

*The Diary of A Public Man, An Intimate View of the National Administration, December 28, 1860 to March 15, 1861, and A Page of Political Correspondence, Stanton to Buchanan.* Prefatory Notes by F. Lauriston Bullard, Foreword by Carl Sandburg (Chicago, Abraham Lincoln Book Shop, 1945, pp. xi, 117. \$10.00.)

This little volume is pre-eminently a fine book. Its design and typography are due to Norman W. Forgue, the hand decorated paper employed for binding was made by R. Hunter Middleton, the typefaces used are Linotype Baskerville and Monotype Ultra Bodoni, and the edition was printed at the Norman Press on Cortlea ivory paper. The number of copies was limited to 500, apparently, designed particularly for Lincoln collectors. It is a beautiful production, and each copy is enclosed in a protective slip-case.

Carl Sandburg in his brief foreword declares the book "has history and mystery." Bullard in his prefatory notes does not attempt to identify the "Public Man," but does tell us quite a little about the *North American Review*, in which the "Diary" first appeared, and about its editor, Allen Thorndike Rice, who refused to reveal the author. Facts about the period covered by the diary and about prominent men are given. Nine letters of Edwin M. Stanton to James Buchanan written between March 14, and July 26, 1861, are included. They contain very pessimistic predictions about the Lincoln administration and items that would "cheer or gratify" the former President. Like the "Diary," they had been published in the *North American Review*.

The whole procedure leaves one feeling as though he were all dressed up with no place to go. We do not learn the identity of the author or to what extent the contents are trustworthy. In fact, historians need to be warned that a fairly good case can be presented for forgery. One will not, however, be harsh with anyone for not producing the name of the diarist, indeed, Mr. Bullard suggests "if this 'Diary' is in fact a fake, it has full right to be pronounced an—almost—perfect crime." Perhaps the volume was intended to stimulate the search for the missing author, or to induce Professor Frank Maloy Anderson to publish the result of his study. It was unfortunate his findings could not have been included.

The "Diary" is "a series of extracts" supposedly written between December 28, 1860, and March 15, 1861. It contains very interesting and provocative stories, gossip, and incidents, which presumably passed through Washington political circles just before the outbreak of the Civil War. There is just enough to whet the appetite, and to give one a vivid idea of the perplexing problems which confronted Lincoln as he came into the presidency.

The solution of the mystery, the identity of the author, can become a lifetime passion or a side issue for Lincoln collectors, college professors, or anyone intrigued by the search for truth.

*Some of the Earliest Oaths of Allegiance to the United States of America.* By Nellie Protsman Waldenmaier. (Privately Printed, 1944, pp. v, 93. \$3.50)

Nellie Waldenmaier is first and foremost a genealogist, and as