

there is little mention of venereal infection, and tuberculosis was much less common before emancipation than after.

To cure the ills of the slaves there were several types of "doctors": botanic, regular, homeopaths, hydropathists, eclectics, and "medicine men." But domestic cures—based on tradition, the "doctor book," popular magazines, and agricultural journals—underlay the medical practice in the South. The prescription of the "doctor" or the self-appointed practitioner might be good, bad, or indifferent and the rating frequently varied from one disease to another. In comparing treatments for flux, pleurisy, and worms, the author concludes that the domestic remedy was best in two cases and that the botanic remedy did the "least amount" of harm in the third case. The regular medical treatment did not "score." The reader, of course, is not to conclude that this was true for all diseases. While quakery, superstition, magic, and sheer humbug constituted far-too-important elements of the practice of the period, and while the treatments can best be described as crude and heroic, there were giants among the medical men of that era and encouraging progress was being made by 1860.

The planter was ever-mindful of the well-being of his slaves, and the conclusion is reached that the "over-all picture of slave health is simply a picture of health conditions in the United States, and their health status was no better and no worse than that of the populace as a whole for that period" (p. 164).

The cataloging of ills and remedies does not lend itself to a smooth-flowing narrative style, but the problems presented by such a study do not excuse such loose writing as the following: "Dr. Philips of Mississippi stated that on his plantation they churned every day, the Negroes, with the exception of the children, getting all the sour milk" (p. 35); and "Unfortunately, Negro women were not all the traditional born cooks depicted in literature" (p. 37). There are some other slips in writing and in calculations, but they do not detract seriously from the value of this volume to the student of slavery and the antebellum South.

Indiana University

Chase C. Mooney

A Home in the Woods: Oliver Johnson's Reminiscences of Early Marion County. As related by Howard Johnson. (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1951, pp. 92.

Index, map, frontispiece portrait of Oliver Johnson. \$1.00.)

Too often the interest of the reading public in local history has suffered because of the formal and pedantic style of certain writers. Unfortunately, such dull and uninspiring presentations of local histories have prompted an indeterminate number of readers to turn to the historical novel as a means of satisfying a natural curiosity concerning early local histories. While the results may be gratifying from the standpoint of entertainment, the fact remains that the novel embraces historical accuracy only as a matter of literary convenience. Between these two extremes in the presentation of local history lies the middle ground of offering an informal and interesting history, yet giving proper emphasis to accuracy. Such is the case in this account of the reminiscences of Oliver Johnson.

In presenting in written form the stories told to him by his grandfather, Howard Johnson has related a seemingly accurate history of the events and situations which attended the earliest settlers of Marion County, Indiana. The greater portion of the story deals with Oliver Johnson's experiences, observations, and impressions during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The author's use of dialect in relating this story adds charm to a style which is both smooth and informal. Occasionally, he has employed footnotes for the sake of clarity or documentation. A portrait of Oliver Johnson serves as a frontispiece and a comprehensive index comprises the final pages of this work. Following a brief introduction by the author, there is a map designating the location of those places mentioned in the story. Not only does this map serve as a geographic guide, but also it attests to the accuracy and authenticity of the narrative.

This thin volume of ninety-two pages represents a definite contribution to the local history of the Hoosier State. The author has succeeded in presenting in a simple yet vivid style a subject which can be summed up in the one word "refreshing." Finally, mention should be made of the contribution of Albert Fessler, nephew of Howard Johnson, and of the officers of the Indiana Historical Society. In a large measure it was their words of encouragement and their general assistance that prompted the writing and publication of this story.