

Book Reviews and Notes

David Ross—Modern Pioneer. By Fred C. Kelly. (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1946, pp. xv, 182. Illustrations and index. \$3.00.)

David Ross, White County farm- and small-town boy early showed an interest in machinery. As a result of temperament rather than poverty or environment, he spent a fairly lonely boyhood. Although needed on the farm, he entered Purdue in 1889. During the next four years he lived out, participated in no organized activities, belonged to no defined group; he was merely one of the large background group, from which often come distinguished individuals in later life. Ross' record in academic work was not outstanding, but he had time to think and he did.

He persuaded his father he could manage the latter's large farm better on his own sole responsibility; showed the community how drainage made productive land out of wet lands; organized a telephone company; made friends. Dave, who had been reading all about automobiles and taking long walks to think about them, invented and patented his first of many ideas—an improved steering gear. Believing he was getting into a rut on the farm, he cut loose, found backing for his ideas, and became the mainspring in the Ross Gear and Tool Company. The man developed with, and ahead of the automobile industry; in time came a fortune.

From membership on an alumni fund-raising committee to trustee to President of the Board, Dave progressed. A deal with George Ade pooled business sense with fame—result the Ross-Ade Stadium, a field house, in time the Purdue Memorial Union. But these were not his main interests. Land, buildings a University had to have, and Ross was looking fifty years ahead (he could buy as an individual what the institution would need later) but a University is not buildings; it is men and ideas. "I believe in seeking new knowledge." Ross' money was important but his ideas were more so. His greatest monument is not a stadium (in which he sometimes sat not knowing which team won) but the Purdue Research Foundation, a dream dear to his heart, and his influence in getting others to see that a university should hold to its major goals. In this, of course, he had important help, but he had the interest, the money and the

time. When some were amazed at his liberal gifts, he laughed and said, "Some men keep race horses or women. I'd rather help support a university." From his bachelor home "The Hills" he continued active as "Trustee Extraordinary" and "Citizen Consultant," inventing, improving and inspiring to the end, which came in 1943.

Mr. Kelly has written simply, effectively and in keeping with Dave Ross' personality. The author might have given more of the history of Ross' business, but has chosen to emphasize his public services. When Bruce Rogers "of Indiana" (Purdue '90), A. Colish, The Plimpton Press, the Meriden Gravure Company and Mr. Alfred A. Knopf all combine their talents to the making of a book, one expects it to be a nice-looking book, a nice book to handle. It is. Purdue, Indiana and points beyond should feel pleased with the result.

R. Carlyle Buley

Pioneer Sketches of the Upper Whitewater Valley, Quaker Stronghold of the West. By Bernhard Knollenberg. (Volume XV, Number 1, Indiana Historical Society, Publications, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1945, pp. 171. \$0.75.)

"I wrote this book because I was born and brought up in the Whitewater Valley and love it. But I have a special reason for publishing it at this time. In 1908, Josiah Royce said in his *Philosophy of Loyalty*: 'We need . . . in this country, a new and wiser provincialism . . . the sort of provincialism which makes people want to idealize . . . their own province; to hold sacred its traditions, to honor its worthy dead.' 'Further centralization of power in the national government,' he continues, 'without a constantly enriched and diversified provincial consciousness, can only increase the estrangement of our national spirit from its own life.' These words are even more apposite today."

The author, who thus clearly stated his purpose, has carried out his intentions without falling into the pitfalls which lay before him. The little volume which he produced is not strictly speaking a history of the Whitewater Valley, although it is a historical account of many of the important early developments.

It begins with the forced withdrawal of the Indians and the arrival of the Friends in the upper valley. Descriptions