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R. M. of Pittsburgh wishes to "read up" on biography. "Please mention several recent biographies and autobiographies that are outstanding," he writes.

A GAIN I am faced with an "embarrassment of riches" as I set about answering R. M.'s question. Noteworthy biographies began to appear when 1925 was yet young—I am thinking especially now of Amy Lowell's "John Keats" (Houghton Mifflin), that amazingly comprehensive life which has been acclaimed in many quarters a masterpiece. An early summer book that caused quite as much comment as did Miss Lowell's is Jean Jacques Brousseau's "Anatole France Himself" (Lippincott), a biography done by the popular conversational method, a revealing method and one that does much to endear the subject to readers. "With Pencil, Brush and Chisel," by Emil Fuchs (Putnam), an intimate record by the artist, strikingly illustrated with portraits and sketches, is another important spring book. The spring list included others that made a stir when they appeared, and are still in demand, among them being M. R. Werner's

"Brigham Young" (Harcourt, Brace), James J. Corbett's "The Roar of the Crowd" (Putnam), W. E. Barton's "The Life of Abraham Lincoln" (Bobbs-Merrill), R. F. Dibble's "John L. Sullivan, an Intimate Narrative" (Little, Brown), Edward W. Bok's "Twice Thirty" (Scribner), W. Johnston Forbes-Robertson's "A Player Under Three Reigns" (Little, Brown) and "Robert E. Lee the Soldier," by Sir Frederick Maurice (Houghton Mifflin). Then came "The Life of Sir William Osler," by Harvey Cushing (Oxford), which immediately took its place as one of the important biographies not only of this year but of many years.

Modern statesmen and historic characters share honors about evenly on the fall list of biographies. As to which in each group is the most important that is largely if not entirely a matter of viewpoint. St. John Ervine's "Parnell" (Little, Brown) is conceded to be the most interesting life that has appeared of this famous Irish leader. Thomas Jefferson is the hero of two recent books figuring jointly with Alexander Hamilton in one of them, "Life and Letters of Thomas Jefferson," by Francis W. Hirst (Macmillan), and "Jefferson and Hamilton," by Claude G. Bowers (Houghton Mifflin). There's a new biography of "Aaron Burr," too, by Samuel H. Wendell and Meade Minnigerode (Putnam), and the "Diaries of George Washington," edited by John C. Fitzpatrick, are now published complete for the first time in four volumes (Houghton Mifflin). Going still farther back, there is the new biography of the immortal Joan, "Joan of Arc—Maid of France," by Albert Bigelow Paine (Macmillan).

Coming again to today, a hearty welcome is assured "Walter Hines Page's Letters to Woodrow Wilson," edited by Burton J. Hendrick (Doubleday, Page), especially from those who enjoyed the first two volumes. William Allen White adds one more to his list of biographies with his "Calvin Coolidge: the Man Who Is President" (Macmillan). Reading Thomas R. Marshall's "Reminiscences" (Bobbs-Merrill) is next best to having heard the genial former Vice-President on the platform. Viscount Grey's "Twenty-five Years, 1892-1916" (Stokes) is a book of reminiscences that has been eagerly awaited. Poultney Bigelow's "Seventy Summers" (Longmans) is rich in the sort of stories about well-known folk that make for interesting reading.