

policy and a plausible interpretation of its meaning. Too bad that Hullinger could not have stayed to tell us of the fall of the Nep.

To talk of little matters of everyday life in a way that is humorous, practical, and pathetic seems to be the aim of Ian Hay in "The Shallow End" (Houghton Mifflin). At the same time he gives us, or tries to, an international viewpoint on a few selected subjects. The first four sections, named for the seasons, deal with London. The atmosphere of Piccadilly Circus, Haymarket, and the moods of the crowds in the park, cinemas, and night clubs are cleverly depicted. In fact, we wonder just why Mr. Hay considered it necessary to wander from these interesting little studies to New York and the national game there called "Hunt the Hoock". Was it to give English readers a taste of life abroad or to make New Yorkers feel at home? To recent visitors to London "The Shallow End" cannot fail to be of interest; and even those who have never been to London may find a congenial topic in the theatre, boxing, cricket, boating, animals, or human nature therein.

There may be some foundation for a feeling that Howells has been subjected to the process which H. G. Wells (in his incomparable "Boon") has labeled, in ribald fashion, as "greatening". But his solidly enduring qualities no doubt are real enough to survive even injudicious praise. No American man of letters of our day, save Mark Twain, has been so fully discussed by the critics and expositors: the incomplete bibliography of books and articles about him appended to "William Dean Howells" (Harvard) by Oscar W. Firkins covers nearly two pages. Mr.

Firkins's study, however, differs from most of its predecessors in that it is more an interpretation, an illuminating commentary, than a critical estimate. It is, of course, critical and analytic, but its aim is more to portray the man and his work than to appraise him. The conclusion reached by Mr. Firkins is that justice has not yet been done to Howells as critic or as poet, and that "due recognition" has not yet been given "to three great elements in his fiction—its vitality, the surpassing distinctness and variety of its characterization, and its firm grasp of some of the rarer and more elusive aspects of everyday reality". The book is handsomely printed and well indexed.

"A great architecture is something to be seen and felt and lived in. By this criterion most of our pretentious buildings are rather pathetic", writes Lewis Mumford in his "Sticks and Stones: A Study of American Architecture and Civilization" (Boniville, Liveright). This reviewer appreciates and agrees with Mr. Mumford's statement. You have but to observe the monotony of skyscrapers and the ugly similarity of the "robot" made apartment houses of this world we live in to realize its truth. Until the coming of the machine age, as the author illustrates, the steadily developing American architecture had many beautiful achievements to its credit, particularly in the New England villages. But architecture without personality is not art, and the machine age does not encourage individuality.

Apparently there is a perennially eager audience for the conventional travel book that appears ever so often from the pen of some painstaking traveler. The formula is a simple one, and consists of a cheery, narrative style

loaded with facts, the ability to brighten a page now and then with anecdote — and that is all. It does not matter whether the facts are old or new, significant or trivial. The average reader of the travel book of this sort is hungry for information, either to appease his own unfulfilled desire to roam, or to read at the next meeting of the local foreign missionary society. At least, that is the reader for whom Dorothy Dix was writing when she penned the story of "My Trip Around the World" (Penn). It is the same reader she addresses in her advice to the lovelorn, as syndicated over this broad land. There is nothing in this book that cannot safely be read at any club meeting, and there is even a sprinkling of her well known homely wit that should start a titillation of amusement through the hearers. But, also, there doesn't seem to be very much in the book that has not been done before, and done a great deal better by writers who do not belong to the Aunt Samantha school of literature.

Dr. Maximilian J. Rudwin has compiled a book of 286 long pages entitled "A Historical and Bibliographical Survey of the German Religious Drama" (University of Pittsburg). His work is dedicated to Wilhelm Creizenach, the old master in this field, and was written because of the incompleteness of similar monographs that essayed the task. It is characterized by intelligent diligence and is indispensable to the student who would like to be guided through this immense mass of material in which convention and love of horse-play applied to a sacred theme played a greater rôle than spiritual originality or æsthetic ability. The work, however, is for reference only.

There are not many who appreciate a *sacre du printemps* when it is first per-

formed; and honor is due Carl Van Vechten for being one of them. Nevertheless, one cannot call him a liberal or even a discriminating critic. If his mind is opened to *sacres* it is shut to other things; in fact, his open mindedness to contemporary music is only one of a number of eccentric attitudes that are quite irrational even when they can be justified subsequently — as many cannot. Mr. Van Vechten says some very sensible things in "Red" (Knopf); one is grateful to him for showing up Krehbiel (he demonstrates "how dull pedantry may exercise an ancillary function to blind obstinacy of opinion" by quoting Krehbiel's attack upon Mahler, outrageous in tone, and caused by Mahler's reducing the strings and doubling the flutes in a Mozart symphony to approximate the proportions in which they were used in Mozart's orchestra); but one must add that he says many things which are quite silly, and rather perverse in their silliness.

Once again E. W. Lucas, the far traveled, sympathetic, and sane, entertains us. In "A Wanderer Among Pictures" (Doran) he has produced a perfect book for those who enjoy paintings in a friendly, untechnical, literary way, and want a discriminating and informal guide to the picture galleries of Europe. He takes the reader enthusiastically through the chief collections of London, Paris, Madrid, Milan, Florence, Rome, Venice, Vienna, Munich, Dresden, Berlin, Amsterdam, The Hague, and Brussels, giving short histories of the various galleries and describing in a condensed, vivid, interesting way those pictures which he thinks particularly fine as well as the acknowledged masterpieces. His charming style, his intelligent and often original choices and criticisms, together with the seventy two excellent reproductions and the