

political obligations and a large official force that was the product of Congressional patronage. In this situation eyes that spotted defrauding contractors at Cairo were blind to the same thing in the political setting. Realizing something wrong, Grant developed a sort of frustration complex.

Catton makes a good case for constructive features in Grant's first administration, especially since a revolution had actually occurred. Able to pick generals he was equally incapable of judging great financial magnates of the period or of understanding their behavior; hence, he got credit for Credit Mobilier, Santa Domingo, and Black Friday. Conditions that produced the Tweed Ring and others, things that had no bearing whatsoever on his administration, were accredited to it. He won a second term on the Democrats' political blunder in accepting Greeley.

In Grant's second administration the author seems more concerned in case making. The development of Reconstruction threw Grant into the arms of the Radicals, and they used him and tarnished his fame. He was helpless in the avalanche of scandals that tradition attached to his administration. He was not elected for a third term.

As a private citizen, his old aimlessness returned. He made a wandering tour of the world, and the Old Liners boomed him for president on his return. He lent his name to a firm, a bucket shop, that swindled the public and pauperized him. Penniless, in the shadow of death, and in great pain, he fought his last battle, wrote his *Memoirs*, and left his family a respectable estate. He was the great general again in this, his last battle.

Catton's book is well written, fast moving, and interesting. It is a must for anyone interested in the period.

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Inside Lincoln's Cabinet: The Civil War Diaries of Salmon P. Chase. Edited by David Donald. (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1954, pp. x, 342. Introduction and index. \$6.50.)

Among the many Washington diaries of the Civil War period, perhaps the least in importance and significance is the diary left by Salmon P. Chase. The great Secretary of the

Treasury appeared frequently and importantly in the diaries of such men as Gideon Welles and Adam Gurowski, but his own personal recordings cast little significant light on either his own activities or upon public affairs. Unlike Welles, Chase essayed no character analysis and made no significant commentary on the leading personalities of wartime Washington. He played, it is true, an important role in the mounting hostility to Abraham Lincoln, but very little of this appeared in his diaries. He seemed rather to be only confused about the President's methods and objectives, and he clearly did not comprehend why Lincoln finally accepted his resignation. The major themes of his diaries were the issuance of bonds, the making of trade regulations, the superficial details of patronage, and an abiding interest in Negro soldiers. He threw in his diaries little light, however, upon financial affairs, though he clearly believed his own acts and policies were both right and successful.

The Chase diaries, which are deposited in two separate libraries, have been printed before, but never before have they been so ably edited or with so understanding an introduction. David Donald has done an excellent editorial job and brought meaning and comprehension to the fragmentary jottings of the treasury secretary. Unfortunately, they are, after all, only fragmentary jottings. For at least half the time that he was inside Lincoln's cabinet, Chase wrote nothing in his diary, and the things that he did write cause him to emerge as a figure of considerably less importance than his contemporaries believed him to be.

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Americans Interpret Their Civil War. By Thomas J. Pressly.
(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954, pp. xvi,
347. Bibliography and index. \$5.00.)

America's Civil War and Reconstruction have produced a literature of vast size and increasing complexity. It is time that historians have set themselves to the task of distillation, a task well begun by this survey of the historiography of the brothers' war. It is an extensive body of writing which the author oversees. The accounts date from the crash of Sumter's guns to the latest available scholarship, range across ninety