

The New Books

(Continued from preceding page)

ware can hardly fail to grasp the parallel between the fictional career of Mr. Hart's Bayard Stuart and that of a prominent Senator who died in 1920. The accuracy of the portrait, which presents Stuart as a monument of selfishness and a master of all the arts of political corruption, may be left to the experts. Certainly he is not a sympathetic figure and has not even the excuse, in Mr. Hart's version, of believing in himself.

Meanwhile, judged purely as a novel, "The Great One" calls for more than usual indulgence. The author has an unconventional and often thoroughly interesting point of view. He possesses something of the indignation and talent for melodramatic narrative which would be necessary in the making of an ironic novel of American politics. But technically his work still seems unsure, and the effect of many excellent passages is almost completely spoiled by the inclusion of other useless and discordant ones. The story is abnormally slow in getting under way; the hero's political career, for instance, does not begin until a third of the book is past. Finally, when a recognizable outline of the young man has been filled in and the first real climax of the book reached, Mr. Hart appears to have found his material overabundant, and has been reduced to skipping the rest of Stuart's life giving us only the deathbed memories of the dying Senator to end an already voluminous novel. There should be room these days for a good satirical portrait of an American politician, but this isn't it.

T. P., Jr.

THE PHANTOM EMPEROR. By Neil H. Swanson. Putnam. 1934. \$2.50.

One quite extraordinary feat that Mr. Swanson has accomplished is the building of a long novel upon the few facts that are known about an actual American character, James Dickson, who proclaimed himself an emperor and raised a private army to conquer a kingdom for himself in the American southwest. He is probably one of the most mysterious characters in American history. He succeeded in enlisting sixty men in his Indian Liberating Army, mustered them in Buffalo, N. Y., issued commissions, sailed westward through the Great Lakes, and was defeated by the Minnesota wilderness in winter. The scene of "The Phantom Emperor" is the Great Lakes region. The story begins with a bang in the Newport Elegant House, in 1836, switches to the Bear's Head Tavern in Buffalo, and proceeds at a rattling pace with all the proper historical trimmings. For "love interest" there are a young American frontiersman and a French girl who has grown up in Army camps. President Jackson has sent Guerdon Warrenner to see what one Phil Dufresne is up to, who has first cut a swath in Washington, then become strangely interested in the Indian service and in Indians that came to Washington, then in hiring young men in Canada to go upon a western expedition, and finally has signed a proclamation to the Indians in Spanish territory, calling himself commander-in-chief of the Indian Liberating Army, Montezuma Second, and Emperor of North America. President Jackson is worried. He thinks Dufresne may be in the pay of the British. Warrenner has suffered from the Indians in the past, they killed his father and raped his mother; for revenge he has acquainted himself with Indian ways; has lived with the Dacotah, because thus he could revenge himself on the Ojibways. For these and other reasons Jackson has picked him for the present mission.

It would not be fair to give away the complicated plot of this long historical romance, save to say that there is—among other matters of derring-do—a grand sea-fight in the book. There is plenty of excitement and battle and blood and love.

"The Phantom Emperor" is a better book than most of its kind. It has action enough to satisfy the most action-seeking of readers, and besides that it has a great deal of interesting historical detail and a decided knack on the part of the author for the re-creation of an historical period. Neil Swanson may yet achieve a Sabatini audience. He has abilities in that direction.

W. R. B.

International

THE UNITED STATES AND CUBA. By Harry F. Guggenheim. Macmillan. 1934. \$2.50.

When a former diplomat writes about the country to which he has been accredited, the resulting work is apt to differ considerably from the conclusions of ob-

servers who are either less informed or more impartial. Mr. Guggenheim is no exception to this tendency, though he refers comparatively little to his own activities; his book is a relatively new approach to the various elements which have prevailed in the relations between the United States and her island neighbor. He likewise outlines a proposal for treaty revision which, being based upon the best advised estimates, is probably a close approximation of the next moves in the conciliatory policy now in force.

The hypothesis, widely accepted in most Latin-American countries, that the United States is still an imperialistic power, receives careful attention, as Mr. Guggenheim is at some pains to prove that American penetration of Cuban economy was at first gradual, even necessary to rehabilitation, and that after the 1921 collapse (Continued on next page)

Highlights in the Scholarly Journals

By J. DELANCEY FERGUSON

A **AMERICAN LITERATURE** (Duke University) for March scored a genuine scoop with "Emily Dickinson's Earliest Friend," by George F. Whicher. A hitherto unpublished letter which Emily wrote to Edward Everett Hale in January, 1854, identifies past question the "tutor" whom she mentions in several later letters, and incidentally deflates half a dozen picturesque and romantic theories about her. The tutor proves to be not Leonard Humphrey but Benjamin F. Newton of Worcester, Mass., who from 1847 to 1849 was a law student in Edward Dickinson's office. Newton, who died of tuberculosis in March, 1853, has previously been mentioned in accounts of Emily only as the donor of Emerson's "Poems" in 1849. Mr. Whicher's summary of his conclusions is fully supported by his facts:

From a careful reading of her own factual statements it is difficult to avoid two leading impressions: first, that not one man, but several men in succession were of great importance to her; and, second, that tenderly as she was attached to them all, the relationship that she demanded of each in turn was not that of lover, but of teacher. Not for nothing was she brought up in a New England college town.

The January issue of this journal was also excellent. Edward Laroque Tinker's "Cable and Creoles," like Mr. Whicher's article, departs from the academic norm by being well-written as well as informative.

The two people most heartily hated by the Creoles of Louisiana were "bloody" O'Reilly, who, when governor, executed five of their compatriots for conspiring against Spanish rule, and George Washington Cable, who had the temerity to write of their race. Although these offenses would appear to differ materially in degree of moral turpitude, they seem to have differed not at all in the amount of vindictive rancor they engendered in the Creoles. . . . The real root reason for this deep-seated spleen . . . was that [Cable's] every hope, habit, thought, and even his religion, were in direct conflict with the Creoles. . . .

The article continues with a brilliant analysis of Cable's character and literary achievement, and concludes by claiming that by virtue of his first two books Cable

is the legitimate father of the literary movement which is producing such splendid fruit in the South today. Cable first, among Southern writers, treated objectively and realistically the life he saw about him, and was first to break the taboo against writing about the Negro. . . . He may well be called the first martyr to the cause of literary freedom in the South.

In the same number, Randall Stewart, whose recent edition of Hawthorne's "American Notebooks" will be remembered, reprints for the first time seven brief articles, mostly book reviews, which Hawthorne contributed to *The Salem Advertiser* between March 25, 1846, and May 10, 1848. The most interesting are reviews of "Typee" and "Evangeline." Fanny N. Cherry discusses the sources of the supernatural elements in "Young Goodman Brown"; John A. Kouwenhoven analyzes Hawthorne's use of material from his notebooks in "Dr. Grimshawe's Secret," and W. L. Werner records several new "points" by which second editions of "The Scarlet Letter" may be distinguished from firsts. Other items are a slight uncollected sketch by Washington Irving, and an autobiographical letter from Paul Hamilton Hayne to William Dean Howells.

"Superb . . .
one of the best historical
romances of recent years."

—NEW YORK TIMES

MARIA PALUNA

by
Blair Niles

MARIA PALUNA . .
SHE SAW THE SPAN-
ISH CONQUEST . . .
LOVED A SPANISH
CONQUEROR



Famous Writers and Critics Recommend It

J. Donald Adams in the *N. Y. Times*:

"She is a lovely creation, this Maria Paluna, with her courage, her sensitive spirit, her understanding heart, and the tale of her love for the young Spanish caballero whose child she bore has an idyllic quality."

Herschel Brickell

in the *N. Y. Evening Post*:

"The whole novel is informed with sympathy and understanding; it has warmth as well as color and a glowing love story—a glamorous and well-done novel."

Gertrude Atherton:

"It is brilliant. I have an idea this will soon be a best seller."

John Chamberlain

in the *N. Y. Times*:

"Her narrative throbs with color, a sense of clarity of hard outline. It should have wide popularity."

Lewis Gannett

in the *N. Y. Herald Tribune*:

"It succeeds uniquely in re-creating the contemporary emotion of the most romantic moment in the history of America."

Heywood Broun

in the

Book-of-the-Month Club News:

"It is a fine book. What a magnificent woman Maria is!"

Margaret Ayer Barnes

Pulitzer Prize Winner:

"I have read Maria Paluna with the greatest possible pleasure. Mrs. Niles writes with beauty and distinction."

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