

cultural pursuits than with strictly military matters. By and large, the equipment was inadequate, efficiency low, and capability for withstanding Indian attacks nil at many of the establishments. Beginning with Fort Brady, Colonel Croghan asks, "Why this place is dignified with the name of fort I can not imagine, for it is fitted for neither offensive or defensive purposes" (p. 35). He held that public funds were shamefully wasted upon Fort Atkinson. The stables at Fort Leavenworth he found "execrable, worse than the worst stables at the worst country taverns. . . ." (p. 45) and completely out of the protective range of the guardhouse. Moreover, the administration and services at the forts were likewise in a deplorable state. However, soldiers at most of the western posts ate simply and well.

Viewed in their entirety, these reports are incisive, highly informative, and thought-provoking. The Introduction by Francis Paul Prucha is well-written and provides a basis for an appreciation of the documents. But inasmuch as these reports expose the flagrant inadequacies of military defenses during the period indicated, one wishes that Father Prucha would have provided his own considered evaluation of army life on the frontier. He is, on the whole, content to let Colonel Croghan tell his story with a minimum of challenges or corroborations. Critical footnotes are few and far between.

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*Franklin Pierce: Young Hickory of the Granite Hills.* Second edition.

By Roy Franklin Nichols. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1958. Pp. xvii, 625. Illustrations, notes, bibliographies, appendix, index. \$8.50.)

Roy F. Nichols, Vice-Provost and Dean of the Graduate School at the University of Pennsylvania, is one of America's distinguished historians. Few know as much about the 1850's in the United States as the scholar who in 1949 won the Pulitzer Prize for his outstanding volume, *The Disruption of American Democracy*. Nichols' *Franklin Pierce*, an earlier product, lacks the stylistic smoothness of its sequel. But in it there are many evidences of the same painstaking research and understanding of political realities which make the name of Nichols synonymous with the best in history and biography.

Through the years, experts have stressed Dean Nichols' mastery of partisan and factional intricacies, which so often present dilemmas to students of mid-nineteenth century drift and disaster. Your reviewer has long been equally impressed by the Pennsylvania scholar's interest in related problems of personality. It is provocative, for example, to contemplate the ways in which events and incidents might have been different if promising little Bennie Pierce had not been killed in a railroad accident, after the Fourteenth President's election but before his inauguration. This tragedy certainly had an effect on the American people as a whole through its impact on the boy's mother and father. It was far more consequential than Willie Lincoln's death during the Civil War. Indeed, a strong case could be built on the premise that no other parental bereavement in the annals of our nation has affected

the lives of so many citizens, young and old, northern and southern, as that of the Franklin Pierces.

Let it not be assumed, however, that there is anything of a pseudo-scientific nature in the Nichols approach to matters of this sort. Relying on facts and logic rather than intuition, the writer is restrained and dispassionate as well as probing. But the stereotype of the "weak" Pierce does not satisfy the questor. "It should be noted," Nichols observes, "that prior to 1853" Pierce "had succeeded reasonably well in meeting, at least adequately, the demands made upon him by public life. Had he entered the White House with the confidence which his great victory should have supplied, and been able to live a happy, normal family life, with his nervous system unshaken and, as hitherto, resilient, it may at least be wondered whether he might not have risen to the challenge of the Presidency. . . . Reconsideration of his complex life experience reveals not mere weakness, but a difficult combination of inner conflict, tragedy and national confusion which prevented him from meeting the challenge of his great responsibility" (pp. 536, 546).

The above quotation is the essence of the difference between the 1931 and 1958 editions of the book, which has not been "Completely Revised" as stated on the copyright page. Aside from Chapter LXXVI and the three-page supplementary bibliography, the revision is substantially the same as the original. Readers, therefore, should approach the new volume not in the hope of discovering page after page of fresh or rearranged details but with the expectation that the reassessment at the end will be well worth their perusal. In conclusion, it seems sensible to say that the chapter entitled "Recasting a Stereotype" ought to be as widely and carefully studied as any fourteen pages in any American biography. For here is a distillation of mature scholarship—the sort of contribution which can be made only by a specialist of Dean Nichols' years, experience, and insights.

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*Doctors in Gray: The Confederate Medical Service.* By H. H. Cunningham. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1958. Pp. xi, 338. Illustrations, appendices, bibliography, index. \$6.00.)

This is the first serious examination and treatment of the ways in which the Confederate States handled their three million cases of disease and wounds. In spite of heroic efforts and conspicuous ingenuity, the non-battlefield deaths far exceeded the battlefield casualties—as they did in the Union forces. The author feels, however, that "all the knowledge of more recent years would not have sufficed to save the lives of many who died from disease in the great conflict of the sixties" (p. 217).

Cunningham has written an excellent book, and it will not be necessary for any one else to rework the field for many decades. He sets the stage by reviewing briefly the status of medical training in the South in 1860, the development of journals and societies, and the level of medical practice which he concludes was about the same as that of the remainder of the country. There were many discouraging factors