

devoted, — these form a group of women fascinating and charming, to-day and forever. Indeed this charm is the quality that dominates the description of them all. The same is true of the only man given equal importance in the group, Baldassare Castiglione, the author of *The Courtier*, who was loved and admired for his qualities of mind and body, but above all for his loyalty and the delight of his companionship.

Each of these women and men is immortalized for us in some famous and familiar portrait or painting of the Renaissance, and about this picture Sizeranne groups his study and creates a word painting vivid with the wit and the gaiety, the tragedy and the instability, of that gorgeous and disturbing period.

To-day, when our magazines are full of the life stories of executive women, and the reminiscences of queens and scullery maids are read with equal avidity by the public, it is particularly refreshing to mingle with this group of ladies of the Renaissance whom men loved and admired for their charm, their beauty, and the delight of their companionship, and whose influence, now as then, from the canvas or from these delightful pages, is one of beauty and of civilization.

FREDERICK S. HOPPIN

Enough Rope

THIS reviewer, somewhat helpless before Dorothy Parker's wise, deep, yet gay book, *ENOUGH ROPE*, (Boni & Liveright, \$2.00), is in danger of hanging by quotation. For once started, there'd be no end but the rope's end. So the only safe way is to eschew citation, and take refuge in comment.

Dorothy Parker is extraordinary in many ways, not least in this: though much of her verse springs from the w.k. broken heart, it is blessedly free from the false sentimentality in which such verse is often so fatly embedded. Under the clever lightness of rime and epigram, hers is an honest, self-knowing, humorous wisdom, — a relentless clear-seeing eye, — a deft irony, never overdone, often bitter, but never sour, — a rare sophistication, because it is without hardness.

Perhaps, sometimes, she is a bit too gayly defiant, which, however, is a good

fault. And may she never lose her bounce! A superfluous wish. So skilful a wielder of the lariat can rope and throw and tie and brand Tragedy, and though she may get a little knocked up in the process now and then, she'll plaster the cuts neatly with light verse and ride on undaunted to the next encounter.

It must be a grand and glorious feeling to have written *Enough Rope*.

VIOLA PARADISE

France Dissected

MR. SISLEY HUDDLESTON has been for many years a very keen observer of everything that happened in Paris and has collected a great number of facts about France. He knows France, French history, French politics, French diplomacy, French ways and habits; and he is able to look upon things French from a friendly and affectionate point of view which does not prevent him from being clear-minded and critical at times. His big book written for the Modern World Series and entitled *FRANCE* (Scribner's, \$5.00) impresses one at first by its great honesty and accuracy. One can rely on his statements and accept his figures and statistics, for Mr. Huddleston has compiled the best dictionary I know on French civilization.

I regret he has not written it as a dictionary, but, instead, has tried to make a book of it. As a book it must be reckoned a failure. The reader feels that Mr. Huddleston has been overwhelmed by all he knew and meant to say. The evidence shows that where he should describe and organize, he gives up and simply quotes. He worked painfully to find some logical way to assemble all these details and put them in an order which would make them look like a "story". The only result, as far as I can see, is that he offers to the public a chaotic dictionary. Moreover, his zeal and hurry to mention facts carry him so far that he does not have time to give adequate explanations, and consequently, many of the events and names he cites are left completely void of meaning and interest. Why, for example, does he feel obliged to give us (page 550) a list of the French playwrights, if he can not describe their works or their talents? It will help nobody to know that among these non-

descript dramatic gentry there was one "Henry Kistemaeckers" or another "Charles Méré", whose plays one will never see and should never try to see if one has any sense.

Mr. Huddleston is a newspaper man and, as such, has spent his life catching facts and selling them, making his living out of them. This calling is highly honorable, but intellectually dangerous. The Anglo-Saxon mind has a strange liking for facts, and at times is inclined to worship them without realizing that facts, — "cold facts", — may be misleading, even more than theories. All over the world, in all countries one finds about the same facts about armies, churches, schools, political parties, elections, and so on. From this material point of view French civilization is hardly different from English or American civilization. Excepting prohibition and skyscrapers, a French provincial city looks very much like an American Middle-Western city.

The main difference does not lie in facts or in things, but in the way people use things, in the logic with which each nation thinks and feels and acts. What is essentially important is not so much the civilization of a country, but the attitude of a people toward their civilization. Mr. Huddleston seems to have missed this point. It is too bad, because it spoils a book which could have been very interesting and useful, but which, owing to this defect, can only be of service to people who already know France well. Others should be careful not to accept all Mr. Huddleston's judgments: the facts on which he bases them are real enough, but the conclusions he draws from them do not follow the French way of reasoning. This is particularly true of the chapters on literature and art.

After all, it is comforting to find that man is still a diversified and mysterious animal, even after Mr. Freud, the psychological tests, and the League of Nations.

BERNARD FAÏ

Napoleon's Star Rises Again

A FASCINATING biography is Emil Ludwig's *NAPOLEON* (Boni & Liveright, \$5.00). It derives its fascination from the fact that Herr Ludwig is no less

a novelist and a dramatist than a historian. He need not have written a single novel or play to be termed a dramatist, for this biography is instinct with the dramatic sense, — as, indeed, was Napoleon's life itself. In penetrating the material of history with the method of drama, he has achieved a rare triumph: we read this biography of a man with whose beginning, middle, and end we are already familiar, as if it were a novel of passion the outcome of which has yet to be related. In short, Herr Ludwig has injected into his history the element of suspense.

Suspense and sympathy are the keys to Ludwig's method. Thus he explains his use of the latter quality in the *Envoy* of the book: "With his own sympathy he (the biographer) forces the heart of the man to reveal its sympathy." Accordingly, he has written the life of Napoleon from the inside, not from without. His is a pro-Napoleonic biography. When the Emperor is victorious or vanquished or betrayed, the reader experiences the same fates vicariously. Herr Ludwig's use of the material of history is simply uncanny.

This biographer has ransacked the archives of Napoleana. The generosity with which he quotes from the innumerable reported conversations of Napoleon, from his vast correspondence, and from the many memoirs written by those around him, gives the reader not only proof of the biographer's diligence, but a sense of contemporaneity, of the many-sidedness of the man, of his humanity. And if there is one aspect of Napoleon which his latest biographer is disinclined to stress, it is that of the soldier, the general, the conqueror. One feels that Herr Ludwig wants to lose that part of the man, or to justify it.

It must be borne in mind that this great dramatic biography is reared on as firm a foundation of historical data as the very dullest could be. (Only the interesting historical study, be it noted, is suspected of inaccuracy.) Herr Ludwig's dramatic method has its dangers, however, — dangers of imitation, — for in less skilful hands it would produce a work that would be both sensational and meretricious. As it is, he resorts to one device upon which orthodox historians will frown: he puts within quotation marks the thoughts which he presumes ran