

a valuable source of biographical information, although it reveals but little concerning the higher aspects of Goethe's intellectual life. It is, in fact, in the main, a quotidian chronicle of small beer which is only now and then lighted up with a stray glint of humor or a wise reflection such as one likes to store away in his memory. The daily occupation of the two correspondents, the doings of mutual friends, musical and theatrical interests, literary gossip—these are the staple themes of the original six volumes and of Mr. Coleridge's one volume. Few people in these days, we should imagine, would care to read this correspondence at all for purposes of literary edification, while all who might have occasion to use it as a source of biographical information will be able to read, and will naturally prefer, the original. At least so it would appear to us.

—Mr. Coleridge says, however, apparently by way of forestalling such criticism: "Any new light thrown upon Goethe's genius and character should be welcome to the student of German literature. The recent production of the *Jahrbuch*, and the affiliation of the English Goethe Society to the Weimar *Goethe-Gesellschaft*, have so stimulated the interest of readers in the publication of new matter affecting Goethe, that it is to be hoped the present volume may be opportune rather than otherwise." We sincerely hope that Mr. Coleridge does not misjudge his public. He has at any rate, so far as our comparisons have gone, done his own work well, and given us in good idiomatic English a large amount of matter, which does, in truth, throw some light upon Goethe's "genius and character," and a great deal more upon his daily walk and conversation during the last three decades of his life. Even the "small beer" will doubtless have its uses. There are those for whom Goethe in his later years is only a Sage throned in carulean mists of speculation, and feeding from day to day upon sublime abstractions concerning Man, Nature, Art, and Science. To all such it will be salutary to look over the shoulders of their hero, so to speak, and watch him as he writes to his friend in Berlin: "Turnips and fish have arrived safely, the former beautifully dry, and the latter well frozen." . . . "The turnips are all the more welcome as there are no chestnuts on the Rhine or Main this year. So we do not eat them as a separate dish, but, served up with cabbage, they are very effective."

—The *Revue Internationale*, in its issue of January 10 (Christern), began the publication of an extremely valuable literary curiosity, the *journal intime* of Benjamin Constant. This entirely unintentional contribution to the literary history of the beginning of the century has been preserved among the private papers of the family of Constant de Rébecque, and it is to one of the descendants of the family, the Countess of Pückler-Branitz, that the present publication is due. At some time not stated, her father, M. Adrien Constant de Rébecque, seems to have made the selections now published, and to have written the short but excellent account of his famous relative which is given as an introduction. The journal itself begins at Weimar in 1804, when the writer's ten years of exile from France had just begun. His *amie* and companion in exile, Mme. de Staël, whose chains had already become very heavy for Constant, was then living near Leipzig. Here and elsewhere in Germany he made her flying visits, but the extracts at this period are generally at times when he was alone, and could give himself up to the delights of an intellectual life and the society of the great writers of the period, with whom he was in familiar contact. The names of Goethe, Schiller, Wieland, and later Schlegel and Sismondi, constantly recur, often accompanied by a judgment or an appreciation

in which the most acute observation and insight are shown. No less clear-sighted and subtle are Constant's observations upon the authors whom he encounters only in his reading. Those upon Herder and Schelling are especially interesting, and also all his impressions of the "new philosophy" of Germany. The notes are generally very short, and they are written with the utmost simplicity and frankness. Very seldom is there anything that can be made to seem like posing, even for himself. A very clear and positive vision of Benjamin Constant disengages itself from these fragments of his journal, and an almost equally clear one of Mme. de Staël at this period of her life.

—*La fièvre verte*, in allusion to the green palms on the official academic costume, is an expression sometimes used to designate the intense desire that comes over French men of letters to be ranked among the "Forty Immortals." As all cannot be chosen, many have been the storms in the Academy when men representative of new ideas and tendencies have sought to be admitted. The history of these struggles may be read in the just published volume of M. Albert Rouxel, 'Chroniques des Élections à l'Académie Française' (Paris: Didot; Boston: Schoenhof). Unfortunately, it does not go beyond 1841, when Victor Hugo finally gained admittance, succeeding one of his bitterest enemies, Lemerrier. Generally, however, whatever animosity the public at large might feel towards the candidates before their election, subsided when the Academy had decided upon its choice. In regard to the last two elections, this has not been the case. The choice of M. Hervé did not meet the approval of the Republicans generally; the choice of M. Gréard has not been taken kindly by the Monarchists. M. Hervé is a well-known and influential publicist, who, especially since he founded the journal *Le Soleil* in 1873, has devoted himself to the fusion of the Orléanists and the Legitimists. Since the death of the Comte de Chambord, he has been urging the Orléans princes to action. It is no wonder, then, that, in the present state of feeling towards the exiled princes, the choice of the Academy should not have been well received. The most radical even called for the immediate suppression of the august body, "the only monarchy that remains standing in France."

—With M. Gréard the case is different. He would here in no sense be looked upon as a political character. He has devoted his life to education. No man has done more for the development of primary instruction in France. His various reports on this subject are admirable documents of high literary merit. But the laicisation of schools is a burning question in France, and M. Gréard has incurred the ill-will of all who do not wish to see the education of the young in the hands of the laity. Great, therefore, was the outcry of the clerical and royalist press when he was chosen to succeed M. de Falloux, a *catholique libéral*. Why, say his opponents, not have chosen M. d'Haussonville, the son of an academician who died but recently, the grandnephew of another academician, the nephew of another still living, and the great-grandson of Mme. de Staël? Why choose M. Gréard, the "prompter of the school laws of the Republic." And then names, not over-courteous, are lavished on the new member elect. He is a *universitaire*, a pedagogue, his works are those of *un professeur de rhétorique*. Thus, while the revolutionists demand the suspension of the Academy because it is too monarchical, the monarchists and conservatives do not think it in harmony with the spirit of the day. Meanwhile, M. Gréard answers, in the only way becoming the new honor conferred upon him, by publishing a book which shows him to be worthy of it:

'L'Éducation des femmes par les femmes' (Paris: Hachette; Boston: Schoenhof). This is the first volume of a series of "Études et Portraits." It treats of Fénelon, J.-J. Rousseau, Mme. de Maintenon, Mme. de Lambert; Mme. d'Épinay, Mme. Necker, Mme. Roland, with a preface on Mme. de Sévigné. The author announces a second series as in preparation, reaching down to modern times.

GIUSEPPE VERDI.

Verdi: an Anecdotic History of his Life and Works. By Arthur Pougin. Scribner & Wellford. 1887. Pp. 308.

THIS translation, by Mr. James E. Matthew, of the most complete biography of Verdi in existence, appears opportunely at a time when the musical world is busy talking about Verdi's latest and probably last work, "Otello." It cannot be said that it is anything more than what it purports to be—an anecdotic record of the composer's twenty-six ("Otello" not included) operatic productions in the order of their appearance, with details regarding their reception and the principal singers who took part in the first or otherwise notable performances. Inasmuch as of these twenty-seven operas only about half-a-dozen have ever had any vogue outside of Italy, some of these details are necessarily of little interest; yet the author wisely reserves most of his space for the best-known of Verdi's operas, and, moreover, gives a large number of new and entertaining biographic details, especially regarding the composer's youth. The reader who desires a critical estimate of Verdi's operas will find much more material in the forty pages which Dr. Hanslick devotes to them in his 'Moderne Oper' than in M. Pougin's 300 pages. It is perhaps fortunate that the latter abstains from criticism, for there are intimations that he would not disagree with a writer in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, who spoke of Verdi as "the foremost, or, we may almost say, the only dramatic, artist of our time."

In his first chapter M. Pougin reproduces a facsimile autograph of the certificate of Verdi's birth, extracted from the registers of the *état civil* of the commune of Busseto, which shows that Verdi was born in the same year as Wagner—1813—and not 1814, as is often stated. But in 1814 Verdi, as his biographer remarks, a second time owed his life to his mother. The Russians having invaded the village Le Roncole, she took refuge with others in the church. The soldiers, however, broke in, and a scene of carnage ensued. But Signora Verdi succeeded in hiding in the belfry with her little Giuseppe until the danger was over—an incident which one rather wonders that the composer of "Rigoletto" did not find a congenial subject for an operatic text. The boy received his first musical impressions from a poor wandering musician, whose "wretched violin charmed the little Verdi till he nearly fell into ecstasy," and who is supposed to have been the first to advise Verdi's father to let him study music. At the age of eight he managed to secure an old spinet which a tradesman repaired for his benefit, and the organist of the village church was his first teacher. In three years he had made so much progress that his father sent him to the neighboring town of Busseto, where he boarded with a cobbler for thirty centimes or six cents a day. Every Sunday he went on foot to Le Roncole to perform his duties as organist, for which he received the princely sum of \$20. a year. On one of these expeditions he fell into a ditch on a dark night, and would probably have been drowned had not a peasant woman heard his cries and saved him.

To the world at large, Verdi is known exclusively as a composer of operas—including a

quasi-operatic requiem. But his operatic career was preceded by a period of miscellaneous composition, as is shown in this citation from the *Gazzetta Musicale* of Milan:

"From the age of thirteen to that of eighteen, the period at which Verdi came to Milan to study counterpoint, he wrote a heap of compositions of all kinds: marches for band up to a *round hundred*; perhaps as many short symphonic pieces, which served for the church, for the theatre, or for the concert room; five or six concertos or airs with variations for the pianoforte, which he performed himself at concerts; many serenades, cantatas, airs, a vast number of duets, trios, and various works for the church, among which is a 'Stabat Mater.'"

Some of these pieces were utilized in his earliest operas; and subsequently, too, after the fashion of the time, Verdi did not hesitate to transfer to a new opera the best melodies of an earlier one that had failed. Nor is there any reason for objecting to such a proceeding in the case of Italian melodies, which rarely have any dramatic individuality or local color. If, on the other hand, we reflect on the incongruity of transferring, e. g., the *Flying Dutchman* motive, or the swan motive in "Lohengrin," or the magic-fire music in the "Walküre," to another opera, we realize most vividly one cause of the superiority of the German music drama over Italian opera.

Many of the early compositions just enumerated were written for the Philharmonic Society of Busseto, at whose concerts Verdi at first played the drum, though subsequently advanced to the posts of pianist and conductor. Nevertheless, when he presented himself for examination at the Milan Conservatory, he was rejected—a fact attested by one of his own letters. But if his musical accomplishments failed to make any impression on the hard-hearted Conservatory professors, they served him a better turn in the case of the tender-hearted daughter of a friend and benefactor of his. He used to play four-hand pieces with this girl, and, as usual in such cases, engagement and marriage followed. Their happiness was of only a few years' duration. "In the space of about two months," he writes in a letter, "three loved ones had disappeared for ever. I had no longer a family. And, in the midst of this terrible anguish, to avoid breaking the engagement I had contracted, I was compelled to write and finish a comic opera." No wonder that this opera, "Un Giorno di Regno," failed. It was his second opera, the first having been "Oberto," on which his profits were \$350. His next opera, "Nabucco," was a success—so much so that Verdi was asked to write the *opera d'obbligo* for the next carnival season, and to make his own terms. He asked for the same sum that Bellini had obtained for "Norma"—about \$1,350. From this date the history of Verdi, so far as known, is little more than the history of his operas. These had the most diverse fortunes, some being successful everywhere, some only in Italy, and not a few of them failures even there. "Rigoletto," "La Traviata," and "Il Trovatore," however, had put his reputation on a firm basis for the time, and when, in 1869, the Khedive of Egypt asked him to write an opera for his new theatre in Cairo, the sum demanded—\$20,000—was paid without a murmur. The copyright and other profits on his latest opera, "Otello," are said to amount already to almost twice that sum.

As Verdi's fame increased, his patriotic countrymen made numerous efforts to lionize him, but he never cared to be "trotted about" as a curiosity, having been averse all his life to posing as a genius. Even the offers of conducting one of his works in some new "Teatro Verdi" could not induce him to make an exception. To one such invitation he replied: "Everything op-

poses it—my age, my health, and, still more than everything else, my inclination. Just tell me, Mr. President, what should I do there? Show myself? Seek applause? That cannot be." Nor did offers of political honors tempt him. When Cavour wanted to unite in his first national Parliament all the men who had distinguished themselves in Italy, he begged Verdi to accept a seat in the Chamber of Deputies. Verdi refused at first, saying that he hated to find himself prominent, and wanted nothing but to be allowed to work quietly in retirement. Finally he consented to appear in the Chamber, but three months later he sent in his resignation. In 1875 Victor Emanuel appointed him a senator. He took the oath, yet, so far as M. Pougin is aware, has never taken his seat.

With all this retiring modesty, Verdi has always known how to preserve his dignity and insist on his rights as a composer. A few instances will illustrate this. During the rehearsals of "Ernani," the prima donna insisted on having the score end with a rondo in which she could display her powers of vocalization. Such a demand was nothing unusual in the palmy days of Italian opera, when the composers were the slaves of the singers, and had constantly to sacrifice their artistic conscience to the vanity and whims of famous vocalists. The librettist in this case was willing to accede to the prima donna's wishes, but Verdi "went off in one of those fits of artistic wrath which the poet had long been accustomed to submit to with great philosophy. 'Do you wish,' said he, 'to ruin the finest situation in the work?'" And he firmly refused to do it. On another occasion, when his "Vêpres Siciliennes" was brought out at Paris, Manager Perrin begged Verdi to conduct some performances. Verdi consented, but insisted on having an orchestral rehearsal. The members of the orchestra, however, appeared in a sullen humor, playing at first much too fast, and, after being remonstrated with, dragging the tempo in an extravagant manner. "It is a poor joke, no doubt," Verdi remarked to the *chef d'orchestre*, Dietsch. "The fact is, Maestro," replied Dietsch, "these gentlemen think that they have no need to rehearse." "Really?" "Yes; they have their own private business." "Ah, they have their own business, which is not that of the Opéra. That makes a difference." With this he seized his hat, left the house, and did not enter it again, although he had his revenge, for Dietsch was discharged three days later. When in 1873 the manager of the Opéra applied for permission to produce "Aïda," Verdi wrote: "I have been so little satisfied each time that I have had to do with your great theatre, that I am not disposed to risk a new attempt. . . . I have not the courage to face again all the trickery and opposition which rule in that theatre, of which I have preserved a painful recollection."

Considering the obscure and uninviting character of most of Verdi's libretti, one is rather surprised to read that he took great pains personally in having everything to suit himself. Concerning one of his librettists, who prepared eight of his texts, M. Pougin writes: "A tolerably bad poet, quite wanting in invention, Piave was not without a certain skill as librettist, and he had, from Verdi's point of view, the overwhelming quality of effacing himself completely, of putting aside every kind of personal vanity, and of following entirely the indications and the desires of the composer, cutting out this, paring down that, shortening or expanding at the will of the latter—giving himself up, in short, to all his exigencies, whatever they might be." In some cases the censors made sad havoc of his libretti. In another place M. Pougin informs us that Verdi not only always chooses the subject of his operas, but, in addition to that, "he draws out the sketch of the

libretti, indicates all the situations, constructs them almost entirely as far as regards the general plan, brings his personages and his characters on the stage, in such a way that his *collaborateur* has simply to follow his indications to bring the whole together and to write the verses." The best of his libretti is "Aïda," the author of which, M. du Locle, says, in a letter, that he wrote it "scene by scene, phrase by phrase, under the eye of the maestro, who took a large share in the work. The idea of the finale of the last act, with its two stages, one above the other, belongs especially to him." In his "Otello" Verdi has been still more fortunate in having the services of Signor Boïto, who, being an able composer, knows just what a musician wants.

This is not the place to discuss the merits of Verdi's music, but it is amusing to read that in Paris and London for a long time he was declared to be no melodist. If his operas should not survive the present century, the fault will not be a lack of melody, but a lack of concentration and elaboration of details. Wagner required two or three years of hard labor to complete a score, every page of which bears evidence of his genius. Verdi did not go to such extremes in the opposite direction as some of his predecessors, who often wrote an opera in a fortnight (their names are still preserved); he usually devoted four months to an opera. "Rigoletto" was written in forty days, and "Don Carlos" in six months. "Aïda," which is by far the best of his operas, owes some of its excellence to the fact that the scenery prepared for its first performance was locked up in Paris during the Prussian siege, which gave Verdi opportunity to retouch and polish his score.

ANCIENT ISRAEL.—I.

Geschichte des Volkes Israel. Von Dr. Bernhard Stade, Professor an der Universität Giessen. Mit Illustrationen und Karten. Vol. I. Berlin, 1887. New York: Westermann. ['Oncken's Weltgeschichte in Einzeldarstellungen.']

HALF a century ago, ancient Israelitish history was generally written as Roman history was before Niebuhr. It began with Ur of the Chaldees and the stories of the patriarchs, just as the history of Rome began with Alba Longa, its kings, and Romulus and Remus. The narratives of Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, or Judges were repeated like the legends of Livy, as traditions containing much that is naturally impossible, but on the whole historical. The story of Sarah's maternity might be left untold, like that of Rhea Silvia's, but the wonderful escape of the infant Moses appeared more natural than that of Romulus, the capture of Jericho was recorded like that of Veii, and the regicide of Ehud like the deed of Mucius Scævola. The miraculous was reverently separated from the naturally possible, and this presented as history. Jacob migrated with his family through Canaan, though he may not have wrestled with God or an angel; Moses gave to his people laws at Sinai, no matter whether the mountain smoked or not; Joshua routed the Canaanites at Gibeon, the sun standing or moving; Samson again and again smote the Philistine, though never, perhaps, with the jaw bone of an ass. This manner of writing the early history of Israel has now become almost obsolete, though not through the powerful efforts of any single Niebuhr in this field.

Israelitish history has been slowly but completely revolutionized by the steady and progressive labor of many eminent scholars, mostly German. The discoveries of Egyptology and Assyriology have had their share in the work. Biblical criticism, an evolution of very old growth, has paved the way for critical history, which, after emancipating itself from the bondage of orthodoxy about the close of [the] last century,