

bathtub." By 1921 the transition was virtually complete and the country store had become little more than a memory.

So skillfully does Carson recreate the atmosphere of the general store that the reader has no difficulty in visualizing its crammed shelves and its cheery stove surrounded by idlers who exchanged stories and munched crackers from a nearby barrel while they wrinkled their noses at the pungent smell of raw kerosene or the fragrant aroma of roasting coffee beans. He is alternately sympathetic toward the storekeeper when the latter is given in trade eggs about to hatch or butter churned from cream in which a mouse had drowned, and critical of him when he wipes the mold off the pork sausage and rubs it with butter to freshen it up. Such characters and incidents provide the basis for Carson's thorough and well-rounded treatment. Indeed, the pages of *The Old Country Store* sparkle with as many colorful, humorous, and interesting people and products as its subject did in its heyday.

Ohio Historical Society

John S. Still

Alexandra Gripenberg's A Half Year in the New World: Miscellaneous Sketches of Travel in the United States (1888). Translated and edited by Ernest J. Moyne. (Newark, Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 1954, pp. xv, 225. Illustration and index. \$4.00.)

Throughout the nineteenth century books on the United States by European travellers were popular in this country as well as in Europe. Some of them remain important sources of social history. To the accounts of earlier feminine visitors, such as Frances Trollope, Harriet Martineau, and Frederika Bremer, which have long been familiar to American readers, is now added *A Half Year in the New World* by Alexandra Gripenberg. The book, which appeared in 1889 and 1891 in Swedish and Finnish editions respectively, has recently been translated into English and edited by Ernest J. Moyne.

Alexandra Gripenberg, member of a distinguished Swedish-Finnish family, was the author of several other books and a leader in securing the emancipation of Finnish women. The present book is in the form of random recollections of her travels and observations during a six months tour of the

United States in 1888. She came to this country as a delegate to the International Council of Women, which met in Washington, D.C. Her book contains an enthusiastic account of this convention, with sketches of such prominent feminists as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone, Julia Ward Howe, and May Wright Sewall. Next to the women's rights movement the author showed the greatest interest in American literature and literary figures, a subject about which she displayed considerable knowledge and appreciation. She visited several literary shrines and met a number of writers. Chapters in the book are devoted to such diverse literary figures as Harriet Beecher Stowe, Mark Twain, and Joaquin Miller. She was fascinated too by some of the new religious movements and made inquiries into Spiritualism, Christian Science, and Mormonism.

During her visit she travelled across the entire continent, observing many varied aspects of the American scene. In her book she sought to cover many other subjects, ranging from politics to the natural wonders of Niagara and Yosemite. Among the more entertaining parts is an account of conditions of railroad travel which she encountered on a trip from Chicago to San Francisco, where she attended a meeting of the National Education Association.

The author showed less understanding of American history and politics than of some other subjects. Although she attended the Republican National Convention of 1888 the complexities of American politics baffled her. Her account of the differences between the Republican and Democratic parties was an over-simplification, to say the least. She also made some egregious errors regarding history, as when she represented the Fourteenth Amendment as a cause of the Civil War.

She visited settlements of her Finnish compatriots in San Francisco and Ashtabula but found little to commend in their way of life (possibly because they retained their native fondness for strong drink, while she was a temperance advocate). On the other hand her attitude toward Americans and American institutions was generally sympathetic and frequently admiring. She had warm praise for American family life and especially for the liberty and esteem enjoyed by American women.

Alexandra Gripenberg's account is not so penetrating

as the works of some other European visitors, but neither is it so biased as some others. Its publication adds an enjoyable item to the social history of the late nineteenth century.

Butler University

Emma Lou Thornbrough

General Edmund Kirby Smith, C. S. A. By Joseph H. Parks.
(Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1954,
pp. viii, 537. Illustrations, bibliography, and index.
\$6.00.)

This very interesting biography by Joseph Parks deals with a Confederate general for whom no real biography has been previously attempted. In many ways Kirby Smith was one of the most dramatic as well as controversial figures of this trying period in the development of American democracy. Obviously a lost cause is productive of controversial figures. Those who lead victorious armies, or their component parts, are more likely to be glorified, than censured for mistakes. The Kirby Smith who helped turn the tide for the South in the first battle of Manassas and who spear-headed what might have proved a successful Southern invasion of Kentucky and of the West found his star dimming when he faced the problems, as general in command, of that portion of the Confederacy known as the Trans-Mississippi. This was particularly true after the surrender of Vicksburg cut the Confederacy in two and isolated that area.

Kirby Smith was a native Floridian whose roots were deep in Connecticut soil. Like many other natives of the area north of the Mason-Dixon line, his parents had transplanted themselves to a southern state and came to love it, even though memories of childhood persisted.

In addition to the Connecticut background this particular Smith family had an army background, which made them, as it were, to the manner born. This means that Kirby Smith had a number of army connections as well as friends of various degrees of intimacy who were in some large measure helpful in forwarding his career in the Army.

Like many other West Pointers of his day, General Kirby Smith received his baptism of fire, in his training for the War for Southern Independence, in the Mexican War where he gave a good account of himself and emerged as a breveted