

washed the entire Tweed Ring; Jim Fisk at the head of his troops, throwing himself from his horse in the face of an armed mob and flying for refuge into the nearest saloon; Tilden, cold and relentless, deftly pulling the strings that compassed Tweed's ruin; and George Jones of the New York Times refusing a bribe of \$5,000,000 to give up the evidence against Tweed that was in the possession of his paper. The subtitle of this book calls it "The Story of a Grim Generation". I doubt the complete aptness of the adjective. The generation was both more and less than grim. Indeed, it contained that admixture of melodrama and farce that is never found in its full flower in any country other than our own. It possessed in its essence that very American quality of being both incredible and true.

It is perhaps a little difficult to realize today, with all our crime waves, that not so long ago gangsters fought behind barricades in New York streets, putting the police to flight, and were finally only subdued by the militia; that by the time the draft riots of Civil War days were at their height, hardly a citizen of consequence remained in the city, and whole blocks of houses were in flames; and that in its heyday the Tweed Ring was able to steal an average of \$1,000,000 a month from the people of the city of New York. Yet all these happenings are no more than just around the corner of the past.

Tweed and many another figure of his time, Vanderbilt, Gould, Fisk, Drew and Astor, exemplify in a remarkable degree just what is likely to happen when the doctrine that "might is right" is taken at its face value. Picturesque they most assuredly were, as vivid as the robber barons of the feudal ages, and, in some strange and devious way, one cannot but believe, they were essential to the development of the experiment in democracy that has not, even yet, emerged from the test-tubes of the political laboratory. As the picture of a very remarkable American era, the book should be read, and the practised reader will skip judiciously; to the very last Tweed is a somewhat shadowy figure moving against a background so vivid that one is reminded of a horned devil silhouetted against the flames of the pit.

PLEASANT HISTORY

By Frederick H. Martens

- HARPER'S LITERARY MUSEUM. A MIRROR OF AMERICAN MANNERS AND MORALS FROM POCAHONTAS TO THE DAYS OF DOLLY MADISON. Composed by Ola Elizabeth Winslow. Harper. \$4.00.
- CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH. By E. Keble Chatterton. Harper. \$4.00.
- NEW ENGLAND COLONIAL LIFE. By Robert Means Lawrence. The Cosmos Press. \$2.00.
- A HISTORY OF THE LIFE AND DEATH, VIRTUES AND EXPLOITS OF GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON. By Mason Weems. American Book-Shelf Series, Ed. by Mark Van Doren. Macy-Masius. \$2.50.
- PATRIOTS OFF THEIR PEDESTALS. By Paul Wiltach. Bobbs. \$2.75.
- THE CAPTURE OF OLD VINCENNES. By George Rogers Clark and Governor Henry Hamilton. Ed. by Milo M. Quaife. Bobbs. \$2.75.
- READINGS IN HISPANIC AMERICAN HISTORY. By N. Andrew N. Clevon. Ginn. \$3.60.
- CALIFORNIA. By Gertrude Atherton. Liveright. \$3.00.
- A PIONEER OF 1850. By George Willis Read. Ed. by Georgia Willis Read. Little, Brown. \$3.50.
- THE WOLF CUB. By Count Gaston de Raousset-Boulbon. Tr. by Farrell Symons. Bobbs. \$3.00.

AMERICANA HISTORICA, once a sapling, is now a towering evergreen, profusely dropping cones of memoir and reminiscence, biography and history, spring, summer, autumn and winter, in keeping with the new laws of book-publishing nature. Recently, autobiography balances descriptive history, while a compilation like "Harper's Literary Museum", by Ola Elizabeth Winslow, mirroring "American morals and manners from Pocahontas to Dolly Madison", a clever, entertaining miscellany, grave and gay, partakes of the nature of both. It has, for example, a whole section devoted to "Women".

Ah, for the etiquette of the good old days! In Boston (1836) "... There may be occasions, when girls over twenty, may go into general society without this protection (mother, chaperon), but for girls in their teens it is very undesirable ... a look from the lady who matronizes them may save them from something they would be sorry for!" In Philadelphia (1838), they stressed a rule which still holds good: "It is better for a lady to say too little in company than too much", though today, when sex and age are mere figures of speech, the suggestion that

"Her conversation should always be consistent with her sex and age" no longer has a meaning. We discover, too, that a favorite modern social gesture originated in Penn's town: "There is another habit, from which some females who class themselves as ladies, are not entirely free — that of lolling back, balanced upon the two hind legs of a chair. . . . How must the feelings of a truly religious and devout man be wounded, when he sees the legs extended, in the same indecent posture, in the house of God!"

Following delightful sections "For Children", and "Forecasting the Future", drawn from old books and magazines, comes "Concerning Weathers", from almanacs, and a concluding section of "Advertisements". These, from ancient broadsides and gazettes, offer quaintly illuminating glimpses of American life from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth century. Book notes include one of John Cotton's "Spiritual Milk for Boston Babes. . . . Drawn out of the Breasts of Both Testaments for their Soul's Nourishment" (Cambridge, 1656). Alas, today even our spiritual milk is synthetic, and the Old Testament breast (in any event) is suspect.

The "Literary Museum" under the section "The Times Recorded", reprints Captain John Smith's original Pocahontas story, as told in his general history of Virginia. E. Keble Chatterton, in his "Captain John Smith", however, has done a very readable, yet reliable and complete biography of the adventurous founder of Jamestown, Virginia, whom many American historians — the more shame to them! — have so long decried as one of the seventeenth century's most picturesque liars. Mr. Chatterton makes out an excellent case, on documentary evidence, for this earnest, whiskered battler against Turk and Indian, who remains an astonishingly romantic figure despite an almost total lack of sex interest. For the Captain's love for adventure practically superseded love for women, and if ladies Turkish, Muscovite and French were "kind" to him, he has discreetly omitted to mention it.

Captain John Smith's "Description of New England" was written five years before King James I created a council for the future

Puritan colony. And Robert Means Lawrence's "New England Colonial Life" offers a fill of information, pleasantly told, anent seventeenth and eighteenth century New England life—pioneers, early homes, Sunday observances, stage-coaches, Old Boston and much else, though he sheds no light on the custom of "bundling" so amusingly exploited by Woodward in his "George Washington".

And now we come naturally to that "image" the last author has so sternly assailed, in the shape of a happy addition to Mark Van Doren's "American Book Shelf" — the "History of the Life and Death, Virtues and Exploits of General George Washington", by Mason Weems, the book which Woodward quite truthfully says is "stuffed . . . with fables". While for the unsophisticated American it supplies (more or less) in one volume what Washington Irving does in two, the sophisticate will revel in its absurd and entertaining rhetoric. Yet despite the shrewd blows which of late have been dealt the olden concept, there may be many who still feel that Weems's is the true King James's gospel of the Father of his country. They will agree when he cries: "To be constantly placing him then, before our children, in this high character (directing the storm of war, or 'ravishing' the ears of deeply listening Senates), what is it but like springing in the clouds of a golden Phoenix, which no mortal calibre can ever hope to reach? . . . Oh, no, give us his *private virtues!* In these every youth is interested. . . ." And they will wish to have their children inoculated early in life with the pietistic virus so that later they will be immune to the germs of irreverence. Besides, as "Parson" Weems says in his first chapter, "Private life is always *real* life" — even though its reality be invented. Mr. Van Doren has earned the thanks of both factions by resuscitating this delightful antique.

As a pendant to Weems we have Paul Wiltach's "Patriots Off Their Pedestals". The title suggests a dragging in the mire of venerated statues, but the author's eight intimate portraits of great figures of the heroic age are Weemsian rather than Woodwardish.

George Rogers Clark's own story of "The

Capture of Old Vincennes", one of the far Western triumphs of the Revolutionary War, is a soldier's straightforward memoir of the great event of his life, set down in honest, convincing style in 1789, ten years after the surrender to him of the British fort and garrison which controlled the Illinois country. It gains completeness by the inclusion of Governor Hamilton's bitter official report to Sir Frederick Haldimand, regarding his treatment as a common felon in an American jail, a prey to "a variety of vermin", until Washington secured his exchange.

It is a pity that Professor Cleven's "Readings in Hispanic American History" appears in a self-confessed text-book garb, for it is full of vivid pictures from the past and comparatively recent present of that Spanish America too many regard merely as an excuse for the Monroe Doctrine. The ponderousness of its official quotations (reports, addresses, proclamations, etc.) is more than offset by intimate views from diaries, letters and memoirs, which cover the entire continent from Indian days to approximately 1914. Since in these 142 excerpts, in most cases, the very men speak who made the history of South America, the book deserves more than a "collateral reading" public.

Father Kino's account, in Professor Cleven's volume, of his missionary work among the artless Pimas, (1681-1711), may serve to introduce a new edition of Gertrude Atherton's enjoyable "intimate" history, "California", a good popular story of the author's native state. And fresh from the original "worn sheepskin notebook", are the reminiscences of George Willis Read, on an overland trip to California, on the Oregon Trail, in 1850; one by sea, via Panama, in 1862; and a visit to the Nevada silver mines in 1863. Edited by his daughter as "A Pioneer of 1850", these artless jottings have the interest attaching to scene and times rather than to the telling. There are copious notes and good pictures.

Far more vivid and colorful, however, is Maurice Soulié's "The Wolf Cub", which deals with the Count de Raousset-Boulbons' madly quixotic attempt to carve out a Sonoran colonial empire for an indifferent France (1850-1854). Farrell Symons, who

has made a good job of the translation, is quite right in saying that "written by a Frenchman for Frenchmen, its interest is probably greater for Americans than for the public for whom it was originally intended". In a simple, compelling way it tells the romantic tragedy of a chivalrous filibuster and may be commended to all who enjoyed Blaise Cendrars's "Sutter's Gold", which Henry Longan Stuart has so inimitably Englished. The black and white illustrations of the original "*la grande Aventure*" seem preferable to their red-brown reproductions in "The Wolf Cub", but that is a matter of taste.

General readers, as well as special students will find in these volumes a wealth of interest. They illuminate fascinatingly a number of the more engrossing episodes in the history of our continent and country.

IN MINOR VEIN

By Emanuel Eisenberg

BALLADS FOR SALE. By Amy Lowell. Houghton, Mifflin. \$2.25.

BOY IN THE WIND. By George Dillon. Viking Press. \$1.50.

THE CYDER FEAST AND OTHER POEMS. By Sacheverell Sitwell. Doran. \$2.

THE TALL MEN. By Donald Davidson. Houghton, Mifflin. \$2.

A CELTIC ANTHOLOGY. By Grace Rhys. Crowell. \$1.75

HERE is Amy Lowell with a third posthumous collection of poems. Up to the time of her death she was one of the outstanding figures in the country — but this was a personal, not a literary renown. Here, where it is possible to consider the verse apart from the individual, it is a little stunning to hear (though one had incredulous suspicions of it before) the utter hollowness of her work. We are purely in an external world: the top layer of emotions, the surface of flowers, the direct conscious statements of mood. We are shown color without warmth, pain without anguish, rage without hate and energy without strength. Controlled, decisive, very well aware of what she is doing and how she wants it done, Miss Lowell walks down the literary garden in her stiff theoretic brocade . . . so stiffly, so glittering with theory, that