

Captain Dauntless: The Story of Nicholas Biddle of the Continental Navy. By William Bell Clark. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1949, pp. x, 317. Illustrations, bibliography, index, and appendix. \$4.50.)

This book is in fact a biography of Nicholas Biddle, a captain in the Continental Navy during the first three years of the American Revolution. A biography of a first-rate-historical personage, such as Washington or Napoleon may sometimes be the thread upon which to string the complete history of a period. This biography is not used as the pretext for writing a general history of the naval operations during the years of the Revolution, but it does give the reader a better understanding of many important aspects of the war on the sea and of its bearing upon the total conflict than an attempt at a general treatise could do. In the course of the narrative numberless incidents, conditions and other details confront Captain Biddle with life and death importance in his operations. But these details are typical of the problems that confronted the seamen of his day. Here is a good illustration of the study of the universal in the study of the particular.

Biddle's domestic background was that of the upper middle class colonial. His early experience at sea was with the ship's captain who participated in the building of the ship, owned it in whole or in part, procured his seamen, laid out his trade route, commanded his vessel, and bought and sold as he went from port to port along his route. This was typical. Biddle's period of service in the British Royal Navy, though in time of peace, gave him needed experience with naval discipline and tradition. His naval experiences during the Revolution ran almost the entire gamut. He was involved in the confused relations between the committees of the Continental Congress and the governments of the different states each building and fitting out ships, issuing letters of marque, appointing officers, and issuing directives. Biddle served first with the Pennsylvania galleys, then was successively in command of a Continental brig and frigate and finally occupied the rather anomalous position of being at the same time captain of a Continental frigate and commander of a South Carolina squadron.

The reader, through the experiences of Biddle is made aware of where the sea lanes were along which came the cargo ships from England and the West Indies bringing vital sup-

plies to the British armies in the colonies and those lanes along which the colonial ships sailed to get munitions and supplies for the colonials. He becomes acquainted with the character and quality of the crews that Biddle commanded. They were composed of a few capable and reliable men, a few won by promise of bounty money, others by the hope of sharing in the division of prize ships and cargoes, a few more were prisoners taken from British ships and either persuaded or forced to serve on American ships, and finally, a few more were jail-birds and Negro slaves.

A review is supposed to point out some error. With this in mind it is suggested that Peyton Randolph hailed from Virginia instead of South Carolina. This slip is rather startling, with some serious implications. The narrative is interesting. It is a story of action, suspense and danger. The author understands the thing that he is writing about: ships, seamanship, and naval action of the Revolutionary period. He has read intelligently the documentary material relating to the subject and has given adequate footnotes.

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Essays in Modern European History. Edited by John J. Murray. Social Science Series, No. 10, Indiana University Publications (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1951, pp. 150. Portraits. Paper edition, \$2.25; cloth edition, \$3.50.)

"The end of the voyage at last!" So wrote William Thomas Morgan upon the completion of his monumental *Bibliography of British History, 1700-1715*. So might the reviewer treat of these *Essays in Modern European History* dedicated to the memory of the late Professor Morgan by the authors, his students. But it is one of the great felicities of the teaching profession that the very dedication belies itself in seven articles which still further extend the lines of inquiry pursued by Morgan at Indiana University.

Of the man and his work little need be said. The appreciation of his university has been graciously expressed by President Herman B Wells in a preface to this volume. The editor has provided a sketch of Morgan's career as a student, as the winner of the Herbert B. Adams prize in 1919, and as