

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

ESSAYS AND CRITICISM

THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR: A STUDY IN LITTERÆ INHUMANIORES by Norman Foerster (UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PRESS. \$1.00)

PROFESSOR FOERSTER, scholar and critic in American literature, distinguished representative from the middle generation of the "new humanists", has drawn with gusto a depressing picture of American scholarship in the field of letters. He contends that "Since the time when Carlyle somewhat romantically lamented the arrival of the Age of Mechanism, literary scholarship has lived in the shadow of science, has been permeated with its spirit, has taken over its methods, has assimilated even its vocabulary". Men of letters have been eager to achieve an objectivity in their studies to parallel the objectivity of the natural sciences. This they have sought in linguistics, in detailed investigations of literary history, in historical studies only by vaguest inference related to literature, in Freudian biographies of poets. Eschewing the development of critical philosophies, the application of standards, the assignment of values, they have given themselves over wholeheartedly to the cult of the fact. According to Foerster's indictment:

"Some of our leading literary scholars, and most of the rank and file, fearful of the broad interpretations and reinterpretations that history involves, prefer the safer task of contributing new materials for future historians. Instead of having a due respect for facts as the necessary basis for sound knowledge and the higher activities of scholarship, they appear to worship facts as facts, things as things. Employing an expert mechanical technique, they give themselves up to a blind

pursuit of facts, an aimless accumulation of small additions to the sum of knowledge." They possess a mystical faith that each item thus collected will, at some future day, prove indispensable to learning. "Whether the bricks will ever be used, whether they are the particular bricks that will be needed by future builders, does not, in their mystical faith in the brick, concern them." We are warned that the critic with his sense of proportion must select from the millions of "facts" which might be known those which human beings find worth knowing. Foerster would join à Kempis in praying, *Da mihi, Domine, scire quod sciendum est*. The evil result of unmitigated activity on the part of researchers is that "We [scholars] spend our days and nights not in studying the authors whom we profess to be concerned with, but in desperately 'keeping up with' other scholars immersed in literary history".

The literary scholar fears to attempt criticism, whether it be "subjective or objective, impressionistic or dogmatic"—indeed, he distinguishes no schools of criticism. He contrasts the *knowledge* of the scientist and the scholar with the *speculation* of the religionist, the dilettante, the critic. Yet he cannot escape from criticism: he who condemns criticism is himself a critic; the researcher is operating upon a theory of values quite as much as is the man of letters. The critic *malgré lui* may be a good or a bad critic, central or eccentric, but critic he cannot elect not to be. In point of fact, we are told, the typical scholar is part scientist and part impressionist, subconsciously convinced that vigorous factualism in the one authorizes him to give free rein to fancy in the other. As against this bifurcation into fact and