

Herald and News Book Reviews

Literary Highlights

THE DRUMMOND TRADITION.

By Charles Mercer. Putnam. \$3.95.

Drew Drummond—Andrew Jackson Drummond IV, major, US Infantry—is having a very un-Army-like time idling in Florence, looking at pictures, enjoying the Tuscan vistas, even living in an apartment of his own as if he were a lucky civilian.

For Drew wants to be a civilian, or so he protests during the seven days in which we follow his adventures in and near Florence and, for a romantic finale, on the island of Ischia.

His father, a lieutenant general, is determined to keep him in the Army, it's the family tradition. So the old gentleman, who is retired, pursues his son to Italy and brings along pretty Jane, an Army daughter, in the hope of making her an Army wife for Drew. But Drew has just met no less pretty Marcia. So the lines are drawn: Jane who seems to invite him to follow in his father's footsteps, and Marcia who might share a different kind of life with him. And his past has prepared him for almost any future, as Mercer shows in ingenious flashbacks.

An Associated Press writer, and author of that best-selling "Rachel Cade" as well as of two earlier novels, Mercer here achieves a more substantial, worthwhile success. None of his characters before has made so compelling an impression as the baffled Drew and the dogged and unscrupulous father, though the women do not have in every scene the healthy rosy living blush. But above all this is sure-fire story-telling: Mercer can spin a yarn with the best of them.

THE PRISONERS OF COMBINE D.

By Len Giovannitti. Holt. \$4.95.

From May, 1944, till liberation, we follow in this novel the adventures of American officers, in particular one small group, in a German camp holding about 1,500.

The author centers our attention sharply on Lawton, who keeps dreaming of his wife, Miriam; Houseman, who has heard he's the father of twins; Fernandez, who boasts zestfully of his conquests of women; the rich Kitchener; Zuckerman the Jew; and also the Americans in command and a couple of guards.

There is a great amount of detail, all of it sound though a little too much of it predictable. Giovannitti lets his soldiers yak-yak, as no doubt they did in fact. They dig a tunnel, they sneak in the BBC broadcasts on a price-less crystal set. Southerners object to Negroes, and others to Jews. Cuts in rations start wrangling. As the boys say, "Every little thing that happens we get all worked up."

Hardships had their salutary effects, and that, I take it, is the principal lesson this earnest author wants us to remember. An essential lesson it is, too. Suffering could remind a man of the common fundamental humanity that surmounted differences in color and creed.

Some of the routine that wore down the prisoners may wear down the reader, too; and if they thought it lasted too long, so may he. It still is a thoughtful and honest piece of writing developed diligently.

Historic Sites Anthologized

THE AMERICAN HERITAGE BOOK OF GREAT HISTORIC PLACES.

By the Editors of American Heritage. Narrative by Richard Ketchum, introduction by Bruce Catton. American Heritage-Simon and Schuster \$12.50.

A hip roof, a square or corkscrew stairwell, a steeple, the crumbling walls of a fort, a water wheel, an Indian mound, a tombstone, a cliff dwelling, a log cabin, an arched cloister, a sunken trail, a red brick facade—and a covered wagon, or a clipper ship with a figurehead, or a two-winged plane to get you there—these are the materials of the American heritage gathered handsomely in this volume.

Some of our heritage was more colorful than the present we have made for ourselves. Some needs sage discounting to separate legend from fact, so there is here a judicious sprinkling of probabys and perhappes.

You can take this as guide, picture book or history. It is a key geographically arranged to museums, historic buildings, battlefields and so on. It contains over 700 pictures. And it has a first-rate interpretative text.

But in a way it is none of these wholly—as history, for instance, it jumps around a lot and there are gaps. What you have here is the physical deposit of the American spirit, progress and grandeur. This is a warm and hearty invitation to get acquainted with your great land.

Current Best Sellers

FICTION

BY LOVE POSSESSED, James Gould Cozzens.

RALLY ROUND THE FLAG, ROYAL Max Shulman.

ON THE BEACH, Nevil Shute.

ATLAS SHRUGGED, Ayn Rand.

BELOW THE SALT, Thomas B. Costain.

NONFICTION

BARUCH, MY OWN STORY, Bernard Baruch.

THE HIDDEN PERSUADERS, Vance Packard.

THE NEW CLASS, Milovan Djilas.

WHERE DID YOU GO? OUT, Robert Paul Smith.

New Cook Book Makes Fine Gift

MARY MARGARET MCBRIDE'S HARVEST OF AMERICAN COOKING. Putnam. \$7.50.

Historians have approached America from many angles: wars, politics, foreign policies, statesmen, spiritual emergence, cultural advances. Now Mary Margaret McBride has chosen to tell the story in terms of its good food and aromatic kitchens. This may be the liveliest, most exciting way of all.

The life and the habits of other days come truly alive in "Harvest of American Cooking" with the appetizing, careful and loving descriptions of our nation's food, past and present. The scope of the book is enormous, geographically ranging from the Hudson River patron's favorite Eleven Fish on the east to the first barbecues of the old California rancheros on the west and good eating every step of the way between.

The author, a devout cream-and-butter cook, has done a magnificent job of making American history seem for once, real and — most important — appetizing. It is practically guaranteed to make the reader raid the ice-box. In addition to 173 pages of the most hungry-making reading you can imagine, there are also 1,000 recipes, all regional, thrown in for good measure. A dandy gift book for ladies and gents who have everything.

Several Civil War Books Coming Out

THE REBEL SHORE. By James W. Merrill. Little, Brown.

When the Civil War started, the United States Navy numbered 90 ships—on paper. Fifty were obsolete sailing ships. Some of the steamships were laid up, others were decrepit, still others were scattered on foreign stations. It came down to this: three steamers in home waters ready to fight.

From that poor beginning, the federal government built a force that throttled the Confederacy. The story of that throttling is the story of "The Rebel Shore."

The subtitle — "The Story of Union Sea Power in the Civil War" — is somewhat of a misnomer in that the book does not deal with actions against Confederate raiders built in England. Prof. Merrill's concern is with the blockade of the Confederate coast line and the role of the Navy in opening the Confederacy's rivers to Union guns. In that area, he acquits himself admirably.

Gideon Welles, secretary of the Navy, and his able lieutenant, Gustavus Fox, played their game by ear. In the beginning, they bought anything that floated, from garbage scows to ferry boats. They discovered early the importance of combined land-sea operations, but didn't quite know what to do with the advantages gained by success. Haphazard campaigning, failure to follow up victories, conflicts in command, frittered away many opportunities. They plunged too heavily on monitors. But slowly the blockade tightened and the Confederacy strangled.

Merrill may overestimate the potential of the Navy. At times, he seems to be saying that the Army really wasn't needed to win. But he argues a strong case, his story is swift-moving and it offers a fascinating panorama of a phase of the Civil War that has been too long neglected.

JEB STUART, THE LAST CAVALIER. By Burke Davis. Rinehart.

\$6.

The Confederate horsemen had

a song, "If you want to have a good time, join the cavalry." And they had a good time, until the Civil War became a grim business of attrition, and the gray troopers rode with the rest of Confederate arms down the long dark road to Appomattox. Of them all, Jeb Stuart had as good a time as any.

With the benefit of previously unknown letter collections, including many from Stuart, Davis has brought a great deal of new information to "Jeb Stuart, The Last Cavalier." A wealth of anecdotal material, intimate glimpses of life in the cavalry corps, the whole pageant of the Confederate troopers' life make the first Stuart biography in 20 years an endeavor that is very much worth while.

Yet it is a strangely disappointing book. The presentation is episodic, disjointed. Excessive use of quotation, while contributing to authoritativeness, imparts a second-hand flavor. Most of all, there is a lack of the historical judgment which would give the biography depth. Davis sets forth the fact as he finds them but, offers no opinion or finding on the right or wrong of controversy.

THE 20TH MAINE, by John J. Pullen. Lippincott. \$5.

The Civil War was fought largely by volunteers, arrayed in regiments like the 20th Maine. As a prototype of hundreds of outfits, "The 20th Maine" is the story of these volunteers—how they were organized, how they marched and lived and fought, from Bull Run to Appomattox. In a sense, the book is a panorama of the American military system in pre-draft days.

"The 20th Maine" is far from a dull journal of a regiment's career. Hundreds of regimental histories have been written but never before one like this. In its 289 pages are embraced the reasons why the Civil War is such a prime subject of study and enthusiasms. If you are not a Civil War buff when you pick up the book, you are likely to be one when you lay it down.

This is a rare book that can be recommended without reservation.

Carl Sandburg Offers Volume Of Extracts From His Works

By W. G. ROGERS

THE SANDBURG RANGE. By Carl Sandburg. Harcourt, Brace. \$6.

Out of some 30 books written in a long, memorable career, Sandburg has chosen, with the advice of his wife and his editor, parts and pieces from most of them, separate poems, abridgments, summaries and extracts running to more than 450 pages.

The first words happily to catch your eye are from the poem which introduced many of us to him: "Chicago."

"Hog Butcher for the World, Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat—"

You remember, though they are more than 40 years old. You remember them in part because right there and then from the very first, they gave the Sandburg essence. They are his kind of poetry and his kind of prose: matter-of-fact but with a wonderful lift, prosaic but romantic; the Swede and Illinoisian and Chicagoan possessed of vision.

The last words are from the Pulitzer prize winning "Lincoln," the most loving biography any American has written about any American. Rightly it gets more space than any other selection runner-up is Sandburg's major fiction venture, the panoramic "Remembrance Rock."

Everyone has preferences. You hunt in vain for "fog" coming on little cat feet. Some one — Mrs. Sandburg is photographer Edward Steichen's sister — might have caught what I suppose the commonest misspelling in art: Georgia O'Keeffe instead of the correct O'Keefe.

On my shelves I find "Remembrance Rock" runs on toward 1,100 pages; the "Lincoln" totaled six volumes. So Sandburg is a sprawling writer, he needs room, he's a hard man to get in a single volume.

But it wouldn't be possible to do better than this, here is indeed the vast "range."

Author Of The Week



CARL SANDBURG, while at work on more of his autobiography, gives us something to keep us contented for the time: "The Sandburg Range," the first representative selection from his entire work, according to his publisher. Eighty years old next year, Sandburg was born in Illinois, the son of a blacksmith who could not write. He went to college, was a day laborer, served in the Army, worked for years on the Chicago Daily News and started on his way to fame with his poem "Chicago," which was published in 1916.

For Young Adults

HOW YOU CAN BE A BETTER STUDENT. By Rudolf Flesch, Paul

Witty and others. Sterling. \$2.95.

Rudolf Flesch may have come off second best in many of the contentions he raised in "Why Johnny Can't Read," but when it comes to Johnny and his writing he can show a clean pair of heels to most.

Writing is Flesch's field, and in this book he demonstrates it. His chapter on "How to Write Better" is a must for high school students who will be called on to write themes and essay type examinations—and many an adult who has to turn in written business reports and the like could profit by it too.

Witty, a recognized reading authority, contributes some invaluable pointers on how to "Streamline Your Reading." Other chapters explain the makeup and meaning of mental tests, tell "How to Take a Test" and how to "Study Your Way Through School."

A couple of teen-agers at my house pronounce this book "keen," and all I can say, boy, is I wish that I had had one like it when I was in high school.

Herman R. Allen

"ONE TOUCH OF GENIUS"

by James C. Miller

The painting, by an unknown artist, had a touch of genius about it. But the world would probably never know, because of a strange, wonderful reason. It's another fiction feature

in

TODAY'S

Family Weekly

Another Outstanding Feature of the SUNDAY

Herald & News