BOOK REVIEWS

I

Ben Franklin Redivivus

There are few great men who have had so much said about them as has Benjamin Franklin, especially in Philadelphia. Our library shelves are lined with his books and with books about him, hardly a month passes without a commemorative address being delivered in his honor, all school children read the *Autobiography*, and a good proportion of our public institutions and clubs bear his name in one form or another. The city of his adoption has surely not forgotten him, and the world at large counts him as one of the great men of history. Why, then, should a new biography be needed so much that an eager public pushes an eight-hundred page volume up into the class of the best-sellers immediately upon its appearance? The mysteries of book-making and book-selling are many, but here is one to which a solution may be found. Franklin in his life rather than in his writings gave clear expression to so much of basic human nature that he must be reinterpreted to each generation. In his weaknesses as well as in his strengths, we recognize ourselves, as Americans and as human beings.

It is easy to see why Carl Van Doren was attracted to his subject and why he draws others in his wake. As he points out in his preface, Franklin saw life as a whole and succeeded in working out a formula for living which reconciled his ideals to his actions and made him effective in everything he thought, felt, or did, from arousing the affections of everyone who knew him to shaping the policies of nations. He was master, seemingly, of power and of love. There is no man or woman who would not measure success in these terms, although few attain to even a small part of it. Franklin seems to have come as near as any mortal to a balanced, if not a complete, attainment of this dual objective. How did he do it? Is it possible that his formula might work for others? for me? for the troubled times in which we live?

These questions are not explicitly raised or answered in this book, although both the problem and its solution are implied. Mr. Van Doren discovered Franklin long ago when he prepared a little col-

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lection of his writings for college students. "Take away from Franklin some of the alloy of his earthiness," he said in the preface to that volume, 2 "his too incessant shrewdness and his ranker appetites, and there remains the pure distillation of human experience, the quintessence of that indispensable wisdom which comes not from illumination but from the fruitful study of all that is given to our senses and our reason to perceive." The reader of Three Worlds will understand why, during the two intervening decades, the critic has retained the gist of his discipleship to Franklin and removed his reservations. Now he would take nothing away from Franklin. Earthiness, shrewdness, and "ranker appetites" are a part of that indispensable wisdom. Without them Franklin would have been something other than he was.

Thus Carl Van Doren has himself left the ranks of the "dry, prim people" to whom he objects so violently in his present preface. "But the chief aim of the book," he says, "has been to restore to Franklin, so often remembered piecemeal in this or that of his diverse aspects, his magnificent central unity as a great and wise man moving through great and troubling events. . . . The dry, prim people seem to regard him as a treasure shut up in a savings bank to which they have the lawful key. I herewith give him back, in his grand dimensions, to his nation and the world."

"To myself," he might have added, for the history of Franklin criticism does not fully bear out the contention that the "many-sided people" and the "dry, prim people" have had Franklin all to themselves. This understanding of the whole man, which has reached such depths in the consciousness of his present biographer, is a discovery that each one of us must make for himself and each generation must make for its nation and for the world. We rediscover Shakespeare annually and Christ at least once a week. Perhaps once a generation is enough for Franklin; but his greatness deserves and will continue to deserve that recurrent tribute.

II

And it has had it from the days when Philadelphia gave a Lindbergh welcome to her "Father of American Independence" on his final return from France in 1785 to the time of this latest biographical

2 Benjamin Franklin and Jonathan Edwards, selections from their writings, Edited by Carl Van Doren. N. Y., 1920. p. xxxiv.
tribute. There was hardly an honorary society in any of the great nations which did not elect Franklin to membership during his lifetime, and even the trifles that came from his pen had a wide circulation. Recognition by the next generation started with a new collection of his writings edited by his grandson in 1818, and continued with the much more inclusive edition of Jared Sparks, the most distinguished American historian of the day, in 1836–1840. A larger understanding came in the middle and toward the end of the century with the work of John Bigelow and James Parton. Between 1864 and 1889 both these men wrote biographies which presented Franklin's career as a whole, and the former reedited the text of his writings from manuscript sources. There is no doubt that our grandfathers had as ripe an appreciation as we could hope to gain. But the wisdom of one age, though it be embalmed in print, cannot be preserved to the next without rediscovery.

In the interval, the "many-sided people" have had their day. This was probably because specialization and one-sidedness became more characteristic of the American idea of success as the nineteenth century waned. At all events, the phrase "many-sided," coined by Paul Leicester Ford in 1899, seems to have become a touchstone for Franklin criticism since then. Specialized addresses before societies which trace their origins to one or another of Franklin's interests have also had something to do with it. Ford discusses his family and social life, his moral code, his theories of education and religion, his careers as printer, as writer, as scientist, as politician, and as diplomat. Others carried the specialization further and analysed his contributions to meteorology, to magazine editing, to librarianship, to post office administration, to economics, to the theory of British imperialism, to medicine, to physiocratic doctrine, to Masonic history, to ethics, to electricity, and to innumerable other facets of his activity. Recently Bennett Nolan, in his General Benjamin Franklin, has told the story of his military career on the Pennsylvania frontier. The appearance of William Cabell Bruce's Benjamin Franklin Self-Revealed in 1923 marks the culmination of this tendency. At the same time, Mr. Bruce has a quality of appreciation which many of his contemporaries lacked, and his book is as valuable for its synthesis as for its analysis. It was he who stated of Franklin: "Wherever he happened to be, he was too
exempt from local bias, thought thoughts, cherished feelings, and spoke a language too universal not to make a strong appeal to good will and friendship." Even a generation devoted to analysis as the true method of knowledge found time to appreciate Franklin as a whole man.

The great American obviously did need to be rescued from these "many-sided people." If so, our whole generation needs to be rescued from the proposition that the whole is equal to the sum of all its parts. Experience teaches that what may be true of geometry is not necessarily true of human nature, or of nature. Humpty Dumpty has fallen off the wall again, but a new rescuer has appeared who is superior in prowess to all the king's horses and all the king's men. Humpty Dumpty has been put together again, not for the first time, but for our generation.

Too great an appreciation of Franklin's versatility is therefore a minor fault in his critics and has provided only temporary loss of vision. The judgment of the "dry, prim people" is more serious as well as more enduring. These folk are sometimes called Puritans, sometimes Victorians, sometimes merely prudes. The last is perhaps the most accurate designation as it has no historical implications. The trait is as old as man. It applies to all those people who object to Franklin's effort to codify his ethics for his own guidance, whether on the grounds that ethics should not be codified at all or that utility is not a proper measure for an ethical code. Mrs. Grundy may open her arms to D. H. Lawrence. The issue is whether or not Franklin was a hypocrite because he worked out, in terms of the utilitarian philosophy of his day, a system of conduct which expressed his ideals rather than his attainment, and then proceeded to violate it on occasion. Lawrence objects to the code, Mrs. Grundy to its violation; they agree in the matter of hypocrisy. In either case Franklin is condemned on ethical grounds.

This sort of attack and defense has taken many forms. Perhaps the most insidious is the editing of his writings. His grandson, William Temple Franklin, used scissors freely in preparing the first edition and caused damage which can never be repaired. Jared Sparks, with more of Mrs. Malaprop than of Mrs. Grundy in his composition, increased

3 I, 544.
the corpus is Frankliniana but altered much of it to conform to the editorial taste of the day. Bigelow took the first steps toward restoration, but unfortunately Mrs. Grundy has again appeared in the person of the most recent editor, A. H. Smyth, whose sins are those of omission. It would require a number of supplementary volumes to include all of Franklin's available work.

But the critics have taken their part in the misrepresentation as well. Even Parton is guarded and represents Franklin as carefully chaperoned by third parties in his semi-weekly musical teas at the home of Madame Brillon. Ford was probably the first to allow this lady's confession that she sat on the sage's lap, and Phillips Russell the first to print his advice to a young man on the choice of a mistress. Early critics suffered some embarrassment, recent critics an undue and an unholy joy, in discussing Franklin's proposal to Madame Helvetius with its debate on the pleasures of Paradise. The presence of illegitimacy to the fourth generation, cut short there by untimely death, has stirred a variety of apologists. The Sunday School and the Pullman smoker have conducted an engaging debate in the which the two ends swing around the circle and meet. Mr. Van Doren has re-discovered the center. He has successfully avoided prudishness and sensationalism, and has pictured a Franklin who is neither unduly inhibited nor unduly profligate.

His is the attitude of the true historical critic. He wishes all the facts about Franklin's life in their accurate proportions and balance, and he leaves it to those facts to provide their own apology in terms of Franklin's own code and standards. He strives to be neither impressionistic nor judicial, even though his deep and intense sympathy with Franklin gives by implication both a personal impression and a judgment. The reader feels almost as though this were the biography that Franklin should have written about himself if he had lived beyond his own generation into our own and had not gone to bed even as early as he did.

III

Even though the biographer refrain himself from critical interpretation of his subject, the reader can scarcely avoid drawing conclusions of his own from so full a presentation of the facts. There are three ways in which Franklin may be studied without breaking down
the central unity of his character, and all three are suggested. He is constantly referred to as a philosopher, yet we are given no analysis or definition of his philosophy. He appears as a great personality in a century which tended to describe life in terms of personality. And he stands out as the representative American at a time when America was coming into being as a nation.

Franklin was not a philosopher in the strict sense of the word. He was never successful as a metaphysician, and had little interest in the problems presented by that learning. Neither did he pay much attention to logic. His interest in the philosophy of the schools was limited to ethics, epistemology, and natural science. A view of nature which lacks a metaphysical discipline can hardly be systematic, and an ethics or epistemology without system and without adherence to the laws of logic will not constitute a philosophy. Nevertheless Franklin had a consistent attitude toward life which may fairly be described as a philosophy in the literary or general sense, the sense for which we usually use the phrase, "philosophy of life." Most great literary men—in fact, most great men in any field—profess philosophy of this sort, and Franklin is no exception.

The recent effort of Chester E. Jorgenson\(^4\) to define Franklin's philosophy is both helpful and misleading. The thesis developed in his introduction is that Franklin's particular type of scientific deism provides impelling unity to his thought in all the diverse fields of his activity. "Franklin's mind," he says, "represents an intellectual coherence—an imperfect counterpart to the physical harmony of the Newtonian order, of which all through his life he was a disciple."\(^5\) Unquestionably some such hypothesis was at the bottom of Franklin's pragmatic inquiry into the ethical laws governing human conduct and the physical laws controlling the universe about him. These two fields of inquiry were his constant preoccupations from youth to old age, and in both he assumed the existence of non-theistic law determining phenomena and their relations. But he made these assumptions with a quite childlike simplicity, without either analysis or dogmatism except for the one unsuccessful attempt of his youth, the *Dissertation* (1725). "I observe so and so," he seems to say. "Therefore so and so probably


\(^5\) p. cxl.
follow. Let us put it to the test. If it works, it works." The laboratory
scientist and the manufacturer of automobiles follow a similar line of
reasoning. Neither before or after need there be any philosophical
formulation of the law concerned, as there would be in the case of a
Locke or a Berkeley. No, Franklin was an experimenter, not a phi-
losopher. One of the most serious mistakes of his critics has been the
false assumption that the ethical code in the *Autobiography* and in the
sayings of Poor Richard, so well catalogued as to seem systematic, is
the statement of an ethical system. It is no more than the record of
laboratory experiments. When he says, "Rarely use venery but for
health and offspring," he is merely recording the fact that, in his own
experience, he has found the greatest satisfaction in sexual temperance.
He might just as well be reporting that he had obtained electricity from
the clouds by the use of kite, key, and bottle. Both are common sense
conclusions drawn from immediate experience.

Such an attitude in the eighteenth century was considered philo-
sophical, and Franklin was recognized by his contemporaries of all
nations as a great philosopher. He probably would not be so considered
today unless we were willing to admit Thomas A. Edison, Andrew
Carnegie, and Franklin D. Roosevelt to the same company. The ex-
perimental scientist, industrialist or politician is not a philosopher
unless, like Alfred N. Whitehead or Woodrow Wilson, he attempts
to systematize the abstract laws governing human experience. Mr.
Jorgenson attributes far too much system to Franklin's thought and
therefore misrepresents him, even though he classifies his attitude cor-
rectly. Mr. Van Doren makes no such mistake. He merely calls Frank-
lin a philosopher in the same sense as did his contemporaries, and he
follows through the history of his experiments with people and things.
Whether he is justified or not in calling him a philosopher is an
academic question. He allows Franklin to exhibit himself as he was,
a persistent experimenter with conduct and with natural phenomena,
no more.

IV

All of which serves mainly to reveal his personality rather than his
mind as a thing apart. In spite of its interest in rational analysis, the
eighteenth century valued personality above all else. The full fruit
of the Renaissance was the free-thinking, free-feeling individual,
conscious of his own power and importance. Boswell’s *Life of Samuel Johnson* is a monument to this attitude. Examples are legion. Franklin was spiritual kin to the good Doctor, as he was to Voltaire, a man respected for what he was almost more than for what he thought, or did, or wrote. The character essay, which reached the peak of its development in this period, bears various testimony to this general interest. Character was typed on the stage and in the drawing room, and the dominant individual in a type became a sort of god. Whimsy and prejudice were raised in value to the level of moral courage or love. In an age of great personalities, Franklin was a great person. It mattered little what he thought or did except as a part of what he was. His was the art of living rather than of writing. His greatest attainment was his being himself.

On the level of his own times, he was therefore no anomaly. His versatility, his rational view of men of affairs, his acceptance of the panorama of life as it stretched out about him, were traits characteristic of his lesser as well as of his greater fellows. His greatness, like all human supremacy, depended not so much on his differences from others as on his superiority in those qualities which he shared with them. It is important, in telling his story, to spread about him the age in which he lived and to deal broadly with contemporary men and events. Balloon ascensions which he watched from his Paris windows, battles fought on the opposite side of the Atlantic, diplomatic intrigue in the Court of London while he was sunning his egoism in the society of Passy, above all, the great and small people who incidentally crossed his path, these things and an infinite number of others are intimate parts of his biography. His egoism was of the extravert variety, it depended upon his relationships with things outside of himself. Through these things and their reflections in him we see Franklin as a whole, as the supreme man in an age of personality.

V

But if one shift from the horizontal to the vertical plane of time, Franklin becomes the American of no one age. The hardy Dutch and Swedes on the Delaware, forcing the rebellious forms of life about them into forms which would serve them, had in their point of view the urgent pragmatism which in a later generation pushed railroads
across the continent and scratched the clouds with shafts of steel and concrete. "The pragmatic method," wrote Franklin's countryman William James more than a century later, "is to try to interpret each notion by tracing its respective practical consequences. What difference would it practically make to anyone if this notion rather than that notion were true? If no practical difference whatever can be traced, then the alternatives mean practically the same thing, and all dispute is idle." Where might one turn for a better statement of Franklin's approach to the problems of science, ethics, politics, or economics? The pragmatic sanction has in our time become a philosophical theory, but with the Puritan Bradford, the Quaker Penn, and the Anglican John Smith, however they might differ in matters of faith, pragmatism alone would save their peoples from starvation, disease, and hostile Indians. Only that which worked would allow survival. America was born to a practical philosophy. The portrait of Franklin as a fireman which hangs in the Museum of the Insurance Company of North America is a representation of the type American far more truly than that of the sage which graces the rooms of the American Philosophical Society. With curls flowing beneath the brim of a Union Fire Company helmet, the placid, quizzical face of a young man looks out upon the world which he is already sure he can conquer. All that was needed was the will to shape the circumstances of life. His was no idealistic hope of making the world safe for democracy, but rather the pragmative imperative to draw lightning from the sky so that it might no longer burn barns, that it might rather be fed through wires in the service of man. Whether we like the thought or not, this is the genius of our people, and always has been.

Again the generalization is best expressed by a multitude of facts and events rather than by its theoretical statement. Franklin moves down the years from the landing of John Smith at Jamestown to the perfection of cellulose and viscose products in the great laboratories within a few miles of the home he shared with Deborah Read and loaned perforce to the British soldiers.

Whether as philosopher, as eighteenth-century personality, or as pragmatic American, Franklin is revealed by Carl Van Doren's inclusive and unprejudiced view more accurately than he could have been.

by any process of scholarly analysis or synthesis however thorough, any critical appraisal however understanding and shrewd. He was an agglomeration of highly diversified parts assembled into a cohesive whole; he was an intensely centralized being with a multitude of means for expressing himself. Because he was one man, the whole of him is more significant than the sum of its parts. He is ourselves, and by knowing him better we learn about ourselves. If at times this great biography seems tediously long, if at times we lose our bearings and our interest centers upon an amusing or a dramatic incident, if pages of quotation from Franklin's letters and reports seem to pall, we can be patient in the confidence that this book is not merely a contribution to the sum of our knowledge (though it contains much new material), nor a critical estimate (though behind its narrative is a consistent judgment), but rather it is a colossal portrait monument to one of the greatest Americans. Franklin, brought again to life, shakes a warning finger at our generation for its failure to see living as an art and life as an organic whole. If he himself had so failed, we should not bother to write or to read about him at such length.

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The size of Pennsylvania, its geographical variety and the multiplicity of its population groups have had a marked influence on its political history. In the early years, in fact down to the Civil War, this complexity prevented the creation of rigid lines in party organization. There was nothing like the Republican predominance which became so marked in the latter part of the nineteenth century. These same characteristics made Pennsylvania a particularly fertile field for various attempts at independent organization. It was comparatively easy to gain a following particularly if the question at issue fitted into social or sectional prejudice.

Three particular enthusiasms became the motives for third party organization in the ante-bellum decades in Pennsylvania: the anti-Masonic, the anti-slavery and the nativist controversies. The anti-Masonic agitation seems to have been symptomatic of the rising spirit of democracy. The prejudice got abroad that the Masonic fraternity was exercising control of politics in arbitrary and aristocratic fashion. The growing self-confidence of the voters and their interest in government made it easy for them to express resentment against a type of class rule and Pennsylvania witnessed a political battle culminating in the Buck-Shot War in 1838.
At the same time manifestations of the prevailing anti-slavery feeling were visible in Pennsylvania. The interest, however, was more apparent than widespread. Important national gatherings of these crusaders were held in Philadelphia and a few Pennsylvanians participated prominently in the move but the active supporters were few. In fact there was much opposition to these radicals; their hall in Philadelphia was burned by a mob in 1838 and in the election of 1840, the anti-slavery ticket polled but 343 votes. During the 'forties the enthusiasm languished but there was a small party which maintained an organization which in the 'fifties was to leap suddenly into importance.

The third enthusiasm was the most widely appealing; this was the nativist move. The variety of racial groups dating from the colonial period and the increasing foreign immigration of the national epoch made Pennsylvania a fertile field for the growth of anti-foreign, anti-Catholic prejudice. The presence of the Irish in Philadelphia was particularly stimulating to a rivalry which finally exploded into violence in the riots of 1844 and the burning of Catholic church property. A nativist party in the region of Philadelphia was occasionally successful in local elections, more especially when in alliance with the Whigs.

In the 'fifties both the anti-slavery and the nativist parties spurted forward under the influence of the westward press of population and the increased foreign immigration. They crowded the old Whig party out of the picture and in Pennsylvania finally fused as a People's party which gained control of the Commonwealth in 1860 and which, as the Republican party, was to maintain itself in control for many a year. This development of a dominant party can be clearly traced from third parties.

This series of political activities is described in a doctoral dissertation prepared at the Catholic University of America. The author's commendable determination to present an unbiased discussion of these controversies has been in large part achieved.

University of Pennsylvania

ROY F. NICHOLS

The Moravian Indian Mission on White River. Diaries and Letters, May 5, 1799, to November 12, 1806. Edited by LAWRENCE HENRY GIPSON for the Indiana Historical Collections. (Indianapolis: Published by the Indiana Historical Bureau, 1938. xv, 674.)

In this twenty-third volume of the Indiana Historical Collections another valuable contribution has been made to the source material dealing with Moravian missions among the Indians and with certain aspects of frontier and Indian life. The realization of a project begun some twenty years ago by Arthur W. Brady, of Anderson, was made possible through the combined labors of the translators and of the editor, Dr. Lawrence Henry Gipson of Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, whose introduction to this work contains an informative summary of the labors of Moravian missionaries in various parts of the world. Special attention is given to their work among the Indians in the movement westward from Shekomeko, New York, to the three settlements in Pennsylvania: Gnadenhütten, Shamokin (Sunbury today), and Friedenshütten,
Bradford County; and then to the three settlements of Schönbrunn, Gnadenhütten, and Lichtenau, and others in the Ohio country. In spite of the harrowing experiences of the Christian Indians during the American Revolution and the massacre at Gnadenhütten the Moravians continued their labors to convert the Indians to Christianity at Goshen on the Tuscarawas, a branch of the Muskingum, and among the Delawares on the White River, near the present city of Muncie, in the Indiana Territory.

The source material which comprises this work covers a little over six hundred pages, the major portion of which consists of the diaries kept by the missionaries at the White River settlement. These diaries are supplemented with the mission letters that were sent from the White River settlement during the years 1802 to 1806 and with the autobiographies of the two missionaries, John Peter Kluge and Abraham Luckenbach. The extracts from the Goshen Diary reveal the reason for a missionary undertaking to the Delawares of the White River and the events related to its founding. In response to a request for a mission from the Indians of the Wabash the Bethlehem Congregation chose Abraham Luckenbach and John Peter Kluge for this important mission.

On October 15, 1800, these two missionaries, accompanied by some friends in the early stages of the journey, set out. They traveled through areas familiar to those interested in Pennsylvania history: Lititz, Elizabethtown, Middletown, Carlisle, Shippensburg, Bedford, the Allegheny mountain area, and Pittsburgh. From the latter place they pushed onward to the Ohio country, and arrived at Goshen on November 18, 1800. The comments on the conditions which they encountered and the brief descriptions of the country through which they traveled and of the people whom they met add color and interest to this record. After four winter months spent at Goshen in preparation for the last important stage of their journey, Kluge, his wife and Luckenbach set out on March 24, 1801, with thirteen Indians who were to form the nucleus of the new settlement on the White River. Two Indian boatmen and three others accompanied them as far as Gnadenhütten. Their journey to the White River came to an end on May 25, 1801, when they arrived at the location which had been selected for the settlement. One reads with fascination the descriptions of their experiences and of the whites and Indians with whom they came in contact; and follows with intense interest the course of this journey. Unfortunately a map tracing their course has not been included. There is, however, a map of the area in which the settlement was made.

Since these missionaries went to the frontiers in the Indiana country to carry to the Indians the Gospel of Jesus Christ as Saviour, the diaries that make up the major portion of the book tell of endeavors to win converts to Christianity, of the difficulties experienced in weaning the Indians from the life of savagery, and of the vices of the whites that threatened both their moral and physical well-being—especially the inordinate use of whiskey which seemed to utterly demoralize them. The struggles and hardships that had to be endured in this pioneer enterprise for Christianity are graphically set forth. The difficulty experienced in winning the Indians from their customary way of life in the midst
of growing hostility brought this little settlement in the Indiana Territory to an unhappy end after five years of persistent effort in the face of almost insurmountable obstacles.

But it was a praiseworthy endeavor. If it must be regarded as a failure from the spiritual end it aimed to attain, the historian finds the record of their experiences contained within the pages of this volume of decided value. Here are depicted the trials and difficulties of establishing a settlement in the wilderness and of teaching the Indians who joined the community the importance of agricultural pursuits in order to provide adequately for the winter months. Here the hardships suffered from severe winters and from flood times, the dangers from wild animals, the unrest and fear created by rumors of war, etc., are found. As one follows this struggle for existence in the wilderness he cannot but be impressed with the importance of such simple means of transportation as a horse, or with the handicaps imposed by the lack of a mill. Indian habits and practices are portrayed graphically, as are the varied relationships of the "heathen" with the little Christian community that brought certain blessings to the Indians as some of them admitted. The strength of the Christian Indians was tested from time to time in the midst of the pagan practices, and not all could resist the temptation to return to the old life.

For a conception of the patient endeavor of those called to conduct a Christian missionary enterprise among the Indians, for information on certain phases of Indian life in the Indiana country, and for an understanding of the struggles that accompanied pioneering in a wilderness, this work furnishes material that is invaluable.

Philadelphia

GUY S. KLETT


Until the first edition of this book appeared in 1931 there was no adequate treatment of the life and labor of the colonial printer, as a craftsman, as a member of society, and as an agent of culture. Not only does Dr. Wroth supply such a treatment, but he also gives an account of the establishment of printing in the several colonies in a bibliographical essay which is interesting and well written. Pennsylvanians, however, may feel somewhat aggrieved that in this revised edition he has taken from them the distinction of being the second colony in which a permanent press was established. The difference lies between William Nuthead’s imprint of a blank form at St. Mary’s City in August, 1685, and the earliest possible date for William Bradford’s printing in Philadelphia, December 28, 1685. Yet there are still honors aplenty for Philadelphia as a center of printing.

In his zeal as a bibliophile, however, the author does not overlook the essential position of the printer as a mechanic. He takes the view of the social historian, and presents so excellent an account of the printer’s manifold activities that a full rounded portrait emerges such as the historian of less fortunate trades and crafts is unable to provide. In the background is the picture of the colonial printing office, a reconstruction made possible by a study of manuals of the art,
inventories, occasional published data gleaned from books and newspapers, and a minute examination of surviving implements. A few old presses are preserved in museums, and Moxon, Stower and others tell us how they were used. An appreciation of the printer's product is greatly enhanced by a realization of the physical difficulties he overcame. Meager and primitive equipment was often handled in a masterly way. In this new edition a series of line drawings by Mr. Ralph Green, an engineer who has studied the early press as a hobby, illustrates the operation of a colonial press. Inasmuch as Dr. Wroth has extended the period studied to about 1800, a section on the Ramage press then becoming common is included. Incidentally a comprehensive monography on Adam Ramage, the Scotsman who came to Philadelphia about 1800, and who was the principal manufacturer of hand presses in the early nineteenth century, is much needed.

Type, ink, and paper, are all treated exhaustively. Paper, above all, was a problem to the colonial printer. Imported paper was expensive, and sometimes subject to tax. (Dr. Wroth believes that paper, rather than tea, should be celebrated as contributing to American independence. Included under the Townshend taxes it, far more than tea, was a legitimate cause of protest.) The average printer, however, secured his supplies from the nearby paper mill. The first such mill was established in 1690 by William Bradford and Samuel Carpenter. Its existence is delightfully proved by the verses of a contemporary, John Holme, who thus described the activities of Bradford (p. 128):

Here dwelt a printer and I find
That he can both print books and bind;
He wants not paper, ink, nor skill
He's owner of a paper mill.
The paper mill is here hard by
And makes good paper frequently,
But the printer as I here tell,
Is gone unto New York to dwell.
No doubt but he will lay up bags
If he can get good store of rags.
Kind friend, when thy old shift is rent
Let it to th' paper mill be sent.

The appeal for rags implicit in the foregoing verses was voiced by every printer. His promise to pay cash for rags, or his willingness to take rags in payment of debts, was varied by disquisitions upon the great utility of rags when converted into paper, or by poetical appeals. Among the latter is a clever conceit from the Virginia Gazette, July 26, 1744, which is worthy of a place in some colonial anthology (p. 147):

Ye Fair, renown'd in Cupid's Field
Who fain would tell what Hearts you've killed;
Each Shift decay'd lay by with care;
Or Apron rubb'd to bits at—Pray'r,
One Shift ten Sonnets may contain
To gild your Charms, and make you vain;
One Cap a Billet-doux may shape,
As full of Whim, as when a Cap,
And modest 'Kerchiefs Sacred held
May sing the Breasts they once conceal'd.
Quite as important to the social historian, if less romantic in appeal to the general reader, was the beginning of American manufacture of ink and types. Dr. Wroth accords credit for the latter to Abel Buell, "jeweler and lapidary," of Killingworth, Connecticut, who began his experiments in 1768, and in the following year won recognition from the colonial legislature and £100 with which to continue his work. The making of ink from lampblack and varnish must have been a nasty business, but when the printer had to boil linseed oil and rosin to make his own varnish his troubles were multiplied. Alongside the usual picture of the printer at his press or case there should be one of Christopher Sower, boiling "his oil in a meadow to keep the evil odor away from the houses of the community," but principally to avoid the danger of burning down his whole establishment in the process. Later printers bought the varnish and added the lampblack; but it was a greater boon to have it ready prepared.

Running a printing office was often a family task in which the women, too, participated. Sons and apprentices had various duties, but upon the wife sometimes fell the task of management. "The first Cambridge press seems to have been set to work by the widow of the Reverend Jose Glover; Dinah Nuthead and Catherine Green in Maryland were accorded the privileges enjoyed under the local government by their deceased husbands; Anne Timothy succeeded her husband, Peter, as printer to the State of South Carolina; Ann Franklin was the successor of her husband as Rhode Island's official printer, . . . Clementina Rind carried on the business of her husband in Williamsburg. Franklin has given immortality in the Autobiography to the effective conduct of the printing house of Lewis Timothy of Charleston, by his Dutch-born widow, Elizabeth. Sarah Updike Goddard of Rhode Island was the backer and partner of her son; and Mary Katherine, her daughter, was her brother's assistant, partner, and stalking-horse until their quarrel and separation in 1784." (pp. 154-5.) Some of these were able to set type, and it is recorded that the wife of Anthony Arm-bruester was "a good worker at press." Printing was, indeed, in the household stage of development, but its growth was forecast in the changing status of the journeyman. Some interesting data have survived as to rates and conditions of labor, most carefully recorded in the Work Book of Franklin and Hall.

As indicated in the verses about Bradford, the printer was often by necessity a binder, too. Bookbinding eventually became a separate trade, and students of the subject have discovered some noteworthy American binders, especially John Ratcliff and Edmund Ranger. Tribute is also paid to the binding accomplished by the Ephrata brethren (Dr. Wroth slips in referring to "the Ephrata Cloister in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania," p. 210), "who printed and bound Der Blutige Schau-Platz, the largest and ugliest book produced in colonial America." After reading this chapter collectors will look anew at the bindings of their early Americana.
The output of the colonial press was of course the major contribution of the printer, and here our author suggests a new bibliographical approach. To appreciate the product of the press we cannot be content with the comprehensive listings of Evans' *American Bibliography*. There were countless smaller items which the bibliographer overlooked, or which were too ephemeral to survive or be identified. The Work Book of Franklin and Hall records the printing of several items not found by Franklin's bibliographers. The conclusion from the study of Franklin's imprints compared with his computed production is such that if the ratio were applied to the Evans list of 1639–1799, the total product of the colonial press would be about 169,000 pieces instead of 36,000. Students have given little attention to job work as lottery tickets, legal forms, government session laws, chapbooks, ballads, and advertising handbills. Yet these must have constituted a good fraction of the printer's work. In this class, by the way, was the *Freeman's Oath*, the first job done by the Cambridge press. The literary product of the colonies: sermons, religious manuals, political tracts, and even almanacs and verses are here accorded their rightful places as a product of the American press.

Here, then, is a stimulating study of the printer as a craftsman, as a businessman and employer; here is a record of his early achievements, and of his contribution to colonial life; and here, too, is a bibliographical essay on the printer's product. These are not apart from each other, but comprise a unified and scholarly treatise, ably presented and thoroughly documented. The reviewer would be remiss if he did not mention the beauty of format and typography so appropriate to this study. The original edition was complimented by Dr. R. W. G. Vail as "a perfect book." The revised edition is as worthy of this tribute in form, as in content.

*Albright College*  
Milton W. Hamilton


This bibliography of 7692 items is by far the most complete compilation on the general subject of American history. Both the term "bibliography" and "history" are conceived on a rather broad scale. The general attitude of the compiler appears to have been: When in doubt, include. Such an attitude naturally adds considerably to the bulk of the volume, but it also tends towards the uncritical. The section on economic history is especially liberal. Special libraries will undoubtedly find much to praise in the space accorded to business and finance. In short, the classified and purely enumerative method of presentation, based upon the actual holdings of the Library of Congress and several libraries in Philadelphia, indicates with sufficient clearness that the needs of the librarian rather than those of the scholar had been the determining factors in the compiler's approach.

A kind word must be said about the form and completeness of entry. In these respects the work is excellent and well in keeping with the high bibliographic standards characteristic of the H. W. Wilson Company. Some manuscript and in-process bibliographies are also included, but while the period up to 1933 is
covered thoroughly, there are some noticeable omissions of publications after that date. It is a valuable compilation and will prove a much used reference tool in any library.

Union Library Catalogue of the Philadelphia Metropolitan Area

Arthur B. Berthold

The Organization of the English Customs System, 1696-1786. By Elizabeth E. Hoon. (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938. viii, 322 p. $4.00.)

The administrative, and consequently the constitutional, history of England in the eighteenth century is largely unwritten. The scarcity of works in this field appears the more remarkable and the more deplorable when one considers the developments in that century which eventually transformed the government of England: the decline of prerogative, the waning of the power of the privy council, the rise of the cabinet, and the evolution of modern administrative departments. Historians may use these phrases glibly, but before they can speak with assurance on these subjects there is much groundwork to be done of the kind performed so admirably by Dr. Hoon in her study of the customs organization.

Her research among the customs records has been exhaustive, and she writes with authority. Here is an amazingly detailed and realistic picture of administrative activity on the part of the customs board and its subordinate officials in all of the multiple branches of the English service. Such a faithful reconstruction is, of course, highly illuminating to anyone interested in administrative methods and practices. Dr. Hoon's study, however, enriches not only administrative history, but commercial and financial history as well. For instance, some of the eighteenth-century obstacles to trade become evident as one understands the delays and annoyances which the ship's captain or merchant experienced in the port of London, on board his ship in the pool or waiting his turn in the long room of the customhouse. Many of the problems of the chancellor of the exchequer are to be explained by the complex character of the custom duties, upon which, in part, he based his estimates of future revenue.

As commerce was of first importance in colonial relationships, and as revenue problems were reflected in colonial policies, this study of an English institution is a contribution not only to English, but also, indirectly, to American history. Furthermore, because the colonial customs system until 1767 was a part of the English organization under the direction of the London board, this description of the English service is an aid in understanding the institution in the colonies. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to suppose that the two branches were alike in all particulars. Students of colonial history will recognize that many of the defects described by Dr. Hoon such as patronage, inefficiency in personnel, variations in fees, and frauds of diverse kinds, characterized the colonial customs also; but they will note that certain abuses were evidently less pronounced in England than in America, and that, on the other hand, there were certain advantages in the colonial system. Great as was the complaint against sinecures, for example, the colonial customs service was comparatively free from the worst
phase of this evil, for patent officers were exceptional. The most significant
differences would seem to be due to the fact that the English organization was
maintained for the purpose of securing a revenue, while the American, until
a few years before the Revolution, was designed primarily for the regulation of
trade.

By contrast with other sections, the chapter on executive control covers a field
too broad for the same sort of painstaking research that distinguishes the work
as a whole. Consequently, and not unnaturally, the reader may question cer-
tain generalizations to be found here. For instance, considering its legal and
constitutional implications, the unqualified assertion that the treasury could
relax the law (apparently using the relaxing power as synonymous with the dis-
oping power) would seem somewhat injudicious, based as it appears to be on
the very limited evidence of 1851 (p. 61). Again, the author would seem to be
in error, technically at any rate, in stating that the customs board granted writs
of assistance (p. 63); and possibly so in declaring that such writs were neces-
sary for search (p. 272). In England writs of assistance were issued out of the
court of exchequer, though usually by a clerk as a matter of course without
reference to the court; and, according to the opinion of his Majesty's attorney
general, De Grey, the authority and power of customs officers were derived from
statutes and not from the writ, which, requiring assistance of others, merely
facilitated the execution of the officers' legal powers, because disobedience to
the writ was contempt of court (Public Record Office, Treasury 1:465, June
3, 1768). In spite of some reservations, however, the reader will gain from this
chapter considerable insight into relations between various administrative
agencies.

The style is essentially simple and clear, although to the casual reader it may
seem diffuse because of the mass of detail. The eighteenth-century influence ap-
ppears in the profusion of capital letters, but the author is consistent in their use.
Footnotes are unnecessarily cluttered by the constant repetition of the location
of sources; and occasionally cross references in the index may prove to be more
puzzling than helpful. But these comments are really evidence that the footnotes
and index have been prepared with the same meticulous care that in general
characterizes the research and makes The Organization of the English Customs
System a work of genuine importance.

Wilson College

DORA MAE CLARK

Doctors on Horseback. By JOHN THOMAS FLEXNER. (New York: Viking
Press, 1937. xvi, 370 p. $2.75.)

It is appropriate that the first third of this excellent book should be concerned
chiefly with Pennsylvania figures, since in the eighteenth century Pennsylvania
was the seeding ground of American medical science. After John Morgan,
William Shippen and Benjamin Rush in Mr. Flexner's historical pageant of
Doctors on Horseback come Ephraim McDowell, Daniel Drake, William Beau-
mont and those four unhappy contenders for the laurel of discovery in anaes-
thesia: Crawford W. Long, William T. G. Morton, Charles T. Jackson and
Horace Wells. Into the scheme of this procession are brought many of the
picturesque episodes of our medical history between 1735 and 1880.
It is a fascinating story—and often unpleasant. The reader is thrilled with the picture of high patriotic purpose, tireless resolution, benign concern for the afflicted and courageous ingenuity in meeting crises with such means and knowledge as were at hand in a wilderness; he is depressed by that of obstinacy queerly compounded with gullibility, and, above all, the touchiness and rancorous jealousy which have so often marked practitioners of the great profession of healing. Mystery surrounds the ministry of the physician; the admission of error is ruinous. Living upon fees that rest upon confidence he is supersensitive to criticism, and yet it is easy to criticize work accomplished in the midst of so many variable factors. The life of an innovating doctor has always been a hard one, and Mr. Flexner's doctors on horseback were all innovators.

The lives of the great Pennsylvanians, all charged with impossible administrative responsibilities in the surgical service of the Revolutionary War, were all darkly clouded with recrimination. "During the entire war, roughly nine American soldiers succumbed to disease for every one killed by the British." It is a sad story of ignorance, inefficiency and insubordination, all more or less excusable, but costly beyond any measure of the imagination. The war experience was in tragic contrast to the high hopes warranted by the student triumphs of Morgan, Shippen and Rush in Edinburgh. Rush, however, was irrepressible and, though a malign influence through his bleeding of all patients, became the most famous physician of his time and a potent force in many other fields.

McDowell of Kentucky lived in a very different atmosphere; his pioneer ovariotomy on Mrs. Thomas Crawford (she gripping the table edge and singing hymns while the surgeon's knife dug deeper and the hostile mob outside was kicking at the door) is the outstanding heroic incident in the annals of healing in America. Daniel Drake founded and broke up medical schools up and down the Ohio Valley and accomplished more than any other American, perhaps, in writing medical history, with a penumbra of common-sense sociology. Everyone knows of William Beaumont's long and valuable study of Alexis St. Martin's stomach, left strangely open by a gun-shot wound, but many will learn here for the first time of Dr. Beaumont's quarrelsome nature and his undying hatred of his patient. The discovery of anaesthesia by Crawford and his contemporaries conferred an incomputable blessing on the race, but their inexorable rivalry for credit and profit was a revelation of human greed. With all the attention that Mr. Flexner pays to this introduction of the use of ether, it is surprising that nothing is said of Dr. Samuel Guthrie and his discovery of chloroform. Besides the dominant figures, however, the author pays respects to many others.

Mr. Flexner has written literature as well as history. That in itself will give permanent value to his book. It is not a treatise, nor will it well serve as a book of reference, though, fortunately, it has a good index; there are some small gaucheries on the historical side. But any one who seeks a great tale of American achievement will find it here, and any one who desires to go into monographic and source material will find an easy guide in the appended bibliographies.

Union College

DIXON RYAN FOX