

tionalized shape to modern ideas—those of Freud, for example. He was a bearer of enlightened entertainment, a spiritual *causeur*.

He knew about the miseries of poverty and exploitation and he felt genuine pity. He loved freedom and detested injustice and tyranny. But he was never a fighter like Victor Hugo or Emile Zola. He would not get "mixed up in the rough business of struggle," and for him, "political tune was an ugly tune." He could praise the "human dictatorship" of Vargas, yet he declined—in far-away pre-Hitler days—an order from Mussolini and asked instead that two imprisoned anti-fascists be liberated. And he wrote one of the most moving pages about Maxim Gorky, full of love for the Russian people. Exile was for him a sort of ill fate, not a task requiring struggle in order to abolish the reasons for exile.

In one of his last letters there are the words: "Courage will have to change itself into patience until that mysterious 'afterwards' arrives which I confess I would be curious to see." But this passive courage was not strong enough. Nor was the curiosity to see the time after Hitler's defeat sufficiently ardent—probably because Zweig did not have much faith in that "mysterious afterwards."

Rereading his novelettes and novels today is a strange experience. One plunges into a submerged world where the greatest misery and tragedy seemed to be the troubles of a perverted love or the sufferings of a lonely lover or the decay of a burned out heart. Still there are scenes—like the description of the hands of the players in Monte Carlo in *Four and Twenty Hours in a Woman's Life*—which you do not forget once you have read them. Even now they make the same strong impression they did ten years ago.

EXILE did not bring to Stefan Zweig material hardships. He had to worry neither about passports nor about permits of stay nor about money. Still he is a victim of Hitler's bloody barbarism. It was the same story with Zweig as it had been with Tucholsky and Toller. Having witnessed the death of their cherished illusions, having seen the collapse of the society in which they had lived, with little faith in the strength of the people, they thought the victory of barbarism global and definite.

Their hearts became tired. In the last works of Stefan Zweig the words "suicidal Europe," "suicidal struggle of our Old World" and "time of despair" make numerous appearances. There did not have to be a sudden terrible blow. In that condition of despair and hopelessness, a moment of depression, a mood of melancholy were enough to let the failing heart wish to seek quiet and forgetting in the deep waters of death.

Had Zweig not put as a motto to a book about the "demonical spirits" of German literature the words of Nietzsche? "I love those who do not know how to live, unless as ones going down." (*Ich liebe die, welche nicht zu leben wissen, es sei denn als Untergehende.*) This might have been his own epitaph.

O. T. RING.

CALDWELL RETURNS FROM SMOLENSK

Samuel Sillen reviews the latest book of one of America's foremost writers. "I never doubted . . . their ability to stop the Germans."

ALL-OUT ON THE ROAD TO SMOLENSK, by Erskine Caldwell. Duell, Sloan & Pearce. \$2.50.

WE MAY be thankful that Erskine Caldwell was in Moscow during the early days of the war. By cable and by radio he gave America a graphic sense of what General MacArthur has called the "scale and grandeur" of the Soviet fight. It was appropriate that one of our finest novelists should report the war to us, just as Ehrenbourg, Sholokhov, and Alexei Tolstoy reported it to their countrymen.

Now he has published a book describing his impression of those early days. It would perhaps be more accurate to say two books. One is a straight reporting job, an eye-witness account of air raids over Moscow and scarred battlefields and civilian heroism. That book is genuinely exciting and illuminating. The other is a fragmentary essay in political speculation, and it is more frequently amateurish, contradictory, unconvincing. Running the two books together gives the effect of sunlit islands in a choppy sea.

With the economy and concreteness of a first rate story teller, Caldwell presents the drama of an entire people mobilized in a war of liberation. Caldwell was especially impressed with the all-out character of popular participation. Despite the suddenness of attack, the country was on a full war footing within three days. So flooded were enlistment stations that all voluntary enrollment had to be abolished within a few hours. "After seeing the Russians in action during the first week of war," he writes, "I never for a moment doubted their ability to stop the Germans." The passages of dramatic reporting tell of a people's war.

There are numerous examples of the devotion and resolve of the masses both at the front and in the rear. One senses an amazing coordination of manifold activities. The labor battalions repaired Moscow's streets faster than the Germans could bomb them. Newspapers were printed under fire at the front, and Caldwell tells us how much that means in terms of ingenuity and courage. We hear the report of a gigantic battle of tanks; the description of a Moscow night made vivid with tracer bullets and flares; the epic tale of Victor Talalikhin, who rammed his fighter plane into a heavily loaded German bomber. Caldwell makes these episodes live for us.

All the more reason to deplore the contradictions between observed fact and political guesswork that one encounters in these pages. On page 161, for example, Caldwell theorizes that "Russians are touchy on the subject of criticism." But on page 168 he reports an experience that "proved to me that Russians are critical of their own shortcomings." On one page he generalizes that, under

socialism, "Many do not wish to accept responsibility, and for that reason work hard at being inefficient. . . ." How many? Surely not those on page 206 where "both soldiers and civilians fought the Germans in a manner that demonstrated that each individual considered himself personally responsible for the success or failure of the war. . . ."

While describing an all-out effort "probably unique in the world's history," Caldwell minimizes, in theory, the initiative and understanding of the masses. The people believed in victory, he says, because they were "told" they would win. Confidence was due "to a great extent" to government propaganda and censorship of news from abroad.

But this is an altogether negative view. If victory were a matter of confiscating radio sets and issuing boasts, the Nazis would today march beyond the Urals. The will-to-believe is insubstantial unless it is grounded in reality. Might it not be more precise to say that, as thinking men and women, Soviet citizens knew the justice of their cause and the facts of their achievement; and that they believed what their leaders said because it corresponded to the truth and expressed their own experience? I stress this distinction between what Caldwell in one airy sentence calls "belief in Stalin's judgment" and "blind faith." Belief in judgment is verifiable; it is constantly tested and proved in practice. Blind faith is mysticism; it may "move mountains," but it cannot shift a complex economy from the front to the interior, nor can it create Leningrad symphonies, scientific institutes, unswerving guerrilla fighters. Only knowledge deep and active, only inquiring intelligence can do that.

Caldwell is equally contradictory on the subject of Stalin. When he appraises the concrete and demonstrable results of Stalin's policies, he properly celebrates the genius of Stalin's strategy. He describes the Soviet leader as "the supreme strategist of the age . . . calm, wise, unshakable." Stalin's "knowledge of military, economic, and political conditions within the borders of his own country, as well as those in the countries of Europe and Asia, is superior to that of anyone else in the world." And yet, categorically, without a shred of evidence, he attributes fanciful views to Stalin. He tells us, for example, that Stalin has "slight conception" of democracy, that Stalin "thinks" public opinion in England and America "can be turned on and off by those in power." Not so many years ago, on separate occasions, Stalin read Emil Ludwig and H. G. Wells instructive lectures on "the democratic spirit" in America and England which he contrasted with the "haughty spirit of the feudal aristocracy" in certain other countries. These interviews bear rereading today.

Of the two books that Caldwell has writ-

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ten, I prefer the one in which he sticks to the plain facts. The second book suggests that he was not able to see very far beneath the surface. When he tells us what he saw and heard, Caldwell writes with a vigor and clarity and sympathy that will recommend themselves to many readers.

SAMUEL SILLEN.

Light on Australia

INTRODUCING AUSTRALIA, by C. Hartley Grattan. John Day. \$3.

FOR most Americans Australia is the least known of the continents. Mr. Grattan now provides an introduction that is clear, comprehensive, and critical. He is able to do this because in addition to personal observation over a period of years, he has steeped himself in Australian writing, including the researches of Brian Fitzpatrick, Australia's pioneer materialist historian.

In his opening chapter Mr. Grattan clears away some popular myths. Australia is not the home of "the middle way," the ideal commonwealth of Social Democracy, in which the elaborate system of arbitration courts has harmonized the interests of capital and labor. On the contrary, the history of Australia is a story of fierce struggle against recalcitrant nature and grasping monopolists. Generally thought of abroad as a mainly agricultural country, Australia has in the last quarter century developed—not without British objections—an extensive manufacturing industry. Seventy percent of its population live in "urban areas"; a third are crowded into two cities, Sydney and Melbourne.

Almost half the interior of the continent is arid semi-desert. This explains, at least in part, why a country not much smaller than the United States in area has a population of only 7,000,000. Incidentally, Mr. Grattan fails to note the immediate military implications of this extraordinary concentration of Australia's population on the southeast fringe of the continent. It makes the problem of getting to the equatorial region very difficult.

One of the most brilliant sections in Grattan's book is the story of the rise of the Australian steel trust, the BHP or the Broken Hill Proprietary Co., Ltd. Its ramifications envelop almost all Australia's heavy industry, including mining, chemicals, shipping, construction, automobile and plane manufacture. Its steel plant at Newcastle, New South Wales, is one of the largest in the world. And it is notable that three-fourths of the shares of BHP are still held in London.

Equally remarkable is the growth of the Australian labor movement. Historically the Australian population was recruited mainly from the working class of the British Isles. The influx of English Chartists and Irish rebels in the middle of the last century is the genesis of the militant unionism of the present. Ever since the great strikes of the nineties, Australian workers have made history of the

kind that has given them a reputation for militancy all over the world. Today labor "is the most powerful single force in the Australian community," forty-six percent of all adult workers are organized in unions.

The last part of the book is devoted to an appraisal of Australia's international position, past, present, and future. Australia is a British "Dominion." But, as Mr. Grattan points out, this is not a very useful definition for Americans. The written formulation of the existing legal relationship is the Statute of Westminster of 1931, which grants the dominions the powers necessary to become autonomous. In reality Australia is still tied to Britain in defense, trade, finance, politics, and culture. About fifty-five percent of Australia's exports go to Great Britain, which supplies forty-two percent of Australia's imports and has over 545,000,000 pounds of capital invested in the Dominion. In World War I and in the first phases of the present war, Australia virtually played the role of a manpower and supply reserve for Britain. But the growing Axis menace and the southern drive of Japan have made Australians look to increasingly closer relations with non-British allies, especially the United States and the USSR. Today Australia is very much part of the wider United Nations bloc, which many Australians and especially its labor movement want to see as a permanent grouping.

Mr. Grattan's well rounded picture is not without weaknesses. His handling of political trends and inner labor tendencies is sometimes misleading. His general analysis is often insufficiently integrated with the present worldwide struggle against the Axis. More might have been said on the military side, which is now an immediate problem. Nonetheless this lively volume will be more than an introduction for most of us. It is also an education.

K. F. LESTER.

Lin Yutang's New Novel

A LEAF IN THE STORM, by Lin Yutang. The John Day Co. \$2.50.

Lin YUTANG's most recent novel of China begins at the time of the Chinese withdrawal from Shanghai in 1937 and closes shortly after the first decisive victory of the Chinese forces at Tai'erchuang, in May 1938. For the Chinese people this period was the most crucial of the Sino-Japanese war: the frontal assaults of the Japanese had swept the defending armies from the coastal cities, and the war was being carried into the interior. The need for unity of the whole nation had been impressed upon millions as the object lesson of their daily experience. *A Leaf in the Storm* contains graphic documentation of the heroic efforts of the Chinese to reorganize their lives for successful resistance to the "empire-dreamers of the East-Ocean."

Of the thousands of "leaves in the storm" of the China War, Lin Yutang has chosen to write the story of a young Chinese woman named Malin. Her adventures, in bare outline,