

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 workmen 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 ¹ 5, 2 9 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

service of the state. He held many public positions in Massachusetts, he was a member of the national House of Representatives and even rose to the high dignity of senator of the United States. He was one of those who wanted to make Burr president in 1801; he was a member and leader in the semi-treasonable Hartford Convention; he voted to admit slavery to the territory of the United States in 1798; while in the Senate, he sustained vested interests in slavery in Missouri; he voted against slavery extension at last, not on moral or religious grounds or on principles of humanity, but in the hope of maintaining the balance of political power (II, page 230); he violently opposed anti-slavery agitation; and he died "a good old, true old Whig."

From such a career one would not expect any extraordinary enthusiasms or irregularities in morals or politics. But one might expect an occasional relief from labored mediocrity. There is none, however. Indeed, Mr. Morison has to devote a large amount of his time to defending Otis's part in the unhappy Hartford affair and its absurd ending (II, pages 78-199); he is compelled to confess that Otis "was not a success in the Senate" (II, page 215); and he admits that Otis's administration as mayor of Boston cannot be compared with that of Josiah Quincy (II, page 285). The sections on the social aspirations and successes of the Otises, entertaining as they are, afford but little relaxation from the record of a singularly commonplace political career.

Without any of that fine imagination and penetration that characterized Fisher Ames, and devoid of that profound philosophic insight into the springs of human action which John Adams had in theory but could not apply in practice, Otis was destined to a well-earned oblivion until rescued by the laudable interest of a descendant. There could be no objection at all to this rescue, if any new material of real importance were yielded on such matters as the Federalist negotiations over the election of Jefferson in 1801, or the true purpose and spirit of the Hartford Convention; but in these and other particulars, the student of history will be disappointed. Otis knew more or less intimately a generation of interesting and forceful political leaders, but we look in vain in these volumes for new unpublished letters of high significance.

This is not saying that the author has not done his part with skill and insight. On the contrary, Dr. Morison is to be congratulated upon the success of his labors, for it is not often that one finds such an entertaining biography or such a judicious piece of historical writing. To have portrayed accurately the life and deeds of a typical Federalist in his true economic and social setting is not a work of supererogation. The subject of this biography was of little importance personally, but

the biography itself is a significant contribution to that history of American economics and politics, destined sometime to be written.

CHARLES A. BEARD.

The House of Lords in the Reign of William III. By A. S. TURBERVILLE. Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1913.—vii, 264 pp.

Students of British institutional history cannot fail to welcome Mr. Turberville's study of the House of Lords in the reign of William III; and they will hope that the complete success with which he has developed an excellent idea will result in other monographs of a similar kind. It is the only attempt, so far as the reviewer is aware, to present a comprehensive picture of the House of Lords at any particular crisis in British history. It is certainly the only one that has been made since so much new material for detailed studies of this kind became available through the work of the Historical Manuscripts Commission. The interest and utility of Mr. Turberville's book are so obvious that it will be somewhat disappointing if monographs on the House of Lords at other great crises are not eventually forthcoming. Pike's *Constitutional History of the House of Lords* has been in good service for twenty years; but there have been comparatively few scholarly studies of the Upper House. The present work suggests similar studies of the Lords, say at the period of the American Revolutionary War; in the ten years preceding the Reform Act of 1832; or in the quarter of a century that lies between the break-up of the old Whig-Liberal party in 1886 and the Parliament Act of 1911.

Except that Mr. Turberville has included no description of procedure at the end of the seventeenth century, there is scarcely an aspect of the House of Lords or of the peerage at that time that has escaped his attention. There is a statistical account of the House—of the peerages created by the Stuarts and by William III; a study of the episcopal bench and of the changes it underwent at the Revolution; an examination of the social position of the peerage at the end of the Stuart dynasty and of the parliamentary privileges claimed by Lords; a chapter on the judicial work of the House of Lords; and also chapters on the Lords and the Constitution and the relations between the two houses. There is, moreover, an ample and clear statement of the part of the Lords in the Revolution settlement; and incidentally, in the chapter on the composition of the House, an examination of the erroneous idea that it was in the reign of William III that there began the period of Whig supremacy in the House of Lords which lasted through the eigh-