

shaping of its own world. This ideal of life as fine and free art involves, as Mr. Brown seems to see, a radical overhauling of our established prejudices and routine institutions. Mr. Brown does not look to any magic to transform our world. He has simply and successfully tried to define where our *Kultur* falls short of being alive, in order that we may turn to seek life more abundant. He has done an excellent and necessary job.

The Creative Spirit. By Rollo Walter Brown. Harper and Brothers.

PRESENT DAY PORTRAITS OF JESUS

By Charles Francis Potter

THE eternal value of Jesus is that he belongs to all time and all places. Attempts to localize him, as in Mary Austin's "A Small Town Man", or to modernize him, as in Bruce Barton's "The Man Nobody Knows", are foredoomed to failure, for his acknowledged universal appeal is not limited geographically or chronologically.

When Mary Austin writes a book to prove him a small town man, we know beforehand that she may remind us that he was born in a village and spent most of his days there, but that her thesis can never be proved, with so much evidence against it. The phrase, "a small town man", has a distinct connotation of inferiority. It implies an individual of provincial ideas and limited horizons. It is true that historical criticism has revealed that Jesus had ideas about demon possession and the millennium which were local and temporary, but the world knows that the Man of Galilee was anything but a small town man. His was an

eternal and universal life, although he lived at a certain time and in a very small place.

When Mr. Barton attempts to prove that Jesus was an American super-salesman born out of due time, we know that his thesis, too, is too much for any clever author to succeed in demonstrating. Indeed, we have a feeling almost of revulsion that anyone should try such a theme. We can suffer the Gideons to put Bibles in the hotels for the salvation of traveling salesmen, but Jesus as a suitcase-carrying drummer is altogether too much for our imaginations.

Mr. Barton confesses in his preface that his book was written as a protest against the idea of Jesus as "a pale young man with flabby forearms and a sad expression" who also wore "red whiskers". This conception was taught in the Sunday School which the author attended in his youth, and we sympathize with the boy's protest. But the defense mechanism which was then established developed such power that the grown man has gone to the other extreme. The picture which is drawn as an antithesis is just as repulsive, except to Rotarians and Babbits. From the book we get a confused and rather painful impression of a muscular hiker who "slept outdoors and spent his days walking around his favorite lake". This he-man was a successful business organizer and at the same time "the most popular dinner guest in Jerusalem". The Man Nobody Knows is a man whom few of us want to know. We have seen too many of the sort in the marts of New York City. One almost prefers the pale young man of the Sunday School charts of Mr. Barton's boyhood.

Such chapter headings as "The Executive", "His Advertisements", and "The Founder of Modern Busi-

ness" shock us into attention. One gets the same impression of incongruity as comes from reading in recent translations of the gospels into Americanese, where "Yea, Lord" is rendered, "Yes, Sir." We read such chapters to see if their headings are justified and find them more ingenious than convincing.

The Bible verse following the title page, presumably as a text for the book, is from the incident of the twelve year old Jesus in the Temple, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's *business*?" The italics are Mr. Barton's, and are inexcusable from the point of view of accurate translation. As a matter of fact the word "business" is not in the Greek at all. When it was inserted by the King James translators to make English sense, the word "business" had not at all the commercial connotation which Mr. Barton gives it and upon which his whole thesis depends. The author forgets, evidently, that it was from that same temple a few years later that this same Jesus drove out with a whip of cords some very successful business men.

The titles of both books are unfortunate. There is an irritating arrogance in "The Man Nobody Knows: A Discovery of Jesus" as a title for a book about a man whom everybody knows. The author has no new material for his book: he can only give his interpretation of the source material which has been available for centuries. We do appreciate a certain vigor of expression and a refreshing insistence upon the manhood of Jesus, but Mr. Barton has made no discoveries.

Mrs. Austin's title is intriguing, but not justified by the contents. An accurate title would be "Jesus, the Mystic". The volume is a rewriting of her very fine book of 1915, "The

Man Jesus". In this edition she has laid more emphasis upon the mystical side of Jesus's nature. She says in the preface that the present volume is carried out in the way she originally intended to write the book — the public was not ready for it at that time. Either volume is very readable and inspiring. It is the best book about Jesus ever written by a woman, and in parts and ways is better than any written by men. It takes a womanly intuition to bring out some phases of Jesus's universal character, and this study supplements all other biographies extant.

Nevertheless, Renan's "Life of Jesus" remains the best modern biography of the greatest character of history.

A Small Town Man. By Mary Austin.
Harper and Brothers.
The Man Nobody Knows. By Bruce Barton.
Bobbs-Merrill Company.

TO SPANK OR NOT TO SPANK

By Eva v. B. Hansl

UNTIL the editor sent me the latest batch of books on child training to review, I thought the subject of spanking had been settled long ago in favor of spoiling the child and sparing the rod. But here, within one week, a college professor pleads for a short snappy spank instead of a long verbal lecture-beating, two Senators in the legislature of the State of Michigan introduce two bills to restore the whipping post, and a New York publishing house issues a book — "Beginning the Child's Education" by Ella Frances Lynch — which is a thinly disguised plea for the reinstatement of the ancient and lately dishonored switch in the home.