

Secretaries and Policies

THE AMERICAN SECRETARIES OF STATE AND THEIR DIPLOMACY. Edited by SAMUEL FLAGG BEMIS. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1927. 3 vols. \$4 each.

Reviewed by JOHN CORBIN

IN his preface to a series of volumes on the lives and achievements of our Secretaries of State, Nicholas Murray Butler stresses the fact that the Declaration of Independence, clarion call though it was to the oppressed of all nations, was predicated upon "a decent respect for the opinions of mankind." He proceeds to sketch in able outline the continuous series of international broils, not to say entanglements, that have confronted the heads of the State Department. It is indeed quite true, though a truth not yet sufficiently realized, that our rôle in the late war was precisely that played by the founders of the republic in the wars between England and the France of Louis XVI, of the French Revolution and of the Empire of Napoleon; that, yesterday as in the beginning, our vital interests and national honor, perhaps our existence as a nation, were to be safeguarded only by the realities of foreign alliance—call it cobelligerency, if you will.

Washington did indeed live to be sorely plagued by the French alliance which had been his and our salvation. Even in the first exultation that indispensable aid was forthcoming, his prudence and his deep wisdom foresaw imminent dangers. At a still earlier date John Adams had the same prevision—and subsequently suffered, as President, inconveniences quite as great. But what they cautioned us against was not all participation in the affairs of Europe, not even against all alliances, but only, to quote the Farewell Address, against such alliances as are "permanent" and therefore calculated, "by interweaving our destiny" with that of a foreign nation, to "entangle our peace and prosperity." Not until Jefferson's Inaugural Address did the loose phrase "entangling alliances" emerge to darken council. The historic fact is that the French alliance disentangled us from toils that threatened to strangle the infant Republic, becoming dangerous only in so far as it had elements of inescapable permanency. The series of volumes in hand bears strongly upon the problem of the League of Nations—the deeply perplexing problem of safeguarding our interests in the affairs of the world without embroiling us in controversies that do not primarily concern us. It aims to inculcate a decent respect not only for the opinions of mankind but for our own vital interests.

Not that the series is in any dubious sense propaganda. Neither President Butler nor James Brown Scott, who contributes a Historical Introduction, so much as mentions the League. The succeeding chapters are contributed by historians of repute, each a specialist in his field and writing as such. Archives have been ransacked with results which, if in no case momentous, yet form a permanent addition to our knowledge. The work as a whole will doubtless take rank among the rapidly increasing list of definitely restricted studies, such as "The American States During and After the Revolution," by Allan Nevins, and "The History of the American Frontier," by Frederic L. Paxson. The danger in such a work, made up of separate studies by a series of collaborators, is the lack of "one increasing purpose." A certain measure of *liaison* is indispensable. Wherever, as is generally the case, a negotiation is handled by two or more succeeding Secretaries of State, the chapters should snugly hook up with one another. This has been admirably accomplished. Among those interested primarily in our foreign relations the work is destined to afford an indispensable supplement, and in some cases to supersede, the general histories.

An effort has been made to "enliven" the narrative "by interweaving the story of the activities and the personalities of the men who have held the office of Secretary of State with the story of the work of that office itself." The endeavor promises well, for, as President Butler points out, "of the forty-two incumbents of the office six became President of the United States, and, in addition, no fewer than thirteen were at one time or another active candidates for that office, either at the polls or in the councils of their respective political parties." This latter activity has possibilities. If it could be detailed in such a work the result would doubtless prove enlivening. But the hard fact is that the Secretary of State as such, lively though his per-

sonality may be, is in reality subordinate to his President and has little scope for the traits that make for salient characterization. Examples of "the character which is drama" come to him from without. "Your veterans in diplomacy," wrote John Adams to R. R. Livingston, Secretary under the old Articles of Confederation, "consider us (American Ministers) as a kind of *militia*, and hold us, perhaps, as is natural, in some degree of contempt; but wise men know that militia sometimes gain victories over regular troops." The reference is to Bunker's Hill, then a recent memory. Long before the era of shirtsleeves, "militia diplomacy" was a byword. Yet Adams's boast was not without warrant: "I have long since learned that a man may give offense and yet succeed." That the highly contentious clauses of Jay's treaty were predetermined by Alexander Hamilton, working extra-officially with the British minister in Philadelphia, unbeknown to Secretary Jefferson and probably also to Washington, has been brilliantly shown by Professor Bemis in his monograph published in 1923, and the story is summarized here. "It would seem that the treaty which bears Jay's name should be credited to Alexander Hamilton." Though not precisely a militia diplomat, the Little Lion was unorthodox in his methods as John Adams—and, as is now generally conceded, as successful.

Those clauses of the treaty which were indubitably Jay's own provide for the peaceful settlement of disputes, and constitute a purer success. The principle of arbitration between states had been imbedded in the Articles of Confederation—and that was really arbitration between foreign nations, for the thirteen States were then more thoroughly "foreign" to one another than we of today can readily imagine. In 1785 Jay had prepared a report favoring the settlement of the boundary dispute with Great Britain by means of a mixed commission, and in 1790 Washington transmitted a copy of it to the Senate—urging, furthermore, a policy of arbitration in all possible disputes with all nations. Jay's treaty of 1794 provided for the arbitration of all outstanding difficulties—"a precedent which has been fruitful in subsequent international relations."

The result of John Adams's militia diplomacy was a treaty with Holland which enunciated principles designed to secure the freedom of the seas. Some of these principles had been foreshadowed in the treaty of 1778 with France, and all of them "have been contended for by the United States ever since." At Paris in 1783 Franklin went so far as to urge that not merely merchants with unarmed vessels but also fishermen, farmers, artisans, and manufacturers should be immune in person and in property. With the success of these efforts to confine the ravages of war the series in hand is very largely concerned, such being the chief substance of American diplomacy. How far we have proceeded, and in which direction, may be judged in this passage from the chapter on Timothy Pickens by the late Henry Jones Ford. It is the nearest approach to propaganda in the three volumes.

Events have not tended to diminish the catalogue of contraband articles, as the United States desired, nor in general to enlarge neutral rights. The mechanical resources of war have been so enlarged as to give military value to many articles that were not formally supposed to possess it. Neutral rights have tended to narrow, rather than to enlarge. The belief that war can be restricted to the combatants primarily engaged, and that definite limits can be put to the disturbance caused by other nations, seems to be less and less practicable as the world goes on.

Few people doubt the essential benevolence of our age-long efforts in behalf of neutrals and of world peace; but the fact remains that we are by nature and manifest destiny a commercial nation, and that our interest in such matters is largely self-interest.

Unexplored Country

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the fairy story and the myth as the legitimate and logical field for the screen. But the motion picture has a far wider range than that. There are superb possibilities for it in poetry—such poetry as Dante's, or Blake's, or Coleridge's, with all their rich freight of imagination. It has never yet been proved that the masses are insensible to the great because they accept the commonplace. If some producer would have the boldness to offer them a picture, shorn of the paraphernalia popularly considered necessary for success, and relying on the greatness of the imagination back of it for appeal, it might be triumphantly demonstrated that the public knows and loves the highest when it sees it.

A Saga of the Obscure

THE FORERUNNERS OF ST. FRANCIS. By ELLEN SCOTT DAVISON. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1927.

Reviewed by VIDA D. SCUDDER

THIS book was needed. In the universal honoring of St. Francis during the past year, it is well to remember that the beloved Poverello was no isolated genius. He and his movement were the final and fragrant flower of a passionate desire potent in Christendom during all its story. Nowhere are to be found more poignant phases of social compunction united to religious unrest, nowhere a braver challenge to conventional Christianity and the institutional Church, than at the very heart of the so-called Ages of authority and faith. "The list of those who questioned the teaching of the Church," says Miss Davison, "is longer in the two centuries just preceding the establishment of the mendicant orders than at any time since the Council of Nicaea." Diverse fluctuating movements, some within the pale of orthodoxy, others slipping into the limbo of heresies, marked the continuous effort of men to escape the shackles of private property and to live in that feudal and predatory world as they thought Christ meant men to live,—the free life of evangelical poverty, of brotherhood and love.

Of such movements this book tells the story, and it is a fine contribution to American scholarship. Nothing had filled its place, though Lea's "History of the Inquisition" and Tocco's "L'Eresia nel Medio Evo" occur to mind as its precursors. But the body of Lea's book belongs to a later period, and Tocco naturally does not deal with the monastic orders. Miss Davison's indefatigable studies, left incomplete at her death and brought into shape by the competent work of Miss Gertrude Richards, form a worthy memorial, and a witness to the ability of American women in historical research. The careful notes and ample bibliography offer a gathering of clues which it may be hoped that future students may follow, while the body of the text will give the general reader a comprehensive and accurate survey of certain less known yet not least significant aspects of medieval life.

The account of the eleventh and twelfth century monastic reformers is followed by chapters on Arnold of Brescia, on those fascinating people the Umiliati, on the Cathari and the Waldensians. Each chapter is full of fresh and vivid detail, for Miss Davison was never content to take factors at second hand; the book, this part of which is enlarged from her doctoral dissertation, bears evidence on almost every page of her painstaking investigation of sources. Miss Richards, who has expanded and rewritten from Miss Davison's notes, well supplements her. It is hardly possible to pass from the chapters on the monastic reformers to those which follow, and discern where a second hand has been at work. Perhaps, however, had the work received the final shaping of the author, there might have been a little more illumined interpretation in proportion to the presentation of facts. One craves delineation more obviously from within of the thought and feeling that inspire these movements of social and religious revolt, which M. Shotwell well calls in his Foreword "a saga of the obscure." The most readable portion of the volume is the Second Part, with its delightful little sketches, sometimes unfinished and fragmentary, picturing the reaction of social and economic forces deep in the life of the common people. Fresh and vital, taken straight from the sources, these sketches show both Miss Davison's ardor in research and her genuine power to make the past live again for us.

But the whole book is packed with information, and it is a fine thing to have gathered in one volume the story of those protesting groups: so restive all of them under the discrepancies between the Gospel they professed and the claims of a despotic and worldly Church, so fervently sure that in evangelical poverty was the Way enjoined by Christ, and so unable to follow that Way, except by either withdrawing from the common lot like monks, or drifting into vagaries like the Cathari. Miss Davison evidently thought that the Christian radical is now as then confronted by an insoluble dilemma. She says: "Early Christianity was . . . an attempt to regulate the individual life according to the precepts and commands of Christ, among which were sev-

eral which if followed literally would have effectually barred the development of any institution based on Christianity." Her whole book is in a way a comment on that sentence, nor does it exhaust by any means the comment to be made.

Meanwhile, this tale of protest against the temporalities and worldliness of the Church, and the general difficulty of living the good life in an acquisitive society, is impressive. At many a turn a modern mind finds itself in fellowship with these gallant, bewildered minds of times long past. The effect of the book is cumulative, and if we add to its story, knowledge of the stubborn effort of Francis's successors to discard ownership and live true to love and poverty, we feel the power of a conflict forever thwarted, forever renewed. Will men ever be satisfied till they find how to live in the normal world so that obedience to Christ's commands shall not lead to defeat or disaster? Modern psychology is helpless to account for those secret impulses coursing through our veins, apparently from a source above nature.

How did Francis, who is remembered, differ from the Cathari, Umiliati, and the rest, who are forgotten? Because, says Miss Davison in her conclusion, he had "capacity for caring so intensely for one's fellow men that all questions of doctrine and of dogma sink into relative unimportance." Other points may be noted. Francis, for instance, eschewed criticism, and never dealt in denunciation. Instead of scoring the Church, he and his sons calmly proceeded to be it, so to speak,—to work from within, following quite simply the Way of Life as they saw it. Moreover, renunciation of worldly goods was no end in itself to them, as it was to the monk and the ascetic, but the inevitable expression of a natural,—or supernatural,—sense of values. Wherefore the blessing of the meek was theirs, and joyously inheriting the earth, they sang triumphant Lauds of the Creatures.

This story of their predecessors, the Christian radicals of the twelfth century, has substantial importance alike for the disinterested student of history and for the troubled and seeking mind of the Christian social reformer.

Medieval Days

BROTHER JOHN, a Tale of the First Franciscans. By VIDA D. SCUDDER. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. (Atlantic Monthly Press Publication.) 1927. \$2.50.

THE DISCIPLE OF A SAINT, Being the Imaginary Biography of Raniero Di Landoccio Dei Pagliaresi, Secretary to St. Catherine of Siena. By VIDA D. SCUDDER. New York: E. P. Dutton. New edition. 1927. \$2.50.

Reviewed by GRACE FRANK

MISS SCUDDER'S imaginative reconstructions of the past reveal the specialist in love with her subject. To the lives of the followers of St. Francis and to the intimates of St. Catherine of Siena she brings not only a scholar's careful research but a sympathy, reverence, and understanding that make her spiritual kin to the times she recreates.

"Brother John" is professedly not a novel—indeed it is much less a novel than its predecessor, "The Disciple of a Saint." The latter, with its more ambitious style, its more involved plot, and its portraits of sinners as well as of saints, may legitimately claim the attention of any reader who would penetrate below the surface of medieval life by way of a very readable historical romance. "Brother John," on the other hand, seeks merely to make real for us the problems that beset the early followers of St. Francis, their difficulty in remaining true to Lady Poverty, the pressure brought to bear on them both by the monastic orders and the Church, the conflict between the more spiritual and the more worldly elements within the Order itself.

As we accompany the young Lord of Sanfort, turned simple Brother John, in his journey from his English castle to Assisi and later Rome, we meet every type of friar from the most learned to the most humble, and share in all their varied occupations and experiences, human and spiritual. In the end there emerges, against a faintly indicated background of strife and intrigue, a charming picture of those gentle, happy, and mystically exalted Franciscans who found their keenest pleasure in the simplest of tasks and rejoiced contentedly in their discovery that the more they renounced, the more they possessed.

Miss Scudder's way is far from being George

Moore's way, but her accomplishment in these two books is not incomparable with that of Mr. Moore in his more detailed and elaborate chronicle of the days of Abelard and Heloise. With themes less modern and human in their appeal than those involved in the great medieval tale of love, renunciation, and frustration, Miss Scudder has nevertheless recreated for us in a beautiful, unmannered prose, delicately attuned to her subjects, the moods and tempers of alien times and peoples.

An Immortal Love

THE IMMORTAL MARRIAGE. By GERTRUDE ATHERTON. New York: Boni and Liveright. 1927. \$2.50.

Reviewed by ANNE C. E. ALLINSON

THE immortal marriage is that of Pericles and Aspasia in Athens of the fifth century B. C. That the love of this man and this woman has lived on gloriously because of the glory of their city and time cannot be denied. But it is also true that to Pericles the immortality of Athens was in large part due. Perhaps never have a man and a city been so completely one. Aspasia was not Athenian born, which is the only reason why their relationship in the strict legal sense could not be called a marriage, and without doubt Mrs. Atherton is right in following the modern scholarship which has taken her out of the class of the ordinary courtesans of the age.

Aspasia came to Athens from Miletus in Asia Minor, where women lived freely and might be richly educated. It was the same freer tradition which shaped Sappho in Lesbos in an earlier century. In Athens a curious reactionary temper kept women in a very inferior position. Even emotionally they were assigned a small rôle. Mrs. Atherton makes a typical Athenian say to Aspasia, in protest against her sympathy with a love affair between a young man and a girl: "True love can exist between intellectual and high-minded men only. It is but the meaner sort of love that a man may feel for a woman, who is without virtue; or with only those lesser virtues which are necessary in the house." The crystal facets of the period took no brilliancy from women. In the healthful, open-air, athletic life, which made bodies fit to house the keenest intellects, they had no share. Nor were they any more desired in the lively intellectual and artistic life. When Socrates came to die, he wanted only his men friends about him for talk on the immortality of the soul. Wife and children were sent away before the great hour.

Into a city like this came Aspasia, not only beautiful, but highly educated, brilliant, able. Pericles was unhappily married. They came together like two stars destined to one orbit. No lover of Hellas, especially if she be a woman also, can fail to be moved by this immortal love. Mrs. Atherton insists upon calling it a marriage, for Olympias, the legal wife, left Pericles, and Aspasia was the head of his house, bringing up his sons and young wards, and herself bearing him a son. Only on account of a law proposed by Pericles himself was he illegitimate, his mother being a foreigner. Later, when the proud statesman's older sons had died, he asked for and obtained the legal legitimacy of Aspasia's.

But this is anticipating the story. The novel is without plot, except such as history has made. When Aspasia comes over from Miletus with her uncle, the architect who has been sent for to beautify Piræus, the harbor town, Pericles is at the height of his power. The ups and downs of politics follow. The enemies of Pericles sometimes win, so that the comic poets of the day dare publicly to defame Aspasia—whence the erroneous tradition of her character. Then once more his statesmanship and eloquence are commandeered by the volatile populace. Through all changes, all troubles, all successes, Aspasia is by his side. The greater among his friends honor her—Socrates, of course, Sophocles, Thucydides, Anaxagoras the philosopher, Phidias. Immortal figures roam about in the book. Alcibiades is still a child, a ward in the house of Pericles. Euripides is beginning to be talked about, although Sophocles is still the most popular dramatist—Æschylus has passed off the stage, Aristophanes is a child. Immortal works of art, like the Parthenon, are in process.

At last the Peloponnesian War begins—but its dreary length is hidden from view in the novel. The terrible plague of the first year of invasion by

Sparta decimates Athens. Pericles is blamed for all the woes. His friend Phidias is accused on some charge and imprisoned. Aspasia is also accused, with the hemlock in the balance, but the court yields to the impassioned appeal of her great lover. His two older sons die the horrible death of the plague. The next year he himself sickens mysteriously and dies. Nothing in the book is more characteristic of Mrs. Atherton than the scene at his deathbed, when Aspasia stares down at the emaciated form and shrunken skull-like head of the man who for so many years had been her friend and companion and lover, and he opens his eyes upon her wide, horrified, but pitying gaze. He is buried, with public ceremony, and in the last sentence of the book we part from Aspasia, with her sad eyes, wearing a faintly puzzled expression, fixed on the sealed door of the tomb.

That Aspasia and Pericles were united in their intellects as well as by passion is obviously the secret of Mrs. Atherton's interest in their story. The union of minds she emphasizes throughout, so entirely subordinating the element of passion as to give to the novel an austerity not usually associated with her work. May we guess that she turns to this ancient marriage of great natures in order to portray what she hopes may be the marriage of the future?

Has she told the ancient story, as a story, well? That is hard for one already familiar with the period to determine. Is it really as dull, as sapless, as it seems in many chapters, or is one only missing one's own pet ideas about the historical personages or events? At any rate the book is done with every desire for fidelity in details. Mrs. Atherton is said to have spent months in Athens, and her list of "authorities" is long and excellent. Of minor errors it would be ungracious to take notice, so large is the canvas she set herself to paint. But the fidelity obvious in most of the archaeological data still remains the fidelity of the student who has crammed for a purpose rather than the fidelity of the master who has lived with these ghosts of the past. "From out the ghost of Pindar in you"—so Tennyson wrote to Sir Richard Jebb, the great Hellenist. Not even Aspasia, we venture to say, has been as close to the author of the "Immortal Marriage," much less her city and her times. But all the same she has convinced us that a man and a woman once loved greatly. And that is probably what she meant to do.

Unusual Tales

THE HOUSE OF LOST IDENTITY. By DONALD CORLEY. New York: Robert M. McBride & Co. 1927. \$2.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

WE have seen Mr. Corley's drawings before. A book or folder of them was published several years ago. They have fantastic imagination but did not greatly impress us so far as style was concerned. Neither do they as adjuncts to the present volume. But we had not been following Mr. Corley's stories in *Harper's*, *The Pictorial Review*, and *Scribner's*, and the unusual quality of some of them has enchanted us. One can remark, "Dunsany!" and one can also be reminded of Mr. Cabell, who writes a graceful if somewhat repetitive "Note for the Intending Reader" to this volume; but Mr. Corley's own individuality, beyond all influence, is impressed upon the best of these tales. The very best, we agree with Mr. Cabell, is "The Legend of the Little Horses." It is richer, and nearer to our human existence here below than the purer fantasies. "The Glass Eye of Throgmorton" is a good shudder-story, but even Gouverneur Morris, when he girded up his loins, used to do rather better in this *genre*. "The Daimyo's Bowl" is beautiful decoration, "The Song of the Tombelaine" achieves a finely tapestried effect, "The House of Lost Identity," "The Price of Reflection," "The Tale That the Ming Bell Told," "The Book of the Debts" all have glamour and inventiveness; but a good deal more satisfactory than any of these are "The Manacles of Youth," "Figs," and "The Ghost-Wedding." Mr. Cabell's insistence that in this volume we encounter magic is more justified when one considers these particular stories, together with "The Legend of the Little Horses," which we have already mentioned.

The poet is insistent upon glamorous atmosphere