

Congress undignified for our Government to buy silver at 85 to 90 cents per 412½ grains and sell it for \$1.00. Moreover, provision has actually been made in the law creating the Geological Survey for the sale of a limited number of its memoirs at cost of publication. This provision, so much desired by that large class of scientific men who, through want of political influence, had been unable to obtain such publications, works a certain injustice to the members of the Survey itself, since, no provision being made for the cost necessarily attending the sale and distribution of such memoirs, it has to be taken from the amount appropriated for scientific work, and no corresponding pecuniary advantage can inure to the Survey, as all sums received from such sales must be covered into the Treasury of the United States.

It seems, therefore, that a great benefit would be conferred upon the community at large by the passage of a bill providing for the sale not only of these maps, but of all Government publications which may be of interest to the public at large, at cost of printing and material used; and, further, that a given number of responsible booksellers at the principal centres of population should be designated as Government agents to conduct the details of such sale, and authorized to add a reasonable percentage to the cost sufficient to remunerate themselves for the labor and expense involved. This increase of cost to the public would be more than offset by the increased facility in obtaining such works, and the members of the various Government departments from which they proceed would be relieved of an irksome and often ungrateful task.

SAINTSBURY'S ELIZABETHAN LITERATURE.—II.

A History of Elizabethan Literature. By George Saintsbury. Macmillan & Co. 1887.

MR. SAINTSBURY'S remarks upon Shakspeare will seem to some extreme in their praise; yet on the whole they strike us as containing many of the best observations in the book. Even here, however, he seems not to comprehend a position he is attacking. We are not arguing for the correctness of the German claim, that it was they who taught the English to understand Shakspeare; but it is surely just to have it fairly stated. They—at least those of them entitled to speak with authority—have never taken the ground which is here vehemently assailed. What they maintain is, not that Germany taught England to admire her greatest author, but that it was Lessing and his school who were the first to point out that Shakspeare was not an inspired barbarian, and that the qualities in him which his countrymen were wont to apologize for were the very ones of which they ought to be proud. It is no reply to this to say that Ben Jonson and Dryden admired him and that Pope and Dr. Johnson edited him. Ben Jonson said, also, that "Shakspeare lacked art." In that brief sentence he compressed the criticism about the poet which was dominant in England for nearly two centuries. It can be found more or less plainly manifested in the writings of all the authors who have just been mentioned. From that idea the German school has always been free; and it early set out to show that art was the quality by which Shakspeare was supremely characterized. Its claim to have originated this view of the poet may or may not have foundation in fact; but, before being denied, it deserves at least to be comprehended.

We have no space to comment upon several other points which betray errors of conception

if not errors of fact. It remains to say a few words about the treatment of the period as a whole. It is a period of preëminent interest in English literature, and the difficulty of discussing it satisfactorily is necessarily increased by the limited scale on which the work is planned. Mr. Saintsbury has still further increased this inevitable difficulty by adopting the theory that, in order to understand the literary history of a period, "it is necessary to study the minor as well as the major illustrations of it"—which of course can only mean studying a small portion of the minor illustrations of it. He has therefore given much space to the inferior men whom the literary resurrectionists of later days have from time to time dug up, but have never succeeded in reviving. Yet, with all this, he has failed to indicate the grand central characteristics which mark the period he describes. Perhaps it would not be unjust to say that he has failed to see them. In that period the literary aspirations of men found their expression in the drama, just as in the age of Anne and the first Georges they did in the essay, just as they now do in the novel. The drama was the national literature. Its weakness and its strength were alike due to that fact. Everybody tried to write for the stage who could write at all, just as everybody now tries to write a novel. The result was, at times, as distressing in the one case as it is in the other. But the drama had this advantage as a national literature over both the essay and the novel, that it could make use of the double vehicle of prose and poetry, but especially of the latter. In the hands of a man of genius it could reach the highest elevation, for it could embody itself in the highest form of literary expression. But from poetry the novel of this century and the essay of the last have been practically divorced.

Because the Elizabethan drama, as the national literature, voiced the feelings and aspirations of the time, the result inevitably followed that everything which sought to interest or to influence men was apt to take upon itself that form. Politics, religion, personalities, atrocious crimes—every event that was talked about or thought about—was brought upon the stage. The period cannot be understood without having this fact clearly in mind; but there is nothing in this volume to show that Mr. Saintsbury has ever heard of it. He has devoted three pages, for instance, to "Gorboduc," and yet has not observed that this so-called first English tragedy is nothing but a pamphlet in disguise, that its aim is primarily political, and only in a limited sense literary. Its object was to persuade the Queen to marry, and to settle, by the results of marriage, the succession to the throne. It was a matter of supremest consequence to English Protestants at that time to have an heir apparent of the right faith while such an heir presumptive as Mary Stuart was in existence. If other proof were needed of the fact, the speech of the Counsellor *Arostus*, with which the tragedy closes, would settle the question decisively. The character of the piece was naturally decided to a great extent by the political motives that prompted its composition, and not by any conscious attempt to introduce into our tongue tragedies modelled after Seneca.

The fecundity of the Elizabethan drama, with all that results from it, was likewise due to the fact that it was the national literature. Of this Mr. Saintsbury has scarcely taken note. Yet it was something inevitable in a period when everybody wrote for the stage, when plays had no run whatever in the modern sense, and when (originally, at least) they were never even acted on successive nights.

Most of the literature of this sort has perished, but there is plenty of proof that its production was enormous. This is something that implies much more than it says. Mr. Saintsbury looks down in a superior way upon the harmless drudges who delve in what "some moderns call the 'Bio-Bibliographical' side of the matter"; but if he had taken the pains to consult so common a work as Henslowe's 'Diary,' he would have seen clearly many things which he now sees dimly or does not see at all.

Take the case of Decker, a dramatist he admires. By collating the references in the work just mentioned, he would find that between the beginning of 1598 and the end of 1602, that author produced ten entire plays of his own, wrote in conjunction with others twenty-nine, and made additions to and alterations in half-a-dozen more. Thus, during the space of four years, he was concerned to a greater or less extent in the production of about forty plays; yet of these forty, if we can judge from the titles, only four appear to have survived. This is far from being a singular instance. The faults of the Elizabethan drama are largely due to the fact that it was almost always written hurriedly, written against time. To that is due much of the crudeness and imperfection that mark it—not anything peculiar in the character of the men or of the period. But the subject is too vast to be much more than indicated in this place.

Of Mr. Saintsbury's critical estimates we purpose to speak only in general terms. These touch matters upon which no two persons will ever agree, and each has a right to his preferences. There is much, however, found here that will exact respect even when it does not command assent. The author's views are those of a man who not only has a firm faith in his opinions, but has generally good reasons to show for his faith. There are paragraphs and even long passages which strike us as of the highest merit, and that, too, when with the views set forth we should have no sympathy. But here, as elsewhere throughout the work, there is another side to the shield. Against the places mentioned are to be set Mr. Saintsbury's occasional mighty admirations for petty men and petty productions, his capacity as a professional critic of finding inimitable what the rest of the world looks on as being simply endurable; and, worse than all, that bias of judgment which is the result of importing politics into literature. The death of King Charles secretly troubles Mr. Saintsbury's head as much as it avowedly did Mr. Dick's. It leads, perhaps unconsciously, to extravagant statements, and gives to some of his remarks a tone unsuited to literary history. The current critical jargon which does so much valiant duty for ideas, reaches perhaps its highest possible climax of absurdity in speaking, as is done in this volume, of Milton's "middle-class Philistinism" (p. 389). Such a phrase recalls the wish expressed in Wordsworth's famous sonnet that Milton were living at this hour, and leads one to feel the truth of his words, "England hath need of thee"—for she has become a fen of stagnant literary waters indeed.

It is necessary to talk plainly in this matter, because it is evident that Mr. Saintsbury has little idea of the toleration of which no one stands more in need than himself. There is sometimes a sad, and sometimes a scornful, pity expressed for those who do not share his sentiments. Of course, you are ignorant, or, if not ignorant, you are dense, or some other one of those epithets in the use of which the bumptiousness of literary criticism finds supreme delight. For Mr. Saintsbury takes himself

very seriously. He possesses plainly the fullest conviction that when he has spoken, the last word has been uttered. Very rarely does he admit the existence of any lingering doubt in his mind that he has penetrated to the inmost citadel of truth. Once, indeed, he does seem to hesitate—but it is for a moment only. This is in his remarks upon the question whether the primacy in English poetry is to be accorded to Spenser, or Milton, or Shelley. Shakspeare is, of course, excluded from consideration, or, in Saintsbury's speech, he is put aside as "*hors concours*" (p. 93). In regard to the comparative merits of these three he confesses that the reader has a right to demand his opinion. He recognizes the momentous consequences of his decision. But while he feels the gravity of the situation, he meets it manfully. He has, as he assures us, "no intention of shirking the difficulty." Therefore, after balancing the merits of the three poets, he determines upon the whole to give the palm to Spenser. To most of our frivolous race, all this will seem supremely comical. There are those, possibly including Mr. Saintsbury, who will look upon it as an act of "derring-do," worthy of the Red-Cross Knight himself. Shelley is too great a genius to be made permanently ridiculous by the antics of his unskilful admirers, whose performances have already largely contributed, and are likely long to contribute, to the gayety of nations. This, serious as it purports to be, is perhaps the most entertaining of any yet produced. We frankly confess to a suspicion that nobody would have noted the absence of Mr. Saintsbury's opinion on the matter if he had left it out, and that nobody will be much impressed by it now that he has put it in—unless it be some outraged fellow-devotee of the Shelley cult.

JAMES'S MANCHURIA.

The Long White Mountain; a Journey in Manchuria. By H. E. M. James. Longmans, Green & Co.

MANCHURIA, a name unknown to the natives, and coined by the French geographers from the vague term Manchou, was that part of the Chinese empire lying north of Corea and China proper, and between Mongolia and the Pacific Ocean. The Russians have helped mightily to make the term definite, and to rectify the frontiers with a science of which they are masters. First securing Siberia, they succeeded, during the Crimean war, in planting outposts on Chinese soil, and then, in 1860, claimed the occupied territory, which was in area as large as France. Ignatieff, seizing his supreme opportunity when China was helpless and the British napping, added this vast domain to the Czar's empire. China lost her outlet in the north Pacific, while Russia gained new seaports, and Corea a dreaded frontager. Manchuria now means that portion of the Chinese empire between Mongolia and the Russian maritime province of Primorsk; or, in Chinese view, the three provinces of Shing-King, Kirin, and He-Lung Kiang; that is, about one-half of the old region.

For ages Manchuria has been the breeding-ground of nations. In this land of mountains, rivers, glens, and grassy plains, fertile, healthful, and well-watered, have originated those various peoples called Ta-tars, or tributary tribes. Here have dwelt the ancestors of the Coreans and Japanese, the Huns, Turks, and Manchus. Once vassals of the Middle Kingdom, they have turned successful rebels or victorious conquerors. With almost the regularity of a law of nature, the roving and

scattered tribes, acting under some obscure impulse, would consolidate and move southward into China, westward into Europe, or eastward into Corea or Japan. In different ages, and speaking varying dialects, these emigrants from the north Asian highlands would take or receive different names; though each wave of humanity was but another overflow of the same geyser-like spring whose rhythm forms the ethnic history of the oldest continent. Despite the Great Wall, first built to keep back these hordes, China has been again and again invaded, conquered, and governed by foreigners. In every case, however, the pen and letter have been in the long run mightier than the sword and spear. China has been able to tame, civilize, and educate her oppressors, and more than once overthrow the alien and reinstate a native dynasty. The last outburst from the north was that of the fierce Manchus who in 1644 conquered the whole empire and people, and imposed on every head that mark of subjugation, the queue. The Chinese, in turn, educating and civilizing their conquerors, have imposed their language on their rulers, and are now about to absorb all Ta-tar land. In this way, Manchuria has been alternately filled and depleted. Unlike previous movements, the emigration is now from the south. The new north-land is, to the crowded Chinese empire, what Manitoba and Australia are to Great Britain. So great is the pressure of population and so valuable the farms, that "the neutral strip" of fifty miles bordering Corea, unoccupied and palisaded off for 200 years, is now blooming with gardens and grain fields, while Chinese towns of brick and wood on the Yalu enjoy a good river trade. As the Chinese farmer rises at two A. M., works till dark, and goes to bed after supper in order to be in the field at the first croak of the raven, the waste "no-man's land" of a century ago is now a granary. Under the plea of abolishing the increasing brigandage, China was in 1874 just to Corea and generous to herself, and, in imitation of Russia, added this strip to her territory.

Of the three Manchurian provinces, Shing-King and Kirin are the most fertile, and abundantly stocked with horses, cattle, swine, and grain. The latter condensed into pork is transportable on the hoof, and the droves of pigs going southward are a noticeable feature of the roads. About one-third of the grain is further reduced in the still, and, as whiskey, serves to keep society from becoming too quiet. Evidently, from what one gathers from Mr. James's account, a railroad, when built, will pay dividends. The area of Manchuria is about 260,000 square miles, equal to Austria-Hungary, and larger than Texas. Its population is reckoned at from 20,000,000 to 30,000,000. Partly because of the immediate pressure and even menace of Russia, and partly from the sentimental necessity of holding inviolate the ancestral home of the imperial dynasty, the Pekin Government keeps this frontier most carefully guarded. The forts are armed with Krupp's cannon, and the rifles are of the latest and costliest pattern. Yet along with breech-loading repeaters, often rusty, the soldiery still cling to the bow and arrow; and the extravagant use of banners—survivals of the old lines of beaters and archers in the royal tiger hunts on the mountains—impedes soldierly movements, and furnishes jest to the Cossacks. Outside the towns and cities, despite the generally settled life and safe condition of the roads, the brigands are still able to earn a fair living and occasionally death by caning and mutilation. Better roads, coinage, and government are still needed.

This information, with a clear, compact, and informing résumé of recent Chinese history, domestic and foreign, is furnished in the first six chapters of the work before us, which really comprises two books in one. The author, H. E. M. James, of the British Civil Service in India, is evidently accustomed to obtain and handle statistics and present them in readable form. His style is pleasing and straightforward, and combines qualities which make his book the best on the subject. A thorough-going "Britisher," he is very apt to build morality on revenue, and heartily believes in and defends the opium trade. He is fond, too, of flings at Americans, of whom he has the usual knowledge gained in *Punch*, in English novels, and possibly in the hotels and on railway cars.

At chapter vii he begins the story of his journeyings, and we enjoy the flavor of personal adventure. After years of desk-work in Bombay, he was fortunate in securing a fellow-traveller in Lieut. Younghusband, and the two resolved on exploring a land which they suspected the map-makers dreamed of rather than surveyed. Further, the Long White Mountain, the centre of Chinese and Korean myth and poetry, had never been ascended by a European. Their journey, in 1886, was made on pony and mule. Concerning the latter beast, Mr. James has much to say. One familiar with men and mules on the Raritan and Lehigh tow-paths will declare that between these and the Manchu variety there is surprisingly little difference. Geographically at antipodes, they possess those original and peculiar touches of nature that make the whole world kin. Of course there is a difference in the Englishman's and Yankee's way of telling a funny thing, but the mule in Mr. James's pages amply corrects any tendency to dulness. Despite midges and gadflies outdoors, and mosquitoes and cockroaches inside, the travellers, in full physical health, and well fortified with insect-powder, enjoyed every hour. Like ships that in strange seas sail over islands, cities, and land which the unrevised map declares ought to be just there, but which are not, the travellers easily and unconsciously passed over the "chains of snowy peaks, from 8,000 to 10,000 feet high," which even the maps of the Royal Geographical Society still preserve on paper. They found, instead, chains of volcanic hills from 3,000 to 8,000 feet high. This highest figure was reached only by the lordly peak called by the Manchus Shan Alin, by the Coreans Pék-tu (White Head), and by the Chinese Chang-peh Shan, or Long White Mountain. In addition to its interest in physical geography, legend locates here the miraculous origin of the founder of the imperial Manchu dynasty. A pure virgin, bathing in the Dragon-Prince's pool in the crater-top of the mountain—of which a beautiful colored picture is given as the frontispiece of the book—conceived from eating the red fruit dropped by a magpie, the bird now held sacred by the Manchus. To the child born of this virgin, the sons of Heaven trace their line. From this pool also, according to tradition, issue the rills which form not only the Sungari, but also the Tumen and the Yalu, which, if true, makes Corea an island. Despite having lived on Manchurian pork and beans, and thus economized, the travellers' provisions failed, and for their stomachs' sake they were obliged to take the back track without fully solving this problem. The adjective "long" in the mountain's name refers either to time or distance, and that of "white" most probably to the general color of the rocks and gravel rather than to the snow which covers the ever-white peak only a portion of the year.