

workers, he was nominated and was actually running for United States President at the hour of his death. In reading Mr. Riley, one thinks how Rufus Choate would have welcomed hypnotism. Could he have reinforced his insanity defences with that plea, all murderers would have gone unwhipped of justice.

Shakespear. By W. Carew Hazlitt. London: Quaritch.

Mr. Hazlitt was disappointed in Mr. Sidney Lee's 'Life of Shakespeare.' It seemed to him little more than a readable distillation of Halliwell-Phillipps's 'Outlines.' He determined, therefore, to take up the subject himself, or, rather, to resume a "half-abandoned design," and the fruits of his determination are before us. He insists, however, that his volume does not profess to be a systematic biography—that it is simply "an essay, restricted to new points of view, which may or may not be held in certain instances to amount to new facts." He claims the same freedom of conjecture and inference in settling the details of Shakspeare's life that would be allowed in other uncertain cases, where the person involved was less considerable. Accordingly, he deals largely in a process which he calls "the concentration of scattered points and hints."

In the main we may accept Mr. Hazlitt's characterization of his own book. Yet it is not an essay in the strict sense of the word. It is rather a collection of essays, for there is little continuity between chapter and chapter. The whole thing rambles and staggers and halts along. There are digressions so little pertinent that they might well have been relegated to an appendix; there are pages of dreary commonplace, and there is everywhere, of course, Mr. Hazlitt's clumsy style—his unsurpassably long-winded fashion of saying the simplest things. As for the restriction to "new points of view," it is not and could not be thoroughgoing; but we meet with a good many new guesses. Most of these are of dubious value, but there is now and then one which merits the attention of scholars.

Mr. Hazlitt, though he has edited a collection of antique jest-books, is somewhat deficient in humor. He can hardly forgive Shakspeare for having so much of it. One gets the impression that he regards a joke as vulgar unless it is either academic or elephantine. If space allowed, we should like to quote his profoundly diverting animadversions on Touchstone's words to Audrey: "I am here with thee and thy goats, as the most capricious poet, honest Ovid, was among the Goths." The reader will find it on page 135, embedded in a chapter on "Self-Culture."

With the Sonnets Mr. Hazlitt has little patience. "Small, very small, loss to the world and to the fame of the writer had it been if the MS. had perished." "The sentiment is often thin and weak, the diction poor, and the metre faulty." "In the Sonnets, forsooth, we see the poetical expression of the author in its earliest and rawest form." "I grieve that they are so poor." As to metre, one is disposed to set up Shakspeare, even in his "earliest and rawest" period, as a match for Mr. Hazlitt, especially after reading a note on page 281. Here, having described a line in Sonnet cvii.

as "neither sense nor metre," he presents us with an emendation. The line is this: "And peace proclaims *olives* of endless age." The new reading which, we presume, is expected to mend the measure, runs as follows: "And peace proclaims *an olive* of endless age!"

Much as he despises the Sonnets as literature, Mr. Hazlitt attaches some biographical value to them. But his attempts to extract this biographical material are not more successful than those of his predecessors. Bartholomew Griffin, a decidedly minor poet, appears as a candidate for the position of Shakspeare's friend, replacing the perhaps sufficiently discredited Pembroke. The dark lady is Griffin's wife. All this is advanced tentatively, with other conjectures of a more trivial kind. We cannot forbear quoting the following sentence: "Shakspeare's 80th Sonnet suggests his acquaintance with the literary gifts of a contemporary, who had been more successful than him in ingratiating himself with a common lady friend at a distance from London, yet at one accessible on horseback, even if not without fatigue." "Mr. W. H.," by the way, becomes William Hammond, concerning whom Mr. Hazlitt favors us with some information and much ingenious guesswork.

It must not be inferred that the volume is valueless. Mr. Hazlitt is a learned and indefatigable bibliographer, as well as a persevering manufacturer and revamper of books. His qualities, good and bad, are well known to scholars, and they all appear in the present "essay." To scholars, then, his 'Shakespear' may be left. They will use it with considerable vexation of spirit, but may find some things in it that will do them good. The general reader will probably let it alone.

Letters from Egypt. By Lady Duff Gordon. London: R. Brimley Johnson; New York: McClure, Phillips & Co. 1902.

Lovers of some of the best letters in English literature will rejoice that Lady Duff Gordon's from Egypt have been reprinted in a single volume. The first series appeared in 1865, the second ('Last Letters') in 1875; and both are now brought together, and some other letters are added. Moreover, all are now printed as Lady Gordon wrote them, so that many characteristic touches, omitted earlier, for various reasons, are given their proper place. This is as it should be; for, if there were ever any doubts as to the lasting quality of this correspondence, they would vanish now that nearly forty years have tested it. The present writer knows of no other Englishwoman's letters that compare with these, and he questions whether the letters of many Englishmen during the past generation will be read longer, or with more delight.

What first strikes one in Lady Gordon's letters is their naturalness; they have high literary excellence, but they do not sacrifice to it the priceless quality, spontaneity. She describes with wonderful vividness the Egypt of the sixties, which had not yet become the commonplace resort of Cook tourists. The land, the people, the associations were to her inexhaustibly interesting. "I write to you out of the real Arabian Nights," is her first greeting from Cairo. But the gorgeousness of the Oriental pageantry is not her main theme. She is not merely a sym-

pathetic traveller, who observes, describes, and passes on. She seeks the human in the Copts and Arabs among whom she lives. She learns to know them better than any other Englishwoman has ever known them; they admit her to their confidence; they look to her for sympathy and aid in their distress; and they come at last almost to worship her as their "Own Lady." The economist not less than the historian will not overlook her account of Egypt from 1862 to 1869, and both will acknowledge that that country to-day, after twenty years of British rule, has greatly improved. Not for the mass of entertaining information, nor for the succession of vivid descriptions, however, will Lady Gordon's letters be most prized. Their deepest charm lies in the fact that they reveal one of the most fascinating of modern women, one who was almost the best specimen of the highest type of Anglo-Saxon womanhood—highly cultivated, tender, strong, fearless; always ready to protect the weak from social or political tyranny; hating pretence; mixing as a matter of course with the best that London could offer or with the humble fellaheen at Luxor; radiantly beautiful; both witty and humorous; and of perfect courage. These letters, written in solitary exile by a consumptive stricken in the prime of life, have no trace of invalidism about them; and, but for passing references to her condition, one would suppose that the writer was as vigorous in body as in mind. But, as Mr. George Meredith says, in an admirable introduction, "her dislike of superlatives, . . . renders hard the task of portraying a woman whose character calls them forth. To him knowing her, they would not fit; her individuality passes between epithets. . . . Lucie Duff Gordon was of the order of women of whom a man of many years may say that their like is to be met but once or twice in a lifetime."

Lady Gordon's daughter, Mrs. Janet Ross, edits this volume. It is to be regretted that she has not amplified the biographical memoir, which stands practically as it first appeared in 1875. A more detailed account of the beautiful Lucie would be welcomed by every one who comes to know her through these letters, and who will hardly be appeased by the chapters devoted to her in Mrs. Ross's 'Three Generations of Englishwomen.' A few inaccuracies ought also to have been corrected; for instance, Heine's "Wenn ich an deinem Hause," first printed in 1824, could not have been inspired by the merry girl of thirteen with whom he played at Boulogne in 1834. The volume has three portraits of Lady Gordon, but not the most beautiful, by Phillips.

Sheridan's Plays. London: David Nutt. 1902.

There have been many editions of Sheridan's famous comedies, but all careful students of stage literature will be glad to possess the authoritative version, printed from the original manuscripts and edited by W. Fraser Rae, which has been published by David Nutt, in a handsome and convenient volume, with every advantage of good paper and typography. Comparatively few persons, probably, are aware that none of these plays except "The Rivals" was given to the world in printed form by Sheridan himself. All the other published copies were reproductions of

those used upon the stage. The original manuscript of "The Rivals" was lost, unfortunately, in the fire which destroyed Covent Garden Theatre, and it is therefore impossible to discover the character or the extent of the alterations made in the piece by the author between the first unsuccessful production of it on the 17th of January, 1775, and the second triumphal presentation nine days later. This, perhaps, is not a matter of much consequence. At all events, we have the comedy in the amended form which Sheridan prepared for the press. Thus there is now a certified text of all the plays, which can scarcely fail to be useful hereafter.

In common with other playwrights, Sheridan, of course, suffered a good deal at the hands of stage-managers and actors, but on the whole he has not been treated very badly. Even adapters, such as Mr. Augustin Daly, did not venture to take important liberties with his dialogue. That he was "cut" sometimes pretty severely, as in the cases of Faulkland and Julia in "The Rivals," is not to be wondered at. That the creator of the Absolutes, Sir Lucius and "Fighting Bob," should have been responsible for this precious pair is a literary fact that cannot easily be explained. Yet, strange to say, that intolerable prig and egotist Faulkland excited the admiration of more than one contemporary critic. In his prelatory notes, Mr. Rae furnishes a number of extracts from the press notices of "The Rivals" as originally played, and they make very amusing reading. In many respects, they are almost as silly as those of to-day, but they indicate pretty plainly that gross incompetency was almost as common among actors then as it is now.

In addition to the Sheridan pieces, "The Rivals," "The School for Scandal," "The Critic," "St. Patrick's Day," and "The Duenna," the present volume contains Mrs. Frances Sheridan's "A Journey to Bath" and an introduction by the late Marquess of Dufferin, Sheridan's great grandson.

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Leyboldt, A. H. Index to the Publishers' Trade List Annual, 1902. Publishers' Weekly.

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