REVIEWS

To Mrs. CAREW

The apparently endless difficulties against which I have contended, and am contending, in the management of Oscar Wilde's literary and dramatic property have brought me many valued friends; but only one friendship which seemed as endless; one friend's kindness which seemed to annul the disappointments of eight years. That is why I venture to place your name on this volume with the assurance of the author himself who bequeathed to me his works and something of his indiscretion.

ROBERT ROSS

May 12*th*, 1908.

INTRODUCTION

The editor of writings by any author not long deceased is censured sooner or later for his errors of omission or commission. I have decided to err on the side of commission and to include in the uniform edition of Wilde's works everything that could be identified as genuine. Wilde's literary reputation has survived so much that I think it proof against any exhumation of articles which he or his admirers would have preferred to forget. As a matter of fact, I believe this volume will prove of unusual interest; some of the reviews are curiously prophetic; some are, of course, biassed by prejudice hostile or friendly; others are conceived in the author's wittiest and happiest vein; only a few are colourless. And if, according to Lord Beaconsfield, the verdict of a continental nation may be regarded as that of posterity, Wilde is a much greater force in our literature than even friendly contemporaries ever supposed he would become.

It should be remembered, however, that at the time when most of these reviews were written Wilde had published scarcely any of the works by which his name has become famous in Europe, though the protagonist of the æsthetic movement was a well-known figure in Paris and London. Later he was recognised—it would be truer to say he was ignored—as a young man who had never fulfilled the high promise of a distinguished university career although his volume of *Poems* had reached its fifth edition, an unusual event in those days. He had alienated a great many of his Oxford contemporaries by his extravagant manner of dress and his methods of courting publicity. The great men of the previous generation, Wilde's intellectual peers, with whom he was in artistic sympathy, looked on him askance. Ruskin was disappointed with his former pupil, and Pater did not hesitate to express disapprobation to private friends; while he accepted incense from a disciple, he distrusted the thurifer.

From a large private correspondence in my possession I gather that it was, oddly enough, in political and social centres that Wilde's amazing powers were rightly appreciated and where he was welcomed as the most brilliant of living talkers. Before he had published anything except his *Poems*, the literary dovecots regarded him with dislike, and when he began to publish essays and fairy stories, the attitude was not changed; it was merely emphasised in the public press. His first dramatic success at the St. James's Theatre gave Wilde, of course, a different position, and the dislike became qualified with envy. Some of the younger men indeed were dazzled, but with few exceptions their appreciation was expressed in an unfortunate manner. It is a consolation or a misfortune that the wrong kind of people are too often correct in their prognostications of the future; the far-seeing are also the foolish.

From these reviews which illustrate the middle period of Wilde's meteoric career, between the æsthetic period and the production of *Lady Windermere's Fan*, we learn *his* opinion of the contemporaries who thought little enough of him. That he revised many of these opinions, notably those that are harsh, I need scarcely say; and after his release from prison he lost much of his admiration for certain writers. I would draw special attention to those reviews of Mr. Swinburne, Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, Mr. Alfred Austin, the Hon. John Collier, Mr. Brander Matthews and Sir Edwin Arnold, Rossetti, Pater, Henley and Morris; they have more permanent value than the others, and are in accord with the wiser critical judgments of to-day.

For leave to republish the articles from the *Pall Mall Gazette* I am indebted to Mr. William Waldorf Astor, the owner of the copyrights, by arrangement with whom they are here reprinted. I have to thank most cordially Messrs. Cassell and Company for permitting me to reproduce the editorial articles and reviews contributed by Wilde to the *Woman's World*; the editor and proprietor of the *Nation* for leave to include the two articles from the *Speaker*; and the editor of the *Saturday Review* for a similar courtesy. For identifying many of the anonymous articles I am indebted to Mr. Arthur Humphreys, not the least of his kindnesses in assisting the publication of this edition; for the trouble of editing, arrangement, and collecting of material I am under obligations to Mr. Stuart Mason for which this acknowledgment is totally inadequate.

ROBERT ROSS
REFORM CLUB,
May 12*th*, 1908

DINNERS AND DISHES

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, March 7, 1885.)

A man can live for three days without bread, but no man can live for one day without poetry, was an aphorism of Baudelaire. You can live without pictures and music but you cannot live without eating, says the author of *Dinners and Dishes*; and this latter view is, no doubt, the more popular. Who, indeed, in these degenerate days would hesitate between an ode and an omelette, a sonnet and a salmis? Yet the position is not entirely Philistine; cookery is an art; are not its principles the subject of South Kensington lectures, and does not the Royal Academy give a banquet once a year? Besides, as the coming democracy will, no doubt, insist on feeding us all on penny dinners, it is well that the laws of cookery should be explained: for were the national meal burned, or badly seasoned, or served up with the wrong sauce a dreadful revolution might follow.

Under these circumstances we strongly recommend *Dinners and Dishes* to every one: it is brief and concise and makes no attempt at eloquence, which is extremely fortunate. For even on ortolans who could endure oratory? It also has the advantage of not being illustrated. The subject of a work of art has, of course, nothing to do with its beauty, but still there is always something depressing about the coloured lithograph of a leg of mutton.

As regards the author's particular views, we entirely agree with him on the important question of macaroni. 'Never,' he says, 'ask me to back a bill for a man who has given me a macaroni pudding.' Macaroni is essentially a savoury dish and may be served with cheese or tomatoes but never with sugar and milk. There is also a useful description of how to cook risotto—a delightful dish too rarely seen in England; an excellent chapter on the different kinds of salads, which should be carefully studied by those many hostesses whose imaginations never pass beyond lettuce and beetroot; and actually a recipe for making Brussels sprouts eatable. The last is, of course, a masterpiece.

The real difficulty that we all have to face in life is not so much the science of cookery as the stupidity of cooks. And in this little handbook to practical Epicureanism the tyrant of the English kitchen is shown in her proper light. Her entire ignorance of herbs, her passion for extracts and essences, her total inability to make a soup which is anything more than a combination of pepper and gravy, her inveterate habit of sending up bread poultices with pheasants,—all these sins and many others are ruthlessly unmasked by the author. Ruthlessly and rightly. For the British cook is a foolish woman who should be turned for her iniquities into a pillar of salt which she never knows how to use.

But our author is not local merely. He has been in many lands; he has eaten back-hendl at Vienna and kulibatsch at St. Petersburg; he has had the courage to face the buffalo veal of Roumania and to dine with a German family at one o'clock; he has serious views on the right method of cooking those famous white truffles of Turin of which Alexandre Dumas was so fond; and, in the face of the Oriental Club, declares that Bombay curry is better than the curry of Bengal. In fact he seems to have had experience of almost every kind of meal except the 'square meal' of the Americans. This he should study at once; there is a great field for the philosophic epicure in the United States. Boston beans may be dismissed at once as delusions, but soft-shell crabs, terrapin, canvas-back ducks, blue fish and the pompono of New Orleans are all wonderful delicacies, particularly when one gets them at Delmonico's. Indeed, the two most remarkable bits of scenery in the States are undoubtedly Delmonico's and the Yosemité Valley; and the former place has done more to promote a good feeling between England and America than anything else has in this century.

We hope the 'Wanderer' will go there soon and add a chapter to *Dinners and Dishes*, and that his book will have in England the influence it deserves. There are twenty ways of cooking a potato and three hundred and sixty-five ways of cooking an egg, yet the British cook, up to the present moment, knows only three methods of sending up either one or the other.

Dinners and Dishes. By 'Wanderer.' (Simpkin and Marshall.)

A MODERN EPIC

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, March 13, 1885.)

In an age of hurry like ours the appearance of an epic poem more than five thousand lines in length cannot but be regarded as remarkable. Whether such a form of art is the one most suited to our century is a question. Edgar Allan Poe insisted that no poem should take more than an hour to read, the essence of a work of art being its unity of impression and of effect. Still, it would be difficult to accept absolutely a canon of art which would place the *Divine Comedy* on the shelf and deprive us of the *Bothwell* of Mr. Swinburne. A work of art is to be estimated by its beauty not by its size, and in Mr. Wills's *Melchior* there is beauty of a rich and lofty character.

Remembering the various arts which have yielded up their secrets to Mr. Wills, it is interesting to note in his poems, here the picturesque vision of the painter, here the psychology of the novelist, and here the playwright's sense of dramatic situation. Yet these things, which are the elements of his work of art though we arbitrarily separate

them in criticism, are in the work itself blended and made one by the true imaginative and informing power. For *Melchior* is not a piece of poetic writing merely; it is that very rare thing, a poem.

It is dedicated to Mr. Robert Browning, not inappropriately, as it deals with that problem of the possible expression of life through music, the value of which as a motive in poetry Mr. Browning was the first to see. The story is this. In one of the little Gothic towns of Northern Germany lives Melchior, a dreamer and a musician. One night he rescues by chance a girl from drowning and lodges her in a convent of holy women. He grows to love her and to see in her the incarnation of that St. Cecily whom, with mystic and almost mediæval passion, he had before adored. But a priest separates them, and Melchior goes mad. An old doctor, who makes a study of insanity, determines to try and cure him, and induces the girl to appear to him, disguised as St. Cecily herself, while he sits brooding at the organ. Thinking her at first to be indeed the Saint he had worshipped, Melchior falls in ecstasy at her feet, but soon discovering the trick kills her in a sudden paroxysm of madness. The horror of the act restores his reason; but, with the return of sanity, the dreams and visions of the artist's nature begin to vanish; the musician sees the world not through a glass but face to face, and he dies just as the world is awakening to his music.

The character of Melchior, who inherits his music from his father, and from his mother his mysticism, is extremely fascinating as a psychological study. Mr. Wills has made a most artistic use of that scientific law of heredity which has already strongly influenced the literature of this century, and to which we owe Dr. Holmes's fantastic *Elsie Venner*, *Daniel Deronda*—that dullest of masterpieces—and the dreadful Rougon-Macquart family with whose misdeeds M. Zola is never weary of troubling us.

Blanca, the girl, is a somewhat slight sketch, but then, like Ophelia, she is merely the occasion of a tragedy and not its heroine. The rest of the characters are most powerfully drawn and create themselves simply and swiftly before us as the story proceeds, the method of the practised dramatist being here of great value.

As regards the style, we notice some accidental assonances of rhyme which in an unrhymed poem are never pleasing; and the unfinished short line of five or six syllables, however legitimate on the stage where the actor himself can make the requisite musical pause, is not a beauty in a blank verse poem, and is employed by Mr. Wills far too frequently. Still, taken as a whole, the style has the distinction of noble melody.

There are many passages which, did space permit us, we would like to quote, but we must content ourselves with saying that in *Melchior* we find not merely pretty gems of rich imagery and delicate fancy, but a fine imaginative treatment of many of the most important modern problems, notably of the relation of life to art. It is a pleasure to herald a poem which combines so many elements of strength and beauty.

Melchior. By W. G. Wills, author of *Charles I.*, *Olivia*, *etc.*, and writer of *Claudian*. (Macmillan and Co.)

SHAKESPEARE ON SCENERY

(*Dramatic Review*, March 14, 1885.)

I have often heard people wonder what Shakespeare would say, could he see Mr. Irving's production of his *Much Ado About Nothing*, or Mr. Wilson Barrett's setting of his *Hamlet*. Would he take pleasure in the glory of the scenery and the marvel of the colour? Would he be interested in the Cathedral of Messina, and the battlements of Elsinore? Or would he be indifferent, and say the play, and the play only, is the thing?

Speculations like these are always pleasurable, and in the present case happen to be profitable also. For it is not difficult to see what Shakespeare's attitude would be; not difficult, that is to say, if one reads Shakespeare himself, instead of reading merely what is written about him.

Speaking, for instance, directly, as the manager of a London theatre, through the lips of the chorus in *Henry V.*, he complains of the smallness of the stage on which he has to produce the pageant of a big historical play, and of the want of scenery which obliges him to cut out many of its most picturesque incidents, apologises for the scanty number of supers who had to play the soldiers, and for the shabbiness of the properties, and, finally, expresses his regret at being unable to bring on real horses.

In the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, again, he gives us a most amusing picture of the straits to which theatrical managers of his day were reduced by the want of proper scenery. In fact, it is impossible to read him without seeing that he is constantly protesting against the two special limitations of the Elizabethan stage—the lack of suitable scenery, and the fashion of men playing women's parts, just as he protests against other difficulties with which managers of theatres have still to contend, such as actors who do not understand their words; actors who miss their cues; actors who overact their parts; actors who mouth; actors who gag; actors who play to the gallery, and amateur actors.

And, indeed, a great dramatist, as he was, could not but have felt very much hampered at being obliged continually to interrupt the progress of a play in order to send on some one to explain to the audience that the scene was to be changed to a particular place on the entrance of a particular character, and after his exit to somewhere else; that the stage was to represent the deck of a ship in a storm, or the interior of a Greek temple, or the streets of a certain town, to all of which inartistic devices Shakespeare is reduced, and for which he always amply apologises. Besides this clumsy method, Shakespeare had two other substitutes for scenery—the hanging out of a placard, and his descriptions. The first of these could hardly have satisfied his passion for picturesqueness and his feeling for beauty, and certainly did not satisfy the dramatic critic of his day. But as regards the description, to those of us who look on Shakespeare not merely as a playwright but as a poet, and who enjoy reading him at home just as much as we enjoy seeing him acted, it may be a matter of congratulation that he had not at his command such skilled machinists as are in use now at the Princess's and at the Lyceum. For had Cleopatra's barge, for instance, been a structure of canvas and Dutch metal, it would probably have been painted over or broken up after the withdrawal of the piece, and, even had it survived to our own day, would, I am afraid, have become extremely shabby by this time. Whereas now the beaten gold of its poop is still bright, and the purple of its sails still beautiful; its silver oars are not tired of keeping time to the music of the flutes they follow, nor the Nereid's flower-soft hands of touching its silken tackle; the mermaid still lies at its helm, and still on its deck stand the boys with their coloured fans. Yet lovely as all Shakespeare's descriptive passages are, a description is in its essence undramatic. Theatrical audiences are far more impressed by what they look at than by what they listen to; and the modern dramatist, in having the surroundings of his play visibly presented to the audience when the curtain rises, enjoys an advantage for which Shakespeare often expresses his desire. It is true that Shakespeare's descriptions are not what descriptions are in modern plays—accounts of what the audience can observe for themselves; they are the imaginative method by which he creates in the mind of the spectators the image of that which he desires them to see. Still, the quality of the drama is action. It is always dangerous to pause for picturesqueness. And the introduction of self-explanatory scenery enables the modern method to be far more direct, while the loveliness of form and colour which it gives us, seems to me often to create an artistic temperament in the audience, and to produce that joy in beauty for beauty's sake, without which the great masterpieces of art can never be understood, to which, and to which only, are they ever revealed.

To talk of the passion of a play being hidden by the paint, and of sentiment being killed by scenery, is mere emptiness and folly of words. A noble play, nobly mounted, gives us double artistic pleasure. The eye as well as the ear is gratified, and the whole nature is made exquisitely receptive of the influence of imaginative work. And as regards a bad play, have we not all seen large audiences lured by the loveliness of scenic effect into listening to rhetoric posing as poetry, and to vulgarity doing duty for realism? Whether this be good or evil for the public I will not here discuss, but it is evident that the playwright, at any rate, never suffers.

Indeed, the artist who really has suffered through the modern mounting of plays is not the dramatist at all, but the scene-painter proper. He is rapidly being displaced by the stage-carpenter. Now and then, at Drury Lane, I have seen beautiful old front cloths let down, as perfect as pictures some of them, and pure painter's work, and there are many which we all remember at other theatres, in front of which some dialogue was reduced to graceful dumb-show through the hammer and tin-tacks behind. But as a rule the stage is overcrowded with enormous properties, which are not merely far more expensive and cumbersome than scene-paintings, but far less beautiful, and far less true. Properties kill perspective. A painted door is more like a real door than a real door is itself, for the proper conditions of light and shade can be given to it; and the excessive use of built up structures always makes the stage too glaring, for as they have to be lit from behind, as well as from the front, the gas-jets become the absolute light of the scene instead of the means merely by which we perceive the conditions of light and shadow which the painter has desired to show us.

So, instead of bemoaning the position of the playwright, it were better for the critics to exert whatever influence they may possess towards restoring the scene-painter to his proper position as an artist, and not allowing him to be built over by the property man, or hammered to death by the carpenter. I have never seen any reason myself why such artists as Mr. Beverley, Mr. Walter Hann, and Mr. Telbin should not be entitled to become Academicians. They have certainly as good a claim as have many of those R.A.'s whose total inability to paint we can see every May for a shilling.

And lastly, let those critics who hold up for our admiration the simplicity of the Elizabethan Stage, remember that they are lauding a condition of things against which Shakespeare himself, in the spirit of a true artist, always strongly protested.

A BEVY OF POETS

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, March 27, 1885.)

This spring the little singers are out before the little sparrows and have already begun chirruping. Here are four volumes already, and who knows how many more will be given to us before the laburnums blossom? The best-bound volume must, of course, have precedence. It is called *Echoes of Memory*, by Atherton Furlong, and is cased in creamy vellum and tied with ribbons of yellow silk. Mr. Furlong's charm is the unsullied sweetness of his simplicity. Indeed, we can strongly recommend to the School-Board the *Lines on the Old Town Pump* as eminently suitable for recitation by children. Such a verse, for instance, as:

I hear the little children say
  (For the tale will never die)
How the old pump flowed both night and day
  When the brooks and the wells ran dry,

has all the ring of Macaulay in it, and is a form of poetry which cannot possibly harm anybody, even if translated into French. Any inaccurate ideas of the laws of nature which the children might get from the passage in question could easily be corrected afterwards by a lecture on Hydrostatics. The poem, however, which gives us most pleasure is the one called *The Dear Old Knocker on the Door*. It is appropriately illustrated by Mr. Tristram Ellis. We quote the concluding verses of the first and last stanzas:

Blithe voices then so dear
  Send up their shouts once more,
Then sounds again on mem'ry's ear
  The dear old knocker on the door.
  . . . . .
When mem'ry turns the key
Where time has placed my score,
Encased 'mid treasured thoughts must be
The dear old knocker on the door.

The cynic may mock at the subject of these verses, but we do not. Why not an ode on a knocker? Does not Victor Hugo's tragedy of *Lucrece Borgia* turn on the defacement of a doorplate? Mr. Furlong must not be discouraged. Perhaps he will write poetry some day. If he does we would earnestly appeal to him to give up calling a cock 'proud chanticleer.' Few synonyms are so depressing.

Having been lured by the Circe of a white vellum binding into the region of the pump and doormat, we turn to a modest little volume by Mr. Bowling of St. John's College, Cambridge, entitled *Sagittulæ*. And they are indeed delicate little arrows, for they are

winged with the lightness of the lyric and barbed daintily with satire. *Æsthesis and Athletes* is a sweet idyll, and nothing can be more pathetic than the *Tragedy of the XIX. Century*, which tells of a luckless examiner condemned in his public capacity to pluck for her Little-go the girl graduate whom he privately adores. Girton seems to be having an important influence on the Cambridge school of poetry. We are not surprised. The Graces are the Graces always, even when they wear spectacles.

Then comes *Tuberose and Meadowsweet*, by Mr. Mark André Raffalovich. This is really a remarkable little volume, and contains many strange and beautiful poems. To say of these poems that they are unhealthy and bring with them the heavy odours of the hothouse is to point out neither their defect nor their merit, but their quality merely. And though Mr. Raffalovich is not a wonderful poet, still he is a subtle artist in poetry. Indeed, in his way he is a boyish master of curious music and of fantastic rhyme, and can strike on the lute of language so many lovely chords that it seems a pity he does not know how to pronounce the title of his book and the theme of his songs. For he insists on making 'tuberose' a trisyllable always, as if it were a potato blossom and not a flower shaped like a tiny trumpet of ivory. However, for the sake of his meadowsweet and his spring-green binding this must be forgiven him. And though he cannot pronounce 'tuberose' aright, at least he can sing of it exquisitely.

Finally we come to *Sturm und Drang*, the work of an anonymous writer. Opening the volume at hazard we come across these graceful lines:

How sweet to spend in this blue bay
The close of life's disastrous day,
To watch the morn break faintly free
Across the greyness of the sea,
What time Memnonian music fills
The shadows of the dewy hills.

Well, here is the touch of a poet, and we pluck up heart and read on. The book is a curious but not inartistic combination of the mental attitude of Mr. Matthew Arnold with the style of Lord Tennyson. Sometimes, as in *The Sicilian Hermit*, we get merely the metre of *Locksley Hall* without its music, merely its fine madness and not its fine magic. Still, elsewhere there is good work, and *Caliban in East London* has a great deal of power in it, though we do not like the adjective 'knockery' even in a poem on Whitechapel.

On the whole, to those who watch the culture of the age, the most interesting thing in young poets is not so much what they invent as what masters they follow. A few years ago it was all Mr. Swinburne. That era has happily passed away. The mimicry of

passion is the most intolerable of all poses. Now, it is all Lord Tennyson, and that is better. For a young writer can gain more from the study of a literary poet than from the study of a lyrist. He may become the pupil of the one, but he can never be anything but the slave of the other. And so we are glad to see in this volume direct and noble praise of him

* * * * *

Who plucked in English meadows flowers fair
As any that in unforgotten stave
Vied with the orient gold of Venus' hair
Or fringed the murmur of the Ægean wave,

which are the fine words in which this anonymous poet pays his tribute to the Laureate.

(1) *Echoes of Memory*. By Atherton Furlong. (Field and Tuer.)

(2) *Sagittulæ*. By E. W. Bowling. (Longmans, Green and Co.)

(3) *Tuberose and Meadowsweet*. By Mark André Raffalovich. (David Bogue.)

(4) *Sturm und Drang*. (Elliot Stock.)

In reply to the review *A Bevy of Poets* the following letter was published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* on March 30, 1885, under the title of

THE ROOT OF THE MATTER

SIR,—I am sorry not to be able to accept the graceful etymology of your reviewer who calls me to task for not knowing how to pronounce the title of my book *Tuberose and Meadowsweet*. I insist, he fancifully says, 'on making "tuberose" a trisyllable always, as if it were a potato blossom and not a flower shaped like a tiny trumpet of ivory.' Alas! tuberose is a trisyllable if properly derived from the Latin *tuberosus*, the lumpy flower, having nothing to do with roses or with trumpets of ivory in name any more than in nature. I am reminded by a great living poet that another correctly wrote:

Or as the moonlight fills the open sky
Struggling with darkness—as a tuberose
Peoples some Indian dell with scents which lie

Like clouds above the flower from which they rose.

In justice to Shelley, whose lines I quote, your readers will admit that I have good authority for making a trisyllable of tuberose.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

ANDRÉ RAFFALOVICH.
March 28.

PARNASSUS VERSUS PHILOLOGY

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, April 1, 1885.)

To the Editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

SIR,—I am deeply distressed to hear that tuberose is so called from its being a 'lumpy flower.' It is not at all lumpy, and, even if it were, no poet should be heartless enough to say so. Henceforth, there really must be two derivations for every word, one for the poet and one for the scientist. And in the present case the poet will dwell on the tiny trumpets of ivory into which the white flower breaks, and leave to the man of science horrid allusions to its supposed lumpiness and indiscreet revelations of its private life below ground. In fact, 'tuber' as a derivation is disgraceful. On the roots of verbs Philology may be allowed to speak, but on the roots of flowers she must keep silence. We cannot allow her to dig up Parnassus. And, as regards the word being a trisyllable, I am reminded by a great living poet that another correctly wrote:

And the jessamine faint, and the sweet tuberose,
The sweetest flower for scent that blows;
And all rare blossoms from every clime
Grew in that garden in perfect prime.

In justice to Shelley, whose lines I quote, your readers will admit that I have good authority for making a dissyllable of tuberose.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

THE CRITIC,
WHO HAD TO READ FOUR VOLUMES OF MODERN POETRY.
March 30.

HAMLET AT THE LYCEUM

(*Dramatic Review*, May 9, 1885.)

It sometimes happens that at a *première* in London the least enjoyable part of the performance is the play. I have seen many audiences more interesting than the actors, and have often heard better dialogue in the *foyer* than I have on the stage. At the Lyceum, however, this is rarely the case, and when the play is a play of Shakespeare's, and among its exponents are Mr. Irving and Miss Ellen Terry, we turn from the gods in the gallery and from the goddesses in the stalls, to enjoy the charm of the production, and to take delight in the art. The lions are behind the footlights and

not in front of them when we have a noble tragedy nobly acted. And I have rarely witnessed such enthusiasm as that which greeted on last Saturday night the two artists I have mentioned. I would like, in fact, to use the word ovation, but a pedantic professor has recently informed us, with the Batavian buoyancy of misapplied learning, that this expression is not to be employed except when a sheep has been sacrificed. At the Lyceum last week I need hardly say nothing so dreadful occurred. The only inartistic incident of the evening was the hurling of a bouquet from a box at Mr. Irving while he was engaged in pourtraying the agony of Hamlet's death, and the pathos of his parting with Horatio. The Dramatic College might take up the education of spectators as well as that of players, and teach people that there is a proper moment for the throwing of flowers as well as a proper method.

As regards Mr. Irving's own performance, it has been already so elaborately criticised and described, from his business with the supposed pictures in the closet scene down to his use of 'peacock' for 'paddock,' that little remains to be said; nor, indeed, does a Lyceum audience require the interposition of the dramatic critic in order to understand or to appreciate the Hamlet of this great actor. I call him a great actor because he brings to the interpretation of a work of art the two qualities which we in this century so much desire, the qualities of personality and of perfection. A few years ago it seemed to many, and perhaps rightly, that the personality overshadowed the art. No such criticism would be fair now. The somewhat harsh angularity of movement and faulty pronunciation have been replaced by exquisite grace of gesture and clear precision of word, where such precision is necessary. For delightful as good elocution is, few things are so depressing as to hear a passionate passage recited instead of being acted. The quality of a fine performance is its life more than its learning, and every word in a play has a musical as well as an intellectual value, and must be made expressive of a certain emotion. So it does not seem to me that in all parts of a play perfect pronunciation is necessarily dramatic. When the words are 'wild and whirling,' the expression of them must be wild and whirling also. Mr. Irving, I think, manages his voice with singular art; it was impossible to discern a false note or wrong intonation in his dialogue or his soliloquies, and his strong dramatic power, his realistic power as an actor, is as effective as ever. A great critic at the beginning of this century said that Hamlet is the most difficult part to personate on the stage, that it is like the attempt to 'embody a shadow.' I cannot say that I agree with this idea. Hamlet seems to me essentially a good acting part, and in Mr. Irving's performance of it there is that combination of poetic grace with absolute reality which is so eternally delightful. Indeed, if the words easy and difficult have any meaning at all in matters of art, I would be inclined to say that Ophelia is the more difficult part. She has, I mean,

less material by which to produce her effects. She is the occasion of the tragedy, but she is neither its heroine nor its chief victim. She is swept away by circumstances, and gives the opportunity for situation, of which she is not herself the climax, and which she does not herself command. And of all the parts which Miss Terry has acted in her brilliant career, there is none in which her infinite powers of pathos and her imaginative and creative faculty are more shown than in her Ophelia. Miss Terry is one of those rare artists who needs for her dramatic effect no elaborate dialogue, and for whom the simplest words are sufficient. 'I love you not,' says Hamlet, and all that Ophelia answers is, 'I was the more deceived.' These are not very grand words to read, but as Miss Terry gave them in acting they seemed to be the highest possible expression of Ophelia's character. Beautiful, too, was the quick remorse she conveyed by her face and gesture the moment she had lied to Hamlet and told him her father was at home. This I thought a masterpiece of good acting, and her mad scene was wonderful beyond all description. The secrets of Melpomene are known to Miss Terry as well as the secrets of Thalia. As regards the rest of the company there is always a high standard at the Lyceum, but some particular mention should be made of Mr. Alexander's brilliant performance of Laertes. Mr. Alexander has a most effective presence, a charming voice, and a capacity for wearing lovely costumes with ease and elegance. Indeed, in the latter respect his only rival was Mr. Norman Forbes, who played either Guildenstern or Rosencrantz very gracefully. I believe one of our budding Hazlitts is preparing a volume to be entitled 'Great Guildensterns and Remarkable Rosencrantzes,' but I have never been able myself to discern any difference between these two characters. They are, I think, the only characters Shakespeare has not cared to individualise. Whichever of the two, however, Mr. Forbes acted, he acted it well. Only one point in Mr. Alexander's performance seemed to me open to question, that was his kneeling during the whole of Polonius's speech. For this I see no necessity at all, and it makes the scene look less natural than it should—gives it, I mean, too formal an air. However, the performance was most spirited and gave great pleasure to every one. Mr. Alexander is an artist from whom much will be expected, and I have no doubt he will give us much that is fine and noble. He seems to have all the qualifications for a good actor.

There is just one other character I should like to notice. The First Player seemed to me to act far too well. He should act very badly. The First Player, besides his position in the dramatic evolution of the tragedy, is Shakespeare's caricature of the ranting actor of his day, just as the passage he recites is Shakespeare's own parody on the dull plays of some of his rivals. The whole point of Hamlet's advice to the players seems to me to be lost unless the Player himself has been guilty of the fault which Hamlet

reprehends, unless he has sawn the air with his hand, mouthed his lines, torn his passion to tatters, and out-Heroded Herod. The very sensibility which Hamlet notices in the actor, such as his real tears and the like, is not the quality of a good artist. The part should be played after the manner of a provincial tragedian. It is meant to be a satire, and to play it well is to play it badly. The scenery and costumes were excellent with the exception of the King's dress, which was coarse in colour and tawdry in effect. And the Player Queen should have come in boy's attire to Elsinore.

However, last Saturday night was not a night for criticism. The theatre was filled with those who desired to welcome Mr. Irving back to his own theatre, and we were all delighted at his re-appearance among us. I hope that some time will elapse before he and Miss Terry cross again that disappointing Atlantic Ocean.

TWO NEW NOVELS

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, May 15, 1885.)

The clever authoress of *In the Golden Days* has chosen for the scene of her story the England of two centuries ago, as a relief, she tells us in her preface, 'from perpetual nineteenth-centuryism.' Upon the other hand, she makes a pathetic appeal to her readers not to regard her book as an 'historical novel,' on the ground that such a title strikes terror into the public. This seems to us rather a curious position to take up. *Esmond* and *Notre Dame* are historical novels, both of them, and both of them popular successes. *John Inglesant* and *Romola* have gone through many editions, and even *Salammbo* has its enthusiasts. We think that the public is very fond of historical novels, and as for perpetual 'nineteenth-centuryism'—a vile phrase, by the way—we only wish that more of our English novelists studied our age and its society than do so at present. However, *In the Golden Days* must not be judged by its foolish preface. It is really a very charming book, and though Dryden, Betterton, and Wills's Coffee-House are dragged in rather *à propos de bottes*, still the picture of the time is well painted. Joyce, the little Puritan maiden, is an exquisite creation, and Hugo Wharncliffe, her lover, makes a fine hero. The sketch of Algernon Sidney is rather colourless, but Charles II. is well drawn. It seems to be a novel with a high purpose and a noble meaning. Yet it is never dull.

Mrs. Macquoid's *Louisa* is modern and the scene is in Italy. Italy, we fear, has been a good deal overdone in fiction. A little more Piccadilly and a little less Perugia would be a relief. However, the story is interesting. A young English girl marries an Italian nobleman and, after some time, being bored with picturesqueness, falls in love with an Englishman. The story is told with a great deal of power and ends properly and pleasantly. It can safely be recommended to young persons.

(1) *In the Golden Days*. By Edna Lyall, Author of *We Two*, *Donovan*, *etc*. (Hurst and Blackett.)

(2) *Louisa*. By Katherine S. Macquoid. (Bentley and Son.)

HENRY THE FOURTH AT OXFORD

(*Dramatic Review*, May 23, 1885.)

I have been told that the ambition of every Dramatic Club is to act *Henry IV*. I am not surprised. The spirit of comedy is as fervent in this play as is the spirit of chivalry; it is an heroic pageant as well as an heroic poem, and like most of Shakespeare's historical dramas it contains an extraordinary number of thoroughly good acting parts, each of which is absolutely individual in character, and each of which contributes to the evolution of the plot.

Rumour, from time to time, has brought in tidings of a proposed production by the banks of the Cam, but it seems at the last moment *Box and Cox* has always had to be substituted in the bill.

To Oxford belongs the honour of having been the first to present on the stage this noble play, and the production which I saw last week was in every way worthy of that lovely town, that mother of sweetness and of light. For, in spite of the roaring of the young lions at the Union, and the screaming of the rabbits in the home of the vivisector, in spite of Keble College, and the tramways, and the sporting prints, Oxford still remains the most beautiful thing in England, and nowhere else are life and art so exquisitely blended, so perfectly made one. Indeed, in most other towns art has often to present herself in the form of a reaction against the sordid ugliness of ignoble lives, but at Oxford she comes to us as an exquisite flower born of the beauty of life and expressive of life's joy. She finds her home by the Isis as once she did by the Ilissus; the Magdalen walks and the Magdalen cloisters are as dear to her as were ever the silver olives of Colonus and the golden gateway of the house of Pallas: she covers with fanlike tracery the vaulted entrance to Christ Church Hall, and looks out from the windows of Merton; her feet have stirred the Cumnor cowslips, and she gathers fritillaries in the river-fields. To her the clamour of the schools and the dulness of the lecture-room are a weariness and a vexation of spirit; she seeks not to define virtue, and cares little for the categories; she smiles on the swift athlete whose plastic grace has pleased her, and rejoices in the young Barbarians at their games; she watches the rowers from the reedy bank and gives myrtle to her lovers, and laurel to her poets, and rue to those who talk wisely in the street; she makes the earth lovely to all who dream with Keats; she opens high heaven to all who soar with Shelley; and turning away her

head from pedant, proctor and Philistine, she has welcomed to her shrine a band of youthful actors, knowing that they have sought with much ardour for the stern secret of Melpomene, and caught with much gladness the sweet laughter of Thalia. And to me this ardour and this gladness were the two most fascinating qualities of the Oxford performance, as indeed they are qualities which are necessary to any fine dramatic production. For without quick and imaginative observation of life the most beautiful play becomes dull in presentation, and what is not conceived in delight by the actor can give no delight at all to others.

I know that there are many who consider that Shakespeare is more for the study than for the stage. With this view I do not for a moment agree. Shakespeare wrote the plays to be acted, and we have no right to alter the form which he himself selected for the full expression of his work. Indeed, many of the beauties of that work can be adequately conveyed to us only through the actor's art. As I sat in the Town Hall of Oxford the other night, the majesty of the mighty lines of the play seemed to me to gain new music from the clear young voices that uttered them, and the ideal grandeur of the heroism to be made more real to the spectators by the chivalrous bearing, the noble gesture and the fine passion of its exponents. Even the dresses had their dramatic value. Their archæological accuracy gave us, immediately on the rise of the curtain, a perfect picture of the time. As the knights and nobles moved across the stage in the flowing robes of peace and in the burnished steel of battle, we needed no dreary chorus to tell us in what age or land the play's action was passing, for the fifteenth century in all the dignity and grace of its apparel was living actually before us, and the delicate harmonies of colour struck from the first a dominant note of beauty which added to the intellectual realism of archæology the sensuous charm of art.

As for individual actors, Mr. Mackinnon's Prince Hal was a most gay and graceful performance, lit here and there with charming touches of princely dignity and of noble feeling. Mr. Coleridge's Falstaff was full of delightful humour, though perhaps at times he did not take us sufficiently into his confidence. An audience looks at a tragedian, but a comedian looks at his audience. However, he gave much pleasure to every one, and Mr. Bourchier's Hotspur was really most remarkable. Mr. Bourchier has a fine stage presence, a beautiful voice, and produces his effects by a method as dramatically impressive as it is artistically right. Once or twice he seemed to me to spoil his last line by walking through it. The part of Harry Percy is one full of climaxes which must not be let slip. But still there was always a freedom and spirit in his style which was very pleasing, and his delivery of the colloquial passages I thought excellent, notably of that in the first act:

What d' ye call the place?
A plague upon't—it is in Gloucestershire;
'Twas where the madcap duke his uncle kept,
His uncle York;

lines by the way in which Kemble made a great effect. Mr. Bourchier has the opportunity of a fine career on the English stage, and I hope he will take advantage of it. Among the minor parts in the play Glendower, Mortimer and Sir Richard Vernon were capitally acted, Worcester was a performance of some subtlety, Mrs. Woods was a charming Lady Percy, and Lady Edward Spencer Churchill, as Mortimer's wife, made us all believe that we understood Welsh. Her dialogue and her song were most pleasing bits of artistic realism which fully accounted for the Celtic chair at Oxford.

But though I have mentioned particular actors, the real value of the whole representation was to be found in its absolute unity, in its delicate sense of proportion, and in that breadth of effect which is to be got only by the most careful elaboration of detail. I have rarely seen a production better stage-managed. Indeed, I hope that the University will take some official notice of this delightful work of art. Why should not degrees be granted for good acting? Are they not given to those who misunderstand Plato and who mistranslate Aristotle? And should the artist be passed over? No. To Prince Hal, Hotspur and Falstaff, D.C.L.'s should be gracefully offered. I feel sure they would be gracefully accepted. To the rest of the company the crimson or the sheep-skin hood might be assigned *honoris causâ* to the eternal confusion of the Philistine, and the rage of the industrious and the dull. Thus would Oxford confer honour on herself, and the artist be placed in his proper position. However, whether or not Convocation recognises the claims of culture, I hope that the Oxford Dramatic Society will produce every summer for us some noble play like *Henry IV*. For, in plays of this kind, plays which deal with bygone times, there is always this peculiar charm, that they combine in one exquisite presentation the passions that are living with the picturesqueness that is dead. And when we have the modern spirit given to us in an antique form, the very remoteness of that form can be made a method of increased realism. This was Shakespeare's own attitude towards the ancient world, this is the attitude we in this century should adopt towards his plays, and with a feeling akin to this it seemed to me that these brilliant young Oxonians were working. If it was so, their aim is the right one. For while we look to the dramatist to give romance to realism, we ask of the actor to give realism to romance.

MODERN GREEK POETRY

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, May *27*, 1885.)

Odysseus, not Achilles, is the type of the modern Greek. Merchandise has taken precedence of the Muses and politics are preferred to Parnassus. Yet by the Illissus there are sweet singers; the nightingales are not silent in Colonus; and from the garden of Greek nineteenth-century poetry Miss Edmonds has made a very pleasing anthology; and in pouring the wine from the golden into the silver cup she has still kept much of the beauty of the original. Even when translated into English, modern Greek lyrics are preferable to modern Greek loans.

As regards the quality of this poetry, if the old Greek spirit can be traced at all, it is the spirit of Tyrtæus and of Theocritus. The warlike ballads of Rhigas and Aristotle Valaôritês have a fine ring of music and of passion in them, and the folk-songs of George Drosinês are full of charming pictures of rustic life and delicate idylls of shepherds' courtships. These we acknowledge that we prefer. The flutes of the sheepfold are more delightful than the clarions of battle. Still, poetry played such a noble part in the Greek War of Independence that it is impossible not to look with reverence on the spirited war-songs that meant so much to those who were righting for liberty and mean so much even now to their children.

Other poets besides Drosinês have taken the legends that linger among the peasants and given to them an artistic form. The song of *The Seasons* is full of beauty, and there is a delightful poem on *The Building of St. Sophia*, which tells how the design of that noble building was suggested by the golden honeycomb of a bee which had flown from the king's palace with a crumb of blessed bread that had fallen from the king's hands. The story is still to be found in Thrace.

One of the ballads, also, has a good deal of spirit. It is by Kostês Palamas and was suggested by an interesting incident which occurred some years ago in Athens. In the summer of 1881 there was borne through the streets the remains of an aged woman in the complete costume of a Pallikar, which dress she had worn at the siege of Missolonghi and in it had requested to be buried. The life of this real Greek heroine should be studied by those who are investigating the question of wherein womanliness consists. The view the poet takes of her is, we need hardly say, very different from that which Canon Liddon would entertain. Yet it is none the less fine on this account, and we are glad that this old lady has been given a place in art. The volume is, on the whole, delightful reading, and though not much can be said for lines like these:

There cometh from the West
The timid starry bands,

still, the translations are in many instances most felicitous and their style most pleasing.

Greek Lays, *Idylls*, *Legends*, *etc*. Translated by E. M. Edmonds. (Trübner and Co.)

OLIVIA AT THE LYCEUM

(*Dramatic Review*, May 30, 1885.)

Whether or not it is an advantage for a novel to be produced in a dramatic form is, I think, open to question. The psychological analysis of such work as that of Mr. George Meredith, for instance, would probably lose by being transmuted into the passionate action of the stage, nor does M. Zola's *formule scientifique* gain anything at all by theatrical presentation. With Goldsmith it is somewhat different. In *The Vicar of Wakefield* he seeks simply to please his readers, and desires not to prove a theory; he looks on life rather as a picture to be painted than as a problem to be solved; his aim is to create men and women more than to vivisect them; his dialogue is essentially dramatic, and his novel seems to pass naturally into the dramatic form. And to me there is something very pleasurable in seeing and studying the same subject under different conditions of art. For life remains eternally unchanged; it is art which, by presenting it to us under various forms, enables us to realise its many-sided mysteries, and to catch the quality of its most fiery-coloured moments. The originality, I mean, which we ask from the artist, is originality of treatment, not of subject. It is only the unimaginative who ever invents. The true artist is known by the use he makes of what he annexes, and he annexes everything.

Looking in this light at Mr. Wills's *Olivia*, it seems to me a very exquisite work of art. Indeed, I know no other dramatist who could have re-told this beautiful English tale with such tenderness and such power, neither losing the charm of the old story nor forgetting the conditions of the new form. The sentiment of the poet and the science of the playwright are exquisitely balanced in it. For though in prose it is a poem, and while a poem it is also a play.

But fortunate as Mr. Wills has been in the selection of his subject and in his treatment of it, he is no less fortunate in the actors who interpret his work. To whatever character Miss Terry plays she brings the infinite charm of her beauty, and the marvellous grace of her movements and gestures. It is impossible to escape from the sweet tyranny of her personality. She dominates her audience by the secret of Cleopatra. In her Olivia, however, it is not merely her personality that fascinates us but her power also, her power over pathos, and her command of situation. The scene in which she bade goodbye to her family was touching beyond any scene I remember

in any modern play, yet no harsh or violent note was sounded; and when in the succeeding act she struck, in natural and noble indignation, the libertine who had betrayed her, there was, I think, no one in the theatre who did not recognise that in Miss Terry our stage possesses a really great artist, who can thrill an audience without harrowing it, and by means that seem simple and easy can produce the finest dramatic effect. Mr. Irving, as Dr. Primrose, intensified the beautiful and blind idolatry of the old pastor for his daughter till his own tragedy seems almost greater than hers; the scene in the third act, where he breaks down in his attempt to reprove the lamb that has strayed from the fold, was a masterpiece of fine acting; and the whole performance, while carefully elaborate in detail, was full of breadth and dignity. I acknowledge that I liked him least at the close of the second act. It seems to me that here we should be made to feel not merely the passionate rage of the father, but the powerlessness of the old man. The taking down of the pistols, and the attempt to follow the young duellist, are pathetic because they are useless, and I hardly think that Mr. Irving conveyed this idea. As regards the rest of the characters, Mr. Terriss's Squire Thornhill was an admirable picture of a fascinating young rake. Indeed, it was so fascinating that the moral equilibrium of the audience was quite disturbed, and nobody seemed to care very much for the virtuous Mr. Burchell. I was not sorry to see this triumph of the artistic over the ethical sympathy. Perfect heroes are the monsters of melodramas, and have no place in dramatic art. Life possibly contains them, but Parnassus often rejects what Peckham may welcome. I look forward to a reaction in favour of the cultured criminal. Mr. Norman Forbes was a very pleasing Moses, and gave his Latin quotations charmingly, Miss Emery's Sophy was most winning, and, indeed, every part seemed to me well acted except that of the virtuous Mr. Burchell. This fact, however, rather pleased me than otherwise, as it increased the charm of his attractive nephew.

The scenery and costumes were excellent, as indeed they always are at the Lyceum when the piece is produced under Mr. Irving's direction. The first scene was really very beautiful, and quite as good as the famous cherry orchard of the Théâtre Français. A critic who posed as an authority on field sports assured me that no one ever went out hunting when roses were in full bloom. Personally, that is exactly the season I would select for the chase, but then I know more about flowers than I do about foxes, and like them much better. If the critic was right, either the roses must wither or Squire Thornhill must change his coat. A more serious objection may be brought against the division of the last act into three scenes. There, I think, there was a distinct dramatic loss. The room to which Olivia returns should have been exactly the same room she had left. As a picture of the eighteenth century, however, the whole production was

admirable, and the details, both of acting and of *mise-en-scène*, wonderfully perfect. I wish Olivia would take off her pretty mittens when her fortune is being told. Cheiromancy is a science which deals almost entirely with the lines on the palm of the hand, and mittens would seriously interfere with its mysticism. Still, when all is said, how easily does this lovely play, this artistic presentation, survive criticisms founded on cheiromancy and cub-hunting! The Lyceum under Mr. Irving's management has become a centre of art. We are all of us in his debt. I trust that we may see some more plays by living dramatists produced at his theatre, for *Olivia* has been exquisitely mounted and exquisitely played.

AS YOU LIKE IT AT COOMBE HOUSE

(*Dramatic Review*, June 6, 1885.)

In Théophile Gautier's first novel, that golden book of spirit and sense, that holy writ of beauty, there is a most fascinating account of an amateur performance of *As You Like It* in the large orangery of a French country house. Yet, lovely as Gautier's description is, the real presentation of the play last week at Coombe seemed to me lovelier still, for not merely were there present in it all those elements of poetry and picturesqueness which *le maître impeccable* so desired, but to them was added also the exquisite charm of the open woodland and the delightful freedom of the open air. Nor indeed could the Pastoral Players have made a more fortunate selection of a play. A tragedy under the same conditions would have been impossible. For tragedy is the exaggeration of the individual, and nature thinks nothing of dwarfing a hero by a holly bush, and reducing a heroine to a mere effect of colour. The subtleties also of facial expression are in the open air almost entirely lost; and while this would be a serious defect in the presentation of a play which deals immediately with psychology, in the case of a comedy, where the situations predominate over the characters, we do not feel it nearly so much; and Shakespeare himself seems to have clearly recognised this difference, for while he had *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* always played by artificial light he acted *As You Like It* and the rest of his comedies *en plein jour*.

The condition then under which this comedy was produced by Lady Archibald Campbell and Mr. Godwin did not place any great limitations on the actor's art, and increased tenfold the value of the play as a picture. Through an alley of white hawthorn and gold laburnum we passed into the green pavilion that served as the theatre, the air sweet with odour of the lilac and with the blackbird's song; and when the curtain fell into its trench of flowers, and the play commenced, we saw before us a real forest, and we knew it to be Arden. For with whoop and shout, up through the rustling fern came the foresters trooping, the banished Duke took his seat beneath the

tall elm, and as his lords lay around him on the grass, the rich melody of Shakespeare's blank verse began to reach our ears. And all through the performance this delightful sense of joyous woodland life was sustained, and even when the scene was left empty for the shepherd to drive his flock across the sward, or for Rosalind to school Orlando in love-making, far away we could hear the shrill halloo of the hunter, and catch now and then the faint music of some distant horn. One distinct dramatic advantage was gained by the *mise en scène*.

The abrupt exits and entrances, which are necessitated on the real stage by the inevitable limitations of space, were in many cases done away with, and we saw the characters coming gradually towards us through brake and underwood, or passing away down the slope till they were lost in some deep recess of the forest; the effect of distance thus gained being largely increased by the faint wreaths of blue mist that floated at times across the background. Indeed I never saw an illustration at once so perfect and so practical of the æsthetic value of smoke.

As for the players themselves, the pleasing naturalness of their method harmonised delightfully with their natural surroundings. Those of them who were amateurs were too artistic to be stagey, and those who were actors too experienced to be artificial. The humorous sadness of Jaques, that philosopher in search of sensation, found a perfect exponent in Mr. Hermann Vezin. Touchstone has been so often acted as a low comedy part that Mr. Elliott's rendering of the swift sententious fool was a welcome change, and a more graceful and winning Phebe than Mrs. Plowden, a more tender Celia than Miss Schletter, a more realistic Audrey than Miss Fulton, I have never seen. Rosalind suffered a good deal through the omission of the first act; we saw, I mean, more of the saucy boy than we did of the noble girl; and though the *persiflage* always told, the poetry was often lost; still Miss Calhoun gave much pleasure; and Lady Archibald Campbell's Orlando was a really remarkable performance. Too melancholy some seemed to think it. Yet is not Orlando lovesick? Too dreamy, I heard it said. Yet Orlando is a poet. And even admitting that the vigour of the lad who tripped up the Duke's wrestler was hardly sufficiently emphasised, still in the low music of Lady Archibald Campbell's voice, and in the strange beauty of her movements and gestures, there was a wonderful fascination, and the visible presence of romance quite consoled me for the possible absence of robustness. Among the other characters should be mentioned Mr. Claude Ponsonby's First Lord, Mr. De Cordova's Corin (a bit of excellent acting), and the Silvius of Mr. Webster.

As regards the costumes the colour scheme was very perfect. Brown and green were the dominant notes, and yellow was most artistically used. There were, however, two

distinct discords. Touchstone's motley was far too glaring, and the crude white of Rosalind's bridal raiment in the last act was absolutely displeasing. A contrast may be striking but should never be harsh. And lovely in colour as Mrs. Plowden's dress was, a sort of panegyric on a pansy, I am afraid that in Shakespeare's Arden there were no Chelsea China Shepherdesses, and I am sure that the romance of Phebe does not need to be intensified by any reminiscences of porcelain. Still, *As You Like It* has probably never been so well mounted, nor costumes worn with more ease and simplicity. Not the least charming part of the whole production was the music, which was under the direction of the Rev. Arthur Batson. The boys' voices were quite exquisite, and Mr. Walsham sang with much spirit.

On the whole the Pastoral Players are to be warmly congratulated on the success of their representation, and to the artistic sympathies of Lady Archibald Campbell, and the artistic knowledge of Mr. Godwin, I am indebted for a most delightful afternoon. Few things are so pleasurable as to be able by an hour's drive to exchange Piccadilly for Parnassus.

A HANDBOOK TO MARRIAGE

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, November 18, 1885.)

In spite of its somewhat alarming title this book may be highly recommended to every one. As for the authorities the author quotes, they are almost numberless, and range from Socrates down to Artemus Ward. He tells us of the wicked bachelor who spoke of marriage as 'a very harmless amusement' and advised a young friend of his to 'marry early and marry often'; of Dr. Johnson who proposed that marriage should be arranged by the Lord Chancellor, without the parties concerned having any choice in the matter; of the Sussex labourer who asked, 'Why should I give a woman half my victuals for cooking the other half?' and of Lord Verulam who thought that unmarried men did the best public work. And, indeed, marriage is the one subject on which all women agree and all men disagree. Our author, however, is clearly of the same opinion as the Scotch lassie who, on her father warning her what a solemn thing it was to get married, answered, 'I ken that, father, but it's a great deal solemner to be single.' He may be regarded as the champion of the married life. Indeed, he has a most interesting chapter on marriage-made men, and though he dissents, and we think rightly, from the view recently put forward by a lady or two on the Women's Rights platform that Solomon owed all his wisdom to the number of his wives, still he appeals to Bismarck, John Stuart Mill, Mahommed and Lord Beaconsfield, as instances of men whose success can be traced to the influence of the women they married. Archbishop Whately once defined woman as 'a creature that does not

reason and pokes the fire from the top,' but since his day the higher education of women has considerably altered their position. Women have always had an emotional sympathy with those they love; Girton and Newnham have rendered intellectual sympathy also possible. In our day it is best for a man to be married, and men must give up the tyranny in married life which was once so dear to them, and which, we are afraid, lingers still, here and there.

'Do you wish to be my wife, Mabel?' said a little boy.

'Yes,' incautiously answered Mabel.

'Then pull off my boots.'

On marriage vows our author has, too, very sensible views and very amusing stories. He tells of a nervous bridegroom who, confusing the baptismal and marriage ceremonies, replied when asked if he consented to take the bride for his wife: 'I renounce them all'; of a Hampshire rustic who, when giving the ring, said solemnly to the bride: 'With my body I thee wash up, and with all my hurdle goods I thee and thou'; of another who, when asked whether he would take his partner to be his wedded wife, replied with shameful indecision: 'Yes, I'm willin'; but I'd a sight rather have her sister'; and of a Scotch lady who, on the occasion of her daughter's wedding, was asked by an old friend whether she might congratulate her on the event, and answered: 'Yes, yes, upon the whole it is very satisfactory; it is true Jeannie hates her gudeman, but then there's always a something!' Indeed, the good stories contained in this book are quite endless and make it very pleasant reading, while the good advice is on all points admirable.

Most young married people nowadays start in life with a dreadful collection of ormolu inkstands covered with sham onyxes, or with a perfect museum of salt-cellars. We strongly recommend this book as one of the best of wedding presents. It is a complete handbook to an earthly Paradise, and its author may be regarded as the Murray of matrimony and the Baedeker of bliss.

How to be Happy though Married: *Being a Handbook to Marriage*. By a Graduate in the University of Matrimony. (T. Fisher Unwin.)

HALF-HOURS WITH THE WORST AUTHORS

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, January 15, 1886.)

I am very much pleased to see that you are beginning to call attention to the extremely slipshod and careless style of our ordinary magazine-writers. Will you allow me to refer your readers to an article on Borrow, in the current number of *Macmillan*, which

exemplifies very clearly the truth of your remarks? The author of the article is Mr. George Saintsbury, a gentleman who has recently written a book on Prose Style, and here are some specimens of the prose of the future according to the *système Saintsbury*:

1. He saw the rise, and, *in some instances*, *the death*, *of Tennyson*, Thackeray, Macaulay, Carlyle, Dickens.

2. *See a place* which Kingsley, *or* Mr. Ruskin, *or* some other master of our decorative school, *have* described—*much more* one which has fallen into the hands of the small fry of their imitators—and you are almost sure to find that *it has been overdone*.

3. The great mass of his translations, published and unpublished, and the smaller mass of his early hackwork, no doubt *deserves* judicious excerption.

4. 'The Romany Rye' *did not appear* for six years, *that is to say*, *in* 1857.

5. The elaborate apparatus which most prose tellers of fantastic tales *use*, and generally *fail in using*.

6. The great writers, whether they try to be like other people or try not to be like them (*and sometimes in the first case most of all*), succeed *only* in being themselves.

7. If he had a slight *overdose* of Celtic blood and Celtic-peculiarity, it was *more than made up* by the readiness of literary expression which it gave him. He, if any one, bore an English heart, though, *as there often has been*, there was something perhaps more than English as well as less than it in his fashion of expression.

8. His flashes of ethical reflection, which, though like *all* ethical reflections *often* one-sided.

9. He certainly was an *unfriend* to Whiggery.

10. *That it contains* a great deal of quaint and piquant writing *is only to say* that its writer wrote it.

11. 'Wild Wales,' too, because of *its* easy and direct *opportunity* of comparing its description with the originals.

12. The capital *and* full-length portraits.

13. Whose attraction is *one* neither mainly nor in any very great degree one of pure form.

14. *Constantly right in general*.

These are merely a few examples of the style of Mr. Saintsbury, a writer who seems quite ignorant of the commonest laws both of grammar and of literary expression, who has apparently no idea of the difference between the pronouns 'this' and 'that,' and has as little hesitation in ending the clause of a sentence with a preposition, as he has in inserting a parenthesis between a preposition and its object, a mistake of which the most ordinary schoolboy would be ashamed. And why can not our magazine-writers use plain, simple English? *Unfriend*, quoted above, is a quite unnecessary archaism, and so is such a phrase as *With this Borrow could not away*, in the sense of 'this Borrow could not endure.' 'Borrow's *abstraction* from general society' may, I suppose, pass muster. Pope talks somewhere of a hermit's 'abstraction,' but what is the meaning of saying that the author of Lavengro *quartered* Castile and Leon 'in the most interesting manner, riding everywhere with his servant'? And what defence can be made for such an expression as 'Scott, and other *black beasts* of Borrow's'? Black beast for *bête noire* is really abominable.

The object of my letter, however, is not to point out the deficiencies of Mr. Saintsbury's style, but to express my surprise that his article should have been admitted into the pages of a magazine like *Macmillan's*. Surely it does not require much experience to know that such an article is a disgrace even to magazine literature.

George Borrow. By George Saintsbury. (*Macmillan's Magazine*, January 1886.)

ONE OF MR. CONWAY'S REMAINDERS

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, February 1, 1886.)

Most people know that in the concoction of a modern novel crime is a more important ingredient than culture. Mr. Hugh Conway certainly knew it, and though for cleverness of invention and ingenuity of construction he cannot be compared to M. Gaboriau, that master of murder and its mysteries, still he fully recognised the artistic value of villainy. His last novel, *A Cardinal Sin*, opens very well. Mr. Philip Bourchier, M.P. for Westshire and owner of Redhills, is travelling home from London in a first-class railway carriage when, suddenly, through the window enters a rough-looking middle-aged man brandishing a long-lost marriage certificate, the effect of which is to deprive the right honourable member of his property and estate. However, Mr. Bourchier, M.P., is quite equal to the emergency. On the arrival of the train at its destination, he invites the unwelcome intruder to drive home with him and, reaching a lonely road, shoots him through the head and gives information to the nearest magistrate that he has rid society of a dangerous highwayman.

Mr. Bourchier is brought to trial and triumphantly acquitted. So far, everything goes well with him. Unfortunately, however, the murdered man, with that superhuman strength which on the stage and in novels always accompanies the agony of death, had managed in falling from the dog-cart to throw the marriage certificate up a fir tree! There it is found by a worthy farmer who talks that conventional rustic dialect which, though unknown in the provinces, is such a popular element in every Adelphi melodrama; and it ultimately falls into the hands of an unscrupulous young man who succeeds in blackmailing Mr. Bourchier and in marrying his daughter. Mr. Bourchier suffers tortures from excess of chloral and of remorse; and there is psychology of a weird and wonderful kind, that kind which Mr. Conway may justly be said to have invented and the result of which is not to be underrated. For, if to raise a goose skin on the reader be the aim of art, Mr. Conway must be regarded as a real artist. So harrowing is his psychology that the ordinary methods of punctuation are quite inadequate to convey it. Agony and asterisks follow each other on every page and, as the murderer's conscience sinks deeper into chaos, the chaos of commas increases.

Finally, Mr. Bourchier dies, *splendide mendax* to the end. A confession, he rightly argued, would break up the harmony of the family circle, particularly as his eldest son had married the daughter of his luckless victim. Few criminals are so thoughtful for others as Mr. Bourchier is, and we are not without admiration for the unselfishness of one who can give up the luxury of a death-bed repentance.

A Cardinal Sin, then, on the whole, may be regarded as a crude novel of a common melodramatic type. What is painful about it is its style, which is slipshod and careless. To describe a honeymoon as a *rare occurrence in any one person's life* is rather amusing. There is an American story of a young couple who had to be married by telephone, as the bridegroom lived in Nebraska and the bride in New York, and they had to go on separate honeymoons; though, perhaps, this is not what Mr. Conway meant. But what can be said for a sentence like this?—'The established favourites in the musical world are never quite sure but the *new comer* may not be *one among the many they have seen fail*'; or this?—'As it is the fate of such a very small number of men to marry a prima donna, I shall be doing little harm, *or be likely to change plans of life*, by enumerating some of the disadvantages.' The nineteenth century may be a prosaic age, but we fear that, if we are to judge by the general run of novels, it is not an age of prose.

A Cardinal Sin. By Hugh Conway. (Remington and Co.)

TO READ OR NOT TO READ

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, February 8, 1886.)

Books, I fancy, may be conveniently divided into three classes:—

1. Books to read, such as Cicero's *Letters*, Suetonius, Vasari's *Lives of the Painters*, the *Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini*, Sir John Mandeville, Marco Polo, St. Simon's *Memoirs*, Mommsen, and (till we get a better one) Grote's *History of Greece*.

2. Books to re-read, such as Plato and Keats: in the sphere of poetry, the masters not the minstrels; in the sphere of philosophy, the seers not the *savants*.

3. Books not to read at all, such as Thomson's *Seasons*, Rogers's *Italy*, Paley's *Evidences*, all the Fathers except St. Augustine, all John Stuart Mill except the essay on *Liberty*, all Voltaire's plays without any exception, Butler's *Analogy*, Grant's *Aristotle*, Hume's *England*, Lewes's *History of Philosophy*, all argumentative books and all books that try to prove anything.

The third class is by far the most important. To tell people what to read is, as a rule, either useless or harmful; for, the appreciation of literature is a question of temperament not of teaching; to Parnassus there is no primer and nothing that one can learn is ever worth learning. But to tell people what not to read is a very different matter, and I venture to recommend it as a mission to the University Extension Scheme.

Indeed, it is one that is eminently needed in this age of ours, an age that reads so much, that it has no time to admire, and writes so much, that it has no time to think. Whoever will select out of the chaos of our modern curricula 'The Worst Hundred Books,' and publish a list of them, will confer on the rising generation a real and lasting benefit.

After expressing these views I suppose I should not offer any suggestions at all with regard to 'The Best Hundred Books,' but I hope you will allow me the pleasure of being inconsistent, as I am anxious to put in a claim for a book that has been strangely omitted by most of the excellent judges who have contributed to your columns. I mean the *Greek Anthology*. The beautiful poems contained in this collection seem to me to hold the same position with regard to Greek dramatic literature as do the delicate little figurines of Tanagra to the Phidian marbles, and to be quite as necessary for the complete understanding of the Greek spirit.

I am also amazed to find that Edgar Allan Poe has been passed over. Surely this marvellous lord of rhythmic expression deserves a place? If, in order to make room for him, it be necessary to elbow out some one else, I should elbow out Southey, and I think that Baudelaire might be most advantageously substituted for Keble.

No doubt, both in the *Curse of Kehama* and in the *Christian Year* there are poetic qualities of a certain kind, but absolute catholicity of taste is not without its dangers. It is only an auctioneer who should admire all schools of art.

TWELFTH NIGHT AT OXFORD

(*Dramatic Review*, February 20, 1886.)

On Saturday last the new theatre at Oxford was opened by the University Dramatic Society. The play selected was Shakespeare's delightful comedy of *Twelfth Night*, a play eminently suitable for performance by a club, as it contains so many good acting parts. Shakespeare's tragedies may be made for a single star, but his comedies are made for a galaxy of constellations. In the first he deals with the pathos of the individual, in the second he gives us a picture of life. The Oxford undergraduates, then, are to be congratulated on the selection of the play, and the result fully justified their choice. Mr. Bourchier as Festa the clown was easy, graceful and joyous, as fanciful as his dress and as funny as his bauble. The beautiful songs which Shakespeare has assigned to this character were rendered by him as charmingly as they were dramatically. To act singing is quite as great an art as to sing. Mr. Letchmere Stuart was a delightful Sir Andrew, and gave much pleasure to the audience. One may hate the villains of Shakespeare, but one cannot help loving his fools. Mr. Macpherson was, perhaps, hardly equal to such an immortal part as that of Sir Toby Belch, though there was much that was clever in his performance. Mr. Lindsay threw new and unexpected light on the character of Fabian, and Mr. Clark's Malvolio was a most remarkable piece of acting. What a difficult part Malvolio is! Shakespeare undoubtedly meant us to laugh all through at the pompous steward, and to join in the practical joke upon him, and yet how impossible not to feel a good deal of sympathy with him! Perhaps in this century we are too altruistic to be really artistic. Hazlitt says somewhere that poetical justice is done him in the uneasiness which Olivia suffers on account of her mistaken attachment to Orsino, as her insensibility to the violence of the Duke's passion is atoned for by the discovery of Viola's concealed love for him; but it is difficult not to feel Malvolio's treatment is unnecessarily harsh. Mr. Clark, however, gave a very clever rendering, full of subtle touches. If I ventured on a bit of advice, which I feel most reluctant to do, it would be to the effect that while one should always study the method of a great artist, one should never imitate his manner. The manner of an artist is essentially individual, the method of an artist is absolutely universal. The first is personality, which no one should copy; the second is perfection, which all should aim at. Miss Arnold was a most sprightly Maria, and Miss Farmer a dignified Olivia; but as Viola Mrs. Bewicke was hardly successful. Her manner was too boisterous and her method too

modern. Where there is violence there is no Viola, where there is no illusion there is no Illyria, and where there is no style there is no Shakespeare. Mr. Higgins looked the part of Sebastian to perfection, and some of the minor characters were excellently played by Mr. Adderley, Mr. King-Harman, Mr. Coningsby Disraeli and Lord Albert Osborne. On the whole, the performance reflected much credit on the Dramatic Society; indeed, its excellence was such that I am led to hope that the University will some day have a theatre of its own, and that proficiency in scene-painting will be regarded as a necessary qualification for the Slade Professorship. On the stage, literature returns to life and archæology becomes art. A fine theatre is a temple where all the muses may meet, a second Parnassus, and the dramatic spirit, though she has long tarried at Cambridge, seems now to be migrating to Oxford.

Thebes did her green unknowing youth engage;
She chooses Athens in her riper age.

THE LETTERS OF A GREAT WOMAN

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, March 6, 1886.)

Of the many collections of letters that have appeared in this century few, if any, can rival for fascination of style and variety of incident the letters of George Sand which have recently been translated into English by M. Ledos de Beaufort. They extend over a space of more than sixty years, from 1812 to 1876, in fact, and comprise the first letters of Aurore Dupin, a child of eight years old, as well as the last letters of George Sand, a woman of seventy-two. The very early letters, those of the child and of the young married woman, possess, of course, merely a psychological interest; but from 1831, the date of Madame Dudevant's separation from her husband and her first entry into Paris life, the interest becomes universal, and the literary and political history of France is mirrored in every page.

For George Sand was an indefatigable correspondent; she longs in one of her letters, it is true, for 'a planet where reading and writing are absolutely unknown,' but still she had a real pleasure in letter-writing. Her greatest delight was the communication of ideas, and she is always in the heart of the battle. She discusses pauperism with Louis Napoleon in his prison at Ham, and liberty with Armand Barbes in his dungeon at Vincennes; she writes to Lamennais on philosophy, to Mazzini on socialism, to Lamartine on democracy, and to Ledru-Rollin on justice. Her letters reveal to us not merely the life of a great novelist but the soul of a great woman, of a woman who was one with all the noblest movements of her day and whose sympathy with humanity was boundless absolutely. For the aristocracy of intellect she had always the deepest veneration, but the democracy of suffering touched her more. She preached the

regeneration of mankind, not with the noisy ardour of the paid advocate, but with the enthusiasm of the true evangelist. Of all the artists of this century she was the most altruistic; she felt every one's misfortunes except her own. Her faith never left her; to the end of her life, as she tells us, she was able to believe without illusions. But the people disappointed her a little. She saw that they followed persons not principles, and for 'the great man theory' George Sand had no respect. 'Proper names are the enemies of principles' is one of her aphorisms.

So from 1850 her letters are more distinctly literary. She discusses modern realism with Flaubert, and play-writing with Dumas *fils*; and protests with passionate vehemence against the doctrine of *L'art pour l'art*. 'Art for the sake of itself is an idle sentence,' she writes; 'art for the sake of truth, for the sake of what is beautiful and good, that is the creed I seek.' And in a delightful letter to M. Charles Poncy she repeats the same idea very charmingly. 'People say that birds sing for the sake of singing, but I doubt it. They sing their loves and happiness, and in that they are in keeping with nature. But man must do something more, and poets only sing in order to move people and to make them think.' She wanted M. Poncy to be the poet of the people and, if good advice were all that had been needed, he would certainly have been the Burns of the workshop. She drew out a delightful scheme for a volume to be called *Songs of all Trades* and saw the possibilities of making handicrafts poetic. Perhaps she valued good intentions in art a little too much, and she hardly understood that art for art's sake is not meant to express the final cause of art but is merely a formula of creation; but, as she herself had scaled Parnassus, we must not quarrel at her bringing Proletarianism with her. For George Sand must be ranked among our poetic geniuses. She regarded the novel as still within the domain of poetry. Her heroes are not dead photographs; they are great possibilities. Modern novels are dissections; hers are dreams. 'I make popular types,' she writes, 'such as I do no longer see, but such as they should and might be.' For realism, in M. Zola's acceptation of the word, she had no admiration. Art to her was a mirror that transfigured truths but did not represent realities. Hence she could not understand art without personality. 'I am aware,' she writes to Flaubert, 'that you are opposed to the exposition of personal doctrine in literature. Are you right? Does not your opposition proceed rather from a want of conviction than from a principle of æsthetics? If we have any philosophy in our brain it must needs break forth in our writings. But you, as soon as you handle literature, you seem anxious, I know not why, to be another man, the one who must disappear, who annihilates himself and is no more. What a singular mania! What a deficient taste! The worth of our productions depends entirely on our own. Besides, if we withhold our own opinions respecting the

personages we create, we naturally leave the reader in uncertainty as to the opinion he should himself form of them. That amounts to wishing not to be understood, and the result of this is that the reader gets weary of us and leaves us.'

She herself, however, may be said to have suffered from too dominant a personality, and this was the reason of the failure of most of her plays.

Of the drama in the sense of disinterested presentation she had no idea, and what is the strength and life-blood of her novels is the weakness of her dramatic works. But in the main she was right. Art without personality is impossible. And yet the aim of art is not to reveal personality, but to please. This she hardly recognised in her æsthetics, though she realised it in her work. On literary style she has some excellent remarks. She dislikes the extravagances of the romantic school and sees the beauty of simplicity. 'Simplicity,' she writes, 'is the most difficult thing to secure in this world: it is the last limit of experience and the last effort of genius.' She hated the slang and *argot* of Paris life, and loved the words used by the peasants in the provinces. 'The provinces,' she remarks, 'preserve the tradition of the original tongue and create but few new words. I feel much respect for the language of the peasantry; in my estimation it is the more correct.'

She thought Flaubert too much preoccupied with the sense of form, and makes these excellent observations to him—perhaps her best piece of literary criticism. 'You consider the form as the aim, whereas it is but the effect. Happy expressions are only the outcome of emotion and emotion itself proceeds from a conviction. We are only moved by that which we ardently believe in.' Literary schools she distrusted. Individualism was to her the keystone of art as well as of life. 'Do not belong to any school: do not imitate any model,' is her advice. Yet she never encouraged eccentricity. 'Be correct,' she writes to Eugene Pelletan, 'that is rarer than being eccentric, as the time goes. It is much more common to please by bad taste than to receive the cross of honour.'

On the whole, her literary advice is sound and healthy. She never shrieks and she never sneers. She is the incarnation of good sense. And the whole collection of her letters is a perfect treasure-house of suggestions both on art and on politics. The manner of the translation is often rather clumsy, but the matter is always so intensely interesting that we can afford to be charitable.

Letters of George Sand. Translated and edited by Raphael Ledos de Beaufort. (Ward and Downey.)

NEWS FROM PARNASSUS

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, April 12, 1886.)

That most delightful of all French critics, M. Edmond Scherer, has recently stated in an article on Wordsworth that the English read far more poetry than any other European nation. We sincerely hope this may be true, not merely for the sake of the public but for the sake of the poets also. It would be sad indeed if the many volumes of poems that are every year published in London found no readers but the authors themselves and the authors' relations; and the real philanthropist should recognise it as part of his duties to buy every new book of verse that appears. Sometimes, we acknowledge, he will be disappointed, often he will be bored; still now and then he will be amply rewarded for his reckless benevolence.

Mr. George Francis Armstrong's *Stories of Wicklow*, for instance, is most pleasant reading. Mr. Armstrong is already well known as the author of *Ugone*, *King Saul* and other dramas, and his latest volume shows that the power and passion of his early work has not deserted him. Most modern Irish poetry is purely political and deals with the wickedness of the landlords and the Tories; but Mr. Armstrong sings of the picturesqueness of Erin, not of its politics. He tells us very charmingly of the magic of its mists and the melody of its colour, and draws a most captivating picture of the peasants of the county Wicklow, whom he describes as

A kindly folk in vale and moor,
  Unvexed with rancours, frank and free
In mood and manners—rich with poor
  Attuned in happiest amity:
Where still the cottage door is wide,
  The stranger welcomed at the hearth,
And pleased the humbler hearts confide
  Still in the friend of gentler birth.

The most ambitious poem in the volume is *De Verdun of Darragh*. It is at once lyrical and dramatic, and though its manner reminds us of Browning and its method of *Maud*, still all through it there is a personal and individual note. Mr. Armstrong also carefully observes the rules of decorum, and, as he promises his readers in a preface, keeps quite clear of 'the seas of sensual art.' In fact, an elderly maiden lady could read this volume without a blush, a thrill, or even an emotion.

Dr. Goodchild does not possess Mr. Armstrong's literary touch, but his *Somnia Medici* is distinguished by a remarkable quality of forcible and direct expression. The poem that opens his volume, *Myrrha*, *or A Dialogue on Creeds*, is quite as readable as a metrical dialogue on creeds could possibly be; and *The Organ Builder* is a most

romantic story charmingly told. Dr. Goodchild seems to be an ardent disciple of Mr. Browning, and though he may not be able to reproduce the virtues of his master, at least he can echo his defects very cleverly. Such a verse as—

'Tis the subtle essayal
  Of the Jews and Judas,
Such lying lisp
Might hail a will-o'-the-wisp,
  A thin somebody—Theudas—

is an excellent example of low comedy in poetry. One of the best poems in the book is *The Ballad of Three Kingdoms*. Indeed, if the form were equal to the conception, it would be a delightful work of art; but Dr. Goodchild, though he may be a master of metres, is not a master of music yet. His verse is often harsh and rugged. On the whole, however, his volume is clever and interesting.

Mr. Keene has not, we believe, a great reputation in England as yet, but in India he seems to be well known. From a collection of criticisms appended to his volume it appears that the *Overland Mail* has christened him the Laureate of Hindostan and that the *Allahabad Pioneer* once compared him to Keats. He is a pleasant rhymer, as rhymers go, and, though we strongly object to his putting the Song of Solomon into bad blank verse, still we are quite ready to admire his translations of the *Pervigilium Veneris* and of Omar Khayyam. We wish he would not write sonnets with fifteen lines. A fifteen-line sonnet is as bad a monstrosity as a sonnet in dialogue. The volume has the merit of being very small, and contains many stanzas quite suitable for valentines.

Finally we come to *Procris and Other Poems*, by Mr. W. G. Hole. Mr. Hole is apparently a very young writer. His work, at least, is full of crudities, his syntax is defective, and his grammar is questionable. And yet, when all is said, in the one poem of *Procris* it is easy to recognise the true poetic ring. Elsewhere the volume is amateurish and weak. *The Spanish Main* was suggested by a leader in the *Daily Telegraph*, and bears all the traces of its lurid origin. *Sir Jocellyn's Trust* is a sort of pseudo-Tennysonian idyll in which the damozel says to her gallant rescuer, 'Come, come, Sir Knight, I catch my death of cold,' and recompenses him with

  What noble minds
Regard the first reward,—an orphan's thanks.

Nunc Dimittis is dull and *The Wandering Jew* dreadful; but *Procris* is a beautiful poem. The richness and variety of its metaphors, the music of its lines, the fine

opulence of its imagery, all seem to point to a new poet. Faults, it is true, there are in abundance; but they are faults that come from want of trouble, not from want of taste. Mr. Hole shows often a rare and exquisite sense of beauty and a marvellous power of poetic vision, and if he will cultivate the technique of his craft a little more we have no doubt but that he will some day give us work worthy to endure. It is true that there is more promise than perfection in his verse at present, yet it is a promise that seems likely to be fulfilled.

(1) *Stories of Wicklow*. By George Francis Armstrong, M.A. (Longmans, Green and Co.)

(2) *Somnia Medici*. By John A. Goodchild. Second Series. (Kegan Paul.)

(3) *Verses*: *Translated and Original*. By H. E. Keene. (W. H. Allen and Co.)

(4) *Procris and Other Poems*. By W. G. Hole. (Kegan Paul.)

SOME NOVELS

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, April 14, 1886.)

After a careful perusal of '*Twixt Love and Duty*, by Mr. Tighe Hopkins, we confess ourselves unable to inform anxious inquirers who it is that is thus sandwiched, and how he (or she) got into so unpleasant a predicament. The curious reader with a taste for enigmas may be advised to find out for himself—if he can. Even if he be unsuccessful, his trouble will be repaid by the pleasant writing and clever character drawing of Mr. Hopkins's tale. The plot is less praiseworthy. The whole Madeira episode seems to lead up to this dilemma, and after all it comes to nothing. We brace up our nerves for a tragedy and are treated instead to the mildest of marivaudage—which is disappointing. In conclusion, one word of advice to Mr. Hopkins: let him refrain from apostrophising his characters after this fashion: 'Oh, Gilbert Reade, what are you about that you dally with this golden chance?' and so forth. This is one of the worst mannerisms of a bygone generation of story tellers.

Mr. Gallenga has written, as he says, 'a tale without a murder,' but having put a pistol-ball through his hero's chest and left him alive and hearty notwithstanding, he cannot be said to have produced a tale without a miracle. His heroine, too, if we may judge by his descriptions of her, is 'all a wonder and a wild desire.' At the age of seventeen she 'was one of the Great Maker's masterpieces . . . a living likeness of the Dresden Madonna.' One rather shudders to think of what she may become at forty, but this is an impertinent prying into futurity. She hails from 'Maryland, my Maryland!' and has 'received a careful, if not a superior, education.' Need we add that she marries the

heir to an earldom who, as aforesaid, has had himself perforated by a pistol-bullet on her behalf? Mr. Gallenga's division of this book into acts and scenes is not justified by anything specially dramatic either in its structure or its method. The dialogue, in truth, is somewhat stilted. Nevertheless, its first-hand sketches of Roman society are not without interest, and one or two characters seem to be drawn from nature.

The *Life's Mistake* which forms the theme of Mrs. Lovett Cameron's two volumes is not a mistake after all, but results in unmixed felicity; and as it is brought about by fraud on the part of the hero, this conclusion is not as moral as it might be. For the rest, the tale is a very familiar one. Its personages are the embarrassed squire with his charming daughter, the wealthy and amorous mortgagee, and the sailor lover who is either supposed to be drowned or falsely represented to be fickle—in Mrs. Cameron's tale he is both in succession. When we add that there is a stanza from Byron on the title-page and a poetical quotation at the beginning of each chapter, we have possessed the discerning reader of all necessary information both as to the matter and the manner of Mrs. Cameron's performance.

Mr. E. O. Pleydell-Bouverie has endowed the novel-writing fraternity with a new formula for the composition of titles. After *J. S.*; *or*, *Trivialities* there is no reason why we should not have *A*.
B.; *or*, *Platitudes*, *M.N.*; *or*, *Sentimentalisms*, *Y.Z.*; *or*, *Inanities*. There are many books which these simple titles would characterise much more aptly than any high-flown phrases—as aptly, in fact, as Mr. Bouverie's title characterises the volume before us. It sets forth the uninteresting fortunes of an insignificant person, one John Stiles, a briefless barrister. The said John falls in love with a young lady, inherits a competence, omits to tell his love, and is killed by the bursting of a fowling-piece—that is all. The only point of interest presented by the book is the problem as to how it ever came to be written. We can scarcely find the solution in Mr. Bouverie's elaborately smart style which cannot be said to transmute his 'trivialities' into 'flies in amber.'

Mr. Swinburne once proposed that it should be a penal offence against literature for any writer to affix a proverb, a phrase or a quotation to a novel, by way of tag or title. We wonder what he would say to the title of 'Pen Oliver's' last book! Probably he would empty on it the bitter vial of his scorn and satire. *All But* is certainly an intolerable name to give to any literary production. The story, however, is quite an interesting one. At Laxenford Hall live Lord and Lady Arthur Winstanley. Lady Arthur has two children by her first marriage, the elder of whom, Walter Hope-Kennedy by name, is heir to the broad acres. Walter is a pleasant English boy, fonder of cricket than of culture, healthy, happy and susceptible. He falls in love with Fanny Taylor, a pretty village girl; is thrown out of his dog-cart one night through the machinations of a

jealous rival, breaks one of his ribs and gets a violent fever. His stepfather tries to murder him by subcutaneous injections of morphia but is detected by the local doctor, and Walter recovers. However, he does not marry Fanny after all, and the story ends ineffectually. To say of a dress that 'it was rather under than over adorned' is not very pleasing English, and such a phrase as 'almost always, but by no means invariably,' is quite detestable. Still we must not expect the master of the scalpel to be the master of the stilus as well. *All But* is a very charming tale, and the sketches of village life are quite admirable. We recommend it to all who are tired of the productions of Mr. Hugh Conway's dreadful disciples.

(1) *'Twixt Love and Duty*: *A Novel*. By Tighe Hopkins. (Chatto and Windus.)

(2) *Jenny Jennet*: *A Tale Without a Murder*. By A. Gallenga. (Chapman and Hall.)

(3) *A Life's Mistake*: *A Novel*. By Mrs. H. Lovett Cameron. (Ward and Downey.)

(4) *J. S.*; *or*, *Trivialities*: *A Novel*. By Edward Oliver Pleydell-Bouverie. (Griffith, Farren and Co.)

(5) *All But*: *A Chronicle of Laxenford Life*. By Pen Oliver, F.R.C.S. (Kegan Paul.)

A LITERARY PILGRIM

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, April 17, 1886.)

Antiquarian books, as a rule, are extremely dull reading. They give us facts without form, science without style, and learning without life. An exception, however, must be made for M. Gaston Boissier's *Promenades Archéologiques*. M. Boissier is a most pleasant and picturesque writer, and is really able to give his readers useful information without ever boring them, an accomplishment which is entirely unknown in Germany, and in England is extremely rare.

The first essay in his book is on the probable site of Horace's country-house, a subject that has interested many scholars from the Renaissance down to our own day. M. Boissier, following the investigations of Signor Rosa, places it on a little hill overlooking the Licenza, and his theory has a great deal to recommend it. The plough still turns up on the spot the bricks and tiles of an old Roman villa; a spring of clear water, like that of which the poet so often sang, 'breaks babbling from the hollow rock,' and is still called by the peasants *Fonte dell' Oratini*, some faint echo possibly of the singer's name; the view from the hill is just what is described in the epistles, 'Continui montes nisi dissocientur opaca valle'; hard by is the site of the ruined temple of Vacuna, where Horace tells us he wrote one of his poems, and the local rustics still go to Varia

(Vicovaro) on market days as they used to do when the graceful Roman lyrist sauntered through his vines and played at being a country gentleman.

M. Boissier, however, is not content merely with identifying the poet's house; he also warmly defends him from the charge that has been brought against him of servility in accepting it. He points out that it was only after the invention of printing that literature became a money-making profession, and that, as there was no copyright law at Rome to prevent books being pirated, patrons had to take the place that publishers hold, or should hold, nowadays. The Roman patron, in fact, kept the Roman poet alive, and we fancy that many of our modern bards rather regret the old system. Better, surely, the humiliation of the *sportula* than the indignity of a bill for printing! Better to accept a country-house as a gift than to be in debt to one's landlady! On the whole, the patron was an excellent institution, if not for poetry at least for the poets; and though he had to be propitiated by panegyrics, still are we not told by our most shining lights that the subject is of no importance in a work of art? M. Boissier need not apologise for Horace: every poet longs for a Mæcenas.

An essay on the Etruscan tombs at Corneto follows, and the remainder of the volume is taken up by a most fascinating article called *Le Pays de l'Enéide*. M. Boissier claims for Virgil's descriptions of scenery an absolute fidelity of detail. 'Les poètes anciens,' he says, 'ont le goût de la précision et de la fidélité: ils n'imaginent guère de paysages en l'air,' and with this view he visited every place in Italy and Sicily that Virgil has mentioned. Sometimes, it is true, modern civilisation, or modern barbarism, has completely altered the aspect of the scene; the 'desolate shore of Drepanum,' for instance ('Drepani illætabilis ora') is now covered with thriving manufactories and stucco villas, and the 'bird-haunted forest' through which the Tiber flowed into the sea has long ago disappeared. Still, on the whole, the general character of the Italian landscape is unchanged, and M. Boissier's researches show very clearly how personal and how vivid were Virgil's impressions of nature. The subject is, of course, a most interesting one, and those who love to make pilgrimages without stirring from home cannot do better than spend three shillings on the French Academician's *Promenades Archéologiques*.

Nouvelles Promenades Archéologiques, *Horace et Virgile*. By Gaston Boissier. (Hachette.)

BÉRANGER IN ENGLAND

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, April 21, 1886.)

A philosophic politician once remarked that the best possible form of government is an absolute monarchy tempered by street ballads. Without at all agreeing with this aphorism we still cannot but regret that the new democracy does not use poetry as a means for the expression of political opinion. The Socialists, it is true, have been heard singing the later poems of Mr. William Morris, but the street ballad is really dead in England. The fact is that most modern poetry is so artificial in its form, so individual in its essence and so literary in its style, that the people as a body are little moved by it, and when they have grievances against the capitalist or the aristocrat they prefer strikes to sonnets and rioting to rondels.

Possibly, Mr. William Toynbee's pleasant little volume of translations from Béranger may be the herald of a new school. Béranger had all the qualifications for a popular poet. He wrote to be sung more than to be read; he preferred the Pont Neuf to Parnassus; he was patriotic as well as romantic, and humorous as well as humane. Translations of poetry as a rule are merely misrepresentations, but the muse of Béranger is so simple and naïve that she can wear our English dress with ease and grace, and Mr. Toynbee has kept much of the mirth and music of the original. Here and there, undoubtedly, the translation could be improved upon; 'rapiers' for instance is an abominable rhyme to 'forefathers'; 'the hated arms of Albion' in the same poem is a very feeble rendering of 'le léopard de l'Anglais,' and such a verse as

'Mid France's miracles of art,
  Rare trophies won from art's own land,
I've lived to see with burning heart
  The fog-bred poor triumphant stand,

reproduces very inadequately the charm of the original:

Dans nos palais, où, près de la victoire,
Brillaient les arts, doux fruits des beaux climats,
J'ai vu du Nord les peuplades sans gloire,
De leurs manteaux secouer les frîmas.

On the whole, however, Mr. Toynbee's work is good; *Les Champs*, for example, is very well translated, and so are the two delightful poems *Rosette* and *Ma République*; and there is a good deal of spirit in *Le Marquis de Carabas*:

Whom have we here in conqueror's rôle?
Our grand old Marquis, bless his soul!
Whose grand old charger (mark his bone!)
Has borne him back to claim his own.

Note, if you please, the grand old style
In which he nears his grand old pile;
With what an air of grand old state
He waves that blade immaculate!
  Hats off, hats off, for my lord to pass,
  The grand old Marquis of Carabas!—

though 'that blade immaculate' has hardly got the sting of 'un sabre innocent'; and in the fourth verse of the same poem, 'Marquise, you'll have the bed-chamber' does not very clearly convey the sense of the line 'La Marquise a le tabouret.' The best translation in the book is *The Court Suit* (L'Habit de Cour), and if Mr. Toynbee will give us some more work as clever as this we shall be glad to see a second volume from his pen. Béranger is not nearly well enough known in England, and though it is always better to read a poet in the original, still translations have their value as echoes have their music.

A Selection from the Songs of De Béranger in English Verse. By William Toynbee. (Kegan Paul.)

THE POETRY OF THE PEOPLE

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, May 13, 1886.)

The Countess Martinengo deserves well of all poets, peasants and publishers. Folklore is so often treated nowadays merely from the point of view of the comparative mythologist, that it is really delightful to come across a book that deals with the subject simply as literature. For the Folk-tale is the father of all fiction as the Folk-song is the mother of all poetry; and in the games, the tales and the ballads of primitive people it is easy to see the germs of such perfected forms of art as the drama, the novel and the epic. It is, of course, true that the highest expression of life is to be found not in the popular songs, however poetical, of any nation, but in the great masterpieces of self-conscious Art; yet it is pleasant sometimes to leave the summit of Parnassus to look at the wild-flowers in the valley, and to turn from the lyre of Apollo to listen to the reed of Pan. We can still listen to it. To this day, the vineyard dressers of Calabria will mock the passer-by with satirical verses as they used to do in the old pagan days, and the peasants of the olive woods of Provence answer each other in amœbæan strains. The Sicilian shepherd has not yet thrown his pipe aside, and the children of modern Greece sing the swallow-song through the villages in spring-time, though Theognis is more than two thousand years dead. Nor is this popular poetry merely the rhythmic expression of joy and sorrow; it is in the highest degree imaginative; and taking its inspiration directly from nature it abounds in realistic

metaphor and in picturesque and fantastic imagery. It must, of course, be admitted that there is a conventionality of nature as there is a conventionality of art, and that certain forms of utterance are apt to become stereotyped by too constant use; yet, on the whole, it is impossible not to recognise in the Folk-songs that the Countess Martinengo has brought together one strong dominant note of fervent and flawless sincerity. Indeed, it is only in the more terrible dramas of the Elizabethan age that we can find any parallel to the Corsican *voceri* with their shrill intensity of passion, their awful frenzies of grief and hate. And yet, ardent as the feeling is, the form is nearly always beautiful. Now and then, in the poems of the extreme South one meets with a curious crudity of realism, but, as a rule, the sense of beauty prevails.

Some of the Folk-poems in this book have all the lightness and loveliness of lyrics, all of them have that sweet simplicity of pure song by which mirth finds its own melody and mourning its own music, and even where there are conceits of thought and expression they are conceits born of fancy not of affectation. Herrick himself might have envied that wonderful love-song of Provence:

If thou wilt be the falling dew
  And fall on me alway,
Then I will be the white, white rose
  On yonder thorny spray.
If thou wilt be the white, white rose
  On yonder thorny spray,
Then I will be the honey-bee
  And kiss thee all the day.

If thou wilt be the honey-bee
  And kiss me all the day,
Then I will be in yonder heaven
  The star of brightest ray.
If thou wilt be in yonder heaven
  The star of brightest ray,
Then I will be the dawn, and we
  Shall meet at break of day.

How charming also is this lullaby by which the Corsican mother sings her babe to sleep!

Gold and pearls my vessel lade,
  Silk and cloth the cargo be,
All the sails are of brocade

Coming from beyond the sea;
And the helm of finest gold,
Made a wonder to behold.
Fast awhile in slumber lie;
Sleep, my child, and hushaby.

After you were born full soon,
You were christened all aright;
Godmother she was the moon,
Godfather the sun so bright.
All the stars in heaven told
Wore their necklaces of gold.
Fast awhile in slumber lie;
Sleep, my child, and hushaby.

Or this from Roumania:

Sleep, my daughter, sleep an hour;
Mother's darling gilliflower.
Mother rocks thee, standing near,
She will wash thee in the clear
Waters that from fountains run,
To protect thee from the sun.

Sleep, my darling, sleep an hour,
Grow thou as the gilliflower.
As a tear-drop be thou white,
As a willow tall and slight;
Gentle as the ring-doves are,
And be lovely as a star!

We hardly know what poems are sung to English babies, but we hope they are as beautiful as these two. Blake might have written them.

The Countess Martinengo has certainly given us a most fascinating book. In a volume of moderate dimensions, not too long to be tiresome nor too brief to be disappointing, she has collected together the best examples of modern Folk-songs, and with her as a guide the lazy reader lounging in his armchair may wander from the melancholy pine-forests of the North to Sicily's orange-groves and the pomegranate gardens of Armenia, and listen to the singing of those to whom poetry is a passion, not a profession, and whose art, coming from inspiration and not from schools, if it has the

limitations, at least has also the loveliness of its origin, and is one with blowing grasses and the flowers of the field.

Essays in the Study of Folk-Songs. By the Countess Evelyn Martinengo Césaresco. (Redway.)

THE CENCI

(*Dramatic Review*, May 15, 1886.)

The production of *The Cenci* last week at the Grand Theatre, Islington, may be said to have been an era in the literary history of this century, and the Shelley Society deserves the highest praise and warmest thanks of all for having given us an opportunity of seeing Shelley's play under the conditions he himself desired for it. For *The Cenci* was written absolutely with a view to theatric presentation, and had Shelley's own wishes been carried out it would have been produced during his lifetime at Covent Garden, with Edmund Kean and Miss O'Neill in the principal parts. In working out his conception, Shelley had studied very carefully the æsthetics of dramatic art. He saw that the essence of the drama is disinterested presentation, and that the characters must not be merely mouthpieces for splendid poetry but must be living subjects for terror and for pity. 'I have endeavoured,' he says, 'as nearly as possible to represent the characters as they probably were, and have sought to avoid the error of making them actuated by my own conception of right or wrong, false or true: thus under a thin veil converting names and actions of the sixteenth century into cold impersonations of my own mind. . . .

'I have avoided with great care the introduction of what is commonly called mere poetry, and I imagine there will scarcely be found a detached simile or a single isolated description, unless Beatrice's description of the chasm appointed for her father's murder should be judged to be of that nature.'

He recognised that a dramatist must be allowed far greater freedom of expression than what is conceded to a poet. 'In a dramatic composition,' to use his own words, 'the imagery and the passion should interpenetrate one another, the former being reserved simply for the full development and illustration of the latter. Imagination is as the immortal God which should assume flesh for the redemption of mortal passion. It is thus that the most remote and the most familiar imagery may alike be fit for dramatic purposes when employed in the illustration of strong feeling, which raises what is low, and levels to the apprehension that which is lofty, casting over all the shadow of its own greatness. In other respects I have written more carelessly, that is, without an over-fastidious and learned choice of words. In this respect I entirely agree

with those modern critics who assert that in order to move men to true sympathy we must use the familiar language of men.'

He knew that if the dramatist is to teach at all it must be by example, not by precept.

'The highest moral purpose,' he remarks, 'aimed at in the highest species of the drama, is the teaching the human heart, through its sympathies and antipathies, the knowledge of itself; in proportion to the possession of which knowledge every human being is wise, just, sincere, tolerant and kind. If dogmas can do more it is well: but a drama is no fit place for the enforcement of them.' He fully realises that it is by a conflict between our artistic sympathies and our moral judgment that the greatest dramatic effects are produced. 'It is in the restless and anatomising casuistry with which men seek the justification of Beatrice, yet feel that she has done what needs justification; it is in the superstitious horror with which they contemplate alike her wrongs and their revenge, that the dramatic character of what she did and suffered consists.'

In fact no one has more clearly understood than Shelley the mission of the dramatist and the meaning of the drama.

And yet I hardly think that the production of *The Cenci*, its absolute presentation on the stage, can be said to have added anything to its beauty, its pathos, or even its realism. Not that the principal actors were at all unworthy of the work of art they interpreted; Mr. Hermann Vezin's Cenci was a noble and magnificent performance; Miss Alma Murray stands now in the very first rank of our English actresses as a mistress of power and pathos; and Mr. Leonard Outram's Orsino was most subtle and artistic; but that *The Cenci* needs for the production of its perfect effect no interpretation at all. It is, as we read it, a complete work of art—capable, indeed, of being acted, but not dependent on theatric presentation; and the impression produced by its exhibition on the stage seemed to me to be merely one of pleasure at the gratification of an intellectual curiosity of seeing how far Melpomene could survive the wagon of Thespis.

In producing the play, however, the members of the Shelley Society were merely carrying out the poet's own wishes, and they are to be congratulated on the success of their experiment—a success due not to any gorgeous scenery or splendid pageant, but to the excellence of the actors who aided them.

HELENA IN TROAS

(*Dramatic Review*, May 22, 1880.)

One might have thought that to have produced *As You Like It* in an English forest would have satisfied the most ambitious spirit; but Mr. Godwin has not contented himself with his sylvan triumphs. From Shakespeare he has passed to Sophocles, and has given us the most perfect exhibition of a Greek dramatic performance that has as yet been seen in this country. For, beautiful as were the productions of the *Agamemnon* at Oxford and the *Eumenides* at Cambridge, their effects were marred in no small or unimportant degree by the want of a proper orchestra for the chorus with its dance and song, a want that was fully supplied in Mr. Godwin's presentation by the use of the arena of a circus.

In the centre of this circle, which was paved with the semblance of tesselated marble, stood the altar of Dionysios, and beyond it rose the long, shallow stage, faced with casts from the temple of Bassæ; and bearing the huge portal of the house of Paris and the gleaming battlements of Troy. Over the portal hung a great curtain, painted with crimson lions, which, when drawn aside, disclosed two massive gates of bronze; in front of the house was placed a golden image of Aphrodite, and across the ramparts on either hand could be seen a stretch of blue waters and faint purple hills. The scene was lovely, not merely in the harmony of its colour but in the exquisite delicacy of its architectural proportions. No nation has ever felt the pure beauty of mere construction so strongly as the Greeks, and in this respect Mr. Godwin has fully caught the Greek feeling.

The play opened by the entrance of the chorus, white vestured and gold filleted, under the leadership of Miss Kinnaird, whose fine gestures and rhythmic movements were quite admirable. In answer to their appeal the stage curtains slowly divided, and from the house of Paris came forth Helen herself, in a robe woven with all the wonders of war, and broidered with the pageant of battle. With her were her two handmaidens—one in white and yellow and one in green; Hecuba followed in sombre grey of mourning, and Priam in kingly garb of gold and purple, and Paris in Phrygian cap and light archer's dress; and when at sunset the lover of Helen was borne back wounded from the field, down from the oaks of Ida stole Œnone in the flowing drapery of the daughter of a river-god, every fold of her garments rippling like dim water as she moved.

As regards the acting, the two things the Greeks valued most in actors were grace of gesture and music of voice. Indeed, to gain these virtues their actors used to subject themselves to a regular course of gymnastics and a particular regime of diet, health being to the Greeks not merely a quality of art, but a condition of its production. Whether or not our English actors hold the same view may be doubted; but Mr. Vezin certainly has always recognised the importance of a physical as well as

of an intellectual training for the stage, and his performance of King Priam was distinguished by stately dignity and most musical enunciation. With Mr. Vezin, grace of gesture is an unconscious result—not a conscious effort. It has become nature, because it was once art. Mr. Beerbohm Tree also is deserving of very high praise for his Paris. Ease and elegance characterised every movement he made, and his voice was extremely effective. Mr. Tree is the perfect Proteus of actors. He can wear the dress of any century and the appearance of any age, and has a marvellous capacity of absorbing his personality into the character he is creating. To have method without mannerism is given only to a few, but among the few is Mr. Tree. Miss Alma Murray does not possess the physique requisite for our conception of Helen, but the beauty of her movements and the extremely sympathetic quality of her voice gave an indefinable charm to her performance. Mrs. Jopling looked like a poem from the Pantheon, and indeed the *personæ mutæ* were not the least effective figures in the play. Hecuba was hardly a success. In acting, the impression of sincerity is conveyed by tone, not by mere volume of voice, and whatever influence emotion has on utterance it is certainly not in the direction of false emphasis. Mrs. Beerbohm Tree's Œnone was much better, and had some fine moments of passion; but the harsh realistic shriek with which the nymph flung herself from the battlements, however effective it might have been in a comedy of Sardou, or in one of Mr. Burnand's farces, was quite out of place in the representation of a Greek tragedy. The classical drama is an imaginative, poetic art, which requires the grand style for its interpretation, and produces its effects by the most ideal means. It is in the operas of Wagner, not in popular melodrama, that any approximation to the Greek method can be found. Better to wear mask and buskin than to mar by any modernity of expression the calm majesty of Melpomene.

As an artistic whole, however, the performance was undoubtedly a great success. It has been much praised for its archæology, but Mr. Godwin is something more than a mere antiquarian. He takes the facts of archæology, but he converts them into artistic and dramatic effects, and the historical accuracy that underlies the visible shapes of beauty that he presents to us, is not by any means the distinguishing quality of the complete work of art. This quality is the absolute unity and harmony of the entire presentation, the presence of one mind controlling the most minute details, and revealing itself only in that true perfection which hides personality. On more than one occasion it seemed to me that the stage was kept a little too dark, and that a purely picturesque effect of light and shade was substituted for the plastic clearness of outline that the Greeks so desired; some objection, too, might be made to the late character of the statue of Aphrodite, which was decidedly post-Periclean; these,

however, are unimportant points. The performance was not intended to be an absolute reproduction of the Greek stage in the fifth century before Christ: it was simply the presentation in Greek form of a poem conceived in the Greek spirit; and the secret of its beauty was the perfect correspondence of form and matter, the delicate equilibrium of spirit and sense.

As for the play, it had, of course, to throw away many sweet superfluous graces of expression before it could adapt itself to the conditions of theatrical presentation, but much that is good was retained; and the choruses, which really possess some pure notes of lyric loveliness, were sung in their entirety. Here and there, it is true, occur such lines as—

What wilt thou do? What can the handful still left?—

lines that owe their blank verse character more to the courtesy of the printer than to the genius of the poet, for without rhythm and melody there is no verse at all; and the attempt to fit Greek forms of construction to our English language often gives the work the air of an awkward translation; however, there is a great deal that is pleasing in *Helena in Troas* and, on the whole, the play was worthy of its pageant and the poem deserved the peplums.

It is much to be regretted that Mr. Godwin's beautiful theatre cannot be made a permanent institution. Even looked at from the low standpoint of educational value, such a performance as that given last Monday might be of the greatest service to modern culture; and who knows but a series of these productions might civilise South Kensington and give tone to Brompton?

Still it is something to have shown our artists 'a dream of form in days of thought,' and to have allowed the Philistines to peer into Paradise. And this is what Mr. Godwin has done.

PLEASING AND PRATTLING

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, August 4, 1880.)

Sixty years ago, when Sir Walter Scott was inaugurating an era of historical romance, *The Wolfe of Badenoch* was a very popular book. To us its interest is more archæological than artistic, and its characters seem merely puppets parading in fourteenth-century costume. It is true our grandfathers thought differently. They liked novels in which the heroine exclaims, 'Peace with thine impudence, sir knave. Dost thou dare to speak thus in presence of the Lady Eleanore de Selby? . . . A greybeard's ire shall never—,' while the hero remarks that 'the welkin reddenes i' the west.' In fact,

they considered that language like this is exceedingly picturesque and gives the necessary historical perspective. Nowadays, however, few people have the time to read a novel that requires a glossary to explain it, and we fear that without a glossary the general reader will hardly appreciate the value of such expressions as 'gnoffe,' 'bowke,' 'herborow,' 'papelarde,' 'couepe,' 'rethes,' 'pankers,' 'agroted lorrel,' and 'horrow tallow-catch,' all of which occur in the first few pages of *The Wolfe of Badenoch*. In a novel we want life, not learning; and, unfortunately, Sir Thomas Lauder lays himself open to the criticism Jonson made on Spenser, that 'in affecting the ancients he writ no language.' Still, there is a healthy spirit of adventure in the book, and no doubt many people will be interested to see the kind of novel the public liked in 1825.

Keep My Secret, by Miss G. M. Robins, is very different. It is quite modern both in manner and in matter. The heroine, Miss Olga Damien, when she is a little girl tries to murder Mr. Victor Burnside. Mr. Burnside, who is tall, blue-eyed and amber-haired, makes her promise never to mention the subject to any one; this, in fact, is the secret that gives the title to the book. The result is that Miss Damien is blackmailed by a fascinating and unscrupulous uncle and is nearly burnt to death in the secret chamber of an old castle. The novel at the end gets too melodramatic in character and the plot becomes a chaos of incoherent incidents, but the writing is clever and bright. It is just the book, in fact, for a summer holiday, as it is never dull and yet makes no demands at all upon the intellect.

Mrs. Chetwynd gives us a new type of widow. As a rule, in fiction widows are delightful, designing and deceitful; but Mrs. Dorriman is not by any means a Cleopatra in crape. She is a weak, retiring woman, very feeble and very feminine, and with the simplicity that is characteristic of such sweet and shallow natures she allows her brother to defraud her of all her property. The widow is rather a bore and the brother is quite a bear, but Margaret Rivers who, to save her sister from poverty, marries a man she does not love, is a cleverly conceived character, and Lady Lyons is an admirable old dowager. The book can be read without any trouble and was probably written without any trouble also. The style is prattling and pleasing.

The plot of *Delamere* is not very new. On the death of her husband, Mrs. De Ruthven discovers that the estates belong by right not to her son Raymond but to her niece Fleurette. As she keeps her knowledge to herself, a series of complications follows, but the cousins are ultimately united in marriage and the story ends happily. Mr. Curzon writes in a clever style, and though its construction is rather clumsy the novel is a thoroughly interesting one.

A Daughter of Fife tells us of the love of a young artist for a Scotch fisher-girl. The character sketches are exceptionally good, especially that of David Promoter, a fisherman who leaves his nets to preach the gospel, and the heroine is quite charming till she becomes civilised. The book is a most artistic combination of romantic feeling with realistic form, and it is pleasant to read descriptions of Scotch scenery that do not represent the land of mist and mountain as a sort of chromolithograph from the Brompton Road.

In Mr. Speight's novel, *A Barren Title*, we have an impoverished earl who receives an allowance from his relations on condition of his remaining single, being all the time secretly married and the father of a grown-up son. The story is improbable and amusing.

On the whole, there is a great deal to be said for our ordinary English novelists. They have all some story to tell, and most of them tell it in an interesting manner. Where they fail is in concentration of style. Their characters are far too eloquent and talk themselves to tatters. What we want is a little more reality and a little less rhetoric. We are most grateful to them that they have not as yet accepted any frigid formula, nor stereotyped themselves into a school, but we wish that they would talk less and think more. They lead us through a barren desert of verbiage to a mirage that they call life; we wander aimlessly through a very wilderness of words in search of one touch of nature. However, one should not be too severe on English novels: they are the only relaxation of the intellectually unemployed.

(1) *The Wolfe of Badenoch*: *A Historical Romance of the Fourteenth Century*. By Sir Thomas Lauder. (Hamilton, Adams and Co.)

(2) *Keep My Secret*. By G. M. Robins. (Bentley and Son.)

(3) *Mrs. Dorriman*. By the Hon. Mrs. Henry Chetwynd. (Chapman and Hall.)

(4) *Delamere*. By G. Curzon. (Sampson Low, Marston and Co.)

(5) *A Daughter of Fife*. By Amelia Barr. (James Clarke and Co.)

(6) *A Barren Title*. By T. W. Speight. (Chatto and Windus.)

BALZAC IN ENGLISH

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, September 13, 1886.)

Many years ago, in a number of *All the Year Round*, Charles Dickens complained that Balzac was very little read in England, and although since then the public has become more familiar with the great masterpieces of French fiction, still it may be doubted

whether the *Comédie Humaine* is at all appreciated or understood by the general run of novel readers. It is really the greatest monument that literature has produced in our century, and M. Taine hardly exaggerates when he says that, after Shakespeare, Balzac is our most important magazine of documents on human nature. Balzac's aim, in fact, was to do for humanity what Buffon had done for the animal creation. As the naturalist studied lions and tigers, so the novelist studied men and women. Yet he was no mere reporter. Photography and *procès-verbal* were not the essentials of his method. Observation gave him the facts of life, but his genius converted facts into truths, and truths into truth. He was, in a word, a marvellous combination of the artistic temperament with the scientific spirit. The latter he bequeathed to his disciples; the former was entirely his own. The distinction between such a book as M. Zola's *L'Assommoir* and such a book as Balzac's *Illusions Perdues* is the distinction between unimaginative realism and imaginative reality. 'All Balzac's characters,' said Baudelaire, 'are gifted with the same ardour of life that animated himself. All his fictions are as deeply coloured as dreams. Every mind is a weapon loaded to the muzzle with will. The very scullions have genius.' He was, of course, accused of being immoral. Few writers who deal directly with life escape that charge. His answer to the accusation was characteristic and conclusive. 'Whoever contributes his stone to the edifice of ideas,' he wrote, 'whoever proclaims an abuse, whoever sets his mark upon an evil to be abolished, always passes for immoral. If you are true in your portraits, if, by dint of daily and nightly toil, you succeed in writing the most difficult language in the world, the word immoral is thrown in your face.' The morals of the personages of the *Comédie Humaine* are simply the morals of the world around us. They are part of the artist's subject-matter; they are not part of his method. If there be any need of censure it is to life, not to literature, that it should be given. Balzac, besides, is essentially universal. He sees life from every point of view. He has no preferences and no prejudices. He does not try to prove anything. He feels that the spectacle of life contains its own secret. 'Il crée un monde et se tait.'

And what a world it is! What a panorama of passions! What a pell-mell of men and women! It was said of Trollope that he increased the number of our acquaintances without adding to our visiting list; but after the *Comédie Humaine* one begins to believe that the only real people are the people who have never existed. Lucien de Rubempré, le Père Goriot, Ursule Mirouët, Marguerite Claës, the Baron Hulot, Madame Marneffe, le Cousin Pons, De Marsay—all bring with them a kind of contagious illusion of life. They have a fierce vitality about them: their existence is fervent and fiery-coloured; we not merely feel for them but we see them—they dominate our fancy and defy scepticism. A steady course of Balzac reduces our living

friends to shadows, and our acquaintances to the shadows of shades. Who would care to go out to an evening party to meet Tomkins, the friend of one's boyhood, when one can sit at home with Lucien de Rubempré? It is pleasanter to have the entrée to Balzac's society than to receive cards from all the duchesses in May fair.

In spite of this, there are many people who have declared the *Comédie Humaine* to be indigestible. Perhaps it is: but then what about truffles? Balzac's publisher refused to be disturbed by any such criticism as that. 'Indigestible, is it?' he exclaimed with what, for a publisher, was rare good sense. 'Well, I should hope so; who ever thinks of a dinner that isn't?' And our English publisher, Mr. Routledge, clearly agrees with M. Poulet-Malassis, as he is occupied in producing a complete translation of the *Comédie Humaine*. The two volumes that at present lie before us contain *César Birotteau*, that terrible tragedy of finance, and *L'lllustre Gaudissart*, the apotheosis of the commercial traveller, the *Duchesse de Langeais*, most marvellous of modern love stories, *Le Chef d'Œuvre Inconnu*, from which Mr. Henry James took his *Madonna of the Future*, and that extraordinary romance *Une Passion dans le Désert*. The choice of stories is quite excellent, but the translations are very unequal, and some of them are positively bad. *L'lllustre Gaudissart*, for instance, is full of the most grotesque mistakes, mistakes that would disgrace a schoolboy. 'Bon conseil vaut un œil dans la main' is translated 'Good advice is an egg in the hand'! 'Écus rebelles' is rendered 'rebellious lucre,' and such common expressions as 'faire la barbe,' 'attendre la vente,' 'n'entendre rien,' pâlir sur une affaire,' are all mistranslated. 'Des bois de quoi se faire un cure-dent' is not 'a few trees to slice into toothpicks,' but 'as much timber as would make a toothpick'; 'son horloge enfermée dans une grande armoire oblongue' is not 'a clock which he kept shut up in a large oblong closet' but simply a clock in a tall clock-case; 'journal viager' is not 'an annuity,' 'garce' is not the same as 'farce,' and 'dessins des Indes' are not 'drawings of the Indies.' On the whole, nothing can be worse than this translation, and if Mr. Routledge wishes the public to read his version of the *Comédie Humaine*, he should engage translators who have some slight knowledge of French.

César Birotteau is better, though it is not by any means free from mistakes. 'To suffer under the Maximum' is an absurd rendering of 'subir le maximum'; 'perse' is 'chintz,' not 'Persian chintz'; 'rendre le pain bénit' is not 'to take the wafer'; 'rivière' is hardly a '*fillet* of diamonds'; and to translate 'son cœur avait un calus à l'endroit du loyer' by 'his heart was a callus in the direction of a lease' is an insult to two languages. On the whole, the best version is that of the *Duchesse de Langeais*, though even this leaves much to be desired. Such a sentence as 'to imitate the rough logician who marched before the Pyrrhonians *while denying his own movement*' entirely misses the point of

Balzac's 'imiter le rude logicien qui marchait devant les pyrrhoniens, qui niaient le mouvement.'

We fear Mr. Routledge's edition will not do. It is well printed and nicely bound; but his translators do not understand French. It is a great pity, for *La Comédie Humaine* is one of the masterpieces of the age.

Balzac's Novels in English. *The Duchesse de Langeais and Other Stories*; *César Birotteau*. (Routledge and Sons.)

TWO NEW NOVELS

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, September 16, 1880.)

Most modern novels are more remarkable for their crime than for their culture, and Mr. G. Manville Fenn's last venture is no exception to the general rule. *The Master of the Ceremonies* is turbid, terrifying and thrilling. It contains, besides many 'moving accidents by flood and field,' an elopement, an abduction, a bigamous marriage, an attempted assassination, a duel, a suicide, and a murder. The murder, we must acknowledge, is a masterpiece. It would do credit to Gaboriau, and should make Miss Braddon jealous. The *Newgate Calendar* itself contains nothing more fascinating, and what higher praise than this can be given to a sensational novel? Not that Lady Teigne, the hapless victim, is killed in any very new or subtle manner. She is merely strangled in bed, like Desdemona; but the circumstances of the murder are so peculiar that Claire Denville, in common with the reader, suspects her own father of being guilty, while the father is convinced that the real criminal is his eldest son. Stuart Denville himself, the Master of the Ceremonies, is most powerfully drawn. He is a penniless, padded dandy who, by a careful study of the 'grand style' in deportment, has succeeded in making himself the Brummel of the promenade and the autocrat of the Assembly Rooms. A light comedian by profession, he is suddenly compelled to play the principal part in a tragedy. His shallow, trivial nature is forced into the loftiest heroism, the noblest self-sacrifice. He becomes a hero against his will. The butterfly goes to martyrdom, the fop has to become fine. Round this character centres, or rather should centre, the psychological interest of the book, but unfortunately Mr. Fenn has insisted on crowding his story with unnecessary incident. He might have made of his novel 'A Soul's Tragedy,' but he has produced merely a melodrama in three volumes. *The Master of the Ceremonies* is a melancholy example of the fatal influence of Drury Lane on literature. Still, it should be read, for though Mr. Fenn has offered up his genius as a holocaust to Mr. Harris, he is never dull, and his style is on the whole very good. We wish, however, that he would not try to give articulate form to

inarticulate exclamations. Such a passage as this is quite dreadful and fails, besides, in producing the effect it aims at:

'He—he—he, hi—hi—hi, hec—hec—hec, ha—ha—ha! ho—ho! Bless my—hey—ha! hey—ha! hugh—hugh—hugh! Oh dear me! Oh—why don't you—heck—heck—heck—heck—heck! shut the—ho—ho—ho—ho—hugh—hugh—window before I—ho—ho—ho—ho!'

This horrible jargon is supposed to convey the impression of a lady coughing. It is, of course, a mere meaningless monstrosity on a par with spelling a sneeze. We hope that Mr. Fenn will not again try these theatrical tricks with language, for he possesses a rare art—the art of telling a story well.

A Statesman's Love, the author tells us in a rather mystical preface, was written 'to show that the alchemist-like transfiguration supposed to be wrought in our whole nature by that passion has no existence in fact,' but it cannot be said to prove this remarkable doctrine.

It is an exaggerated psychological study of a modern woman, a sort of picture by limelight, full of coarse colours and violent contrasts, not by any means devoid of cleverness but essentially false and over-emphasised. The heroine, Helen Rohan by name, tells her own story and, as she takes three volumes to do it in, we weary of the one point of view. Life to be intelligible should be approached from many sides, and valuable though the permanent *ego* may be in philosophy, the permanent *ego* in fiction soon becomes a bore. There are, however, some interesting scenes in the novel, and a good portrait of the Young Pretender, for though the heroine is absolutely a creation of the nineteenth century, the background of the story is historical and deals with the Rebellion of '45. As for the style, it is often original and picturesque; here and there are strong individual touches and brilliant passages; but there is also a good deal of pretence and a good deal of carelessness.

What can be said, for instance, about such expressions as these, taken at random from the second volume,—'evanishing,' 'solitary loneness,' 'in my *then* mood,' 'the bees *might advantage* by to-day,' 'I would not listen reverently as *did the other some* who went,' 'entangling myself in the net of this *retiari*,' and why should Bassanio's beautiful speech in the trial scene be deliberately attributed to Shylock? On the whole, *A Statesman's Love* cannot be said to be an artistic success; but still it shows promise and, some day, the author who, to judge by the style, is probably a woman, may do good work. This, however, will require pruning, prudence and patience. We shall see.

(1) *The Master of the Ceremonies*. By G. Manville Fenn. (Ward and Downey.)

(2) *A Statesman's Love*. By Emile Bauche. (Blackwood and Co.)

BEN JONSON

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, September 20, 1886.)

In selecting Mr. John Addington Symonds to write the life of Ben Jonson for his series of 'English Worthies,' Mr. Lang, no doubt, exercised a wise judgment. Mr. Symonds, like the author of *Volpone*, is a scholar and a man of letters; his book on *Shakspeare's Predecessors* showed a marvellous knowledge of the Elizabethan period, and he is a recognised authority on the Italian Renaissance. The last is not the least of his qualifications. Without a full appreciation of the meaning of the Humanistic movement it is impossible to understand the great struggle between the Classical form and the Romantic spirit which is the chief critical characteristic of the golden age of the English drama, an age when Shakespeare found his chief adversary, not among his contemporaries, but in Seneca, and when Jonson armed himself with Aristotle to win the suffrages of a London audience. Mr. Symonds' book, consequently, will be opened with interest. It does not, of course, contain much that is new about Jonson's life. But the facts of Jonson's life are already well known, and in books of this kind what is true is of more importance than what is new, appreciation more valuable than discovery. Scotchmen, however, will, no doubt, be interested to find that Mr. Symonds has succeeded in identifying Jonson's crest with that of the Johnstones of Annandale, and the story of the way the literary Titan escaped from hanging, by proving that he could read, is graphically told.

On the whole, we have a vivid picture of the man as he lived. Where picturesqueness is required, Mr. Symonds is always good. The usual comparison with Dr. Johnson is, of course, brought out. Few of 'Rare Ben's' biographers spare us that, and the point is possibly a natural one to make. But when Mr. Symonds calls upon us to notice that both men made a journey to Scotland, and that 'each found in a Scotchman his biographer,' the parallel loses all value. There is an M in Monmouth and an M in Macedon, and Drummond of Hawthornden and Boswell of Auchinleck were both born the other side of the Tweed; but from such analogies nothing is to be learned. There is no surer way of destroying a similarity than to strain it.

As for Mr. Symonds' estimate of Jonson's genius, it is in many points quite excellent. He ranks him with the giants rather than with the gods, with those who compel our admiration by their untiring energy and huge strength of intellectual muscle, not with those 'who share the divine gifts of creative imagination and

inevitable instinct.' Here he is right. Pelion more than Parnassus was Jonson's home. His art has too much effort about it, too much definite intention. His style lacks the charm of chance. Mr. Symonds is right also in the stress he lays on the extraordinary combination in Jonson's work of the most concentrated realism with encyclopædic erudition. In Jonson's comedies London slang and learned scholarship go hand in hand. Literature was as living a thing to him as life itself. He used his classical lore not merely to give form to his verse, but to give flesh and blood to the persons of his plays. He could build up a breathing creature out of quotations. He made the poets of Greece and Rome terribly modern, and introduced them to the oddest company. His very culture is an element in his coarseness. There are moments when one is tempted to liken him to a beast that has fed off books.

We cannot, however, agree with Mr. Symonds when he says that Jonson 'rarely touched more than the outside of character,' that his men and women are 'the incarnations of abstract properties rather than living human beings,' that they are in fact mere 'masqueraders and mechanical puppets.' Eloquence is a beautiful thing but rhetoric ruins many a critic, and Mr. Symonds is essentially rhetorical. When, for instance, he tells us that 'Jonson made masks,' while 'Dekker and Heywood created souls,' we feel that he is asking us to accept a crude judgment for the sake of a smart antithesis. It is, of course, true that we do not find in Jonson the same growth of character that we find in Shakespeare, and we may admit that most of the characters in Jonson's plays are, so to speak, ready-made. But a ready-made character is not necessarily either mechanical or wooden, two epithets Mr. Symonds uses constantly in his criticism.

We cannot tell, and Shakespeare himself does not tell us, why Iago is evil, why Regan and Goneril have hard hearts, or why Sir Andrew Aguecheek is a fool. It is sufficient that they are what they are, and that nature gives warrant for their existence. If a character in a play is lifelike, if we recognise it as true to nature, we have no right to insist on the author explaining its genesis to us. We must accept it as it is: and in the hands of a good dramatist mere presentation can take the place of analysis, and indeed is often a more dramatic method, because a more direct one. And Jonson's characters are true to nature. They are in no sense abstractions; they are types. Captain Bobadil and Captain Tucca, Sir John Daw and Sir Amorous La Foole, Volpone and Mosca, Subtle and Sir Epicure Mammon, Mrs. Purecraft and the Rabbi Busy are all creatures of flesh and blood, none the less lifelike because they are labelled. In this point Mr. Symonds seems to us unjust towards Jonson.

We think, also, that a special chapter might have been devoted to Jonson as a literary critic. The creative activity of the English Renaissance is so great that its

achievements in the sphere of criticism are often overlooked by the student. Then, for the first time, was language treated as an art. The laws of expression and composition were investigated and formularised. The importance of words was recognised. Romanticism, Realism and Classicism fought their first battles. The dramatists are full of literary and art criticisms, and amused the public with slashing articles on one another in the form of plays.

Mr. Symonds, of course, deals with Jonson in his capacity as a critic, and always with just appreciation, but the whole subject is one that deserves fuller and more special treatment.

Some small inaccuracies, too, should be corrected in the second edition. Dryden, for instance, was not 'Jonson's successor on the laureate's throne,' as Mr. Symonds eloquently puts it, for Sir William Davenant came between them, and when one remembers the predominance of rhyme in Shakespeare's early plays, it is too much to say that 'after the production of the first part of *Tamburlaine* blank verse became the regular dramatic metre of the public stage.' Shakespeare did not accept blank verse at once as a gift from Marlowe's hand, but himself arrived at it after a long course of experiments in rhyme. Indeed, some of Mr. Symonds' remarks on Marlowe are very curious. To say of his *Edward II.*, for instance, that it 'is not at all inferior to the work of Shakespeare's younger age,' is very niggardly and inadequate praise, and comes strangely from one who has elsewhere written with such appreciation of Marlowe's great genius; while to call Marlowe Jonson's 'master' is to make for him an impossible claim. In comedy Marlowe has nothing whatever to teach Jonson; in tragedy Jonson sought for the classical not the romantic form.

As for Mr. Symonds' style, it is, as usual, very fluent, very picturesque and very full of colour. Here and there, however, it is really irritating. Such a sentence as 'the tavern had the defects of its quality' is an awkward Gallicism; and when Mr. Symonds, after genially comparing Jonson's blank verse to the front of Whitehall (a comparison, by the way, that would have enraged the poet beyond measure) proceeds to play a fantastic aria on the same string, and tells us that 'Massinger reminds us of the intricacies of Sansovino, Shakespeare of Gothic aisles or heaven's cathedral . . . Ford of glittering Corinthian colonnades, Webster of vaulted crypts, . . . Marlowe of masoned clouds, and Marston, in his better moments, of the fragmentary vigour of a Roman ruin,' one begins to regret that any one ever thought of the unity of the arts. Similes such as these obscure; they do not illumine. To say that Ford is like a glittering Corinthian colonnade adds nothing to our knowledge of either Ford or Greek architecture. Mr. Symonds has written some charming poetry, but his prose, unfortunately, is always poetical prose, never the prose of a poet. Still, the volume is

worth reading, though decidedly Mr. Symonds, to use one of his own phrases, has 'the defects of his quality.'

'English Worthies.' Edited by Andrew Lang. *Ben Jonson*. By John Addington Symonds. (Longmans, Green and Co.)

THE POETS' CORNER—I

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, September 27, 1886.)

Among the social problems of the nineteenth century the tramp has always held an important position, but his appearance among the nineteenth-century poets is extremely remarkable. Not that a tramp's mode of life is at all unsuited to the development of the poetic faculty. Far from it! He, if any one, should possess that freedom of mood which is so essential to the artist, for he has no taxes to pay and no relations to worry him. The man who possesses a permanent address, and whose name is to be found in the Directory, is necessarily limited and localised. Only the tramp has absolute liberty of living. Was not Homer himself a vagrant, and did not Thespis go about in a caravan? It is then with feelings of intense expectation that we open the little volume that lies before us. It is entitled *Low Down*, by Two Tramps, and is marvellous even to look at. It is clear that art has at last reached the criminal classes. The cover is of brown paper like the covers of Mr. Whistler's brochures. The printing exhibits every fantastic variation of type, and the pages range in colour from blue to brown, from grey to sage green and from rose pink to chrome yellow. The Philistines may sneer at this chromatic chaos, but we do not. As the painters are always pilfering from the poets, why should not the poet annex the domain of the painter and use colour for the expression of his moods and music: blue for sentiment, and red for passion, grey for cultured melancholy, and green for descriptions? The book, then, is a kind of miniature rainbow, and with all its varied sheets is as lovely as an advertisement hoarding. As for the peripatetics—alas! they are not nightingales. Their note is harsh and rugged, Mr. G. R. Sims is the god of their idolatry, their style is the style of the Surrey Theatre, and we are sorry to see that that disregard of the rights of property which always characterises the able-bodied vagrant is extended by our tramps from the defensible pilfering from hen-roosts to the indefensible pilfering from poets. When we read such lines as:

And builded him a pyramid, four square,
  Open to all the sky and every wind,

we feel that bad as poultry-snatching is, plagiarism is worse. *Facilis descensus Averno*! From highway robbery and crimes of violence one sinks gradually to literary

petty larceny. However, there are coarsely effective poems in the volume, such as *A Super's Philosophy*, *Dick Hewlett*, a ballad of the Californian school, and *Gentleman Bill*; and there is one rather pretty poem called *The Return of Spring*:

When robins hop on naked boughs,
  And swell their throats with song,
When lab'rers trudge behind their ploughs,
  And blithely whistle their teams along;

When glints of summer sunshine chase
  Park shadows on the distant hills,
And scented tufts of pansies grace
  Moist grots that 'scape rude Borean chills.

The last line is very disappointing. No poet, nowadays, should write of 'rude Boreas'; he might just as well call the dawn 'Aurora,' or say that 'Flora decks the enamelled meads.' But there are some nice touches in the poem, and it is pleasant to find that tramps have their harmless moments. On the whole, the volume, if it is not quite worth reading, is at least worth looking at. The fool's motley in which it is arrayed is extremely curious and extremely characteristic.

Mr. Irwin's muse comes to us more simply clad, and more gracefully. She gains her colour-effect from the poet, not from the publisher. No cockneyism or colloquialism mars the sweetness of her speech. She finds music for every mood, and form for every feeling. In art as in life the law of heredity holds good. *On est toujours fits de quelqu'un*. And so it is easy to see that Mr. Irwin is a fervent admirer of Mr. Matthew Arnold. But he is in no sense a plagiarist. He has succeeded in studying a fine poet without stealing from him—a very difficult thing to do—and though many of the reeds through which he blows have been touched by other lips, yet he is able to draw new music from them. Like most of our younger poets, Mr. Irwin is at his best in his sonnets, and those entitled *The Seeker after God* and *The Pillar of the Empire* are really remarkable. All through this volume, however, one comes across good work, and the descriptions of Indian scenery are excellent. India, in fact, is the picturesque background to these poems, and her monstrous beasts, strange flowers and fantastic birds are used with much subtlety for the production of artistic effect. Perhaps there is a little too much about the pipal-tree, but when we have a proper sense of Imperial unity, no doubt the pipal-tree will be as dear and as familiar to us as the oaks and elms of our own woodlands.

(1) *Low Down*: *Wayside Thoughts in Ballad and Other Verse*. By Two Tramps. (Redway.)

(2) *Rhymes and Renderings*. By H. C. Irwin. (David Stott.)

A RIDE THROUGH MOROCCO

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, October 8, 1886.)

Morocco is a sort of paradox among countries, for though it lies westward of Piccadilly yet it is purely Oriental in character, and though it is but three hours' sail from Europe yet it makes you feel (to use the forcible expression of an American writer) as if you had been 'taken up by the scruff of the neck and set down in the Old Testament.' Mr. Hugh Stutfield has ridden twelve hundred miles through it, penetrated to Fez and Wazan, seen the lovely gate at Mequinez and the Hassen Tower by Rabat, feasted with sheikhs and fought with robbers, lived in an atmosphere of Moors, mosques and mirages, visited the city of the lepers and the slave-market of Sus, and played loo under the shadow of the Atlas Mountains. He is not an Herodotus nor a Sir John Mandeville, but he tells his stories very pleasantly. His book, on the whole, is delightful reading, for though Morocco is picturesque he does not weary us with word-painting; though it is poor he does not bore us with platitudes. Now and then he indulges in a traveller's licence and thrills the simple reader with statements as amazing as they are amusing. The Moorish coinage, he tells us, is so cumbersome that if a man gives you change for half-a-crown you have to hire a donkey to carry it away; the Moorish language is so guttural that no one can ever hope to pronounce it aright who has not been brought up within hearing of the grunting of camels, a steady course of sneezing being, consequently, the only way by which a European can acquire anything like the proper accent; the Sultan does not know how much he is married, but he unquestionably is so to a very large extent: on the principle that you cannot have too much of a good thing a woman is valued in proportion to her stoutness, and so far from there being any reduction made in the marriage-market for taking a quantity, you must pay so much per pound; the Arabs believe the Shereef of Wazan to be such a holy man that, if he is guilty of taking champagne, the forbidden wine is turned into milk as he quaffs it, and if he gets extremely drunk he is merely in a mystical trance.

Mr. Stutfield, however, has his serious moments, and his account of the commerce, government and social life of the Moors is extremely interesting. It must be confessed that the picture he draws is in many respects a very tragic one. The Moors are the masters of a beautiful country and of many beautiful arts, but they are paralysed by their fatalism and pillaged by their rulers. Few races, indeed, have had a more terrible fall than these Moors. Of the great intellectual civilisation of the Arabs no trace remains. The names of Averroes and Almaimon, of Al Abbas and Ben Husa are quite

unknown. Fez, once the Athens of Africa, the cradle of the sciences, is now a mere commercial caravansary. Its universities have vanished, its library is almost empty. Freedom of thought has been killed by the Koran, freedom of living by bad government. But Mr. Stutfield is not without hopes for the future. So far from agreeing with Lord Salisbury that 'Morocco may go her own way,' he strongly supports Captain Warren's proposition that we should give up Gibraltar to Spain in exchange for Ceuta, and thereby prevent the Mediterranean from becoming a French lake, and give England a new granary for corn. The Moorish Empire, he warns us, is rapidly breaking up, and if in the 'general scramble for Africa' that has already begun, the French gain possession of Morocco, he points out that our supremacy over the Straits will be lost. Whatever may be thought of Mr. Stutfield's political views, and his suggestions for 'multiple control' and 'collective European action,' there is no doubt that in Morocco England has interests to defend and a mission to pursue, and this part of the book should be carefully studied. As for the general reader who, we fear, is not as a rule interested in the question of 'multiple control,' if he is a sportsman, he will find in *El Magreb* a capital account of pig-sticking; if he is artistic, he will be delighted to know that the importation of magenta into Morocco is strictly prohibited; if criminal jurisprudence has any charms for him, he can examine a code that punishes slander by rubbing cayenne pepper into the lips of the offender; and if he is merely lazy, he can take a pleasant ride of twelve hundred miles in Mr. Stutfield's company without stirring out of his armchair.

El Magreb: *Twelve Hundred Miles' Ride through Morocco*. By Hugh Stutfield. (Sampson Low, Marston and Co.)