

endar of this book, and the author is entitled to praise for having come vastly nearer the truth than a majority of those who have discussed it.

Ward Clark.

XII

PROFESSOR JACKSON'S "PERSIA, PAST AND PRESENT"*

When an accomplished scholar brings to a scholarly task at once the wide sympathy of a man of the world and the zeal of an enthusiast, it is inevitable that he should produce something of enduring value. More than that, it is inevitable that he should also produce something which will appeal to a very wide circle of cultivated readers as well as to the specialist. Such a book is Professor Jackson's *Persia*, of which he says in his preface: "The preparation of this volume has been a work after my own heart for the past three years, and I am now almost sorry that it is finished."

These are the sincere words of one who tempers learning with that sort of universal interest which gives vitality to scholarship. Some of Professor Jackson's chapters are more suited to the Indo-Iranian investigator than to the general reader; yet even the general reader can always find in them something to remember with profit to himself and something that he will remember almost in his own despite. Thus, in the sections relating to the Old Persian inscriptions, it is interesting to learn that the natives call the sculptured tablets "The Treasure Story" because they believe that these inscriptions, so mysterious in appearance, hold the secret of a hidden treasure which can be discovered by him who deciphers the strange characters. One also reads again with interest the fascinating story of how this cuneiform writing had baffled the ingenuity of all interpreters until 1802, when the German schoolmaster, Grotefend, acutely hit upon a clew to their solution, unravelling their meaning very much as Poe's hero deciphered the famous cryptogram in *The Gold Bug*. And so, all through the

*Persia, Past and Present. By A. V. Williams Jackson. With more than two hundred illustrations and a map. New York: The Macmillan Company.

book, there is much to pique the reader's curiosity and to give him a first-hand, living interest in that great empire which once threatened the liberties and the civilisation of the Western world.

Everywhere in Professor Jackson's narrative of "travel and research," there is brought to bear a most felicitous blending of technical knowledge and modern feeling. It gives one pleasure to have an account of the Nestorian Christians illuminated by a gloss concerning the colony of them which exists in Yonkers. It tickles one's fancy to read that while the Persian fire worshippers would not themselves smoke, since smoking involves an irreverent use of fire, they did not object to seeing Dr. Jackson light a cigarette while he was their guest. A casual discourse on the Iranian origin of the mint julep has also a certain naïve charm. There are hundreds of little touches such as this, little glimpses of actual life, which by their cumulative effect make the reader feel that he has actually accompanied the author over the deserts, among the Zoroastrians, through well-watered gardens, into the bustle of the bazaars and the quiet of private houses where, in the cool shade, strange things are told, and stranger things are hinted at. For our part, on putting down the book we experience an impression of having ourselves worn sheepskins, ridden about on donkeys' backs and camels, and of returning suddenly with a sort of gasp to the raw realities of occidental life.

The lavish illustrations with which the book is both ornamented and interpreted are in themselves a liberal education, and they are beautifully done. In going over them we acquire a certain amount of oriental lore without the apparently inevitable concomitants of fleas and filthy caravanseries.

H. T. P.

XIII

GUSTAV POLLAK'S "FRANZ GRILLPARZER"*

Considering the high place awarded to the Austrian playwright and poet Grill-

*Franz Grillparzer and the Austrian Drama. By Gustav Pollak. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company.

parzer by eminent critics of his own tongue, as well as by many French and English writers who have studied his plays, it is surprising how little is known of the man and his work by the public outside of Austria and Germany. To Americans he may be said to be unknown. From time to time one of his plays is given here by some German company, but when one asks about the poet, the sole answer usually given by his admirers is that he is the Austrian Shakespeare. As to the man himself, his successes and failures, little more was to be learned.

There is, therefore, cause for satisfaction in that Mr. Gustav Pollak, widely known as a discriminating writer upon German literary and dramatic matters, and himself an Austrian, has filled the gap with an interesting volume. He has given not only a sympathetic account of Grillparzer's rather meagre and unhappy life, but, what is more essential to readers who know no German, he has translated freely from the best of the plays, thus affording, besides the synopsis of each drama, a taste of the atmosphere of the work that nothing short of the actual text can provide.

Franz Grillparzer was born in Vienna in January, 1791, and died there in 1872. The father was a noted lawyer, and the mother a woman who came of a family in which Haydn and Mozart were intimates. From his mother he inherited the passion for music, the art that proved the solace of his life, and to which he turned for consolation in days, or one might say years, of disappointment. Hanslick, the famous Viennese critic, says that several of his songs show rare taste and skill.

The boy was an omnivorous reader, particularly fond of tales of self-sacrifice. At ten years of age a story of the martyrdom of the saints made him wish to become a priest. He says in his autobiography:

"I got myself a robe made of yellow paper, and read mass. I preached over the back of a chair, our old cook being my only audience. She was also the only listener I had when I played the piano.

At that time the execution of Louis XVI. was still fresh in everybody's mind. I played a march which I had been told had been performed at the execution, and in the second part of which there was a run of an octave, played with one finger that was supposed to express the drop of the guillotine. The old woman always wept copiously when I reached that passage and could not hear it often enough."

At school he was not noted for industry, but early displayed a facility for rhyming, and at the age of eighteen had finished his first drama, *Blanka von Kastilien*, written under the influence of Schiller. At about the same time he fell in love with a young opera singer who ignored him. The ill-success of his first love affair seems to have followed him through life, for he never married. In his plays he creates many women who are delightfully full of grace, tenderness and winsome charm. Yet he was essentially a solitary being and lays stress upon the necessity of preserving intact his liberty of action. For years he was engaged to marry Katharina Fröhlich, one of a family of three sisters, with whom he spent most of his time, and who in later life looked after his comfort with tender zeal. Grillparzer speaks in the highest terms of Katharina, attributing to himself all blame for the rupture. Notwithstanding which, his attitude toward women is sometimes cynical. One day in talking about marriage with Beethoven, he (Grillparzer) remarked that "Women who have minds have no body, and those who have bodies have no mind."

At the death of his father, in 1810, Grillparzer was thrown upon his own resources. He finally obtained a small position in the Imperial Library of Vienna, where he had ample time for browsing upon the Greek classics, Shakespeare and Calderon. His first real play, *Die Ahnfrau* (The Ancestors), was produced, thanks to the friendship of Schreyvogel, manager of the theatre, in January, 1817. Its theme is tragic and its atmosphere gloomy. It established Grillparzer's reputation with the critical few, but the public at first found

it depressing, only later acclaiming it as a work of extraordinary merit, notable for its poetic beauty, descriptive skill and dramatic movement.

During the fifty years following the production of *Die Ahnfrau*, he gave a dozen plays to the stage that are recognised as masterpieces in their way, and in a few instances received at once the stamp of public approval. The list comprises *Sappho*, *Das goldene Vlies* (The Golden Fleece), *König Ottokars Glück und Ende* (King Ottokar's Fortune and End), *Ein treuer Diener seines Herrn* (A Faithful Servant of His Master), *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen* (Waves of the Sea and of Love), *Weh dem, der Lügt* (Woe to Him who Lies), *Der Traum ein Leben* (The Dream, a Life), *Libussa*, *Esther*, *Ein Bruderkzwist in Habsburg* (A Brothers' Feud in the House of Habsburg), and *Die Jüdin von Toledo* (The Jewess of Toledo). Critical approval ranks *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen* as Grillparzer's greatest poetic achievement.

In most of these dramas the poet uses national traditions. He was a patriot to the core. The style is admirable, the action is often stirring, and they are enriched throughout by the author's broad philosophy of life and sympathy with noble aspiration. Quotation is unfortunately impossible here.

Mr. Pollak gives valuable outlines of each plot, and where the fame of the play warrants it, extended quotations. To *Ottokars Glück* alone he devotes more than one hundred pages.

The close of Grillparzer's life, after years of neglect, was gladdened by national recognition. His funeral was the occasion of a demonstration such as no poet since Klopstock had evoked, and later, high critical praise has not been lacking. O. E. Lessing places Grillparzer in some respects above Schiller. Sauer gives to *Weh dem, der Lügt* a place in German literature akin to that of Shakespeare's fairy plays.

The book contains some interesting portraits of the poet, and other illustrations connected with the most important of his plays.

Philip G. Hubert, Jr.

XIV

"LE BLÉ QUI LÈVE"*

The labour troubles which have long agitated the cities and large towns of France have latterly made their appearance in the French country. In several sections the day-labourers of the rural communities, stimulated by the example or incited by the direct propaganda of the labourers of the urban communities, and incensed by a number of untoward local conditions (particularly by the very real prejudice the general adoption of machinery by the large farmers has caused them), have organised rural labour unions. Furthermore, these unions have indulged in demonstrations of class hatred, which have yielded nothing in bitterness and violence to the kindred manifestations of the labour unions of the towns. The rural unions, like the urban unions, have been rash, insolent, intolerant, unjust. They have mouthed the same tirades, have been consumed with the same feverish desire of change for the sake of change, have been afflicted with the same mania for petty politics, and have practiced the same tyranny. They have been enfeebled by the same jealousies and rent asunder by the same factional fights. And yet, by virtue, no doubt, of their greater closeness to nature, the rural unions possess a certain elemental dignity which the urban unions lack.

This agrarian upheaval, which by reason of its relative newness and its remoteness from the interests and activities of the capital, has been little exploited thus far in French literature, has found its adequate romancer in René Bazin, an Academician who has to his credit a long series of works remarkable for their affectionate and faithful portrayal of the more significant phases of French rural life. *Le Blé Qui Lève*, M. Bazin's latest work, centres about the varied undertakings of the Wood-cutters' Union of the village of Fonteneilles, near Corbigny, in the central department of La Nièvre.

"In the year 1891, and the two years following, the wood-cutters of La Nièvre leagued together to obtain an increase of their insufficient wages. In the woods,

**Le Blé Qui Lève*. By René Bazin. Paris: Calmann-Lévy. 3 fr. 50.