

Russia, Pre- and Post-Lenin

A PICTURE HISTORY OF RUSSIA.
Edited by John Stuart Martin. New
York: Crown Publishers. 1945. 379
pp. \$3.75.

Reviewed by LOUIS FISCHER

THIS book of 376 large-format pages contains 1200 photographs, maps, prints of paintings, charts, and tables. Many are rare and valuable, and it is useful to have them collected in one volume. Apparently, however, history needs words. The "Picture History" is supplied with numerous pages and paragraphs of text, some of it written in *Time*-ese.

Following the new Soviet pattern of rehabilitating pre-Bolshevik Russia, the editor of the volume, who was advised by such students of Czarism and Stalinism as Sir Bernard Pares and Professors Frederick Schuman and Vladimir D. Kazakevich, devotes two hundred pages to the era of monarchist despotism, 110 pages to the 1917-41 Soviet period, and the remainder to the Soviet-Nazi war and its diplomatic aftermath.

The portrayal of the Soviet construction years—1928 to 1941—and of the fighting years is interesting but not moving. I can recall many photographs by Margaret Bourke-White and by Soviet cameramen which were exciting and transmitted the thrill of big events. This book would have benefitted by some of them. The pictures here are rather too literary; too many tell stories and too few convey strong impressions.

I have been wondering whether the editor received any complaints from his advising consultants. In his preface, for instance, Mr. Martin says that "in this war [with the Nazis] the Russians were headed, not by a tsar, but by the tsarlike head of a political system which is supposed to be the antithesis of tsarism." There is no undue adoration of Stalin although he gets due attention. On page 225 is a picture "of the group who put over the October Revolution in 1917." It includes Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, Rykov, Radek, Kollontai, Sverdlov, Lunacharsky, Pokrovsky, and Krylenko. "Conspicuous is the absence from this inner circle of Joseph Stalin," reads the accompanying note. Of the twelve only Madame Kollontai is alive. Four died normally, four were sentenced to death in the Moscow trials, one was executed without a trial, and Radek received a long jail sentence. As for Trotsky, the editor is not sure. "Trotsky's demise in 1940," he writes,

"whether or not engineered by Moscow . . ." Equally unorthodox is the editor's explanation of the revival of the church in Russia in recent years. It was done "partly to aid in arous-



ing patriotism, partly as an instrument of foreign policy in countries where Russian Orthodoxy could oppose Roman Catholicism (which opposes Communism)." I note also this phrase: "... the illfamed OGPU . . . the Union's all-seeing, all-knowing political and security police."

Trotsky gets his ration of photos and text (not as much as Peter the Great, to be sure, but then Peter gets more than Lenin). I am surprised, however, that authorities on Russia like Schuman and Kazakevich let pass this sentence: "Trotsky and his followers . . . claimed that if the world revolution were not coming soon, the Soviets in Russia might as well give up." This was never Trotsky's idea. It is likewise incorrect to suggest that Stalin was responsible for the slogan, "He who does not work, does not eat."

The book contains a chronology from Rurik of Novgorod in the ninth century A.D. to Hiroshima, a table on Soviet nationalities by Corliss Lamont, a leading American friend of the Soviet Union, and other interesting data.

Life's Little Ironies

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF BAYARD TAYLOR AND PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE. Edited with an introduction and notes by Charles Duffy. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press. 1945. xi + 111 pp. \$2.

Reviewed by ROBERT E. SPILLER

THESE few letters exchanged between a Northern and a Southern poet in the seventies have little value in themselves. They are notable for neither insight nor skill; but lesser men, by their very shortcomings, often reveal more about themselves and their worlds than do the great. These letters tell a story by their very failure to tell it. By a skilful selection and arrangement of both published and unpublished material, Mr. Duffy has allowed his two poets to expose themselves to the ironies of historical perspective. His volume makes the modern reader wince at the pettiness and blindness of man, especially of nineteenth-century American man.

Here is the setting as it seemed to the chief actors: Bayard Taylor was perhaps the leading literary man of his day; more learned, more traveled, more productive, and more widely read and listened to than even Longfellow, Lowell, or Howells. His mental and physical vigor was astounding; his writing original and masterful. He could turn out poems, essays, travel

letters, and translations almost as fast as the eager Northern presses could issue them, without interrupting his triumphal lecture tours and his round of social lionizing. His income from his work was steady and substantial. He was the perfection of literary success in the triumphant North. As the book closes, he is off to the culminating reward for his virtues, the ambassadorship to Russia.

Paul Hamilton Hayne, on the other hand, spoke for culture in the defeated South. When his possessions were burned by the Northern armies, he had retired to Copse Hill, "16 miles from Augusta on the Ga R R." Physical frailty kept him from stirring from his rural retreat and few sought him out. Determined, like Taylor, to live by his writing, he was reduced to the role of suppliant of Northern bounty because there were, as he tells us, no readers in the South. His last letter to Taylor, written from the sick-bed amid premonitions of death, concludes, "Don't forget your poor, fortune-battered friend, amid the splendors of the *Time* to come!"

The record tells us that Taylor was dead within the year; that Hayne lived eight years longer; and if we search among the minor poets in the modern anthologies, we are more likely to find Hayne's verses to his beloved Southern pines than any of Taylor's "grave, deeply-pondered, no-

ble work." Time has neither validated nor reversed the mutual opinions of these two friends who never saw each other; it has merely shown that both were victims of false values in a confused cultural era, that the similarities in their poetic endowments were more significant than the differences in their human lots.

Unpleasant as are Hayne's wailing testimonials to the greatness of his friend and Taylor's condescending comfort for the obscure Southerner, these letters are naked testimony to the cultural blindness and confusion of the post-Civil War years. No commentary could tell the story more clearly.

Pageantry in Storied England

THE KING'S GENERAL. By Daphne du Maurier. New York: Doubleday & Co. 1946. 371 pp. \$2.75.

Reviewed by THEODORE PURDY

HERE is another historical romance obviously destined to find an enormous number of readers. It is a perfectly packaged, M-1 1946 product, streamlined and technicolor-bright. Essentially a piece of escapism, it is as carefully thought out and as neatly calculated to suit the post-war mood as anything on the market at the moment. By virtue of Miss du Maurier's patent enthusiasm for the antiquities of Cornwall, which often communicates itself to her writing, it even approaches a literary quality now and again. Always it is far more convincing and atmospheric than the other cloak-and-sword romances which have headed the best-seller lists of the past year. While it is never as tense and suspenseful as "Rebecca," it is likely to rank as the author's best book since that great success.

A minor episode in the "troubled island story" of three hundred years ago supplies the plot. A revolution was in progress in England at the time. Miss du Maurier is every inch a Royalist and can see the Roundheads only as selfish, ambitious men who availed themselves of the popular discontent at the heavy taxes and Stuart stubbornness of Charles I to lay hands on the property of the landed gentry. But Miss du Maurier is writing fiction and not history, and a lost cause is always won in the reader's sympathetic mind. So her wild, impulsive hero, tailored to a now familiar pattern, is Sir Richard Grenville, who was briefly "The King's General in the West" during the civil wars. In real life he had as much talent for picking quarrels with his fellow Royalists as for soldiering, but he did turn the Parliament's troops out of Cornwall once, and fled into exile in Holland only after incurring the enmity of the all-powerful Sir Francis Hyde, destined to become chancellor under the Restoration. To break

conventional patterns and perhaps with the Johnston (ex-Hays) office in mind, Miss du Maurier cripples her heroine on the eve of her wedding to Sir Richard. She remains his devoted—and how lovely!—camp follower, but the relations of the pair are necessarily platonic throughout the story. No phil-Ambering for Miss du Maurier.

There is a haunted and haunting house with a secret room, an alluring but evil sister-in-law who turns up in moments of crisis, plenty of high-flown language, roast swan and burgundy for dinner, and all the while drum ruffles and fanfares offstage. The story is told with the necessary panache and magnificence. Any historical inaccuracies slip by unnoticed in the reader's general sense of pleasure in an interesting and well-told, if artificial, tale. And, thanks be, Miss du Maurier is not one of those historical novelists who feel that anything under 500,000 words is scarcely worth putting between covers.

The recent vogue for fiction of the school in which Miss du Maurier is so clearly a leader has been explained as a sharp reader-reaction against present confused world conditions. Yet readers of an era notorious for its

positively boring sense of security made Scott and Dumas and a hundred other historical novelists rich and famous, and later generations read Lew Wallace and Weir Mitchell and Mary Johnston with avidity while this country was reaching its economic maturity and the dividends were rolling in. The popularity of costume fiction is no new phenomenon. It is here to stay—and at the top of the best-seller lists. The chief reason is evident: it satisfies almost all tastes. The romantically inclined, the historically minded, the lover of excitement, those with a liking for color and pageantry—all find enjoyment in historical fiction when it is as good as "The King's General."

Excellent as the author's performance is in this book, one cannot read it without a certain sense of regret. Once upon a time Miss du Maurier wrote a novel called "The Loving Spirit." It was young and naive, but it had a sincerity and poetic feeling in it that the author has never found again. Now her technique is superior and her palette richer, but her people are alive only in a vivid fourth dimensional unreality of their own. She has become a supremely skilful literary confectioner rather than the fine novelist her first book promised. The good things she concocts taste well enough, but they lack true flavor and are not highly sustaining.

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT: No. 134

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer to No. 134 will be found in the next issue.

FOR NEED, PAIR U GPEHRC
AD ORUTRD'W OAJQ QEHRQ,
HAFO WAPRDF SRPAJOF
WAFW UDS WNAPRW ED FOR
DAJOF.

—HAPPAUN QPUIR. — DAJOF—
GACWF WFUDKU.

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 133

IT IS WITH NARROW-SOULED
PEOPLE AS WITH NARROW-
NECKED BOTTLES; THE LESS
THEY HAVE IN THEM THE
MORE NOISE THEY MAKE IN
POURING OUT.

—ALEXANDER POPE.
—Thoughts on Various Subjects



Miss du Maurier "has become a supremely skilful literary confectioner rather than the fine novelist her first book promised."