day Saints are not going to ignore what science tell us about human life, we must not only uncover and recover the facts, but also find ways to speak about and understand evolutionary science that are sustainable in our community of faith in the twenty-first century.

In the concluding scene of *Inherit the Wind*, Drummond (Darrow) upbraids Hornbeck for denigrating Brady's convictions while simultaneously being hopelessly uncritical of his own dogmatic unbelief. Hornbeck exits in disgust. In the empty courtroom, Drummond stands at the counsel's bench and picks up first the Bible, then Darwin's *Origin of Species*, and—with a quizzical glance—places them side by side in his briefcase as the curtain falls. Contemporary Latter-day Saints need to find a way to keep both the scriptures, with their keys to religious belief, and science's constantly revised book of Nature in mind. The two books reviewed here illustrate possibilities for doing this without breaking faith with either science or religion. But they also remind us that those who have troubled the house of the Latter-day Saints with fiery rhetoric—on both sides—have left us the legacy of a hot wind that blew through Dayton during the summer of 1925.

Ridiculously Sublime

Madame Ridiculous and Lady Sublime, by Elouise Bell (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 153 pp.

Reviewed by Kathryn Loosli Pritchett, Columnist, Knight Ridder newspapers, Piedmont, California.

MIDWAY THROUGH HER LATEST collection of humorous essays, former Brigham Young University professor Eloise Bell pleads for a calculated spontaneity in humorous writing. "I do in fact know that much humor is intentional and crafted. And in the Beauty division, my niece tells me it takes her an hour each morning to look "natural." My point is not that all humor, beauty, storytelling is unplanned, but that its charm lies in SEEMING so" (p. 56). With very few exceptions (a strained parody of photo-happy tourists in "Say 'Fromage'!" for example), Bell has crafted her essays with a sly, unforced charm that seems nearly effortless. This, as anyone who has ever tried to start a sacrament meeting talk with a crowd-pleasing quip knows, is tricky work.

The best contemporary humor writers meander through a folksy tale (Garrison Keillor) or a modern-day saga (Jonathan Franzen) only to surprise you with a well-timed punch line that induces a smile of recognition. Bell uses her anecdotes in much the same way to illuminate topics familiar to her readers. A Trivial Pursuit champ herself, she ponders the popularity of trivia contests: "Ultimately, maybe some of us collect answers to the little questions because we find so few answers to the big questions" (p. 127). She condemns those in the service trade who substitute a social demeanor for a professional one, including waiters who insist on being the highlight of a dinner party. "They seem to be saying, 'Don't think for a minute that I'm a servant: I'm your social equal and then some'" (p. 24).

But the commentaries that resonate most are those which tackle the frustrations of modern technology.

The ongoing "lifelag" experienced when change outstrips your normal "slow-motion pace" is particularly evident, says Bell, when returning from an extended vacation:

> If you're lucky, things seem pretty much the same at first. You find the same cobweb by the water heater that was there when you left, the same grease spot on the sport shirt you forgot to wash before storing, and the same curvature of the spine in the back fence. But the world has turned in your absence. You return to your office, slip in a computer disk—the very same disk you used twelve months ago—only to learn that the whole institution has "upgraded" its hardware, its software, AND its cadre of technicians. There is nary a familiar face to troubleshoot for you. You can't even manage to call up your files. Once more, life has made you a freshman. (p. 85)

Though Bell may feel like a neophyte when it comes to new technology, she doesn't hesitate to pass on sage advice regarding modern modes of communication, whether by phone, fax, or e-mail. Yet she champions the old-fashioned personal letter as the most satisfying form of correspondence—"like a magical canteen that always gives you a sip of sweet water each time you put it to your lips" (p. 60). She also feels no compunction about slipping back into the role of teacher. For example, in recalling the end of a day spent playing childhood games, she imparts a bit of language history: "And as darkness draped the alleyway [came] the final, safe incantation, 'Olly, olly, olly oxen free.' In the magic-loving minds of children, those strange words rang more potent and protective than their probable ancestors: 'All ye, all ye, all ye outs in free'" (p. 10).

Mormon readers will find Bell's musings on the significance of a single letter in a general authority's name, be it the O in David O. McKay or the B in Harold B. Lee, amusing, as well as her unofficial guide to Utah culture for those visiting during the Olympics: "Utah drivers honk to let you know they love their families. And the Jazz. And Franklin Covey. And Orrin, who keeps it all safe" (p. 106).

When Bell ventures into more personal territory like her mission in France, where converts were baptized in the rococo bathtub of a former embassy, or the tough but loving memories of her "pugnacious" father (the best essay in the collection), she mines a gentler vein of humor. With these essays Bell reveals her personal pleasures—grand opera, the farmlands of Eastern Idaho, and her beloved hats. Though Bell grieves the loss of her favorite corduroy cap, she isn't quite ready to replace it with the belled fool's cap that sits on her closet shelf. No doubt, when and if she finally does, like her prose it will be ridiculously sublime.

A Travelogue Nonpareil

Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years Among the Mormons, by Jan Shipps. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 400 pp.

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