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described in metrical epitaphs, but in brief sketches in plain and forceful prose. George Milburn is not an imitator; simply the member of a school. These sketches are completely objective. The style does not lend itself to subjective writing, as can be readily seen by any reader who will turn to the last sketch in the book, Hail and Farewell, in which Mr. Milburn speaks for himself and not as a detached and ironical observer. These sketches also show how necessary it is to read the "Hemingway" style aloud in order to get the full flavor of it. These bald, short sentences and paragraphs should be sounded as well as seen, otherwise the pungent, brutal quality of the material is apt to conceal the careful formalism of the writing.

F. L. R.

"The Master Farmers of America"

THE baiters of the boob ought to be delighted with this bulletin by Professor Oliver S. Hamer which describes the American super-farmer. Some years ago the farm journals and agricultural colleges began the practice of granting honorary degrees to outstanding tillers of the soil. We have now in twenty-eight states some six hundred of these so-labeled "Master Farmers," known collectively as "The Master Farmers of America." After a study of 389 of these Professor Hamer has published the specifications of the typical Master Farmer (Univ. of Iowa, \$1.25).

His average age is fifty-two. He was one of six children though he rarely has more than four of his own. The number of children the Master Farmer has is in inverse ratio to his wife's education. He may have six if his wife stopped school in the grades, but no more than two if Mrs. Master Farmer has a college education. His own education generally terminated with one year of high school, but the average wife did not leave high school until the second year. Children of the Master Farmer generally get through high school and one out of three goes through college into the professions.

The average Master Farm is 277 acres (average for the U. S. 145 acres). This farm is worth \$42,000 and earns a net yearly return of \$3,200 (average for the U. S. is \$1,113). Sometimes the better trained younger Master Farmers have larger incomes and from smaller farms. The average Master Farmer reports success in terms of crop increases; boosting the average corn yield from 35 to 53 bushels per acre, wheat yield from 19 to 29 bushels per acre, cotton from 447 to 748 pounds per acre.

As a social animal, the Master Farmer attends about two functions a month, and that includes picture shows. But he attends church and Sunday School thirty-nine times a year. He reads, perhaps, more than his city cousin. In an Iowa study of farm children, of which we will speak in a moment, it was found that the typical farm home contained about ninety books. But the typical Master Farmer's library is almost double that, being 175 volumes. The most mentioned book was the Bible with the dictionary running a close second. Other books in their order were: *Ben Hur*, *Pollyanna*, poems of Guest and Longfellow, works of Gene Stratton Porter and Louise Alcott, and Sheldon's *In His Steps*. Of periodicals the Master Farmer and his family consume four general magazines, two daily papers (one from

the big city) and one religious paper.

The conclusions are statistical and noncommittal, perhaps a little naïve for the way they neglect the deeper implications. What does it profit us, this exalting and honoring of occasional rural individualists? Is this not putting a premium on the one weakness of the farmer that is costing him most dear? Industry, as far as capital is concerned, is wiping individualism out as rapidly as merger programs can get under way. Moreover, industry seems headed in the direction of a controlled production, while it's the lack of such control that is the bane of agriculture. One becomes a Master Farmer by producing more crops at less cost, by forcing his way out of the slough into which the cultivating craft has fallen. This means pushing aside and rising above the dozens of less astute and less aggressive neighbors who can never qualify to be Master Farmers. The present bulletin, then, is both a study and a guide to success, pointing the way for the go-getter in agriculture.

Farm Children is an important book for those who are interested in the modern rural approach to child welfare. The authors, B. T. Baldwin, E. A. Fillmore and L. Hadley, studied two Iowa communities of 115 and 154 families respectively. The objectives of this survey were the usual objectives relative to housing, sanitation, health, recreation, education and the social and economic resources of the community. The findings have been published in a volume (Appleton, \$4) that might be put on a shelf beside Middletown by the Lynds. One reads and wonders if rural America is really as backward as that. The civilization of the "little red schoolhouse" doesn't look so good when we see it through the eyes of the experts who wrote this book about farm children.

The farm problem is not new by any means, though it may be getting a little more than its usual share of political attention. It is now no more than it has always been, a rural-urban problem, to which philosophers for ages have addressed themselves. But the philosophers were about as helpful as politicians. The prospect is that science will make some headway. To recite all that science is attempting would be a big order but here is a significant review of what has been done and what is being done with reference to rural social life and living. It is a volume excellently bound, the first of a three-volume *Systematic Source Book in Rural Sociology* (Univ. of Minnesota, \$15, each volume \$6.50).

The Source book was published under the auspices of the United States Department of Agriculture and the University of Minnesota. The editors are Pitirim A. Sorokin of Harvard, Carl C. Zimmerman of the University of Minnesota and Charles J. Galpin of the United States Department of Agriculture. This is a sort of encyclopedia of rural society. The first volume is largely historical, assembling the reflections of most every world leader back to Confucius and Xenophon who may have written on this problem. The remaining volumes, to appear before summer, deal with rural social organization and institutions, the rural family, art and recreation.

If we may judge the forthcoming volumes by this one, this book ought to be a classic. One wishes that every Congressman and Senator protesting his love for the farmer might browse through it. It would be like taking them up on a high hill to look over the breadth, the age and the complexity of the agricultural kingdom. Perhaps there is no other interest in American life where there is more provincialism. It would be tolerable if only the Master Farmers and their ordinary neighbors were involved, but the fog of provincialism hovers as heavily over many more who are doing the thinking for the farmer.

NELS ANDERSON.

Behind the Blurbs

"THE Tragedy of the Chinese Mine" tells what happened when Gissing came back to life in the Malayan jungle after being cracked over the head by his partner, Crosse. Gissing's memory was gone, and it wasn't until he had won fame in Hollywood that it came back. Of the mess he then got himself into and out of, this well written, though sometimes discursive tale, tells in plenty of detail. *** Further episodes in the career of the always amusing detective, Reginald Fortune, are related in *Mr. Fortune Explains*², and if you have not already made his acquaintance we urge you to do so. In this lot, most of the plots are rather thin, but Mr. F. is always his suave and imperturbable self, and that is the important thing. *** February selections of the clubs: Book-of-the-Month Club, Vicki Baum's *Grand Hotel*; Book League, Struthers Burt's *Festival*; Literary Guild, J. Frank Dobie's *Coronado's Children*. *** *The Man in the Black Hat*³ was a Rosicrucian, who exerted a mysterious influence over a girl named Juniper. When he couldn't be around in person, he sent

1. By Ian Greig: Holt, \$2.00.

2. By H. C. Bailey: Dutton, \$2.00.

3. By Temple Thurston: Doubleday, \$2.00.

his astral body. And all because Juniper's drug addict husband had a book he wanted. Dr. Hawke tries to protect Juniper, whom he loves, but what chance has a medico against a fellow like that? We might have enjoyed the story more if a quotation from it on the jacket hadn't given it all away, so we knew before it started just what was going to happen. Well written, and eerie in spots. *** New titles in Loeb's Classical Library (Putnam \$2.50 each) are St. Augustine's *Selected Letters*, tr. by J. H. Baxter, Bede's *Opera Historica*, two vols, tr. by J. E. King, with Latin and English text; *Philo*, vol. III, tr. by F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, *Lysias*, tr. by W. R. M. Lamb, St. Basil's *Letters*, translated by R. J. De-ferrari, Demosthenes' *Olynthiacs*, Philippics and *In Leptinem*, tr. by J. H. Vince, with Greek and English text. *** *The Fighting Kings of Wessex*⁴ is the story of what happened in England after the breakdown of Roman civilization, and of the building of a new civilization on the ruins of the old. The Kingship, says the author, is not the creation of the state; the state is built up by the personal actions of successive Kings. And he shows how, gradually from the struggles of invaders and sectional leaders, rose a dominant force which drew England together and made the beginnings of a new social and economic system. The story is interesting in itself; it may also conceivably teach lessons of practical value to a generation which has within the past fifteen years so narrowly missed witnessing the complete breakdown of the economic system on which our civilization rests.

WALTER R. BBOOKS.

4. By G. P. Baker: Dodd Mead, \$4.00.

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