

and the art of life itself. He eloquently describes the interrelation of Art and Experience, and the mutual creation of the one by the other: Art, through the originality of some great genius, moulding the forms which Experience will take; Experience moulding the form which Art must take lest it become completely unrelated to life. Much of this analysis is brilliant and illuminating. But one is recurrently disturbed by Mr. Krutch's extreme sceptical relativism. For there is no arguing with him. Granted his premises, his system holds. Yet as soon as one concedes even so much as that Nature is at all knowable; as soon as the delights of modern epistemological theory begin a little bit to pall, Mr. Krutch's aesthetic, like a boulder in a landslide, falls to the ground and is shattered, breaking up into its component thousands of tiny, if scintillating, fragments.

HARRY LORIN BINSSE

INTERPRETATIONS: 1931-1932 by *Walter Lippmann*, edited by *Allan Nevins* (MACMILLAN. \$2.50)

MOST devoted readers of the *World* before its demise were perhaps equally devoted admirers of Mr. Lippmann; his subsequent shift to the *Herald-Tribune* and to syndication carried with it a large part of this audience, which associated his name as much as that of any man with the glories of the *World's* celebrated editorial page. Unfortunately Mr. Lippmann has always been somewhat more conservative than much of his audience. His views on such subjects as the tariff, foreign debts, reparations, the Republican Administration, agree with those of any person of liberal, or even radical views, but fundamentally Mr. Lippmann is a believer in those theories of individual liberty which are basic to the nineteenth-century faith in democracy.

Of course he is too intelligent to give credence to any pure form of *laissez-faire* economics; he sees that the notions of the Manchester school are as completely outmoded in modern capitalistic industrialism as would be a belief in the flatness of the earth in modern science. But he obviously makes his concessions to *laissez-faire* with a very sensitive eye directed at the amount of human freedom which must be sacrificed in the bargain. And he is a good bargainer. He will not give up one iota more of freedom than is absolutely necessary. Hence his "betrayal" of the "cause" of many of his more Marxist adherents, who are essentially enemies of liberty, and who view with deep suspicion any attempt at the defence of individualism—a betrayal which is rendered artistically final, perhaps, by the dedication of the present volume to that wicked Republican and Capitalist, Ogden Mills Reid.

Interpretations gives permanent form to the best of Mr. Lippmann's contributions to the *Herald-Tribune*. Out of some two hundred articles, Mr. Nevins has selected about one hundred for preservation from the impermanence of newspaper publication, and we owe him a debt of gratitude. The selection has been admirably done. And the arrangement of the volume is above criticism. Each article falls under a major heading descriptive of its main emphasis: the depression, Mr. Hoover, Congress, the European situation, the Far Eastern crisis, the Seabury investigation, the American party conventions, et cetera. Within each class, the articles are arranged not chronologically, but in their purely logical position: from general to particular. Altogether *Interpretations* is ideally put together, and preserves for posterity the opinions, during a year of world-wide crisis, of the most acute of American editorial observers.

For Mr. Lippmann must be granted that distinction. However much one may disagree with his underlying philosophy, as set forth in such books as *A Preface to Morals*, his analysis of specific problems is illuminated by extraordinary intelligence, sanity, and good sense. His mind and his style, which, like any man's, is a simulacrum of his mind, are beautifully clear. Indeed in an age which seems to the weary reader of endless commentaries almost wilfully muddle-headed, Mr. Lippmann's brilliant clarity is like a drink of water after bath-tub gin. And this clarity, which is coupled with an inner conviction and a high seriousness equally rare in our distressed era, lends what Mr. Lippmann says an effective authority almost unique in our society. Only by extensive quotation, which might easily be made from the present volume, could these aspects of his style be made clear. There is no space to do this here, and no need, for surely everyone able to read and think in America today has read something of Mr. Lippmann's. We have only to state the obligation which we owe to our most effective mentor. Future generations may never hear Mr. Lippmann's name, but it will still be true that of every practical policy, of every effective principle for which the future may praise our generation, Mr. Lippmann has been a staunch proponent.

HARRY LORIN BINSSE

A CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE
MODERN AGE: VOLUME III *by Egon
Friedell* (KNOPF. \$5.00)

THIS—the "Modern Age" from the Congress of Vienna to the World War—is the *Götterdämmerung* of Herr Friedell's trilogy, and the imputation of Wagnerian form seems no less appropriate than the dedication of the whole work to Max Reinhardt. For, as one

rounds out the reading of perhaps the most widely known post-War contribution to *Weltgeschichte*, one becomes unmistakably conscious of its keen dramatic construction, and more particularly one feels this final volume to be a third drama which fulfills with the swift, precise certainty of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* the tragic prophecies of the earlier two. Herr Friedell, one now realizes, is not only an historian with an extraordinarily wide and humanistic perspective, not only a capable philosopher in the negatively progressive method of Spengler, but also—and this is at least as important—a masterful and brilliant dramatist. It is from all three of these standpoints that he has contemplated and handled the huge theme of his *Cultural History*, yet at least one reader is left pondering whether the third aspect may not have been the chief motive as well as the determinator in execution. Certainly there is evidence for this belief, manifested in this last volume by an over-generous, although magnificently entertaining, consideration of the drama, the theatre, and the actors of the whole nineteenth century. And other unfailing characteristics of this dramatic talent are equally evident: for example, Herr Friedell's self-admitted preoccupation with personalities, already proclaimed as a premise in the manifesto with which the first volume begins. This premise, indeed, has its most fertile growth in the third volume; and since this volume spans the entire period of collective thinking and mass movement of the nineteenth century, it is hardly an advantage, nor does it do credit to the otherwise broad horizon of the author.

To come to the book's actual stuff, it is obviously impossible to compress into a brief review even a fair summary of a work of such formidable scope. Nor would such a summary be much more than a list of the