

man, but an artist's delight in an odd and instructive character. The background is never forgotten. Old Mark doesn't waddle through a vacuum; he makes his progress through two of the most fantastic decades in American history. They saw the downfall of the old United States and the rise of the new. They hatched mountebanks almost beyond compare—Roosevelt, Bryan, and many another. They brought us a war abroad and what came near being a revolution at home. Hanna marched through them as their boss villain—and all the while he was the most sensible man in public life, and probably one of the most honest. There are magnificent ironies in his career, and Mr. Beer does not miss any of them. The book has a fine quality. It stands out sharply from the common run of such things.

Mr. Turnbull in his "Commodore Porter," Mr. James in his life of Sam Houston, Mr. Tate in his "Jefferson Davis," and Mr. Holden in his "Abraham Lincoln" follow more conventional patterns. The two volumes last named belong to a series called *Biographies of Unusual Americans*, which includes Gerald W. Johnson's brilliant study of Jackson and his scarcely less striking study of John Randolph of Roanoke. Neither Mr. Tate nor Mr. Holden reaches the mark set by Mr. Johnson, but both write pleasantly and manage to get a new interest into more or less familiar matters. "Lincoln and His Wife's Home Town" and Mr. Chinard's "Thomas Jefferson" cover only small sectors of large subjects. The field of the first-named is indicated by the title; the latter deals mainly with Jefferson's debt to French influences, and is full of facts that have hitherto got too little attention. Finally, there is Mr. Warren's "John Brown"—the first attempt to tell the story of old Osawatomie objectively, with no bias either for or against him. It is a capital piece of work, careful, thorough and judicious—and its merits are not diminished by the somewhat surprising fact that the author is but twenty-five years old.

The New Britannica

THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA: *Fourteenth Edition*. Edited by J. L. Garvin. Various prices for different bindings. 10 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 8 $\frac{1}{4}$; 25 vols.; an average of 1000 pp. each. New York: *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

WHAT one chiefly notices, comparing this new edition of the Britannica to its predecessors, is the great increase in the number of articles and the shortening of their length.

The old Britannica was a series of exhaustive monographs—many of them, to be sure, brilliant, but most of them of no use whatever to a reader in search of quick information. The new edition, following the example of the New International (which followed, in its turn, the example of the German Brockhaus), has omitted most of these masterpieces, and substituted articles that may be consulted in a hurry, and with good prospects of getting what is wanted. And in cases where length cannot be escaped altogether, it is made bearable by a liberal use of section headings. The result is a reference work of large and protean value. It does not, to be sure, cover the whole field of human knowledge, but it probably comes as near to doing it as human fallibility permits.

In so large a work, naturally enough, errors and omissions are not infrequent. The exploratory reader, I dare say, will be amazed to find that there is no article on Ottmar Mergenthaler, the inventor of the type-setting machine, nor even any mention of him in the index. He will be, perhaps, amused when he discovers that the article on Neutrality takes a most humane view of the English violations of it during the late war. And elsewhere he will come upon other things to give him pause. But such defects, plainly enough, are inevitable in so large a work. To offset them there are hosts of special merits. The list of contributors, running to nearly 3,500 names, is really quite remarkable. It includes scores of men whose special knowledge is unsurpassed, and they were apparently

given free rein. The result is a large number of articles that come very close to the ideal. They are completely informed, and yet they are so clearly written that any reader of ordinary intelligence can make use of them to profit.

For a number of years the sales of the Britannica have been greater in the United States than in England. With the new edition it becomes a genuinely international work, with an American editor sitting beside the editor-in-chief, an American in charge of the illustrations, and a long series of American departmental editors. The latter include James Harvey Robinson, Roscoe Pound, Raymond Pearl and John Dewey. The English spelling has been retained and there are other signs that the chief editorial office is still in London, but the number of American articles has been greatly increased, and in general the United States is treated much more politely than in former editions. One of the novelties in the new edition is a series of articles upon leading American corporations and other salient organizations. Thus there is one upon the United States Steel Corporation, one upon the New York Central Lines, and one upon the International Mercantile Marine. The Ku Klux Klan, the Anti-Saloon League and the Order of the Cincinnati are represented, too, but I look in vain for the Elks, the Eagles and the Moose. I miss, too, articles on the cocktail, necking, Peruna, the Watch and Ward Society and Coca-Cola. But perhaps it is excessive to ask for everything.

A notable feature of the new edition is the excellence of the illustrations, for which the American art director, Warren A. Cox, is responsible. They greatly surpass those of any other encyclopedia, both in number and in intrinsic merit. The beautiful printing of the full-page halftones offers a high testimony to the printers, the R. R. Donnelley Sons Company, of Chicago. There are also many illustrations in the text, and all of them are clearly drawn.

Typographically, indeed, the twenty-four

volumes come close to perfection, and all the bindings offered seem to be sufficiently sturdy for daily use. The maps, unfortunately, are not as good as the other illustrations. They are clear enough, but they show many omissions and also not a few errors.

Fiction by Adept Hands

CORA, by Ruth Suckow. \$2.50. 7½ x 5; 334 pp. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

THE WAY OF ECBEN. *A Comedietta Involving a Gentleman*, by James Branch Cabell. \$2.50. 7½ x 5¾; 209 pp. New York: Robert M. McBride & Company.

A FAREWELL TO ARMS, by Ernest Hemingway. \$2.50. 7½ x 5; 355 pp. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

THESE tales, being by authors of skill and experience, all show a considerable fluency and address, but I have some doubt that any of them will enter into the priceless heritage of our children's children. Both the best and the worst is Cabell's. The idea in it—that the artist must ever fall short of the perfect beauty that is his quest—is one that fits into the Cabellian metaphysics very neatly, and in the development of it—not infrequently it wanders off into some other idea—there appears all the delicate virtuosity that makes the Richmond master so singular among us. Nevertheless, the story leaves me discontented. It is at once too fragile and too heavy-laden. Things get into it that have no place in it—for example, certain heavy flings at democracy—and yet it seems, at the end, to be only half told.

In the author's epilogue, announcing that, at fifty, he is ready for the literary ossuary, I take no stock. He printed it, in a somewhat briefer form, in THE AMERICAN MERCURY last June, and there, I must confess, it seemed to me to be rather persuasive, though certainly depressing. But reading it again, in an expanded form, I find myself full of misgivings. In truth, a note of downright falsetto gets into it. It is the farewell of an actor who will undoubtedly come back again—and maybe to greater acclaim than ever before. I refuse to believe that Cabell is dead; he is simply