

upon the bones of St. Ursula and her 11,000 virgins. But Germany was never really of the Grand Tour; it cost far too much to live in chimneyless hostels where the smoke went out of the windows and the cattle came into your bed. In France and Italy, with slightly better conditions, it was expensive enough; Gibbon drew £900 for a year abroad, though less fussy tourists such as Gray and Dr. Johnson (who would speak only Latin to foreigners) contrived with somewhat less. The English and Americans were being rooked even then.

The sons of the rich went forth, accoutred with several telescopes, a pneumatic bath tub, and father's injunction to broaden their minds no matter how, so long as they shied clear of Popery. Thus they minced across the social crust of Europe, carefully dodging everything that smacked of the actual earth. One didn't tour for scenery then. The earth's beauty was largely ignored by travelers until Byron and Ruskin guided them to it. Venice was the thing; buildings, costumes, art. It seemed the mode of snobbery, rather than English chauvinism, to belittle Bologna as "that celebrated mart of lap-dogs and sausages," to cry with Gray that Florence was "an excellent place to employ all one's animal sensations in," while noisily viewing the Pitti Gallery and the Medici Chapel, the latter "a fine frippery to commemorate fifty rotten and forgotten carcasses." The carcasses of the past considerably exercised these pretty gentlemen; the Scotchman's skin, dried and displayed in Germany, was of more worth to them, as meat for conversation, than the Alpine clouds which Addison loved. Reading of them in this excellent budget of articles and ancient prints, it becomes clear that the early tourists in Europe gave the natives cause to despise them. The book should serve as sermon and inspiration to all travelers abroad.

Tudor Naval Exploits

ELIZABETHAN SEAMEN. By Douglas Bell. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1936. \$3.

THERE is always room for one more book about the exploits of Elizabethan seamen. This one combines a retelling of some of the best stories from Hakluyt and other contemporary narratives with information about the Tudor navy drawn from Sir Julian Corbett's classic studies and from more modern researches. Most of the material is familiar, and neither style nor scholarship rises above a pedestrian level, but the summary of English maritime exploration and naval warfare in the sixteenth century is compact, coherent, and usually reliable. An index and a brief bibliography help to make this a useful guide to more detailed accounts and to the immortal tales of the great Elizabethans themselves.

Hand-Painted History

THE HUNDRED YEARS. By Philip Guedalla. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1937. \$3.

Reviewed by GARRETT MATTINGLY

THE hundred years referred to is the last; the scene, Great Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and the United States; the theme "an attempt to describe the leading movements of the last century as they affected the leading units of the Western world." That is a portentous announcement, but Mr. Guedalla is the Puck of historians; he can put a girder round the earth in the flick of a page, and to any but Macfadden readers the hundred years is no more than three or four agreeable hours under his genial guidance. His first section, for instance, "1837" opens with an inimitable passage in which the dawn rolls westward across Europe, shining chiefly upon the Czar, Metternich, and certain picturesque sentinels, then five pages of Kensington palace while Victoria is apprised of her uncle's death, and a glimpse of President Van Buren taking office in a depression; this is followed by a series headed "1848" (Victoria and Albert at home, the end of the Mexican War, the overthrow of Louis Philippe, the Chartists, and a railroad entering Chicago), then 1861 (the liberation of the serfs anticipated, Fort Sumter, the death of Albert), 1871, 1881, 1897, and so in shortening steps to Hitler, President Roosevelt taking office in a depression, and the accession of another British king.

The leading movements distinguished are mainly the improvements in communication and industry, knitting the world closer together and shedding their golden benefits on all, the principle of nationalism, and the fluctuating advance of democracy in which, in the long run, Mr. Guedalla has unshaken confidence. These movements are not so much described as commented on in pungent epigram: "Dictatorship is only a device by which an air of permanence is lent to temporary retrogressions. . . . For dictatorship is oddly mortal but the revolution

lived." And they engage Mr. Guedalla's attention less than personalities. He rarely touches the great figures of the century for more than a paragraph or two, but he has something shrewd and witty to say about each.

With these strands as his cables swung from the towers of some fourteen significant moments, Mr. Guedalla has, he says, "tried to throw a light bridge across the chasm of a hundred years." It is a light bridge, indeed, its fragile glitter, as of spun glass, bearing bravely a rainbow troop of fancies but cracking ominously at times beneath the tread of thought. For now and then the procession is interrupted by talk of factories and railroads,

national aspirations and geography, and the causes of historical events, reminding the uneasy reader how much better many less ornamental styles bear the burden of dull theories and facts. But before he can be seriously alarmed, and perhaps close the book forever, the gossamer bridge stops quivering and the iridescent shadows of the great resume their pageant. They could not have a defer pageant-master.

In the delightfully bogus Second Empire, of which Mr. Guedalla is so fond, some nameless genius perfected the art of painting historical scenes on china. I have seen a delicate Sèvres tea service thus adorned with a set of Napoleonic battle pieces; on one cup tiny mortars belch orange flame against the walls of Ratisbon, on another a clump of Polish lancers charges at full gallop, and majestic, across the creamer, the Emperor reviews the Old Guard. This art is now revived in letters. The little flags flutter, the sabres flash, the dead are piled symmetrically. Every detail of the background is historical and finished with minute and loving care; the generals and statesmen are exquisitely life-like and stand in the most natural attitudes; the jewel-like uniforms of the soldiers glow with color; there is even a peasant watching the guns go by. It is all very gay and amusing, and very instructive, too, and terribly hard to do. Not the greatest art, perhaps, but one of the rarest.



PHILIP GUEDALLA

The Saturday Review of LITERATURE

BERNARD DeVOTO.....Editor
NOBLE A. CATHCART..... Publisher
AMY LOVEMAN..... Associate Editor
GEORGE STEVENS..... Managing Editor
HENRY SEIDEL CANBY }
WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT } Contributing
CHRISTOPHER MORLEY } Editors

THE SATURDAY REVIEW is indexed in the
"Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature."

THE SATURDAY REVIEW cannot assume re-
sponsibility for the return of unsolicited
manuscripts submitted without an addressed
envelope and the necessary postage.

Copyright, 1937, Saturday Review Co., Inc.



Reviewing Reviews

THIS department is temporarily moved to the editorial page as a convenient way of illustrating a text that *The Saturday Review* has been expounding: the desirability of having history reviewed by historians. If there is any better general reviewer than Mr. Clifton Fadiman, the editor has not heard about him. Mr. Fadiman's intelligence, energy, and ability to be interesting about anything he discusses are unquestionable. On many things, on most fiction for example, we would back him against the field. But when he sets out to tell us about history he drifts off into fantasy.

Within the last few weeks Mr. Fadiman has been twice betrayed, by unfamiliarity with the methods and results of history, into judgments that would grievously mislead anyone who relied on them. Contemplating Mr. Woodward's "A New American History," he reached a conclusion that it is a good book. And the condition of Mortal Error indicated by that conclusion is demonstrated by his more recent and more extended remarks about Mr. Roeder's "Catherine de' Medici."

Mr. Woodward's book need not occupy us long. The last thirty years have completely made over American historiography; the field has been not only enormously extended but revolutionized as well. Mr. Woodward is innocently unaware of the process and its results. His book is as superficial and antiquated as a high school textbook of physics written in 1890, before wave mechanics, the quantum theory, and other basic concepts of modern physics were developed. A textbook, furthermore, that was written from notes which didn't quite get what the instructor had been saying—even in its own simple material it averages some three mistakes to a page, according to an estimate by a member of the American Historical Association at the recent meeting. Even if this estimate is an exaggeration, the book is inaccurate, unimportant, and uninformed, and its only interest is the morbid one provided by Mr. Woodward's opinions on matters about which he is not qualified to ex-

press an opinion and expresses none that a student of history is bound to respect. Nevertheless it satisfied Mr. Fadiman. "Offhand" he says, "it would be difficult to think of a more sensible and illuminating one-volume history of our country." Offhand the editor, who can think of a good many one-volume histories, cannot think of one that is anywhere near so bad.

Any readers of Mr. Fadiman who accepted that judgment and bought Mr. Woodward's book got a lot of misinformation about American history. What they got from Mr. Fadiman's review of Mr. Roeder's book is a lot of bewilderment. Part of it comes from Mr. Fadiman's failure to understand the book and the rest of it from his applying some dubious general ideas. Thus he ends with seven climactic questions, assailing Mr. Roeder for not answering them. Now, it is only in the sacred writings, in Marx and the "Book of Mormon," that history gives absolute answers. Questions are asked in the present; they result from a state of mind that can never be fully congruent with the past; their very phrasing is a partial coloration of the past. The answers that history gives must always be incomplete and tentative, conceding much to God and more to the irrecoverable formulas of chance. But the measure of Mr. Fadiman's bewilderment is that, within that limitation, Mr. Roeder's book employs a brilliant historical science to answer all of those climactic questions that can be answered and show that the others are absurd.

What troubles him is complex ideas. One would like to know, for instance, what the "great single magnetic conception" is that he reproaches Mr. Roeder for not adopting. If Mr. Fadiman has one he ought to release it, for history has signally failed to turn one up, especially in the sixteenth century. There isn't any—Mr. Fadiman is merely repeating the amateur's virginal demand for simplification and unity, joining the wishful chorus of the monists. Mr. Roeder, a historian, is content to find limited systems of interdependent facts where he can be sure they exist—and the great merit of his book is that it does find some and does establish them. They are still far from simple when found, but the student of history must learn how to deal with complexities.

Mr. Fadiman's lack of experience with them shows plainly when he opposes Elizabeth to Catherine. He appears to have derived two simple and extremely fallacious equations: Protestant=Bourgeois=Capitalist ("progressive forces"), and Catholic=feudal (dynastic)=non-capitalist ("non-progressive forces"). Even in those simplified terms, he misses what Mr. Roeder says. His question becomes: Why did not the French monarchy imitate the English in backing the Reformation? History abandons such ultimate questions to controversy, for they

are essentially metaphysical. But in so far as this one can be answered, Mr. Roeder supplies a careful, detailed, and judicious answer. It is complex, of course: (1) the Italian ambitions of the French kings made combinations with the papacy desirable and their power in Italy made them possible, so that (2) by the Concordat of Bologna the French monarchy enjoyed most of those rights over the church which it was the object of Henry VIII to acquire. Also (3) because of the more solidly articulated structure of French society, the deep-seated sentiments and prejudices of the northern French, and the greater geographical and political accessibility of France to the propaganda of the counter-Reformation, about eighty percent of the French remained intensely Catholic. If comparable conditions had existed in England, Elizabeth would have stayed Catholic or lost her throne.

But Mr. Fadiman's equations are false. Only a porch-chair historian can entertain such simplicities, for the material of history is mixed and complex. The Protestant movement in France was essentially conservative, decentralizing, "fundamentalist." Its chief strength was in the petty bourgeoisie and the *petite noblesse*. And there were many strong capitalist elements among the Catholics: most of the large bankers, the great majority of the merchants, and the elite of the guilds. There was also a strong democratic element: the city proletariat was overwhelmingly Catholic and the peasants seem to have been also. In the presence of such facts as these—and there is no secret about them, see any modern history of France, see Roeder, for example—Mr. Fadiman's question loses all meaning.

In short, unfamiliarity with the materials of history and lack of training in its methods make Mr. Fadiman misunderstand Mr. Roeder's book and vitiate the judgment he passes on it. He reports a "somewhat jumbled impression." That, one is forced to conclude, is not Mr. Roeder's fault. But it italicizes the reason why *The Saturday Review* has historians write its reviews of history. Ideas derived from history are live and usable, and there never was a time when they were more important than they are right now. But they must be controlled by knowledge of the facts and skill in the methods of history. We are familiar with the damage done to history by impassioned zeal substituting for knowledge—you remember when the American Legion set out to do Mr. Woodward's job with a different but no more naive formula. A taste for grand and simple conceptions can do just as much damage. This magazine proposes to examine history with the greatest care and to entrust the examination to qualified historians. It is a field where only the expert can be trusted, where no one but the expert is worth anything at all.