

are dissected as with a surgeon's knife and laid bare in the revealing light.

"The Real Tsaritsa" by Lili Dehn (Little, Brown) differs from some other recent books of memoirs in that its purpose is to defend, not defame, prominent persons. Mme. Dehn amply shows her friend the Empress to have been a moral, pious woman, a loyal friend, a devoted wife and mother—and, incidentally, a pigmy empress. This round, unvarnished tale is so commonplace that one feels instinctively that it must be true. We must believe the imperial family to have been good, innocent, harmless, meaningless folk, undeserving of the terrible punishment that ended their lives, equally unfit for the tremendous privileges that preceded the end. The book elaborately whitewashes the autocrats and unintentionally gives a black eye to autocracy.

No one has labored with more gusto or more success to make the light essay "go" in the United States than Oliver Herford. These are mournful days for the polite arts, as Mr. Herford himself remarks in his new book, "Neither Here Nor There" (Doran), but there is nothing melancholy about Mr. Herford's book. His whimsicality retains its freshness amazingly; his informality never seems studied; his urbanity never oversophisticated. It is a deft little book, and a cheerful one!

Dallas Lore Sharp, who has been an eloquent defender, on the Chautauqua platform and in the pages of "The Atlantic Monthly", of the efficacy of our democracy, attacks with spirit in his "Education in a Democracy" (Houghton Mifflin) the parochial school, the private school, the college

"prep" academy, and the vocational and technical high school. It is Dr. Sharp's point that these institutions are inconsistent with our traditions and ideals, anomalous and positively injurious in the present constitution of American society. This is, of course, meddling with strong, vested interests and a red flag to the educational theorists. Dr. Sharp builds a strong case, with the vigor and persuasiveness of earnest conviction. Here will surely be a provoking book.

"Clio and The Chateau de Vaux-le-Vicomte" is the latest title to be issued in the John Lane edition of the works of Anatole France. The name of the muse of history, Clio, is given to five romantic vignettes, ranging from an imaginative improvisation upon a legendary incident in the life of Homer to Napoleon's voyage on "La Muiron", all designed, doubtless, to exhibit five periods of history in their essence, and perhaps M. France's philosophy of history. What that may be, is better left to the disciples and interpreters of the great ironist. The rest of this volume is given over to a long historical and biographical essay on Nicholas Fouquet, the unfortunate Minister of Finance of Louis XIV and the patron of Molière, Racine, La Fontaine, Pellison, and Madame de Sévigné. Only rare, sly glimpses of the satirical manner of the later France are evidenced here. But the stylistic brilliance and finish is, as always, unique and unmistakable. Its limpidity, clarity, and finish are passed on excellently by the translation of Winifred Stephens, who has worshiped long and fruitfully at the shrine of Anatole France.

If the ailing world cared to be told what it ought to be, it might listen to

the message of Dr. Rudolph Steiner, leader of a group of German spiritualists, an English translation of whose book, "The Threefold Commonwealth", is sponsored by Macmillan. By devious philosophical speculations, the author evolves an ideal community, a state operating through three independent "systems", economic, political, and spiritual. Capital, while not abolished, is to belong to private owners only so long as they use it for the public good. Education is to be supernatural, even international. Labor, no longer a commodity but a thing of the spirit, will be free, and laborers will be happy. Highly technical, tasteless, unconvincing is this economic theory of a new Utopia; and the world, however sick, is not asking for advice.

C. Lewis Hind, who has chatted amiably in several previous books about art and letters and authors in juxtaposition to himself, has collected another volume of chats under the title "More Authors and I" (Dodd, Mead). The list of authors included is the last word in timeliness — Sinclair Lewis, A. S. M. Hutchinson, Stephen Leacock, W. H. Hudson, James Huneker, Anatole France, and John Burroughs being conspicuously among those present. Occasionally Mr. Hind reveals a flash of penetration. But for the most part his aim is to entertain rather than to instruct; to speak reminiscently of the literary adventures and encounters of a cultured, urbane personality — himself.

Ineffectual persons, who by fortuitous circumstances have moved dimly and ineptly on the fringes of great society, are now having their inning in literature with the rising popularity of the memoir. A most impressive com-

pilation of distinguished nineteenth century names has been crowded by Sir James Denham into his "Memoirs of the Memorable" (Doran). Sir James, however, adds nothing to the lustre of the name of Denham in English literature. Historical significance and the illumination of character are both distressingly absent from these "intimate glimpses" of Disraeli, Swinburne, Mark Pattison, Lord Kitchener, and the rest. Sir James, who is the author of these depressing lines

Heavy the weight of years I carry hence;
The weightier for every passing year —

should carry a well nigh insupportable burden to the Judgment Seat when he is firmly saddled with his memoirs.

If for nothing else, "Real Property" (Macmillan) by Harold Munro is more than worth while because of its poem "Spring". This old, old theme is never left to rest, and it must take a poet of courage to try a new twisting of words when such an army has done the same before him. Trite as is the subject, Mr. Munro has made his poem leave images of beauty — memories of pasted touches of a delicate brush. Addressing Spring he asks:

Or will you lower
Your voice,
And join the honey-laden undertone,
Murmuring a moment in a flower,
Then zumming to another and another?

But the book holds much that is good besides this one clear song: "Real Property" is worth cherishing.

In his "Tales of Lonely Trails" (Harper), Zane Grey revisits with the reader some of the wild settings of his picturesque western novels, giving if not a more vivid at least a more detailed description of desert and can-