
“It is the mature verdict of history,” begins the author of this work, “that Thaddeus Stevens was the most powerful parliamentary leader our system of government ever produced.” He closes with the quotation: “All his life he held the outposts of thought.” Between these two judgments there is much that the historian would be called upon to verify, qualify, or possibly reject. The author’s attitude toward documentation by footnotes is revealed by a sentence in the preface: “Long ago,” he says, “I made up my mind that any book I wrote would be noteworthy, if for nothing else, because it did not contain a single footnote.” However, the text frequently names the sources of quotations, which constitute a large portion of the work.

Thaddeus Stevens was born in Danville, Vermont, but at an early age he settled into the legal profession in the strongly antislavery Quaker settlement of Adams county, Pennsylvania. He made his first appearance in the state supreme court in the case of Butler et al. v. Delaphaine, in which he opposed the granting of freedom to a colored woman and her family. He soon entered politics and was elected to the state legislature, where he was active in audacious Whig conspiracies for the control of state offices. He took his seat in the Thirty-fifth Congress, which opened in December, 1849, and remained there until his death, nineteen years later.

In Congress, Stevens was an active abolitionist and one of the most unrelenting pressure politicians who have ever appeared in public life. His tactics involved seizing and holding key committee positions, waging constant warfare in every form upon opponents irrespective of the constitution and accepted rules, and seizing power through extralegal organizations which set at naught the constitutional functioning of the governmental system. His common practice was to proclaim his own patriotism so loudly and accuse of treason all his opponents so bitterly and violently that the uncritical masses, knowing nothing of Samuel Johnson’s warning that “patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel,” concluded that patriotism must be found where it was most widely proclaimed.

Two of Stevens’ major objectives were not attained. These were the confiscation and parceling out to former slaves of lands belonging to rebel owners, and also the impeachment of President Johnson. At the time of his death Stevens was still working upon the problem of further packing Congress in order to achieve both of these ends. His previous triumph in
imposing Radical Reconstruction upon the South produced ten years of violence, disorder, and military rule before it was undone.

The author repeatedly asserts the inviolable honor and honesty of his hero. Yet in dealing with Stevens' denials of the charge of illicit sexual relations with his mulatto housekeeper, Lydia Smith, he says that these denials arouse the suspicion that they "are made from the whole cloth. His explanations are too clever to be honest." (p. 13)

That Thaddeus Stevens was a key figure in a most crucial period of our history no one will question, but the picture of "the sinister patriot" that is here presented is far from a convincing one. A critical life of Stevens remains to be written.

University of Nebraska

JAMES L. SELLERS.


As its title indicates, this little book is an essay, not a text; it gives a pen-and-ink sketch of the man rather than a diagram of his philosophy and program. In this respect this booklet stands out in sharp contrast to that by Louis Post entitled "The Prophet of San Francisco," which pictures on an equally small canvas the mission together with the man and the work as well as the author. Although a centennial volume, issued on the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Henry George in Philadelphia, the essay by Nock shows less of the fire of hero worship than does the earlier work on George by his ardent disciple, Post.

Nock sees in Henry George the intellect of a philosopher blended with the temperament of a propagandist. The environmental influence is seen to lie in the economic paralysis following economic stimulation. Although the America of George was expanding and his life covered the period of the rise of some of our great captains of industry, George himself was the victim of poverty and the child of depression.

Nock regards Henry George as among the "first half dozen of the world's creative geniuses in social philosophy." "Yet in this capacity he is today pre-eminently the forgotten man of Anglo-American civilization." In the reviewer's opinion the author fails to make out a good or complete case for either of these appraisals.

The work contains numerous other sweeping statements such as the following lines with reference to the literary feud between Herbert Spencer and Henry George: "The validity of _Social Statics_ and of _Progress and Poverty_ would remain unimpaired today even if their authors had disavowed every line of them. They are, taken together, the complete formulation of the philosophy of human freedom; the one complements the other. Nothing substantial has ever been said against either of them; nothing can be said." Is the author ignorant of or impervious to the whole library of literary criticism of the theories of George and the assumptions of Spencer? Can he ignore the history of the past half century during which proposals of a single tax have been attacked and the premises of _laissez faire_ have been abandoned?
The work should be viewed as a literary essay rather than as an economic tract. The general picture is good, even though some details can be challenged. The author has an easy and a graceful style. His use of characters from David Copperfield warms the heart of a lover of Dickens and gives color and pattern to the picture he is painting, even though at times the color is a bit unnatural and the pattern somewhat distorted.

University of Pennsylvania

S. Howard Patterson.

_In Winter We Flourish: Life and Letters of Sarah Worthington King Peter._


This book is a detailed biography of Mrs. Sarah Peter, the daughter of Governor Thomas of Ohio, who played an important rôle in the early history of that state. Born of wealthy parents, Sarah received a good education and, throughout her entire life, enjoyed the advantages of wealth and social position. At the age of sixteen she was married to Edward King, son of Senator Rufus King of New York, and they made their home in Cincinnati. Upon the death of her husband in 1836, she removed to Cambridge to be near her sons, who were students at Harvard. Following this, she resided for some years in Philadelphia, having married William Peter, the British consul in that city.

While a resident of Philadelphia, Mrs. Peter founded the Philadelphia School of Design as a private enterprise established on the third floor of her home. Outgrowing these quarters and needing financial support, the school was taken under the care of the Franklin Institute. In 1850 it was moved to 70 Walnut Street, where it remained until 1881, when it was moved into a spacious and well-equipped building on the corner of Broad and Master Streets. In 1932 it was merged into the Moore Institute of Art, Science, and Industry; and is recognized as one of the largest and best equipped schools of design in the country. The main hall of the Institute is graced by Bullitt's bust of Mrs. Peter.

After the death of Mr. Peter in 1853, Mrs. Peter re-established her home in Cincinnati, where she continued to reside for the remainder of her long life. At the age of fifty-four she became a Roman Catholic, and her principal interest thereafter was in religious and charitable work, to which she devoted most of her time and much of her means, being instrumental in founding several religious orders and hospitals. She also founded the Ladies' Academy of Art, from which developed the Cincinnati School of Design.

Mrs. Peter had a talent for conversation, letter-writing, and social leadership; and displayed considerable initiative and energy as a leader in charitable and civic enterprises. She was, moreover, a great traveler, making frequent trips to Europe and carrying on a voluminous correspondence with a wide circle of friends at home and abroad.

Regarded from the historical angle, the chief value of this biography is the insight it gives into the life of the times through the means of the large number of letters incorporated in the text. The book displays no great literary skill, however, and tends to wearisome detail about many matters.
of no particular interest to the general reader. While it is well worth reading, it is not the kind of book which one finds difficult to lay down, and its appeal is likely to be stronger for women than for mere men. Its format is good; it is well indexed and fairly well documented.

Pennsylvania State College

WAYLAND F. DUNAWAY.


The reader of Dr. Weygandt's book, if he be a Pennsylvania-German, proceeds slowly, not because the style is not crystal clear, but because memory compels a pause with each paragraph.

"The high and narrow churches"—ah, to see again the ceiling-hung festoons of laurel sway in the wind or with the vibration of the New Year bells! The gardens—how our grandmother's Pennsylvania-German tongue rejoiced in the strange names—brugmangia, oleander, portulaca, lantana! How the men of the family toiled to move the great tubs of brugmangia, oleander, and lantana into the basement for the winter! Sometimes when a neighbor summons me to admire the four flowers on her night-blooming cactus, I boast of the twenty-three which all Macungie came to see.

Tole-ware, is there as perfect a set anywhere as that on a certain lofty shelf which I know? Fractur—on the wall before me at this moment hangs the illuminated confirmation certificate of Carolus Singmeister—once Zange-meister—born in 1802, confirmed in 1817. Pottery—a great, great, great-aunt helped her husband make pottery—and how I wish I possessed a specimen of her work!

We—I speak for all of us—are grateful for one more reminder of our heritage and one more handsome volume to stand on the Pennsylvania-German shelf.

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

ELSIE SINGMASTER.

_Congressional History of Berks (Pa.) District, 1789-1939._ By Benjamin A. Fryer. (Reading, Pa.: Historical Society of Berks County, 1939. Pp. vi, 358. $2.50.)

The author of this book is a newspaper man in Reading, rich in political experience. He has supplemented his many recollections by a series of clipping books which are a great mine of historical information. He has approached his task from the biographical angle and here portrays the careers of the men who represented Berks in Congress.

They have been an interesting and significant group. A number of them have played important rôles in the national legislative halls. Mr. Fryer has searched the newspapers and has supplemented his findings from his own recollections and from the reminiscences of others. He gives interesting accounts of the changing election machinery. He relates a number of curious anecdotes. He gives the details from the official record of the way in which these men voted on a century and a half of legislation. Complete election statistics are tabulated from the beginning and a set of pictures is inserted. The reader follows the changing scene of American history as it
is reflected in the behavior of the Berks representatives and their con-
stituents. A foreword and a number of the pictures are supplied by J.
Bennett Nolan. The reading of this book shows how convenient and valu-
able similar histories of other districts would be.

University of Pennsylvania

ROY F. NICHOLS.

History of the Mennonites of the Franconia Conference. By John C. Wenger.
xvi, 523. Illustrated. $2.50.)

As its title indicates, the History of the Mennonites of the Franconia
Conference is a book of restricted scope. It will naturally be of great
interest to the Mennonites of southeastern Pennsylvania, and it is reasonable
to suppose that it will make some appeal to all persons of the Mennonite
faith in America, wherever they may live. Its publication is an indication
of a quickening of the interest of American Mennonites in the history of
their own denomination, for it is but one of several such regional histories
that have appeared within the present decade. In the long run, its chief
value may consist in the contribution it makes to the accumulating data
from which some scholar eventually will draw material for a definitive
general history of the Mennonites in America.

It would be a mistake, however, to assume that only Mennonites will con-
sult this book. Specialists in several fields will find it a useful reference.
Even general readers of history will examine with interest the first part,
consisting of seven chapters grouped under the heading of "General History."
Two of these seven chapters are of absorbing interest, one describing home
life and religious practices, the other relating the difficulties the Franconia
Mennonites have encountered as non-resistants during the wars in which
the United States has resorted to compulsory military service.

Looking at the book as a whole, the reviewer must conclude that it was
not intended for a wide reading public. Regardless of the appeal the first
part of it may make to students in general, the fact remains that that part is
hardly more than an introduction. The remaining five parts will be of
interest principally to Pennsylvania Mennonites, to genealogists, and to
narrow specialists in a restricted field of American religious history. Part
II, the longest section of the book, is concerned with histories of the
congregations. Immediately following is a list of ministers of the con-
ference, the name of each minister being accompanied by as much biographical
data as the author could discover. Part IV treats briefly of activities, and
Part V contains an account of schisms. The sixth and last part consists
of an appendix of twelve miscellaneous documents, two of which are in the
German language. The book contains numerous illustrations, a satisfactory
index, and a bibliography of more than eight pages. The documentation is
uniformly good.

The author of this work acknowledges a debt of gratitude to Dr. Harold
S. Bender, of Goshen College, under whose direction he once studied. Besides
reading and criticizing the entire manuscript, Dr. Bender has contributed
an illuminating introduction in which he commends the book to "all
Mennonites who love their church and appreciate their rich spiritual heritage." The unqualified indorsement of so competent a scholar in the field of Mennonite history as Dr. Bender will lead students everywhere to believe that the book is as authoritative as outward evidence shows it to be.

J. ORIN OLIPHANT.


This bulletin was prepared by the joint efforts of the director of the Bureau of Instruction and the historian of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission, in response to requests from teachers and school administrators for information on the organization, structure, and functioning of the government of the Commonwealth. It includes a brief sketch of the evolution of Pennsylvania government, short chapters on the executive, legislative and judicial branches, and a series of twenty-six discussions of the administrative departments, boards and commissions of the State. The organization charts which accompany nearly every one of these discussions are a valuable feature. The text presents in summary form, and in barest outline, the functions and duties of the various agencies, and in some cases of their several bureaus and divisions.

Although all of the information presented is conveniently available in the Pennsylvania Manual, the Administrative Code, the Fiscal Code, and the report of the Joint Legislative Committee on Finances, published in 1934, the pamphlet seems well suited to its purpose. It is up-to-date, convenient in form, and attractive in appearance. The preparation of such materials is an indication of a growing interest in the problems of government. It is to be hoped that the pamphlet will have a wide distribution, and that it will serve to interest and inform many regarding the government of the Commonwealth.

W. BROOKE GRAVES.