

*The Historical World of Frederick Jackson Turner, with Selections from His Correspondence.* Narrative by Wilbur R. Jacobs. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968. Pp. xxii, 289. Notes, illustrations, bibliographical note, index. \$10.00.)

Selecting some 150 letters from 3,000 letters of Turner to his friends and colleagues of the academic world, Jacobs seeks to present Turner as a humanist: an advocate of interdisciplinary education who emphasized social and economic history and taught history by going to the sources. But by concentrating on career events and the patronage and patronization of the professional establishment, one can only be more impressed with Turner's narrowness and provincialism rather than his human qualities. His wit contains the subtle vanity and mild egotism reserved for one member of the Establishment to another.

The main divisions of the book are: "Turner's Life and Affairs," "Turner's Educational Concerns," "Social History and Politics," "Problems in Writing History," and "The Generous Critic." Even though the editor acknowledges that Turner "is not one of the great letter writers" (p. 251), it is disappointing that Turner's observations, at least from a later viewpoint in time, seem so superficial. He fails to gauge the progressive impulse of his generation, and he sees social forces merely as a problem of immigration. Somewhat amusingly, he has the same xenophobia about Germans that had irked Benjamin Franklin.

This volume is most useful as an analysis of the objectives of the university, and especially Turner's own concern over what he considered to be an exclusive dilemma: teacher versus scholar and vice versa. There is no mistake that Turner thought of himself as a latter day Socrates—as contrasted to the feverish publish or perish pace of his friend, Woodrow Wilson (who is credited with swinging the department chairmanship at Wisconsin to the young Turner). An attempt should have been made in this volume to reproduce some of Turner's lecture notes or at least to comment on his classroom "give-and-take." Especially it would be instructive to know Turner's interpretations in his participation in The History of Liberty course at Harvard; without any information here and in the light of the correspondence in this volume, it can only be assumed that he had no interest in the fundamental issues of freedom, other than a frontier modification of H. B. Adams' "germ theory" and the Social Darwinism of his day.

Jacobs includes a bibliography of Turner's works and a fine critical essay of studies on the Turner thesis. Turner himself mentions all the authors whom he considers indebted to him in a letter to Constance Lindsay Skinner, who had given most favorable reviews to his books, and who intended to use the material for an introduction to a book she was publishing.

One of a trilogy on Turner, this book affords an excellent autobiographical reconstruction of the life of a chief representative of the "ivory tower" in an Age of Innocence, who delighted in the safely controversial but not the controversy.