

tions. There is no mention of the labor monopolies held by unions, or the effect of continuous pay increases upon labor's cost. This, combined with hearty approval of Henry Wallace's public statements, detracts from

the book, by mixing politics with the question of personal freedom and freedom of speech. There should be more information on affairs in Washington, and a report to the nation that might include light on some shadowy alignments.

BRIEFER COMMENT

BIOGRAPHY

Possibly more interesting than his own novels, *I Wanted to Write*, by Kenneth Roberts (Doubleday, \$3.50), is the story of the author's evolution from newspaper reporter to top rank novelist. From his days at Cornell, experiences as a beginner in Boston, and other literary tasks, one thing was evident in Roberts' way of life. Nothing would deflect him from his chosen field; not even \$5,000 a year to write Katzenjammer episodes for Hearst's *Carvalho* 30 years ago! Roberts doesn't tell much of himself except as a writer, but that includes action, humor, and perception and makes delightful reading.

Dry Messiah, by Virginius Dabney (Knopf, \$4.00), is the life of the late Bishop James Cannon, Jr. Told with blunt admission of the serious charges made against prohibition's leader, in his own personal life, it is a strong indictment of self-appointed reformers generally, to say nothing of hypocrisy in politics, religious organizations, and reform movements as well.

Gene Fowler catches the blithe spirit of James J. Walker in his biography of *Beau James* (Viking, \$4.00). Success story, bright recollections of the better political days of Walker and his cronies, Fowler shows the faster set of New York's yesterday. Walker's domestic troubles are gently handled, with understanding and exoneration. With the figures of Al Smith and other political leaders of the day as characters, it is bound to be an interesting volume.

A portrait of Goethe and his world, offered through selections from his writings, from diaries, and from the records of others, is presented by *Goethe's World*, edited by Berthold Biermann (New Directions,

\$5.00). Freely illustrated, by text and picture the book conveys an interesting biography of the writer.

New England Son, by Marjorie Wiggin Prescott (Dodd, Mead, \$3.50) is the biography of Albert Henry Wiggin, "the man who made the Chase Bank," told by his daughter with understanding and affection. Mrs. Prescott traces the New England ancestry and youth of Wiggin, his start in the banking business, and his progress in New York. The intimate family side and the social and public angles are handled in a cheerful and happy style, with a natural acceptance of the correctness of all of her father's transactions.

D. B. Wyndham Lewis repeats the facts about Madame de Pompadour, Melbourne, Goday, and Potemkin in *Four Favorites* (Longmans, \$3.50), giving the story of each with an eye on the method of reaching personal success. With some of the circumstances of the times of each character thrown in for background, it is entertaining reading.

Gump's Treasure Trade, A Story of San Francisco, by Carol Green Wilson (Crowell, \$5.00), is really the biography of the Gump family and their house of art. Nearly a hundred years of San Francisco history is behind the treasure storehouse. It is a narrative of a purpose devoted to the merchandising of Oriental and other art, with illustrations in color and many anecdotes of prominent customers.

HISTORY

Fletcher Pratt portrays the careers of American commanders in *Eleven Generals* (Sloane, \$5.00), from Nathanael Greene and Anthony Wayne to Summerall and Bradley in our time. With text and maps, Pratt seeks

to prove that American military contribution to the science of war has been the use of infantry. He outlines some of the generals' strategy in support of his theory.

An analysis of the potentialities of the Soviet-American military situation is contained in *If Russia Strikes—*, by George Fielding Eliot (Bobbs-Merrill, \$2.75). Major Eliot gives his reasons for supposing the threat of war is immediate or approaching rapidly, and proceeds to ponder possible shooting war strategy.

The history of the Jews is told anew in *Sacred History*, by H. Daniel-Rops (Longmans, \$4.50), translated from the French by K. Madge. It relates the legends and tales of the Old Testament world as understood by historians; there are suppositions and commentary by the author.

Kermit Roosevelt, in *Arabs, Oil and History* (Harper, \$3.50), gives his version of affairs in the Middle East, whether religious differences, politics, or native customs. His notes on conditions and trends in Palestine and elsewhere in connection with the rivalry of Russia and the West carry a note of caution, not only for the "seen danger of Russia versus the United States," but for the unseen danger of Orient versus Occident.

GENERAL INTEREST

Some of the old history of unions is repeated in *Left, Right and Center*, by Sidney Lens (Regnery, \$4.00), but there is also some frank admission of the evils and high-handedness of union officials. He shows the conflicting forces in American labor, and he is frank about the meaning of political action for labor unions. "Implicit in political action is that those who undertake it must be ready to take over the reins of government itself."

Peace of Soul, by Fulton J. Sheen (Whittlesey House, \$3.00), is an orthodox exposition of the Catholic Church's views on such lively topics as psychoanalysis, confession, sex, repression, and self-expression. Freud and Marx get credit where their conclusions do not conflict with the Church.

American Freedom and Catholic Power, by Paul Blanshard (Beacon Press, \$3.50), points out the political, economic, and other objectives of the Church as opposed to those

of other religious groups. Education, medicine, marriage with its varied aspects, labor are all discussed in an exceptionally frank and critical manner. Blanshard decries the use of the Church's power in opposing those movements and things not in accord with its own teachings. It is a fighting book.

Explanation of the conflict of ideologies between the United States and Soviet Russia is the purpose of the *Philosophy of Peace*, by John Somerville (Gaer, \$3.00). Dr. Somerville, in his effort to show that capitalism and communism can live together, disabuses the mind of the notion that Communism is similar to National Socialism or Fascism, and encourages the reader to feel there must be an error in Western opinion. However, the author makes Communism the same as Stalinism. I find no allusion to the viciousness of the regime; perhaps that does not exist either.

Earl Parker Hanson offers more than a description of his explorations in *New Worlds Emerging* (Duell, Sloan & Pearce, \$3.50). He relates his views on South America and parts of Latin America, Puerto Rico, Africa, and the Polar region, specially with an eye to possible development for the displaced, the colored races, or the excess population of other areas. Here is a combination of information on little known lands and economic possibilities.

Want some mystery stories direct from headquarters? Try *Scotland Yard*, by Richard Harrison (Ziff-Davis, \$2.75), which is the "inside story of London's famous police." Harrison gives the methods, regulations, and traditions of the C. I. D., enlivened by bits of the history of murders, thefts, and other crimes. The story is supported by facts obtained by personal investigation, permitted by the Yard.

Some practical suggestions on the gentle art of being a writer are embodied in *Writers on Writing*, edited by Herschel Brickell (Doubleday, \$3.00). Prepared by the staff of the University of New Hampshire Writers' Conference, it includes chapters on writing the novel, the short story, poetry, non-fiction. This is a direct "help" volume, with many ideas that should be useful to budding writers.