Books

THE WESTERN JOURNALS OF WASHINGTON
IRVING, Edited and annotated by John
Francis McDermott, Norman, University
of Oklahoma Press, 1944. $3.50.

Seldom does a reader pick up a book in which
the arts of illustrating and book-making and of
finished scholarship are so becomingly joined as
in this work. For the first time in 112 years we
can now read and enjoy Washington Irving's five
extant journals. Mr. McDermott tells us in an
introductory chapter all we need to know about
Irving and his traveling companions, and why
he made the trip. He shows that Irving's now
famous Tour on the Prairies was spun largely
from his imagination. Irving scarcely used the
journals.
The first journal entry was made 3 September,
1832, as Irving left Cincinnati. The last entry
bears the date of 17 November, six days after
leaving Fort Gibson for the last time. "Creole
Village" is the last chapter. At the end is a
map of the Irving itinerary, locating and dating
missions and showing Fort Gibson, the Ca-
nadian, Little River and so on.

Using broken sentences and jotting down num-
crous accurate details, Irving fascinates his reader
with constantly changing scenes enlivened by brief
glimpses of Black Hawk, Gen. William Clark,
Col. A. P. Chouteau, Gen. Matthew Arbuckle,
and so on; of Osages and Creeks; of steamboats
and forests. You can fancy hearing wolves
howling at night; seeing herds of buffalo, deer,
elk, wild horses in full flight; marveling at clouds
of passenger pigeons; hearing great bee trees fall-
ing to the ax; and watching a frontier military
company making the tour from Fort Gibson.

Illustrations from Catlin and Stanley and Lewis
and Irving, vignettes depicting frontier scenes,
paper of choice quality, a good index and a
complete and classified bibliography are worthy
of note.—R. H. RECORDS.

WESTERN WORDS: A DICTIONARY OF
THE RANGE, COW CAMP AND TRAIL. By
Ramon Adams, Norman, University of
Oklahoma Press, 1944. xiv—182 pp. $3.00.

This volume is a unique contribution to the
literature of the American West. In many re-
spects it is more nearly an encyclopedia than a
dictionary, since a quarter to half a page is
often given to defining and explaining a single
word or expression. References are also fre-
cently given to further sources of information.
The book is as colorful as a Great Plains sunset,
and has all the tang of camp coffee and the salty
flavor of bacon broiled over a fire of mesquite
wood.

The section included under each letter of the
alphabet is headed by a range aphorism, or pun-
gent epigram, not unlike some of those in Poor
Richard's Almanac. Examples are: "Brains in
the head save blisters on the feet," "It's the man
that's the cowhand, not the outfit he wears;"
"Success is the size of the hole a man leaves after
he dies," "A change of pasture sometimes makes
the calf fatter," and "Nobody ever drowned him-
self in sweat."

The life of any people is undoubtedly reflected
in their speech. Here in the nearly 3,000 words
and phrases defined may be seen in clear per-
spective the daily work and play, problems and
responsibilities of the cowboy and ranchman
and the "range philosophy," or attitude toward
life, which was developed by their environment
and vocation. This is a remarkable book,
beautifully printed and bound, which everyone
interested in the West will love and wish to look
into again and again.—Edward Everett Dake.

JANUARY, 1945

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January, 1945