candle stand. Today we have in the place of manual interior appointments the most graceless machine-stamped furniture.

The most important piece of furniture the Colonial artisan created was the bed. In an inventory of the estate of John Cogswell, quoted by Mr. Downs, the most valued item was "1 Bed Bedstead Curtains and all the Bedding 50.-". The importance of the mattress is emphasized by John Mason's ad in 1769:

> For Sale Mattrasses, or wool beds, which are so beneficial to mankind for when a constitution grown weak through inadvertency, or any waye thrown into Confusion these beds are of great use to rest on, therefore I would advise every Constitution to be provided with one of them . . . [it] gives a greater spring to the nerves than feather beds.

Reminiscent of Shakespeare's bequest to Ann Hathaway is Nathaniel Townsend's will, May 18, 1754; "being . . . very sick and of exquisite pain of body, but my understanding pretty well . . . I leave to my wife Martha one of my choicest beds and full furniture thereto belonging and my cupboard which I had by her and a brass kettle and £ 130." The Colonial had concealed furniture of a type which is generally taken to be modern. In the Winterthur collection is a Philadelphia Deception Bed, 1780-1790, which folds up to resemble a chest of drawers.

Also at Winterthur is one of the famous sample chairs attributed to Benjamin Randolph, celebrated Philadelphia cabinetmaker, as well as the highboy which brought $44,000 in the Reifsnyder sale of 1929. This finely carved piece is made of magnificently colored mahogany and with ball-and-claw feet. Mr. Downs suggests that the ball and claw may come from the dragon's claw grasping a pearl, the Chinese symbol of evil. There is a photograph in this book of the Gratz highboy. Michael Gratz was a well-known merchant and banker, and his daughter, Rebecca, was the model for Scott's heroine in "Ivanhoe."

Many of the Colonial merchants prided themselves on their libraries, and handsome desks with bookcases were made to house their treasures, complete with secret compartments and ample shelving. A partial inventory shows that some merchants were far better read than the average college professor; included in James Bowdoin's library, for example, were Rabelais, Hume, Plutarch, Bacon, St. Augustine, Molière, Shakespeare, Milton, Swift, Locke and many others.

A most important ceremony in Colonial life was that connected with drinking tea. This rite is well illustrated in Mr. Down's book by the profusion of tea tables and kettle stands with tea-cup shelves and storage chambers. Other utensils for tea included caddies, strainers, sugar bowls and boxes, and an infinite variety of special spoons, tongs and napery.

In his Introduction Mr. Downs has a section on native woods which is a fine summary for the collector who has not access to Hough's elaborate multi-volume work, and it is much easier to use.

"American Furniture," though dealing only with the Queen Anne and Chippendale styles of furniture, is an excellent supplement to Nutting's three-volume "Furniture Treasury"; however, its price puts it beyond the reach of anyone save the dilettante collector.

RLENE L. HOWELL

House of Firestone

Harvey Firestone, by Alfred Lief. New York: McGraw-Hill. $3.00

The author of this readable biography of a businessman who started small and grew big has been known chiefly for his popular books on Supreme Court Justices Brandeis and Holmes ("The Dissenting Opinions of Mr. Justice Holmes" and "Brandeis, The Personal History of an American Ideal"). He has made his mark, in other words, as a chronicler of the busters of bigness. How does he handle the rise of the House of Firestone, now so immense, so full of compartments and departments that it maintains a private "archivist" to remember its own past?

Mr. Lief's writing glows pleasantly when he is dealing with his hero's early life on the farm. Harvey Firestone's father was as much a man of business as a farmer; he was

> free from dependence on nature's whims . . . he had money outstanding on mortgage . . . he did not invest in more land than he could cultivate without the use of his children as economic assets . . . he usually had about 400 head of sheep.

For young Firestone "the world of commerce was interwoven with farm life."

The elder Firestone traded in other livestock too, and Harvey was fascinated by the horsy side of the parental business. There was also a relative who operated one of the most important buggy factories in the country, the Columbus Buggy Company of Columbus, Ohio. Harvey began as a bookkeeper, discovered that he had talents as a salesman, and in looking for something new to sell within the industry in which he had served his apprenticeship, he chanced upon the rubber tire. It was already in common use on bicycles. When applied to buggy wheels (as a luxurious accessory) it made riding much nicer; but the newly upcoming automobile industry found that horseless carriages *had* to be shod with rubber. There was no choice about it. A motorcar on iron wheels would shake loose all its nuts, bolts, screws and finally its passengers.

Harvey's first business venture was a partnership with two others who put up the money. Three years later they sold out, bilking Harvey of half his share. Nevertheless, he had more than forty thousand dollars in hand. He invested about half of it in a six-per-cent mortgage and looked around to see what he could do with the twenty thousand dollars remaining. He secured the assignment to himself of a patent for an improved solid tire and shopped for a manufacturer to make it. The arrangement worked poorly and he still kept his eyes open for other opportunities. In 1900 he was offered a still better patent if he would put up his capital to form a new tire company, and thus the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company was born.

At this point Mr. Lief's style begins to glow again.

> The American principle of an open door in industry, through which a man without privilege might enter, to roll up his sleeves and produce, was doing real, if silent, service . . . America grew in the sun of opportunity. And this meant also the freedom to make one's own opportunity.

Firestone concentrated on heavy-duty tires and his success was immediate. He really did have a serviceable patent, and he was himself both a good administrator and a quietly effective salesman. How thoroughly he had grasped the basic rule involved in building up a business is revealed in a letter he wrote ten years after founding his own firm.

> Of course we have made money [he was about to distribute to his shareholders part of a $4,000,000 surplus accumulated in those few years] but we deserve to make it; and I have made up my mind that I have financed and worried long enough . . . I have never had a dollar out of the Company except what it costs me to live, and I feel it is about time to commence to get some returns.

He now decided to let the investing public put in the new capital he needed—"you can not do a rubber-tire business on a small scale—it must be on a large scale or not at all." This operation took care of much of the worrisome, or financial side of the business. He had time to look around him and notice the mansions the other rubber tycoons of Akron had constructed; he promptly constructed one too. He began to live a more spacious life, entertaining celebrities at home and becoming something of a public figure himself by virtue of his constant campaigning for better roads.

Firestone's effort to grow rubber for himself in Liberia, in reaction to the British rubber restriction scheme sponsored by Winston Churchill (then Secretary of State for the Colonies) as "one of the principal means of paying our debt to the United States," is enthusiastically recounted by Mr. Lief, who has a sharp eye for monopolists, whether foreign or domestic. The humor of Churchill's attempt to hold up the Americans for what he owed them is worthy of notice today. The conclusion of that sorry scheme is even better worth noting, and the author loses none of the force of this example of monopolists hoisted with their own device in his telling of the story.

ASHER BRYNES

Recent Novels

Journey With Strangers, by R. C. Hutchinson. New York: Rinehart. $4.00
Missing, by Egon Hostovsky. Translated from the Czech by Ewald Osers. New York: Viking. $3.00
Rage of the Soul, by Vincent Sheean. New York: Random. $3.50

Unlike as they are in mood, theme and background, these three recent novels have a good deal more in common than might appear from a casual survey. First, and most obviously, they are not only all of them the work of skilled and seasoned writers, but they are the work of writers who are genuinely concerned with finding a *modus vivendi* for the times. Although only "Journey With Strangers" could legitimately be called a war novel, the shadow of war lies heavily upon all of them. What are we to do, how live, in a world corroded with hate and bitterness, with political and racial factionalism? That is the question which is implicit, I think, in the minds of all these writers, and the answer they give is the same. Trust, they say, in the human spirit—in its worth, its dignity, its courage, its ultimate importance. Nothing else is of any real consequence.

Of the three books, the most somber and substantial, and incomparably the most moving, is R. C. Hutchinson's "Journey With Strangers." A dynamic and intuitive writer—he is the author of "Shining Scabbard," "Testament," etc.—Mr. Hutchinson deals in this novel with the tragedy of Poland, and with the agonies which it suffered during World War II under both Nazi and Soviet occupation. The story is told retrospectively by a sensitive young woman who married as an outsider into one of the great Polish families and experienced the crushing weight of their disapproval. The Kolbecks were proud, ingrown, more than a little arrogant, strongly religious and fanatically patriotic. Until she shared their ordeal with them —learned as a fellow exile what durable stuff they were made of—Stephanie thought of them as hostile and alien. However, as she faced death with them, and indignity and horror, she came to see that they had values of indestructible worth, and was proud to link her destiny with theirs.

"Journey With Strangers," I hasten to add, is no mere hymn to the virtues of the Polish aristocracy. As they are driven from their homes, as they travel by cattle car to Siberia, as they freeze and die in the slave labor camps, as they come at last to the Middle East under the aegis of the British, the Kolbecks share their stark sufferings with thousands of humbler Poles who are as staunch in their own fashion as they. All this adds up to a tragically impressive story, but it is a story which, I think, is longer than it need be, and one too concerned with details. Greater selectiveness, a sharper highlighting of really significant incidents, perhaps