

sian negotiator, would do when face to face with Napoleon, is so uncannily correct that you might surmise Gentz, writing in professed ignorance three weeks after the events, was making a great impression on Jackson on the basis of information received, perhaps, through Hoym, the governor of Silesia. Gentz's early estimate of Metternich as the coming man is made clearer by these letters.

Many of the letters are expansions of covering notes to accompany the stream of memoirs to be transmitted to London. These memoirs are not here published. The most important are probably in print, although the editor does not identify them. His contribution is chiefly in the identification, by long and unnecessary foot-notes, of persons mentioned in the letters. Ninety pages of appendices are used to the same purpose. Thus a book is made out of material that a discriminating editor could have brought within the compass of a contribution to an historical magazine.

G. S. FORD.

Twenty Years: Being a Study in the Development of the Party System between 1815 and 1835. By Cyril Alington, Head Master of Eton. (Oxford, Clarendon Press; London and New York, Oxford University Press, 1921, pp. 207.) The exact scope of this essay is not easily defined. The anticipation of the reviewer that it would be a disquisition on the party system was no less happily disappointed than his fear that it might be a chronicle of political events of the conventional type. The leaders of the parties constitute the main consideration rather than the parties themselves. Sketches of their personalities, written with rapid strokes of a facile pen, and judgments of their statesmanship, given with mature and thoughtful deliberation, are strung upon a slender thread of political narrative, sufficient to provide the unity necessary for readers whose acquaintance with the period is slight, but not so long as to burden those who possess greater knowledge of this aspect of the subject.

The value of the contribution does not rest primarily upon the presentation of new facts. The author's modest disclaimer of original research, to be sure, must be taken with some qualification, for while he does not cite his authorities systematically, his text gives evidence of acquaintance with many contemporary memoirs, letters, and diaries; but it is true that he has neither discovered material hitherto unexplored nor attempted such a thorough investigation of all available evidence as might produce a great positive addition to our knowledge. The book, nevertheless, fills a place of importance in the historical literature dealing with the period. This place is so happily designated by the author, that nothing better can be done than to quote his words (p. 9):

... first impressions honestly recorded, have a value distinct from

those arrived at by long thought and study. A rapid survey may be inaccurate but it has a unity of its own, and laborious historians may fail to

recapture

The first fine careless rapture
with which they have once believed themselves to appreciate the true meaning of a period or the true character of a statesman.

This statement of his purpose is an accurate measure of his accomplishment with regard to the personalities of the statesmen of the period. Since Walpole characterized them from his Whig viewpoint so many studies of individual statesmen have been made, that it is high time for a new standard of measurement. This it is, which Mr. Alington gives us.

The treatment accorded the subject is such that it is difficult to imagine the type of reader, be he historical student or politician, serious-minded reformer or literary dilettante, who would not derive both pleasure and profit from the perusal of the volume. The narrative is enlivened by the author's keen sense of humor, finding outlet sometimes in his own epigrammatic expression and sometimes in the quotation of the pointed and pithy sayings of contemporaries. The author's selection of the latter material displays a penetrating judgment of historical values and his application of it a particularly happy appreciation of literary values. His kindness, however, removes the sting which such a style generally carries with it. In all men he sees the bad but emphasizes the good. The strongest partizan must admit the tolerance of his judgments, while the historical student is likely, I think, to be impressed with the soundness of them.

W. E. LUNT.

Queen Victoria. By Lytton Strachey. (New York, Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1921, pp. iii, 434, 17s. 6d.) It is not easy to assign a place or a value to this book. To judge it as a source of information would be useless, because it is nearly devoid of substance. To test it with canons of historical method would be ungraciously to point out that it follows none. Yet there is about the book such an undeniable attitude, such an uncommon presentation, that one is tempted to call it simply "Mr. Strachey's Victoria"; and to trust that the initiated will grasp the implication.

Mr. Strachey has really succeeded in turning "Victoria" into something that resembles a light opera. Here is comedy in plenty, pathos, satire, irony; at the end, too, a tepid recessionary likely to satisfy the scruples of his audience—though perhaps not of Mr. Strachey himself—with a solemn note of altered measure at the passing of the great queen. For Mr. Strachey rather creates the impression of being, self-consciously, the most amused spectator of his own composition, only readjusting his features slightly at the funereal moment of fare-

AM. HIST. REV., VOL. XXVII.—24.