

parent by his emphasis on the role of science, to which he assigns a place as the basic determinant of social change since the Reformation. "From a psychological point of view," writes Kardiner, "the prime mover (of the change in values taking place during the Reformation) was not the economic factors but the growth and development of that method which we call scientific." Evidently still quiescent in the chrysalis of the Freudian notion of the origin of science—namely, that it is an outgrowth of the looking, feeling, and handling tendency originally directed toward the sexual object—Kardiner fails to weigh the social origins of modern science, taking no cognizance of the fact that the craftsmen's techniques in the early workshops were often used as a model for the development of the new scientific method.

The Psychological Frontiers of Society is of considerable importance. Kardiner has focused attention on the way the mode of production influences the development of child-rearing methods. He has successfully outlined the psychological functions (not origins) of religious and other ideologies, and finally he has arrived at, from a Freudian point of view, a concept of the relationship between ideology and the social substructure which is remarkably similar to the standpoint of historical materialism. Thus, he states, "... by writing a history of the change in religious ideologies from Job to Calvin, we are studying the projective screen only, leaving the social realities of which they are the expression unaccounted for." But like so many social scientists of our day, Kardiner flounders in his attempt to analyze current social change and its relationship to personality in large measure because of his unwillingness or inability to interpret social structure in terms of the classes composing it.

RICHARD GRAY.

"Neutral" History

THE COMPLETION OF INDEPENDENCE—1790-1830. HISTORY OF AMERICAN LIFE SERIES, VOL. IV, by John Allen Krout and Dixon Ryan Fox. Macmillan. \$4.

THIS twelve-volume history of American life undertakes as its special contribution to put, as it were, "flesh and blood on the bare bones of historical fact." This, the fifth volume in the series, covers the 1790-1830 period. Its many-sided life is described in a refreshing and, as far as it goes, a satisfactory manner. The authors have drawn on a

vast resource of original documents, standard histories and specialized studies.

But historical writing is a science as well as an art. Though from the standpoint of craftsmanship there is little room for criticism here, from the standpoint of history as a science (the very existence of which the authors may deny) this book shows little improvement over earlier histories. The first decade covered in this study was marked by the epic conflict of Jeffersonian Democracy against Federalism under Hamilton, while in Europe the great French Revolution was altering the course of development of all Western civilization. The 1800 election victory of Jefferson represented the triumph in America for democracy. The free, unhampered economic and cultural progress recorded in this book was made possible primarily because the obsolete political philosophy and the doctrine of economic monopoly and privilege represented by the Federalist Party was rejected by the American people.

Professors Krout and Fox overlook the struggle and the consequences of Jefferson's victory. Preferring to stand objective and neutral they view it, by and large, as a normal rivalry of two political parties. By virtually ignoring the conflict of rival political philosophies they, in common with most other historians of the period, avoid the difficult task of analyzing the substance and the economic and historic origins of this struggle. But actually the authors are not neutral. They accept Charles A.

Beard's erroneous appraisal of it as a struggle between agrarianism and capitalism. And this false estimate creates perplexing contradictions.

If Jefferson did represent the "agrarian republic" and an alleged aversion to capitalist development how can one explain the phenomenal growth of manufacture and trade under the six Jeffersonian administrations and the absence of inflationary paper money supposedly loved by the agrarians? Their answer is a simple paraphrasing of Beard's "discovery" that the Jeffersonians adopted the Federalist program. Such reasoning reduces the Jeffersonian-Federalist conflict to an unprincipled rivalry for power and Jeffersonian democracy to a legend.

The danger of this shallowness and "neutrality" toward the past great political conflicts is best illustrated in Professor Beard's new "basic" history which leads him to a "neutral" attitude towards our present anti-fascist war. In real life neutrality towards a war of national survival is considered aid and comfort to the enemy. It is so too in the interpretation of past struggles. No amount of excellent descriptive material of the many-sided facets of our early history can overcome the neglect or faulty estimate of political conflicts that have determined the main direction of our national development.

RALPH BOWMAN.

Novels of Rural Life

THE TOWNSMAN, by John Sedges. John Day. \$2.75.

THE CABIN, by Marquis W. Childs. Harpers. \$2.50.

MR. SEDGES' fine book is the story of a family of small folk who leave England for America shortly after the Civil War. The main thread concerns the family relationships and the character changes that accompany the changes of environment.

Jonathan, the eldest son, returns to England briefly in his last years to realize that America's largeness is now a part of him. He had wanted to teach school in England, and now he fights to keep his adopted home town respectable and schooled. First he opposes the cattle boom; then the oil fever; and he resigns as principal of the school he built rather than submit to a lowering of its standards.

Major issues of contemporary America enter Mr. Sedges' pages. Most impressive is his treatment of the subjection of women. On the Negro question he is a shade less satisfactory.



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Jonathan's best friends are a family of former slaves, salt of the earth; and he arranges to send their eldest son to France to study surgery. The son becomes a celebrated surgeon but accepts his benefactor's advice to stay abroad if he would continue to be happy; the idea of returning to serve his people does not appear in the story. Escape is the only solution indicated.

THE economics of farming and land speculation, which have throughout the nation's history aided and fought each other simultaneously, is brought out somewhat more clearly in Marquis Childs' *The Cabin* than in the treatment given them by Sedges. But the book falls short as a novel. Its theme, the effect on a family group of the death of a woman whose illness has been ignored, is too one-faceted for rounded-out characterization. Its interesting sidelights on American farm life and Midwest small towns are not enough to give it stature as fiction.

STANLEY ARCHER.

Brief Reviews

SOUTH AMERICA CALLED THEM, by Victor Wolfgang von Hagen. Knopf. \$3.75.

THIS poorly organized book contains a great deal of sensuous description of the jungles, llanos and wild places of South America, and heroic paragraphs about the superhuman struggles of four men—La Condamine, Humboldt, Darwin and Spruce—to catalogue the botanical and geological lore of inaccessible regions. The mere recounting of the perils and hardships undergone by these intrepid explorers makes at times reading more thrilling than the most fanciful adventure story. However, they charge through their ordeals with nature in such a way that we see always the machete trail and almost never the three-dimensional human beings who wield the machetes. Quixoticism, rather than necessity, conditions their exploits. This literary method is part and parcel of the author's philosophical attitude; his facts are unorganized and often semi-investigated and *a priori*. Thus, "This Incaic civilization, nestling in the Andes, with its far-flung empire, was as close as man would ever get to Utopia" (!) Las Casas, the reformer Jesuit missionary who helped the Pope to found the institution of Negro slavery by modifying the structure of Indian servitude, is acclaimed as a mighty humanist! Metternich is one who hoped to "bring liberty and universal happiness" to Europe!

However, writers would do well to

stock their heads with the wealth of imagery—cow trees, electric eels, penguins serenaded with St. Elmo's fire, etc.—to be found in such a book.

THE LONG JOURNEY, by Johannes V. Jensen. Knopf. \$3.

THERE are better books still to be honored but the obviously politically motivated judges of the Swedish Academy chose to award the Nobel prize last year to this Danish work, first published in English translation twenty-two years ago and now republished to take advantage of the publicity. It is a trilogy of three historical fantasies: *Fire and Ice*, dealing with the human family at the point where it mastered its greatest tool, fire; *The Cimbrians*, dealing with the Northern tribes in one of their first invasion-migrations to the South; and *Christopher Columbus*, an account of the discovery and exploration of the Western Hemisphere which is made by implications, a Viking voyage. This vast project is handled with considerable skill; an enormous erudition is reduced to assimilable reading matter; there are flashes where the fantasy is heightened by eloquence and understanding into a vivid feeling of reality; and there are dull, longer passages of mere anthropological and historical digest. The history and anthropology are vitiated by a construction which gives the Norse peoples pervasive superiority; Columbus acquires a Norse ancestry and the myth of the white god of the Aztecs takes a Nordic turn. This, of course, should not be perverted into an accusation that Jensen is a Nazi; but it is an indication of the extent of the racial legend which, too seriously played with, can lead to such destructive insanity as Nazism.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES, by Nevins and Commanger. Modern Library. 95c.

THIS book appears to be published to take advantage, in competition with the Beard "basic" history, of the revived interest in our past. It is a great improvement over Beard's calculatingly anti-democratic book, whose last chapter was characterized in the New York *Tribune* as "an isolationist tract." However, it does not take us far beyond the level of public school histories. The concluding chapters, dealing with the Hoover depressions and the New Deal and the anti-fascist war, are clearcut and progressive but in appraising our past Professors Commanger and Nevins become conventional custodians of the