BOOK REVIEWS


This work is not only a valuable book of reference, with its copious notes, appendices, select bibliography, and excellent index, but it is also a compelling narrative of Washington's ventures in the west. It is written in engaging style and it summons from obscurity many interesting and little known events in the career of the great Father of his Country in his rôle as a leader at every important stage of the development of the new lands beyond the Alleghenies. He first went into the western country as a lad with a party of surveyors sent out to prepare lands for Lord Fairfax's tenantry, and as a young man he participated conspicuously in the several ultimately successful attempts of the British and the American colonials to wrest control of the Ohio country from the French. With the trained surveyor's respect for land, Washington became more and more convinced that land ownership was the most important factor of colonial growth, and by the close of the Revolution he had taken up claims to about fifty-eight thousand acres in southwestern Pennsylvania and along the Ohio and Great Kanawha rivers, not in one tract, but in the aggregate about the size of a well-to-do nobleman's estate in England.

Washington's acquisition of these western lands has been urged as proof, far beyond its importance, of his self-interest, and Dr. Ambler's book is a splendid refutation of such unjust aspersions. Based upon facts drawn from a large variety of authentic historical sources, it shows Washington's statesmanlike vision and his ardent devotion to the cause of binding the western settlements to the seaboard colonies or states in the face of separatist tendencies among the former. So far as purely personal interest was concerned, he early expressed an opinion to the effect that distant property in land was more pregnant with perplexities than profit.

Dr. Ambler serves the good cause of historical accuracy and his book deserves the attention of a wide public. It is a real contribution to the literature of the first president of the United States and of the formative period of the nation's history. Pennsylvanians who have come across the remains of Washington's mill near Perryopolis in Fayette County, Pennsylvania, will find of special interest a splendid account of the circumstances that led up to that particular investment,
together with a picture of the mill as it was before it reached its present state of almost complete ruin. The appended roster of Virginia officers and privates in the battle of Fort Necessity in 1754 is also of interest to students of the early history of the region and of the nation.

McElhattan, Pennsylvania

**Henry W. Shoemaker**


Museums during the past decade or two have tended to become totally different institutions from those of the early twentieth century. As Dr. Harlow Lindley, curator of history of the Ohio State Museum, has said, “The day of the curiosity shop is over, and an educational institution with an aggressive and dynamic spirit must take its place.” The older idea of a museum as a warehouse of curios, little relating to human life, still exists, yet there is a growing consciousness of the opportunity of a museum to make the past live in the present by adequate and educational presentation of its material. This opportunity, while presenting itself also to museums of art, of science, and of industry, is particularly open to museums of history. Of more than sixteen hundred museums of all kinds in the United States about six hundred are museums of history and fifty general museums include history as a major subject. The need, therefore, for a manual for history museums is not so limited as one might imagine, and the New York State Historical Association is to be commended for proposing and fostering the preparation and publication of such a guide. The choice of an author, declares Dr. Dixon Ryan Fox in the foreword, was not difficult, and Mr. Parker, who has made the Rochester museum a model for small cities to study, was happily selected.

The purpose of the manual is to encourage the founding of separate historical museums and to improve the administration of supplementary museums that now exist. As the author admits in his preface, the book is not an encyclopaedia, but a compendium, suggesting rather than completely describing. Separate chapters deal with organizing, housing, and financing museums, and other chapters deal with the technical problems of accessions, catalogues, labels, preparations, and exhibits. There are also chapters about research and other activities, mu-