

gether provincial ballads, Durham poems, Scottish verses, patriotic rhythms of Lawrence Minot, snatches concerning Robin Hood, select collections "with their original airs," Yorkshire ditties, Northumberland minstrelsy, and love songs, drinking songs, and patriotic songs of all centuries. The interest in this type of versification was very great. Burns was singing in far-away Scotland, Dibdin was touring the provinces, Moore was preparing to entertain the salons of Lord Lansdowne, and later poets were soon to write stanzas for music and more genuine lyrics. The Romanticism of the new century, even then on its way, received no slight impulse from this activity. The collection of Dodsley, the volumes for which Johnson wrote his "Lives of the Poets," the "Specimens" of Coleridge—these were all part and parcel of the same general movement. In this movement, or in this "period," as the academically minded would say, belonged Joseph Ritson.

Personally, he led a strange life. Apprenticed to a lawyer at Stockton-on-Tees, he came up to London in 1775, and thereafter practiced the profession of a conveyancer. But although he wrote exactly and well upon his own profession, the interest nearest his heart gradually came to be antiquarian research of a literary nature. Almost every day he could be seen walking from his quarters in Gray's Inn to the British Museum, stooping slightly from bending over many books in his own and in public libraries; the determined jaw of a vigorous controversialist, the bold forehead of the scholar, and the thin, pale face of an acute investigator standing forth clear and sharp in contrast with the plain black suit he usually wore. He was distinctly a conveyancer, and a successful one, for in those days, as Charles Lamb has more recently said, literature might do very nicely as a staff, but would hardly serve as a crutch. His investigations, therefore, were to be ranked among his many avocations. For example, his avowed sympathy with the French Revolution impelled him to make a trip to Paris in 1791 with William Shield, the musician, who was likewise a radical, and who had assisted him on one of his collections. In common with other radicals—and he was on the side of the rebels in the Gordon Riots and in the arrest of Holcroft, Hardy, Tooke, and Thelwall in 1794—he dressed simply, lived plainly, professed atheism, "detested every species of aristocracy," sneered at lawyers, and almost worshipped Paine, Voltaire, and Rousseau. He disagreed with Burke, who said that the French had shown themselves "the ablest architects of ruin that had hitherto existed in the world," and, praising "the dissemination and establishment of those sacred and fundamental principles of liberty and equality," declared that "no people ancient or modern was ever so deserving of admiration." Add to this his strict adherence and persistent advocacy of vegetarianism, and we have the man in all his eccentricity.

In his work he is significant; in his life he is interesting. If he hedged and "talked politics as little as possible in order to avoid Newgate," if he was a little too critical of the republican theories as to the effectiveness of the "force and energy of mind," if he was too unrestrained in his controversial pamphleteering in antiquarian matters, we must still render credit to his vigorous will and earnest endeavor. Like Holcroft and Gifford, he was mostly self-taught; and the credit is all his.

To a man whom scholars should respect and the public should not forget, this study by Mr. Burd is an adequate tribute. It is marred by scarcely any errors. There is one

instance of bad proofreading (p. 195); there is an inconsistency in regard to the date of Ritson's appointment as High Bailiff of the Savoy (cf. pp. 27 and 51); and it is hardly acceptable to quote Carlyle as an historical authority to be used or as a worthy source when referring to incidents in the French Revolution (p. 174, n. 8). But these are inconsequential slips.

## An Assault on the Temple of Germanic Philology

*Commentary to the Germanic Laws and Mediæval Documents.* By Leo Wiener, Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures at Harvard University. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

THE unpretending title and modest proportions of Professor Wiener's book give little hint of its revolutionary theories, or of the elaborate arguments by which those theories are defended. It is proposed, in this volume and in another to appear in the future, to pull down many of the stately arches of the temple of Germanic philology about the heads of the worshippers, and to attack cherished shrines of Romance and Slavic philologists as well. Some outlines of this iconoclasm were given in the *Nation* for May 7, 1914, and detailed analysis in forthcoming publications was there promised. The author has now kept his word, and submitted to the world of scholars a mass of evidence in support of his very sensational contentions.

Adequate criticism of the main body of the book is difficult in a brief review. An enormous amount of linguistic detail, drawn from more than eighty different dialects, is presented to the reader with bewildering energy. Such detailed arguments demand detailed examination; here it will be possible only to test the soundness of the general method. The introductory material is more manageable, although this presupposes considerable knowledge of ethnography, paleography, theology, and history. The fairest way to treat the work seems to be to give a general outline of its aims and methods, with some indications of its errors. For it is our opinion that Professor Wiener's attempt to play the rôle of Samson in the halls of Germanic philology has failed.

The Preface, which also affords an introduction to the volume to come, states the way in which the study was undertaken—a point of some importance, since destructive criticism was not in the beginning intended. The work began with "analyzing and excerpting all the accessible documents, to the number of 250,000 or more, from the earliest times of the Roman Empire to the year 1300," in order to control the statements of Germanic, Romance, and Slavic philologists in regard to the history and meaning of words. The results showed "that hardly a historical fact, hardly a law, had been ascertained in connection with the morphological and semantic development of intrinsic words." Particularly puzzling to the author, moreover, was the discovery "that words which from the study of the documents could not possibly have existed before the sixth or seventh century, invariably turned up in the Gothic vocabulary." It was then revealed by "microscopic study of the Gothic language" that "there was not a single fact which could be construed as a proof that the Gothic documents, as we possess them, were written in the fourth cen-

tury by Ulfilas. It soon turned out that the palæographic proof was flimsy and that the subject-matter of the Skeireins could not have been composed before the ninth century." The present book embodies only a small part of the results of these researches. "The second volume will discuss the more than two hundred words of Arabic origin in the Gothic Bible and in all the Germanic languages. I will also show that the Naples and Arezzo Gothic documents are late eighth century forgeries, that Jordanes has come down to us in manuscripts interpolated about the same time, that Germanic mythology is of a literary Gothic origin, based on Arabic sources, and that no literary documents in Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Old High German exist which do not show the influence of the Arabicised Gothic language."

Here is thunder in the index, indeed! We must, however, confine our discussion to the volume just published. The main part of the book is occupied with the "commentary to the Germanic laws and legal documents." In this the author aims to show that much material is really derived from Roman or non-Germanic sources. The first section of the general Introduction makes the underlying principle of these commentaries clearer. Here the general nature of the development of the early Germanic tribes is considered. In the first place, the assumption that the development of a people must be analogous to biological evolution is attacked, and cases of rapid transition from one state of society to another radically different are cited. The statement that the Germanic peoples had enjoyed, prior to the fifth century, a form of civilization similar to that of the centuries following, is challenged, and attention called to the fact that the documents which are held to prove the continuance of this early civilization "are compiled in the Latin language, and betray the Roman notarial attitude towards legal and social institutions." A somewhat elaborate parallel is then drawn between the early Germanic tribes and certain of the North American Indians. The Cherokees, in coming into close contact with the whites after the establishment of the United States, changed from the hunting to the agricultural state, and adopted the legal and political systems of the dominant race, though they were unconscious that their own laws were deduced from those of their neighbors. "Even so the Franks," says Professor Wiener, "were utterly unaware of the fact that their simple Salic and Ribuarian laws were derived from the Roman laws just as much, though not so directly, as were the Burgundian and Visigothic laws, and were based on the Theodosian Code and local Roman enactments."

This general line of argument is by no means new. Many years ago, Guizot, in his "Histoire de la Civilisation en France," pointed out how much the available sources of information in regard to the Germanic tribes before the Migrations have been influenced by later conceptions, that after the barbarian invasions "Germanic society was profoundly altered, and that these modifications affected the laws; the legal code of the Visigoths and that of the Burgundians are far more Roman than barbaric; three-quarters of their provisions deal with facts that could only have arisen after the establishment of these peoples upon Roman soil" (fourteenth edition, Paris, 1876, p. 202). Teutonic scholars are sharply criticised by Guizot for failing to make due allowances in reconstructing the primitive Germans from these later documents. Finally, he draws a series of parallels between the statements of Tacitus and descrip-

tions of modern peoples in an early stage of culture, particularly the North American Indians, Iroquois, Illinois, Hurons, etc. "Vous voyez," he concludes, "quel est l'état social qui correspond à celui de l'ancienne Germanie: que faut-il donc penser des descriptions magnifiques qui en ont été si souvent tracées?" Guizot will do for an example; the problem is one which has troubled many clear-sighted scholars. "Our typical German," says Professor Gummere, "like Plato's ideal horse, is a very difficult matter to define and draw." It does not seem that Professor Wiener has given sufficient idea of previous discussions of this subject; the reader would at all events welcome some references to the authorities who have championed the views he is attacking, and to previous dissent from these views, where it has existed.

When all deductions have been made, comparisons with the North American Indians are likely to be more false than illuminating. It is not necessary to reduce the Germanic peoples of the Migration Period to such a level in order to prove the effects of Roman culture upon them. They were in possession of a highly artistic native poetry, revealing a state of society far removed from that of savages. This poetry, extant in late form, presupposes a long development; "Beowulf" represents an art already on the decline. Both the principles of Germanic society and the artistry of Germanic poetry were far removed from those of Rome. Attempts to show that elements in this civilization which seem thoroughly native were really derived from other sources must be received with caution.

These considerations lead us to question the antecedent probability of many etymologies in the main part of the book. The *sculta-sculan* argument (p. 50) will do for an illustration. "*Sculta*, then, meant, 'guilt, debt, compulsion, that which one owes.' . . . The underlying meaning is invariably 'the compulsion in cases of debt or crime,' hence Gothic *skuldō* 'that which one owes, a debt, due,' *skulds* 'owing,' and from this we get the back formations *skula* 'debtor, liable to, in danger of,' *skulan* 'to owe, to be obliged to, to be about to.' The Germanic philologist, who makes his facts fit in with his abstract laws, will be shocked at finding a preteropresent verb among those borrowed from a Latin root." The Gothic "*daugan*," Professor Wiener finds, is "also a preteropresent and borrowed from the Latin" (p. 50). We think the Germanic philologist ought to be shocked, because the thing is so improbable. The preteritive-present verbs bear in their inflection all the signs of long presence in the language, and their meaning is not secondary or special, but fundamental. They are in a very different class from learned words, which are easily taken over from another language. But we are asked to believe that these two preteritive-presents were borrowed from Latin in the late fourth century. Incidentally it may be remarked that there is no such form as *daugan* in Gothic.

This chapter (pp. 40-51) may serve as an example of Professor Wiener's methods, since it elaborates material which he selected for illustration in the article above referred to. "I will take one group of words," he there said, "and, treating them *historiologically*, not *philologically* [*italics his*], will show that Ulfilas could not have used them, even though they began to form in his day." There is certainly much in the historiological method to give pause to the philologist. Relationships established between words of similar meaning on the basis of slight phonetic correspondences may be significant, but are dangerous when



uncontrolled by scientific observation of linguistic processes. The pitfall of "popular etymology" yawns wide. Furthermore, in this book suggested derivations are frequently put forward not as suggestions, but as statements of fact. "The form *exculeatores* of the *Notitia dignitatum* must have arisen from a shorter form *culeatores*, and this is actually found in Welsh and Cornish, that is, in British, until the present day. We have Cornish *golyas*, *gollyaz*," etc., etc. (p. 40). "There are two series of crimes which are principally included in the amnesty, those arising from debt, and those arising from such pretty [*sic!*] crimes as do not call for serious criminal prosecution, hence we get from (*in*) *dulgere* in Goth. *dulgs*, 'debt' and in OHG *tolg*, *tole*, OFrisian *dolg*," etc., etc. (p. 47). Occasionally, however, a phrase like "no doubt" or "obviously" puts the reader on his guard. The argument is often confused, and the phraseology ambiguous or obscure. But these are minor issues. The chief question is whether the reader is prepared to reject all that linguistic science has contributed to an understanding of early dialects and follow the "historiological" method. If he is, then there is no point in attempting to refute these combinations by philological observations. If he is not, he will find that many of them suggest their own unsoundness.

The second part of the Introduction aims to show that the extant fragments of the Gothic Bible are not part of a translation by Ulfilas in the fourth century, and that the "Skeireins," a commentary on the Gospel of St. John, is based on Alcuin, and cannot have been written before 801.

Here again it is impossible to review the elaborate arguments from documentary evidence, paleography, theology, etc., but a few points may be noted. Philostorgius is authority for the statement that Ulfilas invented the Gothic alphabet, and that he translated the Bible, save the Book of Kings, which he omitted lest it should inflame the warlike Goths. "But Ulfilas," says Professor Wiener, "did not invent a Gothic alphabet, having at best added a few additional signs to the Greek letters then in use, and the reference to the omission of the Book of Kings is apocryphal, totally devoid of probability. We have, therefore, no reason to assume that the statement regarding the translation of the Bible is more correct." It must surely be remembered that Philostorgius was not speaking with the accuracy of the modern scholar; the combination of Greek, Latin, and Runic letters might well have seemed to him invention. If the reason for the omission of the Book of Kings is apocryphal, the fact may have been true, as Streitberg, a better authority than Gabelentz and Loebe, holds. It is significant that scholars like Bessell and Pallmann, who are often skeptical about the authority of Philostorgius, accept his statement in regard to the translation of the Bible. Where evidence fits his theory, our author is less assailed by doubts. Walafrid Strabo says the Bible was translated into Gothic by "learned men." He wrote in the ninth century, and Ulfilas flourished in the fourth—time enough for perversion of the facts, especially when the carelessness of mediæval ascriptions of authorship is remembered. But Professor Wiener accepts his evidence very readily: "Thus the ascription of the Gothic Bible to Ulfilas is once more made impossible." Before passing judgment on the argument that the Skeireins is based on Alcuin, it would be advisable to scrutinize the sources of Alcuin with some care. Some years ago, Professor Carleton Brown showed the weakness of Cook's theory of a late

dating of Cynewulf's "Elene" on the ground of similarities to the work of Alcuin, by pointing out that the resemblances to Alcuin in the "Elene" hold equally for Alcuin's source. Such a situation is possible here.

Apparently a vast deal of time and labor have been expended upon this book. It is a pity that accepted methods of criticism have so often been slighted, and enthusiasm so often allowed to override caution. A great and revolutionary book—such as this would be if its conclusions were sound—should be lucid, poised, systematic, and rigorously critical. Only through these qualities can theories so far-reaching in their implications command attention and carry conviction to the judicious.

## Notes

PUBLICATIONS by Little, Brown & Company for Saturday are as follows: "The Hornet's Nest," by Mrs. Wilson Woodrow; "Joan and the Babies and I," by Cosmo Hamilton; "The Menace of Japan," by Frederick McCormick; "Mental Conflicts and Misconduct," by William Healy; "Psychology of Special Abilities and Disabilities," by Augusta F. Bronner.

"Second Wind," by Freeman Tilden, and "Howells," by Alexander Harvey, are announced as forthcoming by B. W. Huebsch.

Dodd, Mead & Company will publish the following volumes on Saturday: "The Girls at His Billet," by Berta Ruck; "Shadows," by Grahame Richards; "The Life of the Grasshopper," by J. Henri Fabre, translated by Alexander Teixeira de Mattos; "Man's Unconscious Conflict," by Wilfrid Lay, and "Across Asia Minor on Foot," by W. J. Childs.

"Flame and the Shadow Eater," by Henrietta Weaver, and "Poems of Earth's Meaning," by Richard Burton, are included in the spring list of Henry Holt & Company.

The following volumes are announced as forthcoming by G. P. Putnam's Sons: "The Man in Evening Clothes," by John Reed Scott; "Antony Gray—Gardener," by Leslie Moore; "The Song of the Sirens," by Grace Denio Litchfield; "Chocolate Cake and Black Sand and Other Plays," by Samuel Milbank Cauldwell; "The Government of England—National, Local, and Imperial," by D. D. Wallace; "The Man in Court," by F. D. Wells, and "The Fragrant Notebook," by C. Arthur Coan.

THE lamentable manifesto issued by German professors directly after the outbreak of the war has not been forgotten, but it is now counterbalanced happily enough by a collection of essays of similar origin, "Modern Germany in Relation to the Great War" (Mitchell Kennerley; \$2 net). As an offset to passionate recriminations we have a philosophic book inspired by the purpose "to reveal and express Germany to the world in terms of German civilization and German social vision." The table of contents of the new books makes a notable display of authors and topics; it cites not only the names of Delbrück, Schmoller, and Troeltsch, of Berlin; of Marcks, of Munich, and of Oncken, of Heidelberg, but also a range of themes embracing economic statistics, the spirit of self-government in Germany, international law, the meaning of the war, and discussions of the spirit and motives of Germany's allies and enemies. Vigorous exception may be taken to indi-