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Book Reviews

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Slavery in the Cities: The South 1820-1860. By Richard Wade. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964. x, 340 pp. Preface, bibliographic essay, notes, appendix, index. \$6.75.)

Slavery in the Cities represents a significant contribution to American historical research and scholarship because it illumines a much neglected dimension of "the peculiar institution." Most people identify slavery almost wholly within the warp and woof of the plantation system. The institution, however, was also part of the fabric of urban life almost from its inception in North America. "Every southern town and city had a large complement of slaves, and contemporaries considered them as much a part of the system as those who toiled in the fields or served in the mansion."

Professor Wade's book is neither a study of the rise of cities in the Old South nor is it a history of "the peculiar institution." Instead, it is a comprehensive treatment of essentially the problem of what happened to slavery in the South's urban environment and the texture of Negro slavery in its cities. The author's research demonstrates an assiduous and exhaustive examination of a variety of sources located chiefly in the cities themselves. These include court records, police dockets, real-estate conveyances, tax and assessment books, minutes of city councils, municipal ordinances, and local newspapers.

Wade's analysis centers on the principal cities of the South, and his reconstruction of the slave's daily life is vivid and lucid. The author achieves a rare balance between the range and scope in his coverage of subjects such as the slave's housing, conditions of employment, religious and social life, and the penalties and punishments suffered when he violated the rules which governed his actions and movements.

The fluctuations and changes in the slave population, patterns of ownership, and the imbalance between male and female slaves are some of the aspects of urban slavery which are brought into sharp relief in the period 1820-1860. In particular, the author asserts that a watershed occurred about 1840 relative to the variation in the speed and the extent of the growth of urban slavery. Prior to that time, urban slavery resembled the plantation system in that the incidence of ownership was high, the size of holdings

was often substantial, and the presumption of the institution's permanence was widespread. Professor Wade reveals that though slavery encountered some difficulties during this period, no one predicted, much less advocated its abandonment.

After about 1840, however, signs of change began to appear, and Wade discusses these changes and the reasons thereof with care, meaning, and insight. He analyzes the causes of the decline in the number of Negro slaves, the decrease in the number of ownerships, and the decrease in the size of holdings, and he concludes that the vitality of the system clearly was gone after 1840. Statistics are employed effectively to show the marked contrast between urban and rural slavery, but more importantly, the author penetrates beneath the statistical layer to the factors which produced this sharp cleavage between ways of living. He points out that the city created its own kind of world, with a pace, sophistication, and environment that separated it from rural modes. In the process, the city transformed the Negro as well as the white, slave no less than freeman.

Professor Wade provides ample evidence strongly supporting the contention that segregation began both legally and practically in the cities at least a decade before the Civil War. Lastly, and of paramount interest and significance, Professor Wade traces the beginnings of Negro leadership in the churches - a leadership that has proven so vital in the Negro's struggle for liberty and equality. The book affords rich and meaningful insights into this area of the America experience, particularly as they relate to present-day issues and problems.

ROBERT GOLDSTEIN

University of South Florida

The Mind of The Old South. By Clement Eaton. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1964. xii, 271 pp. Preface, illustrations, bibliographical essays, index. \$6.00.)

Clement Eaton is one who believes that history is primarily the story of people. In this latest work he attempts to trace the development of the southern mind through fifteen individuals who he thinks represented the major points of view of the southern mind of 1860. Only ten of these receive extended treatment

as symbolic of major traits: liberalism and radicalism (John Hartwell Cocke, Henry A. Wise, Cassius Marcellus Clay, Hinton Rowan Helper); narrow conservatism (James H. Hammond); romanticism (William Gilmore Simms); emotionalism (William Lowndes Yancey); the scientific mind (William Barton Rogers, Joseph Le Conte); and the commercial mind (Maunsel White).

One might take issue with Professor Eaton's assumption that "representative" men reflect the mass "mind" of any people but for several qualifications which he makes. He asserts that none of these men were completely typical or were consistent, and that their story is "largely a story of its representative men themselves being bent and warped by powerful economic and social forces." The forces which operated to bring a great deal of homogeneity to the southern mind were, as Eaton sees them: an exaggerated sense of honor, profound religious orthodoxy, intense attachment to local communities, extreme conservatism, intolerance of any questioning of slavery or orthodox religion, and a powerful race feeling. Two chapters not centering on great men, in which Eaton explores the yeoman and poor white mind and the evangelical, Calvinist, and genteel religious traditions, further document the widespread presence of these characteristics and values. To his credit, Eaton's work is to some degree comparative in that southern qualities are frequently portrayed in light of those of other parts of the country or of other parts of the world. Influences working upon the South were frequently found to be present in the North, leading Eaton to conclude that, "Regional traits are usually . . . an exaggeration or an understatement of certain aspects of national character, arising from the peculiar conditions of life within the smaller unit."

Florida history buffs will be disappointed in the paucity of references to their state. The only individuals to receive even passing notice are Richard Keith Call, for his ardent nationalism, and A. W. Chapman, for his studies of southern flora. Lack of interest in science in Florida was pointed up by reference to the fact that Florida and Louisiana alone among the southern states failed to conduct state geological surveys in the ante-bellum period. These few references, however, point up the real sterility of a raw frontier region for intellectual endeavor as well as the neglect by Florida scholars of what little such activity there was, rather than any neglect on Professor Eaton's part.

Clement Eaton today is one of the more respected practitioners of history working in the area of southern cultural history. Though this volume produces no surprises or major revisions of his earlier works, it is an example of sound, mature scholarship which will be a worthy addition to every bookshelf.

HERBERT J. DOHERTY, JR.

University of Florida

Jefferson Davis, Tragic Hero: The Last Twenty-Five Years, 1864-1889. By Hudson Strode. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964. xx, 556 pp. Introduction, illustrations, sources, index. \$7.50.)

It is difficult to be objective in a review of Professor Strode's concluding volume on the life of Jefferson Davis primarily because objectivity is conspicuously absent throughout this and Strode's two previous volumes on the eminent southern statesman.

The fatal flaws of Strode's biography can be found in an introductory statement by the author. "Delving into the mind and heart of Jefferson Davis these past dozen years, and refusing to accept the stereotypes of former commentators, I have come to have such enormous respect and admiration for this misunderstood man that I may appear at times to lack objectivity."

Within this one sentence are a number of provocations: by his own admission the author at times forsakes the all-important ingredient necessary for any true historical work; Strode easily discounts the judgments of a host of historians - and this in spite of the fact that he himself is a professor emeritus of English, not of history; he offers no explanation of why commentators of old would and did arrive at "stereotype" analyses of Davis; admiration, while a commendable sentiment, can also be a dangerous motivation in the writing of biography.

Especially in this volume, which follows Davis from January 1864, to his death in December 1889, are the eulogistic weaknesses of Strode's presentation most pronounced. The author is obviously more interested in exonerating Davis than in explaining him. His narrative too often takes the form of idolatry rather than interpretation. Jefferson Davis - of all the leading figures in

the Civil War - most needs understanding; and in this era when glorification of Abraham Lincoln has accelerated to a detrimental pace, it should be apparent that the mantle Davis least needs is one of whitewash.

Strode claims to have had sole access to "almost a thousand private letters that no other historian or biographer has as yet seen." This new Davis collection, however, must be more quantitative than qualitative, for relatively few of the letters seem to have made their way into the narrative. But since the author did not annotate his study, we cannot know how much emphasis he placed on manuscript sources.

This volume doubtless will give new strength to the avid sect of Davis worshippers. At the same time, it should jar historians of the middle period into a fuller realization of the need for a well-researched, scholarly, and interpretive biography of an American patriot who regrettably remains an enigma.

JAMES I. ROBERTSON, JR.

Montana State University

The American Civil War: An English View. By Field Marshal Viscount Wolseley. Edited with an introduction by James A. Rawley. (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1964, xxxvii, 230 pp. Index. \$5.00.)

During the American Civil War, Garnet Joseph Wolseley expressed annoyance, as befitted a person from a nation rich in history and proud of the international reputation of its heroes, with the American propensity to inflate a backwoods skirmish into a decisive battle and puff up a very ordinary soldier with a plain sounding name into the proportions of a Wellington. If nothing else came from the war, it would, he predicted, give American historians a worthy subject. Wolseley himself contributed significantly to the literature of the war, and the present work is a compilation of his writings.

Wolseley, a veteran of many campaigns, had been sent to Canada during the "Trent" crisis. In the autumn of 1862, he slipped into the Confederacy, spent some time at Lee's headquarters, and subsequently published his impressions in an article

for *Blackwood's Magazine*. The article reveals the pro-southern sympathy common to one of his class and position. As a British officer, sensitive to the vulnerability of Canada, he saw advantages in the breakup of the American Union. Interestingly enough, in later life he modified this position and came to appreciate the importance to England and the world of a single, strong American republic.

The second article, written more than two decades after the war, is a valuable picture of Robert E. Lee as he appeared to a great British soldier. Lee was the very embodiment of Wolseley's "true hero." Dedicated, courageous, chivalrous, and God-fearing, he was, to the Englishman, the greatest soldier of his age, and "the most perfect man I ever met." One cannot help but notice the resemblance between Lee's background and the forces that shaped his life, especially the influence of his mother, and Wolseley's own early life.

The remainder of the book consists of his essays written for the *North American Review* as a review of the *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*. The result is an instructive analysis. The articles aroused interest and provoked controversy then, and present-day readers will surely find them interesting and provocative. Some will find certain evaluations and conclusions unacceptable. In Wolseley's eyes, for example, Lincoln did rise from an "insignificant lawyer" (*Blackwood's*, 1863) to a "far-seeing statesman of iron will" (*MacMillan's Magazine*, 1887), but he never saw him as the master strategist depicted by T. Harry Williams.

The work includes a well-written and useful introduction; and Professor Rawley has performed a real service in drawing these articles together, enabling us to see the Civil War as it appeared to a contemporary foreign observer.

LAWRENCE E. BREEZE

Jacksonville University

Aboard the USS Monitor: 1862 - The Letters of Acting Paymaster William Frederick Keeler, U. S. Navy, to his Wife, Anna. Edited by Robert W. Daly. (Annapolis: United States Naval Institute, 1964. xvii, 278 pp. Preface, introduction, appendices, diagrams, index. \$6.50.)

With the spate of Civil War literature which has poured upon the market within the past few years, both in new contributions and reissues, any offering in that field needs some special quality to commend it for notice. This book possesses such merit in abundance. The first of the Naval Letters Series of the U. S. Naval Institute, it contains the letters of William Frederick Keeler, an Illinois merchant converted into a naval officer as an Acting Assistant Paymaster to his wife during his service on the *USS Monitor*, the navy's first seagoing ironclad. The letters contain a fine blending of a homesick young fader and a proud and impressionable civilian turned naval officer, written without the consciousness of the audience which will read and evaluate his writing, and thus without the stilted posturing and banal acknowledgment of accepted opinions which too often accompany accounts intended for public consumption.

The letters detail service on the *Monitor* from its first day until its sinking off Cape Hatteras on New Year's eve, 1862, and full and vivid detail is given to its highly important encounter with its southern counterpart, the *Merrimac (Virginia)* at Hampton Roads on March 9, 1862.

Dr. Robert W. Daly of the U. S. Naval Academy is the editor of this volume, and he has inserted interesting and useful material at the appropriate position within the body of the letters themselves. This somewhat novel departure is a pleasant relief from the tedious practice of bobbing down to footnotes, or leafing to the proper reference in the rear portion of a book.

There is something in this book for everyone, even for historians and scholars interested in Florida history. Paymaster Keeler retired in 1869 to Mayport, Florida with his handsome disability pension of ten dollars a month, where he acted as deputy collector of customs, inspector of elections, auditor of post office funds, and even found time to garden. He wrote letters to Jacksonville's *Florida Times-Union*, and died of heart disease in 1886.

WILLIAM M. GOZA

Clearwater, Florida

Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment. By Willie Lee Rose. (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1964. xviii, 442 pp. Map, illustrations, notes on sources, appendix, index. \$6.50.)

This distinguished, well-written book, for which the author received the Allan Nevins History Prize in 1963, fills a gap in historical information. It is well known that when the federal fleet captured, and troops subsequently occupied Port Royal, South Carolina, the planters fled, leaving one of the largest cotton crops ever produced and more than 10,000 slaves. What happened to the Negroes - their sufferings, employment as free laborers on the abandoned plantations, enlistment and service in the United States Army, and transformation from slave to free citizens under federal guardianship and the guidance of abolitionists, missionaries, and teachers - is presented in detail for the first time in *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment*.

The author, however, does more than present a well-documented account of the developments that weakened in many Negroes and shattered in others "The Old Allegiance." With rare perception and detachment, Mrs. Rose describes the slave's response to freedom, the effects of years of repression and submission on his personality, and the subtle changes that took place as he became a person instead of chattel under the new order inaugurated after northern occupation of the Sea Islands. Although there were generally few opportunities for slaves to develop their special talents, there were ways of getting around the master and there were independent spirits among the bondsmen.

The author also portrays the missionaries and teachers, the "Gideonites," who came to assist the freedmen but who "found themselves, almost in spite of themselves, in the same social relation to the Negroes that the late masters had occupied." With the same understanding and insight previously revealed, Mrs. Rose analyzes the conflicts that arose between the teachers and missionaries from New York, Boston, and Philadelphia. The former were more evangelical than the latter and, since most Negroes were Baptist, the New Yorkers enjoyed a distinct advantage. This group also believed in extending maximum assistance to the Negro while the Bostonians were more businesslike. Despite the divisive

sectarian force, relief societies organized in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston rendered invaluable assistance to the freedmen and led to the formation of the Freedmen's Aid Union, the Freedmen's Inquiry Commission, and the Freedmen's Bureau.

Especially valuable are the chapters - "Confiscation, Publicity and Close Calculation," "Squatter Rights," or "Charitable Purposes"?, and "Plantation Bitters" - which consider efforts by the missionaries to provide Negroes with land, the various policies and plans advanced by the federal government to provide heads of families of the African race with small plots of land at \$1.25 per acre, the abandoned land policy, homestead and preemption, the confusion due to the zeal of the men who meant to help the Negro, and the disillusionment that ensued when former owners claimed their lands on which Negroes were settled. Indeed, what happened at Port Royal was in effect a rehearsal for Reconstruction, and Mrs. Rose has made an important contribution to the history of that era.

ELSIE M. LEWIS

Howard University

Southern Sketches from Virginia, 1881-1901. By Orra Langhorne. Edited by Charles E. Wynes. (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1964. xxxix, 145 pp. Illustrations, preface, bibliography, index. \$3.75.)

All but one of the selections in this book first appeared in the *Southern Workman*, a paper published by Hampton Institute in Virginia. The selections are rather brief for the most part, and are, for that reason, all the more readable. Although they mainly concern the status, living conditions, and progress of Negroes in Virginia during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, other topics are touched upon, and there are occasional glimpses into the ante-bellum past.

These excerpts from the published writings of Orra Langhorne reflect the views of a Virginia-born and bred gentlewoman who disapproved of slavery and who wanted to see Negroes as well as whites given the right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Mrs. Langhorne was an ardent admirer of her fellow-Virginian, Thomas Jefferson. At one point she gives, through the

eyes of a Negro musician, an attractive glimpse of Jefferson as friend and mentor of a gifted Negro family.

Mrs. Langhorne's maiden name was Orra Henderson Moore Gray. She was born on March 8, 1841, in Rockingham County just outside the town of Harrisonburg in the Shenandoah Valley. In 1859 she graduated from Hollins Institute, now Hollins College. She was a young woman of twenty when her father, Algernon Gray, pleaded the Union cause at the Virginia secession convention. His stand made him fear for his life, and he went to live in Baltimore. Before he left, he voluntarily freed many of his slaves and sent them to Ohio.

During the war, Orra helped care for the sick and wounded in Harrisonburg. After the war, she wrote to the president of Hampton Institute, asking admission for several former slaves of her family. Her interest in Hampton Institute continued, and in time she became a regular contributor to its paper, the *Southern Workman*.

In 1871 Orra Gray married Thomas Nelson Langhorne of Lynchburg, Virginia. Many of the columns that she wrote for the *Southern Workman* were penned while she was traveling back and forth by train from Lynchburg to Harrisonburg, with occasional stopovers in Charlottesville or Lexington. She took advantage of these trips to talk with fellow passengers, often Negro passengers. In that way she was able to increase the fund of information she had gained by living in different places in Virginia. Her articles, as the book's editor points out in an introduction, "were a faithful record of the contemporary social and economic status of Virginia as seen through the eyes of a woman of extraordinary insight, perceptivity, and toleration."

The selections have the charm, but transitory quality, of day-to-day impressions. There is, however, one searching essay in the book called "Changes of a Half-Century in Virginia." This essay was presented as a paper before the American Social Science Association on May 10, 1900. It is a seasoned, flavorful reflection on years through which she had lived in the state she loved so much.

MARY LOUISE FAGG

Jacksonville, Florida