

Revolution cut off English supplies that manufacturing got a start, but this was largely lost again when peace reopened the ports and renewed the pull of the *virgin* West.

In the end, though, it was the advancing frontier that not only gave a stimulus to inventions but provided one of great significance—the Pennsylvania rifle, which Mr. Burlinghame finds largely responsible for the success of the Revolution. America, indeed, has always been predominant in the manufacture of firearms, a reflection not only of the dangers of pioneer life but of the individualistic spirit of the frontier. Moreover, as the author shows, from Eli Whitney's experiments in the standardization of rifle parts, as extended by Samuel Colt; there arose both the machine tool and mass production.

As the pioneers pushed westward, the urgent necessity for better communications spurred Yankee ingenuity. While Britain led the way in metallurgy and textile machinery, America concentrated on steamships, railroads, and the telegraph. Each invention led to another, and always the pace was forced by the scarcity of labor. By 1860 the United States was bound together by technological bonds more tightly than it knew. Union had ceased to be a political convenience; it had become an economic necessity.

Mr. Burlinghame has written a fascinating book. He has marshaled a huge volume of material into readable yet scholarly form; and he has not neglected his references. Quite apart from its appeal to the general reader, it will, I imagine, be eagerly seized on by alert history teachers seeking intelligent supplementary reading for their students.

KEITH HUTCHISON

## Success Story

*SPELLA HO.* By H. E. Bates. Little, Brown and Company, \$2.50.

A REVIEWER sometimes wonders whether it is his own concern with social problems that makes so many novels seem symbolic. A few years ago "Spella Ho" would have been commented on merely as a good story. So it is, moreover, in the usual review journals today. But isn't "Spella Ho" more than this? Its hero, illiterate at the age of twenty, has known from childhood the difference between his poverty-stricken family and the grandeur of the great house, Spella Ho. He early decides against complete honesty. He is ugly, dirty, and driven by the will to succeed. Through several women and through his persistent vision of the great house and what it means, he rises—sinking several times in the process—to grandeur at the end when he has become the aged owner of Spella Ho. Moreover, he and his wife have brought to the little village of Castor in which he was born an industrial civilization of consummate ugliness. And the last person to confront him is a rather scatterbrained artist who tells him that his town is hideous, a blot on the landscape. The "power and the glory" are, after all, not really his. He is left to die alone in their dust, but he has been an agent of progress which will, in turn, become reactionary.

The book is very well written; both its characters and its situations are convincing. But from the first chapter on, Bruno appears to be a symbol of a rising class. The various women

he meets are symbols, respectively, of the genteel white-collar slave, the nationalist, the lower middle class which joins with the proletariat to bring progress into the little village, and the idealist who, like most intellectuals in literature today, kills herself. The fashion in which suicide is committed is Victorian, but what of that? Our hero, once he becomes the owner of the great house—a record of the past—joins past with present. The lady artist who tells him his work is hideous states the position of the artist who feels that industrialism does not bring beauty.

Do I read all this into this novel? I doubt it. The novelist today, willy-nilly, good or bad (and Mr. Bates is a good novelist), uses symbols as characters. Nor is there anything very wrong with a character who is a symbol unless his symbolism overwhelms his humanity. Despite the fact that Bruno Stadbelt and his women are believable, they are not completely human in the sense of being rounded, rich characters. Bruno may be a little too unusual to be entirely typical, yet he is the thing that stalks us today, the appealing morose proletarian groping toward the light. He reminds me very much of Hugh in "Poor White," save that his rise to power is less understandable than that of Sherwood Anderson's hero.

Why for once don't the novelists give us an intelligent worker? Why must we trace now, instead of the rise of a family to power, or its decline—two popular themes of the last fifteen years in fiction—the rise of an illiterate emotional proletarian to middle-classdom, through which, like "Miniver Cheevy," he becomes stuck fast in yesterday. "Spella Ho" is in a sense just another success story with an ironic ending. Moreover, one tires of heroes who see the light only through a variety of women (also symbolic). Can't any man go it alone?

Let me end where I began. Perhaps I have read too many books of social significance. Certainly Mr. Bates, choosing the abnormal rather than the normal, creates a dark and moving hero and gives him an unusual life. His book is well worth reading, for Mr. Bates is a first-rate novelist. Nevertheless, "Spella Ho" seems less novel than allegory, and, on the whole, less a work of art than others Mr. Bates has written.

EDA LOU WALTON

## RECORDS

GAMUT has issued a notable volume (six records, \$9) containing the first three of Bach's six sonatas for violin and clavier, played on the violin and harpsichord by Boris Schwarz and Alice Ehlers. No. 3 is one of Bach's finest works, which has long been in need of recording; and each of the other two has individual movements that are good. My own ears have no difficulty in accepting the sound of violin and piano in combination; and if I prefer violin and harpsichord for these sonatas it is because the works were conceived in the terms—for example, the sonorities—offered by violin and harpsichord, and are therefore to be heard as Bach conceived them only when they are re-created in those terms. Performances and recording of harpsichord, in this volume, are excellent; the violin is recorded a little shrill.