

remarkably low price of the volume brings it within the range of every American student of archaeology or history; and it seems a matter of course that few university, college, or public libraries will be without it.

KUNO FRANCKE

Conrad Is Himself

Joseph Conrad, His Romantic Realism. By Ruth M. Stauffer. The Four Seas Company. \$2.50.

DOES it matter to Joseph Conrad whether he is classified as a realist or a romanticist, a romantic-realist or realist-romanticist?

To Conrad the question must appear to be as academic, as far removed from the purposes his art is to serve as was the information Polonius conveyed to Hamlet, to wit, that the traveling players, Elsinore-bound, could enact not only comedy and tragedy but also "history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individual or poem unlimited." Perhaps this attempt to classify Conrad represents, to Miss Stauffer, a needful profession of faith and the volume an humble offering to the shrine of the master, a consolidation of his claims to the more serious attention of the present generation, if not to immortality. Yet, to Conrad himself, this pigeonholing, a process to which Miss Stauffer virtually confesses, must appear altogether beside the mark.

If ever there was an outstanding creator who proceeded to his work without predilections as to method, without conscious choice of manner, it was Conrad. His touching modesty on the occasion of his first interview in this country—that aboard the incoming Tuscania on May Day morning—permits of no other conclusion, even should no other evidence be available. "You know," he declared deprecatingly, "my mind is not critical. I have not the general culture for criticism. . . . Even to this day I do not like writing. It is a frightful grind."

What must a master of this character say to the barrage of impressive quotations behind which Miss Stauffer, after dismissing the elusively simple classifications of realist and romanticist, arrives at the conclusion that he is a romantic-realist? Does it matter?

When Miss Stauffer confesses her inability to "place" Mr. Conrad either as a romanticist or a realist and designates him romantic-realist is she not thereby confessing the more important fact that, to her, Conrad transcends classification? Perceiving in his work the best qualities of both romanticist and realist—assuming the necessity of employing this dichotomy in critical estimates—and finding it needful, moreover, to place a tag upon him for future reference, she must conclude that he combines in himself the best qualities of both, thus completing her critical journey at her starting-point.

To write that "in the descriptions of men Conrad uses the uncompromising method of the realist; and reserves the suggestiveness and poetry of the romantic style for descriptions of nature and of women" is to assert that the novelist uses instinct, and not method, employing realism and romanticism as means to the dominant end of relating a story effectively. It is not as a romanticist that we shall remember Joseph Conrad, or as a realist; neither as a realist-romanticist nor a romantic-realist, but as a story-teller to whom realism and romanticism were either useful tools or useless abstractions. That is the substance of it.

To the reviewer it seems that Mr. Neilson, whom Miss Stauffer quotes, has excellently generalized the point at issue in so far as Conrad is concerned: "The supreme artists at their best," he writes, "rise above conflicts and propaganda, and are known, not by the intensity of their partisanship, but by the perfection of their balance. They show the virtues of all the schools; and in them each virtue is not weakened, but supported, by the presence of others which lesser men had supposed to be antagonistic."

HARRY SALPETER

John Addington Symonds

Letters and Papers of John Addington Symonds. Collected and edited by Horatio F. Brown. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$3.50.

THE reception that this book is to receive will depend upon the sympathies and antipathies of the reader. That is of course the case with any book; but it is particularly true of this, for the reader will be drawn to Symonds's personality only if he sympathizes with the characteristically late nineteenth-century spiritual doubts and misgivings which found such abundant expression in the correspondence and the verse of the author of the "Renaissance in Italy." The biography which Mr. Brown published nearly thirty years ago was made up in large part of extracts from Symonds's letters and journals, and this new volume is a sort of supplement, apparently intended to reach those who do not know the "Life." Readers of the "Life" will find little new here. There is abundant record of the industrious fecundity which poured out book after book; there is the same profound and wistful love of beauty, especially the beauty of Italian art and landscape; there is the same strange and hectic energy that alternated with periods of weak despondency; there is the same evidence of perpetual groping after the truth and determination to live resolutely in the Whole, the Good, and the Beautiful, notwithstanding the ravaging disease from which the writer suffered. Like Pater, with whom Symonds had much in common in taste and little in philosophy and style, Symonds reflects lucidly the mind of his generation. Not a great or original thinker, he stands between the general educated body of readers and the group of philosophic Oxonians who were his friends. He is an interpreter of the new ideas in terms of the old beauty.

There are but few "Papers" in this volume. This is disappointing, for the most interesting part of the book is the first section, the record of an evening at the house of Thomas Woolner, the sculptor, when Symonds, then but twenty-five years of age, heard Woolner and his father, Dr. Symonds, and Holman Hunt, and Tennyson, and Gladstone converse after dinner. The talk turned to the Eyre scandal. Gladstone attacked and Tennyson defended the cruel governor of Jamaica. "Tennyson did not argue. He kept asserting various prejudices and convictions. . . . Gladstone looked glum and irate." Later in the evening, when Tennyson had been persuaded to read his translation of the passage in Homer of Achilles shouting in the trench, "Gladstone continually interrupted him with small points about words. . . . It was always to air some theory of his own that he broke Tennyson's recital; and he seemed listening only in order to catch something up."

For a few more vivid scenes such as this one would gladly sacrifice Symonds's metaphysical speculations. The book contains many acute brief bits of literary criticism; some good counsel to younger men about to enter upon a career of letters; and much attractive evidence of the warmth of Symonds's heart and his attachment to friends.

SAMUEL C. CHEW

Modern French Philosophy

Modern French Philosophy. By J. Alexander Gunn. Dodd, Mead and Company. \$5.

THE nineteenth century in French philosophy has been singularly neglected by historians. It is scarcely ever more than mentioned in the usual general histories, and except for the name of Comte rarely occurs in the university courses. In France itself there have been no treatises covering the whole period. Dr. Gunn's study, then, although it does not do more than touch philosophers who wrote before 1851, is peculiarly welcome. It is pioneer work. Considering this, and the fact that it is an expanded doctoral dissertation, one should be generous in appraising it.

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