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## BOOKS

the melodramatics will appear timely. Mr. Sedges writes well: and, had he ideas to convey, might produce a novel which would do more than merely while away the idle hour.

Mr. Veiel, whose novel Intrigue is about just that, also writes well enough: but his story of fornication in foreign parts leaves an unpleasant taste, which is not sweetened by the crime and curiously bungled trial at the end.

-Sarah Campion

#### LIFETIME AT SCHOOL

SCHOOLMASTER'S HARVEST, by J. H. Simpson; Faber and Faber, English price, 12/-.

MR. SIMPSON was nurtured in a preparatory school for Rugby, and went on to Rugby, where later for a number of years he was a master. But he was an alert and ambitious young man and early sought experience elsewhere, especially under G. W. S. Howson at Gresham's School in Norfolk. He left to become for a short time an Inspector in the Board of Education before returning to Rugby. Coming under the influence of Homer Lane (of the Little Commonwealth in Dorset), he rather naively introduced a system of "self-government" in his form at Rugby, and has recorded this experiment in a book-An Adventure in Education (1917).

He was able to develop his ideas in a more favourable educational climate when, in 1919, he was appointed to establish at Rendcomb in Gloucestershire a privately endowed and well provided boarding school for promising boys from the public elementary schools, a scheme that "was certainly not likely to be popular with the local county families and their friends." He left this post in 1931 to become Principal of a Church of England Training College (for teachers) in London. He says he had heard with incredulity dreadful stories of the customs and general conditions in such places, and of a kind of discipline resembling that of "an inferior nineteenth century boarding school." His incredulity, he adds, was "by no means justified." It was here that, in 1937, I called on Mr. Simpson, to find him still puzzled by those "Contrasts and Uncertainties" to which he devotes a chapter in the book under review.

As may be expected from such sowings and from such varied soil conditions, Mr. Simpson's harvest comprises a great deal of rank straw from which the grain must be sifted. He tells us he has had two questions constantly in mind: first, how far was the purpose of each institution clear and co-ordinated. and how far was the institution successful in finding means adapted to that purpose? In so far as the institutions dealt with most critically are the English public school and its junior relative, the preparatory school of 40 to 50 years ago, the question is now, surely, merely academic. At least one hopes so. His second question-the place and meaning of discipline and freedom in these schools and in the others in which he had later experience — is of more general interest, and his discussion of great value, though there are frequent reminders, of which the author is unconscious, that Rugby put on him an indelible mark.

Nothing I have said is intended to detract from the interest of this very readable book, written by a cultured and amiable gentleman who, with sympathy and discernment, has devoted a lifetime of service to youth.

---L.J.W.

#### CHRISTIAN BELIEF

THE BIRTH OF CHRISTIANITY. by Maurice Goguel, translated from the French by H. C. Snape; Allen and Unwin, English price 42...

THIS learned and sympathetic analysis of the origins of Christianity is a pointer to how far Biblical criticism has travelled from the confidently destructive approach of many writers of the last century. Dr. Goguel sets the tone of his argument in the introduction-

Social religion emerges from personal re-ligion: the converse is also true. All per-sonal religion comes to birth in the setting sonal religion comes to birth in the setting of a social religion, even when it assumes a new form. It is purely a question of theory and impossible to verify by observation whether personal or social religion appears first. . .

Inevitably, since he is not a believing Christian, Dr. Goguel is obliged (though not in so many words) to reject the hypothesis of an actual Resurrection; for this assumption is meaningful and possible only if one accepts also the actual divinity of Christ. Instead, he presents the events of Easter Monday as the projection in mythical form of certain profound and convulsive changes in the unconscious minds of the first Christians. He drives a decisive wedge between Judaic and Hellenist Christianity, suggesting a crucial antagonism between the theology of St. Paul and St. Peter, also between that of St. Paul and St. John. These are matters which can only be fairly discussed with meticulous examination of detail, and then by scholars as fully acquainted with the sources of the Gospels and Epistles as Dr. Goguel himself.

Dr. Goguei's method, however, can be appraised by the unlearned reader. It is ultimately the method of behaviourist psychology, illuminated by considerable wisdom and reverence for religious concepts. After reading this vol-uminous and careful account of the early development of Christian belief, one is left with a question mark. Has one really learnt any more about the birth of Christianity? Did it occur in the minds of men or in a manger? Were the "appearances" real, as you and your wife are real, or old and desolate fantasies renewed? Why is gnostic mythical literature so unconvincing alongside the unpretentious reporting of the Gospels? Not How—but Why? Not What—but Who? These are the questions which shake the world, and wisely Dr. Goguel does not try to answer them.

-James K. Baxter

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

THE CHILDREN'S ILLUSTRATED ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF GENERAL KNOWLEDGE, Odhams Press, through Whitcombe and Tombs, N.Z. price 15/-. large book, copiously illustrated, which should help children to gain a great deal of miscellaneous information.

A RIDE IN THE SUN, by Peggy Iris Thomas; Hodder and Stoughton, English price 12/6. A girl who travelled across Canada, the United States and Mexico on a motor cycle-with an Airedale as sole companion—tells her story with appropriate liveliness.

HUMAN BEHAVIOUR IN THE CONCENTRATION CAMP, by Elie A. Cohen; Jonathan Cape, English price 18/- A Dutchman who spent sevcral years in German concentration camps has analysed the experience with impressive detachment. This is not a popular description, but a learned inquiry based on what was seen and discovered by an intelligent prisoner.