

wait until the senatorship had been delivered. Grasty, growing impatient, then began negotiations with a group of wealthy Baltimore reformers, and they quickly bought the paper for him, and he launched it against Gorman. If Jackson had not been suspicious, Gorman might have stayed in the Senate, got the presidential nomination in 1900, and beaten McKinley. Jackson's suspicions, in point of fact, were well founded. Gorman always betrayed his friends. He had a favorite motto: "There can be no sentiment in politics." Maybe that is why he is so soon forgotten. The *privat dozent* in history who essays to exhume him will strike a goldmine. Mr. Winchester's modest but instructive volume shows the way to it.

The history of Detroit by Mr. Catlin is a conventional compilation by a man without much apparent imagination, but it at least presents the main facts in an orderly manner, and through its pages slit some extremely interesting figures, among them Potato Patch Pingree, Tom L. Johnson, Embalmed Beef Alger, Henry Ford and the Dodge brothers. The book on El Paso by Mr. White covers less time, but is richer in picturesque incidents. So recently as 1873 El Paso was a sprawling cow town, and its mayor and principal citizen was the Hon. Ben Dowell, proprietor of a celebrated saloon and gambling-house. All the more eminent residents of that era carried artillery, drank like Kansas Prohibitionists and lived with Mexican women. Today El Paso is as orderly, refined and forward-looking as Bayonne, N. J., or Youngstown, O. It is a stronghold of Fundamentalism, has five large tanks for ducking Baptists, supports a country club, a little theatre and a thousand bootleggers, and is the episcopal seat of a Catholic bishop, a grand goblin of the Ku Klux Klan and a provincial superior of Kiwanis. Twenty-five years ago, when a traveling troupe played Ibsen's "Ghosts" in the town, there were riots; today the flappers smoke Lucky Strikes, laugh at God, and read Marie C. Stopes and Guillaume Apollinaire. Mr.

White is no virtuoso of prose, but he tells the story of the struggle upward with considerable charm, and to it he appends a number of biographical sketches, with portraits, of the principal El Paso Babbitts. I commend to connoisseurs of ripe American manhood the group showing the three Coles brothers—A. P., Otis and Frank. If Bridgeport, Conn., can show three such handsome realtors, then it has improved vastly since I was last there.

Why are there not more such books? I know of no American town so dull that its history would not make an interesting volume. And every great highway of the land, as Mr. Rothert's work on the Ohio shows, is full of the ghosts of old adventurers.

God's Country: Exterior View

AMAZING AMERICA, by H. M. Somer. Sydney: *New South Wales Bookstall Company*.

DAS LAND GOTTES, by Herman George Schef-fauer. Hannover: *Paul Steegemann*.

EIN FRUEHLING IN AMERIKA, by Roda Roda. Munich: *Gunther Langes*.

AMERIKA VON WASHINGTON BIS WILSON, by C. A. Bratter. Berlin: *Ullstein and Company*.

AUSLANDSRAETSEL: AMERIKANISCHE UND SPANISCHE REISEBRIEFE, by Friedrich Des-sauer. Munich: *Josef Kösel and Friedrich Pustet*.

NEW YORK UND LONDON, by Alfred Kerr. Berlin: *S. Fischer*.

DER AMERIKANISCHE MENSCH, by Annalise Schmidt. Berlin: *Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft für Politik und Geschichte*.

Books on these States, of course, are common, but two-thirds of them, unfortunately, are written by visiting English literati, and so they tend to run in a groove. What one such visitor says is what all of them say, with immaterial variations. They are all entertained at the Coffee House, they all get drunk on what they learn with surprise is regarded as Scotch, they all meet Johnnie Farrar and Otto Kahn, and they all go home determined to come back next year and take another look at that girl in blue who mixed the cocktails at the tea-party after the lecture before the women's club at Ypsilanti, Mich. The reader who has pursued a course in their

books will turn with some relief and curiosity, perhaps, to works on the same subject by less practised hands. Here are seven of them, and no two of the authors have precisely the same equipment. Mr. Somer is an Australian agricultural expert and came to America, not to gape at the Woolworth Building, but to study cattle and sheep raising in the West. Mr. Scheffauer is a Californian who has lived so long abroad that the United States is now almost a foreign country to him. Mr. Roda Roda is a South German humorist who came here to lecture, but mainly to have a good time. Mr. Bratter was for many years a newspaper correspondent in New York and is now one of the editors of the *Vossische Zeitung* in Berlin. Prof. Dessauer is a distinguished German physicist, specializing in radium, and came on a scientific mission. Dr. Kerr is a dramatic critic, and came merely for the sea voyage, staying in New York only a fortnight. Miss Schmidt is a teacher who left America in 1915, and who thus deals chiefly with the days before the war.

Of all these books Prof. Dessauer's is the most romantically gushing and Mr. Roda Roda's is perhaps the most searching and amusing. Who served as guide for the learned professor I don't know, but I am strongly tempted to suspect that it was his colleague in radiography, Dr. Howard A. Kelly, professor of Christian apologetics in the Johns Hopkins Medical School. At all events, the man who steered him around New York must have been a Prohibitionist, for his account of what he saw reads almost exactly like a pronouncement by the late William H. Anderson *selig*. I quote a few strophes:

In diesen fünf Wochen sah ich—in Dutzenden der verschiedensten Gaststätten, niemals offen, einen Tropfen alkoholischen Getränkes, und nur zweimal im leeren Lokal, versteckt in später Nachtstunde. Sehr viele sind jetzt gegen das Prohibitions-gesetz, wollen Bier und Wein weider zulassen. . . . Aber solange das Gesetz gilt, wird es respektiert; es würde nicht verstanden, alles würde sich dagegen wenden, wenn einer versuchte, es öffentlich zu verletzen.

This on page 58. On page 67 the profes-

sor says that all Americans pay their income tax willingly, and that it is not regarded as nice here *die Steuerbehörde zu überlisten*. On page 69 he says that all varieties of honest labor are equally respected, and that a boss, when he has to issue an order to a workman, slaps him on the back and exchanges witticisms with him. On page 70 he says that no American ever works his wicked will upon a maiden, or keeps a mistress. On page 94 he says that—but I refuse to put it into English; you must have the original: "*Die Waschfrau kommt mit ihrem Ford angefahren.*" . . . Turn now to Roda Roda. He describes an evening party that he attended on Riverside Drive, among the newly rich of the second class. He lays it on, I fear, pretty thickly, but the essential facts are all there. It is burlesque, and yet it is fundamentally true. Roda Roda is under no illusions about Prohibition. He got as far West as St. Paul and as far South as Washington, and nowhere did he lack lubrication for his educated Bavarian whistle. He is known at home as the man who lifted the anecdote to the dignity of an art form. His book is made up of very short chapters, some of them half a page. But every one is amusing.

Mr. Somer's book, as I have said, is chiefly devoted to animal economy in the West. Alone among all the foreign visitors that I have ever heard of, he was not much impressed by the Chicago stock-yards. They seemed to him to be dirty, and, inferior in many respects to the killing-pens at home in Australia. Mr. Bratter's book is devoted exclusively to politics, and contains a long and well-informed discussion of the American elections system. It stops with the year 1916, but not a dozen changes would be needed to bring it down to today. Dr. Kerr, Mr. Scheffauer and Miss Schmidt are more concerned with the intellectual life of the Republic. The first-named gives special attention to the theatres, the second to literature and the general trade in ideas, and the last-named to social questions, including feminism.

Mr. Scheffauer's book, in places, makes rather curious reading. He is an American by birth and education and he has remained in constant contact with Americans; nevertheless, his long residence abroad gets a touch of foreignness into his discussion of his own country. He sees it most clearly as it was before the war; the vast changes that have come during the last decade sometimes to leave him rather bewildered. But of all the books in the present list, his is the one most likely to be of value to a foreign reader, for its fundamental judgments are based, not upon superficial observation but upon solid experience, and so they are seldom inaccurate. He should come home and then write another book. The America of today would surprise him, and perhaps appall him.

The Husk of Dreiser

ARLIE GELSTON, by Roger L. Sergel. New York: B. W. Huebsch.

THIS novel, the first by the author, a young journalist of the Middle West, seems to have made a very powerful impression upon the Young Intellectuals. Within a week after its appearance I began to receive letters from them, urging me to read it and enclosing encomiastic reviews of it. Unluckily, I was engrossed at the time in legal business of a nightmarish variety, and so I had no appetite for prose fiction. But of late, delivered by Providence, I have gone back to the vice of reading it, and, among other highly commended volumes, I have got through "Arlie Gelston." I can only report that it seems to me to be a respectable, but entirely undistinguished work. The story it tells is dull and often actively unpleasant, the people it depicts are mainly stiff and unplausible, and the English of the author seldom gets beyond the obvious. A palpable follower of Dreiser, he misses completely the quality which gives Dreiser most of his solid dignity and significance as a novelist.

That quality, of course, is the capacity to enlist the emotions of the reader—to

make him feel for and with the people of the fable. The notion that Dreiser is a mere representational realist, which is to say, a mere photographer, is utterly absurd. It is held, to be sure, by his chief academic opponents, and it seems to be held, too, by some of his imitators, but it is absurd nevertheless. The virtue of such a book as "Jennie Gerhardt" does not lie in the fact that it is accurate and life-like as representation; it lies in the fact that, in some way that is hard to analyze, Dreiser manages to make us see the world through Jennie's eyes, and so gives us an understanding of her pitiful tragedy. Superficially, she is simply a girl of loose morals, living in contempt of the Mann Act. But actually, in Dreiser's highly skillful hands, she becomes a representative of the agony of all womankind. The last scene of the book, with Jennie looking through the train-gate as Lester's carcass is loaded into the baggage-coach, is surely not mere photography; it is poignant and unforgettable tragedy. To argue that it cannot be tragedy because Jennie is a poor simpleton—in other words, that simple folk cannot know disaster and despair—is to argue plain nonsense.

This evoking of emotion is the essential business of the novelist, as it is of any other artist. A novel that neglected it, however brilliantly done otherwise, would be a bad one, and doomed to a swift forgetting. There is, of course, such a thing as lifting mere representation to such heights of skill that the lack of emotional substance is momentarily overlooked, but on second thought the reader always notes that something necessary is lacking. Thackeray discovered this fact when he published "Barry Lyndon," unquestionably the best of all his novels as representation, but now so far in the shadows that I seem to be the only man left alive in the world who still reads it. Sinclair Lewis came near going over the same precipice in "Main Street." "Babbitt" shows how he discerned his danger, and took measures to remove it. "Babbitt" is certainly not all mocking;