shipping was carried in American bottoms. Joseph Dixon invented a machine for the manufacture of lead pencils; Boston began the first American high school; the *Youth's Companion* commenced its hundred years of publication. . . ." and so on and so on.

The last third of the book is given over to accounts of distinguished people who have belonged and contributed to the society, and a long chapter about "Elegant Dinners and Eloquent Diners." Throughout, Vail gives generous donors their due—in generous detail. Quite often he shows rare candor as when he notes that the presidency of Gouverneur Morris "gave the society considerable prestige" (p. 47) though Morris never presided at a meeting. Or when he points out that in 1827 the society elected the entire state legislature to membership.

As a handbook of facts, *Knickerbocker Birthday* will be an addition to one's library; as a meaningful story of the role of a historical agency, it falls short of a historian's standards.

State Historical Society of Wisconsin Donald R. McNeil

Making Democracy a Reality: Jefferson, Jackson, and Polk. By Claude G. Bowers. (Memphis: Memphis State College Press, 1954, pp. x, 170. $3.75.)

These lectures make up a group of charming and interesting essays. They display Bowers's well-known literary qualities of intense and detailed study, homely and striking illustrations, and a partisan concern for the reputation of his heroes. His method involves setting forth a condition of trouble facing the Republic, and, in this case, the manner in which each one of his protagonists checkmated dangers to democracy, while on the other hand advancing democratic principles and practice. Bowers is not only partisan, but partisan in the most political sense; several of his most interesting pages constitute a defense of parties and politics. His present volume could almost be issued as a campaign document by one of the two major political parties; it will not here be revealed which one.

The question is what this kind of bias does to Bowers's history. Does it make a caricature of reality? Is it calculated to deceive uninitiated readers? Does one tire of the author's untiring admiration for Jefferson, Jackson, and Polk? Worse still, is one able to predict his attitudes toward their views

and operations? The first thing the patient and friendly reader will note is that Bowers's method does produce certain valid results. His awareness of differences and passions in American political life, his desire to set forth what seems to him the palpable truth, give him energy and variety in research. His desire to explain and defend the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions of Jefferson and Madison, for example, sets off a vivid and elaborate description of the manner in which the Alien and Sedition Acts were conceived, the threat they posed to democratic life and anticipations, the cruel fashion in which they were administered. To be sure, the Jefferson and Madison resolutions had a strong tendency, if nothing more, to impugn constitutional processes, too; but one has refreshed his sense of the serious challenge to civil liberties which Federalist party leaders had underwritten, and the excitement attending the "Great Revolution" of 1800 which swept Jefferson into the presidency.

Of course, if the reader should not happen to be aware of the determined attack which the Jefferson administration made on the rights and privileges of the Supreme Court, it would be difficult for him to put it into the balance of Jefferson's services to democracy and the Constitution; for he will not read about it in Bowers's pages. There is no doubt that he is best read in company with some more temperate scholar. But his eloquence is stimulating, is, in its fashion, informative, and involves a consistency of execution which can be quite useful and even, to some degree, self-correcting. Bowers makes no secret of his likes and dislikes. It is also evident that he prefers to emphasize some points, rather than others. The curious and alert reader will wonder why. He will wonder why, for example, Bowers has rather vaguely indicated that Alexander Hamilton was "a genius of a very high order," if his party was leading us toward totalitarianism; what may not have been included in his manifestly loose defense of Polk's leadership, in the crisis with Mexico which ended in a war; what is meant by his saying that Jackson "cut the red tape of diplomacy in the fight in Florida." Bowers, incidentally, takes particular pains to answer to his own satisfaction his question: Why was James K. Polk one of the great American presidents? He hopes that "the time will come when a statue of heroic proportions will be raised in San Francisco facing the Golden Gate, from which he never took his eyes until that beautiful city and great port

unfurled the American flag to the breezes of the Pacific sea." One can for himself add up Bowers's evidence, and judge the validity of this dream.

Two general observations about Bowers's method and point of view seem in order. In the first place, his emphasis upon character and conflict, though they make for vivid and interesting reading, seem to do so at the expense of underlying factors. He sees Jefferson as a great democrat, scarcely at all as a product and leader of the agricultural interest in the nation. He sees the low tariff view as representing justice and humanity, not at all as, among other things, reflecting differences between southern and Democratic, as opposed to Federalist, politics. He sees Jackson as marshaling forces to make an end of, of all things, personal government. It is the People who are in control during that great figure's administration. Perhaps. And perhaps he represented all that was manly, honest, and democratic—this gentle constitutionalist who regretted that he had been unable to shoot Clay and hang Calhoun. But Bowers, who believes in politics—who believes that it represents our insurance against totalitarianism—must also realize that Jackson was not raised high for his personal qualities alone, but also because an amalgam of social and economic tendencies found him preferable in the White House to others.

Secondly, Bowers, in retailing the democratic convictions of his major figures, almost entirely forgets to mention the Negro and slavery. He passes with the lightest of sentences over the gag rule which was intended to stifle discussion of the great American problem, and mentions neither the Whigs nor the Democrats who fought it to its death. He refers to the "fanatic, irresponsible crusade of the abolitionists," but does not make clear whether he is including in his strictures John Quincy Adams, James G. Birney, the Tappan brothers, Salmon P. Chase, Samuel G. Howe, William H. Seward, Charles O. Dana, Theodore Parker, and the hosts of others who fought to preserve civil liberties, communication, democratic processes of government, and social action. His lectures are stimulating, forceful, entertaining, and they serve to remind us that Americans have differing interests and compulsions which, up to a point, need to be taken into account, and occasionally, discounted.

Antioch College Louis Filler