

though the book reads with ease, the footnotes are adequate guides for more extensive reading for those who question Quaife's contentions or prefer to investigate at greater length. The volume would have benefited by the addition of a bibliography of the literature about the Flag.

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Paul Revere and the World He Lived In. By Esther Forbes.
(Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1942. Pp. xiii, 510.
\$3.75.)

The stoutish forty-year-old man who set off on a borrowed horse from Charlestown for Lexington on the night of April 18, 1775, cannot have suspected that, in the words of his latest biographer, he was "galloping into history, art, editorials, folklore, poetry; the beat of those hooves never to be forgotten." Even at his death, forty-three years later, "the legend had not as yet risen up to swallow the actual man. . . . [Those] who had so recently seen the stocky, benevolent old gentleman, walking the streets of Boston, could hardly have guessed that he was destined forever to ride a foaming charger, his face enveloped in the blackness of a famous night of almost half a century before, to become in time hardly a man at all—only a hurry of hooves in a village street, a voice in the dark, a knock on a door, a disembodied spirit crying the alarm."

Esther Forbes has given us, in five hundred garrulous pages, the portrait of a man far different from the mysterious, romantic figure of Longfellow's poem or Grant Wood's painting. Her Paul Revere emerges as a solid, practical, versatile individual, a regular church-goer addicted to card-playing, the father of sixteen children, a maker of false teeth, a skilled worker in silver, and an outstandingly successful entrepreneur in the age when the artisan was becoming the modern industrialist. The Paul Revere who, at the age of sixty-five, invested \$25,000 of his own and \$10,000 borrowed from the young Federal government in one of the first copper-rolling mills in the country is probably of greater significance in our history than the Paul Revere who carried subversive messages between Boston, New York, and Philadelphia in the years before the flaring of the Revolution, helped rouse the countryside against the redcoats in

1775, and participated in the ill-fated Penobscot expedition in 1779.

The present volume, which traces the varied lives of its subject, is both much more and much less than a complete biography. Less, because there is not enough material available to give any but the thinnest account of Revere's activities during a considerable part of his life and because Miss Forbes eschews the methods of those biographers who make up what they cannot find out. More, because to compensate for the inadequate material the author paints in a background of New England in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries which at times almost completely swallows up the subject. This is a discursive, leisurely, and often fascinating book. Miss Forbes has evidently steeped herself in the literature of the time, manuscripts as well as printed materials, and through her pen old Boston comes to life again. Let the historical scholar complain, as he will, that she rarely indicates the sources of her information, even in the case of direct quotations; the average reader will take her word and admire her erudition. Bits of lore on all sorts of odd subjects find their way into the pages; the peculiar characteristics of eighteenth-century New England horses and Dr. Samuel Willard's advanced ideas on occupational therapy for the mentally deranged are alike grist for Miss Forbes' slow-grinding mill. A quiet humor often enlivens her descriptions of the customs of the times:

"There were plenty of frolics during which an old English roughness of manner and courting customs come to the top (this phase of Puritan life has been ignored by Thanksgiving magazine covers and school pageants)."

The defect in Miss Forbes' virtues is that there is no balance in her book between the significant and the trivial, and between Revere and his surroundings. She is at times like a talkative octogenarian who starts to tell something but wanders off into all sorts of conversational byways before getting anywhere near her goal. (Notable example: in the midst of an interesting description of the expulsion of Tories from Boston she gets sidetracked, p. 328, into irrelevant comments on Revere as an engraver.) This lack of discipline is accompanied by a certain shallowness of perception regarding the forces responsible for the Revolution. For all her skill in painting a colorful and animated picture of

eighteenth-century Boston, the author fails to convey any such understanding of why New Englanders were rebellious as does, for example, John Miller, in his comparable but much more condensed biography of Samuel Adams. The spirit of Oliver Wiswell is abroad in the land, and at times Miss Forbes comes close to being a gentler, less poisonously reactionary Kenneth Roberts. To be sure, since her subject is a Revolutionary hero, she cannot, like Roberts, make *all* the rebels dirty, insolent, and pockmarked. But it is curious that twice (pp. 103 and 126) she compares the first strong demonstration of the Sons of Liberty to the Fascist march on Rome; and of these rough-mannered but essentially democratic Revolutionists she goes so far as to say (p. 125): "With their marchings and their feasts and their secret oaths, they bear an unpleasant likeness to modern storm troopers." Some indication of the author's attitude can be had from a comparison of her grossly unfair remark about Sam Adams with her approving comment on the Reverend Mather Byles, a Tory:

"That Adams had a certain affection for humble people cannot be questioned, but he had abysmal contempt for their intelligence. He appealed only to their emotions, not to their minds. Fireworks, illuminated pyramids, flags, free feasts, and slogans were all he seems to have thought they could understand [p. 108]."

"Certain of his [Byles'] remarks handed down to the present make pretty good sense. 'They call me a brainless Tory,' the famous Doctor Byles once said as he watched three thousand Sons of Liberty parading the streets of Boston, 'but tell me, my young friend, which is better, to be ruled by one tyrant three thousand miles away or three thousand tyrants not a mile away?'"

Lesser errors are the lack of grammatical logic which leads Miss Forbes into repeated errors of structure when her sentences grow somewhat complicated, the misspellings of the name of Lord Bute (p. 101) and of Noddle's Island (p. 440), and the author's reference to "a pence a week" (p. 27). The book is provided with a bibliography, a section of genealogical data, and a set of supplementary notes for such miscellaneous items as even Miss Forbes' ingenuity could not weave into, or pin on, the fabric of her narrative. Good printing and generous illustrations increase the pleasure of

the reader in an interesting book. The attractive adaptation of Price's map of Boston used as end-papers contains one error: the position of the Cockerel Church does not correspond to the description on page 169 of the text.

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Leonard Lundin

We, the Guardians of Our Liberty. By Marguerite Hall Albjerg and Frederick Butterfield Knight. Beckley-Cardy Company, Chicago, 1940. Pp. x, 194, xxxix. Illustrations. \$1.20.)

Two years ago the educational world may have been only mildly interested in an effort to popularize for adolescents "man's struggle for freedom and what those freedoms are—here—now." And the *Booklist*, XXXVII, p. 328, may have properly expressed doubt that this attractive little book by Mrs. Albjerg and Dr. Knight "will have value as a permanent addition to children's collections." But teachers of social studies who are wracking their brains to make adaptations in response to an all-out war effort will find here an excellent collateral reference. Apparently the larger cities and towns have already found it quite usable, judging from comments heard by the reviewer at recent professional meetings.

Although nominally for junior high school pupils, *We, the Guardians of Our Liberty* recounts so many interesting incidents in what is all too often a catalogue of legislative and constitutional developments, that seniors studying government will also appreciate it. Academically-minded teachers doubtless will be pleased to learn that the chapter on the English Bill of Rights was written by Dr. Victor L. Albjerg, Professor of English History at Purdue University. In light of recent developments in Eastern Europe, some adults will object to the use of Soviet Russia as a whipping boy, along with Germany and Italy.

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Max P. Allen

The Trans-Mississippi West: A Guide to Its Periodical Literature (1811-1938). By Oscar Osburn Winther. (Indiana University Publications, Social Science Series No. 3, Bloomington, Indiana, 1942. Pp. xv, 263. \$1.50.)

A valuable bibliographical aid to historians and scholars