

*Lincoln, Labor and Slavery.* By HERMAN SCHLÜTER. New York, Socialistic Literature Company, 1913.—237 pp.

Mr. Schlüter's book is an interesting chapter from the social history of the United States. It is truly, as the author claims, the first connected story of the part which the industrial workers played in the great crisis of the American nation. Its scope is even larger, because it not only treats of the attitude of American labor to slavery and to the Civil War, but devotes some very interesting pages to the influence exerted by the workingmen of England.

Mr. Schlüter does not pretend to be impartial. He frankly states his position, which is that of economic determinism. He regards history from the point of view of class struggle and is desirous of tracing this idea throughout the period which forms the subject-matter of his study. His success in this respect, however, is but partial. In fact, some of the most interesting facts connected with the Civil War demand a different interpretation. Mr. Schlüter, for instance, traces the attitude of the white workers of the South who took the part of the ruling slave-holders. Evidently that was not in harmony with their economic or political interests. The author is forced to admit that one has to fall back upon race antagonism for an explanation.

Even the attitude of the northern workers can not be wholly explained on economic grounds. Mr. Schlüter tells the interesting story of the German workers in America who formed a considerable part of the organized labor movement of the forties and fifties. As he shows, they practically ignored the whole problem of slavery. Even such advanced spirits as Weitling paid no attention to it. Yet a larger understanding of the aims of the labor movement would have led to a different attitude. The author ignores here a factor which evidently played its part. The German workers upon their arrival in this country could not at once grasp the problems of American life in their true perspective.

A point which is of some interest is the lukewarm attitude of the organized workers of New England to the problem of slavery. From hostility to abolition in the thirties, it softened down to a mild condemnation of slavery in the forties and fifties. But it never developed into a strong anti-slavery feeling. Mr. Schlüter sees the cause of this phenomenon in the class consciousness of the New England workers who were primarily interested in the struggle against wage-slavery. Yet the facts brought forward would support the contention that this so-called class consciousness was nothing more than narrow group-egotism. It

had no larger basis and made no wider appeal. The absence of such egotism explains the fact that the abolitionists found greater response among the unorganized workers.

The pages of the book devoted to the workingmen of England are among the most interesting. Lincoln displayed his ability to recognize merit when he characterized the anti-slavery efforts of English workmen as "an instance of sublime Christian heroism which has not been surpassed in any age or in any country." The addresses of the English workers to Lincoln and his replies are truly inspiring documents.

The author quotes some interesting documents which show the efforts of workers both North and South to preserve the Union. In the main, as Mr. Schlüter shows, the workers of America were for union and against war. Their participation in the war in large numbers was a result of necessity. As soon as the war was over, labor organizations began to play an important part in allaying sectional bad feeling and in creating a sense of nationality.

Regardless of the defects pointed out above, the book is an interesting contribution to the social history of the United States and particularly to the literature of the America labor movement.

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*The Life and Letters of Harrison Gray Otis.* By SAMUEL ELIOT MORISON. New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913.—Two vo <sup>1</sup> 2 xvii, 335; ix, 328 pp.

Harrison Gray Otis was a typical New England Federalist, one of the rank and file of the close-knit capitalistic aristocracy which, according to John Adams, ruled in that part of the country as surely as did the aristocracy of ribbon and title in Old England. The biography of such a man is therefore a contribution to economics and politics. This is an important exhibit in the history of Federalism. Otis, as a young man, opposed the repeal of the law of Massachusetts forbidding "stage plays," and received the praise of Samuel Adams for having defended "the good old cause of morality and religion." But his conscience did not prevent him from accepting shortly afterward a fee for defending a wicked actor who had violated the law. Very early in his career he made a comfortable fortune by real-estate speculation; to this he added adventures in cotton manufacturing which yielded fifteen per cent dividends; and he was denounced by the "Jacobins" as a mere "automaton of funds, banks, and land-jobbing speculators."

After having laid the foundation of his fortune, Otis went into the