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LOW RATES - - - BOOKLET

McDonald, Brother Mac, preacher and soil conservationist, as truly American as the earth into which he sank so much of himself.

This is a good book. It begins well. It has body. It ends with a couple of ironical sentences which sum up the man's life in a remarkable way. James McDonald worked himself to death on his farm and was buried in a steel box to keep the water out. The author reporting the funeral says: "The minister told what a good man he was and how many souls he had saved. He didn't mention the soil he had saved."

BEN FIELD.

Merry Was a Lady

DRIVIN' WOMAN, by Elizabeth Pickett Chevalier. Macmillan. \$2.75.

CONSIDERING the number of southern ladies of superb executive ability who keep popping up in novels, it's a wonder that the movement for women's rights never did any better south of the Mason-Dixon Line. The latest example is Miss America Collier Moncure, who was eighteen years old in Charlotte County, Va., when Marse Robert surrendered. (If you think it's annoying to be confronted by a heroine named America, cheer up: her sisters were called Palestine, Arabia, and Andorra.)

For all she was always at heart a lady, Miss Merry was a drivin' woman, and she certainly got a lot of things done. For one thing, she ran the old plantation while her brothers were off fighting, and that was just the beginning. She killed a "damyankee" who tried to rape poor Palestine, and so had to flee to Kentucky (this in a period when no lady traveled alone), where she married a handsome and useless cousin, gave birth to his children on the kitchen floor, grew tobacco with her own white hands, endured the censure of the community because her husband was supposed to be dead and she kept having children (he was only hiding, really, on account of there was a murder charge against him), peddled her own tobacco on the Cincinnati breaks (not ladylike, either), and dashed up to New York to straighten out the household of sister Palestine and Tugger Blake, a piece of No'th Ca'lina "white trash" who was in with Dan Lord (Duke-Lord; Lord-Duke?) in organizing the tobacco trust. And that ain't all. She also married again in her fifties and in her sixties organized the Equity Association, an organization of Kentucky tobacco-growers that finally broke the power of the tobacco trust by just plain not selling to Duke's buyers and by getting pretty touchy with scabbing growers who did. Quite a gal, Miss Merry.

I doubt that I need point out that this little fable is dished up with the usual collection of moonlight-and-magnolia concepts. The portrayal of Negro characters is stereotyped and false. There is the notion that robber barons like James Duke and the hypothetical Tugger Blake formed the tobacco monopoly that starved and throttled the

growers only because they were Tarheels and no gentlemen, suh. *Damyankee* is always one word. The most sturdily propounded theme is that the only really nice way to live is on a refined farm, and that everything connected with industry (this includes the "cramped" lives of the workers as well as the expensive vulgarities of the Blakes, Dukes, and Lorillards) is definitely regrettable, if not plain nasty. Even in the account of the Equity struggle, the implication is that nobody would have done anything really unpleasant to the scabs if a lot of po' whites hadn't got into the movement. The Moncures would have done it all by speaking to them severely.

SALLY ALFORD.

Brief Review

REBIRTH IN LIBERTY, by Eva Lips. Flamingo Publishing Co.

The author of *Savage Symphony* here recounts her experiences from the day of her arrival in this country as an "exalted green-horn" to the day of her "patriotic wedding" seven years later when she became an American citizen. Primed with her husband's advice to be unbiased, open her heart first, then her mind, she regards each experience with the fresh curiosity of a child, thrilled by letters that have not been opened and by people that have not come to spy. Her visit to Canada, from which she was free to return, and her welcome at its borders, restored for her the human dignity which she had seen so devastatingly trampled upon in Europe.

There are interesting incidents told with warmth and humor of her adjustments to people, the language, and customs; but despite the book's positive qualities, it is a disappointing sequel to *Savage Symphony*. Its defects stem mainly from the limitations of the writer's sympathies. Although she and her husband saw the betrayal of the Spanish republic by British and French appeasers, she shows no awareness of the sacrifices being made for the democracy she was destined to enjoy here in America. Always, one senses her isolation from anti-fascist struggles. While lecturing before women's clubs, she visited many factories, "monuments of American spirit of enterprise," but alas, she was so dazzled by the products, textiles growing on magic looms, that she somehow failed to see the human hands that made these things possible.

The book ends on a passionate appeal to guard and cherish liberty before it is too late. But her failure to link liberty up with battle dooms her concept to an abstraction. Only once are the enemies of liberty identified by name: Quisling, Laval, and Coughlin. This is hardly enough. Perhaps it is a fear of giving offense that motivates her restraint, her timidity. She argues in defense that her experiences with Hitlerism had burdened her with a task not "against Nazism" but for America. But only by fighting against Nazism can one be for America.



THIS IS YOUR ALLY

"Moscow Strikes Back," a mighty documentary from the Soviet Union, shows what a people can do against panzers, torture, murder, pillage. Reviewed by Alvah Bessie. . . . The Negro in the American theater.

IN THE Soviet Union *Moscow Strikes Back*—which is undoubtedly one of the greatest documentaries ever produced—was called *The Rout of the German Armies at Moscow*. It is precisely that, inasmuch as it describes, in terms of the camera, the great winter counter-offensive of the Red Army, which was acclaimed by General MacArthur as "the greatest military achievement in all history." The film is worthy of its subject matter.

Filmed by fifteen of the USSR's ace cameramen, it is unsparing in its realistic portrayal of the total war on the Eastern Front. It is considerably more than a clipped and edited series of guns firing, planes diving, soldiers advancing, tanks rolling, and men and women fortification workers. The entire film sings with the spirit of our great Soviet ally; the material has received an honesty and intelligence of treatment that is both stunning in its dramatic values and unparalleled in its power to educate. For the documentary film can be a great art form, and in *Moscow Strikes Back*, it is a great art form.

THE scene opens in August 1939, at a great festival in honor of the youth of the Soviet Union. Here are the symbols of the new socialist society—Red Square, Stalin, the Tomb of Lenin, and—the people; multitudes of them in athletic costume, in native attire. The commentator, Edward G. Robinson, speaks the simple lines that have been written by Elliot Paul and Albert Maltz:

"From seventeen republics, covering one-sixth of the earth, speaking over a hundred varied languages—come athletes, folk dancers, musicians . . . farmers . . . teachers . . . students . . . young scientists . . . factory workers . . . and little Mischa and his gang."

The shrewd and human eye of the Soviet camera picks up little Mischa, aged six at the most, marching in shorts in front of his contingent. He is a stocky little fellow, striding along with the determination of a man three times his age. He does not turn his clipped head; he pays no attention to the camera. In this one shot the film sets the tone for the balance of the narrative. This is what the people of the Soviet Union are fighting for; the splendid youth of their vast land, for its future, for its culture, and its creative arts.

The festival continues . . . marchers, acrobats, Mongolian and Uzbek dancing, floats and flags in the sun. There is something about these parades, no matter how often you may see them, that tells you more about the Soviet Union than a multitude of learned documents.

For you can see the bodies and the faces of the people.

"This was Moscow at peace," says the voice. "This is the way of life our Russian allies are fighting to preserve."

TITLE: *November 1940. Moscow Parades Her Armed Might.*

The transition is made; from the blaring of festival music, the warm movement of happy human bodies, to absolute silence from the screen, and the vast panoramic shot of that same Red Square, with the Red Army drawn up by divisions in silent, motionless ranks. The breath of the men and the horses steams. It is late fall.

"Fascism," says the voice, "which had enslaved the German people, now threatens to enslave the world."

Marshal Timoshenko rides into the Square on his horse. He addresses his men: "Men of the Red Army: the independence of our country is in your hands. The safety of our people, of our homes, our factories, our great farms, and dams—these are in your hands. If you are called upon to use your weapons—use them well. Always remember what you are defending."

The balance of the film demonstrates in actual battle scenes taken in the front lines by cameramen who are also soldiers, how well the Red Army remembered, how well it has used its arms. You see these men march to war; the streets of the capital barricaded; the early air raid alarms; the anti-aircraft firing;

the armed civilians marching to the front in work clothes, wearing caps, carrying their famous rifles.

The Nazi bombers make an attempt on the city; the pattern of AA fire, of the great searchlights; the Soviet pursuits go out to meet the bombers. The women soldiers—transport pilots, nurses, auxiliaries—march smartly out in their uniforms to take their place beside their men. From this point on the spectator is a member of the Red Army; in the trenches before the city; with the artillery batteries, the man on skis, camouflaged in white, in the cockpit of the bombers blasting Nazi communication lines, behind the enemy lines with the guerrillas, in the factories turning the shells on the lathes.

The film runs eighty minutes and to watch it is almost as exhausting as frontline combat; for the cameramen and editors of this film have made you participants, not spectators. Just as they have not hesitated to take you into the advancing lines of soldiers who are retaking Venev and Rogachev, Mikhailov, Klin, and Mozhaïsk, they have not hesitated to show you your allies shot down as they advance. A soldier falls to the shriek of shrapnel; he falls to the unheard whine of the machine gun bullet; you see him fall and you fall with him.

But this is not enough. It is not enough to show you the burned-out towns, the wrecked homes of the people; the vast scrap pile of the enemy's materiel. They show you,



Girl guerrillas reenter their native town after the Nazis have been driven out.
From "Moscow Strikes Back"