

satisfied that he has drawn some away from childish, futile house-building on the sands of this world; for he is sure that "unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it" (Ps. 126, 1).  
V.M.R.

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**Fifty Years of the American Novel: A Christian Appraisal.** Edited by Harold C. Gardiner, S.J. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951. pp. xii, 304. \$3.00.

There has been a desperate need for an anthology of this kind for some time. Father Gardiner has done us a very great service by editing the present work as have the well-known contributors whose names are sufficient guarantee of the book's excellence.

Father Gardiner himself has written an admirable introductory essay on the point of a Christian appraisal, setting the motif and pattern for the studies which follow. The competent Jesuit critic points out that all literature is *essentially* religious. This is a bold statement; but, in the opinion of this reviewer, an incontestable one in view of Father Gardiner's closely knit, logical reasoning. He goes on to point out that the Christian critic is the best critic, since his basic preconceptions are the most sound. In particular, the Christian critic has a profound insight into the nature of tragedy in that he can view with appreciative sympathy "the tragic stature or at least the tragic potentialities latent in man" (p. 11).

Included in the volume are analyses of Edith Wharton, Theodore Dreiser, Ellen Glasgow, Willa Cather, Sinclair Lewis, John Phillips Marquand, F. Scott Fitzgerald, John Dos Passos, William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, Thomas Wolfe, John Steinbeck, and James T. Farrell. Robert C. Healey, and Nicholas Joost have written the concluding essays on *Novelists of the War* and *Robert Penn Warren and New Directions in the Novel* respectively.

It would be impossible, of course, in this limited space to proffer a critique of all the essays here contained. Each reviewer will find certain ones to his own liking; and he will, no doubt, find others to which he will take exception. All the contributors, however, have presented strong arguments in favor of their theses, and, for the most part, these arguments are given clearly and with considerable insight. The present reviewer found Father John S. Kennedy's essay on John Steinbeck, Anne Freemantle's on Edith Wharton, and Frank O'Malley's on James T. Farrell the most rewarding. Father Kennedy demonstrates with telling force

that in the last analysis we must relegate Steinbeck to the rank of sentimentalists, one who, "in his concern for Manself and Life has dissolved both for want of exact and plenary knowledge of what they are" (p. 235). Miss Freemantle's critique of Edith Wharton is that she lacked a sense of glory. Her strength came not from Him Who is the font of all strength, but rather from her own "stiff upper lip." Frank O'Malley, in his thoughtful essay on James T. Farrell, informs us that Farrell while an earnest sociologist, is not an accomplished artist. He lacks a poetic sense, and, what is more important, he is unable to transcend his own frame of reference which is avowedly naturalistic.

One defect on the part of this otherwise splendid work is the somewhat tortured style of some of the contributors. Prose that is overwritten, especially when it has a positive message, is quite painful to read. It is for this very reason that the reviewer is unable to offer any criticism of Charles Brady's essay on Marquand. For Mr. Brady succeeds in obfuscating his basic theme (whatever it is) with phrases, metaphors, and similes which are, to say the very least, puzzling. Thus, all of Marquand's protagonists are "foredoomed Balin-Balans" (p. 109), another character is a "bifurcated deuteragonist" (119), still another is "a well-bred *homme moyen sensuel* with a habit of meeting up with Kismet in the drawing room" (p. 131). How much can the poor reader take!

With this somewhat minor qualification the book is recommended enthusiastically to all. It should serve as a handy guide book for those who do not have the time or opportunity to study the writers it discusses. For the essays are definitive in every sense of the word.

J.F.C.

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**The United States and Spain.** By Carlton J. H. Hayes. New York, Sheed and Ward, 1951. pp. 198. \$2.75.

Carlton J. H. Hayes, noted historian and former Ambassador to Spain, in his latest book, calls for a termination of our "unfortunate and mistaken" postwar policy towards Spain and the immediate inclusion of that unfortunate nation in the Atlantic Treaty for common defense. He traces our present policy to "Communist and other Leftish propaganda" concerning the Spanish Civil War, which was "particularly marketable in the United States during the period of our 'New Deal'." Besides, Americans were remarkably well disposed to such propaganda because of the bigoted prejudices which we had inherited from