

way to some other fashionable craze that may not provide equally valuable and interesting narratives for the use of the historical student and the delight of the general reader.

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Histoire du Second Empire. Par PIERRE DE LA GORCE. (Paris : E. Plon, Nourrit et Cie. 1895. Two vols., pp. vii, 493, 458.)

As we draw farther and farther away from the events of the period from 1850 to 1870, it may well be expected that renewed attempts will be made to review these events from the standpoint of the historian rather than of the politician ; that scholars will arise competent to discuss men and movements without prejudice and without passion, and to utilize the ever-increasing mass of letters, official documents, memoirs, and special monographs that are each year in course of publication. Thus work will be produced acceptable to the readers and critics of our generation, who, strangers to partisanship and in sympathy with the canons of modern historical research, desire to know accurately the meaning of that important period and the part which its statesmen have played for good or for evil in creating the political situation as we see it to-day. What Mr. Rhodes is doing for this country, and what Sybel—with full allowance for his national liberal sympathies—has done for Germany, M. Pierre de la Gorce is doing for France.

M. de la Gorce is to be classed with the members of the modern school of French historians,—Monod, Aulard, Babeau, Sorel, Rambaud, Langlois, Bémont, and others,—who, in one field or another, are doing the best historical work in France to-day. Already well known as the author of an admirable history of the Second Republic,¹ he has brought to his task the qualities of a trained scholar, who has made his vocation neither politics nor literature, but history ; and, while recognizing that his material is inadequate for a final treatment of his subject, has endeavored to relate faithfully and conscientiously the history of the Second Empire as the accessible documentary evidence presents it to him. Although his work is based to a large extent upon published material, it is evident that access to private sources of information has, in many instances, enabled the author to make clear many important points hitherto obscure.

In these volumes M. de la Gorce treats of the period from January 1, 1852, to May, 1859, when Napoleon III. announced to the French people the fact that war existed between France and Austria. He writes of those first years,—*les années heureuses*,—when the Napoleonic government, in fancied security, gave little thought to indications of eventual failure,—indications bound to appear in the history of a régime indifferent to all those political problems that had been uppermost in France since the French Revolution. M. de la Gorce opens his subject with a discussion of the *coup d'état*, and traces the policy of Louis Napoleon as dictator of the

¹ *Histoire de la Seconde République Française.* Two vols. 1887.

Republic, explaining the success of the *coup d'état* by showing that France did not want parliamentary government as much as she wanted political peace. He examines the methods employed by Louis Napoleon to win the support of all classes of people, his clever manipulation of the economic forces of the period, his measures for gaining electoral support, and his attitude toward the central and local administration, in preparing the way for the establishment of the Empire. He then takes up the Empire itself, traces in considerable detail the steps leading to the assumption of the imperial title, and discusses the imperial constitution, the legislation whereby the imperial power was increased, the men who served as ministers, the loss of liberty, the increase of wealth and luxury, and the growing political apathy of France.

Having thus examined the internal conditions of the first years of the imperial epoch, he turns to the foreign relations, and devotes the remainder of the first volume — about 250 pages — to the Crimean War. Returning, in the second volume, to the government and life of the Empire, M. de la Gorce enters upon a brilliant analysis of the internal economy and administration, the political parties, the Christian society, and the social classes, and searches for the causes of Napoleon's popularity. He studies the Emperor's policy of reconciliation, his sagacity, his quickness to seize opportunities, and his skill in turning everything to the advantage of the Empire. At the same time he shows the hollowness of this popularity, the artificiality of the imperial government, its want of organic connection with the national life, as seen in the growth of doubt and suspicion, of electoral indifference, of party inactivity, and of gloomy debate in the Chambers. His chapters on *L'Empire et les Partis* and *L'Empire et la Société Chrétienne* are particularly strong; each is, in a sense, a distinct essay, in which the delineation of men is admirable, and the treatment of religious leaders and questions, although in no sense laudatory, appreciative and sympathetic. That upon *Les Élections de 1857* — a severe arraignment of a Napoleonic plébiscite — and that upon *L'Attentat d'Orsini*, bring us back to the political phases of the subject, and prepare the way for a further discussion of the foreign relations of the Empire, the last 196 pages being taken up with the Italian question.

To determine the exact measure of M. de la Gorce's contribution to the history of France, we must compare his work with that of others who have written upon the same subject. In the first place, he has approached his evidence as an historian and not as a littérateur, as did Jerrold in *The Life of Napoleon III.* (1874-1877), nor as a politician and journalist, as did Delord in his *Histoire du Second Empire* (1869-1875). Untouched by the political passions of the period, he has published his work at a time when party bitterness is subsiding; whereas Jerrold, an acknowledged friend of the imperial family, began to collect his materials early in the sixties; and Delord, a republican of the type of 1789, issued his first volume in 1869 and the remainder before it was certain whether the Third Republic would live or die. In the second place, M. de la Gorce treats with

equal success affairs of state at home and affairs of diplomacy abroad; whereas Jerrôld wrote of Napoleon *intime*, and had no real appreciation of the political history of the Empire; while Delord, though fairly successful in his delineation of the strength and weakness of the imperial régime, failed signally in his discussion of the foreign relations, and never understood the importance of the war policy in alienating the people of France from Napoleon.

But in his treatment of the Crimean War M. de la Gorce comes into competition with writers of another class. Was it necessary to devote so much space to the war, when Kinglake in *The Invasion of the Crimea*, Geffcken in *Zur Geschichte des orientalischen Krieges*, and Rousset in *La Guerre de Crimée* have already treated it with such fulness? In the first place, the work of neither Kinglake nor Geffcken is complete; the former stops with the death of Lord Raglan, while the latter studies the diplomatic history of the war, and avoids the military movements. M. de la Gorce, on the other hand, has given an admirably proportioned account, beginning with the causes, tracing the diplomatic efforts of the Powers, following the movements of the armies, furnishing details and statistics in large numbers, and concluding with a masterly summing up of the work of the Congress of Paris, and of the results of the war. Now the work of Rousset is equally complete, but it cannot be called in every way a well-balanced history. As a writer on military matters and historiographer to the French Minister of War (1864), Rousset devoted his attention especially to the military aspects of his subject. At the same time, depending as he did upon documents of French origin, he underestimated the services of the English troops as much as Kinglake overestimated them. In this particular M. de la Gorce inclines toward the view of his countryman, and it is probable that his presentation will not be wholly acceptable to those who have been wont to think of Alma, Balaklava, and Inkermann as scenes chiefly of English prowess. When, however, it comes to the events which led to the war he far outclasses Kinglake, whose statements need constant revision, and he is superior to Rousset in historical judgment; for the latter, with all his penetration and technical knowledge, made a number of erroneous estimates as to the influence of the war in European history and its relation to Italian and German unity.

When M. de la Gorce takes up the Italian question, he enters an unworked field and has no competitor; for he is the first to make elaborate use of those indispensable collections of Italian documents, Bianchi's *Storia documentata*, and Chiala's *Lettere edite ed inedite di Camillo Cavour*. It is in his chapter *Le Piémont et L'Italie*, that he has made his greatest contribution to history. In the sentence, "C'est en Italie que s'est décidé le sort du second Empire," he has found his inspiration, and it is this sentence that justifies the fulness of his treatment. To the elucidation of this question he devotes his best efforts, and he works out with marvellous skill that series of negotiations with Napoleon III. and the Powers abroad, and with Victor Emmanuel and the parties at home, which made Cavour

the greatest diplomat of Europe. In but one matter do I find reason for criticism. M. de la Gorce would have strengthened his discussion of the relation of Piedmont to the Crimean War had he dwelt more in detail upon the policy of resistance adopted by the Piedmontese ministry, especially by Dabormida, Minister of Foreign Affairs. He does not make it clear that Dabormida's hostility to Cavour was based on sound argument and not on merely conservative prejudices. Dabormida wanted guarantees, and would not follow Cavour until Austria promised to respect the independence and freedom of Piedmont, and this Austria would not do. In fact, Cavour's boldness, which history would condemn had he failed, led him at times to commit breaches of international courtesy as well as of international law. To drive Dabormida from his position in the ministry in order that he might fill it himself may have been necessary for Italian unity, but it was not officially honorable.

M. de la Gorce offers us, however, few opportunities for criticism. So well has he done his work, so skilfully has he followed the intricate mazes of European diplomacy, so successfully has he concealed his own predilections and party sympathies, — if he have any, — that we have at last a history of the first years of the régime of Napoleon III. that may be read with confidence and satisfaction. It is not surprising that the work, which has already passed into a second edition, should have been crowned by the French Academy and have received the *prix Alfred Née*.

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Mémoires du Duc de Persigny. Publiés avec des Documents inédits, un Avant-Propos, et un Épilogue, par H. DE LAIRE, Comte D'ESPAGNY. (Paris: E. Plon, Nourrit et Cie. 1896. Pp. xx, 512.)

PERSIGNY'S is a name now almost forgotten, but in his day he played no small part in the affairs of the Second Empire. Born a Royalist, he became converted to Imperialism, and participated with Louis Napoleon in the Strassburg and Boulogne episodes. For the last he was condemned to twenty years' imprisonment, but was released in 1848. Beginning with 1849 he was a member of the Legislative Assembly, minister to Berlin, senator, twice minister to England, and twice Secretary of the Interior. The result of the elections of 1863 rendered it advisable that he should resign this portfolio, and soon after his retirement from the cabinet he was created a duke; he continued a member of the privy council, to which he had been appointed in 1858. For fourteen years Persigny rendered a devoted service to Napoleon III., while during the last seven years of the Empire he was utterly neglected by his former master. During this retirement he composed, between November, 1867, and March, 1869, these Memoirs, which are not memoirs in the strict sense of the term, but rather a series of detached studies or essays on the politics of the twenty years