

American Folk Songs

WHITE SPIRITUALS OF THE SOUTHERN UPLANDS. By George Pullen Jackson. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1933. \$4.50.

Reviewed by JOSEPHINE PINCKNEY

HERE is a book about the rural Southerner of the past century whose story has been ignored in favor of the more popular plantation tradition. Since about 1800 the fasola folk have been singing more or less indigenous songs written in the ancient shape-notes and sung to the syllables *fa sol la*—a truncated form of the familiar *do re mi* sequence. This system, common in Elizabethan England, came down via the early New England singing school, whose teachers took it into the South and West, where it still survives lustily, untroubled by the later European culture that destroyed it elsewhere. There are in the present day hundreds of thousands of white people with organized schools, holding singings—not religious meetings but all-day gatherings for the sole pleasure of singing together—at which they still read the music from shape-note books.

For one who has neither heard the singing nor examined the books it is difficult to form an estimate of the quality of the songs, and the extent to which they differ from evangelical hymnology is not quite clear. The words are mostly borrowed from hymns; the tunes are of mixed ancestry, such as unwritten songs of the Methodist and Baptist churches, secular fiddle-tunes and melodies composed or adapted by the compilers of the singing books. The names of the books themselves—"Social Harp," "Sacred Harp," "Timbrel of Zion" have an evangelical ring, and the tunes are sometimes found in church hymnals also. Mr. Jackson insists, however, that it is urban snobbishness to deny that the fasolas' songs are true folk music—spirituals—and he supports his contention with several good arguments. The sharpest departure from hymnology is in some of the melodic idioms. These descendants of the Scotch-Irish have assimilated Celtic folk-tunes for many of the songs, and they use "gapped scales"—a more primitive form of scale consistently omitting the fourth and the leading tone in the major mode and the second and sixth in the minor. The books include numerous religious ballads, like the delightful "Romish Lady," surely a survival of a much older day, and other narratives of experience.

Between the spontaneous spiritual of the country Negro and the gospel hymn

there are many degrees of primitivity. From the fragments given in this book it would appear that the fasola songs are nearer the hymn end of the scale, and the very fact that the singers hold conventions and sing by note from books containing singing instructions shows a relative sophistication. The book is none the less valuable for this and will be absorbing to the discriminating reader; it gives a very full account of these people and their songs and is the result of a zealous and sympathetic research in a virtually unknown field.

The author's discovery of the fasola singers brings new evidence to an old argument concerning the racial origin of the spiritual. Certain types of song and ways of singing, hitherto thought to be peculiarly the Negro's own, were found by Mr. Jackson to be native to the fasolas also, thus adding weight to the theory that the spiritual was born of the white camp-meeting. Whether these whites sing with the magnificent rhythmic instinct of the Negro can only be affirmed by one who has heard both groups. The author apparently thinks they do, though from his account the whites do not go in for the "clapping," "patting" (with the feet), and "shouting" (swinging the body) which so augment the primitive beat of the country Negro's singing and make it individual.

Religion in America

THE MARCH OF FAITH: The Story of Religion in America since 1865. By Winfred Ernest Garrison. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1933. \$2.50.

Reviewed by FELIX MORROW

TO write a history of American religion since 1865 is to begin at a point much less arbitrary than Mr. Garrison thinks it is. For with the termination of the Civil War, industrialism emerges triumphant; and no institution embraces new rulership more avidly than the churches. One of the best things in Mr. Garrison's book is his account of the church's role in the Reconstruction period; but he seems unaware of its full implications. The churches were the most enthusiastic supporters of the military dictatorship over the South which made it impossible for agrarian South and West to come together against the industrialists, and which enabled the business interests to consolidate their rule.

This support of what was essentially a dictatorship of the manufacturing class was but the prelude to the church's sanctification of the new masters. Adoring refer-

ences to the "stewardship of God's wealth" accompanied the growing prosperity of the churches at the steward's hands. Though here and there some of the more sophisticated churchmen began to feel that such sanctification of the industrial barons was overly Philistine, the barons were soon thoroughly in control of the churches. The epoch, since 1865, of the rise and maturity of modern capitalism has been one in which the churches, quite openly, have been the handmaidens of the ruling class. Though hangovers from the anti-ecclesiastical, conventicle, and lower-class origins of the Protestant sects still receive articulation, the churches have become powerful, enormously rich ecclesiastical domains bound up with business interests.

To call this period the "march of faith" is certainly a misnomer. Mr. Garrison's volume has many virtues as historical writing of an unsystematic character, but it shares the blatant optimism of the constant torrent of books on religion, which is particularly objectionable in one like Mr. Garrison who recognizes that the church's role is necessarily political and social. I have been reading many of the religious books appearing since the depression, but still have to find any real recognition of the contradiction between the church's moral claims and its actual functions. How long will the social minded spokesmen of the churches continue to repeat their hopes for the role of the church in social reconstruction, while the churches themselves continue to be a bulwark of present social chaos? What is the worth, for example, of the oft-expressed repentance for the church's jingoism in the World War, when a holocaust has been raging for four years which has reduced many to untold suffering, and no significant section of the churches has even come out to demand in specific terms that toilers and unemployed have a right to be fed?

Though one expects little from the churches on any level of the impending struggle between haves and have-nots, one does begin to wonder how the "social minded" churchmen can continue blandly unconscious of their impasse. Perhaps a partial explanation, in Mr. Garrison's case, is a sheer inability to recognize what is basically important. Here is his list of "present problems": prohibition, and disarmament, and social and economic reforms, and divorce."

A Scholarly Work

A HISTORY OF SPANISH PAINTING. By Chandler Rathfon Post. Vol. IV., pt. 1 and 2. The Hispano-Flemish School in Northwestern Spain. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1933. 2 vols.

Reviewed by FRANK JEWETT MATHER

WITH unabated zeal and caretaking Professor Post conducts his general survey of Spanish painting. The Hispano-Flemish schools of the later fifteenth and entire sixteenth century are intrinsically the dearest chapter of the chronicle, yet they afford very interesting problems of the transmission and transformation of foreign influence. There never was a more complete surrender to an exotic style than the painters of Castile and Leon made at this period.

As Professor Post clearly points out, the Northern Spanish compliment of imitation was merely the extreme phase of the penetration of Flemish realism throughout Europe. Such a conquest was possible only because of the lack of a strong and coherent school. Catalonia and Valencia, which had earlier made their own synthesis, were relatively early immune from the Flemish fashion. But it dominated Madrid, Burgos, Avila, and Zaragoza, and that Aragonese outpost, Naples. Although Jan Van Eyck's visit to Spain in 1428-29 was too brief and occupied to leave an abiding impression, it is certain that many Flemish painters visited Spain during the fifteenth century, while, of those who stayed at home, few of the great Netherlanders, from Rogier de la Pasture to Jerome Bosch, failed to find patronage in Spain. On the whole the austere or grotesque masters of Haarlem and Tournai were preferred to the more courtly and urbane artists of Bruges and Antwerp. Dirk Bouts, Campin, and Rogier are the leaders, though their wide following is generally of a feeble sort. Hugo van der Goes, except Bosch, the Flemish master of highest intensity, is constantly consulted. Many of his works were in Spain.

The movement was accelerated and emphasized by royal patronage. Isabella of Aragon owned numerous Flemish pan-

The AMEN CORNER

"There is no writing too brief that, without obscurity, comprehends the intent of the writer"—Thomas Campion.

With the limited space at our disposal we feel that no better motto could be found than this sentence with which Mr. Ben Ray Redman starts the delightful little anthology *Reading at Random*—a collection "innocent of arrangement" gleaned during his wanderings through the library of the *World's Classics*, that most satisfactory series. As Mr. Christopher Morley says, "If by some typographical convulsion all series of reprints except one were to be deleted from the shelves of this planet, the one to be preserved should be the *World's Classics* of the Oxford Press."

Here are riches in profusion, as a glance into Mr. Redman's anthology will show—a passage from Alexander Smith's *Dream-thorp* (one of Mr. Morley's favorites, too), a sonnet of Shakespeare's, a typical bit of Montaigne, a dash of Trollope, a longish extract from the *Voyage of a Naturalist*, and two lines from Herrick on "kissing" and "bussing."

Suddenly we come upon "Mrs. Jennings was a widow, with an ample jointure," and we are ready to forget all. There is nothing to do but to leave Mr. Redman for the moment and go to Jane's own volume. (*Decorum* would doubtless dictate "Miss Austen.") All her important works are in the handy series, to be carried in the pocket of the "Janeite." At home, of course, he will have on his shelves Mr. R. W. Chapman's beautiful authoritative edition,¹⁰ and his *Letters of Jane Austen*,¹¹ the completest edition in existence—or, indeed, imaginable. He and the Oxford Press have recently placed us further in their debt by bringing out a hitherto unpublished production of the juvenile Miss Austen, *Volume the First*. "Jane Austen," says the *New York Times*, "once wrote to her 12-year old niece advising her to cease writing till she was 16 because, she said, she herself had often wished she had read more and written less in the corresponding years. Whatever her reasons, we cannot agree with them. For it is to this habit of hers that 'Volume the First' . . . owes its delightful existence."

We must be brief, but we cannot forbear quoting the delicious title of one of the gems in this volume—"THE GENEROUS CURATE: a moral Tale, setting forth the Advantages of being Generous and a Curate"—and closing with the *Epitaph* of the fair Charlotte who accepted two gentlemen at once:

"Here lies our friend who having prom-
is-ed
That unto two she would be marri-ed
Threw her sweet Body and her lovely face
Into the Stream that runs thro' Portland
Place."

THE OXONIAN.

(¹) In *English Critical Essays*, XVI-XVIII Centuries. In the *World's Classics* series 80c. (²) Also in the *World's Classics*. 80c. (³) Write for complete list of over 400 titles. Oxford University Press, 114 Fifth Avenue. (⁴) Complete Works in 9 vols. 80c each. (⁵) *Essays*, translated by J. Florio, in 3 vols. 80c each. (⁶) *Autobiography*, 80c. (⁷) By Charles Darwin. 80c. (⁸) *Poems*, 80c. (⁹) Jane Austen: *Sense and Sensibility*, 80c. (¹⁰) 5 vols. \$10.00. (¹¹) 2 vols. \$12.50. (¹²) \$2.00.

WHY Mrs. Egg and Other Barbarians were solidified!

An enthusiastic admirer wrote to Thomas Beer: "Let me urge you to solidify the fat lady and the old horse-breeder. They are hunks out of an America that is dead as a doornail. They are a sight more civilized than most of the contributors to the high-brow magazines. They are not cowards about living. Their children are, and I thank God I will never have to meet any of their grandchildren."

Here they are, at last, for you to enjoy, in

MRS. EGG AND OTHER BARBARIANS

By THOMAS BEER

Author of *The Mauve Decade*

ALFRED A. KNOPF, N. Y. \$2.50

Indian Tribes of the Southwest

By MRS. WHITE MOUNTAIN SMITH

An informal, lively sort of book about the lives, customs, arts, ceremonials, and handicrafts of the Indians of New Mexico and Arizona.

STANFORD \$1.50

"Among books of literary reminiscences Miss Stein's is one of the richest, wittiest, and most irreverent ever written."—WILLIAM TROY,

The Nation

GERTRUDE STEIN'S

Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas

Gertrude Stein's story of her life, in "a style which is almost infinitely artful and yet as lucid and direct as the most artless prose ever written."

—Carl Van Doren, *Wings*

SEPTEMBER LITERARY GUILD SELECTION

320 pages, illustrated, \$3.50

HARCOURT, BRACE & COMPANY
383 MADISON AVENUE, N. Y.

els, still preserved in part in the Cathedral of Grenada. They included Rogier, Bouts, and Memling. Adaptations of the Flemish manner in Spain run from actual copyism.—Professor Post identifies an exact copy of a tiny Jan Van Eyck,—to assimilation of the northern figure style with the old Spanish decorative tradition. It is a pretty dreary art—that of the Gallejos, Masters of Burgos, etc. Only the author's devotion as a specialist could maintain the level of placid interest and curiosity at which he unflinchingly writes. Now and then a reader is caught by an expressive detail, only to remind himself that the best Spanish character painting of this style is, on the most favorable estimate, hardly as good as that of third rate Italian provincial painters—say Cozzarelli or Niccolò Alunno.

On the scholarly side Professor Post follows that tradition of probity, cautiousness, and thoroughness which marks the many encyclopedic works which proceed from Harvard. Such a book is simply a boon to the specialist, and especially a godsend to the harassed graduate student envisaging a general examination. It is a survey of a relatively new and neglected field, a book of pioneer spade-work like that of Crowe and Cavalcasello for Italy, seventy years ago. Indeed the author combines in his own person many of the qualities and some of the defects of these two famous path breakers. The fluid condition of the subject may be judged by the fact that these two new volumes offer no less than 160 pages of necessary addenda to the first three.

Science and Scientists

PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECTS OF CONTEMPORARY SCIENCE. By C. E. M. Joad. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$3.75.

Reviewed by F. S. C. NORTHROP

IT is well to remember that science involves the knower as well as the known. And theory which science proposes must provide for the existence of scientists and their knowledge of that which their theories prescribe. In addition, scientists, being human beings, are concerned with what ought to be as well as what is. Hence any adequate scientific doctrine must eventually provide a theory of knowledge and of values.

This book of Mr. Joad's brings the scientific conceptions of Jeans, Eddington, and Russell into conjunction with these two matters. The reader will find it the best introduction by way of science to the epistemological issues with which philosophers concern themselves. No book gives one a better sense of the importance and natural relevance of these more technically professional issues. If philosophers are prone to overemphasize the importance of epistemology, it is equally true that scientists and laymen neglect it. In "Philosophical Aspects of Contemporary Science," Mr. Joad treats this phase of the situation with consummate clarity and great effectiveness.

At no place does this appear more obviously than in his treatment of the position of Eddington. It is no exaggeration to say that when Mr. Joad gets through with the author of "The Nature of the Physical World," there is very little of the latter's position that can be found. What is true of Eddington holds also for Jeans, and, to a lesser extent, for Russell.

But to suggest that Mr. Joad's analysis is devastating, is not to say that his book fails to be constructive. In revealing the difficulties in the conceptions which he attacks, Mr. Joad takes one to the epistemological issue involved, and once having revealed this phase of the scientific situation, he proceeds to outline a positive theory. This theory is that the knowing relation in all phases of knowledge and in all fields of experience is always the same, and is such that the thing known is always other than the knowing subject. This thoroughgoing realism applies to sense data, perceptual objects, such as tables and chairs, scientific objects, such as electrons, and to esthetic and religious objects as well.

This epistemological theory leads him to a pluralistic theory of reality, and to some excellent comments on value. The latter item is worth consideration. Mr. Joad's fundamental thesis with reference to value is that the "idealistic theory" which would make it and the world of science a construction of the human mind degrades value and thereby degrades man. It is born, he holds, of a narrow anthropomorphism which would reduce all to the level of man, whereas value itself being other than man challenges hu-

man imperfections and spurs one on toward superhuman efforts. The same criticism against the "idealistic theory" of religion.

This bare summary should be sufficient to inform the reader that Mr. Joad's book possesses depth and importance, and provides a contribution to contemporary thought concerning the nature of things, which merits serious attention.

One warning may be given. The book tends to assume that the philosophical conceptions of Eddington and Jeans are representative of the philosophical outlook of contemporary science. Mr. Joad refers in his preface to Whitehead and regrets the omission of his ideas. This is a very serious omission and should temper the assumption emphasized in the last part of the book, that the conceptions of Eddington and the discoveries of modern science are synonymous.

Another warning must be noted. Mr. Joad's thesis is that we know only sense data immediately, and that these suggest to us physical objects such as tables and chairs which in turn suggest to us scientific objects such as electrons and protons. It is usual to call the immediately perceived world of sense data, the phenomenal world. For some unspecified reason Mr. Joad calls it the physical world. This forces him to give the world of physics with its tables and chairs and scientific objects a different title. Thus by a mere trick in the handling of nomenclature he seems to show that the world of physics is a non-physical world. The reader will not be misled by this use of terms.

Technique in Fiction

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY NOVEL.

By J. W. Beach. New York: Appleton-Century. \$3.50.

Reviewed by HARLAN HATCHER

THIS book is good enough to make one wish it were much better. Its subject is the technique of the twentieth century novel, and that is a pertinent field for study during the last thirty years. Our novelists have experimented with seemingly every possible method for enlarging and enriching the form of fiction. Often they have been too far in advance of their readers who are, as a class, artistically lazy and sometimes hostile to the new. Any book that attempts to close this separation and to enrich the pleasure of the reader by broadening his understanding of the art behind a good novel must be praised for its worthy purpose.

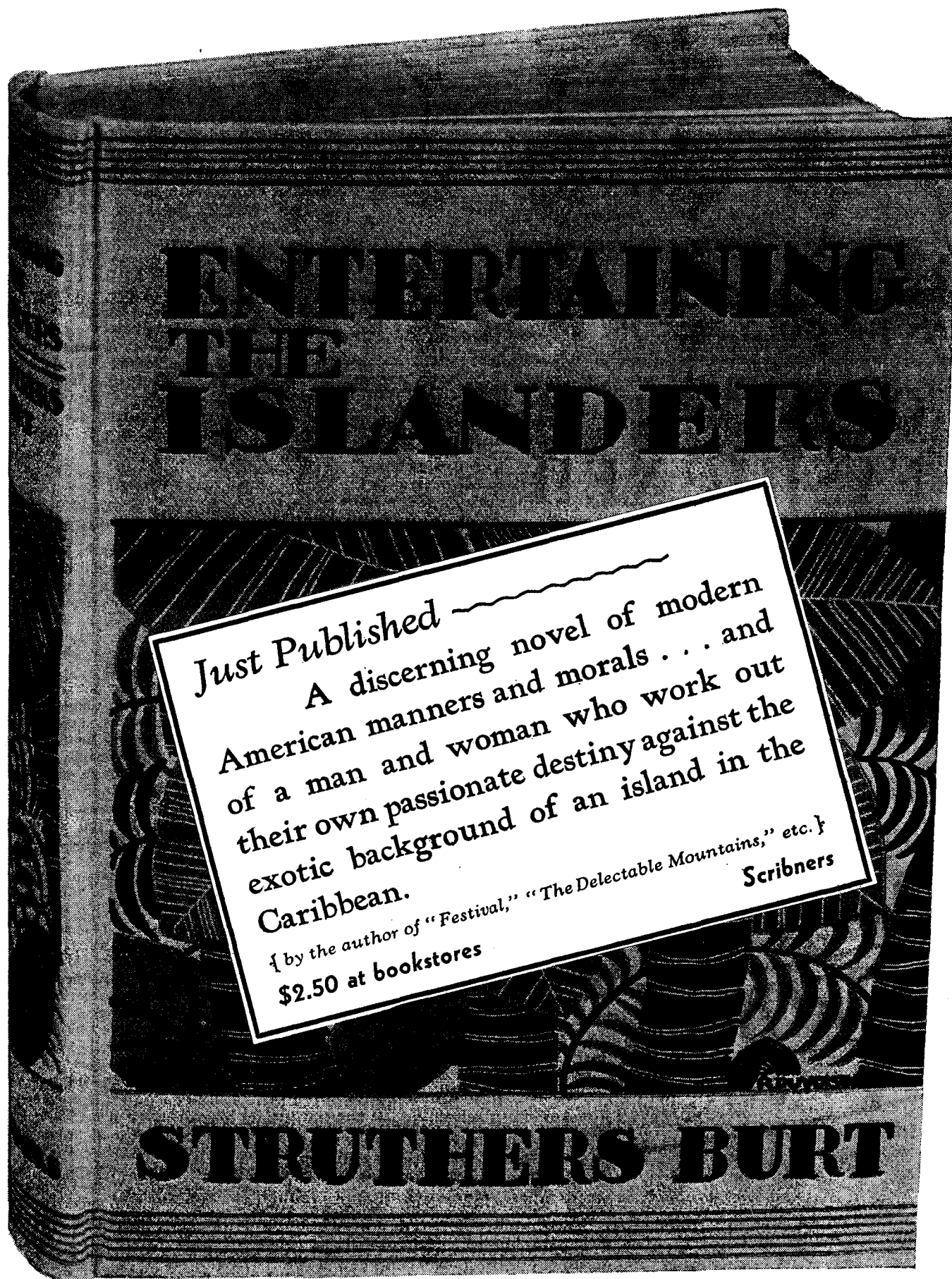
Sometimes, and in its own way, this book is excellent. It covers an enormous field, including most of the great continental as well as the English and American novels. That is no light task. It also reaches back to Fielding and forward to the best seller current on the day of printing, with a section on Faulkner and a mention of "The Good Earth." It tries to isolate and classify the various methods and techniques which have developed in this complex and extensive mass of fiction.

In his discussions of disparate materials, Professor Beach displays a wide but dis-

criminating taste and a fine sense for the technique of the novel. He does well by Dreiser in a particularly good chapter. The section on Joyce contains, within the limits of its space, the best discussion of the method of "Ulysses" that has so far appeared. Great praise must also be offered for the chapters on James, Conrad, and Lawrence, where keen literary criticism is united with an excellent technical analysis.

These things are so good that we wish the whole book were better. But it is not well written. It is rambling, academically talkative, and, in the first third, musty and weighted down with classroom notes on the Fielding to James writers. In this section particularly the style sprawls, and the reader is likely to be irritated by excessive classification and academic jargon.

Further dissatisfaction arises from a confusion of purpose. Much of the book is given over to brief reviews and plot summaries, although the announced purpose is a study of technique. These book notes are often deft, always competent, sometimes illuminating, but they are not always assimilated into the body of the work, and they sometimes seem to be mentioned merely for the sake of mentioning. Strangely enough, among all the novelists who swarm these pages, there is no mention of Ruth Suckow, Kay Boyle, nor Lionel Britton, who have done technically striking things in the novel. On the other hand, Dos Passos rates two complete chapters and a place beside Wassermann, not to mention nearly two score of briefer mentions throughout the book.



ENTERTAINING THE ISLANDERS

Just Published —
A discerning novel of modern
American manners and morals . . . and
of a man and woman who work out
their own passionate destiny against the
exotic background of an island in the
Caribbean.

{ by the author of "Festival," "The Delectable Mountains," etc. }
\$2.50 at bookstores
Scribners

STRUTHERS BURT