

and carrying less conviction than John Muir's sketch. The book is written in the full assumption that the beneficial and useful work of the leaders of our industrial age has been hampered at every turn by demagogues and ambitious adventurers.

Unquestionably there is a case to be made for the consolidators, though it cannot be made complete by one who like Mr. Kennan sees no virtue in the attempt of government to establish a control over industry and traffic. Harriman is brought out as a builder rather than a speculator. By chapter and verse it is proved that his properties were made more productive because of his management of them. His great adventure in Union Pacific, and the southwest merger, is described with much useful detail. And the literature of railroad consolidation has been combed for expressions of opinion that the Northern Securities decision, if good law, was at least bad policy.

The Harriman-Roosevelt controversy receives attention that will interest any student attracted by the merits of various memberships in the Ananias Club. The letters that are printed tend to strengthen the conviction that the facts immediately involved did not warrant the outburst, and that the explosion was more directly due to accumulated irritation and congested emotions. After all, when Harriman and Roosevelt, or Harriman and Sherman engaged in private converse and subsequently disagreed, neither was good authority for the motives of the other.

If Mr. Kennan had been less of a partizan, he would possibly have been less effective as a biographer.

FREDERIC L. PAXSON.

American Portraits, 1875-1900. By Gamaliel Bradford. (Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922, pp. xvii, 249, \$3.50.) The author says in his preface that this group of portraits is the first of a series of seven volumes, in which he hopes "to cover American history", including "representative figures in all the varied lines of life, statesmen and men of action, writers, artists, preachers, scholars, professional men, and men prominent in the business world"—a sufficiently ambitious project, the difficulty of which is recognized by the author, who says, however, "I am concerned with their souls and deal with their work only as their souls are illustrated in it."

In the present volume the difficulty has been lessened by choosing figures—writers, artists, politicians (Mark Twain, Henry Adams, Lanier, Henry James, Whistler, Joseph Jefferson, Blaine, Cleveland)—who afford a biographer plenty of material for the understanding of their souls. The sketches first appeared in magazines, and are short, less than thirty pages each. They are based upon study of the subjects' letters and other writings and upon the standard lives of them, reminiscences and estimates by their friends, etc.; there is no evidence of personal knowledge or of original research by the author.

The value of *American Portraits* must depend, therefore, upon the insight and judgment of the biographer in studying the published mate-

rial and upon his skill in precipitating the results of his study into a brief sketch. In general the value is considerable. Mr. Bradford has the gift of penetrating to the centre of the nature he is analyzing; he is both sympathetic and critical; and his style, although marred by some "modern" carelessness and smartness, is vigorous and vivid and always readable. Each sketch leaves with the reader a distinct picture of a real and interesting personality. The narrow limits forbid full portraiture, and in focusing for unity and sharpness of outline, the biographer necessarily sacrifices something of the modifying effect of minor details; but, on the whole, breadth of view and truth of perspective are fairly well preserved.

The sketch of Jefferson is the slightest and the least worthy of a place in the group; that of James is the feeblest. Mark Twain is painted *con amore*, with great verve, yet the painter sees clearly the limitations and faults of his subject and is perhaps too severe on the whole. The contrasts between the slippery brilliancy of Blaine and the stolid, blunt honesty of Cleveland are brought out with a delicate yet sure hand. Although these two are the only members of the group who were prominent figures in American political history, the relations of Mark Twain, Adams, and Lanier to American life in general receive due emphasis.

W. C. BRONSON.

Making Woodrow Wilson President. By William F. McCombs, Chairman, Democratic National Convention. Edited by Louis Jay Lang. (New York, Fairview Publishing Company, 1921, pp. 309, \$2.50.) Every avenue and boulevard of approach to this book should be placarded "Detour", so as to warn off students and others seeking to acquire a knowledge of the history of our times. There are as many ways of making Presidents as there are "of writing tribal lays", but not "every single one of them is right". The making of a President is a curious, complicated, and interesting business. A true and comprehensive account by an actual participant is not yet available. Certainly this book does not nearly live up to its title. It was apparently written to ease a grudge against Mr. Wilson. Mr. McCombs did not write all of it. He died before the book was published. His assistant, or editor, Mr. Louis Jay Lang, is a veteran worker in the Hearst vineyard. It is enough to say that the material is badly arranged, full of inaccuracies, and does not inspire confidence. It will prove particularly annoying and distressing to those persons who had any knowledge of the preliminary campaign leading up to Mr. Wilson's nomination at Baltimore in 1912. If the narrative has any value at all, it is in its unconscious revelation of Mr. McCombs, who seems to have kept voluminous notes about his grievances against Wilson, but to no end.

This is the sort of book that is best left in obscurity.