

come? Why, simply, that Dos Passos is not what President Truman called Drew Pearson and that *The Grand Design* isn't a very good novel. One might go on and point out that it is terribly difficult to do what Dos Passos has been trying to do all his life and that he deserves more credit than he is currently receiving for such suc-

cesses as he has had. Like Malcolm Cowley, I feel that Donald Adams and John Chamberlain are much too willing to proclaim that Dos Passos was never much of a novelist anyway. I hope that various other critics are equally wrong in saying that he is finished. But whether he is or he isn't, his achievement stands.

MY MUSE TO ME

BY CHARLOTTE LOUISE GROOM

Wear in your mind my lamp and let it shine
Deep down the shaft of self to your heart's core;
Dig out the substance of your saltiest mine
For tears, lay pick to laughter's golden ore,
Out of the pit gouge jewel-words your own.
Dig till emotion from its fiery sleep
Breaks like a giant through the ashy cone
Of cumbrous thought in one quick-jetting leap.
When inspiration chills, my hand will sow
Your thought with seeds of grief and ecstasy,
Whose roots crack open stony hearts, to grow
Into a green, an ever-bearing tree.
These are my gifts — not riches, not renown,
But steep to conquer and my leaves for crown.

THE CHECK LIST



PHILOSOPHY

HUMAN KNOWLEDGE: ITS SCOPE AND LIMITS, by Bertrand Russell. \$5.00. *Simon & Schuster*. Here Mr. Russell states his epistemological theory in detail and with vast learning. He begins with a general analysis of the world of science, and follows it up with a consideration of the rôle of language and perception in scientific methodology. Finally, he takes up the all-important subject of probability, the backbone of scientific knowledge. He points out that there are degrees of knowing, but that in the end "all human knowledge is uncertain, inexact and partial." He remains an empiricist in epistemology, but he hastens to add, "Empiricism as a theory of knowledge has proved inadequate, though less so than any other previous theory of knowledge." This is hardly a book for anyone save the professional philosopher, but he will find it a mine of philosophical insight — and a wonderful specimen of lucid writing about abstruse subjects.

INSIGHT AND OUTLOOK, by Arthur Koestler. \$5.00. *Macmillan*. A pretentious and ill-advised attempt on the part of Mr. Koestler to develop a unified theory of aesthetics, ethics, psychology and epistemology. Beginning with a fairly entertaining and comparatively lucid analysis of the comic, he leads his reader, throughout a rather devious chain of reasoning, to an all-inclusive theory embracing virtually all the ethical and psychological activities of men. It is possible that he has evolved a

theory and that he understands it. But, perhaps because the theory is so complex, Mr. Koestler seems unable to express his ideas with any clarity. It is earnestly to be hoped that he will return speedily to writing fiction.

NOTES TOWARDS THE DEFINITION OF CULTURE, by T. S. Eliot. \$2.50. *Harcourt, Brace*. The 1948 winner of the Nobel Prize in literature here attempts, in his own words, "to help to define a word, the word *culture*." In the very introduction he states what seems to be his chief thesis, namely, that "no culture has appeared or developed except together with a religion: according to the point of view of the observer, the culture will appear to be the product of the religion, or the religion the product of the culture." He also holds that "the culture of the individual is dependent upon the culture of a group or class, and that the culture of the group or class is dependent upon the culture of the whole society to which that group or class belongs," and that "a people should be neither too united nor too divided, if its culture is to flourish." These and similar obviosities Mr. Eliot presents in rather opaque and pompous prose and the general impression left with the reader is that the eminent poet really has nothing to contribute to his subject.

BIOGRAPHY

THE GREAT PIERPONT MORGAN, by Frederick Lewis Allen. \$3.50. *Harper*. Like David Shub's biography of Lenin, this