

REVIEWS

A Political History of the State of New York. By DEALVA STANWOOD ALEXANDER. Volume III, 1861-1882. New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1909.—561 pp.

If a stout volume on the history of athletic sports in the United States during the last twenty years should leave on the reader's mind, as the most distinct impression, the chronological succession, personal qualities and professional achievements of the heavy-weight pugilistic champions of the period, the work would remind one of Dr. Alexander's political history of New York. The sporting history would set forth entertainingly, and with a nice sense of the tactics and strategy involved, how John L. Sullivan won and for twelve years held the championship; how Corbett put Sullivan out; how Fitzsimmons vanquished Corbett and in turn yielded to Jeffries. Even so we learn from Dr. Alexander all about the "big ones" in the New York political arena—always, however, a two-ring show, with independent performances of Republicans and Democrats. We follow, on the one hand, the conflicts of Weed and Greeley, the rise of Fenton, his peremptory suppression by Conkling, and the Sullivan-like domination of the latter till the fatal collision with the national administration in 1881. On the Democratic side we see the supremacy of Dean Richmond, which ended only with his death, and then, under the patriarchal hegemony of Seymour, the ambitious efforts of Tweed and Kelly to seize the power which the astute Tilden was successful in securing.

Dr. Alexander's account of the events in which these various worthies were central figures is for the most part truthful and interesting. Whether it embodies an adequate "political history of the state of New York" is questionable. The author probably would not deny that the political life of the great commonwealth has been determined by more potent factors than the ambitious rivalries of party leaders. It is the personal element that constitutes, however, the staple of his narrative. To him, as an active and very useful politician himself, politics appears chiefly the play of individual wills and purposes. Not even the party influence gets a sufficient recognition in his book. The seeker after party history in the state will be disappointed in Dr. Alexander's work, though it embodies a mass of interesting and suggestive material to illustrate and amplify such history.

The most striking illustration of what might have been done in this volume, but is not, is to be found in the chapters dealing with the end of the war and the development of reconstruction. This period was in New York, as elsewhere throughout the North, a time of flux and transformation in parties. The settlement of old and the appearance of new issues, as a result of the conquest of the South, brought a fundamental readjustment of both principles and personnel. The details of this process in New York are not made at all clear by Dr. Alexander. To make them clear would be, indeed, a difficult task, for the confusion was very great; but what he does is merely to reproduce, not analyze and explain, the turmoil.

On page 165, for example, he speaks of "the Union party," the "Republican press" and "the radicals" who elected Fenton governor. By these three terms he means one and the same political party or group. Only a somewhat laborious analysis of the context can reveal this fact. The reader should be spared such labor, and would have escaped it but for Dr. Alexander's mistaken idea that there was such an entity as the Republican party in 1865. That organization yielded itself up, both principles and personnel, during the war to a new organization, the Union party, which nominated Lincoln and Johnson in 1864. After the war, the new party became badly divided on the questions of reconstruction, the two wings being known as radicals and conservatives. The latter, supporting President Johnson against Congress, drew the Democrats into alliance with them and established a superior title to the name Union party. The Radicals, winning a decisive victory in 1866, gradually abandoned the name to which their adversaries clung, and reverted to the name and traditions of the *ante-bellum* Republicans. If Dr. Alexander had somewhere given a clear statement of this transformation and had made his use of terms and narrative of events in some measure conform to the movement, his treatment of the period would have been much more useful and, indeed, much more intelligible.

As to the general spirit and qualification of the author in his chosen task, only eulogy is possible. This volume completes the work of which two volumes appeared three years ago. It must have been something of an effort for Dr. Alexander, himself an active politician, to preserve the historian's impartiality and coolness in dealing with a period so late as 1880; but he has succeeded. He is in general, also, as accurate as he is judicial. On a single point a question might be raised. Referring to the naming at Cleveland, in 1864, of Fremont and Cochrane, "the two Johns from New York," for president and

vice-president, Dr. Alexander observes in a footnote (page 92) that the convention made a "singular mistake" in the "nomination, contrary to the requirement of the Constitution, of both candidates from the same state." He apparently refers to the clause: "The electors shall . . . vote by ballot for president and vice-president, one of whom, at least, shall not be an inhabitant of the same state with themselves." Would Dr. Alexander, as a lawyer, construe this clause as prohibiting either candidates for, or actual incumbents of, the two offices to be from the same state?

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Human Nature in Politics. By GRAHAM WALLAS. London, Archibald Constable and Company, 1908.—302 pp.

Although the controversy as to the best form of government seems now to be settled in favor of representative democracy, students and statesmen everywhere, and particularly in the countries which have had most experience with it, are disappointed with its results. This partial failure of popular institutions to justify themselves demands a political inquiry more fundamental than our present minute study of political history or the widespread discussion of recent experiments in representative institutions. What is lacking, in the opinion of Mr. Graham Wallas, is an effort to deal with politics in its relation to the nature of man; in other words we need to turn to the psychology of politics.

In Part I, Mr. Wallas discusses "The Conditions of the Problem." The first condition to be noted is the prevalent and unfortunate tendency to exaggerate the part played by the intellect and to lose sight of impulse or instinct as a motive to political action. This tendency is strengthened by an almost inevitable intellectualizing of impulse. During an election, for example, emotions of affection, more or less instinctive, are interpreted as rational convictions and are explained by the voter as well as the candidate on purely intellectual grounds, just as a "man in love will give an elaborate explanation of his perfectly normal feelings, which he describes as an intellectual inference from alleged abnormal excellences in his beloved" (pages 31, 32). The psychology of internal politics, Mr. Wallas observes, has been extensively considered, but in one aspect only, namely, the "psychology of the crowd." Much more important in the whole psychology of political impulse is "that which is concerned not with the emotional effect of the citizens of any state upon each other, but with those racial feelings which reveal themselves in international politics" (page 55).