world. In the first of his dialogues Severus puts into the mouth of an interlocutor a most pleasing description of the life of coenobites and solitaries in the deserts bordering on Egypt. The main evidence of the virtue attained by them lies in the voluntary subjection to them of the savage beasts among which they lived. But Severus was no indiscriminating adherent of monasticism. The same dialogue shows him to be alive to its dangers and defects. The second dialogue is a large appendix to the Life of Martin, and really supplies more information of his life as bishop and of his views than the work which bears the title *Vila S. Martini.* The two dialogues occasionally make interesting references to personages of the epoch. In Dial. 1, cc. 6, 7, we have a vivid picture of the controversies which raged at Alexandria over the works of Origen. The judgment of Severus himself is no doubt that which he puts in the mouth of his interlocutor Postumianus : “ I am astonished

that one and the same man could have so far differed from himself that in the approved portion of his works he has no equal since the apostles, while in that portion for which he is justly blamed it is proved that no man has committed more unseemly errors.” Three epistles complete the list of Severus’s genuine works. He is said to have been led away in his old age by Pelagianism, but to have repented and inflicted long-enduring penance on himself.

The text of the *Chronica* rests on a single MS., one of the Palatine collection now in the Vatican; of the other works MSS. are abundant. Some spurious letters bear the name of Severus; also in a MS. at Madrid is a work falsely professing to be an epitome of the *Chronica* of Severus, and going down to 511. The chief editions of the complete works of Severus are those by De Prato (Verona, 1741) and by Halm (forming vol. i. of the *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum,* Vienna, 1866). There is a most admirable mono­graph on the *Chronica* by Bernays (Berlin, 1S61). (J. S. B.)

SÉVIGNÉ, Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, Marquise de (1626-1696), the most charming of all letter-writers in all languages, was born at Paris on February 6, 1626, and died at the chateau of Grignan (Drôme), on April 18, 1696. The family of Rabutin (if not so illustrious as Bussy, Madame de Sévigné’s notorious cousin, affected to consider it) was one of great age and distinction in Burgundy. It was traceable in documents to the 12th century, and the castle which gave it name still existed, though in ruins, in Madame de Sévigné’s time. The family had been “ gens d’épée” for the most part, though François de Rabutin, the author of valuable memoirs on the sixth decade of the 16th century, undoubtedly belonged to it. It is said that Bussy’s silly vanity led him to exclude this Francois from the genealogy of his house because he had not occupied any high position. Marie’s father, Celse Bénigne de Rabutin, Baron de Chantal, was the son of the celebrated “ Sainte ” Chantal, friend and disciple of St Francis of Sales; her mother was Marie de Coulanges. Celse de Rabutin shared to the full the mania for duelling which was the curse of the gentlemen of France during the first half of the 17th century, and was frequently in danger both directly from his adversaries and indirectly from the law. He died, however, in a more legitimate manner, being killed during the English descent on the Isle of Rhé in July 1627. His wife did not survive him many years, and Marie was left an orphan at the age of seven years and a few months. She then passed into the care of her grand­parents on the mother’s side ; but they were both aged, and the survivor of them, Philippe de Coulanges, died in 1636, Marie being then ten years old. According to French custom a family council was held to select a guardian of the young heiress, for such she was to some extent. Her uncle Christophe de Coulanges, Abbé de Livry, was chosen. He was somewhat young for the guardianship of a girl, being only twenty-nine, but readers of his niece’s letters know how well “ Le Bien Bon ”—for such is his name in Madame de Sévigné’s little language—acquitted himself of the trust. He lived till within ten years of his ward’s death, and long after his nominal functions were ended he was in all matters of business the good angel of the family, while for half a century his abbacy of Livry was the favourite residence, both of his niece and her daughter. Coulanges was much more of a man of business than of a man of letters, but either choice or the fashion of the time induced him to make of his niece a learned lady. Chapelain and Ménage are specially mentioned as her

tutors, and Ménage at least fell in love with her, in which point he resembled the rest of the world, and was constant to his own habits in regard to his pupils. Tallemant des Réaux gives more than one instance of the cool and good- humoured raillery with which she received his passion, and the earliest letters of hers that we possess are addressed to Ménage. Another literary friend of her youth was the poet Saint-Pavin. Among her own sex she was intimate with all the coterie of the Hôtel Rambouillet, and her special ally was Mademoiselle de la Vergne, after­wards Madame de la Fayette. In person she was extremely attractive, though the minute critics of the time (which was the palmy day of portraits in words) objected to her divers deviations from strictly regular beauty, such as eyes of different colours and sizes, a “ square-ended ” nose, and a somewhat heavy jaw. Her beautiful hair and com­plexion, however, were admitted even by these censors, as well as the extraordinary spirit and liveliness of her expression. Her long minority, under so careful a guardian as Coulanges, had also raised her fortune to the amount of 100,000 crowns—a large sum for the time, and one which with her birth and beauty might have allowed her to expect a very brilliant marriage. That which she finally made was certainly one of affection on her side rather than of interest. There had been some talk of her cousin Bussy, but very fortunately for her this came to nothing. She actually married Henri, Marquis de Sévigné, a Breton gentleman of a good family, and allied to the oldest houses of that province, but of no great estate. The marriage took place on August 4, 1644, and the pair went almost immediately to Sévigné’s manor-house of Les Rochers, near Vitré, a place which Madame de Sévigné was in future years to immortalize. It was an unfortified chateau of no very great size, but picturesque enough, with the peaked turrets common in French architecture, and surrounded by a park and grounds of no large extent, but thickly wooded and communicating with other woods. The abundance of trees gave it the repute of being damp and somewhat gloomy. Fond, however, as Madame de Sévigné was of society, it may be suspected that the happiest days of her brief married life were spent there. For there at any rate her husband had less opportunity than in Paris of neglecting her, and of wasting her money and his own. Very little good is said of Henri de Sévigné by any of his contemporaries. He was one of the innumerable lovers of Ninon de l'Enclos, and made himself even more conspicuous with a certain Madame de Gondran, known in the nickname slang of the time as “ La Belle Lolo.” He was wildly extravagant. That his wife loved him and that he did not love her was generally admitted, and the frank if somewhat coxcomb-like accounts which Bussy Rabutin gives of his own attempt and failure to persuade her to retaliate on her husband are decisive as to her virtue. At last Sévigné’s pleasant vices came home to him. He quarrelled with the Chevalier d’Albret about Madame de Gondran, fought with him and was mortally wounded on the 4th of February 1651 ; he died two days afterwards. There is no reasonable doubt that his wife regretted him a great deal more than he deserved. On two different occasions she is said to have fainted in public at the sight once of his adversary and once of his second in the fatal duel ; and whatever Madame de Sévigné was (and she had several faults) she was certainly not a hypocrite. Her husband had when living accused her of coldness,—the common excuse of libertine husbands, —but even he seems to have found fault only with her temperament, not with her heart. To close this part of the subject it may be said that though only six and twenty, and more beautiful than ever, she never married again despite frequent offers, and that no aspersion was