

diplomatic dinners as frequently as the characters in *The Pickwick Papers* refreshed themselves with the cup that cheers.

To the general historian some of the most interesting portions of the book are the following: the light thrown on the characteristics of Cleveland and Roosevelt; the contrast between the attitude toward the labor problem shown at the time of the Pullman strike and during Roosevelt's administration (pp. 194-196); Straus's slight contact with "dollar diplomacy" (p. 297); his guess that Roosevelt would have been elected in 1912 had it not been for the plank on the recall of judicial decisions (p. 311); his quick-witted attempt to take advantage of Bernstorff's claim that Germany would welcome American mediation in 1914 (pp. 378 ff.); and the statement that Roosevelt believed as late as February 2, 1917, that the United States would not become involved in the European crisis (p. 387).

On the whole, Mr. Straus's autobiography is substantial, serious, and worth while. It was good for America that the Bavarian mother emigrated with her children in 1854.

C. R. L.

The Letters of Franklin K. Lane, Personal and Political. Edited by Anne Wintermute Lane and Louise Herrick Wall. (Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922, pp. xxiv, 473, \$5.00.) In judging men who have held high public office one must ask what they have done and how they have done it, but frequently the question arises as to what they would have done had their initiative been unlimited, had they had an opportunity to choose their occasions, and to be inventors as well as routineers. With statesmen who have been at the head of things, this last question is all important: they must be judged not only by what they did but by what they chose to do, by the responsibilities they were willing to assume, and the policies they selected to sponsor. In the case of Franklin K. Lane, however, this last consideration does not figure. Only in early life, in California politics, could he be an inventor. Later, as Interstate Commerce Commissioner and Secretary of the Interior, he did much and did it well, but one wonders what he could have done if he had had a real chance in politics as well as in administration. His career gave evidence of much greater ability than he had a chance to display; his letters and memoranda, more revealing of the man than of events, suggest a putative statecraft that the country could have made good use of.

The letters, which are edited by his widow, cover the period of Lane's active life: politics and journalism, 1884-1894; law and politics, 1894-1906; the Interstate Commerce Commission and the Wilson Cabinets. The early letters are the more interesting, while those dealing with the later period are more important. They throw some light on the workings of the group of chief clerks which we call a "Cabinet", but there are no startling disclosures. There are some minutes of Cabinet meetings, but it is astonishing that, being at the centre of things, Lane kept so few records, although this may have been due to President Wilson's failure

to confide, as much as to Lane's inclination. It is regrettable that the letters and memoranda are given with little explanatory account of what was happening at the time and even, in some cases, with no identification of the people with whom Lane corresponded.

In one of his letters Lane describes himself as "a wild cross between a crazy Irishman with dreams, desires, fancies—and a dour Scot with his conscience and his logical bitterness against himself—and his eternal drive". Again, he tells an editor that he must go elsewhere for his "uplift stuff" on the "moral benefits" of the war, which is certain to make "sheer brutes" out of us. Flashes of honesty, political imagination, and poetical feeling run through the letters and make the reader regret that Lane's niche was a minor Cabinet post. That he was compelled to retire from office for financial reasons was a grievous loss and is a sad commentary on the conditions of public service in the United States.

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HISTORICAL NEWS

AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

The Committee on Programme for the Columbus meeting, December, 1923, invites the members of the American Historical Association to send it the description of papers they would be ready to prepare or information regarding possible papers of other members. Brief technical papers for the special conferences and more elaborate ones for the general sessions will be desired. From the suggestions of the members the committee will select those which promise to make the programme attractive. Communications of this kind should be sent to the chairman, Professor Elbert J. Benton, Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, before May 1.

The American Council of Learned Societies held its annual meeting in New York on January 27. Nearly all the constituent societies devoted to humanistic studies were represented, the American Historical Association by its two delegates, Messrs. Haskins (chairman of the Council) and Jameson. Among the matters dealt with, two may be mentioned as of especial interest to members of the Historical Association. One was the report of the committee on a dictionary of medieval Latin, an international enterprise which, under the auspices of the Union Académique Internationale, is being considered by the academies affiliated in that Union. The Council (representative of the United States in the Union) has had a committee on the subject. The plan finally concerted by the UAI, however, contemplates the preparation, first, by international effort, in which the United States is prepared to take a substantial part, of a dictionary of the Latin of the period from about A. D. 500 to the middle of the eleventh century, and then the possibility that the later medieval periods will be covered by special dictionaries prepared for each nation of western Europe. Accordingly the Council, at the January meeting, established two committees, one, for aid in the international undertaking covering the earlier period, to consist of Professors C. H. Beeson of Chicago (chairman), W. A. Oldfather, L. J. Paetow, E. K. Rand, and F. N. Robinson, the other, for co-operation with the English scholars in work on the medieval Latin terms used in English writings after the Conquest, to consist of Professors George B. Adams (chairman), J. G. Gerould, Nellie Neilson, and J. S. P. Tatlock. Secondly, it was reported, from the Committee on a Dictionary of American Biography, that means had been obtained for holding meetings of the committee this spring for careful consideration of the whole project and the framing of estimates of cost, after which efforts will be made to raise the necessary means for execution of this highly important enterprise. This committee consists of J. F. Jameson, chairman, John Erskine of Columbia University, Thomas W.