

round is a gem of description. The arguments and differences of the various patients is Clydeside, poly-faceted Clydeside to the life. In the hospital, also, is the tough Glasgow bookie's runner, whose philosophy of life, often expressed with considerable force, is that of "sufficient unto the day . . ." The reviewers in some papers may attempt to dismiss these discussions as propaganda, but this dismissal is the tact recognition of the inability to deal with the arguments. Out of hospital the intermingling and intermingling of the two lives, McKelvie and Anderson, continue, leading up to the penultimate scenes when the ex-middle class coal merchant comes over, lock, stock and barrel, to the proletarian viewpoint and, indeed, saves McKelvie's life in a police baton charge. The coal merchant had not only a major operation upon his stomach, but McKelvie had performed a major operation upon his mind.

The description of the tremendous Hunger March in Glasgow, the absolutely steel-sharp etching of these unemployed demonstrations, is something that will live. The descriptions of the Hunger March are unforgettable.

Barke has got across the very sight and tang of this Unemployed Fight. Yet, with it all, the curious feature is that events, and men's reactions to events, are the theme of the book. Here are no Carlilean Great Men, Gods of Destiny, flinging their Jovian thunderbolts far and wide, but ordinary men, caught up in the clutch of one of History's mutation periods, each reacting in his own way.

The book is apt. It comes at a time when the Scottish workers are preparing another march on London. Read this book well, and find out what kind of man it is who organises and leads these marches. The whole book, and it is a very long one, is written in a vivid staccato style, reminiscent of John Dos Passos. The characterisation is superb. Glasgow types, Glasgow institutions crowd the pages. Although Barke is a lusty fighter and a keen and vitriolic observer, yet there is a curious humanity running through the

book. Even the smug Glasgow business men are drawn sympathetically.

The book marks the entrance, definitely into front-rank of literature, of a new force, and a force of which the working-class movement can look to in the future with the greatest expectations and hope.

AITKEN FERGUSON.

A REAL "FANTASY."

Out of the Night. By H. J. Muller.
(A Left Book Club choice.) Gollancz.
pp. 160. 4s. 6d.

RECENTLY a bomb has been dropped into the Eugenics camp. This book is part of the explosive. It has been the contention of Eugenists that much physical and mental unfitness could be abolished if the unfit were prevented from breeding. Modern genetic science has undermined much of this position by showing firstly that much "unfitness" is not due to hereditary defect alone, but due, just as much to an environment (often determined by economics in the case of man) which permits a given hereditary composition to develop in an undesirable way. Thus a child with a given genetic endowment might develop a certain form of heart disease if forced to live ill-nourished in a basement; but it would not develop this disease, although it had the same genetic endowment, if it were allowed to live a healthy well-nourished life. Modern genetic science has indeed shown that there are a few rare diseases, the incidence of which could be reduced by prevention of breeding. But because of their rarity they do not touch the fringe of the "unfitness" the eugenists seek to abolish. Modern genetic science also shows that the fact that certain diseases or disabilities are still occurring in some individuals of the population, and have not been eliminated by natural selection, is evidence that this "unfitness" is not due to inheritance from a parent bearing the gene responsible for the disability, but is due to *new mutations*

occurring. Therefore to prevent the occurrence of these by preventing breeding by bearers of the gene does not solve the problem, since it is a question of new genes arising and not of inheritance, as the source.

So much for genetic science as a critic of the Eugenist position. Now for the attack, launched, independently, by Professor H. J. Muller in the above book, and by Herbert Brewer, in the *Eugenics Review* (July, 1935). Professor Muller turns the attack against the negative Eugenists, who want to prevent the *unfit* (who usually turn out to be the working class and the "superfluous" unemployed) from breeding and proposes a bold *positive* eugenics, namely the control of human reproduction and the use of artificial insemination so that the germ cells with the hereditary endowment of the greatest individuals the human race produces could be used for the reproduction of many descendants.

Often positive eugenic proposals are reactionary in character, success under the

present capitalist system being taken as a measure of biological fitness (R. A. Fisher). Many qualities making for commercial success are socially undesirable. Professor Muller demolishes uncompromisingly the reactionary eugenic views which reflect class interests and shows that the positive eugenics which he advocates can only follow on the economic emancipation of the working class. Only after the overthrow of capitalism can a real attack be made on the problem of breeding a finer humanity.

Professor Muller's proposals will not disturb love, marriage and sexual origin any more than do contraceptive methods. Only when the responsibility of creating a new individual is undertaken, the parents would choose on behalf of the child that was to be, that the finest possible heredity on the male side should be made available for it. By the artificial insemination of the prospective mother with seed from exceptionally gifted men, the hereditary endowment of genius of the calibre of Bach,

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Wellsian fantasy. Professor Muller is one of the world's leading biologists, and a pioneer in genetics. His proposals are based on modern genetic science and are entirely practicable.

JONATHAN KEMP.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

Changing Man : The Soviet Education System. Beatrice King. (Gollancz.) pp. 319. 10s. 6d.

War Scandals. "Cameronian" (of Reynolds). (Lawrence and Wishart.) pp. 40. 6d.

Economists and the Public. W. H. Hutt. (Cape.) pp. 377. 15s.

The Rise of Man through his Handiwork. David Reisz. (Better Education Association, 7808 Quincly Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio.) pp. 36. (No price given.)

The Terror Trap. John Creasy. Melrose. pp. 288. 7s. 6d.

Walls have Mouths. W. F. R. Macartney. (Gollancz.) pp. 440. 10s. 6d.

The Struggle for Peace. Stafford Cripps. (Gollancz.) pp. 287. 7s. 6d.

The Profits of War. R. Lewinsohn. (Routledge.) pp. 304. 10s. 6d.

The Future of the League of Nations. (Royal Inst. of Int. Affairs.) pp. 188. 3s. 6d.

What was his Crime : The Case of Carl von Ossietzky. (Gollancz.) pp. 47. 6d.

Men, Moments and Myself. Lord Snell. (Dent.) 18s.

Major Operation. James Barke. (Collins.) 8s. 6d.

Modern Sociologists : Comte. By F. S. Marvin. pp. 216. *Veblen.* By J. A. Hobson. pp. 227. (Chapman and Hall.) 6s. each.

Staline. H. Barbusse. Edition integrale. (Flammarion.) pp. 87. 2 fr. 50.

Draft Constitution of the Soviet Union. Annotated by Pat Sloan. Introduction by Sidney Webb. (Peace and Friendship Committee with U.S.S.R., 5 Great Ormonde Street.) pp. 79. 2d. (paper); 2s. 6d. (cloth).

Social Care of Motherhood. Prepared for Committee Against Malnutrition. (Lawrence and Wishart.) pp. 28. 2d.

The Soviet Union and the Path to Peace. Lenin, Stalin, Litvinov and others. (Lawrence and Wishart.) pp. 201. 3s. 6d.