

Comment

It has been the policy of the present editor to set aside two or three pages of this quarterly, a sort of corner of his own, where he could comment on anything of interest in his own way. For eight years (he began with the issue of September, 1928, and has brought out every issue since), he has dealt briefly with questions pertaining to the study and writing of history, and also with current problems when their solution rested upon an understanding of historical facts. It has been impossible not to express conclusions or opinions antagonistic to those held by various persons and elements when dealing with certain problems that have been considered in these pages. The editor and no one else should be held responsible for any and all statements that have here appeared. No one has been obliged to read his comments, and certainly no one has been required to accept any view of the editor. What has been published here must stand or fall on its merits. The view is held by some that, since the *Indiana Magazine of History* is partly supported from public funds, no discussion of controversial questions of current interest should appear in its pages. The position of those who hold this view may be sound. If too rigidly applied, there would be times, it seems, when one supported partly or entirely by public funds would have little left to write or speak about while attempting to carry on.

In one of his stories, Mark Twain had a teacher of history ask a class of boys and girls the hard question, "What is the Constitution of the United States?" The designated member of the class stood, and, after he had paused a while for ideas and suitable words out of which to frame the complete sentence required by the schoolmistress, gave this answer: "The Constitution of the United States is the fine print in the back of the history." Why the great instrument has always appeared in the back of the text-book in exceedingly fine print is a question that has never been answered. Perhaps the fact that the copy of the Constitution which most of the mature citizens of our country were asked to study when children in the public schools was so extremely unattractive to the eye accounts for the sad lack of knowledge in regard to the contents of the revered document. It is surely not

too much to say that everyone who talks or writes on the Constitution should first read it carefully and try to understand *all* of it. Among the important clauses that should not be ignored are the following:

"The Congress shall have power to . . . provide for the . . . general welfare of the United States."

"The Congress shall have power to regulate commerce . . . among the several States"

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances". (First amendment).

As a general rule, the state historical magazines of the country carry much news relative to local historical activities and local historical writing. The Indiana Historical Society publishes the *Indiana History Bulletin* in which appear items covering the activities of county and other local historical organizations and items relative to articles published in local newspapers. The *Bulletins* of the Society are available to all readers of the *Indiana Magazine of History*, and, since the Society through the *Bulletins* reports local activities so extensively and well, the *Magazine*, in what is conceived to be a proper spirit of coöperation, leaves this field entirely to the Historical Society.

Corrections: In the June issue, the name of Clyde F. Snider, who contributed a review was erroneously spelled *Snyder*. In the same issue, the editor, in his review of the volume, *Catharine Merrill: Life and Letters*, spoke of the compiler as "Mrs. Katharine Merrill Graydon, daughter of Miss Merrill's brother". He should have stated that Miss Graydon was a daughter of Miss Merrill's sister.

Contributors to this issue: Samuel C. Williams is a prominent attorney at law and former Judge of the Supreme Court of Tennessee who lives in Johnston City, Tennessee. He has written much in the field of Tennessee history. Miss Ella Porter Griffith, a sister of Dr. Thomas J. Griffith of Washington, D. C., lives in Vevay, Indiana. Dr. James R.

Mock of Marion, Indiana, is professor of history at Findlay College, Findlay, Ohio; Robert Birbeck lives at Stanberry, Missouri; Elijah A. Gladden, a citizen of Scottsburg, Indiana, is much interested in the party history of Indiana. Miss Anna Poucher, whose article is reprinted from the *Indiana History Bulletin*, is in charge of the Genealogy Section of the Indiana State Library at Indianapolis; Otto M. Knoblock, whose interest in local history led to the reprinting of Elbert Hubbard's sketch of James Oliver, is President of the Northern Indiana Historical Society and lives at South Bend.