

dian knots; in a democracy you have to untie them. But here he is, swinging his machete at every knot in sight. Who would decide what local political organization is "fascist" enough for the President to supersede it by martial law? Presumably the President; it is hard to imagine that he would allow anybody else to control his action. Possibly President Roosevelt could be trusted with such powers, though the Senators he tried to purge last summer would hardly think so; but give such powers to any of three or four men who might be elected in 1940, and half the country would presently be under martial law.

These points are not essential to Mr. Mumford's program; his doctrine of non-intercourse as at once a psychological gesture and a measure of preparedness, beating the fascists to the punch, is worth thinking about; and his analysis of the present situation of the United States in world affairs is clear, realistic, and we believe incontrovertible. But there is a note of hysterical urgency about his whole argument—justified, perhaps; but it must be repeated that even if men must act, that does not necessarily prove that they must jump at the first idea that offers.

Also and above all, if you are going to defend democracy against fascism, you can't very well do it by telling large numbers of the citizenry that what they believe and what they want is all wrong, and you are going to do what is good for them whether they like it or not. You may defend something that way, if you have the power; but when you have got through defending it it won't be democracy. The national administration has far more power and far more prestige than it had in Jefferson's day; if we should decide that non-intercourse was a policy worth trying, we could try it without instituting what Crane Brinton would call a Reign of Terror and Virtue.

ELMER DAVIS.

Letters to the Editor

"Limestone, Corn, and Literature"

SIR:—"Limestone, Corn, and Literature" in your issue of December 17, 1938, so excited me that I rushed out and bought four additional copies from the student store at Southern California where I happened to be for a conference at the time. Since I mentioned it in much of my correspondence, I am hearing about it from others who have read it and liked it.

I am going into particulars about this—and I am not one who rushes to mail letters to newspapers or to telephone my radio station—because it seems to me we ought to have more stuff like this fellow Cordell writes. In my job, I am constantly conferring with groups of teachers about improving instruction. This fall I surveyed, as one of a committee, some experimental high schools in California. The aim of all these teachers of "Social Living" is to vitalize and increase the effectiveness of instruction, to relate school to the world at large. Naturally English literature has a prominent place in any such attempt. I can take an article like Cordell's "Limestone, Corn, and Literature" and point to it: "Here is the way to make literature real to your students. This links school reading to life and leads naturally to the formation of lifelong habits of reading."

My special charge is the junior colleges of the state. There are forty-three with an enrollment of more than 50,000 students. Such articles are even more appropriate for students at that level of maturity. Of course, English is only one concern of mine; like Horace "Nihil humani alienum a me." But then you are not narrow in your offerings either. Take your issue of January 14, 1939—the one that carries another review by Cordell, of Sassoon's "The Old Century, and Seven More Years," Leonard Bacon's editorial on Hogben's "Science for the Citizen" presents important viewpoints for our em-

bryonic scientists, while the review of Waugh's "Going Their Own Ways" incites one to sociological studies (within limitations).

However, not to labor the point, Cordell's article on Hoosier writers is so much more important than just reviews: it gives the synthesis of a generation; the overview which makes reading have values beyond the immediate enjoyment of each book. Probably I shall not write you again—certainly I do not threaten to inflict my views upon you often. But I did like, as you surely have gathered, "Limestone, Corn, and Literature." And for a Californian to praise something outside California is news, I hear!

FRANK B. LINDSAY, Assistant Chief
Division of Secondary Education
Sacramento, Cal.

A Correction

SIR:—Mr. E. Baldwin Smith, whose excellent book on "Egyptian Architecture" was discussed in *The Saturday Review* for January 28, 1939, might justly apply to the reviewer the vigorous rebuke of Oedipus to Tiresias in the Sophoclean play:

"Thou art blind in ears and mind and eyes."

The reviewer offers public and sincere apology for the misstatement that Mr. Smith failed to include in his bibliography reference to George A. Reisner's "The Development of the Egyptian Tomb." This important book is mentioned on page 35, and in footnotes elsewhere. Even to himself the reviewer's "blind spot" in eye and mind is inexplicable, for he especially sought for reference to this book, and missed it.

A. S.

"Writ in Water"

SIR:—As if carved upon granite, this appears to be one of the enduring phrases of our language and literature. Never was prophecy more gloriously unfulfilled, though Keats's modest estimate must then have seemed invincibly right.

As a mere phrase, however, it had been used several times before Keats. Bartlett ("Familiar Quotations," Boston, 1895, p. 37—"Words writ in waters" from Chapman's "Revenge for Honour," V, 2; 197—"All your better deeds Shall be in water writ, but this in marble" from Beaumont and Fletcher's "Philaster," V, 3; 100—"Men's evil manners live in brass; their virtues we write in water" from Shakespeare's "King Henry VIII," IV, 2) gives examples, at least one of which the belated Elizabethan may have seen and remembered. There is an earlier *ritornello* of the fifteenth century which it is improbable he had met.

Of course writing in water may be as old as writing in the sand, perhaps older. But one thing is to the utmost of my information sure—no one but Keats ever made a *Hic jacet* of it.

CHARLES BELL BURKE.

University of Tennessee,
Knoxville, Tenn.



"This is the real novelty of the Spring. It's just made the best-seller list."



(Left) At the P.E.N. Club dinner in New York last week, Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt spoke on opportunities for writers in reporting the American scene; Louis Bromfield, at her right, discussed the dangers of Fascism. Mr. Bromfield has moved back to Ohio after several years in France. . . . (Above) Honoré Morrow, whose new book is "Demon Daughter: the Confession of a Modern Girl and Her Mother."



From Louisiana, Julia Truitt Yenni (above), author of "This Is Me, Kathie," sits next to Burton Rascoe at the annual Southern Writers' Luncheon in New York. . . . (Right) Leonora Speyer, whose latest book of poems is "Slow Wall," walks through Gramercy Park. . . . (Below) Margaret Fishback, popular light versifier, has written a sprightly guide to etiquette in "Safe Conduct."



Ted Allan (above), Canadian journalist, has written a novel about the Spanish war, "This Time a Better Earth" (Below) Margaret Bourke-White and Erskine Caldwell look over an early copy of their forthcoming book, "North of the Danube." (Pictures of the month by Disraeli)



Hunger for Power

APOSTLES OF REVOLUTION. By Max Nomad. Boston: Little, Brown & Company. 1939. \$3.50.

Reviewed by CRANE BRINTON

POLITICAL thought can make just as strange bedfellows as politics. The author of "Apostles of Revolution" reveals unmistakably a personal background of what is known in this country as "liberalism"; yet his book is as disillusioned about the Leftist revolutions of the last hundred years as the "pessimists in sociology" whose influence it frankly admits. Bibliographically at least, Messrs. James T. Farrell and Sidney Hook here bed with Pareto and Mr. Pitirim A. Sorokin.

The apostles are seven—Blanqui, Marx, Bakunin, Nechayev, Most, Makhno, and Stalin. This is a mixture of names familiar and unfamiliar, of theorists and men of action, of agitators, martyrs, and practical politicians. Strange though this choice of names may seem, it enables the author to do very well what he clearly wanted to do—review the course of Leftist revolutionary movements from the aftermath of the great French Revolution to their culmination in the recent Russian Revolution.

The result is an excellent book, and one which should be on the reading list of all interested in contemporary politics. The author, though disillusioned, is not stirred up to the emotional excitement that makes so much of the work of such enemies of revolution as Mr. E. D. Martin or Mr. Sorokin mere muddled anger. The book is clear and readable. Unfamiliar names and allusions are explained, not just paraded, and the windings of socialist theory, both orthodox and heretical, clearly charted—though not, one suspects, in a way acceptable to very many actual Marxists. The essay on Stalin will infuriate adherents of the present regime in Russia, but that is probably what the author wished to do.

The thesis of the book is stated on the first page: revolutionary mass movements invariably fall short in achieving their originally professed aims. This is because, first, there is a contradiction between the interests of the leaders striving for power, and the uneducated rank and file yearning for a better share of the good things of life, and second the "inexorable logic of every revolutionary struggle" which produces a new ruling aristocracy and therefore a new—or old—"class struggle." Specifically, in the "proletarian" movements of the last hundred years, the leaders have not been genuine members of the "proletariat" as defined in socialist theory, but *déclassé* intellectuals out for a career, or workers and peasants aspiring to the swivel-chair as relief from bench or plow, who with success become

bureaucrats and cease to be proletarians—this even in capitalist societies, as with trades union and labor party leaders. When, as in Russia, the proletarian movement seems to succeed, these power-hungry leaders simply become a new privileged class whose position, untroubled by old laws and traditions, must rest on crude force and even cruder mass-indoctrination. In short, communism in

Russia has come to be in essentials undistinguishable from fascism in Germany and Italy.

This thesis is, of course, endlessly debatable, but it is here admirably presented, and without any attempt to hold up the remaining democracies as shining examples over against the totalitarian states. Though free from excesses of moral indignation, the book has a not disagreeable and perhaps indispensable touch of wistful disillusion.

Crane Brinton is the author of "The Anatomy of Revolution."

"Madame Bovary, C'est Moi"

FLAUBERT AND MADAME BOVARY, A DOUBLE PORTRAIT. By Francis Steegmuller. New York: The Viking Press. 1939. \$3.

Reviewed by JOSEPH F. JACKSON

THE strange and fascinating story of Flaubert has never been told more engagingly than by Mr. Steegmuller. Infusing animation and color into the past, he has reestablished a living Flaubert in his particular environment. He has succeeded especially in the tremendous task of integrating the man, his theories, and his work.

Properly conceiving of Flaubert's career as essentially dramatic, the author has treated it accordingly. We see the sensitive and imaginative youth filled with "romantic" ideas, rebelling against the bourgeois provincial society of Rouen, seeking escape in fantastic forms. He revolts against studying law, from which he is saved by a peculiar recurrent malady. Deaths and separations, disappointments and discouragements add to his natural morbidness and cynicism. Literature is his escape, but his work is condemned as impossible. He realizes part of his early romantic dream by a long trip to Egypt and the Near East. He experiences nearly five years of exquisite torture in chiseling and polishing a masterpiece, "Madame Bovary." When the novel finally appears, he is prosecuted for having offended public morals and religion. The rest is merely an epilogue.

Such is the story told by Mr. Steegmuller, but this sketchy outline gives no impression of the wealth of detail with which he has packed his pages, while never losing the thread of his narrative. It is exciting and exhilarating.

In establishing the intimate relationship between Flaubert and his work, Steegmuller has skillfully shown the in-

fluence of Alfred Le Poittevin and of Louis Bouilhet particularly. He has indicated with fine penetration the extent to which Flaubert, seemingly objective and detached, has put himself into his work. Quite appropriately it was Baudelaire who first divined the real secret of the prodigious *tour de force*.

To dramatize his story more fully, Mr. Steegmuller has allowed the characters to act and speak for themselves as much as possible. The dialogue and indirect discourse are represented so convincingly that the reader forgets he is listening to unrecorded conversations. There are many excellent translations of passages from Flaubert's inimitable letters and journals. By these selections we are often forcibly reminded that Flaubert was accustomed to seek relief from the higher realms of pure esthetics by descending to domains more earthy and more salty, reminiscent of Apuleius and Rabelais, whom he adored. In addition to the imaginary conversations and the *gauloiseries*, the author has permitted himself some liberty in using several unverified

anecdotes. There are a few minor slips in the vast picture of contemporary literary society. However, such things are relatively unimportant.

Mr. Steegmuller has performed a valuable service to the literary cause by presenting a full-length study of Flaubert in English. The book is beautifully written, and it should prove to be informing and absorbing for both the neophyte and the initiate. Mr. Steegmuller himself has accomplished a real *tour de force* in treating his subject so brilliantly. Let us hope that he will give us a second volume elaborating the post-"Bovary" period which he has briefly sketched in his afterword.

J. F. Jackson is a member of the Romance department of Yale University.



Lotte Jacobi
Francis Steegmuller