Strozier’s chapters is not on Lincoln at all but on Mary Todd Lincoln, a sensitive, moving, compassionate portrait that by itself will amply reward the reader of this book.

There is not much that is new in these chapters, although devotees of psychobiography will probably disagree. The story, however, deserves retelling, and by combining a scrupulous search of the historical materials (the author’s balanced and judicious use of William H. Herndon’s biography is especially meritorious) with a fluent, engaging style, Strozier has done so with insight and feeling. The unifying theme, as the title suggests, is Lincoln’s quest for union, a private quest that ultimately merged with a public one; put another way, Lincoln’s “private concerns found reflection in the country as a whole” (p. 233). It is a theme with which few can argue. Nothing has been said of Strozier’s Chapter 8, “The Group Self and the Crisis of the 1850s,” in which the author attempts to place the American people on the psychoanalyst’s couch. In his preface Strozier warns the reader of its tentative and problematic nature and suggests that it might even be skipped. In view of this disclaimer it hardly seems fair to comment upon it.

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Reading Dreiser’s American Diaries is largely an exercise in frustration for the reader who expects thoughtful, incisive, extensive comments on people, times, and the author’s own writings. The biographical scholar, however, who needs to know the daily details of Dreiser’s life, will get some satisfaction from the thousands of two-word or one-line references to people met, places traveled to, restaurants visited, women slept with, and work completed or in progress. The mass of atomistic facts and quotidian detail, impressive though it is, rarely blossoms into insightful, articulate response that would reveal Dreiser’s personality.

Two examples will suffice to define the problem. Since these diaries cover the years in which Dreiser wrote An American Tragedy, one would expect interesting revelations about the process of composition. A check of every index reference to
the *Tragedy*, however, yields nothing but a disappointing collection of bare-bone notations, none of which goes beyond "Working on *An American Tragedy*" (p. 350) or "give her Chapter 17 of *An American Tragedy* to type . . . Finish chapter 18" (p. 409). This procedure, incidentally, turned up one erroneous index reference to p. 453, which turns out to be part of the list of emendations.

The fifty-two entries under H. L. Mencken promise a bountiful harvest of information on the relationship between these two major figures; but on the whole the pickings turn out to be rather slim. The most interesting of the Mencken entries provides a mere glimpse of Dreiser's attitude toward his friend: "Mencken is there with her sister and likes to have her stay there nights when he is there, 'for looks.' The cautious conventionalist!" (p. 169). As for the rest, Dreiser rarely goes much beyond the merest mention of seeing Mencken or receiving a letter from him. In two instances, references to "Mencken's book" (pp. 195, 205) remain unidentified by the editors, whose glosses are otherwise informative, substantial, and clear.

There are a few notable passages where Dreiser suddenly ceases to write in his usual truncated style. These passages stand out both because they occur so rarely and because they immediately engage one's interest and attention. For example, in his 1902-1903 Philadelphia diary Dreiser gives a moving description of being down to his last pennies, yet too ashamed to enter a free public dispensary for medical treatment:

I walked to and fro, thinking of what they would and what I would say and then finally I felt as if I had better not try it. Accordingly I started toward the city but when I got as far as the bridge that spans the Schuylkill at Walnut street, I recovered my courage and went back. When I reached the sidewalk opposite however a negro was cleaning the windows. I felt as if he would know what I was coming for and so I strolled by again . . . (p. 95).

The immediacy of this scene and Dreiser's focus on his emotions draw the reader's interest far more than all the detailed chronological listings of daily events.

In this sense, then, the *Diaries* is a book by scholars for scholars, rather than for the general reader. It was put together by thorough and meticulous editors, who provide not only an informative introduction and ample footnotes but also a sensible set of editorial principles, helpful headnotes for each diary (there is, incidentally, a rather large gap without extant diaries between 1903 and 1916), a mercifully short list of selected emendations, and a useful index containing only a small number of detected errors (e.g., H. T. Coates & Co. appears in the

In The Old Country School Wayne E. Fuller studies primary education in the midwestern countryside during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The subject is a promising one, and the author brings his considerable talents as a researcher and writer to his exploration of it. Unfortunately, the merits of the book are insufficient to overcome its simplistic, one-dimensional quality.

Fuller's affection for the one-room schools of the midwestern past shines through on every page. His sensitive understanding of the struggles of farmers, teachers, boards of education, and county superintendents to create and maintain an educational system is remarkable. And the picture he draws of the nature of the schools, their pupils, teachers, materials, and curricula is outstanding. In Fuller's hands the one-room school becomes all of the things it was supposed to be—a key community adhesive, a showcase for democracy, and a quality educational institution.

Fuller's championship of the one-room school would be admirable if it did not lead him into a narrow and ultimately unsatisfactory analysis. Fuller is so determined to uphold the worth of the little rural schools that he skirts questions about their quality by lapsing into special pleading or exuding a haze of nostalgia. Too often he reaches conclusions which are unjustified by the evidence, as is the case when he suggests that Indiana's relatively high illiteracy rate in the late nineteenth century was attributable mainly to the fact that the township—rather than the rural district—was the main unit of school governance. When Fuller discusses the challenges posed by professional educators to the tiny districts and their one-room schools, his treatment assumes the character of a morality play. The forces of good are represented by the embattled farmers struggling to preserve their local jewels of democracy, and the forces of evil are embodied in the professional educators whose motivation is explained primarily as a quest for power. Recent scholarship regarding rural education and its