

offered us the "vivid story of drama, inspiration and achievement from the founding to the present, as men and women of vision changed a wilderness area into the city of Pittsburgh." After describing the contributions of the Indians, French, and English, the author has provided a chronological summary of the past two hundred years. Although uneven in its coverage (only twenty per cent of the work is devoted to the post-Civil War era) it is a most useful introduction for the student and the non-specialist reader. It would have been helpful had Miss Demorest included a brief bibliographic essay; perhaps she will undertake this project and share her extensive knowledge of sources with her successors and us.

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God Uses Ink, by JOHN A. HOSTETLER. Herald Press (Mennonite Publishing House), Scottdale, Pa., 1958, 264 pp., appendix, index, illustrations. \$2.75.

In consideration of the many religious groups in this country and elsewhere, it has been noted that the smaller sects have frequently exhibited a ministry out of all proportion to their numerical strength, God apparently "having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked." The Mennonites are such a group, relatively slight in numbers yet great in the influence and respect they enjoy in the eyes of their neighbors. Occasionally a disservice has been done them by fictioneers who have emphasized the quaint and the picturesque yet totally ignored the deep spiritual strength. Their program has always been an earnest one, and its effectiveness has in no small way been accomplished through the productivity of their publishing house, the Herald Press of Scottdale, Pennsylvania. *God Uses Ink*, by Dr. Hostetler, Book Editor of the Mennonite Publishing House, is the story of that House since its inception, a backward glance to its forbears, its evolution from several privately-owned printing houses to a large church-owned establishment, and an appraisal of its recent accomplishments.

While the book in a few instances becomes personalized to a degree that will appeal largely to its own constituency, there are

sections of more general interest. The labor historian, for instance, might well be interested in juxtaposing the Mennonite Publishing Company's "Rules of Order for Employees" in 1877 (which we regret space limitations prevent our quoting) with present benefits enjoyed by the employees.

The first third of the book which traces Mennonite publishing from colonial times to 1908 is a mine of interesting information. William Rittenhouse, the first Mennonite minister in America, was also founder (Germantown, Pa., 1690) of America's first paper mill. Although the Methodist Book Concern (1789) is the oldest denominational house, the year 1727 saw the first Mennonite book published. And when we are reminded that the printer produced his own ink from "ordinary chimney soot, oil pressed from flaxseed, oak galls, and the juice of pokeberries," the printer of today may well feel grateful. Paradoxically, the difficulties in getting a Mennonite publishing house started lay with some of its own members, "because in giving the people too much to read, they will be apt to neglect the reading of the Bible." Eventually, however, objections were overcome and competitive Mennonite printers abandoned their separate projects in favor of a church-owned house, and the latter portion of Dr. Hostetler's book is given over to the fifty years of accomplishment thus set in motion.

Here the chronological gives way to a discussion of the ideals, the aims, and the problems of publishing as faced by the Mennonites and, in essence, all publishers, for their output included not only books, but periodicals, tracts, and curriculum materials. All aspects of publishing are touched on, from a description of the physical plant and the functions of its officials to the various printing processes, from the development of talent and writers' conferences to merchandising methods. This section will be welcomed by bibliophiles interested in the mechanics of bookmaking and might well be expanded to a much-needed full-length text on the subject.

God Uses Ink suggests a vast field in a history of Protestant denominational publishing, one which we hope may be attempted one day by a researcher as capable as Dr. Hostetler has shown himself to be.

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