

BOOK REVIEWS

THE LIFE OF FATHER DE SMET, S. J., 1801-1873. By E. Laveille. Authorized translation by Marian Lindsay. Introduction by Charles Coppens, S. J. (New York, Kenedy, 1915. Pp. 400, \$2.75.)

The writer of this review first became interested in the career of Father De Smet as a result of his researches in preparation for his *American Fur Trade of the Far West*. He ran across the famous Jesuit's trail in so many and such interesting relations that he conceived a desire to assemble in compact form his manifold writings published and unpublished. When opportunity offered he undertook the work, associating with himself in it Mr. A. T. Richardson, whose wide reading and linguistic attainments particularly qualified him for the task. In due course the work was accomplished, resulting in four large volumes under the title *Life and Letters of Father De Smet*. As a popular biography it was precluded from general use by the high price of the work. This defect has recently been remedied by the publication of the work here under review, a compact volume of 400 pages, entitled *The Life of Father De Smet*, issued by P. J. Kenedy and Sons of New York.

As the title implies, this work is strictly a biography. In the form before us it is an English translation by Marian Lindsay from the original French by E. Laveille, S. J., published in Belgium, date not given but apparently shortly before the outbreak of the European War. The translation has an interesting introduction by Father Coppens referring to the origin of the work and giving a brief summary of Father De Smet's career. The book contains six illustrations, two of which, with the map showing the missionary's travels, first appeared in the Chittenden-Richardson work. The book contains a satisfactory index and a brief list of authorities.

As to the work itself, it is comprehensive and accurate and written in a pleasing and sympathetic style. It deals more with the religious side of Father De Smet's career than does the larger work already referred to, which was designed particularly to develop the historical value of De Smet's activities. On the whole it must be pronounced a creditable and useful production.

To the author as well as to the translator the appeal in Father De Smet's life was naturally that of his missionary work. To the

present writer the appeal was mainly his wonderful influence with the Indians. His missionary work was indeed successful wherever it had any chance to be, but it pertained to an element of population which has been completely submerged in the flood of colonization. Therefore, while the individual missions took deep root and still flourish, their relative importance is nothing to what their devoted founder at one time confidently expected of them. But their failure to realize his expectations was not in any sense his fault nor that of his system. It resulted from a tremendous movement over which he was able to exercise not the slightest control.

The greatest charm in Father De Smet's work, and, in the writer's opinion, the greatest utility, lay in his power over the Indians during the painful transition from the original tribal life to final subjection to the American government. Some of Father De Smet's exploits at this time must rank with the noblest deeds of heroism in American history. This is particularly true of his visit to the hostile Sioux in 1868. It is no exaggeration to say that no other white man could have performed that feat and lived. It is a beautiful tribute to the uprightness and unselfishness of the great missionary's character that he should have commanded, in a degree so far above that of any of his contemporaries, the affection and confidence of the tribes. And it is a proof which the historian, partial to the white race, will find it difficult to get over that the Indian Question might have been divested of much of its cruelty and savagery if the Indian had been dealt with upon principles of simple justice.

HIRAM M. CHITTENDEN.

THE VIGILANTES OF MONTANA. By Thomas J. Dimsdale. (Butte, Montana, W. F. Bartlett, 1915. Pp. 276. \$.75.)

THE VIGILANTES OF MONTANA. By Thomas J. Dimsdale. (Dillon, Montana, Al. J. Noyes, 1915. Pp. 290. \$2.50.)

The Vigilantes of Montana has served for many years as a source of inspiration to writers of stories of Western life. It contains a wealth of incident and local color. Charles Dickens is reputed to have said that it was the most interesting book that he had ever read. The work was first printed serially in 1865-66 in the Montana Post, the first Montana newspaper, of which the author was editor, and appeared in book form in 1866.

The Vigilantes were a secret organization of citizens whose purpose was to rid the mining camps about Bannack and Virginia City of desperadoes. Their activities extended from a time a few months