

one life in which he is interested, does not wilfully distort the whole picture.

This canon of criticism is at once invoked in dealing with the biographies of Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI. Many a time have their lives been written, but seldom with impartial judgment, and never with a full study of the influences that moulded them, and determined their fate. The present volumes are no exception. They are absolutely dissimilar in style, treatment, scope—everything but prejudice. Both are frank apologies for the life of the queen; both misinterpret history in their sympathy with her. Or rather, let us say, they view the Revolution so exclusively from her standpoint as to mislead a reader who is not forewarned. In the overthrow of ancient privilege, in the establishment of middle-class rule, the greatest individual obstacle was, undoubtedly, the strong-willed woman who called in the troops around Paris and Versailles, and so caused the attack upon the Bastille; she who nerved the King to whatever action he could be nerved into taking, against the new order. There was every reason, to be sure, why she should betray the French plans of campaign to the enemy, her brother. But that does not make her the less guilty. The tragedy of her life began in its gay and self-indulgent youth. She was no person upon whose caprice the welfare of a nation should depend. The King, that acme of kindly stupidity, managed fairly well during the first years of his reign, before the Queen gained her ascendancy. Her whims, if indulged in private life, would have been more or less innocent. In a queen they were worse than a blunder. This is the true tragedy of her life—her irresponsible responsibility, her failure to understand, and consequently her own deliberate choice of the road to destruction. Of course, these biographies do not go into this. They are concerned with the brilliant fortunes of the gay young Austrian; the gossip and life at the court of Versailles; the relations between King and Queen; the darkening of social life at court during 1789; the march of the women in October; the gilded prison of the Tuileries; the tragic close with its strong human appeal.

Yet nothing could be more unlike than these volumes. Mr. Belloc is a master of style. His rhetoric is graphic. His thought is direct and incisive, his virile and masterful presentation of men and events is a triumph of literature. Yet his book is just so much more dangerous than the long, garrulous, and quite uninspired biography of king and queen by Col. Haggard. For Mr. Belloc is not a simple-hearted gentleman, amusing his leisure with a courtly tale; he is a deliberate apologist who chooses to pervert history in order to arrange his *mise en scène*. His book is about as untrustworthy a performance as ever came from

the pen of a master of rhetoric—which is saying a good deal. It opens with the attempt to prove that the "Diplomatic Revolution of the middle of the eighteenth century sprang, like every other major thing in modern history, from the religious schism of the sixteenth!" That Reformation was to him the great catastrophe. Had it succeeded all over Europe, "The spirit of Rome would have vanished as utterly from her deserted provinces, as had that of Assyria from hers." Humanism, according to M. Belloc, is a Catholic thing. This is on a par, as an interpretation of history, with his attempt later to prove that the reason Marie Antoinette developed a liking for gambling was because of the lack of an heir to the throne! It is natural that such playing with events should be careless of detail and of statement. When Turgot entered upon his ministry "the Republic was in sight; already Napoleon was born!" (p. 114). What connection have Turgot's reforms with Jacobinism? "There is not one of us but has come upon a dozen such unions" (p. 62) as that of an imaginary marriage of Louis XV and Madame du Barry! That lady was not the spiteful piece Mr. Belloc makes her out to be, and it is absurd to suppose that she owed her influence over the king to the fact that she had "the same brow and forehead" as Pompadour (p. 63). How does the author know that, at the end of her last day's journey to Versailles, Marie Antoinette's "curiosity and the vitality of her years had forbidden her to feel fatigue" (p. 64)? Or that her mother had carelessly passed by the mention of Du Barry in the note of Mercy (p. 43)? Or that when she danced with Chartres (Orleans), at her first ball at court, the young *dauphine* felt that "something chilled her"? Frequent indeed are the demands here made upon the imagination. And yet Mr. Belloc is a most brilliant writer, and capable of thought; and one enjoys his bad book—as a romance.

Col. Haggard talks to one as he would to a child. He takes you into his confidence. "Now, dear reader," he almost says, "if it were possible I should like to have this story turn out differently, but don't blame me!" In offering you his confidences, however, he wins your own. He is a good, old-fashioned story-teller. His biography in its two good-sized volumes, leaves little out that can well go in. He has read history to advantage, too, in spite of his failure to understand what the Revolution was all about, or in any case to convey a correct impression. He at least has read the decree of August 11, 1789, and other such documents. It is a better book than its inspired neighbor, because it is so straightforward that only the utterly uninitiated will be led astray by it.

A life of Marie Antoinette remains to be written.

The Mystery of Education and Other Academic Performances. By Barrett Wendell. New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons. \$1.25 net.

In these four addresses, the persuasive qualities of Mr. Wendell's wit appear once more to advantage. The title essay and that on the Study of Literature have a gradual Socratic approach that is charming and enlightening. One may doubt if the paradox of a higher education which leaves no perceptible residuum in actual acquirement will ever be wholly elucidated. Here we learn chiefly that intelligent sympathy and its wise radiation as power are the real aims, and both the latter-day dispersion of undergraduate courses and the eccentricity of much postgraduate research are held up for disapproval. This address was delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Johns Hopkins University, and, unless the gentleness of the manner prevented, it should have done them good. What the Newark school teachers thought when they were insidiously led on to the perilous brink where the simple study of literature goes over into Comparative Literature, we have no means of knowing. It should have encouraged them to hitch their pedagogical wagons to the star of the humanities.

Most interesting to those who have followed Mr. Wendell's career at Harvard was the address on the Study of Expression delivered before the College of Charleston, South Carolina. In most respects it is a recantation, an admission of bankruptcy of that elaborate system by which all comers were supposed to learn how to write. The results of an unsuccessful experiment, which he stalwartly insists had to be tried, is that it is futile to teach English composition "as a thing apart." It must grow out of personal interests which cannot be improvised at certain hours of academic schedules. Proficiency comes out of much reading, thinking, and feeling. In a sound education all courses would make for workmanlike expression. Since they do not, we may possibly believe instruction in composition to be still a necessary evil.

The address on Poe, given at the University of Virginia, seems to us at once the most ingenious and sophisticated of these academic performances. What is said about the specific gift of the man, his isolation, his keen romantic glamour, his moral indifference, is excellent; but when Mr. Wendell goes on to say that a genius which had nothing of North or South in it is therefore a precious bond between the sections, he implies false axioms of equivalence. For fairness' sake, we quote the statement upon which the eirenicon of Poe is based:

No other romanticism of the nineteenth century was ever so serenely free from

limitation of material condition and tradition; none, therefore, was so indisputably what the native romanticism of America must inevitably have been.

If we are to argue so, we must also concede that American romanticism began and ended with Poe—a fact which rightly makes his talent precious, but hardly constitutes a bond between Puritan and Cavalier. By the same token we would engage to prove, say, at the University of Durham, that Shelley, being at once wholly detached and the quintessence of British individualism, is a tie between the hearts of Wessex and Northumberland. Public speakers are usually under the burdensome obligation of proving something agreeable and socially expedient.

For good measure is added a poem in heroic couplets, "De Præsede Magnifico," to wit, President Eliot. It is genial and witty, and doubtless served its turn well; but it was possibly a mistake to reprint it. The rhymes fail to answer each other with a satisfying bang. It gives the impression of having been thought out in blank verse to which rhyme has been added subsequently and without relish.

Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1742-1747 and 1748-1749.
Edited by H. R. McIlwaine. Richmond, Virginia.

This is the second volume of the Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia published during the year 1909, and the seventh in the series. It contains the Journals for two Assemblies, or six sessions. The editor gives in the preface a useful summary of the most important acts of each session.

The first session of the former Assembly began on May 6, 1742. Gov. Gooch had returned in 1741 from the unsuccessful expedition of Admiral Vernon against Carthage, in which he had commanded the Virginia troops, instead of Gov. Spotswood, who had died June 7, 1740, just before the expedition was ready to sail. During the Governor's absence, the Rev. James Blair, commissary of the Bishop of London and President of the Council, acted as Governor (1740-41). In the meantime, the House of Burgesses appointed the usual standing committees, and the committee of claims was busy with claims of the widows of those whose lives were lost in the unfortunate affair of Carthage. Furthermore, a tobacco law was passed, and other legislation of considerable importance.

The second session opened September 4, 1744, more than two years after the first closed. The tobacco law was again changed; and a special act for the suppression of gambling was passed. The number of laws passed was forty-six, as against the thirty-three of the previous session. An act laying an increased tax

on skins and furs for the support of William and Mary College was passed, and an act allowing free negroes, mulattoes, and Indians, "being Christians," to testify in cases involving these classes. The county of Albemarle was formed from Goochland in this year, and the town of Port Royal on the Rappahannock was established. The third session (from February 20, 1745) was called by the Governor on hearing the news of the uprising of the followers of the Young Pretender. In its course, both Governor and House manifested their strongly Protestant sentiments and sympathies. As in an earlier session, the House of Burgesses now showed its jealousy of the Council and zeal in maintaining its rights and privileges. One need not discuss in detail the acts of the fourth session of this Assembly, of only six days' duration (from July 11, 1747). Finally, the fifth and last session of this Assembly opened March 30, 1747, to make provision for rebuilding the Capitol, which had been destroyed by an incendiary fire. Now began in earnest the dispute between the House and the Council as to the removal of the capital. The House favored a site on the Pamunkey; the Governor and Council preferred Williamsburg. The Governor finally dissolved the Assembly, and called a new one to meet on October 27, 1748, which continued in session to May 11, 1749, though a recess was taken from December 17, 1748, to March 2, 1749. The Governor recommended Williamsburg as the site for the Capitol, and action on the report of the committee on revision of the laws. The first subject was discussed as bitterly as before. The bill for a town on the Pamunkey was defeated by five votes, and that for rebuilding the Capitol at Williamsburg was passed by two votes. Later, a bill for a town at New Castle, and the erection of public buildings there, was passed by two votes, but was rejected by the Council, the Williamsburg bill having already received the Governor's signature. The dispute continued, and the Governor prorogued the Assembly. The editor remarks that the acts passed by this Assembly "constituted a mass of well-digested legislation which is a worthy monument of the ability of the leaders of the colony at the middle of the eighteenth century."

Whatever criticism may be made of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, especially for their disputes with the Council, and their stickling for their rights and privileges, it must be conceded that it was a working body, patriotic and energetic, and much more democratic than the Council itself. The last action taken by this Assembly was the appointment of a committee of five of the most prominent members to see to the printing of the revised laws, and to the disposition of official copies of

them. As for the Governor himself, one is impressed by his religious attitude throughout his administration, and, in his final address to the Assembly, by his exhortation that this body "continue steadfast in the communion and doctrines of the Church of England," in "a religious regard for the clergy," and in "a legal indulgence to Dissenters." These last were not yet regarded as on an equality with members of the Church of England, for the recommendation with respect to them reads, "there is not anything can contribute more to the reformed interest, or the public weal, than a legal indulgence to such Dissenters, who, under the required proof of their fidelity to our civil establishment, lead quiet and inoffensive lives." Yet the events of the next twenty-five years welded the people of Virginia politically into a united whole.

Essai sur Leconte de Lisle. By Jean Dornis. Paris: Librairie Paul Ollendorff. 3 fr. 50.

There is a good deal of the card catalogue about M. Dornis's essay—the kind of thing an attentive reader might make by partitioning his author into topics such as sense of color, feeling for nature, and so on, and noting apposite quotations, which are then sorted and connected by a tissue of comment and transition. To be sure, this process, if persisted in as M. Dornis does persist in it for 350 pages or thereabouts, will finally give the reader a kind of familiarity with the poet; though it does not orientate him particularly or quicken his critical ideas. But, then, M. Dornis's attitude toward his author is not precisely critical; it is unreservedly enthusiastic, even rhapsodic. Though he recognizes, as far as it is admirable, the poet's grandiosity—the singular atmosphere of vastness or spaciousness diffused through such poems as "le Sommeil du condor"—he fails to recognize the equally curious sense of unreality which makes even the poet's Greek pieces so un-Greek, and which in connection with the former characteristic lends all his figures a singular air of something seen in a fever—large, remote, and vivid, but somehow fantastic and insubstantial like pasteboard cartons.

Besides, the cautious reader cannot fail to suspect M. Dornis in his enthusiasm of exaggerating his author's importance as a philosopher. As a matter of fact, Leconte de Lisle was deeply interested in the successive religious beliefs of the world—indeed, he is occasionally, when his inspiration flags, rather too much of a cosmologist. But it was always the panorama of faith that interested him; and it is going too far to make his main preoccupation religious—it was so obviously something else: what he himself would have called ar-