

of Professor Münsterberg is only that the weakness of all human nature is to be sought for at the roots of its strength.
Brian Hooker.

VI

MME. WADDINGTON'S "MY FIRST YEARS AS A FRENCHWOMAN"*

The period covered by these recollections—1876 to 1879—is that of the struggle of the young Republic in France, the third, toward something like stability, under the able leadership of Marshal MacMahon who had been elected President after the forced resignation of Thiers. Party feeling ran even higher than normally. The National Assembly sat at Versailles, the temper of the "man in the street" in Paris being considered even more uncertain than usual. The old society, that of the Faubourg St. Germain, was divided into Legitimists, Orleanists and Bonapartists. On one point only were they united: in their hatred and contempt for the new republic.

Mme. Waddington, first as the wife of the Minister of Public Instruction, to which post M. Waddington was appointed in 1876 and which he held for two years, until he became Minister of Foreign Affairs and finally Prime Minister under President Grévy, had unusual opportunities for intelligent observation of affairs both political and social during this stormy period. That she has availed herself to the utmost of the advantages which were hers as the wife of an able and patriotic statesman, no one who has enjoyed her earlier books will doubt for a moment. Here is no dry chronological recapitulation, but a vivid and graphic picture of the times further illuminated by timely anecdote. In addition to that valuable possession which painters describe as the "seeing eye," she has that even greater gift of projecting what must be a personality of unusual charm onto the printed page. Throughout her nar-

rative, she herself moves, a graceful, cultured and witty figure, giving one the intimate feeling of being "personally conducted" through the scenes she so vividly describes, without ever once becoming intrusive. In sharp contrast to two other American women who, having risen to positions of eminence on the smaller stages dedicated to the tragic and the lyric drama, have within the last few years given the world their recollections, Mme. Waddington never indulges in ill-natured personalities: always she is good humoured, always she is well bred.

The position of the wife of a man in public life in those early days of the Republic was not always easy. On one occasion, when the author was paying a formal visit upon a countess with Legitimist affiliations, she was astonished to have her hostess address her by name every time she made an observation. Upon returning home, she commented on the fact to her husband: "Mme. de B—— must have said 'Waddington' at least twenty times; is it an old French custom?" He explained that it was so that all the other people present might know who she was and not say things about the *infecte gouvernement*, or make slighting remarks about the Republic, "which no gentleman could serve." On one point, of course, all parties were united, hatred of Germany and everything German. For many years after the war, the German military attaché had to return from the annual review at Longchamps in a closed carriage to guard against being insulted by the crowd. Once, at a dinner given at the German embassy to the President and the Maréchale MacMahon, a small bear made its appearance in the drawing-room with the coffee. When Mme. MacMahon was asked afterward if she was frightened, she said: "Yes, I was very much frightened, but I would not show it before those Germans!"

A large variety of interesting figures are presented to the reader, many of whom were in Paris during the International Exposition of 1878. By some timely anecdote or by some little graphic

*My First Years as a Frenchwoman. By Mme. Waddington. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

touch, every one is made vivid. During the exposition year the President and Mme. MacMahon gave a state dinner to Ex-President and Mrs. Grant. Mme. Waddington's account of Mrs. Grant's natural dismay on discovering that her host on whose right she was placed neither spoke nor understood a word of English and her own difficulties with the Chinese ambassador who sat next her is most amusing. The ambassador was credited with a fluent knowledge of English. Apparently he had learned a few phrases which he used in rotation with all the spontaneity of a phonograph. Among them, "Yes, yes, very hot, very cold, very hot, very cold," seemed to be the one in which he had most confidence. One gathers that, conversationally, at least at the end of the table at which Mrs. Grant and Mme. Waddington found themselves, the dinner was hardly a success.

One has little glimpses of life away from Paris during occasional holidays when this very cosmopolitan family were united. M. Waddington's mother was Scottish by birth, his sister-in-law an English woman, while his sister had married the German diplomatist, de Bunsen, and his wife was an American. French, English, Italian and German were used with equal ease and facility. The elder Mme. Waddington did not at all approve of the careless habit of mixing their languages. She made it a rule that they should keep to one language at least at meals. She did not care which one they chose, as she spoke all four fluently herself. But whichever one the repast began with, had to be held to throughout.

In the author's opinion, none of the celebrities she met ever surpassed the late King Edward, then Prince of Wales, for kindly tact and charm of manner. As a sort of footnote to history, the reviewer recalls reading in the *Figaro* a few weeks before the late king's death, that on his return to Paris from what was to be his last journey to the south of France, the only engagement he made was to attend a breakfast at the house of Mme. Waddington. The author devotes a para-

graph to recording a protest against the modern craze of Bridge which she complains has destroyed all real conversation and has opened the doors to many people who formerly knocked vainly at the portals of good society. It would be interesting to hear her opinion of the more recent craze for dancing and of the people who have tangoed their way into that once exclusive region!

Edmond L. Coubert.

VII

MARY ANTIN'S "THEY WHO KNOCK AT OUR GATES"*

The one fundamental criticism which could be made against *The Promised Land* rested in that it may have led readers to feel it was America and not Mary Antin who made Mary Antin. Indeed that remarkable human document, written with so much eloquence, was primarily the story of a very exceptional woman who had the power to make America give her the things which lay waiting but are undiscoverable to many other immigrants. Seldom has there been written a more moving story of personal experience and, as such, it has already taken its very definite place in the literature of the decade. But one could not help feeling that the flush of gratitude with which the author faced the country where she was able to achieve so much, had blinded her vision somewhat as to actual conditions here. In her latest little volume there is the same lyrical note, touched at times with rhapsodical rhetoric; but one gains a sense of deeper study of the problem as it faces the sordid facts confronting the immigrant. This is not said in deprecation of the earlier volume: merely to point out that as a discussion of the general problem this later book has a distinct and somewhat different contribution.

In the three sections into which she divides the problem the first seems the less convincing. For in it she endeavours to discuss the large problem as to whether

*They Who Knock at Our Gates. By Mary Antin. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.