

and adopted the ideas of the philosophers. But this intercourse was attended with certain disadvantages. The noble seldom felt that men who owed everything to their own talent were his equals. The literary man had all the irritability of his class, and was nettled by the condescending airs of noble patrons. Intimacy often bred antipathy, and those men of letters who owed most to friends among the nobility were foremost in the attack upon the order. The passion for the theatre, then so general, led to many scandals. Still more fatal to the *noblesse* was the passion for gambling, a vice which equalized and confounded all classes. In the endeavour to repair the losses of extravagance, the nobles of the court engaged more and more in financial speculation, which often proved a further cause of impoverishment and discredit. Most fatal of all to the *noblesse* in an age when the spirit of equality was always becoming stronger, were the occasional acts of personal violence against inferiors which went either unpunished or at least without adequate punishment. The story here told at length of Victor-Marie-Nicholas Ysoré, marquis of Pleumartin, affords a curious illustration of what might be done so late as the middle of the eighteenth century.

In his third part, which treats of the war against the *noblesse*, M. Carré is writing of matters so often handled before that there is little room for novelty. The discussion as to how the states-general should be constituted, the easy victory of the third estate when they met, the outbreak of anarchy in the provinces, the growth of emigration, the abolition of privileges and of titles are again described in much detail, which does not, however, modify the general outline of older narratives. M. Carré reminds us that many nobles took service under the revolutionary governments, and that many continued to live obscurely in the provinces, although reduced to the direst want by the loss of their manorial rights. The fourth and concluding part sketches the history of the *ci-devant* nobles under the rule of the first consul and emperor.

F. C. MONTAGUE.

*Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations from April 1704 to February 1708/9, preserved in the Public Record Office.* (London: Stationery Office, 1920.)

STUDENTS of American and colonial history have long looked forward with interest to the promised publication of the journals of the old board of trade, and their expectation of assistance in the investigation of the history of Britain's first colonial empire cannot fail to be realized in ample manner in this, the first volume of the series. It covers four volumes of the bound journals in the Record Office, and prints them as they stand without alteration or abridgement. Under the earlier plan adopted for publication the entries of the proceedings of the commissioners for trade and plantations from their commencement down to 1704 were extracted and included under their respective dates in the *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial*. There they are entangled amidst the abstracts of letters and papers of all kinds that form the mass of the colonial collections. This plan obscured the value of the entries so much as to deprive the journal of a very large part of its value for those who were unable to consult its

volumes in the Record Office and were compelled to rely upon the printed text. The authorities are to be warmly congratulated on the new policy of publication here begun, and it is to be hoped that it may be extended wherever practicable to other registers of historical interest preserved in the national archives.

To many investigators it seems that registers are, as a rule, entirely unsuited to extraction and inclusion in the necessarily rigid chronological arrangement of a calendar of state papers. By the present volume they will undoubtedly be confirmed in that view. The labour that was entailed in the extraction and publication of the colonial entries from the Register of the Acts of the Privy Council was hardly repaid by the resulting volumes of the *Acts of the Privy Council, Colonial*, and would have been of far greater value had the entries been left in their setting and the register published as a whole. The working of a piece of administrative machinery can be understood only vaguely when we have but portions of its records before us, and especially so when they have been torn from their context. If we can be provided with the register of its work that was made up as the work went on for the guidance of those who were using the machine, we shall be placed in as favourable a position for understanding it as any outsider can be. And not merely is this the case, the import of every paper that was produced in the working of the machine can be better appreciated if we know as much of the circumstances of its production as is revealed by a register or journal. A truer view of the administration of the outer empire can be obtained from a careful perusal of the *Board of Trade Journal* in its entirety as published for a given year. The subsequent volumes of the *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial*, too, will necessarily be improved and made easier of consultation. In his short preface the deputy-keeper expresses the hope that the publication of the journals down to the dissolution of the board in 1782 may be accomplished in a reasonable time, while many years must necessarily elapse before the colonial calendar can be brought down to that date. Till such an end can be achieved, the present volume of the journal and its successors will provide a means of access to the yet uncalendared original papers that will be of great value to investigators.

Every letter received by the commissioners was read at a meeting and noted in the journal with all its enclosures, its place of deposit being then indicated by a marginal note with a brief docket showing the subject of its contents. The places of deposit are to be found in the series of volumes of succeeding papers relating each to a different part of the empire (e. g. Jamaica, Leeward Islands, New York, New England, &c.) that from the date of their commencement have been preserved unbroken as the basis of arrangement of our colonial archives. If, therefore, an investigator at a distance desires to consult a particular paper or papers relating to the subject in which he is interested, it will be easy for him to search the published *Journal* to ascertain the date at which they were read to the board. He may then direct his copyist's attention to the matter he requires without being involved in the expense of a laborious search. He can be certain, too, that he has before him in the *Journal* an index of all the papers relating to his subject that reached the commissioners,

and his perusal will be lightened by the exhaustive index of names and subjects that has been prepared for the published volume. The cross-references to folios in the journals were very ample, and as they have been printed without alteration, they greatly facilitate a study of the action of the commissioners in regard to any particular matter. Not merely do the journals include a note of all the letters received and of those written in reply, there are also recorded under the caption 'Plantations General' the substance of the orders and communications sent out to all the colonies at once. These give indications as to the general trend of policy in relation to the oversea dominions and the colonial system. Under this heading there are many interesting papers noted that arose from the state of war and the action of the French privateers against English commerce in the West Indies and elsewhere. Access to the papers is thus rendered easier, and they cannot fail to be of interest to the naval historian. The economist will find matter of the greatest value in the *Journal's* entries concerning trade which for earlier years have been omitted in the extracts that were made for the *Colonial Calendar*. The volume of business done by the commissioners on the plantation side of their work was the greater, but entries relating to home or foreign trade are rarely missing from the notes of the board's meetings during any week. Such matters most frequently arose on communications received from the secretary of state or from the treasury. The *Journal* is, therefore, of value in supplementing the *Calendars of Treasury Books and Papers* that have already been published for the period, and the series of *State Papers, Domestic and Foreign*. Considerable light is thrown upon the history of the great chartered companies like the Hamburg, the Turkey, and the Royal African companies.

Occasionally the debates that marked the proceedings of the commissioners on difficult matters are noted in outline, and we are enabled to discern the opposing views of policy that were held. There are many references of miscellaneous interest, and among them one relating to the papers of the earlier body that was charged with duties concerning trade and plantations. On 30 June 1707 a letter was read to the board giving an account that there were several original books and papers relating to the royal fishery, as also the books and minutes of the council of trade from the year 1660 to 1668, to be disposed of upon a consideration given to the party in possession of them. The commissioners desired to recover the papers, but were not prepared to pay for them before they were valued and a list of them supplied. The vendor forwarded the list, but it does not appear whether the books were purchased or not, and the matter remains to be cleared up by some investigator who is working on the period.

ARTHUR PERCIVAL NEWTON.

*Englische Geschichte im achtzehnten Jahrhundert.* Von WOLFGANG MICHAEL.  
II. Band : *Das Zeitalter Walpole's*. I. Theil. (Berlin : Rothschild, 1920.)<sup>1</sup>

PROFESSOR MICHAEL, whose prefatory message of goodwill to his English friends I, for one, cordially reciprocate, could not have accomplished the present section of the great task which he has set himself without the aid

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, xii. 582.