

completely. She is as feminine, as intricate, as contradictory as it is well possible for a woman to be. She is a good many people rolled into one. It is not only Sarah Bernhardt and Jeremiah and Werther whom I have discovered but several other people less well defined. But then Goethe himself once said something very profound about genius being born of what we should call in these times a divided personality. If you are only one person, it is quite likely that you will be dull and not accomplish much of interest to the rest of the world.

There is much more to be said on the subject of Miss Ferber. One could indeed write an entire book with no trouble at all. But I must add that she is the soul of generosity and that she is a demon shopper. I have seen her in many parts of the world engaged in what is one of her favorite pastimes—buying lace, glass, porcelain, and Heaven knows what. It is virtually impossible for her to pass the window of an attractive shop without going in, and once inside she rarely escapes without buying. A good many of the things go to her friends but no one in the world could have enough friends to care for the shopping urge of our leading American chronicler. I am convinced that somewhere, hidden away, there is a vast room filled with packing cases and packages which bear the labels of Stockholm, Prague, London, Cairo, Biarritz, and Timbuctu, which have not yet been opened because she has been unable to think up a place for the contents. Some day I hope to see a large Edna Ferber Auction which will empty that mysterious storeroom so that she may begin all over again. Or perhaps she will only take another room.

If you have never met Miss Ferber you have lost much for she is one of the persons to know in our time. If you have her for a friend, you are more than lucky, for not only is she a stalwart friend but she has the gift of making life exciting.

History by Formula

THE UNITED STATES, 1830-1850. *The Nation and Its Sections.* By Frederick Jackson Turner. With an Introduction by Avery Craven. New York: Henry Holt & Company. 1935. \$4.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM MACDONALD

THIS long-awaited book will prove a disappointment to those who had hoped that it would rival in importance "The Frontier in American History," the work upon which Turner's fame as a historian mainly rests. The disappointment will be due only in part to the fact that the book, in spite of fifteen years of labor and more of thought, was still unfinished when Turner died. That situation has been met, as far as it was possible to meet it, by Professor Craven, Dr. Max Farrand, and Turner's secretary, Merrill H. Crissey, who with affectionate care and competent scholarship have edited the manuscript and completed the bibliographical footnotes. The disappointment concerns the plan of the book, the marked contrast between its earlier and later parts, and the doubts which it suggests regarding Turner's grasp of the period as a whole.

In a brief introduction, Professor Craven undertakes to dispel the idea that Turner had "a fixed formula or thesis for American history." Turner did not, he declares, "believe that the American experience was entirely unique; he did not think that the frontier was the sole factor in producing democracy or that only good came from frontier experiences." "His approaches were never narrow," and "no one could have abhorred oversimplification more." His chief weaknesses, in Professor Craven's view, "lay in an uneven knowledge of the varied units which

made up and contributed to American life," his tendency to draw the materials for his generalizations from the Middle West, and a sympathy with the "boundless optimism of the prairies" which caused him, "regardless of the logic of facts," to end invariably "on a rising note of faith in the future, not always justified."

The defense is loyal, but the criticism is destructive. Turner may have thought himself untrammelled by a formula, but a formula nevertheless pervades his writing. He doubtless recognized that the frontier was not the whole story, but it is the frontier that bulks largest in his interpretation. Steeped as he was in the spirit of the Middle West frontier, his attitude was at bottom regional or sectional, and in the field of large national issues he was not at home. When, accordingly, he approached the comprehensive task of which this posthumous volume is the fruit, it was with prepossessions and limitations which were bound to prove hindrances.

The book falls into two parts. The first, comprising nearly two-thirds of the whole, is a detailed study of sections—New England, Middle and South Atlantic, South and North Central, and Texas and the Far West—between 1830 and 1850. With prodigal industry Turner examines the physical characteristics of the several regions, the movements of population and settlement, the racial elements of the population and the avenues of migration, the progress of agriculture, manufactures, trade and transportation, and the varied interests of labor, banking, land, education, religion, State politics, and social life. The effect as a whole is imposing.

What follows, however, is both conventional and unenlightening. The national events of the administrations of Jackson, Van Buren, Tyler, Polk, and Taylor are narrated very much as they have been narrated many times before. There is nothing essentially novel in what is said about the bank, tariff, and nullification controversies, the panic of 1837, the ups and downs of party politics, the growth of expansion sentiment and the Mexican War, or the interactions of slavery and sectionalism, nor does one gather clearly that what was happening was making inevitable a struggle over national union. With all allowance for the lack of revision which Turner would certainly have given had he lived, the absence of a chapter, never in fact written, on the Taylor administration and the Compromise of 1850, and the fact that what is now the final chapter was first designed as part of an introduction, one is forced to conclude that Turner was still thinking in terms of a thesis which only in minor parts was applicable to the period, and that the economic developments and political struggles were largely outside the range of his special interest.



GRAND RAPIDS IN 1831

From James Truslow Adams's "History of the United States" (Scribners).

The BOWLING GREEN by Christopher Morley

Summer Reading

IN the intervals of picking caterpillars off the rose bushes I've been jotting down some suggestions for vacation reading (as requested by L. L. D.). Most of these are of recent publication.

I'll begin with entertainment (including some pretty cruel stuff in that division). This list is not intended to cull a whole publishing season, and omits many fine things (e. g. *Musa Dagh*, *Paths of Glory*, etc.) that are being widely read.

Ruggles, Bunker and Merton by Harry Leon Wilson (now in one volume).

The 3rd Omnibus of Crime (edited by Dorothy Sayers).

The Murder of My Aunt, by "Richard Hull."

The Deadly Dowager, by Edwin Greenwood.

Skin for Skin, by Winifred Duke.

And of course, in case you missed it, *The Nine Tailors* by Dorothy Sayers. Ditto *National Velvet*, by Enid Bagnold.

Portrait of the Artist's Children, by Edward Charles, is a novel of unusual quality which you are unlikely to hear of unless you go hunting for it. I hope a few people interested in painting will read this oddly charming book.

Devotees of music, try *Friends and Fiddlers* by Catherine Drinker Bowen. Of the theatre, *The Curtain Falls* by Joseph Verner Reed. Of geography and exploration, *Unrolling the Map* by Leonard Outhwaite and *Attack on Everest* by Rutledge. Of biology (with plenty of plain speaking), *Rats, Lice and History* by Hans Zinsser.

Amateurs of history and politics will find much in *A History of the World War* by Liddell Hart and *The Road to War* by Walter Millis. For true and marrowy sea heroisms, *SOS to the Rescue* by Karl Baarslag. For the humors of human credulity and a fascinating study of the mind in its optative mood, *Wish and Wisdom*, by Joseph Jastrow. For a thoughtful perspective of French character and education, *My Old World* by Abbé Dimnet. If you've always intended to know something about Montaigne and never got round to him, try *The Autobiography of Montaigne* by Marvin Lowenthal, a quite remarkable achievement; it rearranges the essays to form a connected account of Montaigne's life.

Two older books of tranquillizing felic-

ity, perfect for solitude and solstice, are Pater's *Marius the Epicurean* and Alexander Smith's *Dreamthorp*. To these, as a quiet companion, I suggest *An Almanac for Moderns* by Donald Peattie.

In poetry, at opposite ends of the temperamental spectrum I suggest *The Collected Poems of Edwin Arlington Robinson* and *The Primrose Path* by Ogden Nash.

For students of literary doings, *The Georgian Scene* by Frank Swinnerton, and *Creating the Modern American Novel* by Harlan Hatcher. The Random House series of One Volume Editions (\$3.50

to do so. Which is an enormous step forward for one who has a good deal of print to cover.

Let's add Walt Whitman's *Prose* (David McKay, Philadelphia, has I think the only easily available volume) and Edmund Gosse's *Father and Son*. I am prepared to be reprecached if I lead anyone astray.

Guide to Connecticut

Connecticut has always been to us on Long Island a symbol of distance and allure, a blue horizon across the Sound. The children's first use of its difficult name, long ago, showed that they believed it to mean any country accessible only by adventure and foray. To me, in early youth (my skyline then being different) it sounded uninteresting, a bustle of clocks, firearms, sewing machines, and an equally disconcerting hum of education.

Occasional drives through the State have taught me different; it would be hard to find anything pleasanter on a spring day than the drive up the Housatonic Valley, loitering by the old covered bridges at Cornwall and West Cornwall. Our diligent editor, Mr. Canby, spends much time in that happy region, to the dismay of the trout. When one sees fishermen standing arm-pit-deep in the rushing stream I always think it a pretty accurate symbol of the

editor of this Review, up to his neck in the spate of literature.

But I hardly realized how much Connecticut offers for the explorer until I chanced upon *The Connecticut Guide* lately published by the Emergency Relief Commission in Hartford. It is an attractive paper-bound volume of 320 pp., well mapped and indexed; "a Project of the State Planning Board," says the title-page; compiled by Edgar L. Heermance. Governor Wilbur L. Cross writes a brief cordial greeting to Connecticut's visitors in this year of her 300th anniversary. It is an admirably rich souvenir for exiles from the Nutmeg State, and good to slip into the pocket of a touring car. I'm only sorry that the book gives no indication of its price.

Many little curiosities that I chanced upon in looking through the book give me an impulse to cross the Sound again and go looking. It's interesting at this season to know that in Elizabeth Park, Hartford, is one of the finest rose gardens in the country, "visited by thousands in the



PORTRAIT OF SHERLOCK HOLMES
Drawn by C. H. Taffs

each) are packed with pleasures: for instance the *Swift*, the *Donne*, the *Hazlitt*. For rather more intricate discussion of literary problems, *Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy* by M. C. Bradbrook (Macmillan, \$4). This book (as professor Esther Dunn pointed out in her able review in this paper) has more bearing on contemporary writing than you might suppose.

Part of any honest list of suggestions may be one's own hunches about books one has not yet read. Books I myself should enjoy getting at, though I haven't seen them, are:—

The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins.

The MS of Shakespeare's Hamlet, by J. Dover Wilson.

And, in lighter vein, I have a feeling that these are worth while:—*The Doctor's Son* by John O'Hara; *February Hill* by Victoria Lincoln; *Most Beautiful Lady* by Dorothea Brande; *Who Rides on a Tiger* by Mrs. Belloc Lowndes. I repeat, I haven't read these last, but what I've heard about them has made me willing