

Un Demi-Siècle de Civilisation Française (1870-1915). Par MM. BAILLAUD, BOUTROUX, CHAILLEY, DOUMIC, GÉRARD, LANGLOIS, DE LA SIZERANNE, DE LAUNAY, LECOMTE, LEMOINE, RAPHAËL-GEORGES LÉVY, PAINLEVÉ, PERRIER, PICARD, POINCARÉ, RICHET, SCHNEIDER, STRAUSS, VIGER, WIDOR. (Paris: Hachette et Cie. 1916. Pp. 469.)

THE Third Republic is no longer apologetic; neither is it inclined to be boastful; but it is honestly proud of its achievements. Even before the war it had grown conscious of having done great things quietly. Until a few years ago no one could have been more self-critical than the French. They have admitted a political incapacity—under stress of Teutonic, English, and American criticism—while building up one of the greatest and most successful institutions of representative government the world has seen. They have accepted the strictures of a patronizing world upon their moral character and intellectual fibre—all the while remaining silent as to the weaknesses of their neighbors. The pride was there but it was too vital to risk revelation. Now, however, that France has shown herself to all the world for what she is, when a group of savants have combined to sketch the history, or at least to indicate the scope, of her achievements since the “terrible year”, 1870, there is little need of anything but simple, straightforward narrative, such as one finds in the volume under review. It is divided into twenty sections, devoted to such different subjects as Astronomy (by Baillaud), Philosophy (by Boutroux), Colonization (by Chailley), Literature (by Doumic), Metallurgy (by Schneider, “maître des forges”), etc.

On the face of it, such an enterprise would seem to be of considerable importance. But the present volume suffers from inadequate editorship. Although each section is from the pen of a competent collaborator, there is no scheme of co-ordination, the subjects seem chosen at haphazard, and the volume suffers accordingly. Someone should have exercised an editorial control and secured a juster proportion as well as a better arrangement. It can hardly have been due to political exigencies that the only reference to the work done in the Palais Bourbon and the Luxembourg should be devoted to “L'Éloquence Parlementaire”. In the eyes of the sterner critics of the republic there had been too much talking. On the other hand why give less space to the achievements of French art than to the development of autos and aeroplanes? The section which is of main interest to students of history happens, also, to be not over eighteen pages long—that on the development of history and historical study in France since 1870. Written by the competent hand of Ch. V. Langlois, director of the National Archives, it reveals at once that cautious attitude which has characterized all his work. “Il est vrai que la Renaissance historique de la seconde moitié du xix^e siècle, phénomène général, ne s'est pas produite qu'en France. Il est vrai qu'elle s'était accusée en Allemagne avant de s'accuser en France.” Yet

the Germans have not had a monopoly of historical criticism, which, after all, is but common sense keenly alert. Langlois is ready to admit that the French are not lacking in this equipment, but he apparently sees little in such a situation to be enthusiastic about. As a matter of fact, he hardly does justice to his theme owing to his preoccupation with works of erudition. Renan is recognized as the greatest historian of the period but the generous attitude toward the literary historian which Gabriel Monod could cherish, in spite of his ideals of exacting, scientific work, is here lacking. This is significant of the weakness in the recent French school of which Langlois is a leader, which attempts an objectivity which is unattainable and brings the energies of the lucid Gallic mind to bear upon the mathematical problem of a reconstruction of data into structures where no life is. There was something more than humor in the situation, when Seignobos attempted to get a purely objective judgment as to who were the great historians, by accepting those who were members of the Institute since this official designation involved bringing them to the attention of the public! After all, history is an art as well as a science.

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BOOKS OF AMERICAN HISTORY

Readings in the Economic History of the United States. By ERNEST LUDLOW BOGART, Ph.D., and CHARLES MANFRED THOMPSON, Ph.D., of the Department of Economics in the University of Illinois. (New York: Longmans, Green, and Company. 1916. Pp. xxvii, 862.)

It is a large task to attempt to present within the compass of a single volume original materials illustrating adequately the various phases in the economic development of our country. This volume of *Readings* gives the impression that the editors have tried to cover too much in a limited space. An unfortunate result has been the unsatisfactory treatment accorded the important economic problems which have arisen since the Civil War. What is particularly needed by teachers of both political and economic history is a collection of sources and secondary material setting forth with liberal detail and appropriate emphasis the circumstances and causes of the origin of our labor problem, the trust problem, the problem of urban concentration and rural depopulation, the problem of the free negro in the South. Such a collection can hardly be contained in six chapters of barely 250 pages, the space allotted to the last half-century of our history in this volume.

These six chapters contain reprints of government publications, mostly excerpts from census reports on agriculture and manufactures, with occasionally more enlightening discussions from the reports of the Industrial Commission of 1898 and the Immigration Commission of 1907. Census statistics are indeed important raw material for the history of our industrial evolution. But such material is too raw to be readily