

COLORADO, THE QUEEN JEWEL OF THE ROCKIES. By Mae Lucy Baggs. Page; \$3.50.

FLORIDA, THE LAND OF ENCHANTMENT. By Nevin O. Winter. Page; \$3.50.

Give the imagination the task of constructing an unexperienced whole out of the bits of evidence at hand, and it is likely to play strange tricks. A certain writer confesses that he was bitterly disappointed at his first sight of a swan—it was so different from the bird he had reconstructed on the basis of the china cygnet that served as a match safe in the farmhouse where he had spent his boyhood. There are probably not a few people to whom, similarly, Colorado appears in the mind's eye as a wilderness of highly colored post-card mountains, with cogways running to the summits; or to whom Florida, if not the paradise depicted on land-agents' pamphlets, is a vivified woodcut of the Everglades, with a lambrequin of Spanish moss and reptiles. Perhaps in no respect is the average American more deficient than in the geography of his own land. As an aid to his imagination, accordingly, the "See America First" series, of which these two books are the latest volumes, must prove invaluable. If the books themselves hardly justify their sub-titles any more than a chamber of commerce bulletin ever paints a convincing "Wonder City," they yet furnish abundant material from which the active imagination of the reader can reconstruct the true wonderlands in which to go aroaming.

The prospective tourist or the rocking-chair traveler will find "Florida" and "Colorado" complete guides. Both books follow practically the same plan, showing the rich historic backgrounds against which the modern life of the states is lived, and depicting that modern life in its most interesting phases. The chief emphasis (not unnaturally, since one of the chief industries of both states is the tourist) is placed on *playgrounds*. "Florida," while not neglecting Palm Beach, will be found especially interesting and valuable for its descriptions of wild life; and the account of Colorado's mountain sports is enough to awaken a long-stifled wanderlust. The fact that the books have small literary merit is not greatly in their disfavor. One could wish that the writer had not used "glimpse" as a verb, or had been a little more careful with their relative pronouns; but one can recommend the books, in spite of crudities of style, as bits of honest workmanship, brimming over with facts, attractively printed and bound, well illustrated, and presenting each a businesslike bibliography for the reader who wishes to travel further.

A DIARY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION.
By James L. Houghteling, Jr. Dodd,
Mead; \$1.25.

From January 20 to Easter, 1917 Mr. Houghteling was either in Petrograd or Moscow—or on the train between the two cities. Although this is only the start of the Revolution—indeed, the really dangerous revolution to proletarian control did not come until last fall—it is the most dramatic period, the period one would give most to have seen. But it is not an especially dramatic period in Mr. Houghteling's narrative, which is just what it says it is, a diary. He sees some of the street fighting; he witnesses the perverse and imperturbable manner in which the ordinary activities of everyday life insisted on continuing; he talks with people on the train, in the hotel, at street corners. Perhaps if Mr. Houghteling had made pretenses to a subtle literary style instead of writing straightforward description his story would have lost most of its present genuine effectiveness and interest. For that effectiveness comes largely from the naturalness and matter-of-factness of Mr. Houghteling's tone, its very lack, as it were, of the theatrical and melodramatic. A revolution loses most of its terrors under such a treatment; it becomes almost temptingly easy and conventional. On March 13 the author writes: "It was growing dark and we could not make out who were skirmishing, but the thought surged in upon us that we might be taken for policemen. We were near home and by unanimous consent adjourned for the day. The streets of the city are no place for an innocent bystander tonight." Fortunately Mr. Houghteling was content to be an innocent bystander with respect to interpretation of events. He wisely remains a reporter. Yet one report we cannot read but with pride—the eagerness of the Provisional Government to be recognized by the United States, and the historic fact that we were the first nation to accord that recognition.

CREATORS OF DECORATIVE STYLES. By
Walter A. Dyer. Doubleday, Page; \$3.

Mr. Dyer's book reminds one of Oscar Wilde's accusation that we love art but do not sufficiently honor our craftsman. In fact it has chiefly been the epigrams in Wilde's "Decorative Arts in America" which have been remembered, with the result that the book's effectiveness in the drawing-room has largely robbed it of its value as inspiration in the workshop. Mr. Dyer, however, wisely does not attempt to draw morals from his clear and concise history of our decorative styles and their leaders. Yet he has avoided the pitfall of describing all styles or all decorators—an attempt which has cast so many interpreta-

tive efforts on the statistical junk-heap—and he has at the same time resolutely refused to take a short cut to taste. The evolution of the styles in England from 1603 to 1800, which have given a distinctive stamp to English and American social life, is developed so that it is impossible to read his twelve chapters without drawing an inference. English style is our heritage, and others are but exoticisms. When Mr. Dyer chooses eleven decorators from Inigo Jones to Sheraton, we can question only his choice of Chambers, and this is effaced in the joy of escaping Isaac Ware and William Kent. It is not a book telling the component parts of all style, how to recognize them in polite society, and how to imitate them on a small income: hints as to the adaptability to the present are left, as they should be, to the personality of the reader. It is a book not only for those Americans whose social position forces them to take an interest in style, but also for those who honestly wish we could boast a national decorative style of our own.