Journal of Comparative Literature

Shakespeare issued by the Oxford Press, with introduction by Sidney Lee, couched in a tone of extravagant laudation which is not entirely justified by the production.

On January 10, F. S. Boas writes, pointing out that Chapman drew the material for his plays based on French history not from a variety of foreign sources, as has hitherto been supposed (Koeppel, "Quellen-Studien," 1897), but from E. Grimeston's translation of Jean de Serres' History to 1598, with continuation published in 1607.

The issue of February 14 contains an able review of R. W. Bond's edition of Lyly's works. The reviewer makes an original contribution to the subject of Lylyan biography by pointing out that the name of the man who held the clerkship in the Revela' office between 1584 and 1596 is preserved. This fact finally dispenses with Lyly's supposed connection with the office. One of the most questionable features of Mr. Bond's edition was the inclusion of a number of poems doubtfully ascribed to his author. The ingenuity of many critics has been taxed to sift this list of apocrypha, but so far the most successful has been H. Littledale, who on February 28 contributes a note on "The Bee," usually ascribed to Essex, but included in Mr. Bond's edition of Lyly, and later, on April 4, writes, identifying a number of the pieces as the work of other authors—Sidney, Southwell and Shakespeare among others.

On April 18 Paget Toynbee writes a note identifying the "Provenzale" of Dante's "Convivio" (I. 92) with G. de Borneil. The identification is due to Francesco Torre. The same issue also contains a note by Henry Bradley, seeking to fix the date of "Wynner and Wastoure," on the strength of certain allusions, in 1352.

In the "Modern Language Quarterly" for April the chief article is by L. E. Kastner on "The French Symbolists." A general account of the history and characteristics of the movement precedes a more minute inquiry of the technique and language of symbolist poetry. Many illustrative quotations are given.

W. W. Greg.

London.

IV.—BELGIUM AND HOLLAND

A striking contrast will be found to exist between the papers on comparative literature in the periodicals of Belgium and those of Holland. The latter are more substantial and scientific, being
intended for a more cultivated class of readers. This fact is partly accounted for by the circumstance that the Belgian public draw much of their literary pabulum from France, and that the best Belgian work is issued from French presses, and partly by the Belgians having remained more addicted to the merely literary treatment of belles-lettres, according to the standard established by Sainte-Beuve, while the Dutch prefer the heavier and more thorough models offered for imitation by Germany.

BELGIUM

The articles published in the leading conservative review of Belgium, La Revue générale, and in the leading Liberal monthly, La Revue de Belgique, might have been written in France, and are devoted chiefly to French subjects.

Rêve générale.—Prof. Georges Doutrepont, of the Catholic University of Louvain, writes on La critique littéraire en France au XIXe Siècle, tracing the rise of French criticism from the feuilletons on the drama written by Geoffroy under the first empire, through the magnificent portraits of Sainte-Beuve, down to the more scientific productions of Taine and his school. The ground covered by Prof. Doutrepont is familiar to every student of modern French literature, and the aim of the writer is rather to summarize and concentrate traditional opinions than to put forward any fresh theories of his own. The foreign reader may rely on him as a trustworthy guide through the labyrinth of modern French criticism.

M. Henri Davignon, to whom we already owe several charming appreciations of Molière, points to the intimate connection between Molière and the bourgeois. Molière was a bourgeois not only by descent, but also in his feelings and sympathies, as far as a roving player of his time could be. He studied bourgeois life and psychology with a love and an insight which he did not devote either to the nobility or to the people.

Rêve de Belgique.—Here also French influence is prevailing. The February number was wholly devoted to contributions referring to Victor Hugo, whose anniversary was at that time celebrated in Paris.

M. R. Sand contributed a paper on Victor Hugo et le drame moderne, showing how the ideal of political liberty in the beginning of the nineteenth century raised and elated the self-consciousness of the individual, so that a new literary type, that of the parvenu (Ruy Blas) arose on the French stage. The lyrical display of individual feelings had then gradually to yield to the
realism of Balzac, which slowly invaded the French drama, till
the plays sank into the mere tranche de vie of the end of the
last century.

A splendidly written and very appreciative article of the poet,
Albert Giraud, on Alfred de Vigny
is the most noticeable literary
paper in other numbers of the
Revue de Belgique.

While the Belgian periodicals
written in the French language
thus appear as interpreters of
French taste, those written in
the Dutch or Flemish language
look rather to the Teutonic
nations for guidance. They are
not sharply divided on party lines,
admitting contributions from all
sides.

Ditseche Warnande en Belfort
(an amalgamation of two older
reviews, the Dutch Garden
and The Belfry).—Jufvrouw
M. E. Belpaire, concluding a
series of studies on the rural
novel in Europe during the last
century, which is to appear in
book form, contributes an analy-
sis of Björnsterne Björnson's
tale, Synnøve Solbakken, which
she has since translated into
Flemish. (Het landleven in de
letterkunde.)

Prof. Heinrich Bischoff, of the
State University of Liége, intro-
duces a writer of Tyrolean stories,
Richard Brodenbrücker, to our

1 Before being printed in Dutch, the article had appeared in pamphlet form
in English. The publishers were: La Société belge de librairie, Brussels.
Summaries of Periodical Literature, 1902

curacy and illustrated by comparisons with the harmonious construction of the Middle High German Niebelungenlied and with the terse simplicity of the Scandinavian sources. The weakest point in the Tetralogy is the ugly stain thrown on the character of Siegfried by his double marriage of Brunhilde and his betrayal of her to Gunther. Wagner mistook for two consecutive incidents of the same story what were really, in the sources, two variants that excluded one another, and he felt obliged to explain the treachery of Siegfried by inventing a drink of forgetfulness which has no precedent in tradition. On a series of minor points the author demonstrates not only that the departures of Wagner from the traditional story have not always been happy, but also that he substituted an arbitrary interpretation for the mythic significance of the sagas he used. "Wotan is made to breed a race of Übermensch, who are to succeed where he, the God, failed; he thus becomes a father of Nietzsche's, who have been sitting on college forms at Basle."

By this modernization the Tetralogy has become symbolic instead of mythic; it is a product of abstraction and bold combinations. While some characters, like Siegfried, Sigmund, Sigelinde and Brunhild, are full of vigorous life, most of the others, especially the gods and dwarfs, are but personifications, not cool and picturesque as in the Scandinavian poems, but generalized and turned into philosophical ideas. Therefore, it is to be feared that the Tetralogy will be the first to become antiquated among Wagner's dramas.

No less substantial than this interesting paper of Boer's, though perhaps less firm in its grasp of the materials and less definite in its conclusions, is a study of Prof. A. G. Van Hamel on the symbolist writers in recent French literature (Französische Symbolisten). The intricate subject is handled with great wealth and precision of knowledge, in the scholarly, dispassionate way of a well-informed student, not with the loving devotion which living poetry always deserves. Prof. Van Hamel has nothing illuminative to say on symbolism itself, nor on the philosophy of the Unconscious; but he enters upon a minute discussion of the metrical problems which resulted from an application of that philosophy to the art of verse-writing, and which have a permanent bearing on the literatures of all nations.

Prof. Van Hamel traces the symbolist movement from its instinctive uprising in the poems of Rimbaud and Verlaine to
Moréa, Kahn, Laforgue and Vielé-Griffin. He points to Henri de Régnier as the greatest living poet and the most French in temperament and tradition of the whole school, among so many of foreign origin and culture. Having performed its lasting services to French letters, the school has now broken up, and its members are passing into a new stage. Its permanent gains are: a greater liberty of metre and word-combination, the right of plainly expressing a thought, even if somewhat abstract, and of being in earnest, of living the essential life, without affectation or idle fustian. After the appearance of symbolism there has been no going back to the glittering older rhetoric used by romantic poets to deck out commonplace bourgeois thoughts.

Less weighty than this remarkable summary of matters patiently collected and sifted into a logical whole is Prof. B. Sijmons's discussion of the third edition of Bücher's book on labor and rhythm (Poesie en Arbeid). Whatever else may happen, Prof. Sijmons is convinced that one conclusion of Bücher's cannot be challenged, i. e., that rhythm, the peculiar and essential part of primitive poetry, did not rise out of the language, but was forced into it from without.

Another discussion of opinions which have for a time been before the learned world is G. Busken Huet's examination of the rival theories of Benfey and Bédier as to the alleged Indian origin of the traditional tales of the old continent (Komen onze sprokjes en voertellingen, uit India?). G. Busken Huet draws a sharp distinction between the fantastic fairy tales (märchen), with their witchcraft, wonderful metamorphoses and surviving barbarous notions on the one hand, and the funny stories or novels (fabeln, schwänke) on the other. The latter are pictures of vulgar reality, mentioning the supernatural only to disprove it as gross cheating. These funny stories point to an organized state of society, while the fairy tales, being full of primitive ideas, may have their origin in pre-historic times. It would be in vain, Busken Huet admits with Bédier, to trace back the fairy tales to any definite country or nation, while the novels may, in single cases, be located either with Benfey, in India, or in some other of the old centres of civilization that are beginning to be known.

The last paper in De Gids that has to be mentioned is Jufrouw Dr. J. Aleida Nijland's study on the Dutch poet Jacques Perk. It begins with a sketch of the ideal lady-worship from
the Provençal poets down to Dante, Petrarch and Shelley, with
the last of whom the sonneteer Perk is closely related.

*De XXe Eeuw* ("The Twentieth Century").—J. Koopmans
explains the Dutch poet Cats’s *Smae en Minnebeelden* (Pictures
of Love and Allegories) as resting on the broad basis of the
traditional Christianity of the Middle Ages. The realistic pic-
tures of earthly love, which is but an emanation of Divine
Love, intended to propagate man-kind for the fulfilment of the
work of Salvation, attract the readers of Cats and lead them on
to a higher moral purpose. The allegory of Cats is but the un-
folding of the secret meaning which the Middle Ages believed
to be concealed in all the works of Creation. This view of
Koopmans’s is chiefly interesting through the narrow connec-
tion it establishes between the Renaissance and the Middle
Ages, which are Koopmans’s favourite field of study.

*Taal en Letteren* ("Language and Literature.")—This is a
merely philological review; it contains a number of studies on
the legends and literature of the Netherlands, chiefly from the
pen of J. Koopmans, whose comments on Cats we noticed
above.

Here he still exerts himself to vindicate the psychological and
moral soundness of mediæval plays and poems from the stand-
point of the orthodox Christian apologist. His instances are the
epic *Sighluijn van Jerusalem*, the legend *Theophilus*, the morality,
*van de dry Hooftdeuchden* (the three cardinal virtues), and the
drama *Lanckiet van Denemarken*.

J. F. D. Blûte investigates the Netherlandish versions of
the legend of Lohengrin, *De Brabantische Zwaanridder* (the
Knight with the Swan in Brabant), and distinguishes three
forms of it: (1) before 1325, a story with supernatural elements:
a half-human swan or a boat drawn by a swan; (2) 1325–
1500, a lady Swana supersedes the marvellous animal; (3) from
1500, a medley of legends interwoven by Lemaire. Wagner’s
Lohengrin does not come straight from Brabant, but springs from
a German version of the legend.

This partial survey of Belgian and Dutch periodicals during the
year 1902 gives but an imperfect picture of the intellectual
life of the countries concerned. Yet one striking fact is the scar-
city of contributions of a merely antiquarian interest; literature is
studied in both countries as a living force, in contemporary or
recent writers, who are acting or likely to act on the national
character.

**Paul Hamelius.**

**Brussels.**

[ 281 ]