

Review Articles

"Mostly Mearns"

Largely Lincoln. By David Chambers Mearns.
New York: St Martin's Press, [1961] xi,
227 p. \$6.00.

Largely Lincoln is "Mostly Mearns." That means it is a combination of good humor, sound scholarship, and a feeling for the telling incident or appropriate anecdote that adds up to a delightful book. It is a good representation in book form of the genial master of manuscripts at the Library of Congress, a happy reminder of a warmly erudite personality for all who know him and a wonderful introduction to him for those unfortunate librarians who have not yet had the pleasure of hearing him tell in person such stories as they will here find in print.

Dave Mearns is a much more serious scholar than he looks, but it is his sparkling puckishness that is reflected in the warmth of his face, the warmth of a greeting in his office, the warmth with which he helps one scholar after another at the Library of Congress, which is also so well reflected in this volume. Readers can turn to his other works to measure his stature as a historian (of the Library of Congress as well as of President Lincoln); let them turn to this book for history with hilarity and librarianship with laughter.

In *Largely Lincoln* nine of the essays are about the wartime president. All of these are entertaining, and most of them develop, gently and amusingly, little known points in Lincoln's life that verify the claim of Earl Schenck Miers' introduction that: "Much of what is revealed will come as a delightful surprise, rewarding the reader with insight into Lincoln and his age."

The other six essays are equally delightful and equally rewarding. His story of D. P. Gardner, "the New England Soap Man," is

worthy of the late James Thurber; and his account of the seventh annual convocation (1907) of the Boston Authors' Club is as rollicking an excursion into a by-way of American literary history as is likely to be found. Every essay can easily be a favorite—mine or yours—but no bookman, so-called, self-styled or real, can afford to miss the one called "A Neglected Bookman: Calvin Coolidge." It is a gem.

This is a happy book and one to recommend to all lovers of books. But I do have one cavil with the author: He is such a good historian, such a lover of books, such a scholar himself, why does he bang the worn-out drum that librarians are enemies of books, are neither readers nor scholars? I wish he could be as proud as the library profession is proud for him, that it is librarianship that led Dave Mearns down the paths of scholarship to the point that he himself disproves his charges against librarians. Let him stand up and be counted as the fine librarian he is.—Richard Harwell, *Bowdoin College Library.*

Science Literature

Collecting Science Literature for General Reading; Papers presented at an institute conducted by the University of Illinois Graduate School of Library Science, November 6-9, 1960. Champaign, Ill.: Illini Bookstore, 1961. 186p. Paper, \$2.00.

This collection of papers of the seventh Allerton Park Institute is apt to be the most timely and popular topic of the annual series. At all age levels and in a broad range