

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 clerk-controllership in the Revels' office between 1584 and 1596 is preserved. This fact finally disposes of 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" (l. 92) with Giraut de Borneil. The identification is due to Francesco Torraca. The same issue also contains a note by Henry Bradley, seeking to fix the date of "Wynnerre 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.

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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

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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.

Revue générale.—Prof. Georges Doutrepoint, of the Catholic University of Louvain, writes on *La critique littéraire en France au XIX^e 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. Doutrepoint 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 bourgeoisie*. 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.

Revue 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

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realism of Balzac, which slowly invaded the French drama, till the plays sank into the mere *tranches 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.

Dietsche Warande 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 analysis of Björnstjerne 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 Liège, introduces a writer of Tyrolese stories, Richard Bredenbrücker, to our

public, and points out his place among the Austrian tellers of village tales (*Dorfgeschichten*), chief of whom were Anzengruber and Rosegger. This sketch of the growth of the realistic dialect literature of rural Germany will be new to most foreigners.

Van Nu en Straks. ("To-day and To-morrow.")—Last among the Belgians I have to mention my own study of the theory of romantic comedy. (*De theorie van het romantische blijspel*.) It is meant as a refutation of Prof. Dowden's views on the comedies of Shakespeare, and a statement of the doctrine of Hegel and other German philosophers and critics, which has been misunderstood by Prof. Dowden.¹

HOLLAND

De Gids ("The Guide").—The influence of this veteran is much opposed in literary and aesthetic matters, but it has preserved an undisputed authority as a periodical of general information.

Its chief contribution to comparative literature is a learned paper of R. C. Boer, the editor of Northern sagas, on the sources of Wagner (*Wagner's bronnen*). It is mainly concerned with the dramatic composition of the Tetralogy, the artistic flaws of which are laid bare with great ac-

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

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curacy and illustrated by comparisons with the harmonious construction of the Middle High German *Nibelungenlied* 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 *Übermenschen*, who are to succeed where he, the God, failed: he thus becomes a father of Nietzscheans, 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 (*Fransche 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

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Moréas, 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 sprookjes en vertellingen, nit Indië?*). 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 (*fabliaux, schwänke*) on the other. The latter are pictures of vulgar reality, mentioning the supernatural only to deride 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 Jufvrouw Dr. J. Aleida Nijland's study on the Dutch poet *Jacques Perk*. It begins with a sketch of the ideal lady-worship from

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the Provençal poets down to Dante, Petrarch and Shelley, with the last of whom the sonneteer Perk is closely related.

De XX^e Eeuw ("The Twentieth Century").—J. Koopmans explains the Dutch poet Cats's *Sinne en Minnebeelden* (Pictures of Love and Allegories) as resting on the broad basis of the traditional Christianity of the Middle Ages. The realistic pictures of earthly love, which is but an emanation of Divine Love, intended to propagate mankind 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 unfolding 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 connection 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 standpoint of the orthodox Christian apologist. His instances are the epic *Seghelijn van Jerusalem*, the legend *Theophilus*, the morality, *van de dry Hoofdeuchden* (the three cardinal virtues), and the drama *Lanseloet van Denemarken*.

J. F. D. Blöte investigates the Netherlandish versions of the legend of Lohengrin, *De Brabantsche 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 scarcity 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.

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