

*Cambon et la Révolution Française.* Par F. BORNAREL, Docteur-ès-lettres. ('Bibliothèque d'Histoire Contemporaine.') (Paris. Alcan. 1905.)

THIS study of Cambon is one of those studies of the less-known leaders of the French Revolution upon which French students have lately been engaged. Like others of its series, it consists largely of quotations from the speeches of the hero, and it is not M. Bornarel's fault that the financial problems in which Cambon was mainly engaged, coupled with the 'austerity' of Cambon's politics, make progress rather heavy. The life of this dour republican is not relieved by any sparkle of humour, until his final exile from France in 1816. At that time the forbearance of Cambacérès with Cambon's idiosyncrasy in addressing his highness the arch-chancellor of the empire in Jacobin style, says a good deal for Cambacérès' common sense and balance of character, and the stories told redound rather to the credit of Cambacérès than of Cambon. But none can deny Cambon's signal courage and the soundness of his political judgment throughout his career. Although he never attained to the eminence of Danton, Robespierre, or even of the leaders of the Gironde, yet the work that he did for France during the Terror was not less important than that of such men as Carnot, Lindet, and Prieur. He was in fact one of those men who did the work of the republic during the first critical years of its life, but whose career was obscured by his more brilliant and meteoric contemporaries, and who remains to most readers of history little more than a name. The real problem with regard to Cambon's career is how, when next to no one was paying taxes, he found the money to carry on the war against Europe; and M. Bornarel would probably have been well advised if he had devoted more space to this portion of Cambon's life. There is much in the book which is more suited to an outline history of the French Revolution. A book like this is written mainly for people who may be assumed to know already the main outlines of the history of the time; and therefore a great deal of the chapter on the Legislative might have been jettisoned in order to make room for a more minute study of the part played by Cambon. What is more serious is that M. Bornarel does not seem to have consulted the papers of the finance committees of which Cambon was member and president, which are to be found in the National Archives. His references—sometimes very carelessly printed, as on p. 278—are entirely to printed material. Valuable as this undoubtedly is, it cannot be pretended that a satisfactory life of Cambon can be written until those papers (Dvi. 20-55) which deal with the very point in question, have been gone through, and the result published. It is a little difficult to follow M. Bornarel's judgment in the matter of Cambon's behaviour at Danton's trial, the evidence adduced to the effect that Cambon supported Danton proves nothing whatever. Cambon may have done so, and it is possible that his fearlessness was such that he did, but on the evidence here printed it is not by any means 'nearly certain' (p. 340). With this exception M. Bornarel's opinions are on the whole sound, and his work constitutes a welcome addition to the biographies of the less-known but really able administrators of the Convention.

L. G. WICKHAM LEGG.