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W. E. Heitland

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CICERO: A BIOGRAPHY.

Cicero: A Biography. By TORSTEN PETERSSON. University of California Press, 1920.

THIS book is strictly what it professes to be, a biography, and as such it must be judged. For its strength lies in the minute appreciation of Cicero's personality, the thoughts and doings of a warm-hearted and highly-gifted man in an age of political strife and agonies. Now, as by far the greater part of the evidence must be drawn from the writings of the subject himself, it is desirable to present it with a vividness that a mere translation or paraphrase is often unable to supply. For this reason I venture to regret that Professor Petersson has not given more of Cicero's *ipsissima verba* in brief notes. A matter of some five or six pages would have been no great addition to a total of 685 pages of text. And the thoroughness of his work well deserves the relief that such illustrative quotations would surely provide.

The book is not a light one to read, though the author writes under the influence of a stimulating enthusiasm. Whether its vast array of matters is so treated as to deal with the several topics in due proportion is a point upon which opinions may easily differ. I confess that I could have borne some reduction in the chapter on Rhetoric (67 pages), important though it be, and should welcome some enlargement of the section in which Cicero's submission to the Three Partners [X. § 6] is discussed. The assignment of motives is ever a difficulty in historical writing, more particularly in treating of periods where bitter partisanship has stained the record. Professor Petersson, it seems to me, at times accepts alleged motives somewhat too readily. And in the case of Verres I do not think he allows quite enough weight in accounting for the result to the menace of reform at that time threatening senatorial juries. On the other hand, the section dealing

with the *lex Manilia* [pp. 185-9] is admirable.

The modern writers consulted (not merely named in a Bibliography) bear witness to the thoroughness of this book, already evident from the text. I only regret that the author has not had before him some articles of Dr. E. G. Hardy and Constantin John in handling the many obscure details connected with Cicero's consulship and the Catilinarian conspiracy. And whether all scholars will see the career of Cicero in quite so favourable a light as Professor Petersson does I cannot venture to guess.

Perhaps the most engaging part of the book is the estimate of Cicero in private life. Full justice is done to the great orator's human qualities, but the effect is at times limited by the severity of the author's method. In the relations of public life men will judge Cicero differently from different points of view. Perhaps some will think less favourably of him as a statesman in his last years than Professor Petersson does. For my part, his vanity, as a cause of failure and occasionally a blinding influence, seems to be one of his main characteristics; but I may be doing him wrong. At any rate he was a good man, and this book leaves no doubt on the matter.

The general treatment of Roman politics is incidental to the subject, which is Cicero. Here and there occur expressions liable to mislead the so-called 'general reader.' Such are the use of the term *Patricians*, where the nobility, Patrician or Plebeian, are referred to [p. 32, etc.]; the *citizens of Italy* [p. 222]; the *nation*, not a happy term for the Roman people or citizens [pp. 632-3]. But to fasten upon such small matters is to admit the real goodness of the book, and may be thought too like carping criticism.

In short, I have read the book through, and congratulate the author on the successful result of his labour and learning. W. E. HEITLAND.