

THE serious manner with which the press of the state received the cadets' offer of their services to the governor was very gratifying to the students. Even the *Omaha Bee* forgot its prejudice long enough to thank the boys for their generous offer.

LITERARY.

Among the many features that have made the monthly magazine popular none have been more potent to produce that result than memoirs. Aside from the momentary interest they excite as the account of great events by "one who was there," memoirs are not unfrequently a valuable contribution to history.

The history of one man's life very often is the history of an epoch, and about such a man myths gain currency in an incredibly short space of time, which totally conceal the truth of the matter or rear upon it a structure of fiction that should have no place in history. No one is more competent to dispel or prevent the myth than the man himself. The fulsome flattery of biographers too often negatives or hinders the labor of the historian and gives currency to tales that reflect or magnify the glory of the subject. Usually this is lacking in a memoir, which therefore presents the best and truest basis for the labors of the historian. On the other hand the memoir occasionally degenerates into mere matter of excuse.

Public opinion often too rashly and too hastily condemns a man, and a sentence once passed, any attempt at justification or defense is futile. After his death public opinion just as eagerly receives what explanation his memoirs may offer and grant the justice to his memoirs denied to him living.

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Tallyrand was never a leader; he lacked the settled and determined policy that is essential to leadership, yet his name is connected with every event in the most momentous epoch of French history. His talent as a diplomat insured him employment under each successive victor in the strife and turmoil of his time. History has pronounced him as profligate as he was diplomatic, and no doubt any effort to excuse his profligacy, or return the baseness of his character would be useless. Yet his memoirs will be read with more than common interest. His acknowledged diplomacy fitted him to estimate the abilities of the celebrities of the stirring age in which he lived; while the character of his narration will illustrate the spirit of the times. The current number of the *Century* contains the first installment of his memoirs. In plain and concise language he has told the story of his boyhood, and his entrance into politics. His position at the out-break of the revolution, and his part in the assembly on the 14th of July, he has only mentioned. His exile and visit to America, he has related somewhat more in detail, and he seems to have been interested to know the statesmen of the new American nation, some of whom he was later to astound by demanding from them as envoys a tribute and a bribe. Of Hamilton he has expressed a high opinion, and indeed considered him the equal of any living statesman. As an economist he was quick to understand the situation of the struggling nation; whose efforts to establish commerce he condemned.

Although the narrative is concise, it is the conciseness of the diplomat. There are many incidents in this period of Tallyrand's life one would like to have explained, but of them he is cautiously silent, seemingly content that so good

an opinion of diplomacy should prevail and careless of his moral reputation, or perhaps content that it was no worse. His relations with Napoleon will form the topic of the next installment of the memoirs, which will no doubt illustrate the versatility that enabled the secretary of Mirabeau and the bishop of the revolution to become the servant of Napoleon and the empire.

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Mrs. Barr's "Friend Olivia" will be read with delight by those who feel the lack of idealism amid the realism of the day. The history of England under the commonwealth and the restoration of Charles II is fertile in romantic incident. The stern and forbidding temper of the Puritan was well fitted to display the restrained intensity of emotion; the Quaker represented intense devotion, calm firmness, and unostentatious bravery; among the royalists unrestrained passion found its true representatives. The history of the period is the history of violent and tragic struggles both physical and mental. It is from this period that Mrs. Barr has drawn her inspiration.

The plot of the story is founded upon the destinies of a Puritan, a Quaker and a royalist family. Baron Kelder of Keldery represents the fidelity of the ideal Puritan to the commonwealth, while he displays that devotion to conscience that marked the early Puritans before their opinions became a creed. Roger Prideaux is the ideal Quaker, with enough faith in his religion to realize his favorite bible promise that the Lord shall be an ever present help in time of trouble. De Burg is the descendent of an old Norman family whose members had always been renowned for the alacrity with which they shifted their allegiance. The Commonwealth found them ready to forsake the king and become its loyal adherents, all but the son who incurred the wrath of Cromwell and of his father. Banished from home and country, he gave himself up to deeds of lawlessness. An act of kindness precipitated a vengeful prosecution of the Quaker by the royalist. Roger Prideaux received the exiled son, Olivia Prideaux won the love of Nathaniel Kilder, son of the baron, when Anastasia De Burg had failed. The resentment of father and daughter at the Quaker family found willing instruments among those who hated the Quakers for their opinions. The persecutions of the Quaker, beginning from such motives and sustained by the continual intrigue of the royalist and his daughter, display in a vivid manner the effect of success upon the Puritans. To succeed it was necessary to form an organized body; organization could only be effective when it united men in opinion, partisan against the world. Creed took the place of conscience, and persecution fixed it as the standard of belief. The interference of Cromwell himself alone was potent to free the Quaker from imprisonment. His experience in guilt had fitted Roger with the zeal of an apostle against the persecutors of his brethren. Set at liberty, he departed for the colonies where there was much need of help for the Quakers. New England Puritans were more dogmatic than their brethren at home, and their influence had sufficed to turn the good natured people of New Amsterdam against the new sect. Baron Kelder had had reason to fear that the malice of the royalist might ruin him and had made many journeys to Cromwell's court. He had been Cromwell's comrade in arms, and his familiarity enabled him to observe that varying joy or sternness which was peculiar to the great man's temper. His son Nathaniel, too, had occasion to visit Cromwell, and was able to detail to his neighbors the story of the storm that immediately preceded and the calm that followed Cromwell's death.

De Burg's machinations at last worked his own ruin. He