

Plagued by political pressure, demands for equipment for the army, and also demands that he buy only American manufactures, Meigs had bought supplies abroad until domestic prices became competitive, so that by 1865 only blankets were still bought abroad. There were other problems that Meigs did not solve: political interference, the need for increasing his own staff to satisfactory proportions, the reduction of turnover in trained personnel. Thus, by 1865 Meigs had taken the office of quartermaster general in hand and had established some definite practices to be used in the purchasing of supplies for the army. It is a tribute to Meigs that this task was done successfully.

Professor Weigley has done an excellent job with this biography. Not only does he describe the career of an important military officer in a critical era, but he projects to the reader a sense of the man's personality. Meigs was something of a puritan, and once he had made up his mind as to the path of rectitude, he rarely changed it. Meigs was frequently argumentative, especially when he was criticized for some action he firmly believed to be correct. All this and more Weigley includes in an able biography about an interesting soldier in a time of national crisis. The index is exceptionally complete.

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*Prince Napoleon in America, 1861: Letters from His Aide-de-Camp.*

By Lieutenant-Colonel Camille Ferri Pisani. Translated with a preface by Georges J. Joyaux. Foreword by Bruce Catton. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959. Pp. 317. Illustrations, notes. \$6.75.)

Georges Joyaux, of Michigan State University, has produced a graceful and flowing translation of letters that Lieutenant-Colonel Camille Ferri Pisani, aide-de-camp of Prince Napoleon, wrote to his superior officer, Colonel de Franconi re, in Paris, describing the progress of the royal tour in America during the two months immediately after the Battle of Bull Run in July, 1861. The translation is a particularly sensitive one and succeeds in capturing the poetry of the author's descriptions, which are at their best unusually refreshing and colorful.

It is too bad that the author of these letters was not able to tour even longer and more extensively in this country, although he covered a broad geographic area as it was. The party set out from New York and visited Washington, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, St. Louis, Indianapolis, and Boston. They saw such varied examples of Americana as the White House, Mount Vernon, Cherry Hill Penitentiary, Girard College, and Harvard University, as well as visiting encampments of both the Northern and Southern armies. Ferri Pisani's view of America, therefore, was not based upon a brief, comfortable, and carefully conducted tour of one of the large cities. He saw all sorts of people from President Abraham Lincoln, with whom his party dined, to Little Hare, an Indian guide, who took the touring visitors for a canoe trip through the rapids at Sault Sainte Marie.

Ferri Pisani was interested in people, and he ably described and characterized many of the leading figures in American life, both

political and military. Ferri Pisani felt that President Lincoln was a benevolent giant "without brilliance," quite overshadowed by his quick, witty, shrewd Secretary of State, William H. Seward. General Pierre Beauregard, General Albert S. Johnston, and the aging General Winfield Scott, leaning on the arm of General George B. McClellan, were observed at their military headquarters and are given fascinating and incisive characterization.

The author had interests in America other than its people. He commented upon American business, transportation, geology, military affairs, the armies of North and South, politics, education, and religion. In addition Ferri Pisani was something of a philosopher. He felt that America in 1861, like France in the eighteenth century, was in all probability going quickly in the direction of military dictatorship and that the new order was to be in the hands of what he called a new class of people in America, the West Pointers. This philosophical observer also discoursed upon rationalism and deism and on what seemed to him to be their erosive effects upon Protestantism in general and the Congregational and Unitarian churches in particular.

Ferri Pisani was wrong about a great many things. Lincoln was not overthrown by Seward. A Napoleonic regime did not succeed Washingtonian democracy following a collapse of the Northern armies. General John C. Fremont did not play the role Ferri Pisani seemed to imply he might, nor did he run for president against Lincoln in 1860, as the translator points out. An historian could indeed find many points of difference with the writer in fact and in conclusion, but nevertheless Ferri Pisani's letters offer a great deal to the modern scholar and general reader. His gloomy view of many Washington politicians has only too authentic a ring. His barbed comment upon the American "genius for publicity"—Barnum-style—certainly is a recognizable facet of American life, and his characterization of many Americans as original, inventive, and daring calls to mind Frederick Jackson Turner's evaluation of them at the turn of the century.

Altogether this volume contains a fascinating collection of impressions of mid-nineteenth century America, and it affords important insights into many sorts of questions and problems which the professional historian might well utilize, or at least take into account. Professor Joyaux has performed a service in making this fairly objective, shrewd, and humorously critical observation of America available to a larger number of Americans who should be after all the ones most interested in it.

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Mary Steele Owen

*Portrait of America: Letters of Henry Sienkiewicz.* Edited and translated by Charles Morley. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959. Pp. xix, 300. Frontispiece, index. \$5.00.)

The English translation of nearly all Sienkiewicz's letters from America will be welcomed by students of Polish literature and also by those interested in a portrayal of America in the 1870's by a prominent European writer. Although, as Charles Morley points out in his intro-