

The body of the work numbers 850 pages, forming sixty-five chapters. The apprehension expressed by the author that the volume errs in being bulky will be a conviction in the mind of the reader. This fault might have been palliated in a measure by the subdivision of the work into parts. One of the divisions should in this case have fallen upon the death of Gustavus, who dies about the middle of the book. The reader will wish that the numbers of troops were given in figures instead of in words. At the end will be found a list of notable marches of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, of battles in the same period, with percentages of losses, a list of dates, and an exhaustive index. This book contains a great deal of military information that cannot be found in any other single one, or perhaps in any number of books short of a fair-sized library. It is a valuable work of reference on the revival of the art of war after the Middle Ages, and as such is heartily commended to all who are interested in that subject.

JOHN BIGELOW, JR.

*Louis XIV. and the Zenith of the French Monarchy.* By ARTHUR HASSALL, M.A., Student of Christ Church, Oxford. (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1895 Pp. xvi, 444.)

MR. HASSALL is right in claiming for Louis XIV. a place among national heroes. Notwithstanding his mediocre intellect, and his overweening vanity, the narrowness of his religious beliefs and the errors of his policy, the monarch who played so great a part in his day has taken his place among the famous men of history. With all his weaknesses, there was in Louis XIV. much that can rightly be called great; of no man could it be more truly said that he was every inch a king; to the duties of his great office he devoted a conscientious and life-long attention; if he enjoyed the pomp of place he did not shirk the responsibilities; there was a dignity to his character of which his dignity of manner was the fitting expression; tenacious of his own position, he was mindful of the rights of inferiors; amidst a bustling world he bore himself with a certain empyrean calm; he met adversity with fortitude; he exerted a great and permanent influence on the age in which he lived and the people over whom he ruled.

Of the long reign which filled three-quarters of a century, Mr. Hassall has given an eminently fair and just review. There is little new to be said of the events of that period, but it is easy to fall into excessive laudation of the king, and still more easy to belittle his character. Louis XIV. has suffered alike from undeserved flattery and from indiscriminate abuse. If historians of his own day constantly proclaimed him the greatest of kings and of men, modern writers have gone as far wrong in announcing that the great monarch was in reality only an exceptionally ignorant and stupid man, governed in turn by an unscrupulous minister, a designing priest, and a bigoted old woman. Mr. Hassall has avoided these extremes and has given a just estimate of an extraordinary character.

On some questions, indeed, we cannot agree with his conclusions. He places a desire to secure the imperial title among the serious ambitions of Louis XIV. If Mr. Hassall had studied the diplomatic correspondence of the French archives, we think he would have seen that the project of obtaining for Louis XIV. the imperial crown was never seriously considered ; it assumed no more reality than the visions of empire in the East which haunted Napoleon when he was young ; it did not affect the policy of the reign. Dreams of universal empire were attributed to Louis XIV. by his enemies, but in truth a policy which would change the established order of Europe had little attraction for him. His mind was methodical and fond of routine ; he was haunted by no vague ambitions ; few of his contemporaries had less imagination in their composition. Louis followed in the settled paths of French ambition and was not allured by a policy which would have overthrown all established European traditions. He sought to make France the most influential power in Europe, and in this he succeeded ; he longed to be regarded as the most powerful of continental sovereigns, and his wish was gratified. But neither Louis nor his counsellors ever seriously entertained the hope of adding to the dignity of king of France the shadowy halo of the imperial crown.

The errors of Louis' religious policy are fairly stated by Mr. Hassall, and he follows long-established tradition when he says, speaking of those who were driven from France by religious persecution, "The trade of the country went with them, and the rest of Louis' reign is a period of economical decadence." The evils which the revocation of the Edict of Nantes brought on France were indeed great, but an emigration which extended over a quarter of a century and took in all only one per cent. of the population, was not a sufficient cause of decaying industry and declining prosperity. Like many historical traditions, this has been repeated by successive writers without making a rigid examination of the facts. The French Huguenots were industrious, and so also were the French Catholics, and of the Huguenots themselves only one-quarter abandoned their fatherland. The natural increase of population in a growing country would more than compensate for the loss by Huguenot emigration. It is true, as Mr. Hassall says, that the latter part of the reign of Louis XIV. was a period of economical decadence, but Huguenot emigration was a small factor in this result. During a quarter of a century the country enjoyed only four years of peace ; the cumbrous and unwise legislation, by which the government sought to regulate and stimulate manufacture and trade, resulted only in checking and crippling them ; the cost of the administration became larger and the burden of taxation grew heavier ; the errors of Louis' ministers, more than the bigotry of the king, were accountable for the stagnation in business at the close of his reign.

But if some of Mr. Hassall's positions may be questioned, little fault can be found with his presentation of the reign of Louis XIV. as a whole. He describes it during the king's youth, giving just praise to the wise

statesmanship of Mazarin and bestowing just condemnation on the selfish and turbulent movement which took the name of the Fronde. Of the statesmen who helped to make glorious the early years of Louis' personal rule, Mr. Hassall speaks, for the most part, with correctness and good judgment. Sometimes, indeed, he indulges in expressions which a more careful revision would have chastened. "In 1678," he says, "Sir William Temple was much impressed by the wealth and prosperity of France, and this was due entirely to Colbert." To no man has the wealth and prosperity of a country ever been entirely due, and certainly this was not true of Colbert. France is a rich country, because the French people to an extraordinary degree possess the qualities of industry and thrift; she owes her wealth more to her peasants than to her law-makers. That Colbert did much for France is certain, though much less than he desired, and less also than he has sometimes been credited with. When the systems of state interference which he so earnestly fostered, and in which he so sincerely believed, came to be administered by less zealous and less able successors, they crippled the country in its industrial development. In the following century England passed France in the contest for commercial and maritime supremacy, and in part at least this result came because in France industry was held in chains, and in England the individual enjoyed a far larger degree of freedom.

Mr. Hassall follows with care and fairness the mistakes of policy which made the close of Louis XIV.'s reign as disastrous as its beginning had been glorious. He shows how Louis alienated the support of his German allies; how the influence of France in Germany, which Richelieu and Mazarin had established with such pains and skill, was destroyed by the pride of the monarch and the violence and brutality of his war minister; he describes the period of misery and humiliation caused by the War of the Spanish Succession, and tells in fit language of the marvellous fortitude with which the aged king bore adversity.

For those who wish to study the reign of Louis XIV. in its details, a review, brief in comparison with the greatness of the subject, will not tell all they wish to know, but their number is small; the majority have neither time nor inclination for the details of history. They seek a brief but a clear presentation of the great epochs of the past, and of these certainly Louis XIV.'s reign is one. It was an important chapter in the history of a great people; it established France as the foremost European power; it furnished an extraordinary picture of an absolute monarchy, in a highly civilized nation, administered by a king zealous in the political faith of which he was the most brilliant exponent. If one cares for any lessons which the past can teach, the era of Louis XIV. is worthy of study. It was important in literary, in political, and in social development; it had a great influence upon the condition of Europe in the seventeenth century, and its effects were still felt when the French Revolution of the eighteenth century brought the French monarchy to an end.

Mr. Hassall's style has the merits of simplicity and clearness. When

the record of events is condensed into small space, there is little opportunity for picturesque description, for glowing portrayal of character or of famous scenes, and these he has not attempted. His review of Louis XIV.'s reign is eminently correct and just in its general outlines, it is free from prejudice, and will make a useful addition to the series to which it belongs.

JAMES BRECK PERKINS.

*The Huguenots and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.* By HENRY M. BAIRD. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1895. Two vols., pp. 566, 580.)

IN *The Huguenots and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes* Professor Baird closes the series, in which he has narrated the history of the Huguenot party in France. It represents the labor of thirty years, and the author can count as the fruit of the large part of his active life which he has devoted to this subject, the honorable position that his books have gained for him among American historians.

His last work possesses the merits of its predecessors and is subject to the same criticisms. Professor Baird is of Huguenot descent; he is Huguenot in his religious beliefs; he has devoted much of his life to the study of the Huguenot cause. It is natural that he should be a Protestant from strong conviction. There are few acts of the Huguenot party in which he finds aught to blame, and little in the conduct of their opponents in which he finds anything to praise.

It is not always easy to decide how much a decided bias in the writer affects the value of historical writings. In most great historical questions there is a right and a wrong, and the man who is not able to discover where lies the right is not a useful teacher for posterity. A vehement conviction of the justice of a cause may make an historical recital glow with life; strict impartiality, a perfectly calm and well-balanced judgment, sometimes produce only a chilly and passionless record of the past, from which the reader gains little except weariness. *The Rise of the Dutch Republic* was the work of an intense partisan. The history of the same period, written by some cool and indifferent critic, who saw defects in the character of William of Orange and merits in that of Philip II., would not have possessed the fascination of Motley's dramatic narration.

During the early part of the seventeenth century the Huguenot party was involved in frequent contests with the general government; they ceased only when its power was broken by Richelieu and it was no longer an important element in French politics. In this protracted controversy Professor Baird's sympathies are with those of his own faith; he finds justification for their conduct, and regrets the success of Richelieu's policy. It is only just to say that he presents the facts with fairness. If, indeed, there is an issue between a Protestant and a Catholic authority,