

BOOK NOTES

The name of Léon Vanderkindere, professor at the Université Libre de Bruxelles, was not widely known outside of Belgium, yet the memorial volume which a group of his friends have prepared by drawing from his works a *Choix d'études historiques* (Brussels, Weissenbruch, 1909; xii, 389 pp.) reveals a historian and mediævalist of attractive personality and keenly scientific method. The volume contains a suggestive address on the scientific method in history, an investigation of the condition of women among the Merovingian Franks, a survey of feudalism and a series of local studies in the history of Belgian communes. It was in this last field that M. Vanderkindere had especially distinguished himself. This monument to his memory bears the mark of that standard by which he himself judged scientific effort—utility.

Professor John Davidson, of the University of New Brunswick, had long planned a work on the Scottish staple and had collected not a little material. After his death, Mr. Alexander Gray utilized his notes and completed the necessary researches, both in Scotland and in the Netherlands. The results have now been published in an imposing volume entitled *The Scottish Staple at Veere: A Study of the Economic History of Scotland*, by John Davidson and Alexander Gray (London, Longmans Green and Company, 1909; 453 pp.). It consists of three parts: a general introduction, a history of the staple and the organization of the staple. As the authors point out very clearly, the Scottish staple must not be confounded with its English namesake. The English staple was primarily a fiscal device and was concerned almost exclusively with the wool trade. The Scottish staple was an institution of the Convention of Royal Burghs and was more akin, in some respects, to the English merchant adventurers than to the English staple. It differed, however, from the merchant adventurers in that it served also in some respects as an administrative organ of the Scottish government. Finally, whereas the importance of the English staple is found primarily in the earlier centuries, the Scottish staple at Veere or Campvere flourished from the sixteenth century to the end of the eighteenth. The book, which is at once scholarly and interesting, is a fresh and instructive contribution to the entire economic and commercial history of Scotland.

The distinguishing characteristic of *Outlines of the Economic History*

of England: A Study in Social Development, by H. O. Meredith, lecturer at Manchester University (London, Pitman & Sons, 1909; 355 pp.), is the emphasis that is laid upon the general survey of each period. In so condensed a presentation of a very large subject the author had, of course, no opportunity to utilize any original researches of his own; but he has made good use of recent contributions by other writers, such as Sombart's discussion of the genesis of capitalism and Steffen's history of the English laborer. To the reader who desires a concise but comprehensive treatment of English economic history, Mr. Meredith's book may be recommended as one of the best manuals on the subject.

The latest addition to the historical manuals known as the Cambridge Historical Series, edited by G. W. Prothero, is a volume by Mrs. H. M. Vernon, entitled *Italy from 1494 to 1790* (Cambridge University Press, 1909; viii, 516 pp.). The volume resembles others in the series in the compactness of its arrangement and the inclusiveness of its scope, but it shares the fault of several of them, a lack of discrimination in the assortment of material. Anything that happened is told simply because it happened; or rather it is not told but referred to. This is the weakness of the book. Many events are touched upon so slightly that only one familiar with the history of the country and the period realizes their importance, and that particular kind of reader is not likely to turn often to so hurried a narrative. The writer of manuals ought never to refer to things in passing unless he has time to develop his point. He ought to learn first of all to omit from his survey all but the most important things, in order to gain something approaching a perspective. This book shows little skill in either of these essentials. It lacks insight and inspiration. A bibliography (with notably few German titles), an index and three maps furnish a slight compensation for defects in the narrative.

Sir Horace Rumbold was British ambassador to Austria; but new material, or even novel interpretation of old, is wholly absent from his *Francis Joseph and His Times* (New York, D. Appleton and Company, 1909; 405 pp.). The book cannot be taken seriously as an independent piece of historical writing; at best it is only "diplomatic recollections." Sir Horace retains the point of view of the man whose active years were spent at courts and in diplomatic circles. He has a weakness for royalty and solemn processions of state carriages. A third of the book is devoted to what seems to the author to be the necessary background, but is, in reality, a pleasantly selected series of anecdotes about the careers and personalities of Francis Joseph's Hapsburg ancestors, from the redoubtable Maria Theresa down to the