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not one of "could," but of "would." And that is not a matter of economics. The way to disarm is to disarm; the way to end chaotic capitalism is to end it.

ROBERT BRIFFAULT.

LIGHT IN AUGUST, by *WILLIAM FAULKNER*. *Smith and Haas*. \$2.50.

Evaluation of Faulkner's work has followed a prescribed course. "Soldiers Pay" ran into two editions and attracted casual notice; "Mosquitoes," an intensely amusing novel, was still-born; "Sartoris," in many ways his solidest and least self-conscious achievement, reached the second-hand bookstores a few weeks after its appearance, but with "The Sound and The Fury" he forced the attention of the reviewers and a chorus of uncritical approbation arose that proclaimed him an unqualified genius and lavished him with praise that should at least have afforded him the luxury of a wry smile.

The reaction has already set in, and it is now the fashion to say, "Faulkner? Ah, yes; a superb technician, but little more." "Light in August" should supply ammunition for the reactionary camp, for it represents the author at the pitch of his virtuosic skill, and it offers little more. Solid criticism, in so far as it is possible to arrive at it, does not always follow the fashion, yet in this instance the latter contains more than a modicum of truth. Faulkner is, however, more than a superb craftsman; he is plainly a story-teller—a narrator of consummate art, and as such is more than amply qualified to make of the thinnest material a tale informed with an art unparalleled in our time. Judgment based purely on his published work (and what else have we to judge from?) can now clinch the case. So far, there has been little behind this intricate façade; his distinctly unusual imagination has applied itself only to gymnastic exercises; his photographic eye has acutely observed and meticulously recorded the appearances of things without troubling with what lay beneath the surface; he has been wilfully perverse and his characters are memorable only when they are grotesque. Pop-eye, Temple Drake, Joe Christmas, Colonel Sartoris, Janarius Jones and the poor white trash of "As I Lay Dying" remain in the memory for the same reason we recall a man of striking features who passes us in a crowd.

ALVAH C. BESSIE.

GROVER CLEVELAND: A STUDY IN COURAGE, BY *ALLAN NEVINS*. *Dodd, Mead*. \$5.

"In Grover Cleveland the greatness lies in typical rather than unusual qualities," writes Allan Nevins, and the same thing might be said of Mr. Nevins's biography. Nothing less than this hefty volume of 766 crowded pages and additional 65 pages of bibliography and index, written with such plodding sincerity and prosaic accuracy, would be a fitting monument to one of Cleveland's massive commonplaceness and stubborn integrity.

Mr. Nevins lists four "striking achievements which must always be associated by history with Cleveland's name." He "restored honesty and impartiality to government," "planted deep in the American mind the idea that the special privilege and the interference with free economic life which the bloated protective system represented ought to be abolished," "saved the nation from abandonment of the gold standard" and by his treatment of the Nicaraguan, Hawaiian and Venezuelan problems "taught the American people that in their handling of foreign affairs conscience ought always to be the one dominant note."

Considering the last several administrations, the American people can hardly be said to have followed through with any consistency on at least three of these achievements. Of course this was no fault of Cleveland's,

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who remains the hero of Mr. Nevins and the petty bourgeoisie, fighting for a government of the "plain people" against a victorious exploiting class with its industrial capitalism and imperialism.

Neither was it Cleveland's fault that under his second administration the Supreme Court handed down a series of decisions—notably those on the income tax and the Debs case—which were notorious examples of class legislation. But the Pullman Strike was a fair test of Cleveland's democracy, and by the use of injunction and federal troops the strike was crushed. Mr. Nevins admits that "the President moved too fast," that it "was not right to outlaw the strike," but blames Cleveland's attorney-general, the unscrupulous Olney, who in this instance was the prime mover behind the government as strike-breaker.

EDWIN SEAVER.

TITANS OF LITERATURE. FROM HOMER TO THE PRESENT, BY BURTON RASCOE. Putnam's. \$3.75.

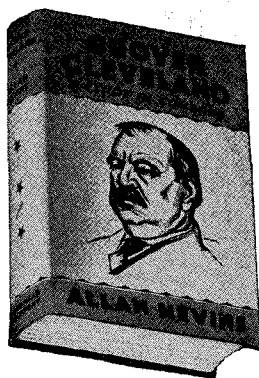
This book will please all who like their literature discussed in a lively and exciting fashion, whose sense of life is greater than their sense of formal fitness and who are delighted when an author shows plainly that he is full to the brim with opinions about books, life and human history. It will displease all those whose penchant is for the academic, who are more logical and orderly than sensible, and who set more store by accepted and conventional judgments than by heretical and irreverent ones.

Burton Rascoe has, in this bright and shining book, run up and down the corridors of literature examining all the carefully preserved "masterpieces" for himself. He is probably the last of the literary journalists who actually reads Greek and Latin for pleasure and who is capable of writing an excursus on the translation and pronunciation of classical Greek. His unusual equipment has allowed him to examine most of his material in the original languages and by concentrating on texts rather than commentaries, he has found out for himself whether the works are to be pronounced living or dead.

It is surprising how many times Rascoe turns up with a new and vivid report on a writer long since consigned to the category of authors about whom nothing new can possibly be said. Bringing his lively intelligence to bear upon them, he has discovered wherein they are human and just when and in what words they still have something to say to us. Fortunately Rascoe is not entirely literary. Though he protesteth much against the social interpretation of literature (which he does not quite understand) he nevertheless is aware in his own way that literature is continuous with life and that literary values are, after all, life values expressed after a certain fashion. His writers always live and move in a visible world, for he tells you plainly what the world was like when they were alive.

The chapters devoted to the Greek writers are especially to be recommended as full of sense and vigor. Rascoe has had the courage to assign to the Roman writers a low value in general, though he distinguishes those who did manage to say something worthwhile. Dante is ruled out of court with a vigorous reprimand and so, to skip the centuries, is Milton, who irritates Rascoe terrifically. But Montaigne, Rabelais, Villon, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Balzac, Verlaine, Tolstoy and Mark Twain are hailed with enthusiasm. Defoe gets the most enthusiastic tribute I recall ever seeing accorded him. Proust is selected for discussion rather than Joyce and the last figure treated *in extenso* is George Moore. Among the Americans, Whitman, Poe, and Mark Twain are given chapters and in the final chapter Dreiser and Cabell are selected as the living Titans. Naturally I disagree with Rascoe on many points, but I was genuinely annoyed but once and then at his really very funny

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