

BOOK REVIEWS

Mutiny on the Bounty. By CHARLES NORDHOFF and JAMES NORMAN HALL. (Boston: Little Brown and Company. 1932. Pp. 396.)

The mutiny of the *Bounty* and Lieutenant Bligh's remarkable boat voyage have been for more than a century a theme for historian, poet, and pamphleteer. Byron took them as the subject of his poem, "The Island"; and Mary Russell Mitford dealt with them also in one of her poems.

The character of Lieutenant Bligh and his conduct as a contributing cause of the mutiny have been discussed and debated, over and over again. The views have varied in proportion to the writers' admiration of Bligh or their sympathy for his down-trodden crew. The mutiny was at first believed, following Bligh's *Narrative* (which for years was the only version of the terrible event) to have originated in a well-planned conspiracy of the seamen in order to return to their dark-eyed loves in Tahiti. Amasa Delano was one of the first to doubt that this was the whole cause. The accepted view now is that it was the result of a sudden impulse of one man, Fletcher Christian, Master's Mate, driven to desperation by the insults and abuse of a tyrannical commander. It is satisfactorily proved that Bligh's *Narrative* does not contain "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

The volume under review is an historical romance, covering the whole story from the sailing of the ship to the trial and execution of some of the mutineers. It is in the form of a narrative told by one "Roger Byam." No person of that name was on the *Bounty*. "Roger Byam" is Peter Heywood, one of the Midshipmen. This is disclosed by a comparison of the list of the ship's company on pages 143 and 144 with that given in *The Eventful History of the Mutiny of the Bounty*, (London, 1831), pages 66 and 67; further, Bligh's unfeeling and brutal letter reproduced on pages 224 and 225, said to have been written to "Byam's" mother, was in truth sent to Mrs. Heywood; and, not to multiply proofs, the words attributed to "Byam" on receiving his pardon, page 353, are Heywood's; see *The Eventful History*, pages 135 and 85.

The authors have taken the usual liberties of romance writers. "Byam's" marriage to Tehani is an example. "It does not appear that young Heywood formed any matrimonial engagement during

his abode in Otaheite": see *The Eventful History*, page 155. Stewart, however, did, as the book states, marry there; the fate of his unhappy wife, who died of a broken heart, is touchingly told in *A Missionary Voyage to the Southern Pacific*; this incident is, by the authors, applied to "Byam's" imaginary wife. One of the conversations, upon which so much is made to turn, between Christian and "Byam" was in fact with Stewart; and the death of "Byam's" mother as a result of Bligh's brutal letter is pure imagination. It is suspected that the references to Sir Joseph Banks, who was a friend of Bligh, are frequently references to Heywood's uncle, Captain Thomas Pasley, later Commodore, Sir Thomas Pasley, Bart., for the concluding portion of "Banks" letter on page 282 has a distinct resemblance to one of Pasley's in *The Eventful History*, page 196. And the dramatic appearance of Tinckler at the last moment to save the day and win the pardon—*Deus ex machina*—is sheer romance. Heywood was, by the Court, recommended for clemency, though that fact is not mentioned by our authors, and his pardon was undoubtedly largely due to the whole-souled efforts of his sister, Nessy.

Aside from such matters, however, the book, for an historical romance, is reasonably accurate in its picture of conditions on the *Bounty*, the description of the mutiny, the life in Tahiti, the conduct of Captain Edwards of the *Pandora*, and the trial of the mutineers. It is plain that it is founded very largely upon Morrison's *Journal* and on the evidence given at the Court Martial. Morrison certainly makes Bligh appear as a coarse man, quick tempered and irritable in the extreme, with no sense of the respect due by a commander to his officers, and with distorted, brutal ideas of discipline and treatment of his crew. These defects are not minimized anywhere by the authors; on the contrary, for dramatic effect, they are emphasized and exaggerated. The reader rises from a perusal of the book with the conviction that Bligh was a monster in human form. It must not be forgotten that whipping, which is so much stressed against Bligh, was a common punishment at that time, not only in British ships, but in those of other nations as well. While Bligh had all the bad qualities that Morrison charges him with, he had counter-balancing good ones: He was brave, a good seaman, and a proficient navigator; he commanded the *Director* in the famous battle of Camperdown, and the *Glatton* at Copenhagen, and received the personal and public thanks of Lord Nelson for his noble

forgetably real. Dr. Allen, an early pioneer in the territory and for over forty years a very close friend of the Crows and of Chief Plenty Coups in particular, furnished the historical facts for the book. Consequently the book combines the ring of authentic history with a most charming informal, and reminiscent style.

Probably, however, the authors were correct in calling the book a biography of Plenty Coups, for it is certainly his figure which stands out from the rest of the characters. His whole story is one of what perseverance, will, fair play, and personality can accomplish. It is a story which might be held as an example to the young men or women of any race—how the young boy of the tribe, with his determination to be not *one* of the best, but *the best* in everything he did, grew up a courageous, daring youth, and finally through his reputation for fairness and wisdom as well as the physical prowess which gave him his name, was elected Chief of the Crows, and appointed by the President of the United States, Chief of all the tribes of the Northwest. It is assuredly the figure of Plenty Coups not only as an Indian, but as a great human being which will make the book of exceptional appeal not only to the student of Indian lore and Northwest history, but to the general reader as well.

WILDA THOMPSON.

History of Mount Rainier National Park. By CAROLINE LEONA TOLBERT. (Seattle: Lowman and Hanford, 1933. Pp. 60. \$0.75, paper; \$2.00, cloth.)

In her history of Washington's great national park, Miss Tolbert has given us the results of extensive research, particularly in the field of government documents. The book contains chapters on creation of Mount Rainier National Park, roads, flowers, forests and wild life of the Park, human history, discovery and exploration. While much of the ground covered by the authoress is of course not entirely new, she has gathered together for the first time much valuable material that might otherwise be difficult to locate. I refer to the chapters on the National Park service, personnel of the park administration, and special events and visitors. The outline form in which the material has been presented should make the volume a valuable reference handbook, especially for the student of Pacific Northwest history. A detailed table of contents takes the place of an index, but a bibliography, however brief, would have added much to the usefulness of the book. The illustrations used are from