

CAGLIOSTRO. By W. H. TROWBRIDGE.

I have a prejudice against memoirs of a century ago. They are usually pornographic tittle-tattle, absolutely pointless, the favourite reading of a Colonel Glumley. One expects to see them in a still-life whose other ingredients are birches tied up with blue ribbons, and imitations of the Inimitable.

What, then, was my pleasure in finding this study of Cagliostro a well-written and profoundly interesting book!

The main problem of Cagliostro's identity is discussed with marvellous power and fascination.

Mr Trowbridge's review of eighteenth-century occultism is strikingly sane and intelligent. Knowing nothing of the causes à priori, he has judged by the effects, and these have not betrayed him. Indeed, had Mr Trowbridge sworn secrecy to the modern Illuminati, I am afraid that he might have his s . . . l s . . n across, and his b . . . . s exposed to the s . . . . . . . . g r . . s of the s . n before now!

I think Mr Trowbridge is too ready to assume that the initiations of Egyptian Masonry were ridiculous. On what documents does he base his description? It is always open to a Mason to reply to an "exposure" that those who tell don't know, and those who know don't tell. My own small knowledge of the matter assures me that the accounts given on pp. 111 and 112, 120 and 121 are entirely foreign to that knowledge and à priori most unlikely. It is incredible that one to whom so many impressive rites were accessible should found his system on tomfoolery.

I wish Mr Trowbridge could have found time to study intimately for a month the life of a modern master.

As it is, the most natural phenomena perturb him. The periodical disappearances of his hero annoy the historian; yet this is the first condition of the life of a Ma-

gus, like the disappearance of salmon from rivers. Unless one went back to the sea pretty often, those silver scales would blacken.

Many other matter, too, would have suggested their own explanation. However, the historian's native wit has gone very far to supply him with motives for Cagliostro. What puzzles fools, whether they be Jewish, Russian, French, or naturalised Englishmen, in estimating the actions of an adept, is this; they have not the smallest notion of what he loves, or even of what he sees. Cagliostro is fortunate in finding a student with good sense and perspicacity. It is only a step from Cagliostro's vindication (successfully accomplished in this book) to his triumph. Mr Trowbridge will come one day to see that his high mission was not a failure, recognise that Dumas is the most illuminated of historians as well as the most fascinating of novelists.

ALEISTER CROWLEY.