that the author's style contrives to enliven subject matter which might easily have been made to seem dull. Further, the intimate glances allowed the reader of the great among the Populists tone up the narrative quite satisfactorily, as do the numerous illustrations which are included. It must be said in simple justice that the work is not free from flaws—for example, Governor James Stephen Hogg of Texas is referred to as "H. H. Hogg" (p. 177)—but fortunately most of these are of a minor nature, and the reviewer is able to maintain his position that the work is withal well done. Thus material which is not always new is made to retain its interest, and portions of the book, as Chapter I ("The Frontier Background"), fire the imagination even of the student of third party movements.

Leave should not be taken of the book without citation of its very complete bibliography, which gives evidence by its inclusiveness of a prodigious amount of work on the part of the author, and its index, which serves materially to increase the usefulness of the work.

Roscoe C. Martin.


A few men have left written records of their own thrilling experiences and many have entertained readers with imaginary adventures, but it is unusual to find a man who has done both. James P. Beckwourth, or Jim Beckwith, as he was known to his contemporaries, had more than his share of adventures. His book as written by T. D. Bonner, is, however, something more than a narrative of what actually happened. It is a structure of fancy built on a foundation of fact.

In 1823 Beckwourth took employment with General William Henry Ashley, one of the promoters of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. This took him to the Green River country and surrounding territory where he trapped, explored, and traded with Indians in company with the most renowned mountain men whose names are recorded in the chronicles of that tough and hardy breed. He mentions Thomas Fitzpatrick, Robert Campbell,
Etienne Provot, William L. Sublette, Jim Bridger, Kenneth McKenzie, Johnson Gardner, and other great traders and mountain men. But little space is given to his white companions, however. Beckwourth is the hero of his own stories and he does not propose to share the stage with rivals.

About 1826 or 1827 he was adopted by the Crow Indians. He says that a fellow trapper made the Crows believe that he (Beckwourth) had been born a Crow, had been taken captive and reared by the white pople, and had now returned to live with his Indian kinsmen. At any rate Jim became a Crow warrior and his Indian parents never found cause to be ashamed of him. He became a leader and chief and (according to his own account) was finally made head-man of all the Crow tribe. No genuine Crow ever slew more Blackfeet than he. The Crows were friendly to the whites, however, and Beckwourth kept more or less in touch with the white traders during the nine or ten years he spent with the red men.

After an absence of some twelve years—he says fourteen—Beckwourth returned to St. Louis, but he soon was away in Florida carrying despatches for the army in the war against the Seminoles. The everglades were uninteresting to a man who had spent so many years in the land of the Snake, the Yellowstone and the Big Horn, and he returned to the Indian trade—this time among the Cheyennes along the Arkansas and Platte. Later he carried despatches for the United States army during the Mexican war, prospected for gold in California, and finally, in 1852, became the keeper of a hotel and trading-post in the Feather River country of California. It seems that Bonner took down Beckwourth's story at this place in the winter of 1854-'55, decorating it no doubt with heroines and love stories taken from the novels of that day. It was published in 1856.

These are the facts which the critics generally accept and which form the framework of Beckwourth's narrative. Students of the fur trade will always find it necessary to examine his book. The customs of trapper and trader, the business practices of the fur companies, and the curse of the Indian liquor trade are some of the topics he deals with in a forceful and fairly accurate way.

His personal narrative is highly flavored with fiction. Some achievements attributed to himself are obviously borrowed from
the narratives of others. To compute the total number of scalps he claims to have taken would call for an adding machine. He never admits that he made an error or suffered defeat. And yet the reader is not disgusted with his conceit and vanity, neither does one become vexed with his inaccuracy and exaggeration. Beckwourth's story does not belong in the category of "big lies." He is both the author and the subject of an epic of the West. If it were written in verse it might be called an American Song of Roland. As such it may continue to live even though its value to the historian is not great.

The introductory chapter and notes by Bernard De Voto are scholarly and add much to the historical value of the work.

RUPERT N. RICHARDSON.


One of the happy by-products of the pursuit of historical investigations is the discovery of obscure materials which prove of general interest and worth. As one source of material for Dr. Dale's recent book, The Cattle Range Industry, the Canton manuscripts, at the University of Oklahoma, were cited. Among these manuscripts Dr. Dale found "five thick notebooks in which Canton had written the story of his life." Realizing that it was no ordinary pioneer autobiography, Dr. Dale prepared it for publication. It is an unusually well written story, broad in its interests as well as in its territorial significance.

Frank M. Canton served for more than fifty years as a western peace officer. His activity in such a capacity carried him from the upper reaches of the Yukon to the Red River of Texas. Some of his trails were long and all of them were hazardous and hard. "But when you are on the border," he wrote, "there is a certain lure which draws you on farther and still farther." That fine lust, rarely so well expressed, has been a powerful factor in the history of the borderlands.

Canton was born in Virginia in 1849. His parents moved to north Texas when he was a child. In 1869 he was a cowboy "going up the trail." Later he became an inspector for the