

## BOOK REVIEWS

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MOUNT RAINIER, A RECORD OF EXPLORATION. Edited by Edmond S. Meany. (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1916. Pp. 325. \$2.00.)

Under the above title the public, and particularly that portion who dwell in this Northwest country, are favored with another contribution to local history from the handiwork of one who has already done a great deal to enrich it with the fruit of his labors. The present work, however, differs materially from its predecessors by the same authority. With the exception of one chapter, it is a compilation pure and simple. It gives in full, or in their essential parts, the authentic reports or writings of those who have visited or explored the Mountain since its discovery by Vancouver, and who have left records worthy of public confidence. For the most part these records are given verbatim, and in the chronological order of their occurrence.

But the book is more than a record of exploration. The first twelve chapters (except the fourth) satisfy this description perfectly; but Chapters XIII to XVI are rather in the nature of monographs upon the various physical aspects of the Park and Mountain. While these monographs are all based upon exploration and study, they are not records of the explorations themselves except in a purely incidental way. Chapter XVII is an account of the creation of the Rainier National Park, and Chapter XVIII is a statement of methods and results in the final determination of the altitude of the Mountain. Chapter XIX is a monograph on the Place Names of the Park from the pen of Professor Meany himself. The scope of the work is thus seen to be more comprehensive than the title itself would indicate.

The mechanical execution of the book is excellent, as one would naturally expect of any work put out by The Macmillan Company. The type is clear and large, and the technique throughout is thoroughly up to date. There are twelve pages of preliminary matter, 325 pages of text, and four pages of advertisements. There are sixteen full page portraits, all, except that of Admiral Rainier, being portraits of the contributors, and all beautifully done. There is an appropriate frontispiece in the form of a reproduction of the fascinating "first picture of the mountain" which dates from Vancouver's time. There is no map and there is no index.

Upon the whole, the book presents a very attractive appearance, and contains a fund of information which should be of positive

value to students of Northwest history, and of genuine assistance to visitors to the Rainier National Park.

With this general view of the work, some of its outstanding features will now be more particularly noted.

The writer is unable to determine whether the author of Chapter IV made any exploration of the Mountain or not. If he did, no narrative is given, and the chief value of the contribution lies in its beauty as an example of highly imaginative word painting. The writer is quite unable to discover in the Hamitchou Legend anything of sufficient importance to justify the prominence given it in this compilation.

A most interesting historic coincidence is suggested by the account of General Stevens' ascent of the Mountain in 1870 (Chapter VI). He reached the summit on August 17th. At that time, in a far-distant field, a party of explorers was on the eve of starting on one of the famous expeditions of discovery in American annals; and twelve days later, August 29th, this party stood upon the summit of Mount Washburn in what is now the Yellowstone Park. It was the real entrance of the white man into the mysteries of that wonderful region.

Chapter XIII contains a touch of true romance and self-sacrifice in devotion to a scientific purpose. That, in pursuit, of such purpose, a life should have been sacrificed upon the treacherous slopes of the Mountain where that purpose was being carried out, only serves to hallow the act of devotion itself. And surely it is most remarkable that these interrupted efforts should have yielded a result so near to the final official determination of the altitude of the Mountain. Not least astonishing is the fact that this close approximation (120 feet) was obtained by barometric estimates.

Of the descriptive monographs, Chapters XIII-XVI, the writer would particularly mention the admirable paper by F. E. Mathes on the Glaciers of Mount Rainier, and Professor Piper's exhaustive List of Species of the Flora of Mount Rainier. It would have been of great advantage to the large majority of visitors to the Park if Professor Piper could have selected about one hundred of the more common varieties which fall under ordinary observation and have devoted some especial treatment to them.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the book to the writer is Professor Meany's chapter on the Place Names of the Park. This interest arises in part, no doubt, from the writer's extensive similar work in the Yellowstone Park; but it has a far deeper meaning—one going to the very roots of local history. In his book on the Yellowstone the writer has enunciated in the following terms what seems

to him an underlying principle on the subject of geographical nomenclature:

"In common experience, the importance of geographical names lies in their use as a means of identification. To describe an object there must be a name, and for this purpose one name is as good as another. But if the reason be sought why a particular name happened to be selected, it will generally be found to arise, not from this practical necessity, but from some primary fact or tradition, or from some distinguished character, in the annals of the community where it occurs. In its mountains and valleys, its lakes and streams, and in its civil divisions, the cradle history of a country may always be found recorded."

It is not, of course, all names that have this deeper significance; far from it. In the Yellowstone there are upward of 360 place names, not including those of geysers, etc. Yet the writer found barely one hundred (and he was successful in getting at the origin of practically all) which were entitled to mention for any other reason than their "use as a means of identification." In the Rainier Park there are, by rough estimate, 112 personal names, the origin of only about half of which is known. There are about 140 names which may be styled characteristic, but of these the origin of about eighty per cent seems to be unknown. From such casual survey as the writer has been able to make of Professor Meany's list, he questions if there are more than fifty names which have any significant interest; that is, serve any other purpose than that of identification.

The writer dwells somewhat at length upon this subject because it reveals a tendency which ought to be held in check. In the Yellowstone Park there is only about one name on the average to every nine square miles; in the Rainier Park there is very nearly one to every square mile. The impulse to give personal names in token of friendship is well-nigh irresistible; but any such criterion is unjust both to the past and to the future. *Service*, in some form, should be, with very few exceptions, the sole criterion. There must be some check to the contrary tendency. In the Yellowstone that same tendency was very manifest in the early days of exploration; but there has been a wholesome weeding out since.

H. M. CHITTENDEN.

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MEMOIRS OF THE WEST, THE SPALDINGS. By Eliza Spalding Warren. (Walla Walla, Washington, the Author, 707 Lincoln Street, 1916. Pp. 153. \$1.50.)

The author of this interesting little book was the first American white child born in the Pacific Northwest who reached maturity. She