

Prerequisites of Growth

AT MADAME BONNARD'S, by Joseph Vogel. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.

IN reviewing Grace Lumpkin's fine new book, Erskine Caldwell has noted a tendency of contemporary Left novelists, an unfortunate and irritating tendency, already less in evidence than it was last year but one that has marred even some of the best of their work.

References are made on several occasions to the clean overalls and shirts of some of the workers, inferences are to be drawn from the remarkably good English of some of them and lessons are given in their chaste moral habits. On the other hand, some individuals among the opposition are depicted as having bad-smelling feet, foul speech and perverted morals. There is truth behind all of these instances, but they are overdrawn, in contrast, to the point of absurdity.

Joseph Vogel is one of the few whose hands are completely clean of this dealing from the bottom because he has a fundamental integrity and a fundamental love for the materials of a novel. He suffers with his people and he would no sooner hurt them in what he conceives to be their artistic completeness than he or you would think of wilfully overturing a baby carriage. When he has an idea about why one of these people acts in a certain way he describes it in sentences that steer clear of adornments outside his range and when he is puzzled or stumped he hazards suggestions, naive perhaps at times, but not with the fashionable, sophisticated primitivism of the Dumbbell School, rather in the truer groping method, if not manner, of the early Sherwood Anderson.

Much as *Jews Without Money* was essentially the work of a poet, *Georgia Nigger* of a reporter, *The Disinherited* of a manual worker, so *At Madame Bonnard's* is a novel by one who has done his best work as a writer of short stories. Its chapters progress in the single-line narrative of most short stories and they are sufficiently complete to stand up by themselves and many of them could be extracted without damage to its structure as a novel. As a result, the situations have little continuity of development and the incidents and people themselves lose the tension necessary to sustain not only our interest in them as individuals but their character as such. Different aspects of Hyman Lavin are shown in the light of different events but these aspects are so unrelated, so lacking in the similar earmarks that stamp the most varied actions of a person, that he doesn't hang together nearly well enough. This is not a plea for the plotty and ostensibly watertight but actually false and adventitious tension created by Hammett or Cain or, at times and on another plane, by Guy de Maupassant. It is a caution against the use of Dos Passos devices, appropriate to the Dos Passos canvas, but harassing on a smaller scale and

this, not due to any lack of intrinsic skill in the body of Vogel's writing.

In common with most of his co-workers in the school he has chosen, Vogel seems to have more success in dealing with the minor characters of his book; definitely the approach of the short-story writer, accustomed to illuminating relatively few aspects of a person, a legitimate and inevitable approach to the short story but something of a tour de force, to be used sparingly in a novel. Mrs. Steiner, the servant at Madame Bonnard's boarding house, used to be a lady in the old country and she is bitter about her lot and she says so every time she crops up in the book and that is all you know about Mrs. Steiner.

You take Francoise, another servant and, in the scheme of Proust's novel, a minor character. You know what she looked like at a dozen periods of her life, what she thought of her successive employers and what they thought of her and what she thought of the people who came to visit her employers and what she thought about the shopkeepers she traded with and of the hats worn by the hero's mistress and what she thought about death, illness, immortality, war, restaurant cooking, etymology, literary work, several other servants; people, ideas and objects the mere list of which would stretch the length of a Vogel chapter. Of course, Joseph Vogel is Joseph Vogel, not Marcel Proust, Klementi Voroshilov or the late Marie Dressler. He is trying to write a book about a group of people and Proust and a lot of other writers have done this in certain ways which ought to be helpful in deciding him on the particulars of his own way. No one growing up in the educational



EXPOSED

Mrs. J. Mortimer Potts, familiar figure Newport and the Lido, thought that yel at butlers, sneering at beggars and ha sales girls fired was a birthright of the P. What was her chagrin when that awfully gaging young man turned out to be Redfield master menace to "the ruling clawss!"

Redfield is the boy who "sees all, knows . . . and he has given Park Avenue and V Street the ride of their lives. In his new bu however, he is most ably seconded by Rol Forsythe, the human thorn. You will war copy of this handsome, de luxe edition . limited to 500 copies, autographed by Redf

The biggest laugh of the New Year

The Ruling CLAWSS

By REDFIELD

with an introduction by
ROBERT FORSYTHE

\$2.50

DAILY WORKER
50 E. 13th St. New York C

Enclosed find \$2.50 for which please sen a copy of "THE RULING CLAWSS," by field.

Name

Address

City..... St-

NOW IN ENGLISH:

The most significant articles appearing in all political, social-economic and cultural periodicals published abroad. Summaries of all important books not yet available in English translation.

INTERNATIONAL REVIEW

January issue contains:

"The Military Might of the Soviet Union" by Alexander Shiffrin.

The secretly circulated "Basic Conception of China" by Major-General Hayao Tada, Commander of the Japanese Forces in North China.

Karl Radek: "Italy, Britain and the Future of Ethiopia."

Andre Malraux: "Ehrenburg and the Soviet Novel Today and Tomorrow."

"Behind the Marseilles Assassination"—Hitler in the Balkans.

Rosa Luxemburg: "The Proletariat and Culture."

On the Eve of Social Violence in France," by Emmanuel Berle.

And other distinctive articles.

Send Immediately for Temporary Introductory Rate of

10 Monthly Issues for \$1

INTERNATIONAL REVIEW

P. O. Box 44 Station O.
New York City

of Utica and the boarding houses of York can know as much about as many of culture, in the narrower sense, as it did. The very fact that his fellow American proletarian novelists share this naive ignorance to slightly varying degrees is an impartial proof of this; Bukharin has noted lack of knowledge, similar if springing from different roots, on the part of Soviet writers. But Vogel can know as much as anybody about the circumstances and the people of his own life, his own culture and he can make of these his own strong and pictures, without the cork-lined chamber. As it is, his people do not have enough historical and psychological density and this is not merely a matter of length of piling on detail. There is hardly more linotype lead in *Anna Karenina* than there is in *Hyman* but *Bovary's* attitudes toward his mother, his child, his wife and her father and her lover are worked out in relation to another, made to illuminate one another they could never be budged from the setting into which Flaubert has imbedded them. Situations in a novel have to be chosen to different standards and a different discipline than those of a short story. There can be nothing more odious to a popular writer than the commentator who pushes him around the shoulder and says "pretty good, boy, pretty good and you'll get better as you go along, anyhow I hope so; I mean well." Vogel is much more than a well-meaning writer. He knows a lot about the forces operating in his people and he works in a collective laboratory where reports are constantly being checked, approved or eliminated. He has command over a vigorous and easy flow of words, the protoplasmic writing, words in their right place. These are the prerequisites of growth.

EDWARD NEWHOUSE.

Sweet Impartiality

PROPHETS AND POETS, by André Maurois. Harper & Brothers. \$3.00.

ANDRE MAUROIS, the William Lyon Phelps of French criticism, has fussed together another of his inimitable bouquets of enthusiasms and it has been rushed through in a gold wrapper at three bucks a throw just in time for the Christmas trade. Aunt Agatha, please take notice.

This time the industrious popularizer of culture for the ladies' clubs lets his impartial Gallic eyes rove over the frames of Kipling, Wells, Shaw, Chesterton, Conrad, Strachey, Lawrence, Huxley (Aldous) and Katherine Mansfield. Impartiality is, indeed, the hopeful motif of this effort to flutter through the thought that has supposedly best expressed the heart and growth of this century. Maurois himself would probably be horrified if you thought he favored any one writer's values above another's: he simply regards them all unimpassionedly and records their contents evenly.

This, for example, on Kipling's brazen imperialism is, we suppose, an "impartial" comment: "For many years liberal critics were prevented by political passion from recognizing that the genius in Kipling is something

quite independent of political ideas." Wells' pseudo-scientific utopianism and wholesale contempt for the "little man" find Maurois positively dripping with approval. And this near-idiotic comment on Shaw—"though he made short work of Marx's obsolescences in abstract economics, and of his inexperience in practical administration, and laughs at the famous dialectic as a method of thought for British islanders, [Shaw] remains in all essentials a convinced Marxist"—should help finally to dispel any lingering delusions about Maurois' reliability as an "unprejudiced" guide to contemporary literature.

The remaining essays add or subtract absolutely nothing in the existent sum of clichés on the subjects. EMANUEL EISENBERG.

Brief Review

WHO ARE THE ARYANS? by Margaret Schlauch. (*Anti-Fascist Literature Committee*, 10 cents.) Margaret Schlauch's simple analysis of the terms Aryan and race is useful and refreshing. Race in its scientific meaning is a physiological differentiation of people. The word Aryan is scientifically used to describe not a race but a prehistoric language, from which many modern European languages are derived and a civilization about whose existence and origin there is very little evidence available. Schlauch concisely shows that race purity or superiority is a myth. Its prominence in fascist countries can only be accepted as an attempt to distract and divide the dissatisfied masses. This pamphlet will serve a valuable purpose in halting the spread of the race myth in other countries.

FIG TREE JOHN, by Edwin Corle. (*Liveright and Company*, \$2.) This smoothly-written, sympathetic story of an old and a young Apache Indian and their different attitudes toward white men, makes interesting reading in spite of its narrow and sectional approach.

REBECCA SILVER Invites You to **FOREST HOUSE** at INTERLAKEN

Miles of Lake, Hills and Dales—America's Switzerland—Accommodations, Cuisine—None better to be wished. Rates Moderate. Auto or N. Y. Central—50 miles—Open all year—of course.
LAKE MAHOPAC, N. Y. Mahopac 977

JOHN'S RESTAURANT

Popular Prices Lunch and Dinner
Private Dining Rooms for Parties
302 EAST 12th STREET TO. 6-9554

INTERNATIONAL

ETHIOPIA and ITALY

by EMILE BURNS

A noted British Marxian political writer (author of "A Handbook of Marxism,") explains the economic motives of Italy's expansionist drive and relates it to world imperialist rivalries.

225 pages, with folding map, \$1.25

Write for complete catalogue to

INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS
381 Fourth Avenue New York, N. Y.

FOOD for the body and spirit

THE TRUFOOD BUILDING OFFERS UNUSUAL FACILITIES FOR GROUPS SPONSORING

- Dances
- Lectures
- Symposia
- Lunches, Banquets

Three spacious halls with piano, stage and private rest rooms may be rented at very nominal cost. Eat in our restaurant, famous for delicious, appetizing, nourishing food before or after your lecture—or at any time . . . You will be well pleased.

Trufood

TRUFOOD HEALTH RESTAURANT
158 West 44th St., MEDALLION 3-9491, N. Y. C.

Hours: 9:30 A. M.—6:30 P. M.

DR. A. SHUYER
OPTOMETRIST

20 YEARS OF SERVICE!
31 Union Sq., W., N.Y.C. (at 16th St.) ALGONQUIN 4-