

security in the good earth of college departments.

With a twinkle in his eye, he notes that sex is a staple trade-book subject and "sells well in any literary form."

He is amused by the highbrow label for trade publishers as "businessmen trafficking in books," and by the low-brow label for them as "bookish men in business." Is it possible that he feels they are neither?

Despite what publishers have told him in personal interviews about depending for their profits on extra rights (such as book clubs, reprints, magazine digests, movies, and so on), he just doesn't believe it. He thinks their bookkeeping is at fault. And he is worried about what may happen, and is happening, to publishing as a result of these accounting practices.

He has some uneasy things to say about the danger of having American literature *sindlingerized* (from the Albert F. Sindlinger audience-research organization, which polls the public via recorded digests of an author's work, and an electrical gadget which produces a composite reaction graph, called Tildox). "So Dear to My Heart," by Sterling North, who refers affectionately to the Sindlinger Tildox as "the collective wisdom of the American people," was supposed to have been produced this way.

One of Mr. Miller's footnotes reveals a formula for the success of such best sellers as "Anthony Adverse," "Gone with the Wind," "Forever Amber," "The King's General," "Green Light," "The Keys of the Kingdom," "The Song of Bernadette," "The Rose," and "The Miracle of the Bells." It also explains why "The Big Fisherman" was bound to outsell "The Naked and the Dead."

Among other things which he discusses are these: why Europeans buy more books than we do, why publishers and editors are rarely women; why purely trade publishing is done only by small houses; whether book-club sales destroy reprint sales; that statistics about the industry are still as scarce as they were in Cheney's day; what booms do to the book business; the shifting of editorial responsibilities in publishing houses and what it means; what effect libraries have on publishing and bookselling, and what the demands of the new markets (such as movies and book clubs) are doing to authors, publishers, and booksellers.

If you write, publish, or sell books (and to some extent if you just read them), you will find plenty to think about, worry about, and be glad about, in the pages of this book. It is indexed and has an appendix with many vital statistics.

The World.

Perhaps the most persuasive testimony to the importance of America in the world today can be found by leafing through the pages of foreign newspapers. There, day after day, news of the USA is chronicled in the fullest detail. Such news is printed not because of idle interest, but because the actions of this country must determine, in large measure, the future course of world history. How do Americans measure up to this responsibility? What are the problems they must solve? It is to such questions as these that "Years of the Modern," which we review below, addresses itself. In this symposium, which is subtitled "An American Appraisal," twelve experts attempt to take a creative inventory of our times. . . . One immediate problem which faces us is the fact of a Communist China. Jack Belden's "China Shakes the World" gives a vivid, factual report of life behind the Communist lines.

Appraising Ourselves at Mid-Century

YEARS OF THE MODERN. Edited by John W. Chase. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 340 pp. \$3.50.

By LYMAN BRYSON

THIS book is a consultation on American life. The doctors do not agree but they all expect better times in our national future. Our distraught economy seems to have a future, our distracted souls are finding examples of courage, and our institutions still work. Faith and energy will be needed. Henry Steele Commager begins the symposium with applicable, but predictable, adjectives on the nature of the typical American and he is followed by Alan Barth with an analysis of our method of freedom. We are warned by Frank Ernest Hill's prefatory notes and the publisher's foreword that "several score persons," for more than a year, have been working at a creative inventory of our times and we may begin to wonder if this is just another publisher's enterprise. What Commager and Barth have to say about peace later on, are all readily available in the words of these or similar sound writers in other places. Did the eighty persons creatively rub out all their differences and reach a level

of well-accepted truths? Or did they exclude awkwardly creative expressions of opinion from their inventory in the hope of making an impression of final synthesis? As one reads on, the prospect brightens.

The discussion picks up, in sprightliness and point, when Walton Hamilton begins the third essay, "The Genius of the Radical." Hamilton is a first-rate realistic economist, as well as several other things, and he has radical ideas about what is really radical in American life. He finds it in industrial enterprise. "The free market," he says, "allows the adventurer to crash the gate. It makes bold ideas the price of success." Adventurers, of course, have a bad habit of getting more than their share of the goods; anti-trust laws and regulating commissions are a natural consequence. Big business challenges social control and has its own ways of suppressing radical invention. In Hamilton's opinion, "at the moment, the drive for regulation and the rule of the corporate imperium have united to create a crisis which threatens to destroy the radical and deny to American society his genius." There is something freshly old-fashioned about this warning.

Alvin Johnson, who then follows with "The Fate of a Skeptic," is also vigorous and eloquent as he reaffirms his own faith in our virtues. What is getting to be commonplace and even suspected among us is still new in the world. "But in one point—the crucial point, I think,—our civilization differs radically from that of Rome, and from all other civilizations that have perished. That is our concern for the masses of the population. . . ." In fact, the underlying population is taking over. The trend is general; the most effective form of the new order is



the Welfare State, as we have had it since Franklin Roosevelt.

A reasonably watchful reader might begin to be slightly puzzled at this point. Is Hamilton, with his acid reminders of the spirit of 1776, offering us the same picture of American life and destiny that Johnson does? Hamilton warns us against present restraints on inventive genius. Johnson sees the greatest creative period in history ahead of us, when the governmental interventions of the Welfare State will give the common man his chance. Perhaps with more space they might have brought their ideas into closer harmony.

David Riesman, who takes the American soul apart to get a good look at it, and J. K. Galbraith, who scrutinizes our economy more closely, help to bring things together, although one cannot be sure that either Hamilton or Johnson, representing two sides of an older liberal tradition, is in agreement with either one of them. Riesman describes most Americans as helplessly "other-directed." We depend on external authority, all of us except for the "saving remnant" who can still call their souls their own. In the same history where Alvin Johnson sees the inevitable and glorious rise of the common man to his hegemony and self-realization, Riesman sees, even in democratic countries, a change which has made the state "so overwhelming that even martyrdom—the last despairing appeal of the individual human spirit against the group—is no longer possible." Most of us want to escape from freedom; only a few have courage. Is the Welfare State a mirage of safety for those who are afraid to go on their own? Or is it the new condition in which independence will be recaptured? The interstitial notes in this book do not say.

Galbraith, who has a distinguished record as a New Deal-Welfare State official, shows more than do most of the contributors what we have always thought of as one of the typical American traits, a cool, informed common sense. He is about as free of dogma as a positive man can get. He believes with Johnson that the growth of government in Western countries in recent years has been accompanied by a change of government intentions from malevolence to good will. But he is not afraid of large-scale private enterprise and he expects the struggle between big government and big business to go on. In the meantime, we shall get on fairly well because the basic technological problems are solved anyhow, and in a context like ours almost any system could be made to work fairly well. So Galbraith swings us back again to a relaxed optimism.



—Burke in Chicago-Sun-Times.

"Lead Kindly Light."

Perry Miller is also among the optimists. He has well-documented doubts about some phases of American education but he thinks the schools are still the best means we have of keeping our inventiveness alive and to that end he urges teachers to hold on to their own freedom. Harrison Brown issues the kind of warning we have come to expect from socially sensitive makers of atom bombs. Erwin D. Canham urges us to be more vigorous in getting our ideas into European and Asiatic heads and General C. T. Lanham describes a kind of American army very different from what we have been told about soldiering by our young novelists.

The last essay in the book, well placed because it does more for synthesis than the others, is the account of his own re-education by Norman Cousins. He was a member of an unhappy generation and his American education did not give him a very clear picture of America, either as it was or as it should be. The war did that work. New powers of destruction compelled him to find an ultimately adequate frame of action which he discovered in working toward world government. The "Years of the Modern," then, come out in the thinking of a serious and sensitive young mind as the years in which America has to accept leadership in uniting the world in practical peace. There are hints in the other essays that indicate what right we have to take such leadership and what qualities there are in the American character that others might try to imitate. After some deliberation on the variety, the unevenness, and the energy of these twelve essays, one is inclined to accept with contentment the idea of the modern American as a character so complex and free that only a polyphonal voice can speak for him. The older cultures have wanted too much shape and uniformity in human life.

Koestler & Israel

PROMISE AND FULFILLMENT. By Arthur Koestler. New York: The Macmillan Co. 335 pp. \$4.

By THOMAS SUGRUE

THE Palestine story from 1917 to 1949 is an allergy test for the emotions of an historian; the most objective of men, examining its parts, have found themselves alternating between rage and melancholy, lapsing occasionally into a cynicism they mistake for perspective. Arthur Koestler, in addition to submitting his adrenals and myocardium to the steady pricks of British colonial and foreign policy, Arab political intransigence, and Zionist idealism, has exposed himself to another hazard; he has endeavored to examine Palestine under the Mandate from what he calls a "psychosomatic" point of view. The result is a noisy, uneven book, in which the author races up and down a ladder of attitudes, shouting from one rung, peering into the distance from another, and muttering to himself while standing on a third. The reader finds himself watching, not the epic of the return to Zion, but the man who is telling him the tale. It is, to choose a mild word, confusing.

In view of this predicament the average person approaching the book will find it helpful to read the epilogue first. In this ultimate section Mr. Koestler discusses the meaning of Israel for Jews in other parts of the world, particularly those content with their situation and innocent of any urge to emigrate to the new homeland of their people. From the moment the State of Israel became a reality there existed, for the first time in 2,000 years, a way of escape for Jews who did not wish to be Jews. During the long centuries of the Diaspora, when the Jew carried his state with him, there could be no emigration—the Jew who tried to assimilate was running away from himself. After May 14, 1948, the situation was reversed; the Jew who lived outside Israel and was not orthodox in religion faced the curious fact that he was a Jew without definition, subject to discrimination and persecution for a "differentness" which no longer existed. Mr. Koestler examines this point fully and expresses this opinion:

The conclusion is that since the foundation of the Hebrew state the attitude of Jews who are unwilling to go there, yet insist on remaining a community in some way apart from their fellow citizens, has become an untenable anachronism. . . . Now that the mission of the Wandering Jew is completed, he