

does not detract from the reader's enthusiasm.

The trouble with Mexico over what was to become the State of California, wilderness fighting with the help of Kit Carson, and a touch of politics in 1846, form the basis for *Eagles Fly West*, by Ed Ainsworth (Macmillan, \$3.00). There is plenty of adventure, shooting and a little of love, but the telling is somewhat crude and adolescent.

HUMOR

So This Is Peace is Bob Hope's new contribution to the mirth of a nation, (Simon & Schuster, paper, \$1.00; cloth, \$2.50). In it, he mixes gags with the report of his travels as a trouper doing shows for servicemen during the war. It is not only for those who served but also, for those who waited, with text and pictures to bring smiles, and sometimes a touch of thoughtfulness, on war generally. It's good fun, with glimpses of the boys' life behind the front.

GENERAL INTEREST

The Monastery, by F. Majdalany, (Houghton, Mifflin, \$2.00), is one of the few brief gems in the collection of war literature. It is the day by day story of the battle for Monte Cassino. Major Majdalany, of the British Army, tells in artless but extremely sharp style not only the details of the military exploit, but the reactions of the men to the business of living under almost impossible situations. There is a tinge of sadness to it, and a touch

of humor too. It has the earmarks of epic quality.

Columnist Paul Mallon has collected some of his best work in *Practical Idealism*, (Bruce Humphries, \$2.00). Taken principally from his 1943 and 1944 writings, the whole work forms a clear-sighted appraisal of world events and trends, with an appeal for Christian ideals. Some of his statements prove to have been prophetic; witness his remarks on Russia's Communism and the then powerful Nazi party. Some of his evaluations of government policies are sound, economic facts.

The second annual of *Best Film Plays*, 1945, again edited by John Gassner and Dudley Nichols, (Crown, \$3.00), makes its appearance with the editors' selection of the 10 best screen plays of late 1944. To the excellent presentation, Gassner adds his able appraisals of the plays and the reason for their selection. Nichols, under the chapter title of "The Machine From the God," makes some appropriate comments on the inside of the picture business and its problems.

Certainly not all the people born in Brooklyn stay there until they die. For those who emigrated to other parts of the United States and still feel a nostalgic urge, here is a pleasant reminder. *Brooklyn, U. S. A.*, by John Richmond and Abril Lamarque, (Creative Age, \$3.00), is made up of pictures and text, showing Brooklyn's great and near great and scenes of diverse interest. It is a tribute to the borough and yet contains some sly digs at it.



COUNTRY COMMENT

NINE GREAT ONES

DOES the world smell bad to you? Is there an unpleasant odor from the present peace? From China, say, or Germany, or the United States?

If so, I invite you by way of antidote to consider the good smells of the earth and especially nine great ones. I invite you to smell them, or if they are not immediately available, to recall them, to conjure them up. Hold them in your mind against a time of need.

By "great" I mean basic, abundant and free-flowing. We go to the rose, but the great scents of the earth come to us. They are seldom sweet. God defend us from a sea that smelt of lilacs or gardenias!

Let the sea be first on our list, with its tonic, universal smell of salt. And let the smell of the sea bring with it the sights and sounds of the sea.

Let the deep forest be second on the list, with its cool moist exhalation of leaf mould, where decay and growth are beautifully blended.

From the general forest scent, we might isolate the particular scent of evergreens hot in the sun—white pines and fir balsams, or whatever your aromatic evergreens are. Don't try to make a little scent out of this great one. Don't go up to it with inquisitive nose; don't break a branch. But let sun and slowly-moving air bring to you what only they together can bring.

Number four on my list is the pungence of a dry dusty land under the first down-rush of raindrops.

Number five is the scent of hay with plenty of clover and sweetgrass in it. First the new-mown hay lying in the sun. Second the evening and early-morning scent wherever hay has been left for the dew.

Summer has many scents. Autumn has one dominant one: that of fallen leaves lying in crisp billows over the forest floor. A kind of slow incense with the sun for fire, to blend with the sharper incense of bonfires along village streets at dusk.

Is the smell of clean cold air in winter a scent or the absence of one? Whichever you will, it is a perfect foil for that almost sweet smell of wood-smoke from farmhouse chimneys.

For eight I have the warm excitement of fresh-ploughed land in spring—the farmer and his plough and team of horses still in the field.

With nine I come at last to sweetness. I make a bouquet of all widely-fragrant flowers—appleblossoms, honey locusts, roadside honeysuckle, lindens full of bees and acres of clover.

The world man makes can smell rather bad. But, the earth he lives on persists in smelling good.

ROBERT FRANCIS.