

tor between France and England; England and Holland, and the United States and Mexico. When he died he was a member of the Permanent International Court of Arbitration at The Hague. In 1906 he represented his country at the Geneva Conference for the revision of the Geneva Convention of 1867. He attended the Peace Conference at The Hague in 1907 for the third time. He wrote many books. One, "De Martens on International Law," has been translated into German, French, Spanish, Japanese, Persian, Servian, and other languages. Other works are: "La paix et la guerre," "On Consular Jurisdiction in the East," "Recueil des traités et conventions conclus par la Russie avec les Puissances étrangères," and "Le Conflit entre la Russie et la Chine."

BRÜCKNER'S RUSSIAN LITERATURE.

A Literary History of Russia. By A. Brückner, Professor of Slavonic Languages and Literature in the University of Berlin. Edited by Ellis H. Minns; translated by H. Havelock. New York: Imported by Charles Scribner's Sons. \$4.

This volume is beyond all question the best—and the most unreadable—account of Russian literature accessible in English. Of former attempts, that of Miss Hapgood is a primer, compiled from Russian critical authorities; that of Waliszewski is a light, hasty sketch, clever and superficial; that of Kropotkin, though full of excellent criticism, is rather a panegyric on the liberation movement, as expressed in Russian writers, than a treatment of the national literature in all its aspects. Professor Brückner has a wider acquaintance with his subject, and a more catholic sympathy, than any of his predecessors. His point of view is that of a professional student of literature. Though he does not strive for an impossible freedom from personal bias, his own political views never blind him to the merits of writers who belong to opposite parties.

Unfortunately, this valuable work is clothed in a style that will frighten away any but determined students of literature. In German, though at times he rises to a sombre eloquence, Professor Brückner usually writes in lumbering, involved, often obscure sentences, sometimes marred by Polonisms. To these sentences Mr. Havelock usually adheres with bulldog tenacity, producing a result that is tenfold worse than the original. An English reader can hardly expect a translation from contorted German periods to be light and graceful; he may, however, demand a plain, straightforward, idiomatic rendering that shall not continually distract his attention from the subject of which it treats. Instead of this, Mr. Havelock gives us uncouth diction like the following:

The most respectable performances still

remain those of Tolstóy, Count Alexéy of the name, the youthful playmate of Alexander II, subsequently for many years Master of the Hunt—sport was his ruling passion—grew up from his early youth among impressions, of beautiful scenery in Little Russia, of Art during Italian journeys—with the inevitable visit to Weimar and Goethe, whose majestic language impressed the boy—of literature, a love for and cultivation of which he found among his nearest relatives, into an admirer of Pushkin, and a contemner of modern didactic literature (p. 493). [The misprint of a comma instead of a period after Tolstóy has made a bad matter much worse.]

On the other hand, absolute errors in translation are infrequent. The versions from Russian poets, which have been made by Mr. Minns directly from the Russian, are accurate and simple, though of small literary merit. The index is careless and unsatisfactory.

Of early Russian literature Professor Brückner gives but the briefest sketch (89 out of 545 pages), beginning his fuller treatment with the reign of Catherine the Great. One may regret this choice, and still more his neglect of the remarkable folk-lore of Russia. Most readers would gladly sacrifice many pages of discussion of minor writers of the eighteenth, and even of the nineteenth century, in exchange for an ample account of the early chronicles, of the apocryphal legends, of the "Tale of the Raid of Igor," and, above all, of the Russian popular ballads. As a Pole, Professor Brückner may be prejudiced against Russian mediæval culture, dominated as it is by Eastern Orthodoxy. Be this as it may, he has acted with his eyes open, deliberately sacrificing the earlier periods in order to give a more adequate account of the origin and development of modern Russian literature. He must be judged by his success in carrying out his own plan, the reasons for which he well states in his opening paragraph:

The history of Russian literature must claim full attention in a special degree. Not by its age, for it is the youngest of the great literatures; not by its perfection, for it often foregoes æsthetic effects; but certainly by its peculiar character, the high humanity of its content, its naturalness and sincerity, its soaring idealism, the depth and pathos of its effects, and lastly, the significance it claims in the mental life of the nation. To Englishmen or Frenchmen, Germans or Italians, polite literature is only one form for the expression of national feeling and thought: to the intelligent Russian, without a free press, without the liberty of assembly, without the right to free expression of opinion, literature became the last refuge of his freedom of thought, the only means of propagating higher ideas. He expected and demanded of his country's literature not merely æsthetic recreation: he placed it at the service of everything noble and good, of his aspirations, of the enlightening and emancipation of the spirit. Hence the striking partiality, nay unfairness, displayed by the Russians towards the most perfect works

of their own literature where they did not answer to the aims or the expectations of their party or their day. A purely æsthetic handling of the subject would not gain it full acceptance.

Accordingly, Professor Brückner adopts primarily the sociological point of view. He makes us understand the great controversy between the Slavophiles and the Westerners, so important for any proper appreciation of the novels of Dostoevsky and Turgénev. He gives an idea, somewhat fragmentary, to be sure, of the radical and materialistic movement of the sixties, and notes the part played in it by different writers. He shows how Ostrovsky's dramas form a protest against the ignorance and brutality of the Russian merchant class, displaying, in Dobrolúbov's phrase, a veritable "kingdom of darkness." He explains how the "poets of pure art," Máikov, Tyutchev, and others, were valued only by a small number of expert judges, while the bitterness and indignation of Nekrásov's verse-pamphlets made him the idol of all young men. In this way the author makes his literary history a running commentary on the social aspirations and speculations of the Russian educated public.

Yet, unlike many Russian critics, Professor Brückner does not allow himself to be dominated by one method of attack. He is careful to give an estimate of the merits of each writer as an artist, and to make us feel at every step that Russian literature is a part of European literature, and follows the same general course of development. He is perhaps at his best in his general criticism of periods or movements, such as this of the romantic poets:

Whoever, leaving the exotic and mystical blooms of German, French, and English romanticism, approaches the Russian, remains disappointed. The longing for the *fleur bleue*, the fantastic ride into wonderland, allegories heavy with meaning, pantheistic or social dreams, mystical transports, are all essentially alien to Russian literature as to the Russian temperament. Both are by nature very sober, clinging to the clod of reality, and do not roam among the stars. Sound sense—how rich Pushkin was in it!—a mind tinged with skepticism, for the Russian only laughs at German enthusiasm and exaggeration; a very moderate feeling for nature, for only men interest the Russian—his landscapes are much too lacking in variety and charm; a direct aversion for abstractions, for hitherto Russia has produced no noteworthy philosopher, though it has theologians and moralists. Such conditions, I say, are most unfavorable to the flourishing of flowers of romance. How soon Pushkin came to his senses, how few Russian poems there are that move in the flaunting garb of romanticism, with all its lilies and stars! At this day we see that the re-birth of poetry, symbolical, dependent, or philosophical, is in Russia a most difficult matter, and reaps rather cheap ridicule than serious consideration (p. 211).

Yet here the author, in giving an excellent verdict upon Russian poetry, betrays himself into too broad a generalization upon Russian literature as a whole. His own analysis (pp. 423, 424) of Chernyshévsky's novel (or, to use Brückner's word, his *phantasia*), "What Is to Be Done?" which had more influence than any other one book upon young Russians of the sixties, proves that he realizes that "social dreams" are by no means absent from Russian literature. Indeed, utopian speculation is almost as characteristic of the Russian temperament as is realistic satire. To explain why it has never found expression in Russian poetry is a problem that, though in itself not difficult, has unfortunately not attracted Professor Brückner's attention.

The critic's æsthetic judgments, though not specially individual or penetrating, are nearly always sound and judicious. His general estimate of Pushkin, for example, is the best with which the present writer is acquainted:

Pushkin founded a school; even in the older writers, who were once his teachers, one sees his influence. It is essentially one of form; not wealth of ideas, but the mastery of "Pushkin's verse," which has become simply an æsthetic definition, is aimed at, mostly to no purpose, by his successors. The indescribable music of verse, its full sensuousness, plasticity, too, with nothing blurred or indistinct, are coupled with genuine and deep feeling, sincere melancholy, and lively whims; if he lacks the passionate glow of love as of hate, yet in his creations he always achieves that balance which he so painfully missed in life. He gives quite the impression of a classical poet, and especially in his later work one forgets his romantic antecedents, and throughout it is the perfection of his form which begets these illusions. It seems to us a natural expression, as if it had been born with the matter or the idea; but behind the apparent ease and absence of effort lurks conscientious, untiring work, polishing and shaping, above all shortening and compressing of the diction, which now drapes the body like a heavy rustling dress of state, now floats about like a loose wrapping (p. 206).

In his opinions on the great Russian novelists Professor Brückner will not always command the assent of Anglo-Saxon readers, brought up in a world of commerce and industry, with its emphasis on the strenuous life. The average American reader of Russian fiction will heartily applaud his praises of Tolstoy's artistic genius; but may demur, whether justly or no need not be argued here, at his description of the great novelist as "physical and moral strength incarnate." Reading further, he will be inclined to vigorous protest when he finds that the critic reserves his most glowing enthusiasm for the diseased, epileptic Dostoevsky. After a comprehensive analysis of that writer's work, he concludes:

As long as metaphysical questions—ques-

tions of good and evil or of the darker side of the human spirit—are raised, so long will Dostoevsky be read. He is one of the few in the world's literature who can never be forgotten: he leaves behind him the profoundest impressions, which can never be effaced, and he stirs the innermost fibres of our spirit. . . . Perhaps there are in the world's literature figures of greater talent, or, rather, more repute; a warmer, more feeling heart there certainly never was. Not in "Faust," but rather in "Crime and Punishment," does the "whole woe of mankind" take hold of us (p. 416).

The critic is right only if sentiment, Chauvinism, and pathological psychology are the sole—or the most essential—materials of a novelist's art.

Of minor defects in Professor Brückner's work nothing need be said here. Professor Veselovsky, in a review of the German edition (*Archiv für Slavische Philologie*, xxviii, 128), has pointed out various errors in matters of fact, none of which will trouble the general reader. The book as a whole may be recommended almost without reserve as the one thorough, comprehensive, and scholarly account of Russian literature in any of the languages of Western Europe.

CURRENT FICTION.

The Planter. By Herman Whitaker. New York: Harper & Bros.

There are moments in the reading of this powerful story of the rubber industry in Mexico, when, like the Abolitionists who demanded "free sugar" of their grocers, one is tempted to forswear forever the use of any article made of rubber. No tale of ante-bellum slavery days could disclose greater horrors than this narrative of tropical labor, contemporaneous, we may suppose from its allusions. The worst treated slaves of the darkest South endured no more cruelty than that here shown as visited upon the contract laborers of Mexico.

The masters varied in their ways of meeting the situation. Thus the American Ewing took his wife with him, established a domestic hearth, and treated his riff-raff laborers as well as he could. The Englishman fell into the usages of the country as he found them, and did his small-souled best from that point of view. The Austrian Jew added to the highly available, ready-made bad, something that was still worse, in the shape of devilish inventions of his own. To this group of planter neighbors is added, presently, David Mann, a Maine boy, with Puritan ideals and the aspirations of a reformer. From a narrowly orthodox mother and a successful lumberman father he derives the qualities that make him a good fighter for his own morals and for his people's improvement—a young David against Goliaths of rascal rubber companies at home and barbari-

ties on the plantations. The story leads him through terrible predicaments, though not unaided by friendly sympathy from his American neighbors and from the best Mexican attitude, personified in a charming girl. She shares his longings to secure freedom for his slaves and justice for all his workers, whether jail scourings or captive Indians. The book ends with the beginning of a better day for masters and servants up and down the river.

The spell of the tropics, the feel of the jungle, the pride of the planter, the problems of race, have an eloquent showing. One must accept the Roman in a story of Rome. Otherwise it would be easy to object not only to the luxuriant length of the novel—five hundred and thirty-odd pages—but to excess of tropical epithet and description, and of the tropically explicit. The characters are defined with more than usual force. It is unquestionably a book of great power, stamping in its sharp-bitten impressions with mighty blows.

Marriage à La Mode. By Mrs. Humphry Ward. New York: Doubleday, Page & Co.

A book dealing indignantly with the untoward possibilities of American divorce is not what we should have expected from Mrs. Ward. We have so long been accustomed to receive from her some treatment of what might be called the grandinsular theme—the great world of little England—that it is surprising at first thought to find her concerning herself with our relatively trifling affairs. But we are presently reassured by the discovery that the paramount consideration is still the same. She inveighs against American divorce, not as a mere transatlantic monster which the world may behold preying upon the misguided inhabitants of that part of the globe, but as a foe which (thanks to the now prevalent habit of international marriages) threatens the peace and integrity of the British fireside. There is a note of panic, consequently, in her performance. She is afraid: no wonder her voice reaches an unaccustomed pitch; no wonder the horrid instance she cites is a bit strained. The disconcerting thing to the American reader is that she apparently regards her Daphne as in some sense typical of our womankind. Poor Daphne has great wealth, much physical charm, and an immeasurable egoism. Her accomplishments are hollow, her connoisseurship a sham, her manners a game which she is able to play while things go to please her. But she is capable of browbeating a husband, riding roughshod over the sensibilities of a mother-in-law, and, if you please, outbidding a duchess to her face for the possession of a costly knick-knack.

The young Englishman whose fireside she blasts is not unduly idealized by his