

Schouler's History of the United States*

THE APPEARANCE in improved form, and from a metropolitan publishing-house, of Mr. Schouler's scholarly work calls attention anew to its signal merits. The City of Washington can not as yet be accurately described as the 'literary centre' of the United States, if indeed there be, or is to be, any such place. To publish a good book on the banks of the Potomac is not, as yet, the best way to make it known to the world. Hitherto, Mr. Schouler's volumes of history have issued from the National Capital, and have not met with the welcome they deserve. Coming now with the imprint of a well-known New York firm, they are more likely to win their meed of honor and use. It is a special work that Mr. Schouler has set himself to accomplish. Mr. Bancroft has written our colonial and constitutional history, and it is more than probable that his work is done. Hildreth's covered the period from 1783 to 1817. Of monographs, such as those of Fiske, Higginson and Adams, there are many, and some of them are excellent. Mr. James Schouler, a Boston lawyer already well-known as a political and legal writer, proposed to himself about the year 1865 to write the story of the nation from 1783 to 1861. With a singularly judicial mind, wide grasp of diverse materials, strong power of dramatic condensation, ability to recognize the truth in fiction and *belles-lettres* and to detect the falsehood under the guise of formal fact, and with no mean literary skill, he

* History of the United States Under the Constitution. By James Schouler. 4 vols. 89. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co.

has wrought out a history worthy of the name. His fourth volume ends with the year 1847. In a concluding instalment, he hopes to compress his studies within the dimensions of a single volume. As Mr. Schouler's work has already been passed upon favorably by the general consensus of the ablest criticism, and as THE CRITIC only recently noticed the fourth volume, it is unnecessary at present to do more than call attention to the improved typography. The four volumes are printed in uniform style, on a clear page with ample margins, the dates being let into the text at the side and the chapter-numbers given at the top. The binding is good, and each volume has an index. The tables-of-contents are full; and at the end there are valuable tables of Electoral votes cast, length of Congressional sessions, and the text of the Constitution. The best use has been made of the great libraries of the country and of the archives of the State Department. We know of no better presentation, in excellent literary form, of the old and new materials serviceable for a history of the United States under the Constitution.