job not only in describing the growth of railroad transportation in the United States but also in relating it to the main trends of American social and economic history.

In so short a volume, however, some questions must be passed over lightly. This is apparently the case with the part played by organized labor in the railroad story. Aside from brief mention of the year of violence in 1877 and Debs and the Pullman strike of 1894, the book contains little information about the organization and early struggles of the railroad workers' brotherhoods and other unions. Yet the author has a good deal to say about such modern labor abuses as "featherbedding" and their effects upon railroad decline. As the editor of the series writes in the Preface, the Age of the Railroad has its romantic element, but in American Railroads most of this is lost in the rapid pace of the narrative and beneath the heavy but probably necessary burden of statistics—trackage and capitalization figures, freight and passenger rates, number of employees—embedded in the prose of many of its pages. But all in all, Stover has accomplished much in so small a space. The story of American railroading as he tells it has continuity, breadth, and direction. Moreover, he obviously believes in railroads. His last chapter is both a good account of present difficulties and a strong plea for a "healthy, stabilized, and prosperous" American railroad system in the future. In his conclusion he argues persuasively that the drama of the railroads' rise and decline need not become decline and fall.

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For countless generations men have carried on a more or less continuous controversy over gambling: Is it a natural "instinct"? If so, is it "moral" or an evidence of human depravity? In any case, does the state have the right (or the obligation) to regulate, limit, or suppress it? While this ageless dispute has been raging, men have had time to devise ingenious and varied forms of gambling, among which the lottery has occupied a special and, in a sense, honored place.

In Fortune's Merry Wheel John Samuel Ezell, associate professor of history at the University of Oklahoma, traces the history of the lottery from its transportation as part of the intellectual baggage brought to colonial America, through its "national mania" phase, to its decline and legislative suppression in the closing years of the nineteenth century. Taken altogether, the book is a detailed and meticulously organized substantiation of the author's thesis that "many an institution has been built on the weakness of man" (p. 281). It is unlikely that any other "weakness" has been exploited for more socially useful purposes than man's fascination for the "lucky lottery." For three centuries Americans used the lottery as a fund-raising device for a
wide range of social welfare projects, extending from providing early Virginia settlers with food to the building of schools, churches, libraries, and penitentiaries during the nineteenth century.

Despite the obvious social benefits which the lottery made possible, there were at all times articulate critics of the practice, and during the wave of reform of the period from 1830 to 1860, public opinion began to focus upon the lottery’s “abuses and frauds.” By the late 1880’s a growing feeling that state regulation had proven ineffective led to demands for federal suppression. To these demands Congress responded, beginning in 1890, with a series of laws based upon federal regulatory power over interstate commerce and the mails, which effectively “ended the saga of the American lottery.”

Perhaps the chief significance of Fortune’s Merry Wheel lies in Professor Ezell’s success in correlating the rise and fall of the lottery with the evolution of social, economic, and political conditions in America over a period of three centuries. A clear relationship is established between the antitax attitudes and the scarcity of capital in colonial and early republican America and the general popularity of the lottery. Similarly, philosophical optimism, a strong streak in American thought during the early nineteenth century, nurtured the growth of the lottery mania. On the other hand, the reform impulse of the ante bellum period and the radical economic and social transformations of the postwar years paved the way for state and, finally, federal abolition.

In this valuable work only two criticisms seem worth mentioning, and both of them are matters of format and style: the reader must search in the back of the book for the numerous (and enlightening) footnotes, and he may miss some of the lottery’s drama and color as a result of Professor Ezell’s colony-by-colony, state-by-state, year-by-year organization of his material.

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J. Robert Constantine


This excellent volume will be welcomed by researchers in American history. Ably edited by Alan Conway, lecturer in American history at the University College of Wales in Aberystwyth, this collection of “America” letters tells the story of Welsh emigrants in America during the first seventy-five years of the last century. The greater portion of the letters were printed in various Welsh newspapers and nonconformist denominational periodicals of the time. Others were obtained from the collections of the National Library of Wales and from individuals. These letters, widely read in the homeland, stimulated Welsh migration to America.

In 1850, 96 per cent of the Welsh immigrants were living in the northern states, the greatest concentrations being in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Illinois. The greater portion of those in