

Reviews

George Croghan and the Westward Movement 1741-1782, by
ALBERT T. VOLWILER. The Arthur H. Clark Company,
Cleveland, 1926. 370 pages.

As its title indicates, this volume is an addition to the literature of the westward movement centering around Pittsburg and involving the Old Northwest. The period is 1741 to 1782 with George Croghan as the central character. It has been a favorite field for historians since Professor F. J. Turner's work began at Wisconsin over a quarter of a century ago. Among the many investigators one will easily recall Consul Butterfield, Louise Kellogg, Clarence Carter, C. W. Alvord, C. M. Burton, A. B. Hulbert and Frank H. Severance. A vast amount of documentary material makes it peculiarly attractive to those in search of themes for doctoral dissertations. So rapidly has this field grown in historical significance that Pittsburg has in a mild way come to be a rival of Boston, Jamestown, New York, and Philadelphia in colonial American history.

The volume under consideration is not a biography in the Boswell strain but rather an economic history of the time and locality of Croghan. The author gives us no clue whereby we might distinguish his leading character from a cowboy, a college professor or an ordinary business man. Had Boone, for instance, fared no better at the hands of his biographers, he would, perhaps, have long ago disappeared from the front rank of western history. This can hardly be attributed to the character, for Croghan is in a small class when it comes to romantic adventure, and in the mass of documents which the author has examined there must be some material which would excite even the most restrained imagination. Concerning scenic description the author has followed the same course. A second reading has failed to leave any distinctive

place impressions in the reviewer's mind. Once, only, when viewing the magnificent scenery from South Mountain, does the author lower his guard for a sentence of poetry. Up the blue Juniata, down the silvery Ohio, over the Great Trail from Pittsburg to Detroit, up the valley of the middle Wabash he pursues his way with the same imperturbability. The explanation is no doubt to be found in the restrictions imposed by the usual university seminar. This is not meant to be a criticism on the work but rather a warning to those who would naturally expect a volume with such a title to be full of romance—such as one finds in Parkman. Neither does the author indulge in any considerable amount of denunciation. He occasionally betrays some impatience at the density or sordidness of the Pennsylvania Quakers or at the dullness of General Amherst, but in general he confines himself to a plain statement of the facts.

In brief it is a piece of historical scholarship, written in a plain unimaginative style for historical scholars. From this, the proper standpoint, it is a worthy addition to the literature of that period. The bibliography, notes, index, mechanical workmanship and proof reading of the volume are beyond criticism.

LOGAN ESAREY.

John Slidell, by LOUIS MARTIN SEARS, Professor of History, Purdue University. Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina, 1925. 252 pages. \$2.50.

This is a scholarly and dispassionate biography, not of a great statesman, but of a leader who played an important part in the history of his period. Professor Sears has not made a hero of his subject, but has revealed his weaknesses as well as his points of strength. A reading of this modest volume convinces one that John Slidell was a man of such ability, character, and political influence as to deserve a biography.

Born in New York City during the presidency of Washington, Slidell spent most of his life in Louisiana. Not much is known of his early years. The matters of chief interest in his public career are his mission to Mexico, his period in