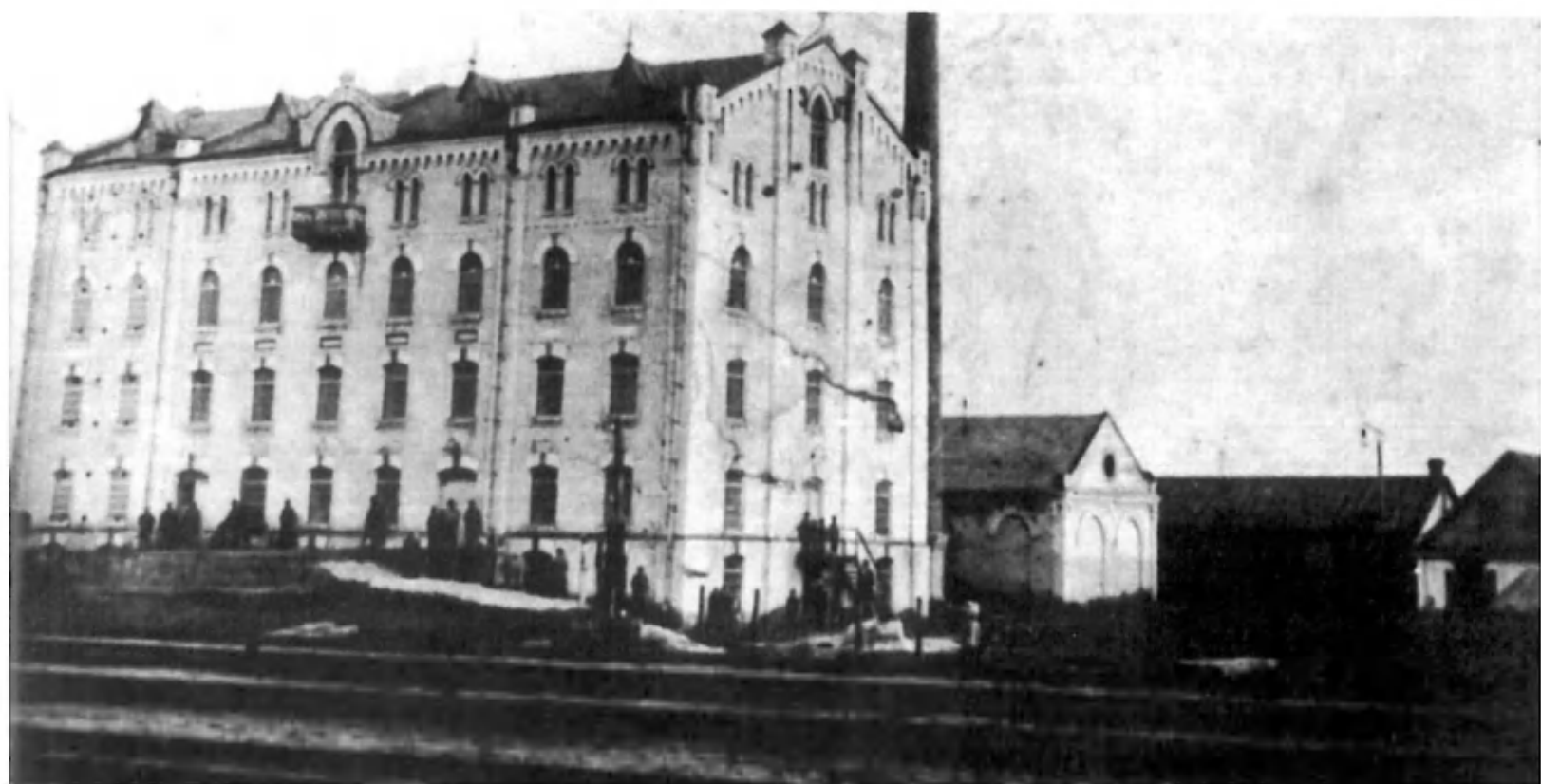


MENNONITE LIFE

JUNE 1994



In This Issue

This issue of *Mennonite Life* includes treatments of Anabaptist Mennonite experience in literature and social history. The authors of the two lead articles, Anthony R. Epp and Calvin Redekop, are long time contributors to the pages of this journal.

Epp reports on the works of the nineteenth century French authors Emile Erckmann and Alexandre Chatrian, who included Anabaptist figures in four novels, one play, and one short story. In Epp's judgement, Erckmann and Chatrian must have had personal contacts with Alsatian Mennonites. The Erckmann-Chatrian Mennonite characters reflect the authors' ideal of tolerance for dissenters. Anthony R. Epp is a member of the foreign languages faculty, Nebraska Wesleyan University, Lincoln, Nebraska. He has been on a sabbatical assignment at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, during the 1993-1994 school year.

Calvin and Benjamin Redekop tell a remarkable tale from experiences in a Mennonite settlement in South Russia as preserved in the Redekop family oral tradition. Such stories of bankruptcy, betrayal, and punishment can be a warning against any tendencies to romanticize the idyllic life of Mennonite villagers in the so-called "Golden Age" of Russian Mennonitism. Calvin Redekop is a retired professor of sociology, living in Harrisonburg, Virginia. He is the author of *Mennonite Society* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

This issue includes the Radical Reformation and Mennonite Bibliography, an annual feature in our June issue. Barbara Thiesen is the Technical Services Librarian and Co-Director of Libraries at Bethel College.

James C. Juhnke

MENNONITE LIFE

June 1994 Vol. 49 No. 2

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Front Cover

The Benjamin Redekopp flour mill in Bliznetsy near Petrovka about 1907 (company included Neufeld and Wiebe).

Back Cover

Benjamin F. Redekopp and Benjamin Redekopp III, managers of the flour mills.

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Erckmann-Chatrian

Anabaptists in the Works of the Alsatian Author Duo

by Anthony R. Epp

Emile Erckmann (1821-1899) and Alexandre Chatrian (1826-1890), both born in Alsace, France, collaborated over a forty year period, writing under the hyphenated name Erckmann-Chatrian as if they were one person, to create popular literature of the sort which became school prize literature. The ninety-third edition of one work, dating from the nineteenth century, testifies to the most tangible proof of their having created truly popular literature. In a second sense, "popular" would describe the market for their success, because although their works have never achieved status as required or even recommended reading on graduate school lists in departments of French (at least not in the United States) the people themselves clamored for those very works in which they found the authors portraying them with great realism (from mores to costumes to language) rather than with the caricatures to which Alsatians have sometimes been subjected in the wider French culture. Included in that realism one finds occasional references to Anabaptists as part of the human scenery. In still another sense the word "popular" applies to their works in that they retell French history from the point of view of the common people who endure history rather than from that of those whom historians usually treat as the heroic creators of history. As champions of the people, Erckmann-Chatrian exhibit a fourth "popular" trait by representing the rights of the people (such as religious tolerance, freedom from oppression by an alliance of state and religion, and the right to primary school education for

all). Finally, their love of country, specifically of their native Alsace and of neighboring Lorraine, both of which the Prussians under Bismarck incorporated into Germany in 1871, contributed substantially to their popular appeal. It is as if they were trying to instill pride in region as well as country.

"When one has had the good fortune of being born in the Vosges [Mountains]," he said, "between Haut-Bar, Nideck and Geierstein, one should never dream of traveling." ("Une Nuit dans le bois," p. 2)

The authors continue this passage by detailing the wonders and bounty of nature as manifested in Alsace. With a detailed map, one can find the Alsatian cities, villages, waterways, and mountains where Erckmann-Chatrian situate their stories.

Apart from their short stories, a genre in which the supernatural constitutes their major theme, Erckmann-Chatrian grounded their historical literature, primarily novels, almost exclusively on the century of French history beginning with the Revolution of 1789. In creating what is called "national literature," they focused on the formative events of that century: the French Revolution, the phenomenon of Napoleon and the ensuing Napoleonic Wars, the restoration of the monarchy, the Revolution of 1830, the Revolution of 1848, the Second Empire under Napoleon III, the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), and the consequent annexation of Alsace-Lorraine to Bismarck's newly-united Germany.

Their works teem with a consistent set of viewpoints and prejudices: an abhorrence of war, the necessity of defending the endangered fatherland, the pri-

macy of preserving rights achieved through the Revolution, and the need for religious tolerance. In recounting the wars of this period from the people's point of view, they consistently emphasize the horror of war, sometimes in detail which would rival the graphic portrayals of modern cinema.

Without knowing why, I dragged myself out of the ruts and propped myself against the wall, and scarcely had I done so when two sixteen pounders, each drawn by six horses, turned the corner at the first house with all their strength, and the wheels rolled over the heaps of dead and wounded as if they were going over straw; *bones snapped*. Now I knew whence came the cries that I had been hearing, and my hair stood on end with horror. [The words in italics are eliminated from at least one English version.] (*Histoire d'un concert de 1813*, p. 185)

Yet the horrors do indeed permeate all their works dealing with war and Erckmann-Chatrian see those horrors as inevitable.

But that's the way men are: the fear of being captured makes them barbarians. (*Waterloo. Suite du Concert de 1813*, p. 276)

Even in *Yégo of the Madman or the Invasion of France in 1814*, a work in which the authors preach the necessity of national defense, Erckmann-Chatrian continue to underscore the inevitable barbarism which envelops human behavior in time of war, even the behavior of those on the "good" side.

At the foot of the bank were heaps of wounded, dragging themselves along the ground. The trodden-down snow was red with blood. In the midst of the piles of dead were two young officers, still alive, but unable to disengage themselves from their dead horses.

It was horrible! But men are, in fact, savages: there was not one among the mountaineers who pitied those poor wretches; but, on the contrary, they seemed to rejoice at the

sight. (*Yégof the Madman*, p. 180-181)

In rare cases Erckmann-Chatrion even express their stance against the horrors of war with biting irony:

for excepting Nicolas Rabeau, former drum major for the fourteenth line, master of arms and French graces, who had had the glory of being skewered by a Cossack and of rendering his soul on the field of honor, with that one exception, all the others had gotten by with getting knocked about. ("Porquoi Hunebourg ne fut pas rendu," p. 352)

As Richard Burton remarks, these novels present "war stript [sic] of its glory, reduced to the one grim denominator of human misery."¹ The historical novels show the deprivations endured by the common people, the unwillingness to go to war, efforts to evade the war by purchasing replacements or emigrating to America, and the massive slaughter of those unable to evade conscription. For instance, in *The Blockade: Episode from the End of the Empire*, the Jewish narrator Moïse sends his sons to America to avoid Napoleon's 1812 conscription. Later, as he calculates how he can survive the coming blockade of Phalsbourg, Moïse coldly calculates that war without brandy would be unthinkable and that brandy would thus be his key to economic survival.

But what can run short is the brandy which men need in order to massacre and exterminate each other in war, and it's brandy that we will buy. (*Le Blocus*, p. 29)

Later the same narrator utters a strong condemnation of war.

... what an amount of money one spends to kill one's fellow creatures! ... I have often thought that if the French put as much care, good sense and courage into things for peace, they would be the richest and the happiest people on earth. (*Le Blocus*, p. 49)

Yes, I have seen those immense trenches in which they bury the dead; Russians, French, Prussians, all together—as God had made them before the invention of plumes and uniforms, which divide them for the benefit of those who govern them. (*Histoire d'un conscrit de 1813*, p. 207)

Narrator Moïse even pleads the case of a deserter and pays for a lawyer to prevent (successfully, as it turns out) the deserter's execution.

Whereas Erckmann-Chatrion do express unconditional support for war when France faces menace from the outside, without exception they condemn with equal staunchness all wars of aggression.

You think it is fine to take their country and to make them French, in spite of themselves? That is sport. You think that is sport! Would you like to become a German? Would you like to obey the Prussians and put aside your country for another? Would it profit us to do such a thing as that? Would it make us richer to tear out the souls of our neighbors? Would that leave us a good conscience? (*Brigadier Frederick*, p. 52)

Indeed they single out patriotism gone awry as an evil. In *The Blockade*, for example, the Jewish family, forced to quarter a sergeant known for his mean streak, quickly analyzes their "guest's" underlying problem.

... and the saddest think is that he's not mean; he loves the Emperor too much, that's all! (*The Blockade*, p. 264-265)

Yet, whereas numerous passages in their works would seem to make Erckmann-Chatrion appear to be peace advocates, their nationalism causes them to turn staunchly militaristic when the people themselves are threatened (as in the French Revolution) or when outside forces endanger French soil, as was the case following the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars, and the Franco-Prussian War. They also portray that danger to the people as coming from the inside, namely in collusion between the nobility and the Catholic Church to revoke the rights obtained by the people during the Revolution of 1789.

Anabaptist Connection

Seemingly as part of their endeavor of portraying eighteenth and nineteenth century Alsace realistically, Erckmann-Chatrion write Anabaptists into six of their works: one short story, "Le Blanc et le noir" ["The White and the Black"]; one play, *Le Juif polonais* [*The Polish Jew*]; and four novels, *Confidences d'un joueur de clarinette* [*The Secrets of a Clarinet Player*], *L'Ami Fritz* [*Friend Fritz*], *Histoire d'un sous-maître* [*The Story of an Assistant School Master*], and *Le Fou Yégof* [*Yégof the Madman or the Invasion of France in 1814*].

The Alsace-Lorraine territory served as an excuse for annexations and wars from 843, when Charlemagne's grandsons divided the vast empire in three parts (with the middle going to Lothair—hence the German name Lothringen for Lorraine), until 1945,

when the two provinces were reincorporated into France. Already in the sixteenth century, Anabaptists had arrived in Alsace-Lorraine, and although persecution annihilated their early settlements, the Anabaptists were again thriving in seventeenth century Alsace. Under the reign of Louis XIV, in the wake of his Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which withdrew freedom of worship from all non-Catholic groups, the Anabaptists were slowly forced out of the territories. In the eighteenth century Louis XV modified the decree, thus allowing local princes again to rent their lands to Anabaptists.²

Erckmann-Chatrion must have had personal knowledge of the Alsatian Anabaptists, for in addition to providing some historical and sociological descriptions, the Anabaptists in three of the above works bear the surname Pelsy, a name still current among the French Mennonites. Indeed, C. Henry Smith, in writing *The Story of the Mennonites*, names Valentin Pelsy as being the leader of the Alsatian Mennonites.³ In four of the works now to be considered, Anabaptists play only a minor role and as thus perhaps simply constituting a portion of the human scenery in Alsace, but in two works they play roles significant enough for some of their beliefs and customs to highlight the didactic purposes being pursued by the authors.

L'Ami Fritz

In *L'Ami Fritz* (1865), the main character, Fritz, in spite of his loudly expressed intentions to enjoy life as a bachelor to the end of his days, falls in love with Sûzel, the daughter of Fritz's Anabaptist tenant, Christel, living on a farm at Meisenthâl near the Vosges, on the Genêts slopes. (Such precision proves helpful in identifying this as an Alsatian rather than a German story, for later the narrator calls himself a Bavarian which would tend to mislead those knowledgeable only of current German political divisions. One needs to know that the Palatinate formerly belonged to Bavaria.) As the story develops, Erckmann-Chatrion restrict their portrayal of the Anabaptists almost exclusively to household and agricultural vir-



Emile Erckmann

tues, with “the old Anabaptist” Christel being known for his excellent work, for instance. Only when gossip turns to a possible love-related duel does one learn anything about Christel’s Anabaptist peace position. (Note also the narrator’s comment about the Anabaptist’s drinking habits.)

“You’re absolutely right, Mr. Kobus,” said the somewhat tipsy Anabaptist, “our religion is a religion of peace, but back when I was in love with Orchel, yes, God forgive me! I would have been capable of fighting with a scythe to have her.” (p. 146)

The daughter Sützel receives praise and admiration for her management of the household and the accounts of the farm and for her ability to read. Even though local villagers do express surprise at the marriage, the surprise stems not from the fact that Fritz is marrying an Anabaptist’s daughter but from his marrying below his station. In the course of the story one also learns that two or three Anabaptist families live in the nearby village of Bischem and that one of them is named Christian Pelsy.

Confidences d’un joueur de clarinette

In *Confidences d’un joueur de clarinette* (1865), in which a clarinet player recounts how he lost out in love to a muscle-bound rival, the Anabaptists enter only as part of the agricultural scene. In assessing a promising oat harvest, one character says:

Look way up there on the slope, those yellow patches between the spruce trees that look like gold, those are the oat fields of Pelsy the Anabaptist; he has six acres all in one field. (p. 402)

The fields in question are high in the mountains near the village of Erckerswir.

“Le blanc et le noir”

“Le Blanc et le noir,” a short story dealing with the supernatural, revolves around the question of whether God determines everything or if invisible spirits play a role in human affairs. Zaphéri Mutz had fallen in love with Grédel Dick, the only daughter of the Anabaptist Pétrus Dick, who farmed near Schlossgarten, but the Mutz family opposed “the union on the pretext that a pagan could not be allowed to enter the family” (p. 204). Grédel commits suicide and Zaphéri disappears but is later apprehended and accused of murder in relation to another death. With Zaphéri under arrest, the local organist prepares a banquet to prove to the Mutz family and other villagers the power of invisible spirits, both good (*le blanc*) and evil (*le noir*). Most of the guests, however, fail to attend the banquet, because knowing about an upcoming baptism in the Mutz family and fearing retribution of some kind, “all of the guests thinking about Grédel Dick, had found pretexts not to come” (p. 221). The banquet does nevertheless take place, during which time Father Mutz again excuses the thwarting of the marriage between Zaphéri and Grédel by saying that “my mother, my grandmother and all the men and women in the family couldn’t receive that pagan into heaven” (p. 226). Ironically, as Zaphéri is led out to be hung, Grédel Dick miraculously appears in prayer at the foot of the gallows, saving her beloved through prayer and prov-

ing, in the context of the story, the power of invisible spirits.

Le Juif polonais

The play titled *Le Juif polonais* [*The Polish Jew*], a ghost story of retribution, fleetingly alludes in the opening lines to an Anabaptist named Walter, apparently hired out to Heinrich the farmer. Walter is supposed to load flour onto the forester's wagon. As the play opens, the Anabaptist is not to be found but is known to be "emptying a bottle" (p. 500) at the Mouton d'Or, the local tavern, after having had the grocer load his own wagon with sugar, coffee, and cinnamon. In talking about the Anabaptist, the forester chuckles: "He knows how to live well. He likes good wine. And he's right." (p. 510) The Anabaptist never appears on stage and receives no further mention as the play progresses.

Histoire d'un sous-maître

Whereas the first four works depict the Anabaptists in strictly sociological terms, and superficially at that, they take on a vital role, one revolving around a cherished French freedom and a tenet of Anabaptist theology, in *Histoire d'un sous-maître* [*The Story of an Assistant Teacher*]. This work is one of several in which Erckmann-Chatrion condemn the collusion between the church and the civilian powers (especially the aristocracy) to use religion as a means of making the people believe in future rewards and punishments. In these works they describe a public education limited to "impressing upon the hearts of young people, in a permanent way, the sentiment of their duties toward God and king" (p. 258). Also in the novel *Waterloo*, Erckmann-Chatrion describe the return of the royalists, bringing with them missionaries eager to convert the Alsations and declaring: "Those who don't want to change, like the Jews and Lutherans, we'll force them." (p. 108)

The present novel begins in 1816 when King Louis XVIII, immediately following the fall of Napoleon, has instructed his ministry of education to encourage primary education throughout the kingdom. As part of that effort,

young Jean-Baptiste Renaud is sent as an assistant teacher to Chêne-Fendu, a village in the Vosges Mountains where he encounters what he describes as a profound ignorance. Although a Catholic himself, Jean-Baptiste soon acknowledges visible differences between Catholics and Alsations of other religious persuasions.

Ah! in spite of how hard it is for me to admit it, Lutherans and Jews raise their children much better; they take care of them better, they devote part of their fortune to them. (p. 274)

With the approval of the head teacher, he sets up an evening school to instruct

older young people in the village in reading, writing, and arithmetic, an initiative which causes his eventual downfall.

Unfortunately kings, priests, and nobles don't want people to reason; they know that educating the people means preparing for the Republic (p. 252)

For having instituted evening instruction without the approval of the local priest, the young assistant teacher is banished to the neighboring hamlet of Les Roches, located higher in the mountains, and where, in spite of the uneducable reputation of the people, he again succeeds, until springtime, that is,



Chatrion

Alexandre Chatrion

when most of the children are sent to do farm work. The diminishing class size spells disaster for Jean-Baptiste, since the number of pupils determines his salary. At the moment of his despair he learns of three isolated Anabaptist farms close to Les Roches, farms teeming with children but who have not come to the school because previous education there had always been restricted to the Catholic catechism. When, in an effort to ensure a living for himself, he goes to visit the elderly Anabaptist patriarch, Jean-Baptiste describes both the

farm and the people. In the appearance both of the farm and the people, the Anabaptists form a stark contrast to the filth and unhappiness which Jean-Baptiste observed upon arriving in Les Roches.

In short a good old Anabaptist farm, without useless luxuries, but where simplicity, cleanliness, orderliness gave the impression that one must live well there and that the people were not unhappy there. (p. 318)

He finds the people all dressed the same way. The elderly Jacob who speaks for the group wears "a straw hat, a cloak of grey cloth and pants of the same

material, his wide white beard spreading across his chest . . ." (p. 319) His wife Salome wore a "wool jacket, a small skirt and a black bonnet . . ." (p. 319)

As the teacher and the Anabaptist discuss education, the Anabaptists themselves come alive for the first time in Erckmann-Chatrian's works. In discussing the possibility of integrating their children into his school at Les Roches, Jean-Baptiste discovers

that these Anabaptists had a great respect for knowledge, and that the old man, whose name was Jacob, often regretted not being able to teach his children and grandchildren surveying techniques, how to draw up simple contracts, how to keep accounts, reckoning and many other things about which the holy books say not a single word and which are nevertheless necessary to know in order to run a farm properly. (p. 315)

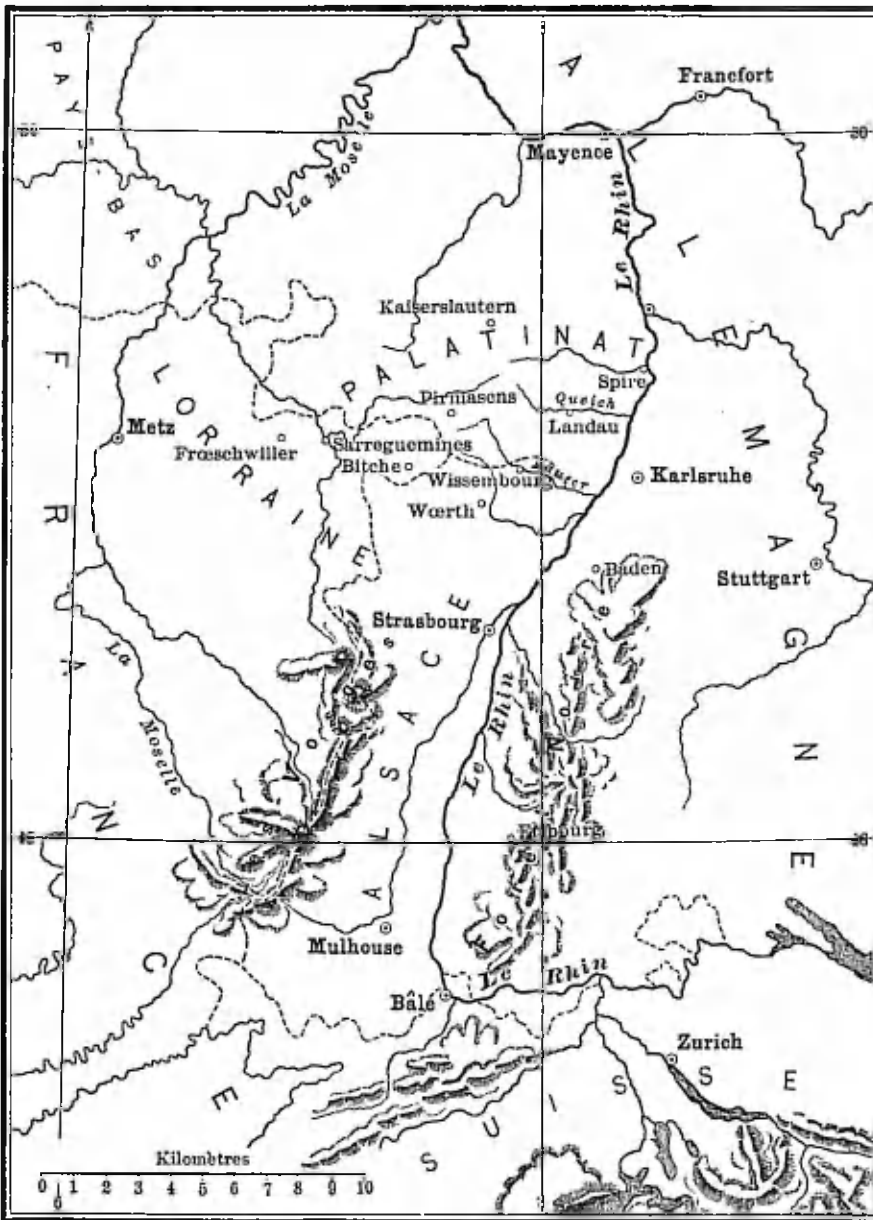
Jacob recognizes Jean-Baptiste for a good teacher, acknowledging in passing that he is much better than the Anabaptist's own teacher who spends his winters with them. This respect for education has been reinforced by family members who have emigrated to America.

"You see," old grandfather Jacob told me laughing, "my two eldest sons, who left for America eighteen years ago, keep writing to their brothers and their brothers-in-law to send the little ones over there; that land of top quality sells for almost nothing, that they have thousands of acres near the Wabach [sic] River, in the state of Illinois . . . But they urge us to give them [the young ones] an education, for in America a man is worth only what he knows." (p. 319-320)

Jean-Baptiste and the Anabaptist Jacob drink *kirschenwasser* after agreeing to a curriculum of surveying (both land and forest), arithmetic, and bookkeeping, with a promise that there be no effort to convert the children.

As in all of his educational undertakings the young teacher succeeds spectacularly, so much so that other Anabaptists reportedly consider boarding their children for the winter near Les Roches so that they too can receive such good instruction. The teacher's own assessment of success receives confirmation when the priest from Chêne-Fendu makes his annual inspection.

Especially the little Anabaptists astonished him by their natural good sense, their composure and the clarity of their answers; even I was surprised. Those children listened sol-



Map of the Palatinate, from Madame Thérèse (New York: American Book Company, 1900)

emply to the questions which the priest addressed to them, they answered calmly and precisely; one could recognize in them the serious and positive mind-set of the people of their religion, who always go straight to the point, simply and without beating around the bush. (p. 334)

The promise which Jean-Baptiste had made to the Anabaptist Jacob brings the young assistant teacher into conflict with the ecclesiastical authorities, a conflict which ties in with the repeated plea in this novel that education be public and separate from religious instruction and control. To the priest and also to the head teacher, the Anabaptists are heretics. In the priest's excitement at possibly converting Anabaptist children, he promises to remove Jean-Baptiste from this lonely post and to grant him an enviable teaching position provided that he take advantage "of the Anabaptist children's presence in his school to sow in their hearts the seeds of our holy religion" (p. 336) for "Nothing brings more honor to a priest than the conversion of a heretic." (p. 338) Jean-Baptiste, refusing to break his promise to the Anabaptist Jacob, leaves quietly to find a new profession, for having thwarted the Church he knows that education will forevermore be a closed profession to him.

Le Fou Yégof

Whereas the Anabaptists enjoy a totally positive treatment in the previous work and serve to reinforce a favorite Erckmann-Chatrian message, the tone changes to a toleration tinged with a strong dose of contempt when they appear in *Yégof the Madman or the Invasion of France in 1814*. This historical novel belongs to a series of works, beginning with the 1789 Revolution, which follows the internal struggles in France to obtain freedoms for the people and continues with the steady encroachment on those freedoms as Napoleon compromises some of them and repeatedly plunges the country into wars of aggression. By 1814 the European armies, including Prussians, English, Austrians, and Russians, have forced the French armies, into which nearly all able-bodied men have been drafted, back into France. French patriots, who

had once proudly raised their tricolor flag as a beacon of freedom to a Europe still ruled by the entrenched nobility, now must defend the very independence of their homeland. The invasion comes through Alsace. *Yégof* tells the story of a madman knowledgeable about the vast stretches of Alsace, capable of communicating with wolves and who, when rejected as a suitor, warns of impending disaster for the French, a disaster which he deliberately creates by betraying strongholds and passes to the enemies.

Labarbe, a leader of the people's spontaneous resistance movement, in traveling about the countryside to enlist support for defense of the fatherland, comes to an Anabaptist farm where his urgent message fails to overcome religious scruples. The encounter resembles those with which the Anabaptists and their Mennonite descendants have become familiar over the centuries when their various homelands have engaged in war.

They visited together the nearest hamlets, re-animating the love of country in the people's hearts; and the next day Labarbe accompanied Hulin into Christ-Nickel's, the anabaptist [sic] farmer of Painbach—a sensible and respectable man, but who could not be prevailed upon to participate in their glorious enterprise. Christ-Nickel had only one reply for all their observations: "It is well, it is just, but the Bible saith, 'Put up they sword into its place. He who lives by the sword shall perish by the sword.'" He promised them, however, to pray for the good cause: it was all they could obtain. (pp. 78-79)

Some chapters later, with the invasion in progress, the scene shifts to the land of another Anabaptist (again a Pelsy) who has been surprised by the enemy and tied up to his bed. The resisters untie him and then take over his house as headquarters for the local resistance. A timid, scared man, Pelsy remains a minor character, depicted as capable only of parroting, and in an unconvincing manner at that, the Anabaptist line. As Pelsy steadfastly refuses to engage in bloodshed, a hardworking resister, Catherine Lefèvre, lashes out impatiently at the Anabaptist stand.

"If that were true, and your religion were right, the Germans, Russians, and all these red men might take the clothes off our backs. 'Tis fine, that religion of yours; yes, fine, for it gives the rogues such an advantage! It helps them to pillage people of substance. I am sure the allies would wish for us no better reli-

gion than yours. Unfortunately, everybody does not care to live like sheep. As for me, Pelsy [sic]—and I say it without wishing to annoy you—I consider it folly to grow rich for the benefit of others. But, after all, you are honest folks; one cannot be angry with you; you have been brought up from father to son in the same notions: what the grandfather thought, the grandson thinks also. But we will defend you in spite of yourselves; and afterward we will let you tell us of the peace eternal. I am fond of discourses on peace, when I have nothing else to do, and when I am thinking after dinner: then it rejoices my heart. (pp. 170-171)

That assault on the Anabaptist peace position receives reinforcement later by a most unflattering description of Pelsy's daughters at work. Pelsy's two daughters help Louise, the beloved daughter of the narrator, to cut and sew bandages.

The two daughters of the anabaptist—one tall, thin, and pale, with her large flat feet encased in round shoes, her red hair fastened up in a little black cap, her blue stuff [sic] dress falling in folds to her heels; the other fat, slowly lifting up one foot after the other, and waddling along like a duck—forming a striking contrast to Louise.

The stout Katel went panting about without saying a word, while Lesselê performed everything in her sleepy methodical way. (p. 213)

Whereas the Anabaptists affirmed Erckmann-Chatrian's thesis in *The Story of an Assistant School Master*, thereby apparently meriting a flattering portrayal, here their theological stance defies the authors' patriotic reveille; hence the unflattering depiction.

Throughout their works, Erckmann-Chatrian, born in Alsace with its considerable Protestant and Jewish population, plead for tolerance. In *The Story of a Peasant*, the principal voice of wisdom is a Calvinist. In the final volume of this four-volume work, they decry the persecution endured by Jews and Calvinists as internal strife wracks France.

The Protestants were being massacred. What a misfortune! while the emigrés were trying to incite Europe against us, instead of remaining united as brothers, division was setting in. (*Histoire d'un paysan*, vol. II: *La Patrie en danger*, p. 31)

In *The Blockade* the authors repeatedly regret the intolerance suffered by the Jews. The Anabaptists themselves are apparently tolerated and even receive a measure of admiration, except, of course, when their religious principles collide with what Erckmann-Chatrian envision as patriotic duty. Even then,

however, it must be noted that no one mistreats the Anabaptists or even tries to coerce them to change their stance. Michel Bastien, a peasant and a thoroughly convinced revolutionary who heroically survives the turmoil from 1789 to 1815, in narrating the four volumes of *The Story of a Peasant*, expresses the tolerance for which Erckmann-Chatrian plead in asides carried in so many of their works.

Well, as for me, I don't want any dictators, and I like liberty more than the guillotine; it's too convenient to kill those who don't think like you, the lowliest bandit can do that.

(vol. IV, *Le Citoyen Bonaparte*, p. 67)

Michel Bastien knew something about intolerance, for his own mother died without ever having forgiven him for marrying a Calvinist whom she persisted to the end in calling "the heretic."

By including the Anabaptists in their works, Erckmann-Chatrian demonstrate by example the kind of tolerance which they promote. Although the authors clearly do not agree with the Anabaptists' categoric refusal to participate in war, that very refusal, placed in the context of works which constantly evoke feelings of abhorrence toward war, perhaps serves as a foil to highlight the authors' repugnance toward wars as they affect the common people. Depicting the Anabaptists' failed attempt to enter the system of public education supports Erckmann-Chatrian's insistence on an unfinished Revolution and on the need for citizens to watch vigilantly over the rights and freedoms already acquired.

ENDNOTES

¹Erckmann-Chatrian, *Brigadier Frederick and The Dean's Watch*. Richard Burton, translator (New York: P. F. Collier and Son, 1902), xi.

²C. Henry Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites* (Newton, KS: Mennonite Publication Office, 1954), 326-327.

³Ibid., 327.

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The Blockade
The Story of a Conscript of 1813

Waterloo

- L'Histoire d'un homme du peuple*
Master Daniel Rock
 **Confidences d'un joueur de clarinette*
Maître Gaspard Fix
 **Yégof the Madman or The Invasion of France in 1814*
La Maison forestière
 **L'Histoire d'un sous-maitre*

Play

- **Le Juif Polonais*

Short Stories

- "The Dean's Watch"
 "Pourquoi Hunebourg ne fut pas rendu"
Contes du bord du Rhin
 "Myrtille"
 "Mon illustre ami Selsam"
 "La Pêche miraculeuse"
 "La Reine des abeilles"
 "Le Talion"
 *"*Le Blanc et le noir*"
 "La Voleuse d'enfants"
 "Le Cabaliste Hans Veinland"
Le Capitaine Rochart
Contes de la montagne
 "Une Nuit dans les bois"
 "Le Tisserand"
 "Le Violon du pendu"
 "L'Héritage de mon oncle Christian"
 "Hugues-le-Loup"
 "Le Bouc d'Israël"
 "Le Combat d'ours"
 "Entre deux vins"
 "La Taverne du Jambon de Mayence"
 "Les Amoureux de Catherine"
 "Une Campagne en Kabylie"
 "Le Bon vieux temps"
 "Lettre d'un électeur à son député"
 "Une veillée au village"

The Naumenko Mill Fever

by Benjamin Redekop IV and Calvin Redekop

During the latter 1890s and early years of the 1900s, a mill fever broke out in the newly established (1884) Naumenko Mennonite settlement. In Banteshevo, the rail station for Petrowka, the Lehns had built a mill. The Johann Epps built a mill in Petrowka in 1903, while in Vasilyevka a steam mill was built about the same time, and in Gusarowka the Siemens built a general-purpose and a fine flour mill, the latter having stone wheels. Barvenkova, in which our congregation was located, also had two mills. The Wilhelm Dycks moved to Petrowka, and built a fine-flour stone mill in 1903. Later they bought a large piece of land in Millerovo and moved there, along with Wilhelm Friesens. The mill in Petrowka was sold to Franz Redekop, grandfather Benjamin's (II) brother. This mill, however, soon burned down; Franz Redekop soon formed a company with Hieberts and Rempels and rebuilt the mill at Kamenskaya in 1907.¹

My grandfather Benjamin (II) also wanted to get into milling, since the milling business seemed to be very prosperous. He had paid all his debts following their settling in 1885 at Petrowka, for the harvests had been very good. He had built a variety of buildings, a new house, a gigantic barn, and granary [*Scheune*] and other smaller buildings. The *Scheune* had a cross gangway on big planks so that wagons could drive through from both sides. So grandfather organized a company with Heinrichs, Wiebes, and Redekops as partners.² The sign on the mill, however, said "Heinrichs and Company" and that is how it remained; I never

could find out why.

As the mill was being constructed in Bliznetsy, grandfather Benjamin (II) sent my father, Benjamin (III), to Kamenskaya to learn financial and business management from the managers of his Uncle Franz's mill.³ He was sent there for one year. When the mill at Bliznetsy was finished, my father was installed as general manager and Heinrichs was installed as finance manager and bookkeeper. At the beginning, the mill functioned well and apparently made lots of money.

Then Heinrichs had another idea about a year or so later. Since milling was so successful, he wanted to build another mill further west, in Ekaterinoslav.⁴ This mill was designed to be the most modern and efficient mill in the region. In order to finance this mill, Grandfather had to borrow 45,000 gold rubles from a bank in Ekaterinoslav, and so the mill was soon on the way to completion. How much of this loan went to finance the new mill and/or finance the operations of the earlier mill I do not know.

Meanwhile at the Bliznetsy mill, my father began to feel that the bookkeeping of Heinrichs was not accurate, but he could not find out what was wrong. Father had not learned the double-entry system, the debit and credit system, in school. Hence he was in the dark, but he always generally knew that "we have sold so much flour, and we should have so much income," but there was no bookkeeping evidence for this that he could understand. What was wrong? How could this be? So he requested clarification from Heinrichs, but it never made much sense.

In order to check on the progress of the mill, grandfather would take the train and come to Bliznetsy. He got on at Banteshevo, went through Gusarowka, Barvenkova, Dobova, and arrived at Bliznetsy. The station was situated before the mill, and only if you went through Bliznetsy would you see the mill from the train. The train arrived at Bliznetsy around 2:00pm on Sunday as it did every day. Heinrichs knew the train arrival and departure times, and would see Grandfather coming along the village street since he had to pass Heinrichs' house before coming to the mill or my father's house.

Father became very concerned about the mill's finances and urgently asked grandfather to come and investigate. So he came again. This Sunday, as Heinrichs sat in the "great room" [*groti schtov*] he saw grandfather coming down the village road, lined with nice trees. Grandfather saw Heinrichs in the room reading the Bible and knocked at the door. Grandfather asked, "How is the mill doing?" "Oh, Onkel Redekop, I have just been reading something in the Bible which is not clear to me. How can it be? I do not understand it. Could you please explain the Bible to me?" Since the train returned at 6:00pm, and he thus had to be back at the station before then, grandfather, wanting to see his family as well, became quite anxious. Grandfather asked, "But how is the mill doing?"

But Heinrichs answered, "But today is Sunday. Let's rather talk about the Bible. The mill is doing very well, and everything is in order." A few minutes later, grandfather managed to leave.



Benjamin Redekopp II and Susanna Kasper Redekopp

When he arrived at our house, father said to Grandfather, "Papa, Heinrichs is not right. He is a deceiver." "But Benjamin, he is such a pious believer," said grandfather. "Everything is in order, we have talked about the Bible and you say he is not an upright man. How can that be? No, no, he is a good man. He said everything is in order." "Papa, that is not true. We do not have enough money. I hardly have enough money to pay the workers." But grandfather said, "Heinrichs said everything is good, and everything is working well." Grandfather believed Heinrichs more than he believed his own son.

So grandfather went home, and in sev-

eral weeks he would come again, and this situation continued for a long time, month by month. I do not know how long this continued, maybe for several years. The other mill was completed in the meantime, and began to operate. But grandfather did not understand the bookkeeping there, either. I do not know who was bookkeeper there. There were two more good harvests after 1908, but by 1912 both mills were bankrupt.

There were no banks in the area, but the post office also served as a bank in the remote regions, providing for deposits and check writing and money orders. I do not know what Heinrichs did with some of the money that belonged to the

business. But it finally came to the point that father had no money to pay the workers anymore. Two weeks passed and it was Friday. The money for the flour that was delivered did not come to the post office. Father as usual knew how much had been shipped and how much money should be coming as payment. Heinrichs assured father that "the money will be here on Monday."

Saturday, father went to the post office and asked the postmaster whether the money had come. "No, it is not here." (The postmaster and his wife were good friends of my father and mother. They often came to our house to drink tea and visit. They were all of the same age and enjoyed each others' company.) My father said, "Today is Saturday, and I have to pay my men their wages." Then the postmaster and friend said, "Today is Saturday, and if the money will come for sure on Monday, I will advance the money over the weekend." My father took the money and paid the workers three weeks back pay. There two work shifts, and it may have been 1,000 rubles, I don't know.

Monday early, the postmaster appeared at the mill and said, "The money is not here." Heinrichs rejoined by saying, "The money will come." After noon, the money had still not arrived on a later train. Heinrichs saw the postmaster go to father's house. But father was not at home at the moment, but soon he came home. The postmaster shouted, "The money is not there, and I have to have it to pay out money orders." Father said, "The money is not there? What can I do about it? Can't you wait a bit? The money has to arrive." The postmaster shouted, "The money will not come. The depositors want their money."

They argued, and then the postmaster drew his pistol and aimed it at my father. My father thought, "What can I do?" and quickly grabbed my brother Peter and held him in his arms, assuming the postmaster would not shoot Peter to get at him. They began to shout some more; not wanting to shoot Peter, the postmaster in desperation pointed the pistol at his own head and shot himself.

The unthinkable tragedy had struck—the postmaster had killed himself in the

Redekop home! The police were informed and they asked questions of everyone. They went to the post office but found everything in order; there was no money missing. Then why had the postmaster killed himself? Aha, the officials concluded that while Redekop was in the mill, the postmaster was visiting Mrs. Redekop. The police deduced there must have been an affair, for it was well known that the Redekop and postmaster couples were good friends. So when Mr. Redekop had come back and found the postmaster with his wife, the postmaster, being an upright man, could not face the shame of betraying his friend and hence had shot himself. Thus the gendarmes wrote up the protocol, maybe with some help from Heinrichs. In the absence of an intensive investigation, this made the most sense and was the easiest way to conclude the sorry af-

fair, the police concluded.

The bank in Ekaterinoslav was informed of the situation; they came and inspected the books, and what had been happening to the money. The mill was closed and declared bankrupt, the managers and the workers sent home. The loans for both mills were called, and a lien was entered on grandfather's farm so that he could not sell the farm, and had to rent it out. Everything was over. The mills were closed, and the court decision was awaited.

These events, of course, created great consternation in the local Mennonite Brethren congregation. Because the circumstances were so confused, and no clear conclusion was forthcoming immediately, the local congregation proceeded to process the sad developments, and finally decided to excommunicate both my father and mother. The fact that

my mother was pregnant at the time did not seem to convince anyone of her innocence.

Father was home but what could he do now? Father had a friend in Persia, which was under the oversight of Russia, since Tsar Nicholas was the guardian for the young Shah. Thus it was easy to travel to Persia. "Come here, for there is much work," the friend wrote. Father went to investigate, and worked there for several months. Things went well, and he earned some money. Then he was asked to make a trip home to bring a grain binder back to Persia. When he got home, the police were there. The court had decided that Heinrichs should sit in prison for a year for financial mismanagement, and because father had allowed this to happen, was given six months in prison.

We were alone without father. I was



The employees and owners of the Franz Redekopp mill; Benjamin F. Redekopp, seated left, first row.

the oldest and needed to earn some money. Thus I worked for grandfather hauling straw with a big stud horse. Since grandfather's farm had a 45,000 gold ruble lien against it, the farm had to be given over to someone for rent. So grandfather rented the farm to Kroeker, the son of grandfather's oldest daughter. He worked part of the farm, and rented the rest to Russians.

Everything at the mills and grandfather's farm was inventoried, and sold at a huge auction, in order to pay for the debts. But the household goods were not to be sold, since it belonged to grandmother. The young cattle and horses were at another place and were not seized. Thus grandfather had retained enough goods to sell and pay for his family's emigration to Canada which took place in 1913. Hence grandfather lost all his wealth and had to leave his homeland a broken man, while my father and family had to stay while he served his sentence and tried to recoup some of the losses.⁵

What had been done with the money, and how Heinrichs had manipulated the books was never fully discovered by the Wiebes, Neufelds, and Redekops. That was sad. According to my insights, Heinrichs had been taking some of the mill's money to save or invest on his own, and when the postmaster's suicide had taken place, had quickly returned the necessary amount of money to the mill's account at the post office, hence allaying any suspicion on his part. Heinrichs gained the most, being accused only of poor bookkeeping, while the death of the postmaster was being pushed into my father's shoes.

Father was released from prison, and after several weeks of freedom, was mobilized and sent to Novgorod where he worked among the mentally ill, in very terrible conditions. The diseases were very broadly disseminated. Typhoid fever was very widespread, and almost all the people were ill. Then father was sent to the Austrian border, and was there until the end of the war in 1917 in the army as a sub-officer.

One story I have heard about Heinrichs' fate was that he returned home after his release, and eventually rented the mill again and ran it for sev-

eral years before Stalin collectivized everything; Heinrichs apparently even made some more money. But the civil war intensified, and the typhoid fever raged, and many died. Heinrichs also got sick of the fever, so sick that he moved in and out of consciousness, and thought his end was near. He called his wife to his bedside. "Listen," he whispered, "go into the upstairs bedroom and lift three planks at the southeast under the bed, and you will find three pots of gold rubles. If I should die, you will know where they are."

The fever raged, and he became increasingly ill; in quasi-delirium, he called again for his wife, "Did you find the money?" "Which money?" she asked. "I told you to look for it yesterday," he replied. "No, you never told me such a thing," she replied. "Then who was here?" he asked. "It must have been the nurse I hired since I was also sick and very tired," Mrs. Heinrichs replied. "Then go immediately and see if the money is still there," Heinrichs said. She went into the bedroom and lifted up the planks, but there were no pots of gold. "Where is the nurse?" she shrieked. But the nurse had left the village. No one knew where she had gone. Well, she now had enough, and could live well the rest of her life.

I stumbled across another story regarding Heinrichs' end recently. After living here in Canada some years, I went to a neighbor to borrow something, and a granddaughter of the Wiebes who were partners in the mill, had just immigrated from Russia, was visiting the neighbor. She stopped me at the door as I was leaving and asked, "Say, Mr. Redekop, did you know that they say when Heinrichs died of typhus, he did not get stiff?" "Why did he not get stiff?" I asked. "They believe he was poisoned," she replied. "Who poisoned him?" I asked. "They say a nurse did it," she replied.

ENDNOTES

¹Based on family oral tradition, recalled by Ben Redekop IV, edited by Calvin Redekop.

²This "fever" was not a local event. A historian of the period, D. H. Epp, writes: "There was no time to lose. Whoever had money or credit built a mill—naturally a steam or motor powered mill. When, however, production commenced and the distribution of the produce was to begin, many of the dreaming mill owners learned that they lacked everything essential to running a milling business...many paid for it with their entire fortune." ("The Emergence of German Industry in the South Russian Colonies," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 55 (1981): 327). In this fascinating story of "mill fever" Epp shows how the oversupply of mills was a major factor for the bankruptcy of the majority of millers.

³The names in this narrative are authentic, except for Heinrichs, which is fictitious, for reasons which will later become clear.

⁴See the picture of Benjamin III and Benjamin F. See also the picture of the Franz Redekop mill and the employees. No equivalent picture is available of the Benjamin Redekop mill employees.

⁵This was in a more populated area, closer to larger cities on the Dnieper river.

⁶Grandfather hoped that there might still be some way of recovering some equity in the mill and thus helping Ben's (IV) father and family to emigrate to Canada, but the war and the revolution intervened.

Radical Reformation and Mennonite Bibliography, 1993

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Book Reviews

John Howard Yoder, *Nevertheless: Varieties of Religious Pacifism*. Revised and expanded. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1992. Pp. 192. (\$9.95 paperback) ISBN 0-8361-3586-5

Herald Press has done a great service to the Mennonite church, the academic community, and all those interested in peace by releasing a revised and expanded edition of John H. Yoder's classic *Nevertheless*.

As its subtitle suggests, *Nevertheless* is a typology of religious pacifist positions. The types represented run the spectrum from the pacifism of nonviolent social change, to the pacifism of the virtuous minority, to the pacifism of the messianic community. In all, Yoder provides the reader with twenty-nine pacifist positions. He also includes helpful appendices on Quaker political witness, nonviolent defense, and an analysis of nonpacifist types.

For a typology to be something more than an obscure academic exercise, it must help to clarify areas of discourse previously muddled by vague definitions and illogical arguments. The problem which this typology seeks to address is the propensity of non-pacifists to attribute the weaknesses of one type of pacifism to all types. Anyone who has sought to articulate a pacifist position to non-pacifists (Yoder's life-long task) knows the frustration which arises when pacifist positions are blurred. *Nevertheless* succeeds admirably in demonstrating the logical integrity of each type of pacifism it explores.

Yoder explores each type in an individual chapter according to a standard rubric. First, the "axiom," or main idea, of the type is presented, followed by a look at its shortcomings. Yoder then mitigates these criticisms in a section entitled "Nevertheless," and then concludes the chapter by demonstrating how the non-pacifist's critique of any given type of pacifism rebounds with greater force onto her or his own position.

If the purpose of the typology were simply to distance the "Mennonite" pacifist position from others so that our non-pacifist interlocutors would be sure to know that we Mennonites don't make the logical mistakes that other pacifists do, then the book would seem like a somewhat sectarian exercise. Fortunately, this is not the case. Yoder takes care to emphasize the strengths of all the positions he presents, even those with which he disagrees. Furthermore, he states that Mennonite pacifists must recognize the "practical common conviction" they share with other pacifists, namely, the rejection of war. Finally, he asserts that pacifists must acknowledge the extent to which they often internalize several types of pacifism. Yoder does not regard drawing upon various types of pacifism as ethical syncretism which must be resisted for the sake of the pure sect. On the contrary, different types of pacifism, he claims, can reinforce each other, creating a new position which is "more convincing, more effective, and more viable."

Some criticisms can be raised about this generally outstanding book. Yoder's treatment of the "nonpacifist nonresistance" of some Mennonites is, compared to the treatment given to the other positions, uncharacteristically harsh and unsympathetic. Perhaps it is easier to treat sympathetically the positions of those with whom one disagrees and with whom one is not in communion than the positions of those close at hand. Also, Yoder's claim that his position, the pacifism of the messianic community, is the most Biblical and closest to the traditional Christian affirmations is left unsubstantiated. Of course, a small book would not have been the place for an overview of the Biblical materials as they relate to pacifism, but a footnote pointing the reader to Yoder's exegetical works like *The Politics of Jesus* would have been helpful, especially for readers not prepared to take Yoder's brash assertion at face value.

With misunderstandings in pacifist/nonpacifist arguments as common today as they were in 1971 when it was first published, this new edition of *Nevertheless* is very welcome. Church study groups, college and seminary classes,

and all those interested in understanding the reasons to oppose war will benefit from it.

Alain Epp Weaver
MCC West Bank

Arthur Paul Boers, *Lord, Teach Us to Pray: A New Look at the Lord's Prayer*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1992. Pp. 183. (\$9.95 paperback) ISBN 0-8361-3583-0

This book is not really a "new look" at the Lord's Prayer. It is quite simply "another look." But don't get me wrong; I like the book. I'm glad I have it in my personal library, alongside other books on the same topic. It adds depth and perspective to a very important subject in the Christian life. The Lord's Prayer merits a lot more careful attention than we have given it in the past. So even though there is nothing original here in this volume, it is good to present a *closer* look, or a *careful* look at the prayer Jesus taught his disciples to pray. This is such a book. I would defend the decision of the publisher to print this volume. It is a good place to begin—or continue—one's study of the Lord's Prayer.

The style of this volume is unapologetically homiletical. The author admits in the preface that this began as a sermon series that grew to more than a dozen sermons (p. 14)! He has an engaging style of communication that is personal without being self-centered. As a "listener" I came to know a lot about this preacher in these pages. I am glad that the Mennonite church has a preacher/pastor like Arthur Boers. Some day I hope to meet him in person, and tell him so.

It is good to read that "I do not believe the Lord's Prayer should be taught in public schools" (p. 24). The proper places for praying this prayer are the closet, the home, and anywhere the congregation gathers. It belongs to all who confess the name of Jesus and all who seek to follow Christ in life. To take the prayer out of the believing context is to desecrate follower and Teacher.

One of the more troubling issues fac-

ing Christians today is the Fatherhood of God. What do we do with masculine names for God? This issue is joined in the first two words of the Lord's Prayer: "Our Father . . ." The author does not dodge this question. He acknowledges it, and then wrestles with it in fine homiletical style. In the process he models good preaching and defends the language of faith implicit in this prayer with these words: "While there is much that remains unanswered, we dare not abandon the Lord's Prayer's wise teaching that one of God's good names is 'Father'" (p. 43). Amen and Amen!

Another issue for me—and for all English-speaking Christians in our world—which the author could have faced more directly is the liturgical question of which version to use in public worship. There is a babble of voices out there in our congregations as we pray the prayer Jesus taught his disciples to pray. Is it "trespasses" or "debts" or "sins?" This past summer I found myself in various settings where each of these was prayed in unison! The new Mennonite *Hymnal: A Worship Book* (#731) has complicated matters even more by replacing "thy" language with "your." We desperately need coherence and unity when we pray together "Our Father in heaven . . ." Who will bring us together? The author does not say—maybe it will happen in a sequel!

One critical note: On page 20 the author quotes the British American Scientific International Commercial (BASIC) English translation of the Lord's Prayer without a footnote. I happen to have a copy of the Bible in Basic English based on this simplified English. The translation of Matthew 6:9-13 there bears no resemblance to the author's quotation. What is his source? It should be documented.

I would recommend this book not so much for the adult Sunday school classroom as for the bedside table. The study guide questions at the end of the book are adaptable to those who enjoy journaling (though I suspect they were included for group discussion).

Darrell W. Fast

North Newton, Kansas

Leland Harder, *Doors to Lock and Doors to Open: The Discerning People of God*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993. Pp. 198. (\$11.95 paperback) ISBN 0-8361-3628-4

From the title we might suspect that Harder, a sociologist, is offering a book on whether the people of God may engage in boundary maintenance, that is, whether ultimately they may draw lines as to who may be considered members of the church, and if they may, then how. In fact, Harder's central theme is the more theological issue raised in the subtitle: How can the church discern God's will on very practical questions, and thereby really be the church both theologically and functionally? The form is that of a study book, written in language suitable for congregational use, with thirteen chapters to fit a Sunday school "quarter," each chapter ending with discussion questions. Although "Mennonite" does not appear in the title, and certainly other groups can profit from using it, the book is very much about and for Mennonites.

Surely a book calling on congregations to engage in discernment is to be welcomed. Another strong feature is the book's relation to the now-prominent "Church Member Profile" (CMP) studies. Harder, with J. Howard Kauffman, was a co-author of the 1974 CMP book *Anabaptism Four Centuries Later*. Now, in his new book, he has made a valiant and generally successful effort to bring the CMP data behind both *Anabaptism Four Centuries Later* and the later CMP II volume, J. Howard Kauffman and Leo Driedger's *Mennonite Mosaic* (1991), out of the realm of academics and into Mennonite congregational life. Besides those purposes, *Doors to Lock and Doors to Open* seems very much to be a personal statement—by a well-prepared, well-informed brother in the church on issues he cares deeply about. Most of those issues are very current ones: how to form faith and decide on what to believe; how pastors and congregations can work together; agreeing upon women's roles in church leadership; discernment in the course of being peacemakers, arriving at political decisions, and dealing with issues such

as abortion and homosexuality; and, of course, how to make such processes of discernment truly biblical and Christian. Generally, Harder's answers are cautious, designed more for promoting good process than for stating "correct" positions.

Whether the book will seem satisfying will depend a great deal on the particular readers. As a sociologist, Harder was quick to seize on complex realities by using typologies. Throughout the book he offers views of four fictional Mennonite members, composite persons representing types: a "separatist," obviously Mennonite Church (MC), Pennsylvania Mennonite housewife; a "conservative" Mennonite Brethren farmer in Kansas; a "liberal" and urban General Conference Mennonite female psychologist with seminary training; and a "transformist" Mennonite who is an engineer in Ontario and member of a dual-conference (MC and GC) congregation. (Oddly, three of the four have "Russian" Mennonite names; are descendants of earlier immigrations so much more homogenous?) Similarly, borrowing from Canadian Mennonite scholar Rodney Sawatsky, Harder offered four types of "Anabaptist" congregations: separatist, establishment, transformist, and reformist. Again and again, Harder quickly broke his discussion of this or that phenomenon down into types. While his method imposes order and structure onto the discussion, some may find it all too reductionist and lacking in nuance. Another problem is the number of topics Harder tried to address. With his theme of discernment, he was able to take up many issues, and did. But often his treatment of any one issue seems all too brief, and seems done without enough biblical and theological exposition to be the best example of discerning Christian truth. If this book is a useful one to lead congregations to better discernment, the congregations will need other books that come more from the fields of theology and biblical studies.

From the perspective of a Mennonite whole, perhaps the book's largest void is that—despite the *Open Doors*, *Locked Doors* of its title—it ignores almost entirely the groups in the Men-

nonite family who believe in firm sorts of congregational discipline (holding their belief even if, as a side effect, firm discipline draws some definite boundaries). For this void Harder is not exceptionally guilty: the pattern runs through almost all Mennonite scholarly discussions. But for Harder to follow that pattern is especially paradoxical. His title surely invites an examination of the views of groups of "plain" Amish and Mennonites, from Old Order to Holdeman to Beachy to Homing, as well as the views of some congregations who work intentionally at congregational discipline without much reliance on visible symbols. Harder has a section explicitly on "binding and loosing." But even that section does not take seriously those Mennonites and Amish groups who have been most systematic and intentional about literal binding and loosing backed by clear criteria for church membership.

The void is not surprising: neither did the ambitious and otherwise very valuable Church Member Profile surveys include the groups with the most highly developed approaches to church discipline. The fact is, very few Mennonite studies of ethics, ecclesiology, and goals for church life take those groups seriously. Do such groups have nothing to offer? If open doors are a value, are not ethical consistency and clarity of the corporate witness also values? Scholars in many fields of Mennonite scholarship would do well to wake up to a truth that historian Steven Nolt has offered: that while scholars and church leaders are looking the other way, the plain groups are the fastest-growing in the Mennonite and Amish family of churches. Of course a few investigators are fascinated with the Old Order Amish (although often not in ways that make the Amish particularly relevant to Mennonite thought or discernment). But the great majority of Mennonite-studies scholars cut off that end of the Mennonite spectrum, and look only at the parts from centrist to liberal.

If centrist to liberal is enough, then Harder's is a useful book. Just how useful, only congregations can answer. If, as Harder hopes, it helps congregations very practically to face certain questions

in congregational life and to develop effective processes for truly Christian discernment, it will prove itself to be a fine book indeed. The proof will be in the using.

Theron F. Schlabach
Goshen, Indiana

Susan E. Janzen, ed., *Weathering the Storm: Christian Pacifist Responses to War*. Newton, KS: Faith and Life Press, 1991. Pp. 168. (\$8.95 paperback) ISBN 0-87303-149-0

August 1990 was a wake-up call for pacifist Mennonites. Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait triggered military mobilization by the western nations, led by President George Bush. Mennonites, along with other concerned citizens, had to decide upon an appropriate response.

We now know that Mennonites in the United States and Canada reacted to the Gulf War in a variety of ways. Some cheered, joining their neighbors in the excitement that America was standing tall again, ready to take on the evil Saddam Hussein. Others rejoiced in the opportunity to give witness to their pacifist faith. Still others were uneasy facing the unexpected hostility toward peace people. Some simply wept quietly.

As I write, it's more than three years since that August crisis. I well remember my own initial hesitation to criticize national policy, hoping that this might become the long awaited test of appropriate international economic sanctions as an alternative to military action. But as the massive unilateral military buildup began, I wrote an urgent letter to President Bush, the first of many such futile efforts to head off the outbreak of war.

Sometime during those months of anxiety, Susan E. Janzen got the inspiration for this book and invited writers to contribute. These essays had to be written hurriedly, as the book was produced between mid-January and April 1991. With very few errors noted, it represents an amazing achievement in this

brief time frame.

Here then are the thoughts of 22 Mennonite authors facing the challenges of peacemaking. Addressed to immediate situations, ranging from the home and school to the nation and the world, nonetheless some chapters should serve for a long time.

With several years' distance, we may begin to sort out the timeless from the timely dimensions of the views presented here. At the risk of ignoring other important themes, I wish to call attention to certain enduring concerns that will undoubtedly shape any future confrontations between pacifist believers and the war-making nations.

1. *Patriotism and dissent*. What happens when a nation decides to go to war? We dare not forget that before January 15, 1991, there was significant public disagreement over the war option. The U.S. Senate conducted hours of noteworthy debate; only three vote switches would have denied President Bush his authorization to use force. Yet a few days later, when the air strikes began, virtually all the opposition evaporated. The president, the media, all the official voices proclaimed that the nation was unified in support of the war effort. Dissent was labeled as unpatriotic.

When we who call ourselves pacifist Christians didn't join in the flag waving and yellow ribbon displays, we learned what it's like to be perceived as a minority with a different set of convictions and priorities. Just when we felt we had bridged a lot of the gaps with the society around us, that we were being accepted as normal human beings and fellow citizens, things began to fall apart.

The essays by Norma Peters Duerksen, Doug Penner, and Rosella Wiens Regier deal with personal dilemmas, in home and school and work place, caused by tensions with the majority culture. Abe Bergen and Randy Keeler speak to the perennial need to empower youth and young adults for faith-based engagement with the big questions of war and peace. We are reminded that a minority dissident view is always just one generation from extinction.

James Longacre's essay examining pa-

triotism and nationalism grapples with the deeper implications of the obvious tensions between pacifists and their North American neighbors. Longacre exposes the contrasting loyalties of God-and-country religiosity over against the universal kingdom of God. Holding to a minority claim for the truth of a different way requires convictions grounded in an ultimate loyalty to Jesus Christ as Lord.

2. *Social science perspectives.* Hubert Brown calls attention to the fact that war takes scarce resources away from the already neglected poor, while James Harder takes on the myth that militarism is good for the economy. James Juhnke places George Bush's call to a limited war in the larger historical context of a century characterized by total war. Along with George Dyck's psychological perspective on the human addiction to violence, all of these essays take the reader beyond the immediate facts of the Gulf War toward larger considerations.

Stuart Showalter analyzes manipulation of the media. Despite America's highly touted freedom of the press, mainstream mass media are generally conformist, resembling "friendly lapdogs who attend loyally to the government's beck and call" (p. 72). Since the book was published, we have learned much more about selective and even deceptive reporting on the war.

3. *Strategies for peacemaking.* The good news is that the Gulf crisis evoked new energy and strategies for communicating peace convictions. There were many spontaneous efforts in local communities: letters published, public vigils, alternatives to yellow ribbons.

Dorothy Friesen, Robert Hull, and other writers call attention to the initiatives launched by Christian Peacemaker Teams. With limited resources, CPT's part-time staff was energized to act boldly. Many churches responded to the call for an Oil-Free Sunday. The mission to Iraq in early December sought to gain release of the hostages and build bridges that would humanize the "enemy." Emergency Sabbath was declared in January as a counter-action to the outbreak of hostilities.

In the longer view, the Gulf War may have enabled pacifists to give attention

to issues other than whether or not to be a conscientious objector to war. Bob Hull calls for new approaches to dialogue and for developing new skills in peacemaking. Katie Funk Wiebe encourages growth in spiritual resources that empower loving acts on behalf of life.

The actual Gulf War was quite brief, but its consequences are still with us. This small but impressive book serves as a checkpoint for assessing the Mennonite effort to maintain and set forth the alternative of Christian pacifism.

J. R. Burkholder
Goshen, Indiana

Ben Wiebe, *Messianic Ethics: Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God and the Church in Response*. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1992. Pp. 223. (\$15.95 paperback) ISBN 0-8361-3585-7

If you are looking for a work which gives a strong Biblical underpinning for the place of the church in the divine economy of salvation, this book is one you want. Wiebe's presentation of the goal of the restoration of Israel is a strong antidote for the Christian individualism of our day.

Wiebe begins his study with a review of the historical debate since the 19th century over Jesus' understanding of eschatology. Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Weiss, Harnack, Schweitzer, C. H. Dodd, Bultmann, and Wilder are all here in brief review. The effect of eschatology on ethics is clearly delineated in the system of each thinker.

Was Jesus' understanding of the kingdom just for his day, a matter of spiritual or crisis decision, or was it intended to build a kingdom and a people in the world?

Wiebe's interest clearly is to show that Jesus' concern was not the isolated individual person, but was to call for a response from a restored Israel, a community of disciples. This is his gift to the development of the subject.

He shows how the theme of the kingdom of God which is so central to the whole story of the Gospels, is rooted in the development in the Hebrew Scriptures of the idea of the restoration of Israel. He traces this theme through the kingship and rule of God which begins with Israel's earliest history and is celebrated in the Feast of Tabernacles and proclaimed by the prophets.

Restoration means return, it means land, rebuilding of ruined cities, the restoration of temple and the dispersed. It is concrete in action, and becomes personal in the messianic hope of Daniel. It is fulfilled in carrying out the commandments, owning God as lord, and having Torah written on your heart. In every way the kingdom is social in character, universal in scope and to be initiated in the creation.

It is this restoration which Jesus comes to proclaim. He calls people to respond to the claim of the kingdom on their lives, not just individually but as a people, a community. This response is a repentance which is not only conformity to the law, but a glad performance of the will of God, a living of the jubilee, an end to all domination.

Here is a welcome call for the church to follow Jesus Christ, rooted in the concreteness of the scriptures as he was, and to live out kingdom ethics as the good news he proclaimed.

Donald R. Steelberg
Wichita, Kansas

Myers, Tamar. *Too Many Crooks Spoil the Broth: A Pennsylvania Dutch Mystery with Recipes*. New York: Doubleday, 1994. Pp. 245. (\$17.00) ISBN 0-385-47139-4

As a reader who enjoys a good murder mystery, I eagerly anticipated reading this "Mennonite" mystery. I regret to say that I was quite disappointed in Myers' book. My objections are as follows:

1) What makes the book or any of the characters Mennonite or Amish? Nothing, except that the author through the characters tells us so. The characters

have "Mennonite/Amish" names like Yoder and Hostetler and the setting is in the Allegheny Mountains of southern Pennsylvania, which apparently is enough to make them Mennonite. The main character, Magdalena Yoder apparently is some sort of conservative Mennonite who has converted the family home into a bed and breakfast called the PennDutch Inn. The cook for this establishment is Freni Hostetler, a Church Amish. She is what might be called a stereotypical Amish in that she doesn't like change or outsiders (the English) and cooks lots of "meat and potatoes" meals.

2) The plot is too contrived to be even remotely believable (even fiction ought to be a bit believable or at least able to fool the reader in to believing that there is some possibility of truth in the story).

3) All of the characters are obnoxious. There wasn't a single character that a reader could really like or sympathize with, from Magdalena Yoder to her rebellious sister Susannah Yoder Entwhistle (after her parents died, she ran off and married a Presbyterian, got a divorce and returned to the farm. She dresses in filmy, loose clothing and does as little as possible to help. She has a dog that is "one of those rat-sized things that yips constantly in a high-pitched voice when it's not nipping at your ankles" (p. 16). She commits adultery, chews gum, smokes, wears sleeveless dresses and occasionally shorts, and worst of all, watches TV!) to Congressman Garrett Ream and all the rest of the suspects and victims. What fun is a murder mystery if you can't identify with or even feel sorry for any of the characters and you wish every last one of them would end up dead?

Myers, who is of Amish background and grew up as a missionary kid in the Belgian Congo, is working on a second Magdalena Yoder mystery. We can only hope that it will be an improvement over this first book.

Barbara A. Thiesen
Newton, Kansas

Glenn Lehman, *Johnny Godshall*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1992. Pp. 216. (\$8.95 paperback) ISBN 0-8361-3597-0

The subtitle of Mennonite writer Glenn Lehman's novel *Johnny Godshall* hints at its interpretive key: *A Pilgrim's Progress*. There was a time when John Bunyan's prose allegory *The Pilgrim's Progress from this World to that which is to Come* (Part I, 1678; Part II, 1684) was the mostly widely read book in English literature except for the Bible. Drawing on the metaphor of religious life as a journey, the book describes in plain language the progress of Christian as he travels through life to the Celestial City. Along the way he deals with allegorical characters such as Mr. Worldly-Wiseman, Piety, and Talkative, and encounters physical elements such as the Slough of Despair, Mountain of Error, and the Vanity Fair.

Johnny Godshall pays strange tribute to *Pilgrim's Progress*. Its protagonist is a famous televangelist, Johnny Godshall, who finds himself journeying from Love-of-Country toward the Mount Zion resort in a decrepit van driven by Christian, the very Christian from Bunyan's book, a man who constantly repeats his spiritual journey and who is consciously aware of being a character in a book. In fact, Godshall at times checks the progress of their modern journey by consulting a copy of Bunyan to see where they're at.

Throughout the novel, we find blended elements retained from Bunyan and new places and characters appropriate to a discussion of faith in the twentieth century. Along their trip, Christian and Godshall encounter places with names like Slow Despond, Ambivalencia, Totalitaria, Valley of Junk, Vanity Fair, Pastures of Personal Discovery, and Secular City. They encounter new allegorical characters such as the subservient Brown Nosa, Eate Wright, Al Liberal, Mr. Liberal Businessman, as well as Bunyan's Evangelist and Interpreter.

A particularly clever sequence concerns an exchange between Godshall and Sister Bible Verse von Everything at Vanity Fair. Here is a portion of their

dialogue entirely of Bible verses taken out of context:

Sister Bible Verse whispered to me, so close I could smell her Jean Nate *eau de bain*, "What thinkest thou of this man' Matthew 17:25, Johnny?"

I said, "If ye think good, (give him) his price' Zechariah 11:12."

"And thou shalt think an evil thought' Ezekiel 38:10."

"Let him not think of himself more highly than he ought to think' Romans 12:3."

We listened to several more young men who all sounded like students reading term papers. I turned to Sister "Shall we 'go [our] ways out into the streets' Luke 10:10?"

"Go up thou bald head; go up, thou bald head' 2 Kings 2:23."

"I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest' Matthew 8:19."

As mentioned at the beginning of this review, a full appreciation of *Johnny Godshall* depends on comprehension of *Pilgrim's Progress*, and readers unfamiliar with Bunyan may not be enthusiastic about this novel. Indeed, before venturing far into the book, I had Bunyan off the shelf for the first time in years. My advice is to start with *Pilgrim's Progress*; then, if you're in the mood for more allegory, tackle *Johnny Godshall*.

David Sprunger
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