a "Collection" — worth so little, yet worth so much? Think well of them, for behind every bowl or box, pie crimper, dipper, or scoop, still stands the American man or woman or child, your ancestor or mine, who made them.

It is not only Miss Gould's enthusiasm for wooden ware and her conscientious search for "the small useful objects" that preserves them for us in this book, but she has in her own way, miraculously brought to life the wonderful, enterprising, busy and ingenious "pioneers," and their way of life.

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An Army Doctor's Wife on the Frontier. Edited by Dr. Abe Laufe.
(Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1962. 352 pp. $6.00.)

The letters of Emily McCorkle Fitzgerald written between 1874 and 1878, edited by Dr. Abe Laufe and published under the title of An Army Doctor's Wife on the Frontier, do for us what no proper historian, no matter how erudite, could ever accomplish. Sitka, Alaska, the Forts in Idaho, the Nez Percé Wars and the Bannock Wars come alive. Vicariously we experience the blood, sweat and tears of the valiant men and women who tamed our frontiers.

The ties between Emily and her family in Columbia, Pennsylvania, were strong. The letters home began shortly after she and the Doctor, with 15-months-old Bess, embarked from New York to his new assignment in Portland, Oregon. They traveled by water to Panama, crossed the Isthmus by rail, and continued by water to Oregon. A change of orders sent them by boat through the Inland Passage to Sitka, Alaska, capital of the newly acquired territory. After 18 months, the Doctor was ordered to Fort Lapwai as Post Surgeon, and then to Fort Boise, Idaho. The editor has aptly entitled the Alaska period "Isolation" and the service in Idaho "The Wild West."

Emily wrote frequently. There was nothing remarkable about her style unless the complete freedom from self-consciousness can be so considered. She was not a wit. She was not a trained observer. She was, however, capable of striking sparks. The charm of the cor-
respondence springs from the homely little details of her daily life and the frank discussion of the people and events that colored it. She was wife, mother, and homemaker in that order. There was no bitterness that with a small child and in the fourth month of her pregnancy she was uprooted to follow her husband to the frontier. Bitterness flashed only when Indians threatened the life of her loved ones. She did not feel heroic. She would have been very much surprised to hear that today we consider her a distinguished daughter of Pennsylvania.

The Alaska letters were fascinating. "It will be dreadfully lonely here; the winters are so long, but I guess we will flourish." Lamps were lit at three o'clock in the afternoon and it was hard to keep the children warm; but in summer "the sun only pops down and up again." Everything was expensive. A safety pin cost a bit (12½ cents), the smallest coin where only hard money was acceptable.

The Indians were dirty but friendly. The wives of the four officers were congenial. The quarters were comfortable with carpets and calico curtains. She was homesick but safe.

In the "Wild West" the story is different. To Fort Lapwai early in July came news from the Black Hills that the Sioux were on the warpath. The non-treaty Nez Percé were friends of the Sioux. Anxiety built up. On July 16, 1876, Emily wrote, "Did you ever hear anything more terrible than the massacre of poor Custer and his command?" On September 16, she reported that Joseph, the great Nez Percé chief, was driving the settlers from the Wallowa Valley. At the Cheyenne, one of Sitting Bull's chiefs had broken up General McKenzie's conference so abruptly that for a few minutes the officers feared another Canby massacre.

On November 15, 1876, the Indian Commissioners met in Council with Chief Joseph and his band. Emily attended this meeting. Her description was vivid. The Indians' ceremonial dress, with bright colors and the elaborate decoration of paint, beads and feathers added to the solemnity. Joseph was a fine looking Indian. His brother Ollifut was "Splendidly horrible, over six feet tall and as straight as an arrow." But the conference came to nothing. Joseph would not give in an inch. General Howard summed up the attitude when he said that if Joseph were given the Wallowa Valley, he would not have accepted it nor have admitted our right to give it to him.

Eventually the troops moved out and the Doctor followed them.
This was the time spent in an agony of fear for her husband's life, for the safety of her children, and of bitter loneliness. There were sharply drawn sketches of General Howard "promenading the porch quoting scriptures" before he left on the trail, of preparations in the Fort against surprise attack, and of the grief of those who had lost husbands in the war. Running through these letters were endearing human touches: she needed dark stockings; she was dissatisfied with her locket; she desired "fixings to look young again."

The post at Boise, Idaho, seemed the answer to prayer. It was not long, however, until the Bannock Wars began. The details of this campaign were told in letters from the Doctor to his wife — letters which she sent home to her mother. Only two short notes from Emily have been preserved. On October 5, 1876, the Fitzgeralds returned to Pennsylvania. On January 21, 1879, Doctor Fitzgerald, weakened by the rigors of the Indian campaigns, died of inflammation of the lungs. Emily lived until 1912. "They lie side by side in the cemetery at Columbia, Pa."

The title page names the editor and adds "Preliminary editing by the late Russell J. Ferguson." Preparation of these letters was one of the projects cut short by Dr. Ferguson's death. Mrs. Ferguson had already typed the entire correspondence — nearly 3000 typed pages. No editing had as yet been done.

The editor, Dr. Abe Laufe, is a distinguished member of the academic community. At the University of Pittsburgh, he is the authority in the field of the American Theatre. His versatility is evident in the fine job he has done in editing Mrs. Fitzgerald's letters. From the 3000, he reduced the material to about 700 typed pages. Such editing required patience, judgment, and sensitivity. What he omitted was a dreary repetition of shopping lists, catalogues of furs, and household matters. He retained the letters that most vividly covered the little human details which give the finished product flavor and make the more important aspects of the experience read like a running narrative of high adventure. The material is fully documented by italicized comment, which relieves the reader from distracting footnotes.

The University of Pittsburgh Press has given us a beautiful volume. A serious omission, however, is failure either between the covers or on the jacket to identify fully the man who edited it.

Pittsburgh

LORETTA P. BYRNE