

The Young Pretender

COMMANDER OF THE MISTS. By D. L. Murray, New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1938. \$3.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

THE grandson of King James II of England, the elder son of the "Old Pretender," is today as glamorous a figure in Scottish history as his famous ancestress, Mary Queen of Scots. The time of the Rising in '45 is a period packed with romance. D. L. Murray writes his new novel "in homage to the Scottish nation from a distant kinsman." Those who read his remarkably vigorous novel of the Crimean War, "Trumpeter, Sound!" and his no less vigorous "Regency," can be assured that he makes the most of this story of Scotland and Bonnie Prince Charlie. He has created a fictitious family and clan living in an imagined locality near Cuillin Sound, the small clan Mac-eachan under protection of the powerful Macdonalds of Clan Ranald and the Camerons of Lochiel, which furnishes a heroine, Darthula (her name coming from Ossian's Deirdre of the Sorrows) who is fascinating and spirited enough for any novel with the clang of claymores in it. She gives everything for her Prince, except her love.

Mr. Murray sticks to history pretty closely, save for certain legitimate and necessary adjustments of it to the pur-

poses of a novel which, besides careful research, blazes with imagination. The history of Charles Edward's gallant attempt that sealed the fate of the House of Stuart is itself replete with romantic episode, but the story of Darthula, her family, and her lawyer lover, Allan Duncanson, who fought on the English side with the Clan Campbell, shows the novelist's power as a creative artist. Scott would have devoured this book with avidity. Its color and drama overcome any difficulties one may encounter with the Scots dialects, and background and characterization are full of rich and beautiful detail. The cast of characters includes actual persons, like those in the retinue of Charles Stuart, and, upon the Hanoverian side, the gross Duke of Cumberland. Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat, the Jacobite intriguer and double-dealer, figures prominently in his wheedling and treacherous role. Besides Allan Duncanson, whom she finally marries, Darthula has another persistent suitor in Alastair MacDonell, Young Glengarry.

Darthula, throughout the tale, is a sort of new Flora Macdonald in her burning loyalty to the ill-fated Stuart cause, and in her self-sacrifice. The backgrounds of old Edinburgh and wild Scotland are vividly depicted. Though this is the kind of novel that Stevenson affectionately denominated "tushery," it is a rattling good one of its kind, and not without its deep pathos.

Ambitious Fathers

MY SON, MY SON! By Howard Spring. New York: The Viking Press. 1938. \$2.50.

Reviewed by AMY LOVEMAN

THIS novel by the literary critic of the London *Evening Standard* has all the elements that make for popularity—a large canvas, pleasing characters, dramatic episodes, a twofold success story, sentiment that hovers on the verge of sentimentality without too frequently slopping over into it, love, and youth, and tragedy woven into its tale.

"My Son, My Son!" is directly in the Dickens tradition, and makes a Dickens-esque use of unfavored childhood to introduce its train of events. It chronicles the life stories of two men who rose from humble beginnings to wealth and of their sons in whom they hoped to realize all that had been denied to their own youth. For William Essex, childhood had meant poverty and toil and unlovely home life, and consequently his dearest wish was to bestow on his son Oliver the luxuries and indulgence his own early years had lacked. In Dermot O'Riordan a passionate devotion to the idea of Irish freedom (the story begins before the World War) had been submerged under the demands of successful business and so was converted into a determination to bring his son up a zealot for the cause. Both men killed the thing they loved. But Mr. Spring has pictured the rise to maturity of two generations before tragedy overtook them, and intertwined the stories of parents and children in a tale that knows both sunshine and shadow. Into the tapestry of his story are woven scenes of lowly life, young love and manhood's success, and the hopes and heartbreaks of a time across which war cut its swath.

Mr. Spring tells his tale with ease, and lays his colors on with deftness. Oliver, with his shining beauty and his weakness, Rory, with his strength and unshakable loyalty, the undisciplined and vivid Livia, Maeve, so ardent, so glowing, so devoured by her own generous nature, each in turn and all together hold the interest. There is no question of the readability of Mr. Spring's book.

And yet it is not a first-rate novel. It is far too long, it is too distinctly in the manner of Dickens not to wear a reminiscent air, and it is too patently motivated to prove a thesis. Mr. Spring set out to show how disastrous the dead hand of hopes can be when laid by an older generation on a younger, and all his succession of events is manipulated to that end. One refuses to accept his conclusions as inevitable except for the purposes of effect. And for all the precision with which the characters are realized they fail on the whole to seize on the emotions profoundly. Because "My Son, My Son!" is such an absorbing tale, one regrets that it is not even more.

GREEK AND ROMAN NAVAL WARFARE

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By Vice Admiral William Ledyard Rodgers
U. S. Navy, Retired

The book is a historical examination of the part played by Greek and Roman navies in the political and economic development of their respective countries in the last five centuries before Christ. There is a study of the types of ships of the day and of changes in arms and tactics and their reactions on each other as well as of the functions of national navies in attack and defence and in support of their national armies.

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Pp. xv + 555, pls. 14, 19 figs. in text, 28 maps. \$6.00 postpaid.

UNITED STATES NAVAL INSTITUTE

Annapolis, Maryland

Transit of Cultures

THE FOUNDING OF AMERICAN CIVILIZATION: THE MIDDLE COLONIES. By Thomas Jefferson Wertebaker. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1938. \$3.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

IT is seldom that a book on colonial history breaks new ground as effectively as this. Dr. Wertebaker occupies himself with one subject—colonial culture between the Hudson and the Chesapeake; and he drives a fresh set of roads through it. No attention is paid to politics and almost none to economics. The author is concerned with the way of life, the civilization, which English, Scotch, Irish, Germans, Swedes, and French Huguenots transplanted to America, and which was at once modified by geography, climate, trade, and the intermingling of races. In any political account of the colonies, the dominant English influences must receive emphasis; so also in any account of the business life of colonial America, its laws and governmental institutions, and its literature. But if the focus of attention is swung to manners, customs, architecture, modes of tillage, and much else that went into daily life, far less stress can be laid upon British impulses. Much was brought from Holland, much from the German Palatinate, much from France. The heterogeneous and polyglot character of early American civilization comes into view. Dr. Wertebaker has given exhaustive study to the contributions of the various racial groups, and to the slow growth of a unique civilization as they collaborated with each other and with the rugged wilderness.

We all know how much the English colonists brought to Massachusetts and Virginia, and how great a part of it survives in the America of 1938. We have all heard the exaggerated boasts of Germans, Irish, Italians, and others upon how much *they* brought to America. But these latter racial groups seldom tell us what we really wish to know. Dr. Wertebaker attacks the subject temperately and scientifically. He shows how the Palatinate settlers tried to set up in central Pennsylvania a replica of their village communities along the Rhine; how the Dutch did erect on Manhattan Island a miniature Amsterdam; how Penn's Quaker followers made brick-built Philadelphia a neater copy of the brick-and-stone London that arose after the Great Fire. He differentiates the Dutch, German, and English barns. In 1730 a traveler who saw the first near Albany, the second near York, Pa., and the third in New Jersey would have grasped their unlikeness instantly. The Flemish cottage of our Walloon settlers, with its sweeping eaves and pronounced overhang; the

Dutch houses, with their serried gable-ends, arched windows, and iron weather-vanes; the beautiful Georgian houses of the English, were equally unlike, and all have their successors today. The methods of tilling land varied as much as the systems of land-tenure. The Palatinate villages were self-contained economic units, whose farmers, masons, smiths, and millers had inherited their crafts directly from the Middle Ages. Their ways were conservative, but English officials and travelers paid tribute to their ingenuity, skill, and thrift. Dr. Wertebaker tells us of the farm implements of the various stocks; of their household furnishings; of their dress and their arts in wood and iron.

The general thesis of the book is that it was a commingling of many cultures, of many ways of life, which made the origins of the American civilization that we know today. The Gloria Dei church in Philadelphia might be taken as a symbol of the process. Its main lines are clearly English, for it was built by workmen of English blood and ideas. But it has French-Flemish details; its baptismal font is Swedish; and its organ-loft is also continental in design. Dr. Wertebaker touches on many curious survivals from the foreign-language groups of colonial days. The adjustable-roof haystack, its wooden top pushed up or down to suit the quantity of hay, survives in a few areas in the Raritan and Passaic valleys of original Dutch settlement; but it has never been adopted outside these areas. The author also pays due attention to the ecclesiastical organization and church history of the various stocks, and to the

influence of Dutch and Germans on the American branch of the English language. His volume, of course, shows the superior vitality and power of the British culture. In New York and Albany the Dutch tongue and Dutch ways were slowly but remorselessly extinguished. In the German areas of Pennsylvania the process of extinction was slower but equally sure. There was a time when Benjamin Franklin expressed alarm lest English speech and English ways be obliterated by the fast-multiplying Germans, but even in his day that fear became fantastic. The author gives proper space to the great Quaker experiment in Pennsylvania, and due homage to its results; and he describes fully the Puritan migration to East Jersey.

Altogether, this is a richly entertaining and an instructive book. Some parts of it are pioneer work, and indicate paths for further research. Dr. Wertebaker would not have us draw any extreme conclusions from it. As he says, New England was purely English in character in colonial times; so was most of the South. But in the Middle Colonies the heterogeneity of races, the variety of economic conditions, the isolation of some groups and the mingling of others, created a remarkable laboratory for the formation of a new civilization. How that American civilization—different from anything in Europe—arose and developed is the subject of his well-planned and well-written work.

Erratum

In our issue of May 7, the name of the author of "The Time of Change" was unfortunately misspelled. It should have appeared as Lucile Grebenc.

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