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Sylvia Pankhurst  
Author of the "Suffragette Movement"

THE connections between Mr. Drew, highwayman, horse-thief, wild-west adventurer, Mrs. Atherton, novelist, and Mrs. Pankhurst, suffragette, are not obvious. Mr. Ward's book is described by his publishers as a long, picaresque novel, which it both is and isn't; Mrs. Atherton's volume is full of memoirs, both delightful and dull, of her childhood in California and her subsequent career as a popular novelist; Mrs. Pankhurst's book, a reprint, deals with the far-off bitter days of the most famous period of her career.

What brings these books together under a common heading is that they are all books of realistic adventure, so that Mr. Ward's book, which is called fiction, might easily pass for actual truth, so convincingly and cunningly is it narrated, and the adventures of both Mrs. Atherton and Mrs. Pankhurst, though authentic autobiography, might just as easily be taken at times for fiction, so extraordinary and unlike everyday life are they and so imaginatively and excitingly are they told.

Parts of both autobiographies might be taken and incorporated with *The Adventures of Jonathan Drew* without disturbing its extraordinary verisimilitude and its wild and bloodthirsty atmosphere; and in return passages of Mr. Ward would not look out of place side by side with Mrs. Pankhurst's stories of suffragette meetings or Mrs. Atherton's strange episodes of the Spanish family into which she married.

How much of *The Adventures of Jonathan Drew* is drawn from life it is impossible to tell, though the constant impression is that every page of it is absolute truth. Just as with *Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders* one is led artlessly, yet so artfully, step by step into the life of Jonathan Drew until one believes in his existence as unshakably as one believes in theirs or in any historical figure such as Oliver Cromwell or Dr. Johnson. It is significant, in fact, that the earliest books Drew read were the novels of Defoe, for the stamp of Defoe's art is on every page of his adventures.

The scene is America and the full title of the book, so like Defoe also, is "*The Strange Adventures of Jonathan Drew*, a rolling stone, during his travels through Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri and Kentucky in the years 1821-24.

# Wanted—a New Dickens

By H. E. BATES

Together with some account of the people he met, the things they did and said, the songs they sang and the roads they travelled."

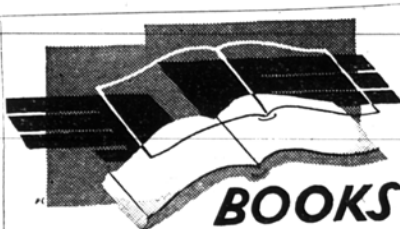
Why no one has set about before to relate such adventures of early America I cannot think; nineteenth-century America, if we are to believe not only Mr. Drew but Mrs. Atherton, must have been as wild, debauched, adventurous and dangerous as seventeenth-century England, an inexhaustible field for any novelist with half the resource and cunning and knowledge of Defoe, or for any writer with the sense to learn his tricks, as Mr. Ward has done.

The tricks of Defoe are as many as his own works, but Mr. Ward has mastered many of them, above all that trick of artlessness, that off-hand take-it-or-leave-it-but-it's-a-fact kind of air by which one is compelled into belief; he

morning, with unpleasant remarks. The Chinese cook went mad and tried to kill the family, but was laid out by George and taken off in irons. A horse ran away with me and jumped over a bank, but fortunately caught a tree and a man dashed down and rescued me. Lightning struck the telephone while I was at the instrument and flung me across the room. The thermometer generally stood at 104 degrees and dropped but two or three degrees at night."

These early adventures of Mrs. Atherton's are all fascinating, but the story of her later career as a novelist degenerates into mere gossip reminiscence, of not much value either to the literary or social historian, and before the career of Mrs. Pankhurst it seems both worthless and meaningless.

There are things in Mrs. Pankhurst's books which make more extraordinary reading than the most incredible piece of reality from any novel. One cannot read the description of Holloway Prison without disgust and anger at the inhumanity of its officials and the official mind behind it, or without pain at the suffering of the prisoners—"the shrunken forms of frail old grannies, with the scant white hair, their shaking hands and piteous withered faces, and the tense, white looks and burning eyes of younger women"; and indeed, as one reads Mrs. Pankhurst's book, one begins to feel that what we need sometimes is not so much a new Defoe as a new Dickens.



## Reviewed Here

THE STRANGE ADVENTURES OF JONATHAN DREW. By Christopher Ward (Gollancz. 8/6).  
THE ADVENTURES OF A NOVELIST. By Gertrude Atherton (Cape. 15/-).  
THE SUFFRAGETTE MOVEMENT. By Sylvia Pankhurst (Longmans. 7/6 net).

has learned also the great art of weaving into the pattern of his story small, common, apparently insignificant threads of detail, all to work up the final pattern of indubitable truth.

"When I crept out again," he says, "I had a sound suit of clothes on my back, decent shoes on my feet, and a proper hat, also some shirts and such tied up in a bundle, and in my pocket six dollars and forty-six cents in cash." From that "six dollars and forty-six cents in cash" there is no escape—it is the touch of supreme artistic cunning, the touch that gives life and makes the reader credulous without his knowing it.

Of the many characters in Mr. Ward's novel five or six, such as the Rev. Peter Wainwright and John G. Bailey, "are drawn from real people of the period," though they are no more alive than the characters which we must believe are simply the creations of Mr. Ward's own imagination. Thus one may check his powers of realistic creation of character.

In many ways one may check him also by Mrs. Atherton's book. The atmosphere of the California of the 'eighties and 'nineties which she describes, is often as wild and strange as that of the 'twenties; there is much in common between their descriptions of New York and San Francisco; often a story of Mrs. Atherton's childhood will take one back to the hectic and lawless days of Jonathan Drew. There are even times when she out-Drews him.

"The house was very-old and battalions of bed-bugs marched over the wooden walls day and night. They thrive on germicides. The nurse used to exhibit a chamber-pot full of them every

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