

THE AMERICAN LAW REGISTER

FOUNDED 1852.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF LAW.

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SUBSCRIPTION PRICE, \$3.00 PER ANNUM. SINGLE COPIES, 35 CENTS.

Edited by members of the Department of Law of the University of Pennsylvania under the supervision of the Faculty, and published monthly for the Department by ERNEST LEROY GREEN, Business Manager, at S. W. Cor. Thirty-fourth and Chestnut Streets, Philadelphia, Pa. Address all literary communications to the EDITOR-IN-CHIEF; all business communications to the BUSINESS MANAGER.

CURRENT LEGAL PERIODICALS AND BOOK REVIEWS.

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF BUSINESS LAW AND FORMS FOR BUSINESSMEN, FARMERS, MECHANICS, LANDLORDS, TENANTS, WORKINGMEN, CAPITALISTS, AND ALL WHO HAVE BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS OF ANY KIND, AS WELL AS FOR LAWYERS AND CONVEYANCERS. Representing the Study and Decisions of Most Able Lawyers and Supreme Judicial Authorities. For all the States and Canada. With Notes and Authorities. By Hon. HUGH M. SPALDING, author of Spalding's Treatise upon the Law of Personal Property, Practice, etc., for the States of Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Kansas; Civil Service of the State of Pennsylvania: Judicial and Public Records; Legal Forms, etc., etc. Pp. i + 702. Revised Edition. Philadelphia: P. W. Ziegler & Co., 1903.

The purpose of the author of the above work is to give to laymen a reference book of law. Some of the reasons he gives

for the publication of the above volume are as follows: 1. "There are times when legal counsel cannot be had." 2. "There are times and circumstances which render it advisable to be one's own legal counsellor." 3. "Ignorance of the law is no excuse."

The above purpose is a very laudable one, and it would be a great privilege to the busy merchant or isolated farmer to be able to turn over a few pages and learn what the law is on some vexatious question, and not have to waste time or money in consulting counsel. But the many previous efforts to give the public a book of the kind have proved pretty conclusively that the value of such a work must be extremely limited.

Well might such volumes be compared to the numerous works on "Household Medicine." One of the latter gives as a cure for apoplexy: "Give the patient a drink of cold water and run for the nearest doctor." The water was possibly a momentary relief, but the physician had to be consulted. So in the law, the brief treatment of the various topics in a work like the above, may in some cases afford the layman some mental refreshment or even give him some slight knowledge of his case. But so brief a work cannot be comprehensive enough to be of any real value, and the references are made to books which no layman possesses; surely it is cheaper and safer to retain a lawyer than buy a law library.

To the legal profession the book can be of little value, for while it is nominally an encyclopedia of law and forms, its scope is so great and its pages so few as to render thorough treatment of any single topic impossible

R. B. W.

A TREATISE ON COMMERCIAL PAPER AND THE NEGOTIABLE INSTRUMENTS LAW, INCLUDING THE LAW RELATING TO PROMISSORY NOTES, BILLS OF EXCHANGE, CHECKS, MUNICIPAL BONDS AND OTHER NEGOTIABLE AND NON-NEGOTIABLE INSTRUMENTS, COMMONLY CLASSED AS COMMERCIAL PAPER, WITH AN APPENDIX CONTAINING THE NEGOTIABLE INSTRUMENTS LAW AND THE ENGLISH BILLS OF EXCHANGE ACT. By JAMES W. EATON, late Lecturer on the Law of Contracts and Negotiable Instruments in the Albany Law School, and on Evidence in the Boston University Law School; former editor of the American Bankruptcy Reports and author of *Eaton on Equity*, and of the Third Edition of *Collier on Bankruptcy*; and FRANK B. GILBERT, author of *Gilbert on Domestic Relations*, etc. Pp. iii-cxciii + 1-767. Albany, N. Y.: Matthew Bender. 1903.

The law of negotiable instruments occupies a rather unique position because of its immense importance in commercial

transactions. Again, there is perhaps no other phase of the law which requires uniformity throughout the world so much as the law of bills and notes. Hence, the efforts of recent years to codify the law on the subject have been welcomed by the public, and the code has been already adopted in nineteen of the states and will probably soon become the law in all the states of the Union.

The authors of the above work set out to make it a treatise on commercial paper in all its various aspects, but especially with a view of expounding on the principles of the subject in connection with the provisions of the Negotiable Instruments Law. Hence the work follows pretty closely the general plan of the Negotiable Instruments Law, first stating the provisions of the law, then adding extensive comments thereon, together with a careful treatment of the correlative principles. Whenever at all necessary, references are given to state authorities, often combined with the special statutory provisions in the different jurisdictions.

The treatment on the various points is as exhaustive as the most exacting practitioner could ask, and is so systematically arranged as to be found in an instant. Black-faced type indicates the general subject of the articles, while the contents of the various sub-heads are indicated by italics.

The notes are very full, and a synopsis of the decisions cited is given in a great number of cases. Although the various sections of the Act are given in the main body of the text, they are given again in the appendix *in toto*, together with the English Bills of Exchange Act.

Taking the book as a whole, we can conscientiously recommend it to both lawyer and student, for we know of no other book of its kind that surpasses it in any respect.

The general arrangement is so systematic, the treatment of the various topics so logical, the references to text-writers, decisions and statutes so abundant, that one can work up any case involving the law of commercial paper with the least possible expenditure of time and trouble.

R. B. W.

AARON BURR: HIS PERSONAL AND POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH THOMAS JEFFERSON AND ALEXANDER HAMILTON. By ISAAC JENKINSON. Pp. viii + 389. Richmond, Ind.: M. Cullaton & Co., 1902.

Thomas Jefferson said: "Nothing is so desirable to me as that after mankind shall have been abused by such gross falsehoods as to events while passing, their minds should at length be set to right by genuine truth."

This has been the object of the author in the book before us.

Probably no character in history has rested under a greater weight of contempt and abuse than Aaron Burr. For more than a century the prevailing opinion has been that he was the incarnation of wickedness and duplicity. If this reputation be undeserved and founded on prejudice, it is certainly time that the true facts of his case be made known.

The author deals exclusively with Burr's political career; nothing is said of his personal character, except indirectly and in so far as it has bearing on his life as a politician. His relations to Hamilton and Jefferson, as the title would indicate, have been freely discussed, the political records of the three compared, and the vindictive and untiring efforts of Hamilton and Jefferson to ruin a political rival exposed. The author has confined himself strictly to facts, and as a general rule has made no statements without at the same time giving the authority from which he derives his information and draws his conclusions, at least in so far as he deals directly with actions and intentions of Burr. In discussing the other two characters it would seem that he is not looking at them from an entirely unprejudiced point of view. For instance, it is a little hard to believe that the brilliant author of the *Federalist* "was not a democrat, had no confidence in the people or in a government by the people," and only advocated the adoption of the constitution for political reasons.

From a literary standpoint, the work is excellent and holds the attention of the reader from cover to cover. It is an interesting book and well worth the time of any one who cares to investigate facts concerning one of the most fascinating, brilliant and unfortunate characters of our history.

I. G. G. F.

PROBATE REPORTS ANNOTATED. By GEO. A. CLEMENT, of New York Bar. Vol. VII.

This is the seventh volume of an interesting collection. Collections of cases seem to be the order of the day, but the idea carried out by the compiler of these volumes is new in this respect, that the cases presented are all recent decisions. The latest expression of the law must always be a matter of interest, if not an actual necessity to the careful lawyer. For this reason a work such as this, being as it is the best thought of the various state judiciaries, must be of great value. The notes of the author, scattered at intervals throughout the work, add to its helpfulness and an ample index gives ready access to its contents.

A. L. D.