

escape route, a diagram of the stage of Ford's theater together with a map of the vicinity, and a floor plan of the courtroom are other features of his book. Besides the testimony, moreover, he also printed the orders convening the military commission, the rules for its guidance, its findings, the sentences, and the arguments of counsel, none of which are to be found in Poore's version.

Notwithstanding the superiority of Pitman's book in these respects, however, it also has defects and limitations. Both Pitman and Poore were obliged to omit some of the testimony in order to obtain permission to publish from the War Department. And Pitman omitted still more of it according to his own standards of relevancy, triviality, and repetitiousness. Furthermore, his method of organization made it necessary for him to depart from the chronology of the trial, though he always gives the date of the witnesses' testimony. And to save space, he often omits the questions and consolidates the answers of the witnesses. For the general reader and even for most students these are not serious defects, but those who must work meticulously may find it necessary to use Poore along with Pitman.

Since the publishers must expect a narrow margin of profit on a venture such as this, one should perhaps forgive them the use of a printing process, which, through reproduction of the original minuscule two-column type, endangers the reader's eyesight. And they are to be commended for adding a splendid and informative introduction by Philip Van Doren Stern.

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*Charles A. Beard: An Appraisal.* Edited by Howard K. Beale. (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1954, pp. xiv, 312. Bibliography. \$4.50.)

In the nineteenth century the American public learned its history from such great scholars as John L. Motley, George Bancroft, William H. Prescott, and Francis Parkman. These men knew their subjects, and could write readable prose. In the twentieth century, however, hardly any American historians have attained a popular following. Allan Nevins, perhaps; and possibly Henry Steele Commager, Samuel Eliot

Morison, and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. It would almost seem, then, that Charles A. Beard, who died in 1948 and undeniably was a popular historian, lived out of his proper time. His nearly fifty books sold the astonishing number of 11,352,163 copies. He also wrote innumerable articles, essays, and reviews. There is no doubt about the quality of this writing, either; "Uncle Charley" had his poor moments, but generally maintained a very high level of excellence. Sometimes a few pet phrases or ideas reiterated themselves into clichés, occasionally the thinker nodded while the prose rattled on; but the sharpness of language and acuteness of thought almost always took the reader irresistibly to the conclusion that Beard had in mind.

It was peculiarly fitting that this extraordinary historian should have come from a farm near Spiceland, Indiana. Beard never forgot his farm experiences in Indiana, nor his college training at DePauw in the 1890's. Neither the intellectual refinement of Oxford nor the academic assembly line at Columbia could change his Midwestern views. His utter sincerity, droll wit, and homely approach to all problems, great and small, made his personality tremendously attractive to generations of students. This present volume of tributary essays indicates the effectiveness of his teaching and scholarship.

There are some brilliant essays here, especially those by George S. Counts, on "Charles Beard, the Public Man," Merle Curti, on "Beard as Historical Critic," and Eric F. Goldman, "Charles A. Beard: An Impression." The editor, Howard K. Beale, has written well of Beard as historian. Beard's own academic interests divided along lines generally true of American scholarship of his time. With one exception, the symposium covers these interests very adequately: around the turn of the century Beard concerned himself with local government, chiefly its institutions; his interest then broadened to American federal government, culminating in his notable volume on the Constitution and an extraordinarily perceptive study of the economic origins of Jeffersonian democracy (these works marked Beard's search for the underpinnings of politics, which he found to be essentially economic); in the 1920's he turned to the history of American civilization, writing his greatest work, *The Rise of American Civilization*; in the thirties his mind turned to economics again, although this time to a search for a way out of the Great Depression;

and in the 1940's he faced the problems of world war and American foreign policy.

Now it seems that Beard's work during the 1930's for the first time showed marked signs of tendentiousness. The wish was constantly father to the thought, and his literary production so suffered that by the end of the decade he had turned to pamphleteering. *The Open Door at Home* and *The Idea of National Interest* are not very competent books, in argument or literary finish, and the tracts which Beard published just prior to American entry into the second World War—*Giddy Minds and Foreign Quarrels* and *A Foreign Policy for America*—are unfit products of historical scholarship. After the war Beard set out to show fatuousness and bad faith on the part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in two books which were, again, not searches for truth but vindications of positions taken in advance. Beard's writing in the 1930's and 1940's grew from his great concern for the future of the Republic. Yet wishing could not make America safe. He could not return the United States to the carefree era before the first World War, and it was of little avail to ransack history to prove what essentially was a false theory: that isolation (or "continentalism," as he liked to call it) was possible in the twentieth century. This impossible quest brought him much unhappiness; even his tremendous personal influence upon American scholarship and American popular thought could not make his point of view prevail.

The present symposium unfortunately does not face up to this tragedy of Beard's later years. A problem deserving at least three or four essays in a book as long as this is given only one—"Beard and Foreign Policy," by George R. Leighton. A member of the staff of the Republican Policy Committee of the United States Senate, Leighton in some sense is disqualified as an objective critic. Although unfavorable criticism is not frequently found in memorial volumes, surely Beard himself would have wished its inclusion. His reputation is solid enough to have withstood some adverse appraisal.

Withal this symposium comes off quite successfully. The editor deserves congratulation for the high quality of the contributions, which with minor exception are worthy of their subject.

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