

BOOK REVIEWS AND BOOK NOTES

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Dictionary of American History. Edited by James Truslow Adams and R. V. Coleman. (6 vols., New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940. Pp. xi, 444; 430; 432; 512; 515; Index. \$60.00.)

A work which has been four years in preparation and consists of 6,425 articles covering every phase of American history can only be compared to the labors of Hercules. That some 1,200 scholars aided in its conception and execution and that it was compressed into 2,333 pages does not lessen the herculean nature of the task. Continuing the analogy, examination will reveal that individual contributors, dealing with a variety of historical subjects and problems, have had occasional opportunities to slay hydras, cleanse Augean stables, pluck golden apples of Hesperides, and even restore Alceste to the realm of the living.

The *Dictionary* is unique and therefore invaluable as a work of reference. It is equally useful to the general public and to professional historians, an end often sought but seldom achieved. The contributors, whose signatures are appended to the articles, are to be congratulated upon their skillful condensation of materials; the editors, upon the comprehensive scope of the work as a whole. Inside the blue covers of these light but sturdy volumes will be found military and naval engagements, political campaigns, boundary disputes, court decisions, Indian affairs, public land policies, in fact, all subjects ordinarily construed as falling within the proper bounds of history. In addition, there are many articles dealing with cultural, religious, economic, and social history. It is in these latter provinces that the *Dictionary* may be said to have made its most distinctive contribution. Nearly always one will find a convenient summary of essential facts, with bibliographical clues to more extended treatment elsewhere, but in the field broadly spoken of as social history, there are numerous articles of original and valuable character. The coverage of events that have occurred within the last dozen years is excellent, a particularly welcome feature. In short, the *Dictionary* is a work that will be as greatly appreciated in the future as it has been greatly needed in the past.

Errors of commission are to be expected in a work so extensive. There is no county of Williamson in West Virginia (III, 16). Mingo County, of which Williamson is the county seat, being intended. Conklin appears twice for Conkling (V, 154). The example of frontier oratory (II, 353), illustrates in time, place, and subject the post-bellum solid south rather than the frontier. The Progressive Movement (IV, 356) had roots farther back in La Follette's career than 1908. Bell is credited incorrectly (II, 44),

in the election of 1860, with 590,000 votes and correctly with having carried Kentucky, Virginia, and Tennessee. Another contributor (I, 285) correctly gives the vote as 646,124 but says that "Bell carried the border states *qv.*" Since the article on the border states enumerates them as Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, and Missouri, the statement is obviously doubly incorrect, as Tennessee was not a border state and Bell did not carry Delaware, Maryland, or Missouri. It is a testimony to careful editing that such errors are neither so numerous nor so consequential as to impair the authoritative nature of the work.

There are also errors of omission, though many of these undoubtedly resulted from serious editorial deliberation rather than from inadvertence. Most of the historic rivers of the United States are treated, but the Wabash will not be found. Most religious denominations are given separate mention but the German Reformed Church is not noticed, either under that name or its later titles of Reformed Church in the United States or Evangelical and Reformed Church. To your reviewer, a Hoosier by birth and a Pennsylvanian by adoption, such omissions seem both regrettable and unaccountable. Similarly, the Ozarks are not included and among Civil War battles that of Selma, Alabama (April 2, 1865) is conspicuously absent, though the munitions works there was second in importance in the Confederacy. Opportunities for significant articles on Interstate Migration, Geographical Influences in American History, Regionalism, and Single Crop Farming have also been passed by.

When one finds the Cajuns and the Melungeons, one wonders why not the Jackson Whites? If the Chinch Bug is included, why not the Japanese Beetle? Of diseases common to pioneer settlers one will find Shakes and Ague but not Milk Sickness. Of the confederated Iroquois, the Cayugas and Onondagas have not been given separate notice as have the Mohawks, Oneidas, Senecas, and Tuscaroras. Of the important early railroads, the Madison and Indianapolis has been omitted. An effort has been made to include such subjects of art, architecture, fiction, folklore, and drama, but poetry has been neglected. The article on Early Botanists might have been expanded to include Early Naturalists. Virginians will look in vain for the "Northern Neck," and the terms "Burnt District," "Grand Prairie," and "The Wigwam" have historical meanings distinct from and in addition to those given.

There arises also the question of space allotted to comparable subjects. No readily apparent reason comes to mind why the Bluestem Pastures should receive more space than the Black Belt and much more than the Blue Grass. The space given to the Virginia Company of London (the same amount accorded to the Supreme Court) seems excessive when compared to that given to other colonial companies. The Great Plains receive three times the amount allowed for Prairies. This reviewer would have liked to see longer articles on Anti-Federalists, Political Boss, Progressive Party and Post-Office Department, to cite but a few cases. However, these are matters of editorial judgment and, though there may be room for difference of opinion, the apportionment of space is for the most part fairly handled.

In a few instances there will doubtless be some who take exception to the content of articles or to the method of treatment. Essential data concerning battles are not always given, *e.g.*, in the account concerning Fort Donelson (II, 160) there is no mention of any of the Confederate generals involved. In general, it appears that persons have not been mentioned as often as they should have been when it is considered that few historical occurrences are devoid of personal influence. An exception is found in the case of the Erie Canal, where Clinton rather than the canal occupies the attention of the contributor.

More important as well as more surprising is the fact that, although the economic interpretation of the Constitution has attracted increasingly favorable attention for over thirty years, there is no recognition of its existence, as either fact or theory, in the article on the Convention of 1787. Likewise there is no recognition of economic issues in the account of the Ratification of the Constitution. It is to be noted also that whereas Sectionalism (V, 53-6) is treated as an historical fact, Class Struggle (I, 395) is treated from a purely hypothetical point of view.

The greatest defect appears to be a lack of uniformity of practice in regard to comparable articles and editorial procedure. This is especially seen in the articles covering the various states. Some of these, *e.g.*, Georgia, end abruptly at a too early date; several others, *e.g.*, Michigan, contain very little on the later period; few of them mention important governors. In this reviewer's opinion a more desirable result would have been attained if the articles had conformed more to the type exemplified by those on Minnesota, Illinois, Ohio, and Indiana. The bibliographies, rightly or wrongly, were intended to include only one or two easily obtainable references. However, certain contributors have furnished fuller references, though to have allowed the same latitude to all would have greatly increased the length of the work. On the other hand, there are, in some cases, no bibliographical references made. While this is excusable on certain topics, it hardly seems so in the case of such subjects as Dollar Diplomacy or Insular Possessions. Editorial practice has also been inconsistent in regard to the mention of living persons, sometimes permitting and sometimes prohibiting it. In all these matters a closer cooperation between editors and contributors might have been desirable.

It seems too bad that more place names were not included, but to have done justice to the facts of local history would have necessitated another volume. It does appear that more use might have been made of tables listing agricultural and industrial production, cabinet officers, dates, and other information of this kind in a very small space.

The work runs to nearly 2,000,000 words. The articles average about 300 words in length. The first volume averages 3.0 articles to the page; the second, 2.7; the third, 2.8; the fourth, 2.5; the fifth, 2.6. This is a fairly consistent record. The index volume is ably constructed. The work is made extremely usable by means of numerous cross references. For example, the article on Pennsylvania contains thirty-one *qv's*, seven *qqv's*, and two exact citations to other articles. Even so there are opportunities in some articles for cross references which have not been made.

To point out these things is to emphasize the difficulties in preparing a work of this kind rather than to list its shortcomings. All in all it is a work of lasting importance, admirably conceived and painstakingly executed. It will serve the public well for many years to come.

Ursinus College

HARVEY L. CARTER.

The Course of American Democratic Thought: An Intellectual History Since 1815. By Ralph Henry Gabriel. (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1940. Pp. xi, 452. \$4.00.)

There could be no better recipe for this time of crisis than the review of American thought and its relation to democracy which this volume so admirably provides. The emphasis is on the last word of the title, for this is not a history of democratic processes, nor of political developments. It attempts to focus on the highlights of our intellectual history since 1815. This arbitrary date, political in fact, is not adequately explained; but it may be noted that the first part of the volume, covering the "Middle Period," is devoted to the *Flowering of New England*, with whole chapters on "Emerson and Thoreau," and "Melville." Transcendentalists and Utopians, Catholic thinkers and rationalists, Puritans and Unitarians are pitted against each other, and there emerges a very vivid portrayal of American thought in the era of nationalism. Such a fascinating story, however, like that of the literary historian, is achieved by being selective, if not whimsical, in balance and content. The author has sought to be provocative rather than comprehensive. The emphasis on Melville, for example, recurring throughout the volume, cannot be justified by contemporary influence, but only by the twentieth century vogue. It probably would be difficult to demonstrate his influence upon other writers on democracy, even in this century.

Of nineteenth century statesmen only John C. Calhoun is given a chapter head, entitled a "Footnote"; and "the significance of the Civil War for the history of American democratic faith is suggested by the evolution of the thought of one man," Walt Whitman. It seems scarcely orthodox to find Lincoln treated in such an account largely as a symbol and a tradition. Yet this is a history of thought and thinkers, rather than of doers in the field of democracy.

In the post-war period more trends are discernible, and the author explores the "Gospel of Wealth in the Gilded Age" through such prophets as Russell H. Conwell and Andrew Carnegie. Then came the impact of Science, Evolution, and the disturbing iconoclasm of Ingersoll, Andrew D. White, Lewis H. Morgan, and John Wesley Powell. This was in turn followed by humanitarianism, "Neo-Rationalism," and optimistic systems of betterment. These trends are traced into government and constitutional law.

Scholarly treatment of "problems inherent in the American democratic faith" is illustrated by the doctrines of William Graham Sumner, the historical teachings of "Frederick Jackson Turner Versus Henry Adams," and the philosophies of Josiah Royce and William James. The principal prophet

of the "Post-Versailles World" was Mr. Justice Holmes. Pennsylvanians may ask whether the work of J. B. McMaster, *The History of the People of the United States*, was not of democratic significance.

In spite of omissions and probable exaggerations it is quite in order to praise the catholicity of the author's survey, the vitality of his argument, and the unflagging interest of his narrative. He has rescued some figures from oblivion, and has infused others with life. He has postulated trends and interpretations that are worthy of study and appreciation. He has written an *American Story of Philosophy*. And finally, he has contributed immensely to the understanding of American democracy.

Albright College

MILTON W. HAMILTON.

We Who Built America: The Saga of the Immigrant. By Carl Wittke. (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1939. 547 pp. \$3.75.)

Economists and sociologists have written of immigration as a social problem, but it has been left for a historian, son of an immigrant, to give us one of the most realistic and readable accounts of this great movement to America. All immigrant groups with the exception of the English and the Negro are presented.

Professor Wittke has solved the problem of chronological versus topical presentation by treating each of the important ethnic groups in three periods: colonial, old immigration and new. Mention is freely made of those who achieved exceptional success, but as in all good social history the main attention has been given the masses and the culture they brought to America. It is natural that the Germans and the Irish should furnish most vivid portraits but other groups, in spite of the lesser literature that has grown up around them, are shown to be as vital to our national life.

None of the sordidness of the early immigrant traffic nor the cruelties and crudities of the nativist movements are blinked or evaded. Attempt is made to determine causes of migration of each group at every major period as well as the conditions and the reception they encountered in America. It is a vibrant and a heartening story now that the bitterness and controversies have largely died down. Wittke retells the story in the World War and of the position of the German group—one which we do well to recall in this period of fifth columnists and anti-alien agitation.

Professor Wittke is at home in the cultural interpretation. A valuable chapter is devoted to the immigrant utopias and ideal communities which are shown to have run the whole gamut of social experimentation. Equally good is his account of culture in immigrant chests, the contribution of various groups to painting, sculpture, music, drama, the professions, and business and industry. A fresh discussion of the course of American nativism from Know-Nothingism to Ku Klux Klan and of the immigration legislation that finally closed the gates serves to close the account.

This is a readable book. New materials have become available since the earlier accounts of immigration were written, and the historian's art has added something that the earlier economists and sociologists lacked.

University of North Carolina

RUPERT B. VANCE.

George Washington. By Nathaniel Wright Stephenson and Waldo Hilary Dunn. (2 vols., New York: Oxford University Press, 1940. Pp. xiii, 473; vii, 596. \$10.00.)

"They [the Virginians] had dreamed of the west as their pot of gold and had sought to find the rainbow's end by the flash of their smoking rifles." [I, 253.] But the Royal Proclamation of 1763 had closed the West to both individual trade and individual settlement. The Crown and the London merchants had appropriated all the results of the French and Indian War and they had denied to the Virginians, and others, the full enjoyment of the fruits of their victory—the right to occupy the Western lands.

The king's proclamation retarded, for a time, the Western migration, but the adventurous individuals soon defied the law and pushed into present day Tennessee and Kentucky.

"Theirs 'the good old rule,'
The simple plan
That they should take, who have the power,
And they should keep who can."

"If the Crown intended to drive them from the forests, which they held to be free land, the patrimony of whoever could take it and master it, let the Crown come and do so. The long rifles that hung on every cabin wall, not lawyers' arguments nor the visions of imperial statesmen, should be their final arguments." [I, 294.]

These excerpts illustrate the forceful literary style of the study. The scholarship is thorough, the facts are forcefully and admirably presented, and the real Washington, is presented so clearly that he really returns in almost lifelike form to the reader. In succession, Washington the child, the boy, the man, the planter, the burgess, the general, the President, marches vividly across the pages of the treatise accompanied by such personages as Jefferson, Madison, Henry, Hamilton, Franklin, John Adams, and others. The study is, therefore, more than a biography: it is a history of the period. The colonial, state, and national problems, jealousies and controversies are handled with scholarly skill. The reviewer feels that the weakest aspect of the study is found in the presentation of the part played by the British government after 1763.

The first volume contains sixteen chapters, four illustrations, one map, and seventy pages of references and important notes. The second volume contains sixteen chapters also, four maps of important battles, four illustrations, sixty-one pages of important notes and references, and an excellent index.

The authors have caught the spirit of the man and the temper of the period in which he lived. "George Washington will always hold the love and reverence of men because they see embodied in him the noblest possibilities of humanity." [II, 503.]

I recommend this important biography of Washington to the student of history and to the reading public.

Lehigh University

GEORGE D. HARMON.