

to win the regard of the scattered members of our potential intellectual aristocracy. Only in spiritual consolations of this kind can the artist find his proper audience, his necessary support. Mr. Brooks also makes the point that the poverty which the artist must necessarily suffer is a heavier burden in these States than elsewhere. It means not merely physical, but intellectual starvation. He quotes Samuel Butler to the effect that "A genius can never expect to have a good time anywhere, if he is a genuine article, but America is about the last place in which life will be endurable at all for an inspired writer of any kind." One of the things that make it endurable for our generation is the example of such honest and earnest workers as Mr. Brooks.

It is distressing to descend from the intellectual peaks one treads with this clear sighted and plausible thinker to the dull little backwater on which Mr. Abbott lazily punts. His collection of studies contains some fine quotations from the writings of his heroes, but he scarcely bears reading for himself.

Emerson and Others. By Van Wyck Brooks. E. P. Dutton and Company.
Twelve Great Modernists. By Lawrence F. Abbott. Doubleday, Page and Company.

ANGLO-AMERICAN

By Gerald Carson

AMONG the substantial biographies appearing on the publishers' lists this spring none has a more interesting subject treated in a happier vein than H. A. L. Fisher's two careful, well documented volumes on James Bryce.

Lord Bryce is a congenial subject to carry to an American public. He is

justly regarded here as having been our most sympathetic as well as our most influential modern British interpreter. The Civil War first drew the attention of Bryce, then a brilliant young Oxford historian, to American affairs. He paid the first of his many visits to this country in 1870.

"He fell in love with the United States", says Mr. Fisher. "It was almost a case of love at first sight."

Bryce's courtship of the American genius was ardent, for he visited this country no less than seven times before his appearance at Washington as British Ambassador in 1907, and his American contacts were already numerous and well tended.

In a review for *THE BOOKMAN* upon F. W. Hirst's "Early Life and Letters of John Morley" I recently spoke of one of the important differences between British and American life: that whereas in our country the best men keep out of politics, in Britain it is quite the contrary. There the young men of strongest character and most ranging ambition force their way as soon as possible into active political life. Lord Morley was one example. Lord Bryce affords another.

Like Morley and other of the able men who have eventually graced the House of Lords, Bryce was of humble but stalwart stock. He was Scotch and Irish and Presbyterian, a man whose apprehensive mind and inflexible attachment to principle made him a powerful force whenever intellectual or moral values were uppermost. Being Scotch-Irish, an evangelical Protestant, and a well educated commoner to boot, Bryce belonged politically among the Liberals. In 1874 he offered himself as a Liberal candidate for Parliament and was defeated. He was then a young lawyer of thirty six, with a solid

reputation as an historian because of his brilliant early essay "The Holy Roman Empire".

In 1880 Bryce was successful in getting a seat, and from then until his death he was engaged constantly in politics, in travel, in writing or preparing to write books. His curiosity was like that of an eighteenth century philosopher. He was interested in flowers and stones and mountain climbing, in Homer, in woman suffrage in Ohio, in wild animals, in Armenia, in the work of American humanistic scholars, in the history of human progress, in peace, in the fortunes of the American Negroes, in Hindu temples, and in the progress of business and manufactures in the United States.

Mr. Fisher points out that Bryce was not a great writer. One does not think of him in terms of form or style. One thinks of his solid substance. Loving knowledge, Lord Bryce wrote to convey information. He wrote about what he saw and heard and read.

Greatest among his interests was his concern with the workings of modern democracy. That interest led him naturally to the United States and to the composition of "The American Commonwealth", the book by which we know him best.

Mr. Fisher covers the years of the Great War in much detail. They represent Bryce at the top of his powers, writing to Root, Roosevelt, Henry Holt, Dr. Eliot, President Lowell of Harvard, and the historian James Ford Rhodes, with a thoroughly British point of view (which Mr. Fisher quite preserves in his interpretative remarks) but with a temperateness and comprehension of the United States which marks him as a real Anglo-American.

Mr. Fisher's long narrative is com-

pletely objective, as it should be. Lord Bryce would be a tough subject for a psychologist. His significance lies elsewhere than in the curiosity or intricacy of his interior life. Rather, he is significant because of what he was and what he did, and it is the glory of biography that although it is a part of the literature of fact, it becomes, in dealing with such a man as Lord Bryce, a part of the literature of power, from which posterity draws courage and refreshment.

James Bryce. By H. A. L. Fisher. Two volumes. The Macmillan Company.

LOIS MONTROSS LEAVES THE CAMPUS

By Desmond Powell

THE title of Lois Montross's new book of short stories gives a cue to the characters about whom she writes. For the most part they are the kind of persons who, if they are mentioned at all, are mentioned only as "among those present". Mrs. Montross enters into the mental processes of these characters so completely and depicts their motives with so great a tolerance and so fine an artistry that they attain an intense interest denied them in actual life. Miss Shaley and the wife in "Near a Park" could be nothing but dowdy and mediocre to their most intimate friends. Under Lois Montross's deft fingers they become vital and important; they command our sympathy; they make us willing sharers of their experiences.

Not all of the characters, however, are drawn from the rank and file. One or two are cast in another mold. The protagonist in "The Man Who Was God" has in him the makings of a hero in the old style; and there is a quality