

the number of affiliated societies at different intervals, neither is reference made to such tabulations as have been made by other students.

The colonization movement is represented as one of numerous plans for bringing about a satisfactory and practical solution of the negro problem. The various classes that were affiliated with the organization at different times and the motives of each are interestingly described, as well as the relation of the colonization movement to the other movements that had as their chief object the solution of the negro problem. The influence of the American Colonization Society as an agency for shaping public opinion and for accomplishing any one of the things for which the society was created appears to have been overestimated. While the general work of the society was officially approved by numerous state legislatures, by Congress, and by the leading religious and philanthropic organizations, the financial assistance from all sources was always small. The total expenditure of the society up to November, 1838, was only \$379,644.15; and in 1838, the receipts for the year amounted to only \$11,597. The number of slaves actually transported to Africa was very small, numbering during the entire period less than the annual increase of the free negro population. The propaganda of the society, in the form of publications and speeches, was astonishingly small as compared with the Garrisonian abolition organization. The society did have many men of eminence affiliated with it, and, consequently, its influence in centring public attention on the slavery question was considerable.

The author attempts to prove that the average slaveholder in the border states as well as hundreds of those in the Lower South, before 1840, felt that slavery was not only an evil but detrimental to their best interests, and they were earnestly and eagerly looking for a practical solution of the problem. Colonization made a special appeal to this class.

The book contains much valuable information, and it is to be hoped that the author will carry the study on through the period of the Civil War.

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*Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1916. Volume II. Correspondence of R. M. T. Hunter, 1826-1876.* Edited by CHARLES HENRY AMBLER. (Washington: Government Printing Office. 1918. Pp. 383.)

THE Historical Manuscripts Commission of the American Historical Association has rendered students an excellent service in the publication of this fragment of the correspondence of R. M. T. Hunter, senator from Virginia during the decade immediately preceding the outbreak of civil war. The pity of it is that there are no more letters of Hunter himself, who was certainly a very influential figure in the shaping of the issues that ripened into war. Professor Ambler, who has done his

work well, indicates that we shall probably never find the greater collections of correspondence bearing upon the secession movement. James A. Seddon kept no files. Lewis E. Harvie destroyed his papers in 1865. And we know that Yancey of Alabama and Rhett of South Carolina left no important stores of papers. The Hunter letters, now for the first time published, are but the remnants of General Benjamin F. Butler's destructive work.

Hunter's own part of this correspondence amounts to little, and what we have does not add particularly to what we know of him from other sources. But the letters of James A. Seddon, whom Roger Pryor pronounced to be the master of Virginia in 1860, Lewis E. Harvie, William O. Goode, and others do make clear the rifts and rivalries of Virginia politics during most of the decade of 1850-1860. Virginia was then a great state and one of the arbiters of national politics. In this period the Whig party collapsed and the new American party ran a fitful course. This left the Democratic organization the dominant force in the life of the state, whose boundaries were far-flung.

The more important group of leaders in the Democratic party were Hunter himself, James M. Mason, his colleague in the Senate, and John Letcher, first a representative in Congress and finally, 1860, governor of Virginia. Hunter represented the tide-water counties, Mason the northern part of the state, and Letcher lived at Lexington and had close affiliations with the west. The offices were filled upon the recommendation of these leaders or of their co-workers, Harvie and Seddon. Roger Pryor, editor of *The South*, was the newspaper voice of the group. The other and opposing set of politicians were Henry A. Wise, who came from the low country but who had stolen the hearts of the western Virginians in 1850-1851; William J. Faulkner of what is now West Virginia, an anti-slavery man in 1830 but a convert to the safe and sane view of slavery in 1850-1860; and John B. Floyd, son of that fiery John B. Floyd who fought for Calhoun in nullification days. When Wise won his spectacular campaign against the Know-Nothings in 1855 he suddenly rose to national fame and gave Hunter and his machine almost as much trouble as the Know-Nothings might have given them, if they had won. Wise always claimed that he was the maker of President Buchanan, a claim which disgusted Hunter in the extreme.

It was this alignment of the Virginia political forces which gave Douglas so much trouble when he was finally to make his great fight for the presidency. When Douglas defied Buchanan in December, 1857, Governor Wise published an ardent defense of the recalcitrant senator in the Illinois papers. This Wise did because Hunter had finally become a warmer friend of Buchanan than Wise himself had been, and because most western Virginians were generally disposed to be hostile to slavery and eastern Virginians. But although Wise was a loud-mouthed governor and disposed to take the front of the stage on every possible occasion, Hunter and Seddon and Harvie were the real masters.

Virginia declared war to the knife upon Douglas and thus helped Lincoln to the presidency. Hunter was himself a candidate for the Democratic nomination in 1860, and Wise must of necessity ask as much or confess himself second fiddle to Douglas. This rivalry blinded the eyes of the greater Virginians of that day and made the Old Dominion, proud as she was, impotent at Charleston. The Hunter machine was not strong enough to crush Wise and, busy all the while trying to do so, let the leadership of the South fall to such men as Rhett and Yancey, who blindly drove forward the chariot of war into the fatal cataclysm—few of the people dreaming that war and bloodshed were to be their lot.

Historians will find much in these letters to explain, if not to change, their judgments. In 1852 Seddon wrote to Hunter that henceforth the South must nominate and control presidents, not endeavor to set up candidates of their own. Edmund W. Hubbard, a member of the Hunter machine, said in effect (p. 141), give the North the honors of government and we may take the measures. David R. Atchison wrote in March, 1855, that seven thousand Missourians were then in Kansas to take part in the election (p. 161). And Isaac E. Holmes of Charleston declared that Atchison was the master spirit in the Kansas "revolution".

WILLIAM E. DODD.

*The War with Mexico.* By JUSTIN H. SMITH, formerly Professor of Modern History at Dartmouth College. In two volumes. (New York: Macmillan Company. 1919. Pp. xxii, 572; xiv, 620. \$10.00.)<sup>1</sup>

No event in our history has been so distorted by ignorance, prejudice, misinterpretation, and downright misrepresentation as the Mexican War. Passions inflamed by the slavery question and the angry political struggles preceding and following the war created an emotional atmosphere in which vituperation took the place of sober reasoning and slanderous assertion too often supplanted proved fact. Probably not since the ratification of the Constitution has there been less national *esprit* and team-work than during the four years of Polk's administration. The multitude of presidential aspirants in and out of the army, each of whom believed his own success dependent upon the destruction of his rivals' claims to honor and intelligence, the irritating jibes and innuendoes of the British press, and the natural bitterness of Mexican writers, have left a fog of confusion which American historians until recently have shown little disposition to dispel. The task of doing so, indeed, was staggering, and to form a fair judgment of the present volumes at least two sets of difficulties must be kept in mind. In the first place, with a controversy at every step involving national or personal reputation and character, only a fine sifting of all the material would give the work permanent worth—and the amount of material is enormous, and

<sup>1</sup> See p. 755.