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Books of Special Interest

Liggett, Exhibit A

COMMANDING AN AMERICAN ARMY. Recollections of the World War by HUNTER LIGGETT, Major General, U.S.A. retired. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1925.

Reviewed by MAJOR THOMAS H. THOMAS

GENERAL HUNTER LIGGETT might be presented as Exhibit A of the Staff School at Leavenworth and the War College at Washington: of the whole effort made by the old Regular Army in pre-war days to give itself the rudiments of Staff training and of higher military education. It was an effort which had little encouragement or support from the outside; Elihu Root was perhaps the only civilian in this country who grasped its full importance, and the War College, (which he created and of which Hunter Liggett was a graduate and later president), may be called Root's personal contribution to the success of the army in 1918. It was only the grim determination of General Pershing that gave the A. E. F. the chance to form its own staffs and operate a great army under an American High Command; and on Liggett first of all fell the task of proving in actual practice that the thing could be done. At the end of 1917, he was selected as commander of the First Army Corps. It existed only on paper, and there had not been an army corps in our Army since the days of the Civil War; so that Liggett had to create it from the ground up: to form a modern corps staff at a time when we had as yet no sector on the front and no actual experience in the war.

This process occupied the first six months of 1918. Then, before the corps had held command of even a quiet sector, it was suddenly thrust into the *melée* of the Second Battle of the Marne, like a small boy being taught to swim by being thrown head first into deep water. The French Command has no enthusiasm for the project, but General Liggett, instead of abusing them for selfish motives, sets forth with perfect fairness the facts which led the French to honest if mistaken conclusions. Purely as an argument, the French had all the best of it; Pershing's determination to have American commands rested, at bottom, on the ability of the few staff officers trained at home to leaven the whole lump. It was a matter of personal judgment, in which he took one opinion and his Allies another: and when Pershing forced the French to make a place for the untried First Corps in the line of battle at a critical period, it was realized on all sides that the whole principle of a separate American Command must stand or fall according to the success or failure of Liggett's work.

The untried First Corps had accordingly to make its battle debut in the lively war movement of Foch's July counter-offensive; it had to attack vigorously with its green divisions and at the same time to remember that any serious setback would be doubly fatal.

The result of this test was that a few weeks later the French allowed a still newer and greener American corps to enter the line beside the First. In September a wholly improvised American corps tried its hand at St. Mihiel, and immediately afterwards this infant High Command was entrusted with a major operation in the Meuse-Argonne. In all these Liggett's command played an important part, and when General Pershing gave up his experiment of directing military operations in person as well as filling the duties of Commander-in-Chief, it was to General Liggett that he turned over the conduct of the Meuse-Argonne campaign.

General Liggett's book sets forth this rapid evolution in a singularity detached and impersonal fashion: it is perhaps the most concise of all books upon the War. From the standpoint of the general reader it would have been more interesting if it had been fuller and less impersonal, if the author had offered more of the very illuminating comments and opinions he occasionally allows himself. But in another sense this reticence is decidedly creditable to the author; and it is no small satisfaction that the first book forthcoming from any of the leading American Commanders in the war should be so sound a military narrative; written from so broad a viewpoint and marked by so fine a tone.

Spanish Needlework

POPULAR WEAVING AND EMBROIDERY IN SPAIN. By MILDRED STAPLEY. New York: William Helburn Inc. 1925. \$15.

Reviewed by GEORGIANA GORDON KING

THIS very delightful book suffers under two disadvantages, both perhaps inescapable; the use of photographs reproduced by half-tone, where even twenty years ago drawings would have been substituted, makes the plates useless as copies to work from, or even, for the most part, in comparisons with any piece of stuff a reader may have in possession or within reach. On the other hand, the text is almost exclusively descriptive, where a more historical treatment might have been not only desirable but possible, for the sparse allusions to Sicily and the Greek Islands, to Balkan work and old Venetian lace, show how wide is the range of the author's expertise. "Cretan," "Persian," and "Coptic," words too often lightly used, represent here actual comparison probably of museum pieces. Three charming *genre* pictures, from photographs of an old Gallegan woman spinning, a group of embroiderers at Lagartera, with carts in Avila showing characteristic linen-and-wool coverlets, prompt a regret that some famous pieces preserved in Spanish painting might not have been included. There is a girl-saint by Zurbaran who carries a choice bag on her arm, and a "Mary Embroidering," by the same artist; not to name an altar-piece in an out-of-the-way corner of Leon where the "Education of the Virgin" shows her making lace on a pillow. Indeed, by reason of the Spanish passion for realism a serious contribution to the subject might be made by gathering from old paintings, just as the late Sr. Osma's discussion of the Hispano-Moresque and Valentian ware starts from a photograph of a trecento Last Supper, where the table is set out with priceless pottery at Solsona.

More could have been done also with the Sardinian work, both woven and embroidered, for Sardinia shares a common inheritance with Spain besides owing a direct debt, and the likenesses are suggestive. Less excusable is the absence of explicit reference, by number, in the fifty-odd pages of exposition, to the 118 plates, among which, in the multitude of instances, it is not always easy to make out which one is under discussion. On the other hand, the twenty cuts that illustrate simple stitches frequently employed, are plain and imitable, and the three color-plates both pleasing and representative.

Here, as elsewhere, the weakness or flaw in the workmanlike thoroughness of the author is a curious inability to tell all she knows; a common difficulty of the inexperienced writer, it is harder to explain in one who has so many books to her credit, besides a Corresponding Membership in the Hispanic Society. In a sense the book falls between two stools, not quite learned, not quite practical; notwithstanding which, it remains indispensable.

The uses of linen and wool, and the various types of strictly peasant weaving, are first discussed, and with the fringes and tassels and appliqué work cut out chiefly from felt, occupy the first five little chapters; the last one describes filet lace. In the intermediate seven, devoted to embroidery and drawn work, lies the main interest to collector and reader in the careful account of shades and stitches, and the exact procedure for making different sorts of patterns, openwork or darned or re woven. Odds and ends of observation have real value likewise; the account of prayer-mats spread under memorial candles upon the church floor, on All Souls' Day, and *panos de ofrenda* used at other times, fills a hiatus that existed in other travelers' records of the *hacheras* set out and lighted for the Sunday Mass and the memorial loaves offered in commemoration of the dead.

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Books of Special Interest

Adventures of a Scholar

TRAMP. By GLEN H. MULLIN. New York: The Century Co. 1925. \$2.

Reviewed by JIM TULLY

I HAVE read Glen Mullin's "Adventures of a Scholar Tramp," with mingled delight and wonder. To one who spent the better portion of six years as a vagabond in the far and hungry places this book seems like a light that never was on land or sea or any railroad engine. In Chapter VII Mr. Mullin, the scholar tramp, writes:

To the genuine hobo, a train is a thing compounded of magic and beauty, just as a bravely trimmed vessel is to a mariner. It arouses within him a latent mysticism. The rattle and swank of a long freight pulling out of the yards, the locomotive, black and eager, shoving her snorting muzzle along the rails, this is a spectacle and a challenge which only the wanderer who loves train riding can understand. To him at such a moment, a train is not harnessed to the sordid, uncouth uses of commercial transport. She is an enchanted caravan moving into the mysterious beyond, hailing with bells and song the blue distance that fades forever as she moves.

Only a scholar who tramped in a Y. M. C. A. railroad yard could write like that. Even a professor of English would know that such writing has nothing to do with hoboes or hoboing. Only in one case out of every eighty million is there a hobo who is any more conscious of magic or beauty than the man who chisels the local court-house statue.

Perhaps times have changed in the fourteen years I have been away—perhaps poets have taken to the road and now chant their verses under the stars.

It has always seemed strange to me that no American has written anything worth while about the vermin-chasing life of the hobo. Jack London tried it in "The Road." It was one of this magnificent prostitute's sorriest attempts in literature. With all Jack's showmanship he really did not know the road. Mr. Vachel Lindsey once wrote a "Handy Guide for Beggars"—but of course much should be forgiven a man brave enough to preach the "gospel of beauty" in the backwaters of America. Then Josiah Flynt wrote some books which I read carefully in my boyhood. I did not know what was wrong with Josiah then. I do now. He couldn't write. He made a painstaking study of a phase that has passed. His name has passed with it. Harry Kemp wrote "Tramping on Life." I was interested in what he said about Mrs. Upton Sinclair the first. But she was not a tramp.

As I have said above, fourteen years may make a vast difference even in hobo-land. Perhaps the recruits have grown

weaker. Hoboes were respectable when I was a boy. They snarled and were cynical at life. They were indignant when given bread without butter. They said "Oh applesauce" to all illusions but one—they each and every one wanted to work their way up in the world. That is, they wanted to want to do it. They were theorists about work.

Some of the descriptions of tramps in this book are very well done. But Mr. Mullin has failed to imbue the objects of his descriptions with life. The book will prove of interest to those readers who wish to catch a glimmer of the truth without being made to feel uncomfortable. However, it is not likely to be given wide approval among the roving brotherhood.

Symbolic Dialogue

CAPTAINS AND KINGS. By ANDRE MAUROIS. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1925. \$1.50.

Reviewed by T. J. C. MARTYN

IT IS a natural temptation to contrast this book with the author's "Ariel"; for it was by the latter that M. Maurois won for himself a high place in the literature of the English-speaking world. Like most temptations it is an idle one: there is no similarity between the two books; and even the style, since it serves an utterly different purpose, is not to be compared to the great force and precision, charm and wit of that brilliant piece of realism that was presented to us in the biography of Shelley.

The form which this book takes is a dialogue between a Radical philosopher and an aristocratic army officer. The rôles are, perhaps, symbolical. The philosopher represents an order which is not disposed to accept things at their face value, while the soldier, not less critical than his master, is a servant of tradition. It is to a large extent a discussion between Liberal and Conservative France.

The controversy is shaped to provide an answer to Jean Pierrefeu's "Plutarque a Menti." It attempts to show that the quality of leadership is neither accidental nor incidental, but innate and a sum of many virtues. Jean Pierrefeu sets out to remove "those comfortable illusions" concerning the halo of military genius that so many soldiers wear. In the words of the philosopher, he says that the "Generals propose and the Fates dispose," that "the wisest plans may miscarry and the clumsiest win the day," that "military genius is but the fond illusion of nervous civilians."

In the course of the argument the qualities of leadership are brilliantly defined. It is shown that chance is not the supreme arbiter and that success is not the only criterion of a great leader. This is done by a number of clever references to historical figures and to such contemporary soldiers as Lyautey, of whom the officer has an exceedingly high opinion, Joffre, Weygand, Pétain, Fayolle, Gallieni, Mangin, and others. These are all great leaders, for they are able to survey the "Territory of Things Possible" with an eye unclouded by "materialistic determinism." They are, in other words, able to create an action and carry it out, always, however, having due regard to what is and what is not possible.

But there is something more to leadership. Jean Pierrefeu was singularly contemptuous of what he called the Bergson general staff. Joffre, like Briand, is represented as being lazy. He is scored for his "occultism"—the "will to win." But the young officer shows that there are things ponderable and imponderable to be taken into account. "Action," he says, "must have another motive force than pure reason." What he means is evidently that "the mystical resolve to conquer can take the place of plan and method."

It is one of the faults of dialogue that it never is conclusive. M. Maurois has indicated a good case against M. Pierrefeu, but he can scarcely be said to have answered him. What he has done is to point out the way and the manner in which he should be answered. He is definite to this extent; he points out that military leadership is composed of a large quantity of qualities and that to be a successful leader requires more intelligence than good fortune.

The first volume of the sixth edition of Meyers Lexikon has just been issued (Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut). This great German encyclopædia, which is to run to twelve volumes in its new issue, has been completely revised. The last edition appeared twenty years ago, and the intervening period has necessitated not merely the changes which two decades of progress normally call for, but the complete revision of world affairs, maps, and biographical data that the war has demanded.

Miguel Artigas has recently issued a new life of the seventeenth century Spanish poet, Don Luis de Góngora Argote (Madrid: Revista de Archivos), which very ably represents what is already known of the life and work of the father of Baroque poetry, and adds considerable new matter to the old. Señor Artigas includes in his biography some hitherto unpublished poems, and between sixty and seventy new letters.



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