

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.

well. His biography is not so much a gauge of character as a subtle display of incident and circumstance. He skims dexterously over a surface of anecdote and idiosyncrasy, gathering up the trivial and the familiar as he hurries along, never pausing once to fathom.

The general reader relishing entertainment at the expense of royalty assuredly will adopt Mr. Strachey's "Victoria" as his very own. He will be amused at the class of story that pictures Victoria stamping her foot in vexation at the Prince Consort; or pounding in vain at "Albert's" door demanding admittance because she is "Queen of England"; or at the description of Victoria in later life sentimentally plucking primroses to send to Disraeli in return for the thick and fulsome flattery of that "old comedian". In such a field an anecdotist finds abundant scope. Mr. Strachey has kept his field rather unduly restricted, however; perhaps because he confined the preparation of his volume to a minimum of reading effort. Grouping together his anecdotal material, with a few exceptions it is apparent that it comes in part from the journals, letters, and diary of the queen, with the *Life* of the Prince Consort and the inevitable Creevey, Stockmar, and Greville; in part from the lives of the Victorian prime ministers: in other words from only the current publications on the Victorian era to be found in any small private library. We are limited then to two sets of views of the queen: one, that is often too private and familiar; another, that is often merely ceremonious and official. Between the two extremes the real queen scarcely emerges.

When the character of the queen—as distinct from Victoria's incidental career—is made the subject of study, it were better done by a writer temperamentally more in sympathy than Mr. Strachey with the Victorian era, and less prone to look askance at its moral tempests. The trivial side of its great personages belies their force and depth. Mr. Strachey's biography is essentially an essay in Victorian trivialities—as refreshing to the student as it is captivating to the general reader—but, after all, only refreshing.

C. E. FRYER.

British Policy and Opinion during the Franco-Prussian War. By Dora Neill Raymond, Ph.D. [Columbia University Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law, vol. C., no. 1.] (New York and London, Longmans, Green, and Company, 1921, pp. 435, \$4.50.) Two brief chapters of this study are devoted to a survey of Britain's relations with France and Prussia, 1860-1870, and of the political situation in France during the first six months of 1870. The author then traces the negotiations and events of the momentous July days and discusses with a considerable amount of detail the attitude of the British government and of the public to the war and the various problems connected therewith. Among the topics treated with special care might be