

BOOK REVIEWS

The Westward Crossings: Balboa, Mackenzie, Lewis and Clark. By JEANNETTE MIRSKY. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946. xvi, 365, xiv p. Maps, illustrations. \$4.00.)

"Balboa, Mackenzie, and Lewis and Clark are not three stories, they are three episodes in one story—the penetration and exploration of the continent. These episodes are tied together by a solid line of continuous development. . . ." Here in the author's words is the thesis of her book—the fundamental unity of North American history. This is not a new theme. The material covered has been discussed thoroughly by competent scholars to whom Miss Mirsky gives due credit in acknowledgments and in a well-chosen selective bibliography. Yet the professional historian can derive much of value from a reading of the volume for it fills the gap in historical writing between the "dry as dust" presentation and the oversimplified, overdramatized popularization. On the whole Miss Mirsky has adhered strictly to the standards of scholarship, and at the same time achieved a style of writing which by adroit use of incident, vivid phrase, and pertinent selections from diaries and contemporary accounts keeps the reader on the scene and as concerned about the outcome of events as the lowliest member of the expeditions.

By emphasizing the interplay of Spanish, English, French and Russian expansion and in drawing comparisons and contrasts by shifting back and forth in time and space, she relates the European background to the American scene and points out the significance of the expeditions for the broader development of the continent.

In a lusty, colorful treatment the men who make the great crossings take the stage in turn, playing the hero role, yet stepping down to introduce the reader to the environment and climate of opinion of vigorous times and to contemporary figures—Las Casas, Fonseca, Ojeda, Peter Pond, John Ledyard and Jefferson. In forging links to give continuity to the expeditions of Balboa, Mackenzie, and Lewis and Clark, Miss Mirsky is successful in building a "solid line of continuous development." Only at one point does she appear to strain the facts to fit the pattern. Her first link, Central America, established through the efforts of Balboa was not as she says ". . . the narrow funnel (through which) Spanish explorers spilled out into the interior, northward and southward reaching . . . deep into the southern half of what is now the United States." Rather, it was Cortes' New Spain which served as the base for northern expansion and New Spain was in the stream of development emanating from Cuba and Española, not Darién. Balboa's achievement in Panama has actually more significance for

South America and fits the pattern of North American settlement only in the figurative sense of being the first permanent mainland settlement.

Westward Crossings is not confined to mere narrative. "After Balboa," an interpretive chapter on the work of Spain in America, skillfully woven around the figures of Las Casas, man of reform and freedom, and Fonseca, upholder of privilege and the established order, is an able analysis. So, too, is the chapter, "Jefferson's Western Dream," in which it is shown that liberty and freedom, destroyed by the interests of privilege in the Spanish colonies, flower in the English settlements and are later nurtured by the westward expansion of the youthful United States resulting from the expedition of Lewis and Clark. This struggle for liberty and freedom against the special privilege of the established order recurrently is emphasized throughout the work and provides a minor theme which Miss Mirsky develops with careful generalizations which for the most part are sound.

However, in chapters which briefly interpret broad subjects there can generally be found points over which there may be disagreement. In the reviewer's opinion, the role of bureaucratic Spain is pictured too darkly in order to set the efforts of Las Casas and the reformers in high relief. Furthermore, it is only a half truth to say that at a later date ". . . the ideas for which Las Casas fought found political expression—that all men were created free and equal." True, Las Casas struggled to free the Indians from their Spanish masters but for the purpose of settling them in theocratic colonies—a far cry from the political expression of the ideas of freedom and equality which developed after the late eighteenth century. Finally, the statement that "the traditional municipal liberties were recognized by Ferdinand and Isabella" is contrary to the record of centralization of power left by the Catholic Kings.

It is a temptation to raise and discuss points of this nature. More important, however, is the fact that the book as a whole achieves its ambitious purpose of presenting a panorama of great achievements, of energy and ambition displayed by Spaniard, Englishman and American in cutting paths across an often antagonistic but ever-alluring continent.

Rutgers University

ROBERT N. BURR

The Selected Writings of John and John Quincy Adams. Edited by ADRIENNE KOCH and WILLIAM PEDEN. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946. xxxix, 413, xxx p. \$4.50.)

"The common and vulgar herd of statesmen and warriors are so wont to promote on every occasion their private and personal interest at the expense of their country that it will be a great and glorious pre-eminence for you to have exhibited an example of the contrary, of a statesman who made the sacrifice of his own interest and influence to the real and unquestionable benefit of his country."

Such was the language in which John Quincy Adams addressed his father

after the latter's defeat in the election of 1800. And, whatever else one may think of either of them, it would be difficult to deny that the ideal expressed in these words animated their conduct at all stages of their political career. When Jefferson described John Adams as "distinguished as the Being who made him" he paid him a compliment which, while perhaps extravagant, expressed the very core of the Adams' character. The sturdy independence of both father and son is one of the splendid heritages of the American people.

The Selected Writings gives, perhaps, too little of the day-to-day reactions of the Adamses to the political events of their times. What has attracted Miss Koch and Mr. Peden, on the whole, is the philosophical, rather than the severely practical aspects of the Adams' mind. But with this small reservation, it is fair to say that in these pages is compressed the very best of two remarkable men.

How New Englandlike they seem! The painful effort at self-cultivation, and perpetual discontent at the results; the personal grappling with the truths of religion, respect for education, and interest in it; a democracy strongly favored with the principles of aristocracy, acid criticism of others, all these things come out in the pages of the *Selected Writings*.

And sometimes one gets a revealing opinion on a particular point. When John Quincy Adams points out that, in the midst of the informal war with France, when the Hamiltonians were pressing for an army in 1798, there was not an inch of French territory on the American continent, he makes a point that has not always received due emphasis. When John Adams declares against banks, and in favor of metallic money, he expresses a view not always realized as his. And when he declares that the rich should contribute to education in proportion to their means, he is anticipating an important movement, and laying down a canon of taxation that would not have been generally accepted at the time.

It is interesting, too, to get a glimpse of the religious views of father and of son. Adams senior was certainly a Unitarian, in the literal sense; but John Quincy appears to have been moved in the direction of a stricter orthodoxy. Both men were devout, but less concerned with creeds, of course, than with exacting standards of moral conduct.

On the side of political theory, neither the elder nor the younger Adams was in any sense a theoretical democrat. John Adams believed in a balanced government, and wrote much to prove his point. John Quincy Adams looked with a cold and practical eye upon the revolutions in Latin America, and indulged in no such ardently idealistic democratic hopes for the new republics as did some of his contemporaries. Both men were as little disposed to bow before King Mob, as they were to bend the knee to the wealthy or the powerful. Despite the somewhat aristocratic flavor of his thinking, Adams the elder could write, of the rich, that they were "seldom remarkable for modesty, ingenuity or humanity. Their wealth has rather a tendency to make them penurious and selfish."

Lovable the Adamsses were not. Morally a bit complacent for all their self-searching and self-discipline, without the instincts of friendly association with others, intellectually just a trifle snobbish, they were none the less (as any perusal of their writings shows) truly great men in their way. A democracy needs more than it is likely to get of the sturdy independence, the exacting standard of public conduct, that was displayed by the Adamsses. And it needs still more to be able to recognize and reward such qualities. Could such men succeed, or even survive in public life today? That is one of the most sober and perhaps most disturbing questions presented by this correspondence. Miss Koch and Mr. Peden have done well in making available to us in relatively brief form so much of what is fundamental and central in the lives and thought of the two great New Englanders and of two great Americans.

The University of Rochester

DEXTER PERKINS

Lydia Bailey. By KENNETH ROBERTS. (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1947. 488 p. \$3.00.)

Probably no recent novel has been reviewed more favorably or more frequently than *Lydia Bailey*. A new book by Kenneth Roberts, whose *Northwest Passage* and *Oliver Wiswell* have placed him in a class by himself as a writer of historical fiction, is a literary event. It is to be expected that many gracious comments will be forthcoming; in that respect this novel has followed the pattern set by its distinguished predecessors.

This review will not attempt an evaluation of *Lydia Bailey* as a novel, a task better left to literary critics. Rather it will concentrate its criticism upon Roberts' treatment of Tobias Lear, one of the principal characters. Let it be agreed at the outset that Roberts has time and again proved himself an accurate historian, never taking "editorial liberties" or falling into anachronisms. Let it be further agreed that every historian is entitled to his opinion of an historic individual, provided he can back up his opinion reasonably well by facts. However, it seems to me that, in depicting Lear, Roberts has been unduly harsh.

Lear was private secretary to General Washington from 1785 until 1793, became military secretary to the General in 1798, and was at Washington's deathbed. Two of Lear's wives were nieces of Martha Washington, who was the most puritanical and critical of women and would certainly never have permitted her relatives to marry a man whose character was not exemplary.

Roberts' case against Lear begins at Santo Domingo, where Jefferson had appointed him consul. However, this score does not seem to me a very serious one. Incidentally, Roberts has done a magnificent job of description in these vividly accurate island scenes. It may be remembered that Napoleon was preparing to invade America through Louisiana, and was stopped only by Toussaint L'Ouverture and the yellow fever. Leclerc's forces were

so decimated that the project was given up, and Louisiana was sold to the United States instead.

Later, with the shifting of scenes, Lear is indicted for the peace he had a part in making at Tripoli. It should be noted that Jefferson had told Lear to make peace, and that the whole administration was satisfied. In justice to Mr. Roberts, however, it is only fair to add that a special Committee of Congress ruled that Lear had influenced Commodore Samuel Barron to make an unfortunate peace. But even if the treaty was a mistake, Lear was not by reason of it the complete rascal Kenneth Roberts would have him. Whatever Lear may have been, Washington and the leading men of his time thought exceedingly well of him. In other words, it was not like the case of poor Light-Horse Harry Lee who did so well during the Revolution and died forgotten. I have no interest in Lear, but it would seem that Roberts has done an injustice to a man who was certainly not considered all black by his own time. This is especially serious when Roberts' well-known historical accuracy and popularity are considered.

All of this is perhaps beside the point, for Roberts has indeed done a wonderful job in *Lydia Bailey*. The years from 1798 to 1805 live again for us through the magic of his words.

Philadelphia

FREDERIC R. KIRKLAND

James Monroe. By W. P. CRESSON. Introduction by M. A. DE WOLFE HOWE. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1946. xiv, 578 p. Illustrations. \$5.00.)

The author of this biography died fifteen years ago, and the manuscript was put into its final form by other hands. Just how much of the work Mr. Cresson had completed is not stated by Mr. M. A. De Wolfe Howe in his introduction; probably the bulk of it, though the reader will probably notice a greater thoroughness of treatment in the earlier than in the later chapters.

The lapse of time between the author's death and the publication of the book explains the absence from the bibliography of some of the more recent monographic literature; it does not explain the omission of Charles A. Beard's two works on the Constitution and the Jeffersonian Democracy or of I. J. Cox's *West Florida Controversy*, or the fact that while Dexter Perkins' *The Monroe Doctrine, 1823-1826*, is cited, no attention is paid to the revelations in that volume as to the European diplomatic background of the Monroe Doctrine. It is to be observed also that while some sixteen manuscript collections are listed in the bibliography, references to them in the footnotes are few, and that the book rests principally upon well-known printed sources.

The result is disappointing. Written in excellent style, admirably printed, and judiciously illustrated, this volume of over five hundred pages con-

tributes a minimum of new information about Monroe or of interpretation of the events of his time. Certainly the biography is more adequate than any earlier one, contains some excellent chapters on the social life of the period, and is very free from errors, factual or typographical; but as an account of the aspects of American foreign policy in which Monroe played so large a part, it is far from being the definitive treatment which one might justly expect in a work with so many pretensions to scholarship. If the deficiency is the result of the author's untimely death, the publishers would have been well advised to secure more expert collaboration in editing the manuscript for publication.

University of Buffalo

JULIUS W. PRATT

The Famous Case of Myra Clark Gaines. By NOLAN B. HARMON, JR. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1946. xiv, 482 p. Illustrations. \$3.50.)

New Orleans Woman: A Biographical Novel of Myra Clark Gaines. By HARNETT T. KANE. (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1946. 344 p. \$2.75.)

In 1833, when married and nearly thirty years of age, a young woman known to history as Myra Clark Gaines accidentally discovered that she was the daughter of Daniel Clark, a wealthy merchant, trader, and politician of New Orleans who had died some twenty years previous, allegedly leaving a will which recognized Myra as his legitimate daughter and bequeathing his estate to her.

She had been reared by foster parents whom, until her discovery, she had always thought her actual parents. Several years previously she had married believing this to be the case. Soon after discovering who were her real parents, Myra commenced a litigation to establish her right to Clark's estate. The suits which absorbed the remaining fifty years of her life were begun in the Louisiana state courts; went eleven times to the United States Supreme Court; and were not finally settled until nearly ten years after her death.

Certain facts are clear. Daniel Clark apparently married Zulime Carriere, a reputedly beautiful Creole of unconventional marital habits, and they became the parents of Myra; for political, business, and social reasons Clark insisted that the marriage be kept secret and refused, at any time, publicly to acknowledge Zulime as his legal wife. Later Zulime left Clark when he continued to refuse to acknowledge their marriage publicly and married another. Clark had arranged with his friend, Colonel Samuel B. Davis, for the care of his daughter and made a will in her favor. The will was

suppressed and probably destroyed by Clark's executors, Relf and Chew, who became administrators of the estate and prospered thereby. No accounting of any sort was made of their administration for a quarter of a century after Clark's death.

Myra Clark married first, William Whitney of a well-to-do family of Binghamton, N. Y.; several years after his death she married General E. P. Gaines of the United States Army, thereby commanding a respect society had previously denied her because of her alleged illegitimacy. Myra suffered mob violence, social humiliation, and legal defeats; knew social triumph, legal victories, poverty, affluence, fame and scorn, but never acknowledged defeat in her long career as a litigant.

Both of her husbands as well as her foster parents provided funds that enabled her to carry her fight in the courts; likewise, aid came from many interested friends. General Gaines died; her children grew up and her son was killed, but the case went on. The property Myra claimed changed hands many times. Just how much she finally recovered is beyond accurate determination. The Gaines case was before the courts from 1836 to 1896, ten years after Myra's death. Final settlement was based on the acknowledgment by the courts of a will that was never produced. At the end, because the property Myra sought to recover was in the heart of New Orleans, the city itself became the defendant.

Dr. Harmon's account is the record of the litigation in this involved case, prefaced by a short biographical record of Daniel Clark and the circumstances leading up to Myra's birth. The story is told in an interesting way, the continuity of the litigation through a maze of moves and countermoves being kept ever-present so that the reader gets a reasonably connected picture of the proceedings as one suit followed another. Harnett Kane, the author of *Louisiana Hayride*, *Plantation Parade*, and other kindred studies, in his fictionalized story handles the intricacies of the case and the many characters involved with skill, always keeping Myra as the central and dominating person in the cast.

The ending of Myra's career is as bizarre and unusual as its beginning. She had asked to be buried beside her father. This was done, "but when . . . the tomb of Daniel Clark was opened, the surprising discovery was made that there was nothing whatever in it. No fragment of bone, or button or wood remained—nothing. Was it the last mystery?"

Dr. Harmon's book contains notes, a bibliography, and an index. Both authors used much the same source material, though neither mentions any collaboration or exchange of material and data with the other. Barring the discovery of new material not previously available either to the litigant or the authors, together these two books give as complete an account of the Gaines case as we shall ever need.

Locust Valley, N. Y.

THOMAS ROBSON HAY

Thomas Henry Burrowes, 1805-1871. By ROBERT LANDIS MOHR. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1946. xiv, 272 p. Illustrations. \$4.00.)

In this careful biographical study, the author has given deserved recognition to one of Pennsylvania's foremost educational leaders whose influence permeated politics and education for more than thirty-five years. In the preface the author mentions that Burrowes is "an example of the curious fact that humanity's greatest servants often win but a small place in public esteem, and are sometimes even blotted from memory altogether." While time has not dealt so ruthlessly with Burrowes, there are many, no doubt, who associate Governor Wolf and Thaddeus Stevens with the organization of Pennsylvania's public schools and who know very little about the accomplishments of Burrowes. This biography places in "truer perspective" the record of Burrowes in the history of Pennsylvania.

Thomas Henry Burrowes was born in 1805, at Strasburg, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. In his early years he turned to politics. After two terms in the state legislature, he was appointed Secretary of the Commonwealth in 1835, in which position he became ex officio Superintendent of Common Schools, a post which gave him the responsibility of administering the Common School Law of 1834. After his secretaryship terminated in 1838, he did not lose interest in educational developments, and by 1860 he was widely known as an educator rather than as a politician.

Dr. Mohr has treated adequately and in good proportion Burrowes' political experience. Greater emphasis, however, is placed upon his defense of the common schools, his work as editor of the *Pennsylvania School Journal*, his efforts to develop professional associations for teachers, the struggle for normal schools and for better school buildings, his influence in securing schools for the orphans of Civil War soldiers and sailors, and his presidency of the state agricultural college. One of Burrowes' deepest convictions had to do with the need for more adequately trained teachers for Pennsylvania, and his normal school crusade provides a very interesting chapter in the history of public teacher education. In the appendix is found the Normal School Act of 1857, which was drafted by Burrowes.

During his second superintendency of state schools from 1860-1863, Burrowes was confronted with problems created by the war. Because of the loss of records, the treatment of this period is limited. It is evident, however, that during these years he "fought a rear-guard action in defense of education at a time of general despair, when most people were ready to sacrifice schools to other considerations." Following his second state superintendency, he was made Superintendent of Soldiers' Orphans Schools. His courageous fight to secure schools for the orphans and his years as superintendent of these schools stand among his leading contributions to education.

Instead of remaining free to devote his time to promoting the cause of public education through the *Pennsylvania School Journal* and on the speaking platform, at the end of his superintendency of schools for orphans

in 1867, Burrowes was soon called to the presidency of the agricultural college. This final task, "a last and crowning labor," is interestingly given by Dr. Mohr. In the concluding chapter, "As Men Judge Him," is found an excellent evaluation of the work of Burrowes by the press and various individuals.

The bibliography of twenty-eight pages shows that Dr. Mohr has made extensive use of manuscript sources, printed material, newspapers, and secondary works. The leading sources are private and official letters, newspapers, *Pennsylvania School Journal* (of which Burrowes was editor so long), and official documents of various kinds. Many quotations from the sources are given throughout the biography. One wishes at times that the author had given his interpretation of more of the quoted material, as he writes in a very readable style. Documentation is excellent.

This interesting study of Thomas H. Burrowes is a worthy addition to the history of Pennsylvania. It is a useful contribution to the field of biography and deserves a wide reading by those interested in the history of American education.

Wilson Teachers College, Washington, D. C.

PAUL O. CARR

The Valley of Oil. By HARRY BOTSFORD. (New York: Hastings House, 1946. viii, 278 p. \$3.00.)

If there is such a thing as fictional history, this is Exhibit A. Probably no living person knows the Valley of Oil up in northwestern Pennsylvania better than Mr. Botsford. His father and grandfather were oil men, and one of Mr. Botsford's earliest memories is that of climbing oil derricks at the age of four and being pointedly reminded by the application of his mother's slipper, of the risks he incurred. Later he worked as a tool-dresser, a pumper, in pipe-line production, and in the refining and marketing of petroleum. And he has written voluminously on the subject. If only, with all this background, he would write a book based on authentic records, original documents, and the reputable sources that students of history demand, rather than resort to imaginary conversation, reconstructed dialogue, and the telling of tall stories which may or may never have happened, he would add another valuable chapter to the history of the petroleum industry which Professor Paul Giddens opened up so dramatically, yet so truthfully, some years ago.

But if the conscientious historian can by-pass the "theatricals" and the imaginary dialogues, and move on to Mr. Botsford's dramatic description of those hot summer days in 1859 when Colonel Edwin L. Drake and his driller, William Smith, first drilled for oil, and "struck" it; and then follow through his succeeding chapters, he will be amply repaid. Few writers can equal him in re-creating the stirring events that followed quick on the heels of this historical event. When the news spread abroad, Titusville, Pa., and the surrounding countryside became the scene of the greatest gambling

game in our nation's history. The California gold rush was a tame affair by comparison. People from everywhere flocked into the oil country. They were eager to try their luck. Men talked in hundreds of thousands of dollars,—then millions. Capitalists madly engaged drillers, bought steam engines, and had visions of realizing millions in profits. Costs of everything soared. Banks sprang up, hotels were built, opera houses constructed, and gambling was wide open. Fortunes were made and lost. Men with a team of horses earned more hard cash in one day than they had earned in a whole year. Farmers sold their oak trees for staves, gave up farming, and flocked to the oil wells.

A new world was developing. Queer characters swarmed the new settlements. Here came Ben Hagan, "The wickedest man in the world," and his French wife, Kate. The tool-dressers, scouts, and oil operators who visited Ben's saloon seldom got out with their roll of money; either he or Kate managed some way to get it. But Ben finally met his match in "Stonehouse Jack," who put him out of the way by sheer brute force and a pair of powerful fists. There was Coal Oil Johnny who fell heir to \$200,000 from a rich aunt, and whose income for a time amounted to almost \$3,000 a day. There was John Wilkes Booth, a shy, mysterious character who drifted into Franklin, Pa., in 1864, invested in a few wells, had a good income, and then mysteriously disappeared to show up in Washington, where he committed the tragic deed on April 14, 1865.

But other men destined to gain prominence in the industrial, financial, and political world also became interested in this new discovery. Samuel M. Kier, of near-by Pittsburgh, was to become the world's first oil refiner. He engaged two young men who in later years played important roles in United States history. One was young Ben F. Jones, who became the first head of the great Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation; and the second was none other than James Buchanan, fifteenth president of the United States. Many inventions which have contributed to the rise of the great petroleum industry are here described. The introduction of pipe lines, wooden tank cars, iron tank cars, and steel tank cars; the "shooting" of wells by the first use of nitroglycerine, all appeared here in Pennsylvania for the first time.

And what became of all the oil produced? Most of it was used for illuminants, and for lubrication. This new illuminant meant the passing of the Dark Age. The new lubrication came just on the eve of America's greatest industrial expansion. Tallow oil, whale oil, and hard oil were unsatisfactory. This new lubricant was soon to make possible a whole new industry of revolving gears, axles, and all moving machine parts. New locomotives were designed. Trains could now speed up and haul heavier loads with greater safety. And a few years later, when the internal combustion engine came, another revolution occurred—due to what was first a by-product, benzine, later, gasoline. Today, oil and its by-products are man's second greatest source of wealth.

University of Pittsburgh

JOHN W. OLIVER

Lincoln's War Cabinet. By BURTON J. HENDRICK. (Boston: Atlantic-Little, Brown and Co., 1946. x, 482 p. Illustrations. \$5.00.)

Lincoln chose his ex-rivals for the presidential nomination as department heads. For that and other reasons his cabinet became the most famous one in American history. It was a good idea to write a book about the assorted group of characters called the war cabinet, and Hendrick has done a first-class job. The author's general plan can be indicated by the titles of the seven books into which the volume is divided: "A Ministry of All the Talents"; "William Henry Seward: 'Prime Minister'"; "Exit Cameron: Enter Stanton"; "The Cabinet and McClellan"; "Senate versus Cabinet"; "Chase and 'the Blairs'"; and "End of the Coalition."

While it cannot be claimed that anything specifically new is stated, the book is a notable example of lively style, clever condensation of a mass of material, and apt quotation. There is no bibliography, but the footnotes show that for the most part Hendrick used printed materials. There are some well-chosen illustrations as well as an index. The volume is quite free of typographical errors, and the few mistakes of fact and questionable statements on pages 13, 15, 40, 64, 393, and 437 are so obvious that they need no discussion in this place; they do not deter from the general excellence of the work. It is an outstanding contribution which is well written and very much worth reading. So much for generalities.

Inasmuch as this review is primarily for Pennsylvania readers it is only fair that something be said about a few of the Pennsylvanians who appear in the book. They get considerable space. Buchanan is called a "double-dealer." Curtin receives favorable notice for opposing Cameron's machine and for helping to nominate Lincoln at Chicago. Stanton wins much attention for his anti-Lincoln complex. The impression left by Hendrick's treatment of Stanton does not differ materially from the common estimate, namely, that he was a marplot and a thorn in the flesh of the lonely man in the Executive Mansion who felt that Stanton's hypocrisy had to be endured in the interest of winning the war. McClellan also figures prominently. Hendrick's conclusions about "Little Mac" are about the same as those held by historians generally.

Of the Pennsylvanians, Cameron stands out as perhaps the most interesting because the most venal. When his appointment to the War Department was being pressed in accordance with the deals at the Wigwam, Lincoln said: "All that I am in the world, the Presidency and all else, I owe to the opinion of me which people express when they call me 'honest old Abe.' Now, what would they think of their 'honest old Abe' if he should make such an appointment as the one proposed? (p. 51)" It soon became clear that the Secretary of War was one of the chief obstacles to Union success. "There was universal agreement with the editorial view of the *New York Herald* that Cameron's resignation was as good as a major military victory for the Federal cause (p. 235)." The facts that Sunbury has a Cameron Park and that Pennsylvania has a Cameron County form an intriguing

commentary upon the way in which we Americans create our heroes. In a leading article on the first page of the *Sunbury Daily Item* for March 23, 1946, appeared the following words: ". . . Henry W. Lark, Northumberland county Republican chairman, recalled how 85 years ago, the fate of the nation, and with it the fate of the world, was partially determined by Central Pennsylvania. It was from here that the older [*sic*] Simon Cameron went to the cabinet of President Lincoln . . ." If Mr. Lark was correctly quoted, he might profit by reading from page 219 to 236 of this fascinating book.

Susquehanna University

WILLIAM A. RUSS, JR.

Alexander H. Stephens. By RUDOLPH VON ABELE. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946. xiv, 338, x p. Illustrations. \$4.00.)

The processes of democracy produce curious leaders. There are times and regions in which the more bizarre the character, the more likely seems to be the chance of success. The years just before the Civil War saw many men of this type in places of influence and the vagaries of their behavior played no little part in that tense drama preceding the firing on Sumter.

Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia was one of the strangest of these men of influence. Physically he was abnormal, a living skeleton weighing but ninety pounds, nervous, morbid, always sick, eternally drugging himself with nostrums which probably exaggerated his nervous depressions. His frail body was dominated by a tremendous ego which would not yield to its physical limitations. He must dominate if only to prove that his mind had the power which his body lacked. He was brilliant in thought and speech and his will was tremendous.

Three professions held out prospects to him for the dominance he craved: teaching, the law, and politics. He tried all three, but soon abandoned the first for that combination of the other two which in American life has always been so popular.

He served his apprenticeship in Georgia politics in the legislature from 1836 to 1843; then in his thirty-first year he entered Congress as a Whig. His career in the House of Representatives lasted sixteen years and was remarkable for the increment of power which came to him. After he turned Democrat in the 1850's he became one of the dictators of the House. His supreme self-confidence, his refusal to brook contradiction, his position because of seniority and his bizarre person and manners combined to make many of his associates stand in awe of him. His audacity and his tongue literally made men fear him. With uncanny foresight he retired when the Republicans were about to take over.

Although a firm believer in the rights of the South, he opposed secession in 1860 because he could see no reason for it in the winning of a fairly contested election by the Republicans. However, he accepted the fact of secession and joined the secessionists to found the Confederacy. The politics of

that move made him Vice-President of the new Republic. But he could never play second fiddle to anyone, least of all to Jefferson Davis. So he became the "marplot" of the Confederacy. He even went so far as to plot against the policies of Davis and force him to seek peace by negotiation. Stephens was certainly one of the causes of the collapse of the Confederacy.

After the Civil War he re-entered the political arena and attempted to go to the Senate. The new leaders prevented that but returned him to the House as a sop, for after all he was useful. So he spent nine more pain-ridden, drug-sodden years in the familiar Washington environment, playing a less and less significant role, a convenient relic. Then all of a sudden the exigencies of Georgia's turgid politics made him governor. Elevation to that office killed him.

There have been several previous biographies of Stephens but none of them ever really tried to untangle the snarled threads of this curiously complex personality. There are many problems but von Abele has faced them all, even the most intimate and significant which involve Stephens' exaggerated and warped affections. He has therefore given us a real picture. The author's command of style is very happy and effective so that we have that rare construction, a sound scholarly analysis clothed in attractive and effective literary garb.

University of Pennsylvania

ROY F. NICHOLS

Touched With Fire. Civil War Letters and Diary of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. 1861-1864. Edited by MARK DE WOLFE HOWE. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1946. xiv, 158 p. Illustrations. \$3.00.)

"I started in this thing a boy, I am now a man. . . . I can do a disagreeable thing or face a great danger coolly enough when I KNOW it is a duty," so writes the youthful Holmes to his Mother amidst the horrors and utter weariness of the Wilderness Campaign of 1864 as Grant battled his way towards Richmond.

Professor Howe has succeeded notably in translating for the layman the abbreviations, allusions, and locations mentioned in the diary which, while fairly clear to a student of the Civil War, would convey little to the average reader.

Holmes's regiment, the Twentieth Massachusetts Infantry, was one of the finest in the service, according to no less an authority than General Humphreys in his classic, *The Virginia Campaign of 1864-1865*. As the war progressed, the diarist saw his intimate friends in the regiment killed or wounded. Later as a Staff Officer in the VI Corps he performed notable service, and his observations on tactics, from the crossing of the Rapidan to Cold Harbor, are of peculiar interest.

This book is a definite addition to an understanding of Holmes the

soldier, later Holmes the Chief Justice, and his fight for physical as well as intellectual freedom.

Paoli, Pa.

KENT PACKARD

The Lowells and Their Seven Worlds. By FERRIS GREENSLET. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1946. xii, 442 p. Illustrated. \$4.00.)

Ferris Greenslet has made the story of the Lowell family "a history of the heart, mind, imagination, animal spirits, and pocketbook of New England." The seven worlds of the Lowells are chronological periods in American life. "The New World" was the world of the first American member of the clan, Percival Lowle, born in 1571, who emigrated to Massachusetts in 1638. From this contemporary of Shakespeare to the Lowells of today, the author has developed the chronicle of an American family.

It was John Lowell, the Divine, who added to the family coat of arms the motto *Occasionem cognosce*, which he freely translated as "Seize your opportunity!" Any in the long line of Lowells who did not profit by this hard-headed Yankee wisdom were not candidates for Mr. Greenslet's book.

The author has examined an enormous volume of secondary source material, "old newspapers, court records, and letters and diaries of contemporaries, both published and unpublished . . . and a beautifully ample and revealing mass of correspondence, diaries, financial accounts, unpublished poems, and miscellaneous memoranda, still in the possession of members of the family." As a result of his skill in weaving together the threads of these many lives, through the centuries, he has given us a cross section of the social history of Massachusetts.

Although Ferris Greenslet is sympathetic to the accomplishments of the Lowells, he recognizes and indicates their limitations. The opposition to the Louisiana Purchase on the part of John Lowell, the Rebel, and his Federalist friends elicits the comment: "That the Louisiana Purchase Treaty had no merit in it and would ruin the country by its extension of the power of the slave-holding agricultural South was the view of all the Federalists whose firm yet limited minds lacked unfortunately that last gift of the gods without which the people perish." The cotton mills in Lowell and Manchester have not always presented a pretty picture, but it is true, as Mr. Greenslet says, that under the paternalistic system set up by Francis Cabot Lowell in early days the girls were generally content with their wages and living conditions and grateful to escape from the farm. He adds, "In the years after the [Civil] War the difficulty of labor management reached its limit, and the paternalistic attitude of the owners was worn away in a vicious circle of misunderstandings." This eternal conflict between high-minded aspiration and practical necessity runs through the history of the Lowells with the balance swinging toward the conservative, the solid, the substantial, the tried.

The seven worlds of the Lowells offered more substance for the social historian than for the critic, yet Mr. Greenslet's literary judgment is surprisingly uneven. Actually James Russell Lowell is more famous than any other Lowell, and Amy Lowell was at least as well known as her brothers, Lawrence and Percival. Of the earlier poet the author says, "The truth is that, for all the ten volumes of his Collected Works, James Russell Lowell never wrote a book. He only put newspaper and magazine contributions, poems, speeches, and lectures together." Mr. Greenslet might reflect that poets do not generally write "books" but poems. Ferris Greenslet has a sound respect for *A Fable for Critics* and the two series of *The Biglow Papers* and no one would be likely to disagree with his high praise of the passage on Lincoln in the "Commemoration Ode." The great poems of James Russell Lowell are all long poems, and it is for that reason that they do not generally appear in anthologies, and not, as the author suggests, because of their inferiority. Mr. Greenslet has in the past contributed so acceptably to our literary criticism, that we can only suppose that in the present work he has been more interested in other factors.

It seems to the present writer, however, that Mr. Greenslet underestimates the influence of Lowell in politics and public life—quite apart from the permanent value of his poems. From his early antislavery prose and verse down to his great speech in England, in 1884, on "Democracy," Lowell was the exponent of a patrician democracy of leadership and responsibility against the abuses of privileges on the one hand and vulgarization on the other.

Ferris Greenslet's book is an excellent one, however, climaxing a career of service to American letters as a publisher and writer. It is perhaps to that mythical figure "the general reader" that the book makes its greatest appeal with its romantic story, its colorful anecdotes, its evocation of the past. Mr. Greenslet has hit upon an original and generally useful plan for rejuvenating the art of family history which has had a long tradition in English letters, unhappily too often a solemn one. Here the style is fluent, easy, untroubled—never pedantic, dull, or pompous. When a book that is useful to the specialist succeeds at the same time in being diverting for the general reader—as this one does—it is a very unusual book indeed.

Temple University

THELMA M. SMITH

The Congressional Career of Thomas Francis Bayard, 1869-1885. By CHARLES CALLAN TANSILL. (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1946. The Georgetown University Studies in History, Number One. xiv, 362 p. Privately printed.)

The Bayards of Delaware, producing at least one United States Senator in every generation and comprising the longest unbroken senatorial dynasty in American history, seem to be a paradox in a democracy. However, the Bayards won distinction in the Senate not only by their numbers but by the

quality of their service; certainly two members of the family were among the great senators of their time. Of the elder Senator James A. Bayard, William Plumer, of New Hampshire, wrote, "He is certainly a man with great talents—prompt & ready on every question. I have yet seen no man in Congress whose resources are so great. He is a host." It is his grandson who is the subject of this book.

Thomas Francis Bayard, Sr., represented Delaware in the Senate for sixteen years, resigning to become Cleveland's Secretary of State. During his service in the Senate, Bayard became chairman of the Finance Committee and was three times a prominent candidate for the Democratic nomination to the presidency, twice—in 1880 and 1884—being runner-up on the first ballot. Bayard's chances for the presidency furnish the theme of this volume and reveal both his strength as a statesman and his weakness as a politician. Southerners who loved him feared that his conservative attitude on finance would cost him Western votes, and that his sympathy for the South and for states' rights would cost him Northern votes. His high moral tone, causing him to seek the presidency "by being worthy of it and by no arrangement of stage machinery" (page 220), placed him at a disadvantage among men like Samuel Tilden who valued political machinery more than he. Finally, coming from a small state handicapped him as a presidential aspirant, as it has many other men, owing to the insignificance of his state's representation in the electoral college. Bayard was doomed to remain the second choice of almost everyone.

This volume complements Dr. Tansill's earlier study of *The Foreign Policy of Thomas F. Bayard*, the two books together forming not a biography of Bayard but a study of his public career. The newer volume, however, exhibits a weakness which the other volume does not share. The diplomacy of a Secretary of State and an ambassador to the Court of St. James may be studied with little regard to the man's local background; not so, the career of a United States Senator. The relationship of Bayard to the state which he represented is here almost completely neglected. What political magic, one wonders, did Bayard and the members of his family possess that occasioned them repeatedly to be chosen by Delaware to the senatorship with, according to James A. Bayard, the third (page 24), "neither fortune, landed interest, or solicitation to obtain the position?"

Character and intelligence, together with a willingness to devote these qualities to the public service, must have played a part in the Bayards' preferment, but character and intelligence are no guarantees of political advancement, as the Democratic Party's repeated rejection of Bayard's presidential bid testifies. Democratic domination of Delaware in the wake of the Civil War undoubtedly eased Thomas F. Bayard's way to the Senate, but dominant parties in Delaware politics have frequently been split by the struggle for power between opposing cliques. The relationship of the powerful Saulsbury family to the Bayards would repay attention. Still, some clue to Bayard's success may be offered by the fact that his attitudes and judg-

ments represent the continuing pattern of thinking in Delaware concerning national and international problems.

Because no interpretative survey of the course of Delaware politics exists to guide the student of a career which far transcended the bounds of a unique little state, the Delawarean must admit with shame that little criticism can attach to Dr. Tansill, an outlander, for his neglect of Bayard's local background. The relationship of Delaware and her Bayards deserves study, but Dr. Tansill could not be expected in this volume to undertake what would involve a comprehensive survey of Delaware political history, the entire course of which features Bayards, generation after generation.

Nevertheless Dr. Tansill has performed a valuable service in opening the Bayard Papers and in culling them of their richest lore. The elucidation of Bayard's part in the Electoral Commission of 1876, in the Democratic conventions of 1876, 1880, and 1884, and in practically all important problems that came before the Senate over a sixteen-year period is of obvious value. Collating the Bayard letters with material from many other manuscript sources, Dr. Tansill has produced a second readable volume as his memorial to a distinguished Senator and diplomat, who once wrote, "I am really trying to *be* just one thing, and that is *myself*."

University of Delaware

JOHN A. MUNROE

New Jersey Progressivism before Wilson. By RANSOM E. NOBLE, JR. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946. x, 176 p. \$2.00.)

The Progressive movement is one of the many facets of our national history that can be studied best from a state viewpoint, for it was within the states that the Progressives formulated their programs, founded their organizations, and achieved their earliest victories. Professor Noble in his limited survey of Progressivism in New Jersey during the first decade of the present century has provided a case history of the movement in an industrialized state, where the main problem to be solved was "the relation of corporate wealth to government." This may, indeed, have been the crux of the matter, but it can hardly be said that the Progressives saw or met the issue in its elemental form.

Progressivism is an elusive term that is susceptible of numerous interpretations. As used by the author it is applied principally to the insurgency that developed within the Republican party in the populous northern section of the state and which culminated in 1906 in the short-lived "New Idea" enthusiasm. Originating in Hudson County with the efforts of Mark Fagan and George L. Record to impose equal taxation on the railroads, the movement soon appeared in Essex as well, where the trolley franchise question was agitating the normally conservative citizenry of the staid Oranges. In 1905 the Progressives hailed as their leader the wealthy young aristocrat, Everett Colby, whose flourishing political career had seemingly been balked by the party bosses. To the railroad and trolley issues, a host

of others were quickly added—some of them indigenous, most of them borrowed—until the crusaders for the right stood arrayed in typical panoply from municipal ownership to direct primaries. Significantly enough, attacks on the trusts played a distinctly minor role in the state which was notorious as their home. Between 1905 and 1908 the “regulars” were badgered into a number of concessions. In several fields—equal taxation, limited franchises, primary reform, utility regulation, civil service—the small progressive forces were able to claim modest victories, although in many cases the credit was contested. By the latter year the movement had passed its peak, Fagan and Colby had been defeated, and party harmony had in large measure been restored. Progressivism entered a period of relative quiescence only to emerge again with greater force and under new auspices when Wilson assumed the governorship in 1911.

The record of the New Jersey Progressives prior to 1911 was far from imposing. The outstanding accomplishment of the period was the writing of laws to insure the equal taxation and revaluation of railroad property. Yet this question was the hardy perennial of New Jersey politics, antedating by more than twenty years the rise of Progressivism. Corporate interests were able to block other important reforms. In spite of the feeble showing of the “New Idea,” Professor Noble insists that Governor Wilson’s “economic legislation could not possibly have passed without the extensive political preparation and public education which the insurgent movement had afforded (p. 120).” This thesis can be verified only after we have a much needed study of Wilson’s extraordinary administration. Certainly there is little forecast of the “Seven Sisters Laws” before 1910. The author devotes but two pages and occasional scattered references to conditions within the Democratic party, the party which was soon to enact an impressive series of Progressive measures. More might be made, too, of the significance of the shift in the control of the Republican party from the southern to the northern part of the state and of the purely political elements in Progressivism. The main shortcomings of the book are its brevity and its limited scope. Professor Noble is to be commended for his use of personal interviews to supplement a discouraging lack of manuscript materials, for the care and objectivity with which he handles controversial personalities, and for producing a monograph which no student of Progressivism can prudently neglect.

Rutgers University

RICHARD P. McCORMICK

Folk Art of Rural Pennsylvania. By FRANCES LICHTEN. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1946. xiv, 276 p. Illustrations. \$10.00.)

This book commands our attention not only because of the lavish manner in which it has been produced but also because of the manner in which Miss Lichten presents her subject. It approaches the Pennsylvania crafts from the point of view of the objects themselves. It deals with various decorated

and fashioned objects of clay, flax, wool, grain, wood, stone, iron, tin, and with fragments, rags, remnants, and barns. The point of view is then object-centered and not design-centered and the text speaks with knowledge about the techniques and processes by which the objects were made. The whole approach is representational. To illustrate her text Miss Lichten introduces about 325 illustrations in black and white and 32 pages in color. Her accompanying text is sometimes informative and always interesting.

Most of the illustrations are sketches made for the Index of American Design by the artists who were employed by the WPA to work on Pennsylvania designs. Miss Lichten herself was director of this project. The illustrations are therefore not untouched photographs of original objects but sketches of old things made by modern artists. And, as is the case in all such work, distortions in design are inevitable. Many of the sketches, when they are compared with the objects and with untouched photographs, show distortions which are certainly serious in character.

The fact that this book does consist mainly of sketches of old objects by modern artists is, perhaps, sufficient explanation for its failure to communicate in full measure the spirit of Pennsylvania Dutch folk art. Even an amateur who casually looks at the book shakes his head and says: "That's not Pennsylvania folk art." Something is lacking. Even the thirty-two pages of colored designs at the rear of the volume—magnificently printed as they are—fail to communicate the spirit and mood of the folk art of rural Pennsylvania. No one ever saw such colors used by the old craft artists of this commonwealth. The green is livid; the blue is offensive; the red is far too brilliant; and the purple is a fake of an old color. In short, the colored section and the illustrations (in the main) are not honest reproductions of the folk art of the Pennsylvania Dutch.

This is hard criticism, I know, and I would much rather write a favorable review of a book which so many of us have awaited for so long. But there is also the duty of honesty to the good people of Pennsylvania who made these things. Pennsylvania folk art cannot be exploited; it cannot be imitated; and all attempts to reproduce Pennsylvania Dutch designs without communicating the spirit in which they were first created will necessarily fail. For in the final analysis, the failures of all efforts to copy Pennsylvania Dutch folk art are not just accidental and chance; they are necessary and final, for an honest art always expresses life.

Now, what about Miss Lichten's text? The text is always informed and sometimes even brilliant. Miss Lichten is well aware of the technical processes of craft production, and she explains this background with imagination and even verve. Two defects are however apparent: first, her sense of Pennsylvania Dutch iconography leaves much to be desired; and secondly, she is much too sentimental about the matter, too much inclined to speak about "decorative sense," "love of color," and other such sentimentalities. These are romanticized opinions about the artists and they are not always in accord with the known characters of the folk artists themselves.

Finally, Miss Lichten is writing about what was in the main a religious folk art and she is reluctant to admit that the major forms of expression—*Taufscheine*, etc.—were religious in character.

Yet Miss Lichten's beautiful book will serve to make a larger circle of readers curious about the most interesting form of folk art in colonial America.

Allentown, Pennsylvania

JOHN JOSEPH STOUT

Writings On Pennsylvania History: A Bibliography. A List of Secondary Materials Compiled under the Auspices of the Pennsylvania Historical Association. By ARTHUR C. BINING, ROBERT L. BRUNHOUSE, and NORMAN B. WILKINSON. (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1946. xxxviii, 565 p.)

The publication of this long-awaited bibliography is an event of the first importance in the history of Pennsylvania history. Filling the need for a practical guide to the mass of writings on the history of the commonwealth, it reveals both the achievements of Pennsylvania historiography and the opportunities that await future investigation. More than 6000 titles, including duplicate entries, are listed here; 400 periodicals ranging from this *MAGAZINE* to the *New Republic* and from *DeBow's Review* to the *Journal* of the New England Water Works Association have been culled for articles, many of them indexed in no other standard bibliography; 700 titles are briefly but critically annotated; and all have been arranged under a simple, useful outline history of the commonwealth.

The work is divided into four parts: first, bibliographical aids to history; second, the bibliography proper, listing, as its title says, only secondary materials; third, state and local history, with religious and military histories, these titles not fitting conveniently under any of the heads of the main bibliography; and, fourth—significantly—Pennsylvania in literature. Some may find it inconvenient to search for titles in two places—in sections two and three; but this objection is not serious. What is of most worth is the breadth of the editors' view, which brings studies of truck farming, private police, and the water supply of Philadelphia within the historian's ken. The index is of authors only.

Writings on Pennsylvania History cannot fail to stimulate and direct studies in the history of the Keystone State. Those persons and institutions which contributed to the preparation and publication of this invaluable guide—the Pennsylvania Historical Association, which sponsored the project; the editors, who did the hard work; the American Philosophical Society, which supported it; and the Pennsylvania State Historical and Museum Commission, which published it—deserve well, therefore, of their fellow citizens and their collaborators in history.

Dickinson College

WHITFIELD J. BELL, JR.