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JOHN SHARP WILLIAMS, by George Coleman Osborn, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, 1943. Pp. ix, 501. \$4.00.

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done by Jefferson to guarantee a free press in the Bill of Rights. It was Jefferson who argued for the inclusion of a free press guaranty in the Constitution, holding as he did that without an expressed guaranty the federal government might, through implied powers, seek to control the press. The author's comment "We must admit that time has shown the necessity of that guaranty," is forceful and convincing in the light of present day developments. Dr. Mott's booklet is a valuable contribution both to the history of a free press and to the part that Thomas Jefferson played in its establishment.

CHAS. P. MANSHP\*

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JOHN SHARP WILLIAMS, by George Coleman Osborn, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, 1943. Pp. ix, 501. \$4.00.

To the older people of Mississippi generally the career of John Sharp Williams is proof not only of nearly all the best copybook adages of their day pertaining to the reward of merit, but as well of particular elaborations and applications, sometimes questioned by the later generation. Outstanding among the latter are such assertions that a statesman can be elected to public office without demagoguery by the present democratic political machinery and that Mississippi can produce such a one, the peer of any produced by other states or nations. The fact that he was born in Memphis is pooh-poohed as insignificant, if mentioned by some outsider, since Memphis itself has always been a product of Mississippi from the time it was Chickasaw Bluffs until it became the hobby of Mr. Crump, another Mississippian, who has been cited, strangely enough, as disproving some of the same copybook adages. Besides, Williams did not spend much time in Memphis. He was merely born there. At the age of eight he went to live at Cedar Grove Plantation near Yazoo City, Mississippi, the home of his maternal ancestors, which was to continue to be his home for the remainder of his life.

After tracing the ancestry of Williams from seventeenth century Virginia to his birth in 1854 in Memphis, Mr. Osborn follows his subject from his youth during the Civil War and the days of reconstruction, through his cultural education at Kentucky Military Institute, Sewanee, Virginia, Heidelberg, Dijon and back to

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Virginia for law. After a brief try at practice in Memphis and his marriage to Elizabeth Dial Webb of Livingston, Alabama, Williams returned to Cedar Grove Plantation, and a short while later began the practice of law in Yazoo City. From the late spring of 1890 Mr. Osborn dates his entry into public life as an unsuccessful candidate for Congress. Elected after a second try in 1892, Williams moved thenceforward on the national scene. As a congressman he attained the minority leadership of his party from 1903 to 1908, when he was elected to the senate by the Mississippi legislature after a popular campaign the preceding year against then Governor James K. Vardaman. This to Mississippians was a battle of the Titans. The echoes of the famous joint debate at Meridian on July 4, 1907, still reverberate when oldsters get to talking politics and those who heard it can still give a round-by-round and blow-by-blow account with a few details added. Not only can they, but they will whenever given half a chance! No account of the life of Williams would be complete without it and so our author does not overlook this prime requirement. After an intervening period of two years spent in study and preparation, Williams went from the House of Representatives to the Senate, where he remained from March 4, 1911, until his voluntary retirement upon the accession of his successor March 4, 1923. He spent his declining days at Cedar Grove until his death on September 27, 1932. To appreciate the statesmanship of Williams it is necessary to reconstruct the national issues from "free silver" to the League of Nations, the transition from the representative of the minority to the senator of the majority. This Mr. Osborn does effectively for the reader's understanding without sacrificing the interlineation of honor, honesty, wit, satire, intelligence, learning, perspicacity, whimsicality, gentleness, and just enough of weakness for humanity and lovability.

Any work which serves to keep green the memory of so great and interesting a man is worthwhile. Mr. Osborn has done what appears to be a tremendous amount of research. It is footnoted and appropriately illustrated by photographs and cartoons of the day. It will be quite valuable as a source-book. However, in this lies a possible adverse criticism and especially with reference to modern biography. In his preface the author says that he "has chosen to rely heavily upon the Williams papers in order that the subject may be portrayed as far as possible in his own words." One's own depiction of oneself is apt to be either too modest or too boastful and self-analysis is seldom accurate. The author also

quotes the hope of the New York Times expressed on September 29, 1932, that "John Sharp Williams' whims, his learning, his weakness, the touch of genius in him, his strong individuality and originality" would in time find "a competent, sympathetic but impartial biographer." A little less of the circumscription of certainty and documentation and more resort to apocrypha and imagination may have given a more colorful and paradoxically an even more accurate portrayal. After all, Major Frederick Sullens, of the Jackson Daily News, to whom many of the footnotes point, has known and used this method delightfully for a long time!

Otherwise, it is a well-constructed book.

R. J. FARLEY\*

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The Louisiana State University Law School is justly proud of the three alumni law partnerships whose members have founded a marital as well as a professional association. The three following book reviews attest the continued scholarly activity of these six graduates as well as their constant interest in the journal and affairs of their alma mater.

LIFE AND LAW, by Samuel Williston. Little, Brown and Company, 1940.

Every law student, every teacher of law, every practicing lawyer, in fact everyone interested in the life of a great American, should keenly enjoy reading the autobiography of Samuel Williston entitled *Life and Law*. As you would expect of the life of a great legal scholar, writer, and teacher, it is not the story of high adventure or of romance that one finds in the autobiography of a Cellini, or in the Confessions of a Saint Augustine. The whole book is almost wholly devoid of romance with the exception of a few paragraphs dealing with the courtship of the young lady who later became the author's wife, and of several casual references to the courtships of others. Everything else in the book is concerned with law or persons associated with it. In fact, it is the story of the author's lifetime devotion to the field of law and of his fervent and almost romantic attachment to it, in spite of many intermittent and quite frequently long spells of illness from his youth up to the time of the writing of this

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