Central R. R., as it was sent by mistake to Chicago." In her letter of August 3, 1860, she asserted that "Pittsburg is greatly improved. There are street Railroads on Penn St. and Pennsylvania Avenue, on Smithfield from Fifth to Birmingham, and on St. Clair St. running to Manchester... The old Allegheny Bridge has been replaced by a fine suspension bridge, with rails for the horse cars crossing it; and there has been a great number of valuable blocks of buildings put up in different parts of the city." Pennsylvania crops and roads, even Pennsylvania people, suffered by comparison with those of Minnesota, and on August 13, 1860, she wrote: "It rains every day and every night... and as I have been so long accustomed to Minnesota air and sunshine, this spell of Pennsylvania weather does not agree with me."

The letters are printed in chronological order but are divided into seven chapters, the titles of which indicate the general interest of the letters composing them. Excellent footnotes keep the reader abreast of the movements of the author when they are not made clear in the text and explain vague references to individuals or events mentioned. The volume has been carefully prepared and edited and presents an interesting subject in an engaging yet scholarly manner.

Pittsburgh

Elisabeth M. Sellers


"Here is a story, previously unwritten," says Professor Brigance in the preface, "of a dynamic and colorful public character who wrought more influence on American history than many Presidents." A cabinet member in an unpopular administration, a devotee of a party discredited for many years after the Civil War, one of the most scathing critics and vituperative denouncers of the dominant Republican group—it is little wonder that Jeremiah S. Black has been somewhat neglected by the historian, but he was not an obscure figure in the day in which he lived. The political and legal career of Black as a district judge in western Pennsylvania, as chief justice of the supreme court of the Keystone state, as attorney general and secretary of state under President Buchanan are accurately traced in this book. His activities as a constitutional lawyer and his influence as a private citizen after the Civil War are vividly described. Professor Brigance has told his story well. His style
is plain, vigorous, and attractive, and he has made a valuable contribution to the historical literature of the reconstruction period.

The emphasis on this period, however, is one of the weaknesses of the biography. Although Black reached the acme of his legal reputation in the post-war years, to devote more than one-half of the book to the last third of his life, the phase that parallels "the tragic era," is an amplification that tends to destroy the perspective. The scant attention paid to Black's formative years, including his family influence, schooling, and legal training, may be excused even in a personal biography such as this seems to be, but the sketchiness of the account of the period between young manhood and the appointment as attorney general is not pardonable. Black's cabinet career is given a very summary treatment although it was his first contact with national affairs and paved the way for his later legal achievements. The mental changes that he underwent on "the eve of conflict," when social, religious, and political ties were being rent asunder, are not made to stand out in bold relief. He felt that evil would surely come upon the country because of the election of Lincoln. He deeply regretted the fact that Pennsylvania had been swept into the Republican column in 1860. He was devoted to his own state and looked upon her as the breakwater against radicalism. A loyal Democrat and a staunch Unionist, Black stood for calmness, justice, and moderation; he disliked the extreme views of both sides and pleaded for sensible deliberation. To both groups he appeared to be a colorless neutral, a political traitor. The Civil War formed a sharp line of demarcation in Black's career but the break occasioned by it is depicted more as a natural transition.

Professor Brigance has also fallen into an error that is common to many biographers. He has become so enamored with his subject that he imputes triumphs to Black without taking cognizance of public opinion, political conditions, or other aspects of the situation. Thus he states that: "under his startling eloquence the Supreme Court overthrew trial by military commissions in the North at the close of the Civil War," and that "he forced the Radical Congress of 1868 to repeal one of the Enforcement Acts of Reconstruction." Too often has the personal chronicle been carried on without due consideration of the political background.

Though the work as a whole is thorough there are numerous omissions in the bibliography, among which may be mentioned Francis N. Thorpe's excellent article on "Jeremiah S. Black" in volume 50 of the Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography (1926), which deals largely with the legal and constitutional aspects of secession. Numerous pamphlets on various phases
of Black's life that are to be found in the Library of Congress and the Pennsylvania State Library are not mentioned.

_Northwestern University_  
Alston G. Field

**True Tales of the Clarion River.** Compiled and edited by George P. Sheffer under the auspices of the Northwestern Pennsylvania Raftsmen Association. (Clarion, Pennsylvania, 1933. 204 p. Illustrations, map.)

Much information about rafting and boat building and many tall stories of the heyday of the lumbering industry along the Clarion River are contained in this collection of reminiscences written by lumbermen and old residents of the region. Between the lines of romantic poetry and interesting fiction there is, however, a touch of tragedy, for by May 22, 1915, when the last fleet of thirty-three rafts loaded with pit posts and manned by skilled rivermen went down the Clarion and Allegheny rivers to Pittsburgh, the virgin forest of northwestern Pennsylvania that had brought industry and wealth to the towns along the river was gone except for one small tract at Cooksburg. Of the sixteen communities whose histories are sketched by the old-timers in this book but two, Ridgeway and Clarion, are towns of any note today, and of the others but five are named on modern state maps.

In 1832 enterprising pioneer lumbermen rafted their timber from Clarion to Cincinnati when they couldn't find a market in Pittsburgh. By 1870 lumbering had grown so profitable that the Navigation Company was organized to dredge the channel and chart the river. The industry could not have been very remunerative for the raftsmen, however, for one raconteur states that he and his brother "when all our bills were paid . . . had about 30c for our two winter's work" in the spring of 1874. The greatest profits seem to have been made during the last three decades of the nineteenth century, when well-organized lumber companies, improved transportation facilities, and a good market in industrial Pittsburgh made lucrative the task of cutting and marketing the big trees. The boat and raft building industry flourished and mills appeared at every creek junction. The period was productive, too, of raftsmen's band concerts and incredible yarns. After the turn of the century the forests began to dwindle and by the end of the first decade the mills were fast disappearing, the boat builders' scaffolds were neglected, and the great lumber camps were being abandoned.

The book is divided into three sections: poetry and songs, which seem to