

**ARDISTAN AND
DJINNISTAN
IN THE DESERT
WINNETOU**

by Karl May
Seabury Press, 1977, 654 pp.
\$12.95; 411 pp. \$10.95; and
749 pp. \$13.95, respectively
L of C nos. 77-12605, 77-13037,
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0-8164-9306-5

Ask anyone from Germany, Scandinavia, or Eastern Europe, particularly those who grew up before World War II, where they first learned about the American West or the Arab Middle East, and they will almost certainly reply, "from Karl May." A favorite of the youthful Albert Einstein, still very popular in Europe, translated into 22 languages, and the subject of many scholarly monographs in German, May (1842-1912) remains virtually unknown in the English-speaking world. Certainly his work is a remarkable and durable example of popular literature. In over 70 adventure novels, he vividly describes strange and exotic places that he never visited. For most adult readers, one May will be enough. The language seems rather clumsy. But the stories move rapidly, and at least one contemporary teen-ager read these three newly translated yarns with enthusiasm. May's heroes constantly get into apparently impossible situations and out of them in ingenious and plausible ways. The books are full of what seems to be accurate local color, Indian ceremonies, Bedouin customs, and the like. Both the Bedouin and the Indians of the American West tend to be idealized. Technology and violence are depreciated; many villains are knocked down, but few are shot and killed. Karl May, in short, is a lot better than most television—and readers may learn from him how to skin a buffalo, too.

—Walter M. Pintner

**A CHANCE TO LEARN:
The History of Race and
Education in the United
States**

by Meyer Weinberg
Cambridge, 1977, 471 pp.
\$27.50 cloth, \$6.95 paper
L of C 76-4235
ISBN 0-521-21303-7
ISBN 0-521-29128-3 pbk

The details vary, but similar patterns emerge in Meyer Weinberg's meticulous history of discrimination against blacks, Mexican-Americans, Indians, and Puerto Ricans in American education through the 1960s. Simple neglect or outright exclusion from schools is followed by admission to separate and woefully inadequate facilities; minority cultures are sometimes ignored in the classroom but more often demeaned. Separate schools for minority children were never designed to be equal—nor could they be. As Frederick Douglass put it in 1872, they created "a system

that exalts one class and debases another." Not until the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* did integration become official policy. And even as this is being written, official policy and reality often remain widely separated. Weinberg, editor of the journal *Integrated Education* and for decades an active foe of racial discrimination, makes no effort to disguise his own sympathies. But he has not written a political tract. This carefully documented account deserves to be widely read not only by historians of American education but also by those who seek the origins of a problem as contemporary as the *Bakke* case.

—Harold Woodman ('77)

A HEALTHY STATE: An International Perspective on the Crisis in United States Medical Care

by Victor W. and Ruth Sidel
Pantheon, 1978
347 pp. \$10.95
L of C 77-5196
ISBN 0-394-40760-1

The United States spent more than \$139 billion on health and medical care in 1976, or \$638 per citizen, making its investment in prevention and cure of illness the highest per capita in the world. Yet the nation ranks low by international standards in terms of results (19th in male life expectancy, four years less than Sweden; 15th in infant mortality, with a rate 80 percent higher than that of Sweden). The Sidels—he is chairman of the Department of Social Medicine at New York's Montefiore Hospital, she is a social worker—competently describe the financial disarray and medical shortcomings of the U.S. health care system. They then compare its history and organization with those of counterparts in Sweden, Britain, the Soviet Union, and China. Because they clearly favor a state-run system, they at times seem to suspend critical judgment; for example, they ignore the Soviet Union's recent rise in infant mortality from 22.9 deaths per 1,000 in 1971 to an estimated 31 per 1,000 in 1976, twice the present U.S. rate. Their own proposal for a comprehensive U.S. national health service includes: greater availability of medical services, no direct financial burdens on the ill, community participation, improved planning, and more stress on preventive medicine.

—Christopher Davis ('77)