

tion and sound analysis into a relatively short space and in an eminently readable style.

Because of the long domination of the Southern viewpoint on Reconstruction, it is always necessary, in writing or speaking of the subject, not only to describe what happened but also what did not. Stamppp does an excellent job of this, using facts and common sense to demolish many fallacies and misconceptions. Especially perceptive is his criticism of Charles Beard's "Second American Revolution" thesis, which saw Reconstruction policy as mainly inspired by the economic interests of Northern big business. Stamppp readily grants that Beard and his followers made a valuable contribution to history by calling attention to the economic aspects of the period. But, as usual in their case, they went too far—so much so that they practically excluded all other factors. The reason for their one-sidedness, Stamppp believes, lies in a concept of history which regarded economic motives as the only "real" ones and which ignored other types of causation.

In conjunction with his criticism of Beard, Stamppp also disposes of the old question of whether the Radicals were motivated by "idealism" or by "partisanship." He simply points out that neither in the minds of the Radicals nor as a matter of objective fact was their any inherent contradiction between the two, at least during the early stages of Reconstruction. In other words, by advancing the cause of the Negro the Radicals advanced the interests of the Republican party and *vice versa*. Eventually, of course, Reconstruction ended ingloriously as the North and the Republican party abandoned the Negro to the Southern "Redemptionists." The Radical effort to establish and protect Negro civil and political rights had apparently failed. In the long run, however, it did not. While in power, and by the only means and at the only time they could have done so, the Radicals had put through the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments. Nearly a hundred years later, these measures served as the legal springboard for a New Reconstruction, one which must succeed or this nation shall fail.

Since *The Era of Reconstruction* is essentially and frankly a summary of the work of other writers, the specialist will encounter little in it that is new; but he will experience the satisfaction of seeing most of his judgments affirmed by one of the leading historians of the Civil War period. The non-specialist, the student, and the interested layman will find the book a stimulating as well as an informative introduction to the latest and best in Reconstruction scholarship. It is to be hoped that this work reaches a large audience, especially among people of influence, and will thus help to dispel some of the myths about Reconstruction that hamper efforts in the civil rights field to this day.

Western Michigan University

Albert Castel

William Jennings Bryan. Volume I, *Political Evangelist, 1860-1908*. By Paolo E. Coletta. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964. Pp. x, 486. Notes, illustrations, bibliography, index. \$6.50.)

The writer of this review agrees with the late Claude Bowers who, writing shortly before his death a few years ago, believed that even historians had failed to do justice to William Jennings Bryan. The H. L.

Mencken image of Bryan projected at the Scopes trial and the play and movie, "Inherit the Wind," have tended to confirm the stereotype of a narrow-minded, unintelligent bigot. Of the half dozen or more earlier biographies of the Commoner none is satisfactory.

If Bowers were writing in 1965, however, his assessment would, no doubt, be different. A new interest in Bryan has recently developed among historians; and, for the most part, a new and fairer picture of him is emerging. In addition to the book reviewed, the works of Paul Glad and Lawrence W. Levine, among others, are providing a better balanced interpretation of the Nebraska statesman.

Professor Coletta's work is the first volume of a projected two-volume biography of Bryan. If the scholarship that goes into the second volume even approaches the painstaking effort evidenced in the first, the completed work will come about as near being definitive as any biography can be. It is to be hoped, however, that readers will not have to wait as long for the second volume as for the first. For some eighteen or twenty years Professor Coletta, along with his teaching, has been gathering material and writing this volume. Unlike some writers on Bryan, he has not "rushed in where angels fear to tread" in treating this complex and controversial character in American history. His treatment is neither sensational nor superficial. He has combed many sources, both primary and secondary. This reviewer, who himself has gone through the Bryan papers in the Library of Congress, knows of no one who has searched and used his collection more extensively than Coletta has. He has also used numerous other manuscript collections, including unused Bryan papers preserved by the late Ruth Bryan Rhode, a daughter of the Commoner, and those preserved by the late Silas Bryan, a nephew. In addition, the author had the use of the Henry Steele Commager papers which Commager began to gather a number of years ago for a Bryan biography, but which he never completed.

In view of the large number of sources used, it may seem ungracious to call attention to others not drawn upon. Nevertheless, some may be a bit surprised that, apparently, neither the Ignatius Donnelly nor the James B. Weaver collection was used.

The author's aim is to deal with Bryan largely as a political figure who left his impress on American foreign and domestic policy from 1890, when he entered Congress, through his third defeat for the presidency in 1908. He succeeds well in his purpose. More could have been said, however, about Bryan's social and religious thought, even in this earlier period, had the author chosen to do so.

Bryan's greatest contribution, thinks the author, "was his insistence that political liberty could work only in the context of relative economic equality" (p. 438). Influenced by Jeffersonian agrarianism, he worked for the restoration of that economic opportunity which was destroyed by a triumphant, unregulated capitalism. All of his numerous reforms, nearly all of which were later adopted during the Progressive movement or during the New Deal, had this restoration in mind.

The weaknesses of this work are few and minor compared with its strengths. Some may disagree with a minor statement of fact here or a judgment there. This reviewer, for example, would be willing to

make still greater concessions to the rightness of Bryan's position on free silver, at least down to 1897, than the author apparently does. The work of Professor Milton Friedman, an outstanding authority on economics and finance at the University of Chicago, and who as one of Barry Goldwater's advisers in last year's campaign could hardly be characterized as a flaming radical, could have been profitably cited at this point. Some other readers may feel that the work moves along too slowly; that it is too detailed, and at times repetitious. But, whatever the minor blemishes may be, one has a feeling that here is an excellent, trustworthy, and scholarly work on Bryan down to 1908—one in which the author, with no axes to grind, makes a serious and successful effort, not to exalt or pillory, but to understand the man who, with all his mistakes, deserves more credit than has usually been given him for the important part he played in the Progressive movement.

Goshen College

Willard H. Smith

Five Novelists of the Progressive Era. By Robert W. Schneider. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965. Pp. vii, 290. Notes, index. \$7.50.)

The Progressive Era, either as a halcyon period before the holocaust of two world wars or as a period of transition necessary before the acceptance of a scientific orientation, has recently attracted the attention of social scientists and cultural historians alike. Richard Hofstadter's *Social Darwinism in American Thought* and Henry May's *The End of American Innocence* are two cases in point. Robert W. Schneider's *Five Novelists of the Progressive Era*, an attempt to shed light on the period 1890-1917 through a close examination of the work of five writers of fiction, seems to be a blend of the two approaches. The author concentrates his attention on "the thought patterns of a generation which reached intellectual maturity during the 1890s" (p. 5) and selects literary figures as his sources because they best represent a continuity of the old traditions and an intelligent criticism of the new ideas. His conclusion is that the period defined was one "of uneasy transition, not of intellectual revolution" (p. 255).

The authors selected as focal figures immediately raise problems. Howells as a mild realist with a genuine interest in social reform is an inevitable choice. Dreiser with his determinism, his antipathy to capitalism, and his pet theory of "chemic" compulsions directing human behavior is equally unavoidable (although the failure to consider *An American Tragedy*, 1925, weakens the argument). The inclusion of Winston Churchill, at one time an enormously popular novelist as well as an actual participant in New Hampshire politics, is particularly appropriate. But it is hard to understand why Stephen Crane and Frank Norris are given similar attention. Although Crane's association with early American naturalism (he published *Maggie* in 1893) is well established, his role as a significant social thinker is surely questionable. And today one can hardly take Norris' rhapsodic romanticism very