BOOK REVIEWS

Eight First Biographies of William Penn in Seven Languages and Seven Lands.

By WILLIAM I. HULL. [Swarthmore College Monographs on Quaker History, Number Three.] (Swarthmore, Pennsylvania: Swarthmore College, 1936, xviii, 136 p. Illustrated. $2.00.)

In this volume Professor Hull leaves the highroad of his travels down the trail of Quakerism in Holland. It is only a brief excursion, however, for his next volume in the Swarthmore series will tell of the rise of Quakerism in Amsterdam. Meanwhile his pursuit of the earliest biographies of William Penn has carried him from Holland into Germany, and back again, and thence to England, France, the United States, Mexico, and Italy. Three of the “first biographies” are full-length treatments, that of the German, Wilhelm Abraham Teller (1779), which has survived only in the allusions of contemporaries, that of the French physician, Jean Marsillac (1791), and the extraordinary story by our own Parson Weems (1822). Shorter sketches are to be found in the early histories of Quakerism by Croese (Latin, 1695) and Sewel (Dutch, 1717), in Besse's collection of Penn's “Works” (London, 1726), and, in the case of the German (1700 and following) and Italian (1884) biographies, in encyclopedias. The Spanish biography is a translation of a tract in English, which was made in 1879 by Samuel A. Purdie, an American Quaker missionary to Mexico.

A book such as this is useful to two kinds of people. Bibliographers will find in it a great store of Penn material, gathered with meticulous care from manuscript and printed sources which are widely scattered and difficult of access. Others of less specialized interest will learn from it something of the impact of Penn’s career and, through him, of Quakerism, on the countries where his biographies appeared. Croese, for instance, was critical of the Quakers, and the wide distribution which his book had in Germany seems to have been in part responsible for the persistent antagonism which German writers showed toward Quakerism until well into the nineteenth century. Sewel and Besse were friendly enough, but their lack of interest in Penn's Essay Towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe indicates that few of Penn's Quaker contemporaries shared his hope that international organization to preserve the peace was within the realm of possibility. Jean Marsillac's Penn was not only an apostle of peace, but of freedom as well, the “good Quaker of French legend.” In Mexico, Penn’s pacific Indian policy was emphasized by Samuel Purdie as an aid to his ministry among the Mexican Indians. Here in the United States Mason Locke Weems embellished the life of Penn as generously as he had done in the case of George Washington, inventing long conversations between Penn and his mother in order to prove his theory that great men who are also good owe all their goodness and much of their greatness to the influence of a pious mother.

Dr. Hull's remark in his preface on the hazards of calling anything in
literature the first of its kind is illustrated by the statement on page 13 that Parson Weems' biography of Washington was a "first." For, as William Spohn Baker shows in his *Bibliotheca Washingtoniana*, there were some two dozen biographical sketches of Washington printed or reprinted before 1800, when Weems' best seller appeared. It should be also noted in defense of the illustration of "the first Quaker Meeting-house in Philadelphia" which Dr. Hull reproduces (p. 120) from Boccardo's *Nuova Enciclopedia Italiana*, that the picture is not a product of the encyclopedist's imagination. It is rather a poor copy of an engraving of the Old Merion Meeting-house as it looked before its old stones were plastered over in 1829-1830.

*Haverford College*


The present volume carries the history of Harvard from the Charter of 1650 to the close of the administration of Samuel Willard in 1707; from the concluding years of the Dunster régime through a most important half century. These were formative years during which the college, founded upon the model of Cambridge, England, and deeply imbued with many of the traditions of that venerable institution, struggled to win its intellectual independence.

The degree to which this was accomplished is best shown by a careful study of the curriculum. Two points are of outstanding significance. Harvard emphasized the study of Hebrew and the Oriental languages far more than did any English university during the seventeenth century. This may have been a reflection of the personal predilections of Presidents Dunster and Chauncy—Hebraists both—but, be that as it may, it gave a unique character to the college. In those days of relatively free-and-easy philology, Hebrew generally was supposed to be the *ursprache* of all European languages. Accordingly, each Thursday was largely devoted to its study, or to the study of a closely cognate tongue such as Aramaic or Syriac.

But above all else it must be noted that, from 1659, the Harvard under-graduates studied the heliocentric hypothesis—at a time distinctly in advance of any wide-spread acceptance of the conclusions of Copernicus, Kepler, and Gassendi by the European universities. In 1672 Governor Winthrop presented Harvard with a telescope, with which Thomas Brattle observed the comet of 1680. These men, together with the Mathers and the Cottons, constituted a small scientifically-minded group of which any college might well be proud.

The advanced stand taken and maintained by Harvard University with regard to the teaching of the exact sciences, at a time when such teaching was often gravely questioned or entirely prohibited was alike creditable to the
faculty and students, and was, moreover, proof positive of the existence of a far more liberal spirit among the New England Puritans than they are usually accorded.

The spirit of a university necessarily lies in its student body. To a certain degree, this is reflected in the development of the library. In 1655 the Harvard library numbered a little over a thousand volumes. The Catalogue of 1723—"the first public library catalogue published in this country" (p. 293)—listed 3,516 volumes. Of these 2,183 were on theology or related subjects; 367 on history, politics, and travel; and 255 on the several exact sciences. Although weak in belles-lettres, the library possessed a 1709 edition of the Works of William Shakespeare. The principle of the library in the days of Joshua Gee—"lots of theology, and a little of everything else" (p. 295)—may serve as an index to the unity of purpose in the intellectual life of seventeenth century New England, even as the vast library of the present is indicative of the complex aims and objectives of modern research.

All aspects of student life are treated—and treated thoroughly—in the book under review. The conclusions would seem to demonstrate that the seventeenth century college man was not so very different from his twentieth century prototype. Then, as now, college life was somewhat apart from the workaday world. However, it may be noted that the chance for the graduates to influence community life was far greater in the days when most students trained for the ministry, and when almost everybody was an active church member—looking up to the minister, and truly respecting his opinions on affairs spiritual and temporal.

The administrations of the several presidents are given with considerable detail, from the great Dunster to Increase Mather—who used his first-rate powers in a vain attempt to win for himself a second voyage to England, and to reduce Harvard to the status of a sectarian theological seminary.

Six appendices, giving important documentary and statistical information, a good index, numerous footnotes, and many illustrations complete a work the value of which can never be questioned—significant not only as a history of Harvard, but as an important study of the best in New England culture during the seventeenth century. The detail is often somewhat overwhelming, but, so far as the reviewer can discern, is essential to the picture.

ALBAN W. HOOPE

*Bermuda and the American Revolution: 1760-1783. By Wilfred Brenton Kerr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1936. xii, 142 p. $2.00.)*

The study of American colonial history was, until recently, oriented from the point of view of the genesis of the United States, to the exclusion of its importance as a phase of British imperialism. In the same manner the American Revolution has long been approached as if it were a movement confined to the thirteen revolting colonies. Professor Andrews’ recent volumes have gone far to give a proper perspective for colonial history, and the volume under review will help to extend the boundaries of knowledge concerning the revolutionary movement. Despite the fact that, by a numerical computation, most
of the British colonies in America remained under the British flag after 1776, a nationalistic approach to our history should not obscure the fact that, in the period from 1760 to 1783, they were more or less closely allied with the thirteen colonies in the movement which led to American independence. The measures of Townsend affected all, and "protests against the Stamp Act arose from Quebec to St. Kitts." The non-seceding colonies were more than interested onlookers in the contest of 1775-1783: "Some of them had minorities anxious to throw in their lot with the revolting Americans; some were fields of military operations; some viewed the war chiefly as it affected their commercial interests"; and all were vitally concerned in the ministerial interpretation of the constitutional issues involved.

Professor Kerr has chosen Bermuda as the first of a series of studies of the non-revolting colonies and their relations with the national movement of the thirteen. Because of its carrying trade, its record in furnishing most of the privateers of the thirteen colonies, its function as a training school for navigators, and its strong pro-American minority group, Bermuda was perhaps more closely allied with the revolting colonies than any other British province. "In the midst of this mighty struggle for glory, dominion and liberty, poor little Bermuda has observed a strict neutrality," wrote one of the representatives of the dominant element in the island at the end of the Revolution. Professor Kerr concludes, however, that Bermudian relations with the states had been those of an ally rather than a neutral. Indeed, "the leading merchants and shipowners had conceived it desirable to maintain if possible the same economic relations with the continental colonies in war as in peace. They had therefore led Bermuda into a passive conflict with the mother country and an association with the Americans which carried Bermuda closest of all the non-revolutionary colonies to the thirteen which separated from the Empire." This policy, however, was abandoned by the force of Governor George Bruere's administration and by the presence of refugee British privateers. In substance, therefore, Professor Kerr's little volume is an essay in economic determinism, embellished by less tangible evidences of loyalty in the form of religious, family, and cultural associations which helped to keep the island in the empire. The note of economic motivation is so insistent throughout the volume that there is almost an implied charge of insincerity in the appeals and protests of sympathy emanating from Bermuda to the continental congress. Although there was strong opposition to the Stamp Act in Bermuda and constant evasion of the Navigation Acts, resulting in open flaunting of the authority of customs officers, there was an important difference between the opposition of Bermuda and that of the thirteen colonies. At no time did Bermudians challenge the authority of Parliament; at no time were constitutional issues raised.

Most of Professor Kerr's volume is devoted to the rather negligible politics of the island, the continual struggles of the royal governors with the popular party, the relations of the islanders with the royal navy, and their experiences with privateers. Bermudians enjoyed an excellent opportunity to fit out privateers to prey on American commerce, but they refrained from
doing so, extending the same courtesy to the French after 1778. But others, less particular than the islanders, came to enjoy the opportunity—with serious consequences for Bermuda-American relations. Colonel Henry Tucker and Colonel Henry Tucker of Somerset, both American sympathizers, are given space commensurate with the importance of the Tucker family in Bermudian affairs. The story is based almost entirely on documentary sources; the Tucker family papers in Williamsburg were used to a considerable extent in amplifying the official documents.

Inasmuch as Professor Kerr announces this as the first of a series, it may be the part of charity to suggest greater caution in the use of original sources. For example, in the incident of the powder magazine robbery of 1775, wherein Captain Ord of Philadelphia, commanding the Lady Catherine, is supposed to have received assistance from certain Bermudians, Professor Kerr's documentary evidence is largely based on two letters: (1) an original draft of a letter from St. George Tucker to Richard Rush, written in 1813, in which his faulty memory places Silas Deane in the powder exploit (incidentally, the incident is omitted from the final draft of the letter which Rush received); and (2) charges made in 1786 by two loyalists, obviously to embarrass the Tuckers politically—charges which the Bermuda Assembly considered "too frivulous and nugatory for notice." These documents are accepted at face value (p. 48, note 18 and p. 133) and Professor Kerr in using the second document omits the statement in it that the charges of the two loyalists against James Tucker were denied by him and that in the same account Colonel Henry Tucker charitably assumed that one of the two "from his great age had forgot the circumstance and had mistaken the matter." The mystery surrounding the powder robbery is still as deep as when A. E. Verrill in 1907 posed some still unanswered questions regarding it—how much powder was taken, who took it, and where it went.

It is also regrettable that so much dependence upon manuscript sources should lead the author to overlook equally valuable printed materials. In referring to the correspondence of General Gage in the Clements Library, the author states that they "may contain two letters from the governor of Bermuda." A brief reference to Clarence E. Carter's Correspondence of General Thomas Gage would not only have disclosed the presence of several letters of Governor Bruere but would have given a fair knowledge of their contents. It is likewise regrettable that Silas Deane's name should be misspelled throughout, that both English and American spellings should be used for the same words, that the use of italics in distinguishing printed and manuscript sources should be inconsistent, that familiar abbreviations such as "Ben Franklin" should mar a dignified work. A bibliography would have increased the value of the monograph.

Nevertheless, Professor Kerr has produced a valuable work—valuable for the information it contains and valuable for the point of view it represents. Aside from Verrill's slight essay, it is the only work on the subject, and as such will be useful. It is to be hoped that the author will carry out his intention of doing similar studies for other non-revolutionary colonies.

J. P. B.
To the student of Americana the past twelvemonth has brought what promises to be one of the chief aids in his researches—Douglas C. McMurtrie's *History of printing in the United States*. When this monument of research is finally completed, the history of the propagation of our literary inheritance will be secure for at least another century. However, while McMurtrie's work was in the press a German publisher was quietly engaged upon a publication which, though in many respects much more modest, will also be consulted for many years to come. This other work is *Das Amerikanische Buchwesen*.

The titles in both instances are very aptly chosen. They describe their respective works admirably. *Buchwesen* has no English equivalent. It might be rendered as bookdom and if such a term would be permissible, it might do very well indeed. It would suggest the Republic of Letters, covering the writing, the multiplication, the distribution, the preservation, and the use of books. This—nothing less—is the scope of the German book. The three authors need no special introduction. Their names are well known to any student of Americana. It is not easy to suggest another trio equally well equipped to write on their chosen subjects. Dr. Wroth opens the book with an account of the American book trade from its genesis to the Civil War. In a hundred pages he has crowded most of the essential facts on the introduction and the spread of printing, the manufacture of presses and printing material, bookselling, auctioneering, book collecting, the formation of libraries, centres of publishing, statistics on book production both as to quantity and subject matter, and many other interesting facts hitherto scattered in numerous books and articles.

The colonial period is well covered as is also the period through the revolutionary struggle. But the early decades of the Republic leave much to be desired. It is a period strangely overlooked by the historians and with this in mind it is surprising that Dr. Wroth was able to treat of this period as lucidly as he has. Dr. Lehmann-Haupt has dealt valiantly with the maze of more recent evolutions. While Dr. Wroth is dealing primarily with "the art and mystery of printing," Dr. Lehmann-Haupt is describing the "book trade" as it is understood today. There are sections on the technical advance in printing, the business organization of publishers and booksellers, competition, copyright, underselling,—in a word all that goes to make the present production of printed matter a major industry in the country.

Miss Granniss treats of book collecting and libraries. It is a fitting finale. The producers and distributors come first, to be sure, but it is of the work and the enthusiasms of the Lennoxes and the Browns, the Huntingtones and the Folgers that one reads with real pleasure. One wishes that at least twice the eighty pages had been devoted to them. McMurtrie is doing all that can be asked for the printers and publishers, and the booksellers have also received
part of their due from Boynton and Ford and others. Miss Granniss might well expand her section for an American edition. Even this short survey reveals a knowledge of American bibliophily far beyond others who have elected to write on the subject.

Though hampered by the limitations of space, this work is a mine of information on American bookmen and the bookly arts. Its reference value is much enhanced by a carefully prepared classified bibliography of some twenty pages. The publishers have done their part in making this a work of beauty. Washington's book plate appropriately graces the cover.

Union Library Catalogue of the Philadelphia Metropolitan Area


One might think that life held out to Nancy Shippen everything that seems good to a woman of her class. Wealth, social position, beauty, and, in addition to good looks, the indulgence that is always accorded the young lady who possesses them were hers in abundance. Moreover, she was fortunate in appearing in Philadelphia society at the time when it was gayest, most cosmopolitan and sophisticated. For a time the pattern of her days was attended by good fortune. Then an unhappy marriage, followed by a separation from her husband and daughter, which brought in its wake a certain amount of social ostracism and family disapproval, upset the pleasant tenor of her existence and foreshadowed the tragic close of her life, the last forty years of which she spent alone, with her daughter, a victim of melancholy and religious mania.

Such in brief is the story of Nancy Shippen. The reader of her journal and of the letters included in Miss Armes' book will receive a more extended picture of her life as a typical lady of fashion of the period. Nancy read Clarissa and admired the sentiments of that much persecuted lady; she had apparently imbibed something of the prevalent worship of the doctrines of Rousseau, although in general she confessed to a preference for the town, and, indeed, it was in the whirl of balls, and chitchats, of shopping and teas which made up a Philadelphia season that she was most truly at home. To this world she had been brought up from childhood. Then Dr. Shippen had admonished her to take care of her spelling and her teeth, and Mrs. Shippen reminded her that "needlework is a most important branch of a female education" and enjoined upon her the value of a perfect curtsey, of "going out or coming into a room, in giving & receiving, holding your knife & fork, walking & setting" decorously, for custom was the despot of that age and "fashion must be attended to."

Fortunately, it is not necessary to pass judgment upon Nancy, upon her family, the conduct of Henry Beekman Livingston, her husband, upon her own actions in the matter of Louis Guillaume Otto. Miss Armes is so wholeheartedly the partisan of the eighteenth century beauty, that this reader, out of sheer
contrariness, found herself thinking that Nancy, whose journal on some occasions seemed to show overmuch sensibility and a certain want of sense, could not have been so wholly angelic, nor could Livingston have been so completely the villain as he was painted. Laying aside such natural perversity, one cannot help feeling that Miss Armes has been too much concerned with the superficially romantic elements of the story, that she has sentimentalized and glorified her heroine out of all reason, and risked alienating her readers thereby. Moreover, the book is heavily weighted with editorial comment and padded twice its proper size with historical material generally descriptive of the period. A certain amount of comment and stage setting is both necessary and desirable but there is never any excuse for inserting paragraphs and even whole chapters where a trenchant sentence or two would have done equally well.

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania

MARGARET LEE BAILEY


Almost a half century has passed since J. Franklin Jameson published his study of American historical writing. Twenty years ago there appeared The Middle Group of American Historians by John Spencer Bassett, but until the appearance of the present A History of American History by Dr. Kraus of the College of the City of New York, no survey of the whole field of American historical writing has been available. This volume sets out to include only those "who were influential in the creation of a tradition of historical scholarship and who have contributed most to the writing of American history in a comprehensive manner." There are so many omissions of important writers, however, that one wonders how Professor Kraus fixed the limits of what might have been an important and broad survey. This book is hardly satisfactory as it is; it is too academic in its viewpoint, too orthodox in the selection and interpretation of the historians and their work. It offers few particularly brilliant summaries.

After an introductory section on the Norse voyages and the early histories of America, there is a discussion of William Bradford, John Winthrop, Increase Mather, Cotton Mather and other leaders of affairs in seventeenth century America who wrote their own story of the early colonization and development of the country. William Byrd, Cadwallader Colden, and William Smith are among those discussed in the chapter dealing with the first half of the eighteenth century. The last half of this century was marked by the "growing self-consciousness of Americans which the revolutionary years evoked" and this, naturally gave an impetus to historical writing. "Many histories of provinces and states now appeared, and historians also began to transcend local boundaries." The first volume of Thomas Hutchinson's notable history appeared in 1764, and readers in this age were also entertained by the writings of Robert Proud, David Ramsay, Jeremy Belknap, Benjamin Trumbull, Jedidiah Morse, Parson Weems and others. After the turn of the century a new crop of annalists started to gather the records of the colonial and revolutionary periods. The
amassing of materials went on, "but the historian who had been eagerly awaited did not make his appearance until 1834. It was then that George Bancroft published his first volume." Professor Kraus aptly suggests: "Wholly apart from his proper mixture of rhetoric and fact, so necessary to the success of a historian in that day, the acclaim that rewarded him was in large measure due to the intense need of Americans for a national historian."

After Bancroft, Palfrey, Tucker, and Parkman, one is introduced to the "scientific school" of historical writing. Henry Adams is discussed in a separate chapter, while McMaster and Oberholtzer are set off as historians of the people. Both chapters are excellent. The frontier and sectional historians are quite properly treated together in one chapter.

One is surprised that no mention is made in this volume of the distinguished work of such men as Philip Ashton Rollins, Allen French, Alvin Harlow, and that Bryce's American Commonwealth is included only when a quotation is drawn from it. Mark Sullivan's Our Times and Frederick Lewis Allen's two studies of our own times are not discussed. Where are Ida Tarbell's history of the Standard Oil Company, and Charles Merriam's History of American Political Theories? Where are the important histories of our artistic life such as Lorado Taft's American Sculpture?

The section on biography is so inadequate that it might well have been omitted entirely.

This book might properly have contained a check list of all authors and books mentioned or, at least, a more complete index. The complete history of American history still remains unwritten.

NATHAN G. GOODMAN