

1963

## Book Reviews

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*William Henry Drayton and the American Revolution.* By William M. Dabney and Marion Dargan. (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1962. xiv, 225 pp. \$5.00.)

In this treatment of the South Carolina Revolutionary leader William Henry Drayton (a double first cousin of William Drayton, councillor and chief justice of British East Florida) William M. Dabney has brought to completion a biography first begun by the late Marion Dargan in the 1920's. The book rests on apparently thorough research, restricted, however, by a lack of Drayton's own papers other than published political and judicial writings. Perhaps for this reason the authors have been more successful in providing a narrative of several important events in the Revolutionary history of South Carolina than in dealing definitively with Drayton himself. Among the more significant episodes to which they call attention are the mission of Drayton and several other coastal spokesmen to the South Carolina backcountry in 1775 in an effort to drum up more support for the Patriot cause and also the attempt of South Carolina, in which Drayton's role was prominent but hardly flattering, to absorb the weaker state of Georgia.

At the same time it does seem possible that the authors might have achieved a more adequate interpretation of Drayton's career. As matters stand, there are a number of shortcomings. They essay an explanation of Drayton's belated switch to the Patriot side after 1770 - possibly for material motives - which may have to be tentative but could nonetheless be more searching. They never quite resolve a point which bothers them greatly: whether Drayton was simply an inept busybody with a certain flair for writing and oratory or a somewhat reckless man who still accomplished a good bit in a political and even in a military sense. Though providing summations of Drayton's major writings, they miss many opportunities for a more thoroughgoing analysis of their contents. Finally, the authors merely nibble around the edges of what Drayton's role as a "radical" who was certainly no democrat might illustrate about the Revolution in South Carolina as an internal conflict. These criticisms are not to say this is a bad book but rather that it is potentially a much better one than it is. The vol-

ume, as it stands, is still a useful account of the Revolutionary movement in South Carolina until Drayton's death in 1779.

THAD W. TATE

*College of William and Mary*

*Green Mountain Boy at Monticello, A Talk With Jefferson in 1822.* By Daniel Pierce Thompson. (Brattleboro, Vt.: The Stephen Greene Press, 1962. 35 pp. Introduction, illustrations. \$4.00.)

This little book is an account of the visit that a young Vermont man paid Thomas Jefferson at Monticello in 1822. He was Daniel Pierce Thompson, novelist, lawyer, antiquarian, and publisher. Finding himself near Monticello he visited Thomas Jefferson, passing a pleasant day with him in his hill-top home. Thompson made notes of Jefferson's opinions of people and causes, particularly regarding slavery, for Thompson was an ardent abolitionist all his life. Apparently he did nothing with the notes for forty years. The Civil War brought them to mind and revealed their value as propaganda in that struggle. Thompson wrote an article that appeared in Harper's Magazine for May, 1863. The notes themselves disappeared, probably destroyed when his Montpelier, Vermont, home burned after his death.

This article is here republished with an informative introduction by Howard C. Rice, Jr., Assistant Librarian for Rare Books and Special Collections at Princeton. He is author in his own right and an authority on Jefferson. Dr. Rice puts the article in its true light when he concludes his introduction with these words, "He [Thompson] and the editors of Harper's Magazine obviously thought of it as a tract for the times. A century later, when we are celebrating the Civil War, often in a romantic manner reminiscent of Thompson's novels, this less-colored fugitive essay of his may still provoke thought as a tract for other times."

If further evidence were needed, it is in Jefferson's miraculous prediction "of the doom, which if, not averted by emancipation, must sooner or later fall, not only on our own beloved state, but the whole South, in the ruin of their people or in the overthrow of their republican liberties, in consequence of the

inevitable workings of that most unfortunate institution." So accurate is this prophecy of conditions at this stage of the war, and so pat to the vengeful hopes of the abolitionists for the destruction of the South in 1863, that it is a shame that Thompson did not make it a matter of record before it came to pass.

This little book shows another thing - like old soldiers the country's basic problems never die. The slavery question plagued the founding fathers and almost wrecked the Constitution and the Union itself. It rankled and seethed all through the expansion period, to burst into roaring flame in the Civil War. It is still a serious problem in the guise of "civil rights," with the Federal Government still using armed troops to enforce its will on a reluctant South.

"State's rights" has been an issue from the first attempt to form a union. Together with slavery it was the issue in the Civil War. With the Negro question it is a live question and as long as the Union exists, it will be the mortal problem of the states to prevent this thing that they have created for their use and benefit from consuming them entirely.

Here, then, is a piece of propaganda based on the first days of the Union, planted in a period of stress, published during the Civil War, and potent as propaganda now, a hundred years later.

LOUIS CAPRON

*West Palm Beach, Florida*

*The Diary of Dolly Lunt Burge, 1847-1875.* Edited by James I. Robertson, Jr. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1962. xv, 141 pp. Introduction and index. \$4.00.)

Dolly Sumner Lunt was born in Maine in 1817. Shortly after her twenty-first birthday she was married to Dr. Samuel Lewis from Portland. In 1842, the young couple moved to Georgia, where a year later, Dr. Lewis died of fever. During the next six years, Dolly Lewis taught in a Madison, Georgia elementary school. Early in 1847 she began the diary which she was to continue at intervals until 1880. She had much to confide to the diary about her personal life, and much to report about ways of life in Georgia.

In 1850, she married Thomas Burge, a widower with five children, who owned a large plantation lying between Madison and Covington. The Burges traveled to Maine in 1858, hoping that Mr. Burge's health would benefit from a cool summer climate, but he died in December of that year. Dolly was obliged to run the plantation during the troubled era that followed. She watched helplessly while federal troops raided her property. Fortunately, the main house was spared from burning and is still standing today.

Even though she was a strongly religious woman, she enjoyed a good time and her diary is full of references to savory food, pretty clothes, and lively company. Her honesty about herself and others adds salt to her comments. She remarks at one point during the years while she was teaching school, "This keeping house without a man, I don't like much." On another occasion she forthrightly refers to a sermon she heard as "nothing very excellent." Although she took great interest in all the activities connected with crops and livestock on the Burge plantation, she does not hesitate to say: "How I hate housecleaning!"

Her thoughts on slavery and the Civil War are particularly interesting in view of the fact that she was brought up in Maine and was a cousin of Charles Sumner, the famous abolitionist. It is rather fascinating to observe how easily she fitted into life in the Deep South in spite of her northern background.

The diary has been made more readable by its division into six chapters. Dr. James I. Robertson, Executive Director of the National Civil War Centennial Commission, has written an illuminating introduction that makes the many separate entries in the diary much more comprehensible.

MARY LOUISE FAGG

*Jacksonville, Florida*

*The Civil War At Sea. Vol. I: The Blockaders.* By Virgil Carrington Jones. (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1960. xxvi, 483 pp. \$6.00.)

*The Civil War At Sea. Vol. II: The River War.* By Virgil Carrington Jones. (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1961. xx, 490 pp. \$6.00.)

*The Civil War At Sea. Vol. III: The Final Effort.* By Virgil Carrington Jones. (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1962. xviii, 456 pp. \$6.50.)

This three volume work has had a mixed reception as it appeared over the past few years, with the critical comments likely to obscure Virgil Carrington Jones' very worthwhile accomplishments in presenting the action stories of sea power in the American Civil War. The publishers are to be complimented too for making this tactical material available at such length.

Mr. Jones states clearly that he is writing for the general reader, not the scholar. The author interprets this point of view to license him to tell as animated a story as possible, occasionally by making direct quotation of what are indirect statements in the original, and to introduce all sorts of local color details. On the other hand, he feels that strategic considerations, administrative and logistic problems, solutions, and intricacies are beyond the scope of his work. It should be noted, however, that within these limitations the research is thorough and the presentation, though sometimes tedious in its detail, is generally satisfactory.

Very little serious scholarship has been devoted to the field of naval contributions to the Civil War. Studies are needed on the organization of the Union Navy in particular and on naval logistic support of the Union Army. Mr. Jones' volumes up-date and expand the naval selections to be found in *Battles and Leaders* and sift much of the grain from the chaff in the *Official Records* Navy.

The author's "general reader" will probably prove to be the college undergraduate intent on writing a course paper on some aspect of the Civil War. These volumes will suggest many interesting topics neglected in the past, make interesting reading in themselves, and lead him on to primary source material concerned.

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