

more politely and even hail their poverty as a proof of merit. But despite all its opulence, Christian Science is probably making very little progress. Its history, in the long run, will be that of all other such aberrations. It will make a noise for a while, and then it will suddenly vanish, to make way for something sweeter and worse.

Mr. Dakin's book is well ordered and competently written. He has been at pains to unearth the precise facts and he sets them forth carefully and pleasantly. The Christian Science press-agents, of course, will damn him as a slanderer, but that fact is unimportant. He has made a valuable contribution to American history.

Memorials of Dishonor

THE TRAGIC ERA: *The Revolution After Lincoln*, by Claude G. Bowers. \$5. 8¾ x 5½; 567 pp. Boston: The Houghton Mifflin Company.

MR. BOWERS' book is a long one and in parts it is painfully dull; nevertheless, I'd be glad to second a motion to compel every Federal judge in America, every member of the W. C. T. U. and the D. A. R., every Rotarian and Kiwanian and every self-confessed hero of the late war to memorize it on penalty of the bastinado. For it is a magnificent antidote to the whole rumble-bumble of Law Enforcement, with side swipes at all the other varieties of pious nonsense which now delude the American people. It deals with a period when "idealism" was loose upon the land as never before or since, and the tale it has to tell is one of almost unmitigated oppression, corruption and false pretenses. Then, as now, politicians, theologians and stock-jobbers combined to bring in the Millennium, and then, as now, the fruits were only extortion and excess. It is difficult, reading the record, to believe it. It seems a sheer impossibility that such things could have happened in a country pretending to be civilized. Yet happen they did, and not all the scouring and polishing of prostitute historians can ever erase the damning facts.

The period, of course, was that of the

two Grant administrations. Ignorant, stupid, plebeian and uncouth, with the tastes of a village drunkard and the pathetic credulity of a yokel at a county fair, Grant staggered through his eight years of disgrace and dishonor. He had an instinct for trusting scoundrels which almost amounted to genius. So long as Lincoln lived the influence of that vast and mystical personage held him in leash, and in his final dealings with Lee the orders that came from above even got him some reputation as a humane and sensible man. But once old Abe was in the boneyard, his native imbecility developed rapidly and brilliantly. By 1866 he was already lined up with the harpies and fanatics who sought to destroy Andrew Johnson, and thereafter, until his second term ended in a blast of horrible stench, he was the stalking-horse of every infamy. There is no record, after the first year or two, that he ever so much as suspected that most of his friends were scoundrels. In the midst of it all he believed that they were virtuous, and marvelled that their patriotic inspirations could be challenged. Today, appropriately enough, the largest monument in the largest American city does honor to his *manes*. It is sad, but it is fitting.

Mr. Bowers' eye is cast mainly below the Potomac. In his discussion of the sordid abominations of Reconstruction he piles up documents with relentless industry, but when it comes to what went on simultaneously in the North he is not so copious. Such half fabulous frauds as Henry Ward Beecher get only a few tart words, and there is next to nothing about the thieveries and oppressions which begat the industrialism of today. The South, in the long run, will probably suffer as unpleasantly under that industrialism as it ever suffered under Reconstruction: the signs to that effect are already numerous and striking. But Mr. Bowers has no time or steam for the subject: he is concerned primarily with the robbery and debauchery which went on in the conquered States immediately after the war.

There are few parallels to the story in the history of civilized man. The ancients, butchering their defeated foes out of hand, were relatively humane. It remained for 100% Americans to invent the scheme of first disarming them and then starving and looting them, of setting savages upon them, of cruelly and deliberately reducing them to desperation and despair. It was American soldiers in uniform who carried out that chivalrous business, and it was the most glorious of American captains who bossed the job. Let the fact be remembered by exuberant patriots whenever the flag goes by.

Mr. Bowers unearths some curious and sardonic details. When, at the height of the saturnalia, certain tender-minded Northerners protested against it on grounds of humanity, the Northern Methodist bishops demanded that the whip be laid on with unabated ferocity. From the learned jurists of the Federal judiciary came support no less hearty: they were always ready with decisions justifying the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus*, the confiscation of private property, the stealing of elections, the waste of the public funds. History repeats itself in our own day, but the denizens of the New South are too stupid to read its lessons. Mr. Bowers makes no vain pretense to judicial impartiality. He is frankly against the Sumners, Thaddeus Stevens and other such appalling sadists of the era, and apparently hopes that they are now in Hell. The ground he covers has been covered before, but his documentation is largely new. He makes heavy use of the files of the New York *World*, the paper he now serves as an editorial writer. He also dredges a lot of interesting stuff out of contemporary manuscripts, notably the unpublished diary of George W. Julian of Indiana, a follower of Stevens who gagged at what went on, and ended his career as a Democrat. The book, as I have said, has some dullness; Mr. Bowers is not a brisk writer. But the tale he has to tell is one that every American should study on his knees.

Poison Through the Mails

THE MOLINEUX CASE, edited by Samuel Klaus.
\$5. 9½ x 6½; 409 pp. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

THE technique of murder, like the technique of love, has its fashions. There are periods when fire-arms are all the rage, and there are periods when the vogue is for hammers, bludgeons, golf-clubs and sash-weights. Toward the end of the year 1898 the smart thing was to send poison through the mails—in a box of candy, a bottle of headache powders, a plug of chewing-tobacco, or what not. Thus a Mrs. Dunning was dispatched in San Francisco, a Mrs. Wilkinson in Newark, and a Mrs. Adams and a Mr. Barnet in New York. The poison that fetched Mrs. Adams was cyanide of mercury, and it reached her in a bottle of Bromo-Seltzer, then the universal morning draft of red-blooded Americans. That bottle had been addressed, not to her, but to a boarder in her house, one Cornish, an athletic instructor employed by the Knickerbocker Athletic Club. A few weeks earlier a member of the club, the Barnet aforesaid, had received a package of lost manhood powders containing the same deadly drug; he swallowed them hopefully and went to meet his God. There ensued a pother, with the *World* and the *Journal* running a race in alarms. Early in 1899 one Roland B. Molineux, a chemist, was taken into custody, charged with the crime, and for nearly three years thereafter the case held the public attention. First Molineux was found guilty and sentenced to the chair. Then the Court of Appeals upset the verdict and ordered a new trial. Then he was tried again and acquitted. Then he vanished for fifteen years, only to bob up again in a lunatic asylum, where he died in 1917.

Was Molineux innocent or guilty? The answer, I daresay, will never be known. Here Mr. Klaus presents the evidence at length, mainly in stenographic form. I can only report that after reading it diligently and prayerfully I find myself unable to make up my mind. Mr. Klaus himself, in