

The Civil War and After

OF the making of books on the Civil War there is no end, and doubtless never will be. Despite the great number of new issues that have arisen in all the realms of social and intellectual activity, the various phases of the great American conflict still provide motive and subject for an ever-swelling tide of print.

Mr. French¹ tells the story of the *Army of the Potomac* from the official records. Unfortunately excerpt and comment are jumbled together without sufficient typographical distinction between the two, and it is often difficult to tell what is official record and what is Mr. French. The proofreading, moreover, is frequently of a sort to add to the reader's distress. But the matter collated is of the greatest value, and one may read here the plain, unvarnished tale of the operations of the great army which, though for so long a time badly led, was at last destined to deliver the finishing blows against the Confederacy. The account closes with the supersession of General Hooker by General Meade immediately before the battle of Gettysburg.

Captain Battine² is an English army officer and a sympathizer with the Confederacy. He relates, at great length, the operations of the Federal and Con-

¹ THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC. FROM 1861 to 1863. By Samuel Livingston French. New York: Publishing Society of New York. \$2.50.

² THE CRISIS OF THE CONFEDERACY. A History of Gettysburg and the Wilderness. By Cecil Battine. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. \$5.00.

federate armies in Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania, from Bull Run to Spottsylvania, and punctuates his account with critical judgments on men and their actions. He finds in the history of the Civil War a subject of great fascination, declaring that it

"Still remains the most important theme for the student and the statesman because it was waged between adversaries of the highest intelligence and courage, who fought by land and sea over an enormous area with every device within the reach of human ingenuity, and who had to create every organization needed for the purpose after the struggle had begun. . . . The Americans still hold the world's record for hard fighting."

Captain Battine is a clever, a vivid and an engaging writer. But his judgments, both of men and of events, are often airy and unbiased. His assertion here and there that the Confederacy would have won the war had only this or that thing happened, as, for instance had Lee defeated Meade at Gettysburg, reveals an utter lack of knowledge of the the Northern attitude in the conflict. His laudation of Stonewall Jackson is extreme; and his admiration for McClellan and his statement of the numbers of soldiers engaged and of the comparative losses in the various battles, indicate that he has gathered his material from Southern partisan writers rather than from the official records.

Mr. Weeden¹ lays about him with a cudgel and hits heads right and left. His task is to show the relation of Federal Government to State government during the war, but he uses his opportunity for an undue amount of denunciation of his very numerous Dr. Fells. The material he has gathered is of great value, but the arrangement of it is faulty in the extreme, and the style and tone of the book are, to say the least, unfortunate. It is not easy to see what useful purpose his chapter headings serve; for the readable matter is grouped under such specific titles as "The Genesis of the Union" and "Federal and State Interference," it might, with almost equal appropriateness, be assembled under any of the other headings. A string of pungent judgments upon men and affairs, anecdotes,

excerpts from letters and speeches on every conceivable subject, now and then threaded together with a bit of historical narrative—of such is this book. It is entertainingly written, and only the most *blasé* of readers of Civil War matters can fail to find an engaging interest in its pages. It reveals, moreover, a vast deal of research. But it can hardly be called a critical study of the relation of Federal to State government during the Civil War.

A partisan, tho on the whole a temperately worded narrative, is Mr. Reynolds' history of the reconstruction period in South Carolina, ending with the removal by President Hayes of the Federal soldiers from the State House, at Columbia, in 1877.⁴ Despite an evident effort to minimize the odious character of the acts of the Ku Klux Klan, admission is candidly made that some of its acts were deplorable. An unworthy bitterness against President Grant, based on his support of the State governments during the many troublesome periods in that commonwealth, crops out from time to time, and the great soldier is characterized as the "smallest man that had ever sat in the chair of Washington." In spite of certain faults of temper and attitude, the book is, in many respects, worthy of high praise. A patient care in the gathering and use of its voluminous and minute data is everywhere observable, and a judicial method is attempted thruout, tho unfortunately not always maintained.

¹ WAR GOVERNMENT, FEDERAL AND STATE, in Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania and Indiana, 1861-65. By William B. Weeden. New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. \$2.50.