

Napoleon asked his secretary, Las Cases, when they were starting for St. Helena, "What can we do in that out-of-the-world place?" What he actually did do, the degree of influence that he still exerted, from his island prison, on the fortunes of France, and so to some extent of Europe, is told in sufficient detail, and with constant reference to published and manuscript sources of information, by M. Philippe Gonnard in his profusely illustrated volume entitled "The Exile of St. Helena." But the purpose of the book goes further than this: what the author has primarily tried to do is to determine the share Napoleon had in generating the so-called "Napoleonic legend," — that is, the legend that he was the disinterested advocate of the principles of 1789; that, himself a Liberal, he became Dictator only from sheer necessity; that, wishing for peace, he was repeatedly forced into war by the European coalition; that he supported and proclaimed the law of nations, and so on. This "Napoleonic legend," so at variance with many historic facts, the author thinks may be traced to its source in the writings and reported sayings of the St. Helena exile. "The conclusion to which one comes after such a study as this," says the author in closing, "is that the man of St. Helena equalled the man of Austerlitz. He realised there the political mis-

*THE EXILE OF ST. HELENA. The Last Phase in Fact and Fiction. From the French of Philippe Gonnard. Illustrated. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co.

THE LAST KING OF POLAND, and his Contemporaries. By R. Nisbet Bain. With sixteen illustrations. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

FRANCIS JOSEPH AND HIS TIMES. By Sir Horace Rumbold, Bart. Illustrated. New York: D. Appleton & Co.

THE IRON CARDINAL: The Romance of Richelieu. By Joseph McCabe. New York: The John McBride Co.

FRANCESCO PETRARCA, POET AND HUMANIST. By Maud F. Jerrold. Illustrated. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.

COROT AND HIS FRIENDS. By Everard Meynell. With twenty-nine illustrations. New York: A. Wessels Co.

takes he had made, and, as far as it was in his power, he endeavoured to make up for them." The argument is well handled, and the book may be read with profit and pleasure in connection with Lord Rosebery's work, "Napoleon: the Last Phase," which the French author frequently cites. M. Gonnard's competent translator is unnamed, but deserves at least a closing word of praise.

A decadent kingdom tottering to its fall, and hurried over the precipice by a brilliant but irresponsible and morally worthless ruler, is the subject of the late R. Nisbet Bain's readable and scholarly volume on "The Last King of Poland, and his Contemporaries." It is a department of eastern European history made familiar to the author by his previous studies and writings, and he, better than almost any other English scholar, was fitted to undertake the reading and critical study of the numerous Polish, Russian, and other authorities on the deeds and misdeeds of Stanislaus Poniatowski. Of course it is no picture of puritanic virtues and austere living that we are called upon to contemplate; the conspicuous position that Catherine II. occupies in the canvas is a sufficient assurance of that. Among the episodes (more amusing and perhaps more instructive than the main events) which enliven the narrative is one in which the sorrows of an underpaid royal librarian, Reverdil, are serio-comically narrated by the librarian-author. Insufficient shelving, no charging system, no classification, poor lighting, and extreme exiguity of income, were among the ills afflicting this royal library; while its custodian was obliged to marry two of the King's cast-off mistresses (but not simultaneously) in order to retain his unenviable position. Portraits of Stanislaus, the "Prince Charming" of the story, and of celebrated contemporaries, are liberally supplied.

Sir Horace Rumbold's late diplomatic experience, as British Ambassador to the Emperor of Austria, has qualified him to write understandingly of that monarch and his court. "Francis Joseph and his Times" is the title of a beautifully printed, well illustrated, and agreeably written volume from Sir Horace's pen. The public and the private life of the Emperor are passed in review, his entrance on the scene being prepared for by five chapters of historical matter from the close of the eighteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century. In dealing with royalties, as with women, the natural impulse is to be to their virtues very kind and to their

faults a little blind; and this amiable impulse the author has indulged. But the aged ruler is surely a majestic figure. One wishes that Sir Horace might have thrown some light on the tragic fate of Crown Prince Rudolf, but the sad event of now twenty years ago is only briefly touched upon. The ties of politics and race uniting the Austrians and the Germans are regarded by the author as a "baneful bond," and he views with not unnatural English apprehension a possible welding together of all central Europe "under the hard, unscrupulous lead of the most aspiring of Powers." The German bogy dies hard.

"The Iron Cardinal," by Mr. Joseph McCabe, modestly disclaims any pretensions to completeness as a biography, but, as indicated by its sub-title, "The Romance of Richelieu," contents itself with examining the authenticity of certain romantic legends that have become associated with Richelieu's name. In other words, this hero of the elder Dumas and of G. P. R. James is dragged with all his trappings of romance about him into the search-light of history; and the result is the representation of a Richelieu rather less darkly repellent and ruthlessly ambitious than is the common conception of him. He has suffered, pleads the author, from two unfortunate circumstances: "He was born into an age of national lawlessness, and it took a generation to destroy it"; and his deeds and character have been made the fruitful subject of many memoirs from the hands of his enemies, while those who knew him best and were not prejudiced against him have left no written tribute to his memory. The complete life of this wonderful man remains to be written, is in fact even now in process of writing by the French historian M. Hanotaux. Meanwhile this less serious and far less voluminous study of his character, with its many portraits and other attractive features, is welcome.

Petrarch's fame, as Miss Maud F. Jerrold remarks in the preface to her "Francesco Petrarca, Poet and Humanist," was long that of a poet, his claims to consideration as a humanist being obscured by the beauties of his lyric verse. The purpose of her book is to do equal justice to the author of those Latin studies which are now attracting increasing attention, and to the composer of the exquisite sonnets whose modern imitators have, by their exaggeration of Petrarch's faults of taste, thrown some shadow of disfavor upon their model. Accordingly, in a dozen narrative and critical chapters she tells

the story of his life and work, drawing freely for illustration on his vernacular verse and Latin prose, but condescending to the reader's possible unfamiliarity with those tongues by supplying translations, apparently her own in most instances. The influence of Petrarch on English poetry, with the old argument from the Prologue of the "Canterbury Tales" to demonstrate the probability of a personal meeting between Chaucer and his Italian contemporary, is treated in a chapter on "Petrarca's School." The secret of Petrarch's charm as a man, the author finds in the fact that his character shows "a total lack of the obvious and the consistent, and this it is, perhaps, which makes him so perennially interesting. There is nothing flatter in life than the people who are so like themselves, of whom we can predict what they will say and do on all occasions, and the line of conduct they are sure to pursue." A more careful avoidance of the tautology illustrated by the last sentence would have made still more excellent this scholarly treatment of an interesting theme. The appended bibliography, alphabetically arranged, is to be commended.

One needs only to look upon the portrait of Corot to feel the charm of his naturalness and unaffected goodness. In Mr. Everard Meynell's "Corot and his Friends" this endearing quality of the man is emphasized, and the reader is spared the jargon of the studio and the technical criticism of the expert. To Robaut's voluminous work on Corot and to the intimate reminiscences of MM. Dumesnil and Silvestre the author acknowledges his large indebtedness. In the compass of three hundred openly printed pages he has brought together all that the desultory student of art history needs to know of this French painter, and the text is illustrated with a good number of half-tone prints from his masterpieces. These mechanical reproductions do but scant justice to the peculiar excellences of the originals, but they may at least spur on the reader to make the acquaintance of those originals. Some of Corot's attributes as artist and man are reflected in a friend's account of him: "He is simple, good, and altogether free from the vices of genius. He is so sweet and gentle that he hesitates to awake a dozing model. He is extremely gallant towards women, extremely good-natured with children. . . . He has often said to me, 'When I find myself in one of Nature's beautiful places, I grow angry with my pictures.' Perhaps the trials of his youth, the long contest made against his genius, had left some bitterness in his spirit."