

of the times. Almost every document in the two volumes possesses historical value. Many of the letters are fascinating in their human interest and may be read for pure enjoyment.

The editing has been done with meticulous care. Anyone accustomed to the preparation of manuscripts for the printer knows that Dr. Quaife and his *aides* have performed a stupendous piece of work. Beyond question, the task has been well executed. It has been the desire of the editor and the printers of the *Askin Papers* to produce "books worthy of bearing the imprint of the Detroit Public Library." The two volumes published are tangible evidence that they have succeeded in fulfilling that desire.

William O. Lynch

Soil (Its Influence on the History of the United States). By Archer Butler Hulbert. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1930. Pp. xii + 227, illustrated, \$2.50.

In this volume, the author undertakes a study of the effects of soils on the migration to and the settlement of areas westward to the Mississippi. He adds a single chapter, "Types of Soil Influence in the West" in which he deals very briefly with the trans-Mississippi country. There is also an appendix (pp 209-215) in which suggestions are made for the study of local areas through the making of a series of key maps.

"The main theme of the present volume is the quite ignored one of the influences of the soil on American settlement and expansion," says Professor Hulbert at the beginning of his preface. Following three general chapters, he writes a series of strong chapters in which there is a definite attempt to carry out the purpose of the book. Among the best of these chapters are: "The Waterway Keys to our Soil Provinces"; "Highland Pathways of Conquest and Migration"; "The Meadows of New England"; "The Tidewater Pioneers"; "The Virginia Piedmont"; "The Grand Advance"; "Beyond the Shenandoah"; "The Conquest of the Alleghanies"; "The Blue Grass Region."

Though the title is *Soil*, the volume is as much a study of the effects of topography on American history as it is of the influence of soils. In fact, the study is what it should be, an analysis of geographic influences with more than the custom-

any space devoted to soil as a determining factor in the history of the country.

There is too much rambling and lack of organization within many of the chapters, but in general the content is very good. The pages of the volume abound in sane conclusions and illuminating comments. We are told (p. 53) that, "The student of American history who becomes acquainted with the uplands of his neighborhood, is in the way not only of understanding better just how population advanced and was distributed, but is likely to assay other factors of geography, of soils, forests and vegetation as he never would otherwise." The great influence exerted by the *meadows* of New England is fully portrayed. "These rugged states of New England must be seen in the light of these innumerable spots of vivid green" declares the author (p. 105). By a sure hand, the reader has pointed out to him the many ways in which the economic, social and political life of New England was affected by the "diminutive meadows" of that section.

In regard to the Old Dominion, it is asserted that "Beyond anything known in New England, the history of Virginia is the history of her soil" (p. 109). The "garden spot of the Middle West" is found in Kentucky, concerning which area we have the statement (p. 187) that, "It would be difficult to overestimate the influence of the Blue Grass Region of Kentucky on American expansion and Republic building."

The chapters dealing with mountain areas and drainage systems would be greatly improved if accompanied by a few good maps. A reader not thoroughly acquainted with the geography of the Southern Appalachians will have a difficult time when reading chapters three, four, five and seventeen. In some cases, it seems to the reviewer that the author himself is confused. Speaking of the *divide* between the New River and the sources of the Virginia rivers that feed the Tennessee system, Dr. Hurlburt says (p. 45) of this elevation: "Those highlands are in reality the summit of the Alleghenies, but so gradual is the rise that riding swiftly by train or automobile one hardly realizes the mountain barrier is being crossed; this is the 'South Pass of the Rockies' over the Alleghenies." The question which we raise here is, whether the divide mentioned has been, or can be, called a part of the Allegheny escarpment by any geographer? Rather it seems to be merely

a higher portion of the Appalachian Valley stretching south-eastward from the Alleghenies parallel to the New and above the sources of the forks of the Holston. Is it not instead of a pass, simply a moderate barrier lying across the trough of the Appalachians?

Truly, Professor Hulbert has taken up the study of a fruitful theme. His volume makes a real contribution, though, as he realizes, it is but a beginning. History is the product of many forces, and it is impossible to correctly narrate or interpret the development of any people or country without giving consideration to each of the essential factors. It is well that the fundamental importance of *soil* has been so clearly and fully set forth.

William O. Lynch

Simon Bruté de Rémur, First Bishop of Vincennes. By Sister MARY SALESIA GODECKER, O.S.B., Ph.D. St. Meinrad Historical Essays, St. Meinrad, Indiana, 1931. Pp. xliii + 441, illustrated, \$4.00.

The author of this book, perhaps unconsciously, carried out two purposes: one to present to her readers an edifying account of a holy and devout churchman; the other to give a detailed and accurate biography of a historical character. Bishop Bruté lends himself admirably to either purpose. He was a "man of God," energetic in every good work, denying himself everything in order to give to others according to their needs, contemplative, even mystical, in his communion with his Lord, always with an eye single to the promotion of the Kingdom of God in this world and to an eternity of blessedness hereafter. He was also a person of historical significance—one of the greatest of the comparatively small group who laid the foundation of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States.

Sister Mary Salesia's biography presents Bishop Bruté admirably from both of these points of view. It is to be feared, however, that the combination will cause the work to be received with less favor than it is entitled to. The religiously minded may find historical details uninteresting, and some of the historically minded who are not members of the Catholic church may misjudge the tone of piety which characterizes the narrative. If this is the case, it is unfortunate, for Sister