

jacket calls it a "Communist riot.") Priestley describes the Communist leader as a well-intentioned, unimaginative Northcountryman who parrots his Russian comrades and talks of "liquidating" the bourgeoisie only because, no sadist, he does not see them as real people.

The comedy of errors ends on an Oppenheim note when a big-shot international adventurer is murdered in a house of ill fame to which Rose had been lured to serve his pleasure. Edward, after a good deal of detective work, finds her there alone after the murderers have fled. She wants to sneak off to Halford without more ado. But in a speech of impassioned incoherence that is apparently intended to provide the key to the allegory, Edward refuses. They must tell the police. "People can't go fighting and killing other people—I thought that the other night when they were all at it in Trafalgar Square and then the police came to clear up the mess—and we say it's no business of ours. . . . I want to know why this house was here, why this man came here, why somebody killed him—what it's all about. We can't go on like this," he continued, strangely, as it seemed to her—"With you being lost, and then me lost, looking for you, and both of us lost, and things just happening to us and we don't know why." They can't, for certain, because the book ends on the next page. And however commendable such a confused and undirected plea for understanding is on simple Edward's part, it is hardly enough from Mr. Priestley to keep the novel from seeming nearly as pointless as it is diverting and easy to read.

OBED BROOKS.

Brief Reviews

MIDWEST: A REVIEW. 650 Gateway Building, Minneapolis. 15c.

This is the first issue of the magazine of the Midwest Federation of Arts and Professions, and a very important one. A mere list of its contributors, who include Meridel Le Sueur, Edgar Lee Masters, Alfred Morang, Joe Jones, Meyer Levin, Kerker Quinn, Harry Thornton Moore, B. A. Botkin, and, among the communications, William Ellery Leonard and Sherwood Anderson, gives no notion of its interest and importance. It is not only a literary magazine for the expression of the distinctive life of their region for Middle-Western writers. In the fullest sense it is an expression of Midwest culture. Professor Botkin's article, "Regionalism: Cult or Culture?" is fine and illuminating, and is given pages of incidental but pointed documentation in the section of union news giving information of local Newspaper Guild Chapters, the Cleveland Inter-Professional Association, Writers Union branches in the Midwest areas, Artists Unions, and organizations of W.P.A. musicians; and in the pages dealing with suppressed murals in public buildings in Midwest cities. There is living breath in *Midwest: A Review*.

THE MAXIMS OF LA ROCHEFOUCAULD. Newly translated with a foreword by Louis Kronenberger. Stackpole Sons. \$1.75.

Louis Kronenberger's translation of one of the most remarkable classics in literature is clear and beautifully turned. La Rochefoucauld's wisdom is based on human self-centeredness, and with that X-ray he saw into the human interior with a penetration that ranks him among the great psychologists of the company of Montaigne, Saint-Simon and

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Proust. But, as Mr. Kronenberger shows in his graceful and illuminating foreword, it is a partial wisdom. It is sufficient as an analysis of the motives and conduct of a privileged class whose duty, since they not only lived for themselves, but had the world live for them, was self-indulgence, and whose ambition was greater self-indulgence. Nevertheless, to the extent that there is a capacity in all of us to exploit advantage, and life provides some occasion to all of us for selfishness to operate, La Rochefoucauld's wisdom is not likely ever to become obsolete.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE LIBERTY LEAGUE, by Grace Hutchins. International Pamphlets. 2c.

The composition of the Liberty League, its purposes both real and avowed, the parallel in dominant figures and program with the Republican Party are here given in a vivid analysis based upon clearly marshaled data. Its circulation should be a powerful aid in the drive against reaction.

AUDUBON, by Constance Rourke. Harcourt, Brace & Co. Illustrated. \$3.

This is the November co-selection (with A. E. Housman's *More Poems*) of the Book-of-the-Month club. Audubon, a true genius, was not only a self-taught artist and naturalist but had to be his own promoter and salesman in the publication of his epoch-making works. His career was a noble one, reflecting the pioneering courage and resourcefulness of America in the early eighteen-hundreds; Miss Rourke's account of it is a good example of scholarly yet evocative biographical writing.

Also Published This Week

(A listing of important new books not necessarily recommended.)

Maiden Castle, by John Cowper Powys. Simon & Schuster. \$2.50. Novel.

Selected Poems, by Witter Bynner. Edited by Robert Hunt. Knopf. \$2.50.

Not under Forty, by Willa Cather. Knopf. \$2. Essays and reminiscences.

Prize Stories of 1936. O. Henry Award, edited by Harry Hansen. Doubleday. Doran. \$2.50.

The New York Tribune Since the Civil War, by Harry W. Baehr, Jr. Dodd, Mead. \$3.

The Return of the Weed, by Paul Horgan. Harper. \$2. Novel of the Southwest.

Why We Went to War, by Newton D. Baker. Published by Harper for the Council on Foreign Relations. \$1.50.

The Shipbuilders, by George Blake. Lippincott. \$2.50. Novel; English Book Society choice.

Recently Recommended

Bitter Victory, by Louis Guilloux, translated by Samuel Putnam. McBride. \$2.50. War novel.

Courthouse Square, by Hamilton Basso. Scribner's. \$2.50. Novel of the South.

Æsop Said So, lithographs by Hugo Gellert. Covici, Friede. \$1.75. Fables in modern dress.

Mexico: A Revolution by Education, by George I. Sánchez. Viking. \$2.75.

The War in Outline, by Liddell Hart. Random House. \$2. A critical history of strategy.

How to Run a War, by Bruce Winton Knight, Knopf. \$2. An unsentimental blueprint for war-mongers.

Caleb Catlum's America, by Vincent McHugh. Illustrated by George T. Hartmann. Stackpole. \$2.50. Tall tales with sociological overtones.

The Yellow Spot: The Extermination of the Jews in Germany. Knight, Inc. \$2. A documentary study. Introduction by the Bishop of Durham.

The Negro as Capitalist, by Abram L. Harris. Am. Academy of Political & Social Science. \$3.

More Poems, by A. E. Housman. Knopf. \$2.

Lincoln Steffens Speaking. Harcourt, Brace. \$2.50. A collection of Steffens's essays, sketches, etc.

All Brides Are Beautiful, by Thomas Bell. Little, Brown. \$2.50. Novel.

An American Testament, by Joseph Freeman. Farrar & Rinehart. \$3. Autobiography of a NEW MASSES editor. Book Union choice for October.

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