

noisy; the smoke stacks belched black fumes. Sand bars often brought the vessel to a violent stop. Inadequate railings allowed men to slip overboard. Gambling and drinking were permitted most of the twenty-four hours.

McDermott has drawn from a wide variety of sources: the chronicles of American and British travellers, contemporary magazines, St. Louis newspapers. The reader will find here Timothy Flint's description of the variety of river boats, Schultz' amusing sketch of an Indian band which made eerie music out of enormous kettles and the joints of sugar cane, the actor Joe Cowell's comment that a Mississippi steamboat was a "high-pressure prison," Thomas Hamilton's lugubrious dismissal of the river as a place of "solemn gloom," and John Bradbury's graphic account of the New Madrid earthquake as it felt to terrified voyagers on a keelboat. Other travellers testified to the abundance of the food, the picturesqueness of the woodyards where the steamboats replenished their supply of fuel, the kaleidoscopic scenery which unrolled in actuality like a John Banvard panorama in miniature.

Every anthologist naturally faces a problem in selection. A reader might regret the omission here of anything by Charles Dickens or Captain Marryat or Francis Parkman. Basil Hall is not represented, and one looks in vain for that superb account of the social milieu on a Mississippi steamboat which Herman Melville gives in chapter two of *The Confidence Man*. *Au contraire* there are T. B. Thorpe and C. A. Murray and J. S. Robb and J. M. Field. There are some twenty pages of illustrations by Jacob A. Dallas and a handful of cartoons by an early artist named Arrowsmith. And there are excellent preliminary remarks and headnotes by the editor. *Before Mark Twain* is vivid description and important social history.

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The Democratic Republic, 1801-1815. By Marshall Smelser. *The New American Nation Series*. Edited by Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1968. Pp. xiv, 369. Notes, illustrations, select bibliography, index. \$7.95.)

The task which Professor Smelser set for himself in offering this survey volume was to blend together into a coherent narrative the great body of historical writings on the period from 1801 to 1815 published since the appearance of Edward Channing's volume on the Jeffersonians in the *American Nation* series in 1906. That he has done this with care and diligence is unquestioned; the heavily footnoted volume is a storehouse of references to a half century of scholarship. Moreover, he has lifted his work from the shadow of Henry Adams, whose monumental study has long dominated surveys of the period. Yet the volume is not fully satisfying as a summation of current scholarship in the period. The author's decisions on what is important to be reported, what findings or interpretations of scholars should be accepted, and what should be ignored, are based on subjective

judgments; his methodology does not insure that his summary rests upon the most exhaustive studies that have been produced.

Although Smelser departs from Adams' view of Jefferson and Madison, like Adams he places major emphasis on foreign affairs and on the War of 1812. The author's overall verdict on Jefferson and Madison as Presidents rests largely on their records in handling foreign affairs, and it is basically sympathetic. "It is easy to ridicule the judgments of Jefferson and Madison on the problems posed by the great Anglo-French contest," he writes, "but better solutions (except by hindsight) do not come readily to hand" (p. 323). He refuses to accept Adams' description of Jefferson as leaving office an unpopular and discredited President, and he rejects the picture of Jefferson and the Republicans as repudiating the principles that brought them into power. The acquisition of power did not Federalize the Jeffersonians, he argues. "The Republicans adopted new positions to meet newly discovered circumstances" (p. 314). Jefferson's deviations from stated principles may be viewed as "intelligent adaptation to unforeseen circumstances" (p. 191). Madison, he acknowledges, did not provide the leadership of Congress that Jefferson had furnished; his greatest difficulty was that he had been made President by the congressional nominating caucus, and "Madison could never dominate his makers" (p. 186). Nevertheless, Smelser sees Madison as an executive who learned from his mistakes and those of the nation and moved to correct the deficiencies that the reverses of war exposed. In assessing the causes of the War of 1812, the author subscribes to a "heap-of-motives theory" (p. 219), although he concedes that "there could have been no war without either the orders in council or impressment" (p. 220).

While Smelser seeks to contribute to revising Henry Adams' picture of Jefferson and Madison, he also seems compelled to help in deflating the popular image of Jefferson as the liberal saint. There is far more attention to Jefferson as a man than to Madison, and there is more about Jefferson as a person before he became President than there is about him as a person while he was President. Since the popular image of Jefferson and the verdict of Adams have little resemblance, it is not surprising that in challenging both, Smelser's tone and conclusions produce a somewhat ambivalent portrait.

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Noble E. Cunningham, Jr.

The Politics of the Universe: Edward Beecher, Abolition, and Orthodoxy.

By Robert Merideth. (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968. Pp. xi, 274. Notes, bibliographic essay, index. \$5.95.)

Few American families during the nineteenth century were more illustrious than the Beecher clan. Lyman Beecher not only dominated religious thought during the first half of the century, coming as close as any man could to being an "American Pope," he produced five extraordinary children. The youngest daughter, Harriet Beecher Stowe, left her mark on history as the