

assumed that Jefferson was one of the most unscrupulous men that ever occupied the presidential chair, but he cannot bring himself to believe that he was morally as low as the acceptance of Mr. Lewis' thesis would compel one to believe. Think of the moral depravity of a man who would ask to have placed on his tombstone the statement that he was the author of something or other that was really written by someone else! Neither can the reviewer believe that Jefferson was fool enough to take such a risk. Just think of the foolhardiness of a man claiming such authorship and accepting without hesitation the credit universally ascribed to him, when old John Adams, his political enemy, and Tom Paine were still living and, by revealing the truth, could have blown him and his reputation sky high!

Mr. Lewis has produced a remarkable book. It is marred somewhat by the author's categorical statement of personal opinions about matters that can be neither proved or disproved. For example, the author states that the production of *Common Sense* "was the the greatest single literary achievement in the history of the printed word." It may have been, but it can't be proved. He has, however, made a strong case in his main contention. Men have been hung before now when the prosecution had a much weaker case. An array of selected facts, even though they have stood the test of the canons of historical criticism, do not always add up to the truth.

Indiana University

Albert L. Kohlmeier

Midwest at Noon. By Graham Hutton. (Chicago, Illinois, University of Chicago Press, 1946, pp. xv, 351. End maps, line drawings, and index. \$3.50.)

Graham Hutton, war-time director of the Office of British Information at Chicago, was Britain's ambassador at large to the Middle West. That he found time to learn so much about us, and to write this book in the midst of other duties is certainly a testimony to his energies. In *Midwest at Noon* he has done, in many respects, a more difficult thing than his compatriots of an earlier day—Basil Hall, Mrs. Trollope, even James Bryce.

Midwest at Noon is not a history; it is a survey and an interpretation. The climate and the environment are treated

in relation to the frontier influence. The early population, based on the "Unconsidered Earth," was modified by industrialization, different foreign immigration, business, science. "The Cities Rise" and profusely affect the "Folk and Ways." The chapters on "The Cult of the Average," "Ideas Incorporated," and "We the People" contain some of the best observations in the book.

One might question the somewhat arbitrary delineation of the Midwest—just why the Ohio should be a dividing line and not the Mississippi is not clear. The author saves himself, however, in referring to his area—the Old Northwest plus Minnesota, Iowa, and Missouri—as the "core" of the Midwest. There are historical errors—for instance, p. 62, a great overemphasis on the contributions of the Yankees to civilization in the area; the statement, p.115, that the Midwest "farmers were frozen completely out" of politics during the period of industrialization; "the old uniform equality of the settlers," p. 127; "the best black earth could be had . . . at \$1.25 per acre"; etc.—but one is amazed at their fewness and insignificance. Errors of interpretation and analysis are also at a minimum. Perhaps there is an overemphasis on business as god (basketball at times seems equally important); "To the businessmen and bankers who dominated the Republican party, security meant . . . rendering the costs of industry rigid" would hardly stand the test of facts; the statement that "foreign trade was thought to be immoral" by the Midwest would be hard to document—perhaps, forgetting their own early derelictions along that line, it was the foreigners who did not pay their bills whom Midwesterners considered immoral; "there is no folklore or family background" to the Midwesterner's history. But here again the strikes are few and the hits many.

Though the author is at his best on the big cities and the effects of industrial urbanization, the small towns, rural areas, and byways are not neglected. Though naturally he is not acquainted with the latter as well, he understands their basic importance. "Those fundamental and remarkably searching political discussions in the stores, taverns, farms, and courthouses of Ohio, and Indiana and Illinois before the Civil War do not seem so long ago when you go among Midwest farmers today. This may seem very near to romantic idealism; but it goes on. It simply is not heard of by the

three-fifths of the population who are city dwellers in the Midwest. And that seems to me a pity for both of the great divisions of the Midwest people. "There is a great gulf fixed" And again when he points out that American newspapers are likely to fool outsiders more than the natives he is but recognizing the old pioneer use of humor as a critical prop.

So frequent are the shrewd and illuminating observations and bits of inspired writing that it would be impossible to spoil the book for the reader even though the reviewer quoted dozens of them. He cannot resist the temptation to quote one:

There is more politeness in thanking than in asking. That is probably because midwesterners like to be asked to do things or to help and are the most approachable (and approaching) people. One is struck by the extent to which kindness and considerateness form the basis and justification of Midwest manners. It is as if the mutual aid and comfort of pioneers and alien immigrants had been turned into sympathetic consideration for all men. But it is a realistic sympathy and consideration. For instance, self-help must be exhausted before consideration will be forthcoming. There is more help for someone who has suffered by an act of God than for someone who has only himself to blame or can look after himself. A man will take off his hat before a young stenographer in the office elevator; he will not give up his seat to her in the streetcar; but he will get up for an elderly woman or an obviously expectant mother. When he does get up, there is an awkwardness in his approach because he is doing something good in public: "Here, take this seat," or "You sit right here," he will say. In this there is some evidence of the midwesterners' deep distrust of gallantry and "the gentleman."

This is strange because, between 1870 and 1910, in every big Midwest city there was what is now called the "old school" of courtesy, manners, and elegance: a society which could, on its home ground, compare with its counterparts anywhere in the world. These were 'the old men with beautiful manners.' Some of them remain. Their world has vanished. Instead, a new school of free-and-easy, familiar, natural *bonhomie* has sprung up. Its members, now in their forties, think the old school "stuffy." They emancipated themselves from the old school of manners during and after the first World War. Meanwhile, however, their children have been in the second World War, and there are evidences of a return to more formal manners in this informally brought-up younger generation. So does the wheel come full circle, and so are parents surprised—and grandparents often delighted.

The shrewd and clever observations and at times brilliant writing in *Midwest at Noon* could only have been the

product of the peculiar combination of talents and experiences of a man such as Graham Hutton: a fine scholarship in languages, literature and history, wide travel, a curious mind, a traveling man's disposition, a businessman's experience, a facil pen, and the artist's intuition.

The author draws upon his firsthand acquaintance with much of the world for many comparisons, contrasts, and allusions; he gives the Midwest a kind of valuation which a Midwesterner could not give it. There is no malice or prejudice in the book; nor is there the slightest striving for the spectacular or an attempt to flatter us. Of the author's sincere liking for the region there can be no question. In fact, the Midwest being, as it is, a state of mind, Hutton must have been a Midwesterner long before he came here; his ancestors, by some quirk of fate, just happened to have stayed in England.

Midwest at Noon and Era Bell Thompson's *American Daughter* (1946) were sponsored by Newberry Library fellowships in Midwest History. These first two publications by Newberry fellows have set a high standard for the projects still under way.

The book with its end maps, line drawings for chapter heads, and neat typography makes an attractive volume, as well as an important one.

Indiana University

R. Carlyle Buley

The Lincoln Reader. Edited by Paul M. Angle. (New Brunswick, New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 1947, pp. xii, 564. Illustrations. \$3.75.)

Preparing a biography of Abraham Lincoln is a difficult and involved task. The literature is extensive and the varied career of Lincoln requires a writer to know much about the United States from 1809 to 1865. A greater difficulty is found in the traditions and reminiscences that have grown around the great man. In an effort to glorify him, his humble origins have been exaggerated and his parents and wife subjected to very questionable treatment. Writers seeking to make the man human have succeeded in picturing him as more eccentric, romantic, and melancholy than he probably was. A true biographer needs to be a hardboiled scholar who will not hesitate to declare that reminiscences