

ican girl, and is ardently coveted by her and her cleyer "Momma." He is attracted, but "Momma" sees that he will never really swallow the bare hook of a pretty little chatterbox, and whisks the girl off to London before the first attraction is exhausted. Ordham is left in Munich with only a pleasant and fading memory of the child.

Six months later, however, he is tricked into marriage with her, and after the deadly commonplace experience of calf-love, wakes to find himself cheated and bound to a silly woman. And he then realizes that before his marriage the best of him, his heart as well as his mind, has become the property of another woman. He has met Margarethe Styr after the little heiress's departure from Munich. Margarethe is his senior by a dozen years, and the intimacy which has sprung up between them has remained blameless. But the bond cannot be broken, and after Ordham's marriage it becomes clear to both that it is not a bond of friendship. "The Styr" is a great singer and actress, a protégé of the mad King of Bavaria. During the many years of her career as a singer she has lived upon a high plane intellectually, and her private life has been without reproach. But she admits to Ordham that the rumors are true which assign to her a low origin, and a shameless life for many years as a professional courtesan. She does not regret that life, since she believes that it has contributed to her powers as an artist, and even to her present strength of character. But he proposes to cast his career to the winds, and to join their lives at all cost. His wife dies, and his brother. He becomes almost in the same moment a peer, and a man free to marry the woman to whom he feels that fate has already joined him. But the Styr understands that this will mean ruin for them both, and finds the only way out.

The silly little wife, the pair of manœuvring dowagers, the brutal brothers, do not quite emerge from the convention of their rôles. But Ordham and Margarethe Styr are persons conceived and presented with extraordinary clearness and power. One does not doubt that the bond which unites them, and which is fated to suffer no tarnishing by failure of magnanimity on either side, is the supreme bond which has linked the great lovers of all time.

Rhoda of the Underground. By Florence F. Kelly. New York: Sturgis & Walton.

This story deals with the operations of the extensive system of assisting runaway slaves across the Canadian border, known in ante-bellum days as the Underground Railway. While written from an obviously partisan point of view, it shows fairness of judgment, and a sympathy with those individual slaveholders who tried so gallantly and so

vainly by their personal kindness to redeem the institution of slavery from its inherent evils. The writer has embodied the two opposing sides in Rhoda of the Underground, and her lover, who is a determined adherent of the South. There is a fine victory of principle over personal feeling; and they part as war is declared—he to serve in the Confederate army, and she to nurse in the Union lines, leaving to the decision of Providence the vexed question of which is to yield, and agreeing to abide by the result of the war. It is one of those books the soul of which so far outweighs its body that one can readily overlook the mediocrity of the latter.

Cab No. 44. By R. F. Foster. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co.

This writer, well known as an authority on bridge, plays out his story, mystification upon mystification, like a well-planned hand at no-trumps. The plot is ingenious, and though at times a little trite, it succeeds beyond the wont of detective stories in rewarding the reader with a final surprise. The chief interest lies in the movement of the story, for, in spite of much careful effort at characterization, the personages are no more than marionettes who go through the action of their pantomime at the will of their manipulator. The weakest link of Mr. Foster's chain is the effort to minister to that pathetic fallacy, the absolute necessity of the "love interest." The hero's affair of the heart is unconvincing to the point of being ludicrous. It is to be hoped that in the future the author will see fit to give us a detective story that makes no attempt to deal with anything but the keen analysis and unravelling of problems that are so well within his scope.

FRENCH MEMOIRS.

A Rose of Savoy. By H. Noel Williams. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$3.50 net.

Madame Du Barry. By H. Noel Williams. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$2 net.

Madame de Maintenon. By C. C. Dyson. New York: John Lane. \$4 net.

The old régime in France is still the apparently inexhaustible storehouse of courtly romance. Indeed, for a good many people the old régime means little else than the court at Versailles or the gossipy salons of Paris. Few know the real eighteenth century: the great creative period which made the nineteenth possible, which saw the dawn of science, the emancipation of reason, the rise of rationalism, the development of commercial and colonial politics, the beginnings of social and economic science. It stands in most minds for the stately formalism of an age of low morality, for a clogged classicism

in literature—burst through, it is true, by the volcanic passion of Rousseau, and cleft by Voltaire's rapier thrusts; a stilted world in a stilted style.

The three books before us are all of a kind. They are biographies built up out of the results of the more recent French investigations. They are works of vulgarisation, not original contributions to historical knowledge. This is not said in condemnation. It merely means that they must not be judged as products of scientific research, but rather as literary compilations: efforts to convey a more or less correct impression of the results of such research on the part of others. The trouble is, however, that when one who is not a trained historian attempts to popularize the scientific achievements of historical research, he is as likely to mis-state the case as would a theologian writing a text-book on Darwin. History-writing seems so easy to the untrained mind. These books teach us, if anything, how difficult it really is.

Noel Williams has now written some ten volumes of biographies, all dealing with notabilities at Versailles. He is familiar with that world of intrigue in which French royalty moved, from the Fronde to the Revolution. He has gone to the works of the best of recent French investigators. His picture is drawn in the plainest lines, without a touch of rhetorical display, in homely and uninspired fashion. But a straightforward style does not always mean a straightforward story. Mr. Williams tries to be impartial, but because his interest is in his heroine and in her story rather than in mere truth for its own sake, he fails to meet the demands of the impartial reader. When two accounts conflict, the one dramatic, the other commonplace and sober, he cannot resist the temptation to choose the striking narrative for the body of his page, even when he shows his deference to the critic by referring to the other in his footnote. For example, take the account of the "Rose of Savoy" (p. 464), where we are told that when the Duke of Orleans (later the Regent) went to sprinkle holy water on the coffin of the Dauphin,

he had to endure "the most atrocious insults from a people which believed it was showing clemency in not falling upon him and tearing him to pieces!" Similar scenes were witnessed in Paris, when he passed through it with the funeral cortège, in spite of the precautions taken by the police, and "for some minutes there was everything to fear."

This is straight from Saint-Simon, the duke's bitterest enemy. Mr. Williams feels obliged to tell us in a footnote that Souches and the *Mercure* tell of the orderly conduct of the crowd. Yet he follows Saint-Simon without a qualification in the body of the text. Such use of the tools of historical scholarship

makes the scholar skeptical of the "vulgarizer." For whenever truth and fiction conflict, truth falls into footnotes and fiction has the page.

The "Rose of Savoy" was Marie Adelaide of Savoy, duchess of Burgundy, and mother of Louis XV. She was the light-headed, high-spirited little princess, who came to grace the court of Louis XIV, when it was already taking on that austere tone which Madame de Maintenon brought into it. There is something in the relation of this sprightly girl, fond of practical jokes, to her moping husband, which suggests that other royal visitor to Versailles, Marie Antoinette. Fortunately for herself—and for her husband—the duchess did not live to share the responsibilities of government. The woman who caused the fall of Vauban was about as well fitted to rule as the one who brought about Turgot's retirement. Their husbands were of an equal degree of ineptitude, though from different causes. The "Rose of Savoy" was not without a thorny side to her character, and that long inertia known as the era of Fleury might never have given its refreshment to exhausted France if this vivacious woman had been able to satisfy her caprice at the expense of the nation. Mr. Williams has, of course, not concerned himself with these broader aspects of the problem. He becomes interested in his heroine as a light-hearted girl, and tells her story as a friend. The details of what dresses they wore, how "Monsieur's waistcoat was entirely covered with diamonds, tied by strings formed of diamonds," the number of times the king kissed her when she first arrived at court, the amount of money Madame de Montespan lost at the gaming table—items like these fill up the pages of a biography which finds but little else to record. And yet we had already Sainte-Beuve's keen analysis of the Duchess.

As for Madame du Barry, here historians forget that the proudest ladies of France—the sister of the powerful Duc de Choiseul, for instance—envied her, and that her chief reproach was not that she was mistress of a king, but that she was low-born, and had been immoral outside of court circles. In this biography, however, Mr. Williams has been relatively successful. Not venturing to be too sympathetic, he has made a fairer use of sources. Here are many indications of conscientious study. Vatel is the main basis for the biography, but his exhaustive apology for the "joyous libertine" is duly tempered. The result is, we believe, a reproduction of du Barry as she really was: light-hearted, unconventional, unaffected, simple but vulgar in bearing, generous at heart, not malicious like Pompadour, not imperious like Montespan, absolutely unmoral rather than a conscious sinner—a jolly, giddy thing, retaining her healthy animal

spirits in the unwholesome atmosphere of corrupt Versailles. One must not forget in judging her that she retained the affection of the king to his dying moments, and that Louis XV had tired of all the means of self-gratification ever offered to a man before she entered into his life. This is a genuine tribute to her charms. Madame du Barry has borne the blackest character among many of her class, but when one looks at the peculiar kind of achievement of her life, and then follows her generous impulses to her equally unmoral mother and to her neighbors, one feels little of that repulsion called out by the selfish, sordid lives of her titled rivals.

The life of Madame de Maintenon has recently been the subject of serious research, and something like a definitive biography is now possible. The work of the late De Boislisle has proved much to be legendary which formerly passed for history. The stories concerning her stay in the West Indies, the arrangement of her marriage to Scarron, and the way she was introduced at court, are now to be retold in more sober guise. The "Souvenirs de Madame de Maintenon," published by Hanotaux and d'Haussonville in 1902, furnish us with her last letters and the only authentic copy of the Journal of Madame de Maintenon's secretary, Mlle. d'Aumale. We are now in a position to know intimately what manner of woman it was who "converted" Louis XIV, turned him from a libertine into a Puritan, and still managed to retain her control over him absolutely, so long as he lived. Mr. Dyson's biography is an attempt to place this new knowledge before the English reader, along with the well-known history of which Maintenon was the centre. The political rôle of the King's wife had been exaggerated by earlier biographers. In these pages the point is well made that Louis was not the man to be led, too directly at least, into plans that were not his own. This tribute to his strength of character is also to be found in the latest full study of his reign, the masterful analysis by Lavissee. But if Madame de Maintenon was not responsible directly for the expulsion of the Huguenots, she induced an attitude of mind in the king which led indirectly to the same end. She was more than a colorless ornament, a kind of prude sitting by the royal fireside to grace his moments of leisure. She was a strong-willed woman, of infinite tact and indomitable perseverance, who never tired under the most exacting demands of that egoist whose ego was held to be a sort of divine symbol of the nation. Such a woman was no mere figure-head set over the king's household. But her influence was of that intangible type which leaves no record for the historian. Mr. Dyson's biography is a careful piece of work; albeit wanting in

deep insight. Its chief merit, indeed, is in the elaborate use of the sources, of which there are many interesting citations. A little thin in itself, the narrative takes on color and gains in interest from these glimpses of parts of old letters and diaries, more eloquent than any comment: the very human stuff out of which the tale is made.

Homer and the Iliad: An Essay to Determine the Scope and Character of the Original Poem. By F. Melian Stawell. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. \$3 net.

Even after the recent works of Lang, Leaf, Seymour, Bréal, and Murray, the "Homer and the Iliad" of Miss Stawell cannot be pronounced wholly superfluous. Its main value, however, lies not in the demonstration of its thesis, but in the accompanying literary criticism and incidental appreciations of Homer's art. Miss Stawell's special theory of the origin and structure of the Iliad will go the way of all Homeric theories. Its distinctive feature is the rejection, with Grote, from the "original Iliad" of book ix, the Embassy to Achilles, and of book viii, which leads up to it; though she retains not only the general picture of the war contained in books ii to vii, but also books xxiii and xxiv, after the climax has been reached in the death of Hector. In the affirmative part of her argument, Miss Stawell follows and resumes Mr. Lang, with many interesting and subtle suggestions of her own. For example, she argues that if we retain book xxiv, the Ransom and Burial of Hector, then book xxiii, the Funeral Games in honor of Patroclus, is needed to prevent the immediate juxtaposition of the emotional climax at Hector's death with that which finds expression in the lamentations at his burial. She might have reinforced this point by a comparison with the structure of Plato's "Republic," where the interpolation of the digression on poetry in the first half of book x has the same effect and probably the same intention. In her rejection of book ix, she expounds and expands the arguments of Walter Leaf and other disintegrating critics. It would be idle to go over this ground again. We note merely that destructive criticism brings with it bad luck, as usual. To prove that book xix is incompatible with the embassy, Miss Stawell tells us that in xix, 134-6, Agamemnon even goes so far as to say that he had never been able to give up his anger. Agamemnon says nothing of the kind. Miss Stawell mis-translates οὐ δυνάμην λελαθέσθ' ἄτης, ἥ πρώτην ἄσθην.

We have ourselves no theory of the Iliad, constructive or destructive, to maintain. But it is a curious fact that destructive arguments nearly always involve misinterpretation or false statis-