

also abound in data relevant to the social and economic development of the areas tributary to the Burlington system. It is to be hoped that the publication of this *Guide* may inspire other railroads to emulate the example of the Burlington.

Brown University

James B. Hedges

Aesculapius Comes to the Colonies. The Story of the Early Days of Medicine in the Thirteen Original Colonies. By Maurice Bear Gordon. (Ventnor, New Jersey, Ventnor Publishers, Inc., 1949, pp. xiv, 560. Illustrations, bibliography, and index. Portrait of Benjamin Franklin frontispiece. \$10.00.)

The promise of this title is, unfortunately, entirely unfilled in the actual narrative. The book purports to be "a comprehensive survey" of Colonial medicine and an "evaluation" of its nature; but in reality it is a miscellaneous collection of materials—taken with or without acknowledgments—from well-known secondary works. Random annals and biographical notes fill most of the pages, and it is difficult to discover any system or organization in the whole. The only approach to order lies in the devotion of chapters to particular states, and this is unsatisfactory in that there was often little difference between the medicine of one state and that of another. Expensive and somewhat pretentious, the book adds little or nothing to our knowledge of Colonial medicine.

The Johns Hopkins University

Richard Harrison Shryock

Benjamin Franklin and Catharine Ray Greene: Their Correspondence, 1755-1790. Edited and annotated by William Greene Roelker. Volume XXVI, *Memoirs*, American Philosophical Society. (Philadelphia, American Philosophical Society, 1949, pp. ix, 147. Illustrations, introduction, and index. \$3.00.)

In the winter of 1754-55, Dr. Benjamin Franklin, on a postal tour of inspection, came to Boston where he conferred with Governor Shirley and appointed his brother, John, postmaster. John had recently married the widow Hubbard and moved into her "mansion," where Franklin naturally stayed during his visit. There he met Catharine Ray, from Block

Island, who was visiting her sister, Judith, daughter-in-law of the new Mrs. John Franklin. An amazing friendship sprang up between the provincial but keen-witted girl of twenty-three and the already world renowned scientist, philosopher, and statesman of forty-eight. On his homeward journey, Catharine accompanied Franklin in his carriage to her sister's farm at Westerly, Rhode Island, spending at least three days on the road. Thereafter, they saw each other again on only five different occasions, and then but briefly. Franklin spent most of the succeeding thirty-five years in Philadelphia, London, or Paris. Catharine remained in Rhode Island, married a future governor of the state, governed his household, and bore him six children. In spite of these seeming obstacles, Franklin and Catharine maintained until his death their unique friendship, of which the volume under review is the epistolary record.

The editor of this collection, a Director of the Rhode Island Historical Society and a descendant of Catharine (Ray) Greene, has gathered together ninety-eight letters, fewer than half of which conform strictly to the title of the book. Of the eighteen letters from Franklin to "Katy," twelve have previously been published. The twenty-one letters from Catharine to Franklin, however, appear completely in print for the first time. The remaining fifty-nine letters came from a varied assortment of correspondents within the Franklin-Greene-Hubbard-Ward family nexus. Their inclusion is justified by the fact that they illuminate the relationship between the two principals. Many of these also are newly-published. They derive, for the most part, from manuscript collections of the Greene and Ward families of Rhode Island, now deposited in the library of the American Philosophical Society.

Any scrap of evidence, no matter how trivial, deserves publication when it concerns a man of Benjamin Franklin's stature. The letters in this collection, while not unimportant, contain no startling revelations. One can agree with the editor that they "portray a kindly, mellow, domestic side of Franklin" but it may well be questioned whether this side is "little known to the world." Van Doren, for one, has used these manuscripts to delineate this side of the "many-sided Franklin." Nor would all readers agree with Mr. Roelker that "the most interesting and important" letters in this collection have not previously been published. None of the correspondence exceeds in interest and piquancy the first

three letters which Franklin wrote to his "Katy" in 1755 after his return from their first meeting (containing the famous "cypher lesson"), or his last letter to Mrs. Greene in 1789, a year before his death (with its equally well-known line "Among the Felicities of my Life I reckon your Friendship . . ."). These have all appeared in the Bigelow or Smyth editions. Many of the new letters printed by Roelker, especially those between the women—Catharine, Jane Mecom, Deborah and Sally Franklin, etc.—are full of trivial gossip which reveals how fond they were of Franklin, but little else. The collection, unfortunately, does not include the earliest letters from Miss Ray to Franklin, which might explain some of the tantalizing and intimate references in his replies. These were probably destroyed. On the other hand, the editor does not include some letters, already in print, which passed between the Greene and Franklin families.

In spite of these minor defects, most of which are inherent in the materials themselves, the publication of this collection serves several useful purposes. In the first place, even the letters which have been published before are here edited much more faithfully than they were in the standard editions. This gives them character and emotional significance. The life long devotion of a clever and personable woman, twenty years his junior, shining through this artless correspondence, certifies Franklin's charm as no second-hand testimony could do. On the other hand, it definitely denies the suggestion made by some writers of an illicit relationship between Franklin and Catharine. This correspondence could not have arisen from the ashes of a seduction.

Finally, the perusal of these letters, separated as they are from the vast body of literature produced by and about Franklin, allows the reader to concentrate upon the great Philadelphian's inimitable domestic personality. Books have been written about Franklin the scientist, Franklin the diplomat, Franklin the statesman, Franklin the essayist. This little book might well be sub-titled "Franklin, Staunch Friend."

Indiana University

Lynn W. Turner

The Land Lies Open. By Theodore C. Blegen. (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1949, pp. x, 246. Index and end maps. \$3.00.)