

complete collapse of Tecumseh's dream of sweeping the whites from the land. Mr. Dutton has presented a readable book; it is a fine addition to "Perryana."

*Erie County Historical Society*

JOHN ELMER REED

*Ethelbert Nevin*. By JOHN TASKER HOWARD. (New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1935. xiv, 423 p. Illustrations.)

UNLIKE Mr. Howard's recent work on Stephen Foster, this book is compiled from a wide variety of source materials: Ethelbert Nevin's widow and many of his relatives and friends were able to furnish the author with a quantity of information, as well as diaries, letters, and documents pertaining to the life of the composer. From the resultant welter of facts and ideas emerges a biography somewhat overburdened with trivialities and sentimental detail but nevertheless of considerable human interest. To those concerned with Nevin's compositions and with his place in the musical sun, the book has a specific appeal; to loyal Pittsburghers alert to discover the ways of life of the more-than-ordinary mortals who derived from the vicinity, it will also have special meaning; and for the lay reader it will convey a picture, not devoid of charm, of American family life in the late nineteenth century and of a man whose manner of thinking and feeling was somewhat typical of his day.

Ethelbert Nevin was born in 1862 at "Vineacre," in Edgeworth, Pennsylvania, about fifteen miles down the Ohio River from Pittsburgh. Although a great part of his life, both before and after his marriage, was lived abroad and in Boston and New York, this family homestead exerted a strong influence on him and strikes a keynote in the background against which he moved. This background is presented mostly through the medium of excerpts from letters and diaries, from which a sketchy picture of the life and conditions of the period emerges. Events in western Pennsylvania during the past two centuries are touched on in the discussion of Nevin's ancestry and the activities of his parents and grandparents. His father, Robert Peebles Nevin, was engaged from 1842 to 1870 in merchandising in Pittsburgh and later purchased an interest in and edited the Pittsburgh *Weekly Leader* and founded the *Pittsburgh Times*. Glimpses of the social and musical life of Pittsburgh and of Edgeworth, "a small residential community that was part of Sewickley," during the 1900's are afforded in the chapters on "Family," "Youth," "Musician," and "Vineacre," and the details of Nevin's wedding to Anne Paul of Edgewater, "a major social event in Pittsburgh," are set forth in the chapter entitled "Marriage." Particulars of family life and personal matters together with the com-

poser's musical career and business affairs comprise the bulk of the narrative. The story of his dealings with various music publishers forms one of the most interesting sequences in the book; the history of his progress towards success in his chosen profession, accounts of his various compositions, and sidelights on the musical world in which he lived, furnished by means of press notices of his recitals, information in letters, and recollections of contemporaries, also engage the reader's attention.

The volume is provided, in accordance with the author's usual sense of completeness, with an epilogue including information on memorials to the composer, one of them being a memorial music room at the University of Pittsburgh's Cathedral of Learning; and with appendixes containing a chronological outline of Nevin's life, a list of his published works, and a bibliography. There is also a good index. The book is readable and is enlivened by a number of well-selected portraits.

*Western Pennsylvania Historical Survey*

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