

from Salerno), and squelching lawyers' fees. It is the England of simple piety, in whose religion the Virgin Mary civilized and elevated the degraded status in which women had been held, and in which tournaments, jousting, and crusades lent strength to the warlike energies of the race. What people then ate, such as porpoises, seals, bustards, swans, and peacocks, is eloquent testimony to their stout stomachs, just as much as what and how they drank. The divers professions and callings which catered to the prominent classes, the various fine arts of armourer and of many guilds, are also all passed in review by Miss Stuart in an instructive, valuable, and well-written volume, indebted chiefly to manuscripts like the *Luttrell Psalter* and to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. The worth of the book as a summation of the rites and habits of Englishmen which are not to be found *seriatim* in the literature of the time is subtle, but nevertheless large.

JAMES W. LANE

MORE MERRY-GO-ROUND *Anonymous*
(LIVERIGHT. \$3.00)

THOSE Walter Winchells of Washington, the authors of *Washington Merry-Go-Round*, continue their phrase-making in this sequel. The book has a sprightly, malicious style, but little else. Newspaper men will recognize it as a job of "smart rewrite"; newspaper readers will feel little surprise at many of its "revelations", unless minor gossip startles them.

The writer of "inside stuff" undertakes a hard job. He must be utterly accurate in facts of record, or all he says is suspect. And he must not try to palm off public property as part of his store of special information, now at last revealed to the lucky reader. This book errs in both these ways.

The jacket blurb says, "For the first time

in the history of the country, the real inside story of members of the United States Supreme Court is told, who these men are, what they do, why". Those "inside" histories of the justices could be obtained from *Who's Who in America* and the files of newspapers in any large city. There is no evidence, for example, that the writers went far beyond the pages of *The New Yorker* and the New York *Herald Tribune* in preparing that of Justice Cardozo—except possibly to discover that Cardozo once taught law at Columbia University. Columbia regretfully denies this.

The authors of *More Merry-Go-Round* are thoroughly anti-conservative—one of their rare unalloyed compliments is for Senator Norris—and they indict conservatives on the Supreme Court bench of a high crime. They are also spitefully anti-Hoover. For subjects they choose: "Dance of the Depression", dealing with a miscellany of Washingtonians; "Nine Old Men", the Supreme Court Justices; "The Wizards of Reconstruction", Meyer and Mills; "The Cotillion Leader", Secretary of War Hurley; "Gold Braid and Epaulets", army officers; "Adams and His Admirals"; "Chief Cook and Bottle Washer", Postmaster Brown; "The Capital Underworld"; "Muscle Men" and "The Mutes", Senators; "Head Bouncer", Secretary of Labor Doak; "Lame Ducks", and "The Janizaries", lobbyists.

There are, of course, things wrong and things which might be better in Washington, but anonymous smart-alecking is not likely to cure the troubles.

DAN C. ANDERSON

ROGER WILLIAMS by *James Ernst* (MACMILLAN. \$4.00)

PRESENTED as the first full-length biography of Roger Williams, this book expounds the thesis that the place of Williams in the his-

tory of American thought is that of the first American democrat and nonconformist. It is well documented and shows evidence of patient research. But it is a work of unbalanced eulogy, building up a mass of evidence in favour of Williams and taking no notice of the charges that have been levelled against his name by various students of his period.

The Rhode Island pioneer is drawn for us as a transcendental mystic who was the first promulgator of the modern doctrine of freedom of worship and the builder of a civil state, the principles of which have since spread over the entire American union. He is hailed as the forerunner of Jefferson and Madison and as spiritually akin to Bacon, Hobbes, Descartes, and the French Encyclopedists. But there is no direct reference to the classical criticisms against his life and labours.

Twichell the historian, for instance, says that everywhere Williams lingered there sprang up strife in an acute form. Schneider in *The Puritan Mind* asserts that Williams did not so much establish religious liberty on Rhode Island as create religious anarchy so that Rhode Island became a refuge for all sorts of religious misfits. John Fiske sums him up as hopelessly controversial. His biographers, from Gammell to Emily Easton, have generally found something to explain in his contentious life. This present book apparently finds nothing. Dr. Ernst, saying nothing of his hero's hostility towards the Catholics, omits to mention the fact that there was a law in Rhode Island debarring them from the franchise, which law remained on the statute books from 1664 to 1783. In his estimate of the political experiment at Providence he makes no reference to the anterior policy of the Calverts in Maryland. He overlooks the statement John Fiske has made in regard to the beginnings

of American democracy. Fiske said that Connecticut had the first written constitution known to history as creating a government and that our system of government today is in lineal descent more nearly related to that of Connecticut than that of any of the other thirteen colonies.

The thesis which Dr. Ernst sets forth is easily credible to those who know nothing about Roger Williams and his times. But the scientific student of the period would have welcomed a less partisan biography. It is a pity that the author, in elaborating his theme, should have failed to take account of the relevant objections.

CHAS. F. RONAYNE

CHARLOTTE BRONTË by E. F. Benson
(LONGMANS. \$4.00)

THREE-QUARTERS of a century has gone by since Mrs. Gaskell brought a hurricane about her ears by the publication of her *Life of Charlotte Brontë*. Since then we have had innumerable biographies of the Brontës, but we are as far as ever from getting an impartial one. Something in the air of Hawthorne Parsonage seems to go to the heads of chroniclers, and they emerge from their researches in states of violent partisanship.

Although Mr. Benson has made Charlotte the titular heroine of his book he inclines to the Emily-cum-Branwell cult. Poor Charlotte emerges as an acidulous, spinsterish little figure-of-fun, driving her talented sisters and brother with her own furious ambition. Often Mr. Benson seems aware that he is not presenting a woman who could by any sweep of the imagination have been a genius, and at such moments he halts his interpretation to recall to us, flatly, that he is writing of the author of *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*. But the moment passes; we have again the resentful, driving, managing creature before