

size with his thumb and forefinger.

When Prohibition came, Billy closed his saloon. He opened the Champion's Rest with the return of beer to Oregon. Billy died not long ago, but the Champion's Rest is still in business; and on its wall there is an enormous photograph, in a gilt frame, of Billy himself, in old-fashioned tights reaching from waist to shoes,

his bare fists upraised in conventional stance, on his face the same surly, savage look that I noted in his latter days. He was a born, a natural, fighter, not a boxer — a primordial character like John L. Sullivan, who would honestly rather fight than eat. It was obviously a mistake to attack him with anything smaller than a .38 calibre gun.

AT THE SETTING OF THE SUN

BY GUSTAV DAVIDSON

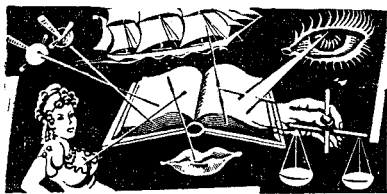
The air is solvent, clear.
The shimmering daylight
Grieves against the hill.

The opal talk of birds
Is done,
The reverie of bees;
There is still
A trembling of leaves.

The sun is two hours gone.
The fluent paw of fox, the white
Knees of fawn and stoat
Are folded for the night.

The caw of the crow
Is homingly remote.

THE LIBRARY



FROM DREISER TO FARRELL

by **BEN RAY REDMAN**

TWO recently published books shed considerable light upon the careers of two writers who occupy, and will probably continue to occupy, conspicuous places in the history of American naturalistic fiction. One of these careers is ended, while the other — for better or for worse — is still unfolding in the public view. One author was a great and lumbering pioneer; the other has been a follower, not an imitator, who has made determined use of the freedom secured, in large measure, by the efforts of his trail-blazing predecessor. The first climbed the hill of fame without ever being quite sure of his beliefs, his intentions, or his goal. The second, although he has not climbed as high, seems always to have known exactly where he wished to go, why he wished

to go there, and what he wished to do along the way. The names of the two writers are Dreiser and Farrell. The illuminating books before us are *Theodore Dreiser: Apostle of Nature* [\$4.00, Knopf], by Robert H. Elias, and James T. Farrell's new novel, *The Road Between* [\$3.50, Vanguard]. The biography is a carefully documented, objective study, while the novel clearly, if unintentionally, exhibits its author's failings as well as the sources of his proved strength. Let us look at these books, one after the other, in their natural order of precedence, with a view to discovering what Mr. Elias has to tell us about Dreiser, and what Mr. Farrell has to tell us about Farrell.

Mr. Elias has, in my opinion, done a remarkably sound job. Indeed, it is hard to see how he could have done a better or more thorough one, in the circumstances in which he wrote. The privileges which he enjoyed while pre-

BEN RAY REDMAN has written, edited or translated some twenty volumes, including the recently published *Viking Portable Voltaire*. He is a regular contributor to the *MERCURY*.