

The Port of New York. By THOMAS E. RUSH. (Doubleday, Page and Company. 1920. Pp. xiv, 358. Illustrated.)

This is a rather rambling, sketchy, gossipy account of the port of New York—its historical development, its present activities, its needs. The author's stated purpose is to make better known the national importance of the country's greatest port. A great deal is said about the indifference of various agencies—political, civic and commercial—to the promotion of the port, and particularly it criticizes business interests for failure to more effectively support the recently proposed New York and New Jersey "port treaty."

The first chapters of the book are historical, beginning with the earliest discoveries. Chapters are then devoted to such topics as piracy and smuggling; the official activities of the customs service, particularly the work of the surveyor's office; the American merchant marine; fortifications; immigration; harbor improvements; and so on. The chapter on a free zone is a summary of the tariff commission's report on that subject. Another chapter treats of the teaching of "port truths" in schools and colleges. The above will sufficiently indicate the wide range of topics touched upon. The book, confessedly, offers little that is new. The fragments of information assembled may possibly aid in creating a greater popular interest in New York's port development; but beyond this its service is limited.

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BRIEFER NOTICES

Coming as it does close to the three hundredth anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims, *The Founding of New England*, by James Truslow Adams (Boston: The Atlantic Monthly Press, pp. 482), is a most timely book. Drawing upon a wealth of material much of which has come to light only in recent years, the author deals chiefly with the origins and history of New England to the close of the seventeenth century, discussing the discovery and settlement of the region; "the genesis of the religious and political ideas which there took root and flourished; the geographic and other factors which shaped its economic development; the beginnings of that English overseas empire, of which it formed a part; and the early formulation of thought—on both sides of the Atlantic—regarding imperial problems." The struggles and history of the early settlements are retold with new knowledge and a new point of view, with

emphasis upon the social and economic factors rather than upon theological or theocratic ideas. Of particular interest to the student of political science are the chapters on imperial control and administrative experiments within the colonies, especially the attempts at consolidated administration. The whole book is a most scholarly and interesting narrative with scarcely a dull page from beginning to end. It is hoped that the author will carry out his intention of making this volume the introduction to a series which will bring the history of New England down to date.

The History of the San Francisco Committee of Vigilance of 1851 (University of California Press, pp. xii, 543), by Dr. Mary Floyd Williams, is a reinterpretation of the social life of California during the crisis of the gold fever. Earlier accounts, Charles Howard Shinn's *Mining Camps* (1885), Josiah Royce's *California* (1886), and H. H. Bancroft's *Popular Tribunals* (1887), have in common a distinctly moral point of view. They interpret the gold period in uncompromising terms of right and wrong. Dr. Williams, in accord with later ideals of historical research, is less inclined to pose as a dispenser of halos and gridirons. She has studied more carefully and impartially than her predecessors the source materials, particularly the archives of the committees of vigilance, and has edited the minutes and miscellaneous papers, financial accounts and vouchers which appear as volume four of the Publications of the Academy of Pacific Coast History, under the title *Papers of the San Francisco Committee of Vigilance of 1851* (University of California Press, pp. xvi, 906). The years spent in collecting, studying and editing these documents have acquainted her with the men and women of this earlier age, and she regards them as little better or worse than their children of today. She therefore seeks to account for their deeds by explaining the social conditions which impelled them to action. The California settlement is treated as similar in many respects to earlier extensions of the frontier of American democracy. Here as elsewhere there was common acceptance of the theory that the state was created by a voluntary compact between contracting parties who possessed inherent rights. Closely linked with this was the distrust of a centralized form of government, a demand for utmost liberty of action in domestic affairs. But local government was notoriously weak in suppressing disorder in the outer line of settlements and this fact explains in large measure the necessity for the San Francisco Vigilantes as well as for other self-appointed defenders of "law and order" in other frontier communities.