

campaign in the West he learned that at the party headquarters in New York there was a good deal of talk about Franklin Roosevelt as a possible candidate for Governor. "Out of the question," was Smith's first reaction to intimates on the campaign train. "You know as well as I do that Frank hasn't any brains." Smith was thinking of Roosevelt's aversion to the drudgery of detail and grappling with hard facts which must almost always be endured (since January 1953 there has been an outstanding exception) if would-be political leaders are to have a measure of success. Even after four years in Albany Roosevelt appeared to Heywood Broun and Walter Lippmann, whom Mr. Burns quotes, as the "corkscrew candidate of a convoluting convention," and as an "amiable man with many philanthropic impulses" who did not have a firm grasp on public affairs. The critics did not realize that something had happened in Albany. There and, outstandingly, in Washington, Roosevelt proved that there is a kernel of truth in La Bruyère's maxim: "Eminent place makes the great man greater than he is; the small man it makes less."

Mr. Burns does not mar or, as could be the case, brighten his text with footnotes. He relegates his "scholarly apparatus" to an appendix of fifty closely printed pages which disclose how formidable is the task of the present-day biographer of a major figure, even if he has attempted, as Stanley Baldwin did, to leave no papers. Even if there were no muniments at Hyde Park there would still be the many collections of papers of contemporaries housed in the Library of Congress. Already there are hundreds of "secondary" books by FDR's associates and by outsiders of whom some can contribute much be-

cause they record rumored trivialities frequently as revealing as tailored opinions. Nowadays, also, the biographer must listen to sound recordings, look at newsreels, and interview those who were near the seat of the mighty. Mr. Burns has made skilful use of these sources but has not permitted them to overwhelm him; his narrative is always smooth and lively. But there is one blemish.

The story naturally comes to an end on a Sunday afternoon in April 1945. Nine months before Roosevelt had said: "All that is within me cries out to go back to my home on the Hudson River." Now he had returned. Mr. Burns is economical with his words:

... a caisson drawn by six brown horses . . . a lone horse, hooded, stirrups reversed and a sword hanging from the left stirrup—symbolic of a lost warrior. . .

A river breeze off the Hudson ruffled the trees above. A military band sounded the sad notes of its dirge. Muffled drums beat slowly and a bugler played the haunting notes of Taps as the coffin was slowly lowered into the grave. The warrior was home.

Every reader, no matter what he thought of "the warrior," will want to pause before he turns the page. He will do well not to turn it at all, because he will find "A Note on the Study of Political Leadership"—five heavily footnoted pages, replete with social-science jargon and generalizations that not only do not illuminate but that do not even glitter. It is as if a pianist had finished a stellar performance of a concerto and while his audience was still in a rapt mood suddenly and stridently begun to drum chopsticks. I hope that the chopsticks will be missing from the first reprinting.

Good Gold

"John D. Rockefeller, Jr., a Portrait," by Raymond B. Fosdick (Harper. 477 pp. \$6.50), is the story of a man who inherited great wealth and has felt a great public responsibility in its use. Our reviewer, John D. Hicks, is Morrison Professor of History at the University of California.

By John D. Hicks

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, Jr. has long been the despair of the muck-rakers. An established principle of their creed is that "any man of wealth must inevitably be acting from sordid motives," which along with the painful results they make it their mission to seek out and reveal. But in the case of the second Rockefeller, throughout his long career, they have had uncommonly bad luck. Perhaps their trouble stems in part from the fact that John D. Rockefeller, Jr. never had to engage in the pursuit of wealth, for it was thrust upon him. It came to him unbidden, and it compounded of itself; it was as inescapable as the air he breathed and in a sense as oppressive as the poverty that engulfed the overwhelming majority of mankind. To John D. Rockefeller, Jr. wealth was primarily a duty and a responsibility, his only to administer and distribute. Brought up on "a Western brand of New England Puritanism," from which he never revolted, he "was continually facing the necessity of squaring his religious views with the facts of life." And in case of doubt it was the right, as he saw it, not expediency that won out. "The only question with wealth," he once said, "is what you do with it. It can be used for evil purposes or it can be an instrumentality for constructive social living."

As a business executive John D. Rockefeller, Jr. demonstrated abilities that made his father proud of him, but he was not at heart a businessman, and to a degree "he was repelled by the tough give-and-take of the business world." "Aware of usages and actions" that he deplored, but could not prevent, he resigned as a director of Standard Oil and U. S. Steel in 1910, and thereafter from many other boards. The Colorado miners' strike of 1913 opened his eyes to the labor point of view, and under the tutelage of Mackenzie King he came to see that it was "just as proper and advantageous" for labor to organize as for capital. He sold his stock in U. S. Steel when his protest to Judge Gary over the twelve-hour day and the seven-



—From "The Lion and the Fox."

FDR in his Governor's chair—"... 'eminent place makes the great man greater'."

day week was ignored. He used his influence to remove Colonel Robert W. Stewart, of Continental Trading Company infamy, from the chairmanship of the Board of Standard Oil of Indiana. He could never escape entirely his business commitments, but from his thirty-sixth year on he turned his attention primarily to "the social purposes to which a great fortune could be dedicated."

Thus the central theme of Raymond B. Fosdick's book "John D. Rockefeller, Jr.: A Portrait" is its subject's career as a philanthropist. It may well be, as Mr. Fosdick asserts, that "the Rockefeller fortune was largely an historical accident in which the special economic, legal, and fiscal situation in the United States between 1865 and 1914 played a determinative part"; it may also be that nothing of the kind should ever be permitted to happen again. But the nation and world were fortunate in having as the steward of this colossal wealth a man of John D. Rockefeller, Jr.'s vision, integrity, and ability. From his father and his father's mentor, Frederick T. Gates, he had learned to think of giving in large terms, wholesale not retail fashion. He had before him the example of four foundations created by his father through gifts totaling nearly half a billion dollars. In all these J. D. R., Jr. played an important and continuing part, but he went on from there to distribute nearly an equal amount in such breathtaking projects as Colonial Williamsburg, the Jackson Hole Monument, the Shenandoah National Park; the Acadia National Park; the Palisades Interstate Park; the Cloisters; restorations at Rheims Cathedral and Versailles; International Houses at Columbia, California, Chicago, and Paris; the Palestine Archaeological Museum, the Save-the-Redwoods League, and literally scores of similar undertakings, many far less tangible and nameable. In addition he built Rockefeller Center in the midst of the Great Depression, furnishing much-needed work for thousands of men, and he presented to the United Nations its incomparable East River site. Each philanthropy was a labor of love, in which the donor put not only his money but himself. "Giving," he once said, "is the secret of a healthy life."

This is not an impartial book and was not so intended. Mr. Fosdick is an admiring friend and associate of the man of whom he writes. But if the book is understandably friendly to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., it is also an honest book. And, as a New York columnist once quipped, "It sort of flattens the notion that it's a terrible thing for anybody to have money."

Mass Producer

"Eli Whitney and the Birth of American Technology," by Constance McL. Green (Little, Brown. 215 pp. \$3.50), is a short biography of the Yankee who invented not only the cotton gin but the pattern of interchangeable parts manufacture. Roger Burlingame, our reviewer, is the author of "Backgrounds of Power: The Human Story of Mass Production."

By Roger Burlingame

AN invention," Constance Green quotes Eli Whitney as saying, "can be so valuable as to be worthless to the inventor." This was painfully true of the cotton gin patented by Whitney in 1794. It was less true of the great invention he made four years later and never patented. This was the pattern of interchangeable parts manufacture that signalized what Mrs. Green in the title of her new book has called the "Birth of American Technology."

Mrs. Green has skilfully balanced these enterprises in their relation both to the inventor's life and to the American scene. The chapters on the cotton gin present that device as a historical necessity too immediately valuable to wait on any law. The desperate post-war depression of the Deep South had extended into the 1790s. Indigo had been abandoned. The war had brought destruction and neglect to the rice plantations. Yet the planters saw all around them a potential crop more profitable than either. Even in the upland wilderness of Georgia green-seed cotton grew "almost as a weed." The one obstacle to making this "weed" into the kind of staple that the spinners of both England and New England with their newly mechanized mills were crying for was the cost of separating the fiber from the clinging seeds. When the Yankee Whitney, sojourning by chance on the plantation of Catherine Greene at Mulberry Grove, produced his simple machine the flood gates were down.

When Whitney patented his "gin" (short for "engine") the Patent Office was only four years old. The constitutional government of the United States was so new that the people of the more remote states scarcely knew what federal law meant. But they knew what upland cotton meant and what the gin meant as soon as the news of it leaked out. Inevitably the invention was stolen. Gins more or less on Whitney's design were being built in the carpenter shops of every plantation in

Georgia before the inventor could set up his manufactory in far-away New Haven.

As the narrative moves into the second Whitney enterprise we get a sense of the inventor's maturity. He had learned a bitter lesson. He would not make the same mistakes again. But with his maturity, too, had come a vision broad enough to encompass not a single invention but a whole sequence of devices designed to multiply production and economize labor. There would be no need for patents here. Whitney's monopoly was inherent in the magnitude of the concept.

Mrs. Green has seen in his patient, meticulous planning a demonstration of the true scientific method. He did not proceed, as was the American custom, empirically, through trial and error. He had worked out his system in theory before he put any of it into practice. The result was that when he signed a contract with the Federal Government to manufacture ten thousand smooth-bore flintlock muskets within two years he had a precise mental blueprint of how this miracle was to be performed.

THE sense of Whitney's profound preoccupation with his idea to the exclusion of every potential practical obstacle is extremely clear. In terms of materials and skill in the "mechanical arts" the idea was at least half a century ahead of its time. Finding that he must work with men who could not possibly understand any part of his novel scheme he had to make every machine with his own hands, and even the tools to make the machines. That he took ten years to complete the two-year promise was still a miracle and, indeed, this span was scarcely too long to work out the pioneer basis of all mass production in the world!

In this part of the book it seems to me that the author's main achievement lies in her presentation of Whitney's genius in transferring his own self-hypnosis to a hard-boiled government. There were, to be sure, intelligent men in the high places—Jefferson and Oliver Wolcott among them—but how through delay after delay Whitney was able to make them realize that the plan itself was worth any number of muskets has always seemed a mystery to students of the event. This book makes it credible.

With the space at her disposal Mrs. Green has not tried to produce an exhaustive documented record. She has written not for the historian or the scholar but for the general reader. Yet she has missed no important event, no vital clue to character, no pertinent feature of background, no bit of drama inherent in her material.