BOOK REVIEWS


To those acquainted with Professor Gipson and his publications, this scholarly volume, his eighth in recent years, is an additional source of amazement at the extent of his historical activities. Applicable to this volume are the general remarks made by this reviewer concerning the first three volumes of the British Empire before the American Revolution (ante, 20:63—March, 1937). The intensive and extensive research indicated in the earlier volumes is clearly demonstrated in volume four. Some statements on the paper cover of this volume nicely establish the purport or viewpoint of the author. They say: "The present volume is concerned with the dynamics of British Imperial expansion in the New World before the outbreak of the final war for empire between Great Britain and France in the eighteenth century—a war that was to settle the destiny of the North American continent." To this statement is added: "Professor Gipson takes the position that the chief source of this bitter conflict is to be found not at the seat of Imperial control, but in those forces that made their appearance in the American scene and that operated with or without government sanction. They flowed out in the ambitions and activities of Englishmen who sought to exploit the resources of the American wilderness, and who were brought face to face with the determined and formidable opposition of their rivals, the French and Spanish."

In reading this volume it is advisable to hold in mind that the major emphasis of the volumes is on the British Empire, with here a secondary emphasis on zones of international friction in connection therewith. Of the nine chapters of volume four, the first is an introduction and the remaining eight are entitled "The Florida Frontier," "Cherokee Paths," "The Lower Mississippi Basin," "The French New World Granary" (i.e. Illinois), "The Valley of the Ohio to 1749," "The Rise and Fall of Pickawillany," "The Ohio Company," and "The Collapse of the English Trans-Appalachian Movement." The entire vol-
ume is of value to members of this historical society. The last five chapters, in particular, treat topics commonly included in books devoted to the history of this region.

The merits of the earlier volumes can be found in this one. In no single volume has such material been hitherto assembled. Within each chapter the literary organization and exposition is definitely superior. On the other hand, the impression of the volume as a whole is somewhat that of cross sections and pen pictures. The inclusion in one work of so many topics, not closely related, geographically and logically, is open to criticism. The problem of unity in historical writing is a serious one. The combination of complete, first-hand scholarship and comprehensive unity is difficult to attain in a work of this scope. Individual scholarly monographs have been, or may be, written not only on the chapter topics, but, in fact, on some of their varied aspects or numerous details. The production of scholarly monographs on small topics is relatively easy. So also is a general work that is not monographic. A monographic general work is much more difficult. Excessively acute recognition of this, however, on the part of historians would possibly inhibit production of works of high value to general learning, such as these volumes on the British Empire. The wide perspective, in such a presentation as Professor Gipson is setting forth, justifies the endeavor to combine two different types of historical writing. A general contribution to learning may be more valuable to society as a whole than a particularized monographic contribution to specialized scholarship.

If and when completed, The British Empire before the American Revolution will be a significant contribution to British and American historical understanding. Volume four is a credit both to its indefatigable author and to his excellent publisher. The binding and typography are excellent. The book is unusually free of errors of significance. The index is very extensive. Provision for the utilization of the volume could hardly be improved upon. Booklovers able to buy this relatively expensive set of volumes are advised to add them to their literary possessions.

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We Who Built America: The Saga of the Immigrant. By Carl Wittke, Ph.D., professor of history and dean of the college of arts and sciences, Oberlin College. (New York, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1939. xviii, 547 p.)

This volume presents the first birds-eye view of immigration to the United States from the beginning to the present which is detailed and scholarly enough