

on departing and returning, covering most of the Big Bend, aiding in its growth, feeling it when the Big Bend was in straits of any kind . . ."

As the story covers four generations, every phase of the farming process is described and coincidentally the developing of farming methods. The coming of the telephone, the automobile, mechanical equipment, the beginnings of the county fair, the commercial growth of Waterville, are component parts of the narrative. Of all these pictures, tending "header" on a combine harvester, harvesting from thirty-five to forty acres a day, is the most vividly described.

Farmers and farming have been favorite themes in American literature, but this biography is none the less distinctive. It is as unique as the country in which it is located. Local color and human interest are comprehended in every page. Dates elude the author, he confesses, so none appear in the book. Neither is there a map nor any mention of the Grand Coulee, that marvel of nature East of Waterville. However, the author's aim was not to provide source material for the historian or the geographer, but to give the record of his people and this he has faithfully and entertainingly accomplished.

ELVA BATCHELLER

Sourdough Gold: The Log of a Yukon Adventure. By MARY LEE DAVIS. (Boston: W. A. Wilde Company, 1933. Pp. 351. \$3.50.)

Given: a reminiscent man old in years only, relating in conversational, whimsical vein the happenings of an all-important year of his youth as spent in the Northland where the mighty Yukon flows. That wise old western-wending river symbolized for him (with its high, deep, wide and shallow progress) the inevitable attainment of his ever-urgent goal—the finding of his own soul. Throughout 47 "sleeps" he navigated by man-power and alone, all the winding way to St. Michael from Dawson, where he had wintered as "physician extraordinary" those hectic months of '98-'99.

More interesting to the many might be, perhaps, his vivid recollections of those early days in the Klondike. His memory refreshed by diaries kept faithfully during and through the "general insanity of that get-rich-quick stampede," he tells in the first person—to, and by Mary Lee—his man's story, day-by-day: inadvertently joining the gold rush, toiling up the Chilcoot, noting those curious snow megaphones after the disastrous avalanche, and withal weathering

successfully his own transition from cheechaco to sourdough. Observant always but critical never, outspoken, very, but supplying no sordid details, he notes the many social and economical aspects of that unbelievable life under the Northern Lights. Solitude and aloneness had been unattainable for him.

He sought neither romance nor adventure but found a-plenty. This first part of his particular-but-never-garrulous tale fairly bubbles over with his own sourdough yeast of human kindness, and with sympathetic understanding of what "crowding, herding, massing will do—to the human soul." Witness his comments on the "gold-diggers of the wrong sex."

Very plainly evident throughout is the genuine sourdough atmosphere of this book which Mrs. Davis releases as her fourth and best effort. Not overdrawn yet teeming with bald facts it presents a poetic, unjaundiced viewpoint that is refreshing in the extreme—to northerners especially. The relative value of beans or rice as trail grub? The strange cycle of the fur trade? The cadastral facts and the rival claims as to the international boundary? The three sketch maps and the many photographs contribute the last touch of realism.

He "panned his pay from the bedrock of his own experience" and won his long-sought "real sourdough gold of living wisdom." Wedged in, not too much at a time, is his philosophical contentment, the outcropping from that refining crucible and spiritual assay of his extended communion with nature. Mystical but quite logical was that Dawson aftermath—his quest and conquest of the Yukon.

JESSIE M. CLEGG

Meriwether Lewis of Lewis and Clark. By CHARLES MORROW WILSON. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1934. Pp. 305. \$3.00.)

The author signs and dates his preface at Fayetteville, Arkansas. He is quite proud of being a native of the Ozarks, a farm-raised but well-educated man, twenty-nine years of age. He has written much for newspapers and magazines. He discovered that, while many books have been written about the Lewis and Clark Expedition, a full biography of the leader seemed to be needed. In preparing for his task he diligently sought the published sources and, going beyond them, found a harvest in manuscript letters and Government documents. His twelve chapters will be accepted en-