

statement, supported with documentary evidence, you see that all of the organized Single Taxers of the State of California have united in the Equity Tax League, and they have presented the Equity Tax League amendment to the people of California and have secured its introduction into the State Legislature and are now confronted with the important task of having that amendment placed upon the ballot by action of the Legislature instead of at the immense cost of time and money of an initiative petition.

"In the presence of this consolidation of our forces and the great task before us we are confronted with the fact that Mr. Daniel Kiefer has given fifteen hundred dollars (\$1500.00) to Mr. Luke North and his small minority, according to his letter of February 21, 1917. This money of the National Single Tax League has been contributed by Single Taxers to aid the Single Tax cause and it is now being used by this small group in opposition to the largest, most comprehensive and unified body of Single Taxers ever grouped together in this State."

BOOK REVIEWS

AMERICAN POLITICAL HISTORY FROM A NEW VIEW POINT*

Dr. Miller, who, as a reviewer of the present work says in *The Nation*, is "favorably known to college debates by his compilation entitled "Great Debates in American History" (14 vols., Current Literature Publishing Co., New York), has in "American Debate" dropped his attitude toward the subject as an editor, and taken up that of an historian and critic, his main purposes, as stated in his preface to volume one, being to give (1) an historical account of main subjects of public discussion in the United States from colonial times to the beginning of the Civil War; (2) an exposition of the chief political and economic

*"American Debate," a History of Political and Economic Controversy in the United States, with Critical Digests of Leading Debates. In two volumes, with separate indexes. I: Colonial, State and National Rights: II: The Land and Slavery Questions. By Marion Mills Miller, Litt. D. (Princeton). \$2.50 per volume. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York.

principles which have been incorporated in the legislation and governmental institutions of the country; (3) a history of political issues and events; (4) a treatise upon the art of debate as exemplified in American forensic contests; and (5) a collection of short biographies of statesmen of the time, with appreciations of their abilities, particularly as debaters.

The need of a revival of an intelligent patriotism is urged in the preface. The author points to our forefathers as models in this for the present generation. "The citizens of that day were all vitally interested in politics, especially as revealed in public discussion. They fully realized that the generation of which they were a part was making basic history."

"Debate," continues Dr. Miller, "is the crucible of law which is the metal of history General ideas of legislation and government acquired through the reflected views of historians and publicists can never be as impressive as direct presentation of the fusing and casting of these laws and institutions." Hence he allows so far as possible, the makers of American history to tell the story of American history in their own words. The result is that his work, to quote from a review in the *Boston Journal of Education*, is graphic to the limit with flashes of forces that reveal the movements for human freedom. It is the best story . . . of the significant issues from the first purpling of the dawn of independence from Great Britain to the first ray of hope of freedom for the African-Americans."

This feature of graphic presentation is further enhanced by the practice of the author in telling, as soon as a new character is introduced in the dramatic narrative, his past history and the esteem in which he was held at the time by his countrymen. On this point the *Journal of Education* continues: "But the greatness of the work does not end with the debates, nor with the story of their setting, because there is running all through the study like the rippling personality . . . of a great artist's song, the best series of brief biographies to be found anywhere."

The first volume deals with political as

distinct from economic questions, that is, with constitutional principles and administrative policies. In brief, it is concerned with civil rights, which the author, in the manner of the founders of the nation from James Otis to Thomas Jefferson, and of the upholders of the Constitution from Daniel Webster to Abraham Lincoln, identifies with natural and popular or democratic rights. The dedication to the volume is apt and timely: "To the Patriotic Citizens of America that they may 'know their rights, and, knowing, dare maintain.'"

The interest of Jeffersonian democrats will be at once caught by chapter one, "The Writs of Assistance," the controversy over which first united all the colonies to resist the British policy of monopolizing their trade and taxing them without their consent. It was James Otis, the magnetic orator of Boston, who opposed this policy by asserting the doctrines of natural rights "to life, liberty, and property," and of the democratic nature of the State, namely that just government rests on the consent of the governed. In this connection he clearly stated the doctrine of the social contract, anticipating by one year the book of Jean Jacques Rousseau on the subject.

Dr. Miller has been criticised by the *Nation* reviewers for the undue importance he gives to such colonial controversies as that over the Writs, which never were effectively executed. We cannot however, agree with this opinion. First debates on principles of government, even though connected with events of minor importance, are of profound significance as well as of interest to any one sincerely devoted to democratic institutions. It is remarkable that in almost all of these first debates, not only is every one of the fundamental principles of the subject clearly presented, but their application is also made to concrete issues yet to arise in American politics. Thus John Adams, who as a young man was present at Otis' speech, reported in extreme old age the electric effect of the orator's demand that the natural rights of even the "poor negroes" be recognized.

As in the case of the Writs, in almost every succeeding controversy Dr. Miller brings

forward a dominant personality with telling dramatic effect. Patrick Henry is the American protagonist in opposition to the Stamp Act. Sir William Pitt, afterwards Lord Chatham, urges his view of the British constitution, already the type of free government, and later to become the model of most of the European States, against that of the great jurist, William Murray, Lord Mansfield, in the controversy over the Supremacy of Parliament.

Samuel Adams, son of the inventor of the American political caucus, is presented in the controversies between Massachusetts and Parliament as using his inherited ingenuity to grander ends by devising the consolidation of public opinion through "communities of correspondence," thus welding the will of the people, to use George William Curtis' figure, into a "claymore" with which he effectively smote all the counsels of the British ministry, and showed the way in which union of all the colonies was afterwards effected and their independence achieved. In the next controversy, "Congress vs. Parliament," we revert to England, or rather Ireland for the greatest spokesman in behalf of American rights, Edmund Burke. His long speech, the finest to our mind, of his utterances, if not indeed, the masterpiece of all forensic oratory, is ably digested, with *verbatim* classic passages and annotated with touches of human interest by the author. One note, very timely in view of Ireland's renewed demand for home rule, will give the quality of Dr. Miller's editorial taste and historical research. It is upon the statement of Burke: "The Americans have developed an unexpected ability in self-government. . . . The laws they are now making for themselves, reports Governor Dunmore of Virginia, are infinitely better obeyed than the ancient government." Dr. Miller remarks: "That this is a general principle of the human mind Burke might have shown by citing a similar report made of his own countrymen. In the time of Henry VIII., Finglass, Chief-Baron of the Exchequer, reported: "That the English statutes passed in Ireland are not observed eight days after passing them; whereas those laws and statutes made by the Irish on their hills they keep firm and stable with-

out breaking them for any favor or reward.'"

The chapter on "Independence" is monographic in its recital of all the influences leading up to separation of the colonies from their unnatural mother country, and is dramatic in its presentation of the circumstances connected with that momentous decision. Here no one statesman stands out as foremost. George Mason, who drafted the Virginia Bill of Rights in terms already made familiar by James Otis, and to become sacred when re-penned by Jefferson; Jefferson himself, the modest annalist of the great Act which made his name immortal; Richard Henry Lee, the noblest Roman of them all in the classic mold of his patriotism, whose resolution of independence, passed on July 2, made that date the real birthday of the Republic; and John Adams, the "colossus of the debate" whose combined argument and eloquence won over the opposition to the measure—to all is given honor due. It is fitting that, in the body of statesmen who brought to birth a democracy, and who collectively, as Lord Chatham had said of essentially the same group in the First Congress, had no peer in ancient or modern legislative assemblies, no one man was pre-eminent.

A much neglected American publicist and economist, a man who never held public office, is brought to the fore in the chapters on the Confederation and the Constitution as the inspirer of most important principles of government. This was Pelatiah Webster, retired merchant of Philadelphia, known as the "Adam Smith of America" for his essays on Free Trade and, from his "Dissertation on the Constitution," published in 1783, deserving of the fame of the Forerunner of the Constitution, not only in its first form, but in its subsequent, and, it is to be hoped its future developments. In his "Dissertation" Webster stated that "the value of land, being created by population, is a just and natural standard for determining contributions to public revenue." While this is the pure Single Tax principle, it would seem that neither Webster nor the other economists of the time, notably Dr. John Witherspoon, separated the value of land from that of its improvements. To this fact is largely due

the sectionalism which brought disasters such as the Civil War upon the country. Dr. Witherspoon, in the debate on the Articles of Confederation, convinced Congress of the justice of the principle enunciated by Webster as applied to apportioning the contributions of the States to the expenses of the Federal Government, but included the value of houses in the assessment. This the weak Congress found impracticable to estimate, and so it was forced in the end to go to population as a standard. This tended to fix population as the unqualified standard for representation in the Federal Government, slaves being reckoned (in the ratio of 3 to 5) as persons and not as property. The principle of representation was continued in the Constitution, with the result, as Dr. Miller points out, that slavery was made a political issue and therefore impossible of settlement by the economic solution of compensation, but demanding the exercise of superior force for its abolition, for, as Burke had remarked, in speaking of the Virginia slave-owners, an oligarchy class will never forego its privileges for any consideration whatsoever. The lesson is significant of what the Single Tax would do in preventing not only industrial wars in times of peace, but also all war in the strict sense of that term.

James Madison, who, even more than Jefferson, seems to be Dr. Miller's ideal of a democratic statesman (for example he gives to Madison more honor for his arduous labors in securing the Virginia statute of religious liberty than to Jefferson for drafting it), is presented as the great figure of the period when the Constitution was conceived, drafted, ratified, and finally consummated in the organization by the First Congress of the new government. In such a large subject Dr. Miller has rightly concentrated the reader's attention on the fundamental issue, national government through the direct representatives of the people *vs.* a federation of States. Madison and his following succeeded in the Constitutional Convention in securing recognition of this principle, and in emphasizing it by the opening sentence of the national charter, though compromises were effected notably in making the Senate representative

of the States. Dr. Miller completely demolishes the prevalent view among many radicals, Socialists almost as a body, and a number of Single Taxers similarly infected with the conspiracy idea, that the Constitution was a "reactionary" document, devised by representatives of the "interests" of that day to keep the government out of the hands of the people. He does this by showing through quotation of their utterances, that opponents of the Constitution urged as their chief objection that the instrument took away power from the States and gave it to the people. With all its shortcomings the Constitution certainly was a great stride forward toward democracy.

The real beginning of reaction, as Dr. Miller shows in his chapter, "Federalist vs. Republican," was the largely successful attempt of the aristocratic "interest" under the leadership of Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury and virtual Premier of Washington's Administration, to increase the power of the executive department at the expense of the legislative—a principle which he had advocated in the Constitutional Convention without finding a single delegate to agree even to its consideration. Thomas Jefferson, Secretary of State, and James Madison, the acknowledged leader of the House of Representatives, were his chief opponents. Madison was the spokesman of the partnership. Though he got the better of Hamilton in argument, notably in the case of Washington's proclamation of neutrality in 1793 which construed, without consultation with the Senate which had joint power with the President over treaties, that the French Alliance of 1778 was no longer binding, nevertheless Hamilton secured his ends, and the power of the President was increased beyond the intent of the Constitution, as Hamilton himself had stated in his contribution to the *Federalist*.

Hamilton's party, the Federalists, became entrenched in power for what they fondly imagined would prove a period lasting as the Republic itself, including as the party did the bulk of men of wealth and culture. But Jefferson and Madison, the Castor and Pollux of democracy, "great twin brethren of the

fight," with such able lieutenants as Albert Gallatin and Edward Livingston, seized upon the despotic Alien and Sedition laws of John Adams' administration to arouse the people, and, by a "campaign of education" in the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions, won over to their cause an overwhelming majority which accomplished the "Democratic Revolution" that placed Jefferson in the Presidential chair with a loyal Congress behind him.

The acts of Jefferson and his successors Madison and Monroe are related in the succeeding chapter on National Defense. Jefferson heartily agreed with Washington that this country should steer clear of entanglement with foreign politics, and to this end he adopted the policy of removing the European menace as far from our shores as possible, purchasing Louisiana when he learned of its transfer by Spain to France and of Napoleon's design to make it the base for extending imperial rule in the New World. In acquiring title to this broad dominion Jefferson had to stretch the Constitution, and run counter to his own doctrine of democratic government expressed in the Declaration of Independence, by accepting in the transfer the European theory of sovereignty, which disregards the will of the people. Nevertheless, as soon as practicable he replaced this title by the American one of self-government. "Preparedness" of this basic order peculiarly fitted his genius, for he was the ideal statesman for a time of peace. But war is the antithesis of peace, rendering the wisdom of the natural order the unwisdom of the unnatural, and Jefferson did not have that supreme quality of statesmanship which made Washington equally great in both states of the country. His policy of substituting passive commercial restriction for active military defense against the outrages committed by Great Britain and France proved utterly ineffective, based as it was on bad psychology in underestimating the stubbornness and craft of his respective foes, and on bad economics, for an embargo laid by a country inferior in commerce must necessarily injure its own trade more than that of the enemy.

Madison inherited the inevitable war with Great Britain, and, being another Jefferson in statesmanship, conducted it in most muddling fashion. Not the least of American indictments against war is that it robbed our country, at the time that it most needed industrial development, of the undivided attention to the arts of peace by that one of our early Presidents who with a political genius equal to that of any of our early statesmen, had transcended them all in economic knowledge and wisdom. The Jeffersonian principle of fundamental national defense as shown in the Louisiana Purchase came to the fore again in the Monroe Doctrine, which has already been of incalculable benefit in accomplishing its original purpose, checking the spread of autocratic rule to the New World, and which promises to form the fundamental principle of world peace, if this is ever to be permanently established.

The closing chapters of the volume deal with Nullification and Secession, the applications of the State Rights theory carried to an extremity that was repudiated by Madison, its early opponent, who however, with Jefferson, in the hot-beds of their respective Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions had intermingled tares of disunion with the seeds of popular liberty.

The Webster-Hayne debate on the Nature of the Union is given in the chapter on Nullification with a fuller and clearer exposition of argument, and with a greater wealth of descriptive detail and editorial comment than is presented in any American political history of similar extent. A later debate on the same question between Webster and Calhoun, a man of greater ability though less eloquence than his colleague Hayne, closes the chapter.

The final chapter, "Secession," has as its center the too little known debate in the Senate between Judah P. Benjamin, of Louisiana, afterwards called the "Brains of the Confederacy," and Edward D. Baker, of Oregon, unsurpassed in quick wit, ready argument and the "eloquence of the instant" by any statesman of a generation that included Thomas Corwin, Stephen A. Douglas and John P. Hale, Lincoln, Chase and Sum-

ner not being considered since their forensic power was based on careful preparation.

We quote the opening sentence of Dr. Miller's comment on the debate as a sample of his criticism:

"If conclusiveness be the main object of forensic argument, then to this speech of Senator Baker cannot be denied pre-eminence in American debate, for no other deliverance in our legislative halls, not even the majestic oration of Webster against Hayne, so effectively beat down, one by one, the arguments of an able opponent, extorting from him either an admission of their untenability or an easily answered parry, and so thoroughly built up, stone upon stone, the speaker's own position, establishing it as a strong fortress for his party which was never thereafter successfully assailed."

We shall review in our next issue at some length the second volume of "American Debate."—J. D. M.

THE POETS' LINCOLN*

Here is another volume with an illuminating and discriminating introduction by that master literary handicraftsman, Dr. M. M. Miller. The work is a collection of nearly one hundred poems in honor of the first of our martyred presidents. Here we shall find many of our old favorites, Whitman's "O, Captain! My Captain!" Lowell's Commemorative Ode, and Tom Taylor's beautiful tribute—and manly confession.

There are other poems not so well known. Not all are good. Indeed the number of really fine poetical tributes to Lincoln are surprisingly few, and there is an appalling sameness about many of them. The same adjectives, "seamed," "gnarled," "homely," "quaint" appear to come naturally to all of them and become very tiresome in their repetition.

In the Introduction Dr. Miller who cannot neglect an opportunity to enforce an economic lesson, indicates Lincoln's small acquaintance with the laws governing this at-the-time little known department of knowledge

*The Poets' Lincoln. A collection of tributes by the poets of the world to Abraham Lincoln. By Osborn H. Oldroyd, Editor and Publisher, Washington, D. C.