

Reviews and Notices

A History of Minnesota. By WILLIAM WATTS FOLWELL. Four volumes. Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, 1921-1930. Pp. xvii+515, xviii+477, xiii+605, xviii+575.

The volumes of this work have been greeted as they appeared from time to time during the last ten years with expressions of appreciation and praise by those interested in Minnesota history. The commendations of the reviewers have been tempered with some criticism, but the impression gained from the work and from the judgment of critics is that of a substantial, comprehensive, scholarly treatise on the political history of Minnesota. It is a monument to the author whose long and useful life came to a close so quickly after the writing was finished. It is also an excellent example of the type of publication which an adequately financed and managed state historical society can produce.

The activities of the French, English, and Americans in the pre-territorial period, the acquisition by the United States, the coming of the settlers, and the years of territorial government are the main topics described in the first volume. The admission of the new state (1857-1858), economic flounderings in railroad building and banking, the Sioux Outbreak in 1862, and the state in the "slaveholders' rebellion" constitute the story of the second volume. The third takes up the narrative at the close of the Civil War and carries it through to 1925, two of the better chapters are concerned with the "Grangers," and the "Grasshopper Invasion." The years from 1876 to 1909, except for the Spanish-American War, are organized according to gubernatorial administrations. A final chapter chronicles the events of more recent years. Because of the difficulties of presenting in a single narrative the various tangled threads of life in a modern commonwealth, the author reserved for the final volume certain important topics in economic and social history; the development of the iron mines, educational progress, Indian problems, changing electoral procedure, and the contributions of twelve leading citizens to the evolution of the state and its institutions. In each volume important material has been placed in numerous ap-

pendices, and excellent illustrations and maps have been interspersed throughout the text.

Although no distinction has been noted in the character of the work, previous to the year 1869, it is that of an historian treating events with which he did not have personal contact. In that year the author became President of the University of Minnesota, and a participant in the events he described. During the later years of his life he was active in collecting material which he used in these volumes. He also employed the sources in the manuscript and newspaper collections of the Minnesota Historical Society, especially the Sibley, Ramsey, and Donnelly papers. It is to be regretted that some important papers of the period since the Civil War have not been available, though the effect is not seen by the reader. It is difficult to understand the motives of descendants who withhold from the Historical Society or the University Library such material. Mr. Folwell's own experience may have made these papers somewhat less essential.

The author possessed many of the qualifications for his task. It is obvious that he was a skilled investigator, and an industrious collector of evidence. The presentation of his conclusions is scholarly. With a few exceptions he maintained a detachment and lack of bias that is unusual. Quite marked is the ability to summarize. The style is adequate, and in most respects admirable, though it cannot rightly be called brilliant. It is simple, clear, and spirited. The narrative does not lag, although it possesses little romance or stimulus to the imagination.

The shortcomings of this work can be traced very largely to Mr. Folwell's lack of an historical training and to the times in which he lived. To the latter may be attributed his emphasis upon the political and military, which is in harmony with the conception of history during much of his life. Training under one of the better historians might have enabled him to have associated the history of his state more closely with the progress of the nation. Western historians will look in vain for an account of the racial or sectional contributions to the commonwealth, or the routes by which the settlers came, or the factors which induced them to migrate. There is little evidence that he grasped the significance of geographic or economic forces. In contrast with these shortcomings, it is

interesting to note that he was aware of the social concept of history and made efforts to embody it in his writing, particularly in the final volume. His success in this endeavor will probably be considered limited by the members of this school of thought. The chronological proportion of the work is not that of the present generation. The fourth volume, composed of various essays not entirely confined to the period since the Civil War, does not overcome the lack of balance occasioned by condensing the narrative of the years since 1865 into the third volume, after the first two had been devoted to the affairs of the small community which existed prior to that date. Folwell was true to the generation that passed through the Civil War when he took the entire second volume for the years 1857 to 1865. If the discussion of Indian affairs received too much space throughout the publication, it is easily forgiven because the thoroughness with which it is done makes it one of the most valuable phases of the work.

The labor of others, in addition to the author, is involved in this history. The experience and training of the excellent staff of the Minnesota Historical Society has been drawn upon to transform the manuscript into a finished product. The able editor, Solon J. Buck, with the assistance of Theodore C. Blegen, Warren Upham, Mary E. Wheelhouse, and others, has accomplished a thoroughly creditable piece of editing and publishing. Very few flaws can be found. The table of contents, footnotes, illustrations, maps, and indices are excellent. The appearance of the volumes is neat and dignified. The most serious omission in this part of the work is the lack of a formal bibliography which was promised in the introduction to the first volume. The editor may be quoted in his own defense, "in view of the inclusion of complete bibliographical information with the first reference in each volume to each work cited, it seemed that the principal object of such a bibliography would be achieved by listing the works in the consolidated index."

Since the fourth volume has recently appeared, it may be briefly considered apart from the others. The chapters are quite different in character and are only loosely associated. The development of the iron mines and the problems of the Chippewa Indians are delineated in a complete and thorough manner. The discussion of the University of Minnesota is

supplemental to other published accounts. The chapter entitled "Public Education" is more general but not exhaustive. The final chapter with its biblical title, "The Acts of the Apostles" is a combination of institutional history and biography. It may be suggested that the Minnesota History Bulletin would have been a more suitable medium of publication for these essays than a separate volume of the history.

What may be said about the importance of this work? It is chiefly significant to the people of Minnesota for whom it was written. It stands out as superior to most of the histories of its type. Since national history is in part a mosaic of that of the states it has a place of wide importance, though its author has failed to take full advantage of this opportunity. It should be useful in assembling special histories of mining and of the Indians. Should one need to be disillusioned about the benevolence of mankind or the enlightened Indian policy of recent years, a reading of the chapter "Chippewa Indian Problems" will be found useful. It has numerous other values. Unquestionably it is a contribution to knowledge.

JOHN DONALD BARNHART

Lucius B. Swift, a Biography. By WILLIAM DUDLEY FOULKE. Indiana Historical Society (*Publications*, IX), Indianapolis, 1930. Pp. vi+153.

This biography of Lucius B. Swift is a modest and loyal attempt to portray the life of a close friend of nearly half a century. Owing to the intimate friendship between Mr. Foulke and Mr. Swift and between these men and Theodore Roosevelt, the study is uncritical. The book deals prominently with Mr. Swift, Mr. Roosevelt and Civil Service Reform. It is primarily a memorial to Mr. Swift, but secondarily a tribute to Mr. Roosevelt. Although Mr. Foulke was a more influential civil service reformer than Mr. Swift and a more consistent one than Mr. Roosevelt, yet he leaves himself almost entirely out of the story. The book must be read as the tribute of one friend to another.

Mr. Swift was born on a farm in New York in 1844. He entered the Civil War as a private in 1861 and was mustered out as a sergeant in June, 1863. Later he entered Michigan University from which institution he was graduated in 1870. To pay his college debt, he entered the teaching profession at