



OXFORD JOURNALS
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Review

Reviewed Work(s): *American Commonwealths: California* by Josiah Royce

Review by: J. A. Doyle

Source: *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 2, No. 6 (Apr., 1887), pp. 391-392

Published by: Oxford University Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/546504>

Accessed: 13-02-2021 19:53 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

Oxford University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The English Historical Review*

the Kaiser on the 6th, whilst Napoleon's letter, written in preparation of his attempted suicide, was dated 8 April and reached Méneval at Orleans on the 10th. The culmination of the empress's treason was then two days old; for on the 8th had occurred the melodramatic scene in which she had called the household to rescue her from the kings Joseph and Jerome, who desired to convey her across the Loire for safety. She declared that to quit Blois without Napoleon's orders was impossible. Three hours later Schouwaloff arrived, and quietly took possession of her and the king of Rome. The next day they set out northwards in search of the Kaiser's protection. On the 11th the cession of Parma and Placenza rewarded her perfidy.

In the spring of 1815 she was sojourning amidst the gaieties of Vienna, engrossed in the attentions of General Neipperg and in the barter of her son for the promised duchies, when her serenity was disturbed by the emperor's escape from Elba. His failure might injure her prospects; therefore she hastened to abjure his designs, and placed herself under the ægis of the powers. The next morning they proclaimed her husband's title to existence forfeited. When a few days more saw Napoleon again installed at the Tuileries, his wife discussed the propriety of rejoining him with a perturbation that bewildered her followers. They were ignorant that she already bore within her the fruit of a passionless adultery, a fact she confessed long afterwards to Lady Burghersh.¹

The captivity of the emperor at St. Helena was to Marie-Louise a period of 'perfect happiness,' only broken by an occasional fear that he might yet escape his gaolers. Living with her paramour in her tawdry court at Parma, she affected to have completely forgotten Paris, its public buildings, and everything connected with her occupation of the imperial throne—'all that was a bad dream.' Oblivious of her son, the prisoner of Schoenbrunn, she could offer fulsome congratulations to Louis XVIII on the birth of the Duc de Bordeaux. When at length news arrived of the emperor's death, she expressly commanded that the name of the deceased should not be mentioned in the prayers offered on his behalf. Napoleon was naught but *l'époux de Madame*.

It is difficult to reconcile these facts with M. de Saint-Amand's opinion that history has dealt too harshly with his heroine. The emperor to the last observed a chivalrous reticence regarding his wife's frailties. In loyalty to their chief, Méneval and Bausset imitated his discretion. Among the scanty details of the concluding portion of this memoir it is curious to find no reference to the eulogy published by the Count de Bombelles in 1845, and entitled *Monumenti e Munificenze di Maria Luigia, Arciduchessa d'Austria*.
E. BLANCHE HAMILTON.

American Commonwealths: California. By JOSIAH ROYCE, Assistant Professor of Philosophy in Harvard College. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, & Co., 1886.)

THE student of American history is often tempted to complain that his teachers deal with their subject somewhat in the fashion of a medieval chronicler. American writers have been too apt to begin their Iliad with

¹ *Journal of Mary Frampton*, 1885, pp. 399, 400.

Leda's egg, and to go over again the oft-told tale of the Greenlanders and the Zeni—those somewhat cloudy predecessors of Columbus and Cabot. They have too often wasted precious space on those prehistoric mound-builders who left an impress on the soil of America, none on its human life as we know it. Mr. Royce has sternly resisted all such temptations of Spanish explorers and Spanish missionaries: he does not tell us a word more than is absolutely needed to make plain his own tale. That tale has for its subject the process by which California became a portion of the federal republic. I should, however, leave a very imperfect and unfair impression of Mr. Royce's book if I implied that its sole or even chief merit was the avoidance of one particular error. Mr. Royce has manifestly worked out his subject with a thoroughly zealous purpose of getting at the real truth of every event. Hosea Biglow himself could not be freer from the 'jingo' feeling with which so many Americans regarded the Mexican war, or hate more cordially the doctrine 'our country right or wrong.'

Mr. Royce's style is for the most part adequate, though it certainly cannot be called attractive. But it would need very pronounced faults of manner to mar the effectiveness of a tale such as that which he has to tell. Mr. Royce describes the process by which a community made out of the most unhelpful material, beset by peculiar temptations, was fashioned into an orderly state. For telling that tale Mr. Royce possesses at least two conspicuous qualifications. He has a keen perception of what is dramatic in his subject—of really illustrative incidents. Yet he shows no readiness to believe an incident because it would furnish him with a telling illustration.

To set off against these merits there are marked drawbacks. He has a taste for rounded and vague moral reflections. In criticising conduct, he gives one hints and innuendoes when a plain statement would be far more telling. His style, too, not unfrequently shows one that Lord Macaulay's objection to the so-called 'dignity of history' may be carried a trifle too far. Mr. Lewis Carroll's poems are hardly such established volumes that an historian may illustrate his subject by references to their characters.

The detailed accuracy of such a work cannot fairly be tested except by a specialist who has studied the subject as fully as it has been studied by the author; for the history of California has but few points of contact with those events and persons in American history of whom an ordinary reader knows something. It is the history of a detached and isolated community. One must judge Mr. Royce by the nature of the evidence which he produces, and by the power which he shows of sifting and estimating the value of it. And one who cannot test his statements in detail may at least say that the whole method and character of the work raises a strong presumption in favour of its soundness, its careful research, and impartial judgment.

J. A. DOYLE.

Professor Droysen's *Allgemeiner Historischer Handatlas* (Leipzig: Velhagen & Klasing) has appeared in its completed form, and a comparison of its arrangement and method with the original edition of Spruner might serve in itself as a record of the advance which has been made in the development of historical studies. This atlas is the result of the joint