

landers. Here, for once, it is worth while noticing the subtitle: *Portrait of a Calvinist*.

From the first Mr. Muir analyzes his subject with the insight of a ruthless relative. He is himself a Scotchman and serious. He surveys bitterly the influence of a Puritan religion upon his country. He does not lack an inclination to dogmatize; his *Structure of the English Novel* (1929) is hardly less rigid than the Nietzschean aphorisms of *We Moderns* (1918). Moreover, he has as sharp a style as any contemporary critic.

In the biography John Knox does not change; he merely hardens. At the beginning he has already renounced the Catholic faith for a Lutheran gospel. Somehow he has acquired a will to power and a perfect ability to see only his side of a question. The remainder of his life is a constant fanatical war to carry out the will of a God whom he unconsciously confuses with himself. He is a type, a humour, or even a caricature. Whether he tries to learn Greek or debates insolently with Mary Stuart, he never surprises us, but only becomes more distinct and more oppressive.

This distinctness, after its first effect, ends in establishing a number of doubts. We feel that we are reading not about John Knox, but about "a Calvinist", and an imaginary one. As for this typical Protestant, we should like to see him treated with more tolerance, or else his opposites with more severity. Either more credit should be given, for instance, to his reorganization of the town of Berwick; or his critic before Mary Stuart should not collapse into a sentimental gentleman and overlook the Queen's wretched incompetence. As do many types in fiction and biography, at first the villain seems true, and then a distortion of the truth.

The biography sets out to do this: "to give a critical account of a representative Calvinist and Puritan". It sets out to analyze, to depict, to define. But it quickly passes from definition into denunciation. There it for the most part remains. It seldom mentions John Knox without irony, or scorn, or fury. It studies

bigotry one-sidedly, and returns vehemence for vehemence. As biography, it is not unlike Lytton Strachey's portrait of Arnold of Rugby, which Mr. Muir has called "excellent satire". Such critical accounts are indeed illuminating, but they leave the reader to do most of the judging.

JOHN KEMMERER

CASANOVA: HIS KNOWN AND UNKNOWN LIFE by S. Guy Endore (JOHN DAY. \$5.00)

IN AN era of facile biography, we may be grateful for an account so careful and loving, so orderly and authentic, as this Mr. S. Guy Endore has given us of Giacomo Casanova, Chevalier de Seingalt. The problems Mr. Endore has encountered, the mass of material he has sifted and evaluated, the researches he has undertaken, are almost endless. In the midst of his gigantic task, he has preserved a balance and freshness one cannot help but admire. As a Casanovist, Mr. Endore ranks midway between the defenders of the great amorist, who have been lured by his paganism into ardent and often unreasonable partisanship, and the scholars, who have involved themselves in the labyrinthine inquiries afforded by the truth or falsity of the *Memoirs*, to the exclusion of the color and vitality still inherent in what is perhaps the greatest of all self-portraits. Having steered an incorruptible course between the two traditional schools of Casanovan criticism, Mr. Endore avoids a third and more modern pitfall. He has advanced no nimble theories, no psycho-analytic catch-phrases, to account for the great adventurer of the eighteenth century who has already so ably and richly accounted for himself.

In the construction of his biography, Mr. Endore has followed the *Memoirs*, adopting, where it is possible to do so, Casanova's own story of his life. This was wise, for the sheer dramatic power of Casanova's confessions would be difficult for even the most inspired

biographer to match. Where Casanova's own statements run counter to the findings of historical research, Mr. Endore has interpolated brief, critical investigations, calculated to modify our impressions of the man, without breaking the thread of the narrative or sacrificing the color and impulse of the original account. After 1774, at which point the *Memoirs* abruptly come to an end, Mr. Endore has had recourse to a variety of notes, documents, reports, letters and government dispatches, to complete the history of Casanova's last years, when "the charlatan, the braggart, the liar, forger, adulterer, seducer, jailbird, and student of the humanities" was living out his old age as librarian in the castle of Count Waldstein at Dux. These final chapters are perhaps less interesting than the spectacular adventures which Casanova attributed to himself, but they complete the portrait in a manner infinitely creditable to Mr. Endore. In them appears the pathetic and credible figure of the aged Casanova—a figure which explains in retrospect the lavish and dazzling personage of the *Memoirs*.

MARGARET WALLACE

**MARIE ANTOINETTE: THE PLAYER QUEEN** by John Garber Palache (LONGMANS, GREEN. \$5.00)

CONSIDERING his treatment of his subject, Mr. Palache has selected rather a misleading subtitle for his book. Marie Antoinette was the "Player Queen" only so long as the frivolity of the foreign court, in which she nominally ruled, imposed on her the rôle of leader of the revels. Her sense of security and her confidence in those she trusted kept her unaware of actual conditions. Only when the Bastille fell and she faced the guillotine did her essential nobility and courage become apparent. Faced by her judges, she could keep her wits nimble and her head high—she could be in reality the queen she no longer was in name.

Marie Antoinette was unfortunately the daughter of an Empress who, despite a real love for her child, saw in her a useful pawn in her political game. Marie Theresa always kept Ambassador Mercy-Argenteau at the elbow of the young ruler, urging the claims of Austria under the guise of being a mother's counsellor.

"Be not frivolous like the French," wrote the Empress herself to her daughter, "but glory in being a good German. If you are cordial to my subjects, you will be praised not blamed."

In her new home the girl had found a king subtly aware that the "deluge" would succeed him and interested only in his Du Barry. She found a husband who ate heavily on his wedding night so that he might sleep well, who hunted all day and who had finally to be reminded that marriage is intended to prolong the race. He was no help to her. If she was cheered by the people, she thought all was well. When they jeered at her, she understood as little the reason for the changed reception.

But when, on the morning of her execution, someone tried to encourage Marie Antoinette, she could say truly: "I have learned bravery in long years of woe, and it is not their ending that shall find me weak, for I should have more need of heroism were I still to live".

On high-heeled shoes she ran up the platform steps to her death, and she apologized to the executioner for treading on his toes.

With no attempt at partisanship Mr. Palache has done the memory of Marie Antoinette a service. Even had she been a stateswoman like her mother, which she was not, it is doubtful if she could have stemmed or even dammed the rising tide of France's resentment against its kings. Like Hamlet she was born in a time out of joint. She could not save the Bourbons, but she did at the end prove the regality of her blood, if not of her reign.

NORAH MEADE