

Reviews and Notes

The Land of the Potawatomi. By ELMORE BARCE, Fowler Indiana. Member of Indiana Historical Society. pp. 115. 1919. Fowler.

The readers of the Magazine are acquainted with the author, Mr. Barce. He has been interested for years in the history and legends of the Potawatomi who inhabited the prairies northwest of Lafayette, and the early settlement of this section by the White pioneers. The Indians themselves, their relation to the early British agents, their part in the Tippecanoe campaign, their later banditti life, Topenabee, their trails, the Chicago road, the old taverns, the Grand Prairie, the prairie fires, groves and plains and the first cattlemen are some of the topics the author has treated. While no footnotes are given the author has appended a bibliography showing that he has searched far and wide for all the evidence to be found relating to his subject. The author has a keen sympathy for the pioneer times and things and a good easy style of writing. These he combines to give us a gem in the little book under review. Besides preserving the bits of history now fast disappearing and the legends it is a literary treasure.

Centennial History of Illinois. The Illinois Centennial Commission of fifteen members, authorized by act of January 21, 1916 and appointed by Gov. Edward F. Dunne, besides other work of a celebrational nature, planned a history of the state, to be complete in five volumes. In commendable distinction from similar committees elsewhere this committee recognized that serious history writing was the work of specialists and assigned the actual work over to young men carefully trained in the best history seminaries in the country. The general supervision and direction of the work was placed in the hands of Professors Evarts B. Greene and Clarence W. Alvord of Illinois University. The commission has availed itself of the best historians of the state and has apparently assisted in plac-

ing at the disposal of the writers all the historical materials to be had. Three volumes have now appeared and if the others maintain their high excellence the people of Illinois will not be disappointed. They are certainly the best work so far done in the field of state history. The introductory volume is entitled:

Illinois in 1818. By SOLON JUSTUS BUCK, Springfield, 1917. pp. 362.

When the work was begun Dr. Buck was secretary of the Illinois Historical Survey at the University of Illinois. Since then he has become secretary of the Minnesota Historical Society. The purpose of this volume is to give a picture of Illinois at the time of its admission, a back ground or setting for the later volumes. It takes some effort to get back to 1818 from Illinois at the present. Indians hunted over far more than half the state. The state was sandwiched across the American frontier. The first chapter therefore deals with the Indians and the fur trade. Almost as dissimilar and unreal were the ancient subjects of Louis le Grande living on the southwest border of the state from Kaskaskia to Cahokia. Into this wilderness the author must next bring the surveyor and land speculators to prepare for the lank, backwoodsmen now transforming themselves into prairie farmers. After sketching briefly the location and amount of public lands open for settlement the reader may take his position at Shawneetown, Vincennes or Old Kaskaskia and watch the weird procession come in to take possession of their own after half a century of bloody conflict. Illinois has had a full measure of distinction but nothing in its history should be more inspiring to the citizens of today than to see in imagination these lusty veterans, mens, women and children, march quietly in and take their places on the firing line. Too often they are overlooked among the more gifted men who came later to develop the country, frequently by crowding out the original settlers.

The scene changes. The conquerors pass off and the organizers come on, with their work of social, political and economic development. Poetry gives way to prose, romance to reality. The latter are not unlike ourselves, we can understand and appreciate them, the former belong to a different world,

ethically and economically a different world. The chief event in the process of organization was the formation of the state, so the author devotes the last five chapters to this work. In this there is little peculiar to Illinois. The new constitution was almost a duplicate of those of Indiana and Ohio. The bogey of slavery was present in all but there was only a remote probability that the institution would gain a foothold anywhere in the movement.

The author has observed all the rules of good historical composition. The purpose evidently was to set forth a fair picture, truthful and lasting. Many a good pioneer story has evidently been passed up; many a dramatic situation has had to be neglected. Those who desire a thrilling story of course will be disappointed. Likewise the author has disappointed those readers who look in history for the delineation of great social forces—a modern name for the discarded philosophy of history. No one except a novice in the field of history or a charlatan indulges in these sweeping generalizations. A good bibliography and index add to the general excellence of the volume.

The Frontier State 1818-1848 The centennial history of Illinois By THEODORE CALVIN PEASE, University of Illinois. Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Company. 1919. 745 p. \$2.00.

This volume is one of a series written and published by the Centennial Historical commission to place in the hands of the citizenship of Illinois a reliable account of the transformation of a wilderness land into the present state of Illinois. It illustrates the advantages and disadvantages of coöperative authorship. The disadvantages of cross-sectioning are about equaled by the advantages of more careful investigation. Dr. Pease has rightly relied, entirely it seems, on primary sources—newspapers, state records and manuscripts. Any one who has not tried can never realize how difficult it is to wring a connected consequential story out of such materials. The writer who produces alleged history from reports of commissions, public speeches and magazine articles may even die in the belief that he has been a historian. The public has very little appreciation of the vast gulf between the two kinds of