BOOK REVIEWS

By CHARLES and MARY BEARD. Vol. IV of The Rise of American Civilization. (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1942. xii, 696 p. $5.00.)

One of the prime functions of historians is to prepare general syntheses of the past of any given people or nation. This is distinct from the work of social scientists or others who may write of the history of their special fields. Thus the economist may provide an "economic history" or the architect an "architectural history" of the United States, but it is the historian's obligation to prepare the epic of "the American people" as a whole—a synthesis in which all special phases of development are woven into one narrative corresponding to the interweaving that occurred in the actual course of human events. This is a difficult and solemn obligation, and few if any Americans have assumed and met it so effectively in the past generation as have the Beards in their Rise of American Civilization. In the earlier volumes, they presented "the outward aspects of civilization . . . with expressions in government, politics, economy, institutions, letters, arts, and sciences." Readers might naturally have assumed that this completed the work, for indeed these "expressions" included a more comprehensive picture of American developments than had usually been incorporated in earlier histories.

For the Beards, however, the story of what men had actually done was but the "exterior" of their civilization, and they have now added in the present volume a history of its "interior" aspects; that is, of what Americans thought about their society and ideals while these were in course of development. This is not, however, a general intellectual history, but rather one that focuses on a special problem. What did American thinkers—statesmen, scientists, literary men—believe was the larger meaning of American experience? What should the new nation stand for; what was or ought to be its contribution to the future of mankind? The Beards found that discussions of these ultimate questions turned more and more, as the nineteenth century advanced, on the concept of "civilization." It was civilization that all good men should strive to advance, and when necessary struggle to save. But there was no complete agreement as to the meaning of the word. Hence the Beards, having written three volumes on the "Rise of American Civilization," have now felt it wise to examine just what it was that so rose!

Like most terms commonly used, "civilization" is not easy to define. The authors trace the use of the original Latin root (through meanings similar to the modern "civility") until the end of the eighteenth century,
when Condorcet conferred upon it the complex meaning which is here accepted. It came to represent what is termed a "world view," that is, an outlook on life which gave meaning to all that men did or strove to do. There had been other world views—Buddhistic renunciation, the opposite extreme of ruthless will-to-power as seen today in Nazi thought, and the Christian will to overcome suffering and evil. During the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, another world view evolved which is expressed in the term "progress." This implied scientific optimism concerning technical improvements (inventions were viewed as a sign of progress) in combination with a growing concern for the welfare of all men (social reforms were also considered a mark of progress).

In a word, "progress" consisted of an increasingly humane desire to employ improving technologies in the service of mankind. But "civilization," as the word came to be used after 1800, implied even more than this. True, it involved both the ethical and the scientific elements just noted, but placed these in a new historical setting or synthesis. Human institutions had not "advanced" in isolation from one another as had hitherto been supposed. All in a given society were interrelated, and these societies with one another—not only in space but also in time. All social orders grew out of those preceding them. This idea of historical continuity enabled Condorcet to envisage "civilization" not as a static state of a given society, but as something dynamic—progress moving continuously on through the ages.

This was indeed an inspiring concept, and one by which optimistic nineteenth-century thinkers could well evaluate the achievements of their age. And in no country was this idea of civilization more generally welcomed than in the United States, where yet untouched wealth promised technological improvements on a vast scale, and where the recent Revolution had proclaimed the ethical obligation to use these for the benefit of the common man.

The first three chapters of The American Spirit are devoted to the analysis and ideas summarized above. The rest of the work is given to a running account of the thoughts of outstanding Americans on the nature and meaning of civilization in the United States. These thinkers are grouped into approximate chronological periods, and their individual views are related to certain trends in attitude which were more or less characteristic of each era. Thus there were the "fathers" of the Early Republic, who stressed the capacity of mankind for "progress"—in the days when that conception was still a fresh and novel one. Here such well-known leaders as Jefferson, John and John Quincy Adams, Paine, Rush, and Joel Barlow are featured, along with less known but equally interesting figures like Robert Coram of Delaware.

There ensue chapters on the thought of the decades preceding the Civil War, when the implications of equalitarianism—the ethical element in the concept of civilization—were being worked out in general, and also in
special reference to slavery as the chief obstacle to the realization of American ideals. To the comprehensive observations of such figures as Tocqueville, Bancroft, and Emerson, are added the opinions of others who were primarily concerned with special aspects of American civilization. Thus Lucretia Mott discusses the place of women; Henry C. Carey, Albert Brisbane and others are concerned with economic problems and with poverty in particular; and a number of literary figures—Whitman, Cooper, and Margaret Fuller—proclaim the distinctions between European and American civilization. In view of these distinctions, the introduction of Old World Catholicism via the immigration of 1840–1860 is viewed as having constituted a real threat to American ideals of liberty (p. 256), and the ensuing conflict of ideas is illustrated by the shifting and eventually dogmatic opinions of Orestes Brownson.

After the Civil War, the advent of the new industrial order was associated with an emphasis upon “individualism.” So far as this meant individual liberty in terms of the bill of rights, it was already inherent in the American tradition; but now it was used primarily to justify laissez-faire policies in economic society—the sanctity of competition as the life of trade, and as the normal biological procedure making for evolutionary progress in society as well as in organisms. Here the academics begin to come into their own, as in Sumner of Yale, Burgess of Columbia, and Wilson of Princeton. In protest against the ensuing exploitation of the masses and the vulgarity of an acquisitive leadership, Henry and Brooks Adams wrote pessimistically of “the degradation of the democratic dogma,” and saw no hope for the future. In contrast, however, a new generation of social scientists—Lewis H. Morgan (anthropology), Lester F. Ward (sociology), Simon Patten and Thorstein Veblen (economics)—analyzed the weaknesses of individualism, and renewed the faith in civilization as a continued drive towards the welfare of the masses.

Meanwhile, European critics had had much to say since Tocqueville’s day about American civilization—most of it unfavorable. Extremely caustic were the English literary lights, such as Dickens and Matthew Arnold (compare Gustavus Myer’s America Strikes Back for a detailed account); but Continental critics like Siegfried and Freud occasionally could be just as nasty. The latter, for example, did not “hate” America—he merely “regretted” that Columbus had ever discovered it! The main indictments were that Americans were merely a money-mad people, and that their society in consequence was vulgar and incapable of cultivating the arts and sciences. During the reaction back to “normalcy” after 1918, a group of young American writers accepted these foreign criticisms as sound. Journalists (Dorothy Thompson), musicians (Deems Taylor) and literary men (Van Wyck Brooks, Archibald MacLeish) vied with one another in asserting the essentially sordid character of American life and its cultural inferiority to that of Europe. Yet it was this very group which, when the present War threatened, suddenly discovered transcendent values in American democ-
racy and led in the demand that these must be preserved even at the cost of war.

The Beards evidently feel that those who had questioned American civilization in the 1920's had never fully appreciated its elements of strength, and were therefore the last who should have assumed to speak in its name in the 1940's. The stress which they place on this theme reveals their major conviction as to the distinctiveness of American civilization and its relative merit in comparison with that of Western Europe. They have certainly documented this conviction in an impressive manner, and their analysis should long remain one of the most telling presentations of this view. On so broad and basic a question, of course, there is bound to remain a wide divergence of opinion. It will not do to exaggerate the authors' position by calling it mere nationalism, any more than it will suffice to exaggerate that of their opponents by terming them mere Anglophiles or dilettantes. It is the reviewer's opinion that there are elements of truth on each side of the matter. Historically speaking—and assuming the concept of civilization here presented—the American way seems to have surpassed the European in virile equalitarianism; while the latter has achieved more in the arts and sciences. Whether there was any subtle connection between American leadership in one respect and lag in the other, is an important question that calls for further analysis. At present, however, a victory for the democracies would promise something for equalitarianism in Western Europe, at the very time that art and science seem to be coming into their own in the U. S. A. One may hope, at least, for such a higher synthesis of the respective elements of strength in both of these traditions.

At the risk of anti-climax, a few critical comments may be made of *The American Spirit* as a study in intellectual history. The range of reading on which it is based is remarkable, and any given section is therefore valuable as a work of reference—apart from its meaning as a whole. Pennsylvanians will be interested in the prominence accorded Philadelphia thinkers—Rush, Carey, Patten and the less well-known contemporary A. J. Snyder—all but the first of whom flourished while the city was supposed to be intellectually somnolent. Many sections of the work are intellectually exciting, and one senses candor and independence of opinion throughout.

Yet the book is undeniably hard reading, not because of any lack of clarity in style, but because the procedure of following brief summaries of an abstract nature through more than six hundred pages is necessarily slow work. At places, the varying employment of such general terms as "civilization," "culture," and "progress" is confusing, even though it is a main purpose to clarify such usage. The definitions are there, but sometimes have to be "dug out" on second reading.

The authors recognize at one point the difficult question that is bound to haunt the critical reader; that is, how representative were the thinkers selected for this analysis? The problem is an essential one for all intellectual history; but by and on the large, no answers are attempted in this instance.
One has simply the Beards' subjective opinion, but in the case of such mature judgment this is most valuable in itself.

There remains, finally, the question whether it is more effective in intellectual history to pass in successive review the opinions of many individuals as such; or whether it were better to prepare an interpretive narrative in which individuals are cited only as illustrations of general trends. The authors have here elected to follow the first procedure, some of the advantages and disadvantages of which are suggested above. Each has its values, and one may supplement the other. Hence one who wishes to secure an over-all view of the development of American thought could hardly do better than to combine a reading of so able a general narrative as Merle Curti's recent *History of American Thought* with the Beards' analysis of *The American Spirit*. Such reading may well commend itself to all thoughtful citizens, in these days when the World War has renewed interest in the meaning of that American civilization which it is our high purpose to preserve.

*University of Pennsylvania*  
Richard H. Shryock


This is a most convenient book, both in size and format. It is easy to handle and its maps are drawn very clearly in black and white and marked with uncrowded type, in fact more clearly than in other atlases. The list of places is more inclusive than usual and therefore is most gratifying.

The editors who were first responsible for the excellent *Dictionary of American History* have followed a careful plan. They have had the advice of other scholars and many of the maps are marked as drawn under the direction of these advisers. The maps begin with an excellent and novel pair showing the geographical features of the nation and the distribution of the forests. Then follow plates illustrating the advance of discovery, exploration, colonization and westward migration. Military campaigns and the definition of the national boundaries bulk large.

Up to a certain point the atlas contains practically everything that one could desire. For good reasons, however, the editors have set drastic limitations on their work. They have kept out all graphs or charts and give little attention to economic or social data. Also there are very few maps after the post-Civil War reconstruction period. Much has happened since then which might have been included, many important demographic changes and economic shifts have occurred. No effort has been made to illustrate the advance of American interests outside North American continental limits.

This handy reference work will be invaluable for students and general readers and should be in a prominent place in every historical library.

*University of Pennsylvania*  
Roy F. Nichols

To some persons the title of this volume may come as a surprise, for there seems to be a notion prevalent in some quarters that the Pennsylvania German dialect is a poor vehicle for conveying thought. Dr. Robacker's study of the dialect writings of the past two hundred and fifty years will astonish those who have not become acquainted with this non-English culture which has thrived in Pennsylvania for many years. Only diligent research and inexhaustible patience could have succeeded in dusting off so many ancient writings and unearthing printed materials from the crumbling files of newspapers scattered over eastern Pennsylvania.

The author divides the history of Pennsylvania German literature into five periods. The first period, extending from 1683 to 1800, he calls the Period of Greatest Religious Significance. During those years the early German settlers wrote religious tracts and publishers reprinted the works of European authors. Dr. Robacker declares that "when religion was the motivating force in literature, German Pennsylvania must be credited with a status equal to that of New England and far in advance of that of many of the seaboard settlements."

The Period of Transition, from 1800 to 1861, is a difficult one for the Pennsylvania German. He is not at ease in either English or German. His ideas have become somewhat worldly and he finds less solace in German hymnbooks and printed sermons in the German language. His reading is limited to the newspaper, the almanac and perhaps some book on occult lore, such as John George Hohman's Long Lost Friend. German verses appeared in newspapers during this period but the writers were striving to write the German they heard from the pulpit or that which appeared in their almanacs. It was not dialect literature.

After the Civil War the Pennsylvania Germans became language-conscious. This the author designates as the third period, extending from 1861 to 1902. Poets began to write in the dialect. Some of the finest classics of dialect literature were written during this period, notably, Henry Harbaugh's "Heemweh" and Eli Keller's "Mer wolle Fische Geh!" Newspapers circulated in Pennsylvania German counties printed columns in the dialect, usually in the form of letters to the editor. Church magazines, such as the Guardian, published dialect verses. Late in the Language-Conscious Period the Pennsylvania German Magazine made its appearance. It was published from 1900 to 1914. In 1890 the Pennsylvania German Society was formed in Lancaster.

The fourth period, called the Local Color Period by Dr. Robacker, is marked by literature written about the Pennsylvania Germans rather than literature written by them. Authors in search of atmosphere exploited the quaint customs of the farmer-folk of eastern Pennsylvania. A lengthy list
of novels by Helen Reimensnyder Martin is furnished by the author, as well as a great number of leads to short stories which appeared in popular magazines during the early decades of the present century. One wishes that the weight of interpretation were added to the almost bare catalogue of publications. Unfortunately the author confines his labors to casual reviews which in some cases are merely reviews of other reviews. Perhaps it was not to be expected that he should read and interpret all of Mrs. Martin's novels, yet to this reviewer it seems unfortunate that Mrs. Martin must bear the censure for her Tillie the Mennonite Maid in which she ridicules the Pennsylvania Germans, while no mention is made of her Porcelain and Clay and Sylvia of the Minute in which her "Dutch" characters are covered with glory.

Finally, since 1928, we have the Folk Conscious period, when writers have recognized Pennsylvania German culture as a distinct contribution in its own right. Again the casual reader will be surprised to note the number of persons who can still take pen in hand and express their emotions in dialect verse. Occasionally one senses that the author of this book is discouraged because he fails to find great masterpieces or men of letters among those who are writing today. It is useless to look for them. The language in which they write was never constructed for drawing-room usage or polite speech. But it is a dialect capable of expressing deep emotion, it can speak of birds and flowers and natural things; it can write poems that gush from the heart, like "showers from the clouds in summer, or tears from the eyelids start."

Dr. Robacker has pointed the way to the materials; he has allocated them to periods and made it possible to view Pennsylvania German literature in perspective. Now we need someone to interpret it. Among the legends of the Pennsylvania Germans is the story of the Wild Huntsman (Der Ewige Jaeger) who flies through the clouds during the night while yelping dogs bark along his trail. Only those born on Christmas Day can see the hunter in the sky. Perhaps it is true that only those born and reared to the dialect will ever see the true beauty of its literature.

Robesonia, Pa.

ARTHUR D. GRAEFF


The authors of this volume set out to interpret American culture from what they call a new point of view, namely, the effects of the machine and industrial practices upon our social and cultural life and habits of thought since the time of Alexander Hamilton. "Here in a most revealing way" reads the jacket statement, "are traced the social, economic and political effects of the development of industry in the United States.” And in their
introduction, the authors emphasize the point, "we have been primarily a business people, and business has been most important in our lives." Other historians, say these authors, have abstracted the colorful aspects of our culture, and have interpreted them naively in terms of the profit motive. "In doing so they ignored the most dramatic story in our history, the story of business enterprise itself, the story of its institutions and their impact upon American society." The authors then proceed to chart the course of our history from a business point of view. With these objectives this reviewer is in hearty accord.

After a somewhat brief review of what is called "False Starts in Manufacturing," and the rise of the industrial workers, the authors turn to a discussion of "The Intensive Frontier." While not discounting the effects of our frontier upon American culture, they believe that the impact of the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in England and the United States produced a greater revolution in our ways of living than the changes effected by our American frontier. Since the effects of the Industrial Revolution were felt mostly in the eastern cities, one must turn to the cities properly to appraise our national culture.

In reading the chapter on "The Early Railroad Age," one gets the impression that things were in a pretty bad way during the 1840's and 1850's. The railroads were able to get about what they wanted—politicians, public officials, municipalities, farmers—all were easy prey for the railroad lobbyists. "The Gilded Age" in American politics obviously began with the railroads, not with the Civil War and Reconstruction. The Civil War years afforded the business and industrial leaders a rare opportunity. True, business did not want a war, but once it began, businessmen took advantage of the opportunities it afforded. By the close of the war they were in control. The agrarian interests which had held dominion since the days of Jefferson were removed beyond recall. As the businessmen and industrialists rose to power following the Civil War, they felt the need of a philosophy to justify their conduct. Darwin and Spencer supplied them with such a philosophy. "Spencer reduced homo sapiens to the level of the machine, and so well adapted was his mechanistic philosophy to the culture of his age that he was warmly embraced as the master theoretician of his time."

Politics laid a heavy toll upon industry for some years following the close of the Civil War. Industry and railroads were forced to pay huge sums for political benefits, and were frequently blackmailed by threats of regulation or withdrawal of government aid. The politicians who came into power after the war could treat businessmen simply as customers, selling political support at the highest price the traffic would bear. Following the panic of 1873 and the passage of the Civil Service Act, politicians turned to the industrialists and railroad interests for campaign funds. This in turn gave the business interests a greater voice in naming the candidates, dictating the platforms, and shaping the laws. Just as the industrialists had brought order out of business anarchy, now they planned to do the same in dealing
with rival political interests. Thus in the decades following the Civil War "politics became one of the great businesses of the nation, steadily employing thousands of workers, seeking profits like any other enterprise in a competitive society."

By this time the reader is forced to conclude that the authors do not have a very high regard for the ethics of organized business or organized politics, and the concluding chapters clinch this belief. If there is any sin for which business has not been blamed, this reviewer is unable to recall it. But wait—a surprise is to come in the last chapter. "But nowhere, at any time in the world’s history had there been so much wealth so widely distributed." Strange admission, after all the lambasting business received throughout the preceding 344 pages!

University of Pittsburgh  

John W. Oliver

By Marquis James. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1942. 432 p. Illustrated. $4.00.)

In his Biography of a Business, 1792–1942, Marquis James has clearly demonstrated that the history of an individual business enterprise can be interestingly and even fascinatingly written. In this account of the Insurance Company of North America, the author has skillfully analyzed and colorfully presented the activities of a great business organization from its origin to the present, covering a period of one hundred and fifty years. The result is a living portrait of a corporation—a portrait that is by no means impersonal or soulless. On the contrary, it possesses life, warmth and vitality.

The Insurance Company of North America was born in the year 1792 in the beautifully panelled Georgian rooms of Independence Hall, where sixteen years before the Declaration of Independence was adopted. It received a charter from the Pennsylvania legislature in 1794. The company was established in Philadelphia to write marine, fire, and life insurance. The last-named type of insurance was new and the public skeptical of such an innovation. The new business organization, therefore, did not venture into this field. Its early functions centered in underwriting marine insurance but in the course of time it added fire, and in more recent years casualty, and almost every other form of insurance. In the field of life insurance, however, its activities have been quite limited.

Like the First Bank of the United States, the company played a most important part in the life of the young Republic. But unlike the First Bank, its existence was continuous. It grew up with the new nation and contributed much to its development.

The author clearly brings out the fact that the growth of the Insurance Company of North America has been closely intertwined with the history of the country. For example, its earliest investments included stock in
turnpike companies, United States government bonds, and western securities. In later periods, it paid large sums for losses incurred in such catastrophes as the Chicago fire of 1871 and the terrible disaster at San Francisco in 1906. The machine age wrought many changes in the plans and structure of the company. Thus, through its changing activities, the organization reflects various aspects of national history, from the simple life of frontier days to the complex organization of society today. Its change of home from the two rooms on South Front Street to the great office building on Arch Street and its giant New York building symbolizes the growth of the company and the nation.

The history of this insurance company is not one of a dominant family succession. It includes a variety of individuals. The author has taken the opportunity to weave into his work brief biographies of many who contributed to building up the organization. From its first promoter, Samuel Blodgett, Jr., and its first president, John M. Nesbitt, to its present president, John A. Diemand, who rose from the ranks, the lives and services of many officers and men are presented.

In his conclusion the author writes: “This account of the Insurance Company of North America ends almost as it began: at a time of national peril. It is the lot of underwriters, however, to deal with perils as an everyday thing, whereas the rest of us experience them only once in a while.” The book ends in an optimistic note as the company reaches its one hundred and fiftieth birthday in a sound and healthy condition.

The volume is well illustrated and contains notes and references to sources in an appendix. The format of the book is in keeping with the high standard of writing maintained throughout by the author.

University of Pennsylvania


Professor Dickson is quite right in saying in the foreword that most of us who are interested in American art do not know the writings of John Neal and indeed have never heard of him. Therefore, it is good that he has collected these excerpts from Neal's writings which deal with art. The selections are taken from Randolph, a popular novel published in 1823, from Blackwood's Magazine (1824–25), from The Yankee (1828–29), from Brother Jonathan (1843) and from The Atlantic Monthly (1868–69). The first two selections use much of the same material, and the articles of his old age which appeared in The Atlantic Monthly summarize in large measure what he wrote forty years before.

Neal had a genuine enthusiasm for painting and was exceptionally clear-eyed and honest in his judgments. His opinions were his own and not
necessarily the fashionable ones of the day. In consequence many of his estimates of the early nineteenth-century American painters have been substantiated by time; this Professor Dickson points out in the Introduction (p. xxiv). With Neal’s judgment of Audubon and his *Birds of America*, most people would disagree, but Neal’s article “Audubon—the American Naturalist” which appeared in *Brother Jonathan* is entertaining in its intemperance.

While Neal has many pertinent comments to make on American artists and their paintings, the scope of his work in no way compares with that of William Dunlap. Articles similar to Neal’s are to be found in a number of contemporary American periodicals, especially in the *Port Folio*, published in Philadelphia. Sufficient evidence that, European critics to the contrary, there was a wide-spread interest in art in the Early Republic. Most of Neal’s writing deals with painting and he seems to have little knowledge of sculpture and architecture. His few comments on the architecture of Baltimore (p. 34-36) are neither discerning nor accurate. He thinks Latrobe was a Frenchman and accepts the current story that the Baltimore Cathedral was designed after St. Peter’s in Rome!

Professor Dickson has given a good account of Neal’s life in the Introduction and for people who are not familiar with the subject he has appended Notes on Artists, in which are given brief biographical notices of the sixty-nine artists mentioned by Neal. There are also illustrations (not very good) of thirteen of the paintings described by Neal, together with a frontispiece of John Neal, himself. The volume is, all in all, an agreeable addition to *Americana artistica*.

*New York City*  
*Agnes Addison*

*The Repair and Preservation of Records.* By *Adelaide E. Minogue.*  
(Washington, D.C.: Bulletins of the National Archives, No. 5, 1943.)

For some time one of the great needs of manuscript custodians and of librarians has been a clear and concise account of the various methods used in preserving and repairing manuscripts. These processes are described in scattered publications, many of them unavailable today. Therefore this bulletin of the National Archives meets a real need.

The author has long been engaged in the study of paper preservation and repair. Her summary of the causes of deterioration of paper and its prevention will be of value to everyone who has permanent records in his care. The repair of damaged manuscripts is described briefly and with clarity. The processes mentioned will suffice for the collector having but one or two documents to repair as well as those counting their repairs by the thousands. The many recipes given will be found useful in solving the librarian’s problem of pasting, cleaning and other processing. The National Archives and Dr. Minogue are to be congratulated for this timely bulletin.

*The Historical Society of Pennsylvania*  
*J. Harcourt Givens*
The John Tipton Papers. With an introduction by Paul Wallace Gates. Compiled by Glen A. Blackburn. Edited by Nellie Armstrong Robertson and Dorothy Riker. 3 vols., Indiana Historical Collections, vols. XXIV-XXVI. (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1942. xix, 909; xi, 947; and ix, 927 p. $11.00.)

These volumes present material that will enlighten certain aspects of national history, such as Indian trade, internal improvements, land speculation, and political parties in the 1830's. The chief significance of the work, however, concerns the development of northern Indiana. A clear picture may be obtained of the Indian trade in the Fort Wayne area, of treaty negotiations leading to the cession of land by the Indians, and of the removal of the Potawatomi to the trans-Mississippi in 1838. The shameless action of the traders is well presented in their own letters. The grasping individuals who carried on the business connected with the negotiation of the treaties and who used political connections to gain their opportunities appear in letters of application. Efforts to gain governmental aid in the building of the Wabash-Erie Canal and efforts of insiders to secure choice land sites also appear. The difficult business of Indian removal is here mirrored in the letters and reports of the actors responsible for the migration. Through all runs the story of John Tipton as Indian Agent, land speculator, and United States Senator. He became the representative of this area, advancing its interests but not neglecting his own, a friend of the Indians as well as the pioneers, supported by Jacksonians as well as by followers of Clay, a leader who tried to be nonpartisan at a time when political parties were drawing their lines tighter and tighter. His career illustrates the callousness of the political leader towards standards of public service at the same time that he adhered to other principles of public welfare and private conduct.

An essay of fifty pages on Tipton's career by Paul W. Gates forms the introduction to the volumes. Although the conclusions are all that one could ask, the sketch should, perhaps, either have been shorter and therefore a mere outline of Tipton's life, or longer and hence contain substantiating details and supporting evidence. Lacking these, it seems to have a rather definite slant. The statements about Tipton's attitude on slavery (II, 25 and 37) are too brief to mean very much and they may be contradictory. The sketch is the best we have of Tipton, and in most respects, is excellent.

Some of the incidental remarks found here and there in the volumes are quite revealing. An instance is the request (II, 524) of a correspondent for an opportunity, "to make $500 somehow or other." "Cannot you smuggle me in as an originell Jackson man or an 11th hour convert, or as being under serious convictions, or let the rule be waived in my favor a little? . . . . I have never ate a dinner or drunk a glass of wine at the expense of Uncle Sam's loaves & fishes just want a little sop now if it be my turn. I want the money to pay my electioneering expences. . . ." In the second volume a good statement revealing the methods of making money in laying out a
town is found on pp. 346-47 and the use of federal funds for private speculation on p. 467.

The work of compiling the writings of Tipton was begun by Glen A. Blackburn as a graduate student at Indiana University. His work is included in the first volume. More recently Mrs. Nellie Armstrong Robertson and Miss Dorothy Riker of the Indiana Historical Bureau completed the task of collection, and edited the three volumes. Their work has been admirably performed. Few editors supply so much explanatory information. It is impossible, however, to satisfy every reader’s needs. For instance, on p. 131 of volume I a reference to Tipton’s divorce would have helped explain a paragraph of condolence. References to William H. St. Clair and Arthur St. Clair are not accompanied by the usual biographical information. An extensive index is included in each volume. The Indiana Historical Bureau and all connected with the production of these volumes have done their work creditably.

University of Indiana

JOHN D. BARNHART

Memoirs of Jeremiah Curtin. Edited with notes and an introduction by JOSEPH SCHAFFER. Wisconsin Biography Series. (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1940. 2 vols. ix, 925 p. $3.00.)

Jeremiah Curtin is best known in America as the translator of Henryk Sienkiewicz’s Quo Vadis and the same author’s trilogy With Fire and Sword, The Deluge, and Pan Michael. The first of these works caught the imagination of the reading public and rapidly became not only a “best seller,” but chalked up a sale of a million copies after its appearance in 1896.

Curtin was born in Detroit, Michigan, in 1835. This son of an Irish immigrant entered Harvard in 1859, where John Fiske became his life-long friend. Lowell, Longfellow, Peirce and Agassiz were his favorite professors, whom he came to know well and by whom, particularly the first, he was strongly influenced. At Harvard, Curtin made a study of languages his special field. From German, French, Swedish and Danish, he passed to the study of Sanscrit, Icelandic and Hebrew, and later acquired a knowledge of Finnish and Polish.

The presence of Admiral Lesovskii’s squadron in New York led to Curtin’s acquaintance and friendship with some of the Russian naval officers, one of whom taught him the Russian language. His new friends had apparently made a strong impression on the young Harvard graduate. He decided to make the study of Russia, its history and epos, his lifework, with the view of promoting better understanding between the United States and the Empire of the Romanovs. As he wrote to Secretary Seward: “It is very essential that Russia and the United States should know each other well. We know our enemies at the present time, and the least we can do is to become acquainted with our friends.”
As a means to this end—of interpreting Russia to America—Curtin sought to enter first the consular and later the diplomatic service. He succeeded in obtaining the Secretaryship of the U. S. Legation at St. Petersburg. There he quickly made a host of friends. And a very unusual collection these friends were. The nationalist leader Katkov and the fierce Caucasian chieftain Shamil; the lay Pope of Russia, Pobedonostsev, and Leo Tolstoy; young Serge Witte and the slavophile General Cherniaev. The only link among these was their liking for the young American diplomat, who spoke their language well, studied diligently their literature and history, and was in love with all things Russian. Cassius M. Clay, the head of the Legation, conceived a great dislike for his "Jesuit Irishman" secretary, and their subsequent quarrel, assuming a most bitter aspect, led to Curtin's abandoning the diplomatic career. He remained in Russia, however, first in association with General Cherniaev in a railway enterprise and later engaged in lumbering operations in the Caucasus. The Russo-Turkish war interrupted Curtin's work and he returned to the United States.

In 1883 another chapter of Curtin's life began through his connection with the Smithsonian Institution. His interest in Irish and Russian folklore laid the foundation for his attempt to establish the science of mythology. He developed the theory that all peoples, during the most primitive stage of their development, were essentially alike and held a certain common stock of ideas about the creation, the emergence of their own race, etc. These, in Curtin's view, suggested a unitary "First Cause" as the background of all history. The Thirty-Second Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1910, 1911, contains a detailed statement of Curtin's views in J. N. B. Hewitt's edition of Seneca Fiction, Legends and Myths, Part I, collected by Curtin and Hewitt.

Curtin's passion for travel was one of his most characteristic traits. His voyages to Russia, Western Europe, Central America, Siberia, and the Western States made him a modern nomad. He never owned a home and with the exception of the period of his connection with the Smithsonian Institution, he never lived at any one place more than a few months at a time.

The Memoirs fall into fifty-four chapters. Of these, three deal with the author's early years; eleven are mostly concerned with Russia and the vicissitudes of Curtin's diplomatic career; six with his studies of Indian lore, including his field work; eight with his expeditions in Mexico and Guatemala. The balance is devoted to Sienkiewicz and Poland, to Ireland, and to studies of Gaelic folklore, together with travels to the Holy Land, Japan and China, and various parts of Europe. In this reviewer's opinion, the part of the Memoirs which has the greatest value for the general informed reader today lies in one of the chapters dealing with Russia and Poland. Curtin understood both these countries well—perhaps better than any other American in the nineteenth century. He was steeped in their culture and felt as much at home in the Polish countryside as in Moscow or St.
Petersburg. He loved and sympathized with both nations, and his memoirs bear witness to his steadfast devotion to the task he had set himself in 1863—to promote a better understanding between the United States and Russia.

It is unfortunate that the section concerned with Curtin’s dealings with Count Serge Witte during the preliminaries to the Portsmouth Peace Conference of 1905 was omitted by the editors. It is to be hoped that it will appear in print in one of the historical journals, as Curtin had the confidence of the head of the Russian Delegation and knew well some of his aides.

The manuscript of the Memoirs is in the handwriting of Curtin’s wife, who took notes under his dictation and later prepared a fair copy from these notes. Apparently Mrs. Curtin was not as familiar with some of the foreign personalities mentioned in the Memoirs as was her husband, for there are many mistakes in the spelling of these foreign names. There is no consistency in the transliteration of Russian names, nor, for that matter, of the Russian words quoted. Some of the translations of Russian idioms are incorrect. There is a slip of the pen in the reference to the Marienburg Knights of the Cross controlling all Western Europe. In one instance a patronymic is used instead of the first name. One should not, however, permit these editorial shortcomings to detract from the merits of this lively and well-written volume. Anyone interested in the several fields that attracted Curtin: American-Russian relations, Russian and Polish literatures, folklore—Gaelic, Russian, Indian—and, finally, anyone who likes a good travel book, will find it well worth his while to read the volume of Memoirs of this unusual person, who in a speech made in Milwaukee in the ’seventies said: “If in future time an enemy shall strike at Russia, no matter how he may be panoplied in iron, no matter what streams of blood may flow in his footsteps, Moscow will know how to meet him with the same spirit and effect as she has always met Russia’s enemies.”

Philadelphia

D. Fedotoff White


Urbane Travelers is a highly entertaining sequel to the author’s earlier work, The Sherleian Odyssey. The present volume recounts the experiences of six Englishmen and of one Scot who toured Europe, Africa, and Asia in the years between the Armada and the outbreak of the Civil War. These seven men had in common the fact that all were sightseers, traveling out of curiosity. Theirs was the idle curiosity of the tourist, not the burning zeal of the explorer, and it was this attitude which won them the title urbane travelers, a term which the author has adopted from Professor Eva Taylor. Like many others of the period our seven gentlemen traveled for travel’s sake, but unlike most of the others, they qualified for the present volume by
leaving behind them detailed accounts of their adventures. These accounts form the warp and woof of this work.

Even if the author had been content with a summary his book would have considerable value, for he has a lively style and a good sense, generally speaking, of the selections which will appeal to the twentieth century. There is a certain value, moreover, in a readily accessible guide to the rather long-winded memoirs written by the urbane travelers. But Mr. Penrose does much more than summarize. An urbane traveler himself, he uses his knowledge of the show places of Europe and the Near East as a sort of yardstick with which to measure the reactions of his subjects. When one of them overlooks a cathedral or a collection of masterpieces, he expresses polite regret. When Sir Henry Blount’s faulty memory of the classics made it possible for a wily Turk to persuade him that the field of Thermopylae was on the outskirts of Sofia, the author is careful to point out the error. But he is also interested in the travelers’ reactions to such of the less rarified strata of social and cultural phenomena as sleeping accommodations on land and on shipboard, the sophisticated manners and customs of the Italians, and the various “rackets” by which the priestly custodians of the Holy Land imposed on pious and curious travelers. He seems not a little pained when one of his urbane travelers loses his urbanity, at least according to modern standards, by engaging in furious theological disputations.

In addition to the fact that all were literary to some degree, these seven travelers further had in common journeys to the Levant. Two of them, Coryate and Herbert, went as far as India, while Cartwright got as far east as Persia. Two of them sailed also in the opposite direction from England, Cartwright to the Arctic regions of America, and Sandys to Virginia. Just why the author included these westward voyages in a work on urbane travelers is a little difficult to fathom, for such belong properly to the experiences of the explorer and colonist rather than the idle sightseer. Three of our travelers, Moryson, Lithgow, and Blount traveled extensively in eastern Europe. Indeed, the surprising thing is not that so many got so far afield, but that only three of the travelers in this volume seem to have seen much of western Europe, the Mecca, if we are to believe the author’s conclusion, of tourists of the day.

In his conclusion, the author ventures the opinion that the reports of these travelers helped stimulate the imagination of the English people, and served to broaden their horizons so that these seven men can lay some claim to a real part in the founding of the British Empire. This thesis is plausible, although the author does not examine the evidence closely. In fact the author makes no effort, in the main body of the work, to undertake a general study of travel in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. He makes no survey of the great mass of travelers, urbane or otherwise. Nor does he analyze the impact of these urbane travelers on English society. The Zeitgeist does creep in, but only through the experi-
ences of the seven urbane travelers. Certainly there could be no disputing the fact that an age in which men risked pirates, Arabian brigands, and the Inquisition, to say nothing of the perils of shipwreck and pestilence, for the sake of seeing the world was an age of courage and enthusiasm.

*University of Pennsylvania*  
Daniel S. Allen

Wanted: Information regarding the present location of the painting, "Washington at Prayers at Valley Forge," by Henry Bruckner (Brückner or Brunckner). Will members of The Historical Society who have information which might contribute to the discovery of this canvas please communicate with the Director?