

without the accompaniment of the explanatory notes—an omission likely to confuse when (p. 20) a scene from one of the cathedral windows at Bourges is placed in the midst of the chapter on Roman Gaul. It is a pity that no Gothic church figures among the illustrations, and that French Romanesque is not represented by something finer than St. Serinin at Toulouse, which is neither typical of the usual French style nor, in our opinion, so beautiful as many of the smaller churches.

CHARLES H. HASKINS.

*Social Forces in German Literature.* A Study in the History of Civilization. By KUNO FRANCKE, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of German Literature in Harvard University. (New York: Henry Holt and Co. 1896. Pp. xiii, 577.)

To describe these titles as concessions to the timeliness of studies in social science and history as applied to literature, would be inadequate. The book sails under a double flag, but in reality a third ensign floats at the fore, inscribed "pantheistic collectivism." German literature is here interpreted neither from the historical nor the social-science point of view, as these terms are usually understood, but rather as the evolution and embodiment of a philosophical idea. The manifestations of this idea are presented with something like religious fervor, but this unusual tone in literary discussions is not repellent, at least not to the fair-minded reader. Vilmar's *History of German Literature* has wrung praises from a generation of his countrymen who were far from sharing his militant attitude in matters literary. Francke's attitude is not for a moment to be compared with Vilmar's, but like his predecessor he has a burden, and like him he possesses insight and knowledge of his subject. His very fervor makes him tell his story well. Indeed, the chapter on "Pantheism and Socialism," in which the central idea receives its fullest exposition, is, for discriminating research, just presentation of the literary outcome of his subject, and a certain sympathetic hurry and rush of style, perhaps the best written portion of the book. And even here, the author's grasp of the inter-relations of history, philosophical thought and literature, and his sound applications to questions of national and private duty, rescue his speculative thesis in a good measure from such a judgment as Goethe passed upon Herder's *Älteste Urkunde*, as a "mystisch weitstrahl-sinniges Ganze."

From this central height the literary landscape slopes off in both directions, in a series of animated sketches or fuller executed pictures. But they are all carefully disposed for effect, and, in the later portions of the work, are dotted everywhere with little philosophical edifices, like chapels, which invite the wanderer to enter and meditate on the "self-unfolding of the infinite." In the epilogue the final practical outcome appears in a frankly socialistic forecast of the future of the German nation, while already in the first chapters the phenomena of early German

history and life are vigorously marshalled, to the rallying cries of "individualism and collectivism."

In the first third of the book (from the beginnings to the middle of the seventeenth century) the story of German literature is freshly and dramatically told. Everywhere the author's eye singles out the modern, the interesting, the universally human, in the ancient. Where the treatment is somewhat sketchy, as in the case of Minnesong, the reader will find his account in new fields of research, not previously treated with this fulness in shorter literary histories: cf. the German mystics of the fourteenth century. As an excellent example of the historical framework in which the author is accustomed to set his literary discussions, the chapter on the Rise of the Middle Classes may be mentioned; as a bit of character painting, Gudrun (pp. 82-84).

The treatment of the modern period satisfies, in the main, in an increasing measure, but it also invites dissent. When German literature ebbs, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, our author promptly fixes the responsibility for this state of things, but his perception of poetry as an organic growth, and his study of the manifold social forces at work in the slow upward levelling, are entirely inadequate. "The sad figure of German poetry herself, bereft of her mind by the insults and persecutions heaped upon her," arouses his ire against "that most despicable of all the petty tyrants of the time, Augustus the Strong," and against—Opitz' theory of poetry. This is fighting windmills. Opitz' theory was based on the French and Dutch theories. His fault lay not here, but in writing bad poetry; and Germany's misfortune was, that few better poets immediately appeared. Germany, up to the seventeenth century, had not yet developed a distinct literary style, the old popular style serving all ranks of the nation as the universal medium of expression. England, with her Jacobean style, could make the change to pseudo-classicism, without literary convulsions or a period of partial inanition. Germany tried to become dignified and genteel and witty and pointed, in literature, all at once. Our author pays little attention to the national side of this, and as little to the international, the workings from without. The immediate result in Germany was pathological, but of profound interest in its bearings on the future. The Italian, French and English influence, that is to say, the larger group of social forces, vies in importance with the work of the bourgeois poets within. This comparative element of literary sociology is too often lacking in Francke's system, as it was in that of his favorite philosopher Fichte.

With the eighteenth century the author's theory of pantheistic collectivism enters upon far-reaching applications. The isolated individual is proscribed; each shall sacrifice his existence to the existence of the whole. Adopting Hegel's dogma, that individuals are nothing but organs of the idea of humanity, and that the only measure of their greatness is to be found in their fitness to embody this ideal, Francke succeeds well in the application to authors of the second rank; the parts fit into his system. But the same method applied to genius does not meet

with the same success. The result is more than once a mere atomizing process. This is especially the case with Goethe, in his early period. The assertion is made that the so-called "Urfaust" and "the first conception of Faust" are identical, and that this first conception is of far less significance than Lessing's. "How limited, how fragmentary, does this conception appear compared with the grand outline and the wide perspective of Lessing's Faust idea!" But it is now well known that the "Urfaust," which was never intended by the author for publication, does not contain the whole exposition of the plan as it had matured in Goethe's mind up to 1775. Nothing could be more hazardous than the attempt to limit that conception off-hand. Lessing's shadowy Faust fragments are then strangely styled by Francke a *work*, and their disappearance a national loss of the first magnitude. Erich Schmidt, whom Francke cites, speaks of sketches and fragments, and thinks Lessing may have destroyed them himself. Von Blankenburg is not to be taken too seriously; his ill-concealed suspicions of foul play on the part of the writers of the "other Fausts" are not calculated to recommend his other observations. But even imposing upon Goethe's "Urfaust" the responsibilities of the completed drama, our author's whole discussion fails to appreciate the nature of what Goethe in 1773 called "characteristic art." Goethe triumphantly maintains that such art is universal, and we know that he was then at work on Faust. One recalls just here Ben Jonson's proud distinction between his own *works* and Shakespeare's *plays*. He appears to have a premonition of our author's theory, which would be a decided gainer by this new and striking parallel, if Shakespeare were not—Shakespeare.

If we inquire why this depreciation of Goethe's early compositions is indulged in, why Götz von Berlichingen is called a "youthful effusion," and Faust "a reckless Sturm und Drang individualist," Francke's philosophical thesis furnishes a ready answer. "All of Goethe's and Schiller's greatest productions lead out of narrow, isolated, fragmentary conceptions of life into the broad daylight of universal humanity." Instead of these universal propositions, could our author not be persuaded to accept particular affirmatives, and to leave the Apollo-Goethe of twenty-five his daylight? Goethe himself did not succeed, in "Dichtung und Wahrheit," in disintegrating himself. The macrocosmic autobiographer was obliged to accept, and do deference to, his own early microcosmic personality. It has been justly said that Goethe was a law-giver to philosophy. The theories of the German idealistic philosophers will not suffer seriously, if Goethe is seen to be, in a certain sense, their ally rather than their servant. It is futile to attempt to shape him into a rung in the Hegelian ladder, up which the nation is to climb into the paradise of universal humanity. When Germany reaches that goal it will meet there, not only Goethe the sage, but also the Promethean youth who sang: "Hier sitz' ich, forme Menschen nach meinem Bilde, ein Geschlecht das mir gleich sei."

Both the period immediately preceding Goethe and Schiller and the

post-classical literature are presented in a series of well-written character sketches, abounding in just and discriminating literary criticism. The chapter on Lessing is among the more profound, that on Klopstock the most artistic. In the later period, Heinrich von Kleist, Uhland and Heine have also received excellent monographic treatment. Where the author's philosophical thesis is kept within bounds, the added interest of an ideal connection between successive authors and periods makes each part the gainer.

His social theory is more frequently a disturbing element. Some obnoxious governmental interference or villainous constitution of society is always to blame, where talent fails. We learn, with monotonous iteration, what a different Fischart, Gryphius, Jean Paul, Immermann, etc., the world would have seen, if the times had answered to our author's ideal. This is quite too paternal a treatment of great men. It recalls the point of view of Thomas Hughes, in his *Life of Alfred the Great*, that Alfred, had he lived in the present century, would have been a good English Liberal.

But if our author has carried his theories too far, this is no gauge for the work as a whole. From beginning to end, a high and remarkably even quality is maintained, in conception and presentation. The book will be welcomed by scholars and general readers alike, and the eloquent and forcible style will be a still further recommendation. In the instances where the wording or phrasing varies noticeably from received English usage, there is nearly always a gain in color and picturesqueness, with no loss of dignity.

HENRY WOOD.

*Venerabilis Baedae Historiam Ecclesiasticam Gentis Anglorum, Historiam Abbatum, Epistolam ad Ecgbertum, una cum Historia Abbatum auctore anonymo*, etc., recognovit CAROLUS PLUMMER, M. A. (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1896. Two vols., pp. clxxviii, 458; xxxvii, 405.)

THERE are perhaps few harder tasks from one point of view, few easier from another, than the review of an edition of the work or works of a "standard" author like Bede. For in the main there are no striking positions assumed and maintained to be elucidated or attacked by the reviewer as in a history or an essay, no characters to be attacked or defended. One has not even the opportunity of writing a critical essay on the life, character, work or times of the author, in this case at least. For the place of Bede has so long been fixed, he and his work have been so thoroughly and variously discussed, that it would be worse than useless to attempt any new résumé of these, even had not Mr. Plummer in his admirable introduction made it doubly a work of supererogation. Practically, in such a case as that of this exhaustive edition, one can do little more than enumerate what the editor has done and pronounce some judgment on the manner in which he has accomplished his task.