the artistic feebleness of such verse as "The Murder of Lidice" does much to compensate for the poetic slag she mined out of herself between 1941 and 1946.

The richness of Miss Millay's emotional life comes through in all its splendor in the letters. Her playfulness with her good friends is wonderful to behold—*vide* the letters to Allan Ross Macdougall written in a lingo drawn from the cartoon world of Krazy Kat. She was always close to her mother and her two sisters, Norma and Kathleen. The mother, a remarkable woman who raised her three daughters by herself after kicking her husband out of the house for reasons never explained by Edna Millay in her correspondence, drenched her girls in the spirit of English poetry and classical music, supporting and educating them out of her earnings as a nurse. (Edna made a brief appearance as a concert pianist at the age of seventeen, but it was the literary training which Cora Millay insisted upon that really took hold.) The mother was, to quote herself, always "busy as the devil in a gale of wind." Her example makes one wonder what has happened to the old-fashioned parent who could conjure wonderful training for children out of practically no money at all. Edna's Maine apprenticeship was apt in many things—but it was her apprenticeship in nobility of character that impresses one most. She never complained after her husband had died, but when the postmistress of Austerlitz, New York, remarked that it seemed impossible that Eugen Boissevain would not be coming down the hill to fetch the mail, Edna put all her sorrow into one blinding line: "He never comes up the hill, either, any more."

Reading these letters of Edna Millay underscores what has happened to American literature since the twenties. The best of our twentieth-century literature dates back to the twenties—even the good work of the fifties (say, Ernest Hemingway's "The Old Man and the Sea") was born in the training and the attitudes of that time. Since the twenties our criticism has become a species of sterile academicism, our novels have come down from a high-hearted celebration of the forward-living quality of the human will to the passive sociological or psychoanalytical thing, and our poetry has gone off into non-singable cerebration. The neglect and the misinterpretation of Edna Millay are indicative of the poverty of our modern literary life. But we have now come into the age of revivals, which means that ancient hungers are soon to be renewed. The spirit of Edna Millay will live again before we are dead.

The Little Golden Day

The American Twenties, by John K. Hutchens. Philadelphia: Lippincott. $5.00

This is a sampler-box of literary work which Mr. Hutchens considers peculiarly representative of the multiplex and variegated spirit of the twenties in America. In an essay too modestly entitled "A Note on the Nineteen Twenties," which is one of the best things in the book, Mr. Hutchens not only gives a concise, perceptive and comprehensive account of the salient factors that produced the literary climate of the period but also establishes the rationale on which he based his particular choices from the entire body of the work of the 48 writers whose products are represented in this collection.

The book, on all counts, from introduction to the close of the biographical notes on the authors, is so good as to be positively startling.

Lest You Forget

SOME RECENT BOOKS FOR LIBERTARIANS

Democracy at Bay, by Felix Sommary (Knopf)

The World of Eli Whitney, by Jeannette Mirsky and Allan Nevins (Macmillan)

The Old Man and the Sea, by Ernest Hemingway (Scribner)

Human Action, by Ludwig von Mises (Yale)

The Korea Story, by John C. Caldwell and Lesley Frost (Regnery)

As an indication why it should be startling, one has only to read the jacket description of the book (written in the publisher's office) to observe that the person to whom the job of writing the promotion matter was entrusted omitted the very names and the very points which give Mr. Hutchens's book its unique distinction. Anybody could throw together some of the more familiar pieces by F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ring Lardner, Ernest Hemingway, Dorothy Parker, Alexander Woollcott, Edna St. Vincent Millay and others mentioned on the jacket, and palm it off as an "anthology" of the twenties. Indeed, several have done so, with results that can only be regarded as a shoddy and meretricious exploitation of names which have appeared to have the most commercial value at the moment.

But my first quick glance at the table of contents was enough to tell me that Mr. Hutchens is a literary critic of such general awareness of the American scene, such a wide and understanding background of reading in works that are indigenous to the American soil, and the possessor of such an acute common-sensical sensibility as to make him a most unusual phenomenon among the current inheritors of the Marxian mantles of Granville Hicks, Newton Arvin, Clifton Fadiman and Joseph Freeman.

It is highly improbable that many of Mr. Hutchens's co-evals in criticism have ever heard of Kin Hubbard and even more improbable that any one of them possesses the skill, learning and acumen which enables Mr. Hutchens to say about all there is to say about Will Rogers in the observation, "Kin Hubbard's Abe Martin was the wit Will Rogers tried to be." Who, among Mr. Hutchens's colleagues, knows enough to understand that Gilbert Seldes's "Seven Lively Arts" was more important than was Van Wyck Brooks's "America's Coming of Age" in liberating and fructifying the creative spirit of the twenties, being, as it was, itself a product of that spirit?

How many besides Mr. Hutchens in the contemporary field of book reviewing realize that the columns "conducted" by Franklin P. Adams, Don Marquis and Christopher Morley were quite as representative of, and peculiar to, the twenties as were the "Tales of the Jazz Age" by F. Scott Fitzgerald, and that something went out of the metropolitan life of America with the disappearance of F.P.A.'s "Conning Tower," Marquis's "Sun Dial," Christopher Morley's "Bowling Green," and Bert Leston Taylor's "Line-o'-Type or Two" for which the columns of Joseph Alsop, Drew Pearson and Jinx Falkenberg are by no means an adequate substitute.

You will not, I think, understand just why Mr. Hutchens chose just the particular poems he did as representative of the work of Robert Frost, Carl Sandburg, Marianne Moore and E. E. Cummings, instead of their more anthologized poems until you have read his introduction and perceived that Mr. Hutchens has not selected them merely to avoid the familiar but with keen discrimination. This discrimination causes him to reject the work of Carl Van Vechten not merely because Van Vechten's "purplish" novels were "ludicrous" (which they are and, unfortunately, were meant to be) but because they belong to the more preposterous phases of the nineties and the "Yellow Book." So also he rightfully rejects Faulkner as belonging to the thirties more patently than to the twenties.

Mr. Hutchens says all the valid things about the twenties with perspicacity and point, namely:

> . . . it seems incontestable that 1918-1929 really was a good time for the American writer, the best he had known since New England's Golden Day. If his post-World War I disillusion was bitter, it was a creative disillusion. . . . The revolution in manners, morals and thinking for which "The Jazz Age" is so foolishly inadequate a label was . . . profound and challenging. It inspired and liberated some artists, it destroyed others. Historically, the important fact about it was that it was personal and individualistic and therefore made for good writing. The literary "climate" (as the term did not go then) was excellent.
>
> All through the Twenties ran an excitement and concern about writing for its own sake that have not since existed here. . . . The concentration on art which so dismays the social scientists gave the novels and the poems and the stories an enduring base. It was a good time for a writer to learn his craft. . . . Above all, although we did not realize it then, the Twenties brought to a decisive end America's status as a literary colony.

Mr. Hutchens rightly says that, if the twenties had a theme-song, it was "the gorgeous melancholy of 'The Rhapsody in Blue.'" And that observation leads me to the only flaw of omission I find in the book; for T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" was certainly the sardonic dirge which seemed to express the poetic essence of disillusion so widely felt when, at the bargaining table at Versailles, we saw that the war "to prevent war" and to "save democracy" was a tragic hoax and only the curtain-raiser to more devastating wars, the signal for the rise of totalitarian tyrannies. Instead of "The Waste Land," Mr. Hutchens has included Eliot's "Gerontion," which belongs, I think, to the thirties rather than to the twenties.

In his work, both on the *Times* and the *Herald Tribune,* Mr. Hutchens has been almost completely surrounded by persons who are under the impression that literary criticism consists of denouncing Senators McCarthy and McCarran apropos of any subject whatever, and who never cease to warn their readers that their very freedom to read the Bible and Shakespeare is gravely endangered by the witch-hunting hysteria that has promoted disbelief in the omniscience of Owen Lattimore and Joseph Barnes. Mr. Hutchens has remained above that mêlée.

I was wondering how this was possible, when a glance at the biographical note on the jacket of his book told me that he is the son of Martin Hutchens, which told me much. Martin Hutchens was of the great tradition of newspaper editors in Chicago whose genius it was to discover and promote new and original talent. This tradition began with Robert Patterson of the *Tribune,* who hired such men as F. P. Dunne, John T. McCutcheon and Joseph Keeley, and with Stone, who hired men like Eugene Field. Their heirs were Beck and Howey of the *Tribune,* Henry Justin Smith of the *News* and Hutchens of the *Journal.*

Martin Hutchens turned Franklin P. Adams from an insurance salesman into a newspaper humorist and columnist; he made a drama critic out of Percy Hammond and later out of "Doc" Hall; he gave Lowell Thomas, Marquis James, "Casey of the News," Lloyd Lewis and Ben Hecht their first chance to learn how to put words together effectively, accurately and colorfully, and, when the *Journal* folded Hutchens achieved the ambition of all newsmen of his day—he bought and ran a small-town newspaper, the Missoula, Montana, *Daily Missoulian,* where young John Hutchens did his postgraduate work after a stretch at Hamilton College before coming to New York. With such a background he was never likely to let a Faulkner fool him with the notion that one can make a spavined nag look like a percheron by pumping him up with a bicycle pump, or a Caldwell make him cry Marxian tears with stuff about how Lesters in Georgia have to live for months on one turnip. A White Sox victory at Comiskey Park was his opium, not Dialectical Materialism in Union Square.

BURTON RASCOE

MacArthur's Strategy

Douglas MacArthur, by Clark Lee and Richard Henschel. New York: Holt. $6.00

Regardless of the fact that MacArthur has not been nominated for any political office and probably will not be appointed to any position of importance by Eisenhower, this is a timely book. The fact remains that what MacArthur thinks will exercise considerable influence in both parties for some years to come.

MacArthur believes that the way to win is to destroy the armed forces of your enemy. With the growth of the powers of aviation, he has made air power one of a team of three, the other two being the ground forces and the Navy, to carry out this type of strategy. He rejects the strategy based on strategic bombing alone. While this book does not go into detail, it furnishes the evidence in describing MacArthur's Pacific campaigns and later the Inchon invasion of Korea. The evidence proves his conception of strategy.