

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

the Senate of the United States, and his service in France during the Civil War as the representative of the Confederacy. He proved himself to be an able and conscientious diplomat. That he failed to accomplish his purpose both in Mexico and in France, was surely no fault of Slidell. He did not prove himself to be a great Senator. In his period, he was a conservative and a strong Union man. He proved his strength as a political leader by winning control of Louisiana and by placing Buchanan in the presidency.

When the breach came between Douglas and Buchanan in 1858, Slidell stood with the President. He appeared in the Charlestown convention of 1860 as the arch-foe of Douglas. Professor Sears, basing his conclusion on the statements of Murat Halstead, thinks that Slidell wielded a political influence at this crisis "which marked him as one of the great figures of the day." He adds: "The man who divided his party in 1860, whatever his methods and motives, assumed no mean responsibility for the vast consequences determined by that event." It is often asserted that Douglas divided the party at this time, and, he must, of course, share the responsibility along with Slidell and others. It is exceedingly easy, in the opinion of the reviewer, to attribute too much in such crises to the influence of individual leaders. The great split of 1860 was due to a tense situation which had developed in response to the influence of powerful factors long in operation. The cleavage was present and the leaders merely took advantage of it.

The most valuable portions of the biography, though perhaps they do not present the newest matter contained in the volume, relate to the Mexican and French missions. In connection with the Mexican mission, interesting light is thrown on the motives and policies of President Polk, and it is also made clear that it was at this time that the strong and important friendship between Slidell and Buchanan was formed.

The story of the French mission is based on the letters of Slidell to James M. Mason, the representative of the Confederacy in England. It is an interesting narrative. A curious fact is that the author, who has followed these letters very closely, reports absolutely nothing concerning the effects of

the issuance of President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation on the leaders of either England or France. Indeed, Professor Sears does not mention the Proclamation in his volume. Can it be that American historians have greatly exaggerated the effects of this policy of Lincoln in preventing the recognition of the Confederacy by the governments of England and France?

This biography of Slidell should find a wide circle of readers. It is based on extensive research, but this does not detract from its interest. Surely those who find time to read history and biography will enjoy the reading of this little volume, for, though it is not from the pen of a popular writer of the journalistic school, it is well written.

WILLIAM O. LYNCH.

*The Environment of Abraham Lincoln in Indiana, with an Account of the DeBruler Family*, by JOHN E. IGLEHART and EUGENIA EHLMANN. Indiana Historical Society Publications, Volume VIII, Number 3, Indianapolis, 1925. 40 pages.

Number 3, Volume 8 of the Indiana Historical Society *Publications* contains three papers, the ones on the "Environment of Abraham Lincoln in Indiana" and "The DeBruler Family as Typical Pioneers" being written by Judge John E. Iglehart, president of the Southwestern Indiana Historical Society. The brief paper on "Judge Lemuel Quincey DeBruler" by Eugenia Ehrmann traces the DeBruler family from Maryland through North Carolina to Indiana where they arrived in 1818. Judge DeBruler, who served as judge of the common pleas court of the district embracing Spencer county from 1852 to 1860, was one of the leading lawyers of western Indiana and during the Civil War was a Union man and personally acquainted with President Lincoln. Judge Iglehart in his paper on the environment of Lincoln discourses upon the frontier and its importance in American history, the character and influence of the pioneers and then indicates the influence which the typical neighbors of Lincoln during the formative years of his life in Indiana must have had upon the