

ures such as Edison and Burroughs; and while it tells us little of Ford himself, it has the interest that necessarily attaches to the history of a great industrial achievement.

"Lo, the poor immigrant" — his problem has been tackled from all angles; he has been as unceremoniously jostled through our literature as through our ports of entrance. Now it is the Interchurch World Movement which has focused its orthodox pince-nez upon him, and we have him in bird's eye view, card indexed, pigeon-holed in neat little sections relating to his background, his economic, social, and religious conditions, etc. Undeniably these "Racial Studies — New Americans Series" (Doran) have done a valuable work in reducing the immigrant to his lowest terms for inspection. Six volumes have already appeared: "The Czecho-Slovaks in America" by Kenneth D. Miller, "The Poles in America" by Paul Fox, "The Russians and Ruthenians in America" by Jerome Davis, "The Italians in America" by Philip M. Rose, "The Greeks in America" by J. P. Xenides, and "The Magyars in America" by D. A. Souders. Perhaps it is too much to hope that the telescoping of such vast fields of material could steer wholly clear of snap generalizations and truisms. But for the purposes of the lay student these little handbooks represent a brief but zealous survey, with only a shade of condescension toward other Americanizing agencies outside the church.

Casual readers, staring aghast at the form in which the works of foreign artists are generally presented to Americans — yard-long sets — cannot be expected to know how to choose the best and should not be expected to

buy and wallow through twenty volumes to learn through long weeks of study which books are most interesting. The avalanche of current literature rushes by and the casual reader must miss all of that or despair of reading the foreign books of a few years ago. Alfred A. Knopf has endeavored to give the reader some of the French books he believes the most important, without issuing authors' sets, and the latest in this collection is "Germinie Lacerteux" by Edmond and Jules de Goncourt. It is prefaced with an article on these brothers and their work, written by Ernest Boyd. While this and other books are being selected by Mr. Knopf to guide the casual reader, it seems unfortunate that they should come out in limited editions, though this does tend to make their physical characteristics much more pleasing.

Laughing with George Ade seems never to get tiresome. Just when one imagines his stock of laughing medicine is getting low, in he walks with a new bottle and the patient willingly passes into another convulsion. "Single Blessedness and Other Observations" (Doubleday, Page) is such a container. Now and then his famous slang steals into the essays, but that is just one of many ingredients used in preparing the good-tasting tonic. Most of the group have been printed before, but others are "first exhibited in private and now put into print for the first time". The book is just George Ade, one of those next speakers "who needs no introduction".

Wars may come and wars may go, leaving behind them pitiful remnants of illusions, but throughout all time human nature remains more or less unchanged and if illusions are demol-

ished — well, it more or less serves the loser right for cherishing them. C. E. Montague, in "Disenchantment" (Brentano), seeing the tremendous heap of garbaged hopes, undertakes an unimpassioned mission of salvage. His method is to enumerate through pages of serious thinking made assimilable by frequent bits of humor many of the things which brought about the sad disenchantment of war and post-war times. Coupled with this presentation is a realization of the frailties of man which explains for the disenchanting just how it was the mighty did not really fall, inasmuch as they were never on more than an imaginative pinnacle from which to tumble. Touches of bitterness may creep into the pages, for it is hard to excuse blunders, human though they may be, when they cost thousands of lives. For the most part, however, the book gives its facts as though the author had followed the old injunction, "Know thyself", and, in knowing, had forgiven.

The student or social worker who is looking for information on the naturalization and the political life of the immigrant need seek no further than John Palmer Gavit's "Americans by Choice" (Harper), one of a complete series on Americanization being prepared through funds furnished by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Mr. Gavit has made a detailed investigation of the subject and presents his results with thoroughness and historical accuracy, enlivened by touches of humor and a sympathetic attitude toward the troubles of the alien.

When a foreign writer attains a popularity like that of Knut Hamsun in the United States, any information bearing on his career must aid in the forming of a correct estimate of his

general character. Hanna Astrup Larsen's intimate acquaintance with the Norwegian language in which Hamsun's writings originally appeared foreshadowed a biography that would be authentic. That she has discharged her task with every regard for the readers of his books in their English translation is apparent at once. In "Knut Hamsun" (Knopf) we learn for the first time just what were the progressive steps upward of a writer who recorded early suffering in so unique a work as "Hunger". From then on to the "Women at the Pump" we are afforded glimpses of a literary activity that is almost unparalleled, considering the uniform excellence of Hamsun's books. Showing us the author as "The Wanderer", next as "The Poet", and finally as "The Citizen", Miss Larsen has divided her biography into three parts that give a concise picture of a rounded out career. The work furnishes a complete index for anyone wishing to go further and acquaint himself with the various books now available in English.

The only espionage in "The London Spy" (Doran) is the sort that O. Henry indulged in when he explored Manhattan. Thomas Burke, who takes a huge joy in his London, leads his reader in jaunts about town. More than usual he leaves the slums to visit the more select districts of London. To the American reader with visions of Hollywood scandals and motion picture gaiety fresh in mind, the account of the dismal dullness of an English movie lot will be at least startling. So will be the interview with Charlie Chaplin. But it is the slums that Burke really loves. Bars, opium dens, the room of a Jack the Clipper and less reputable places — these are the vivid spots in the spy's report.