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Books of Special Interest

Restoration Drama

A HISTORY OF RESTORATION DRAMA, 1660-1700. By ALLARDYCE NICOLL. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Macmillan). 1923.

RESTORATION COMEDY, 1660-1720. By BONAMY DOBRÉE. New York: Oxford University Press. 1924. \$2.

COMEDY AND CONSCIENCE AFTER THE RESTORATION. By JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH. New York: Columbia University Press. 1924. \$2.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE HENRY NETTLETON
Author of "English Drama of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century."

THE recent publication by the University Presses of Cambridge, Oxford, and Columbia of three critical studies of Restoration drama emphasizes anew the change in the academic status of English stage-plays since the days when Sir Thomas Bodley dismissed them as "baggage books" unworthy of room "in so noble a Librarie" as that which he founded at Oxford. Sir William Osler liked to illustrate this with the story of how it cost the Bodleian Library three thousand pounds, in 1906, to regain its original copy of Shakespeare's First Folio which had been sold as a needless duplicate when the Third Folio of 1663-4 came out. But the full academic consideration now given to that body of Restoration comedy which Macaulay pronounced "a disgrace to our language and our national character" is still more a case in point.

The Cambridge and Oxford volumes approach Restoration drama from different angles. Mr. Nicoll is primarily a student of history; Mr. Dobrée, an interpreter of literature. The historian aims resolutely at the facts. His best source is the Public Record Office from which he has generously drawn valuable material bearing on Restoration stage-history. Mr. Dobrée draws mainly from wide reading in the general literature of the period, Continental as well as English. He prefers to roam where even critical fancy is free. The merits and limitations of each writer are enforced by the contrast. The historian proceeds *fortiter in re*; the critic, *suaviter in modo*. The former has assured energy in investigating facts rather than an equally assured faculty of critical interpretation; the latter tends at times to disregard facts that might mar his fancy.

The solidity of Mr. Nicoll's work suggests at once its chief merit and defect. The weight of his task often depresses his style. His account of the Comedy of Manners has not caught from it the contagion of its easy urbanity. In the gracious presence of Congreve's brilliant lovers, he stands somewhat ill at ease. "Mirabell and Millamant, about whom the plot, such as it is, gyrates continually, are not complete figures: they are merely automata, devised as mouth-pieces for the poet." Alas, poor Millamant! Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment that were wont to beguile Hazlitt and George Meredith? Mr. Dobrée, on the other hand, feels that even Meredith does not do full justice to Millamant. So far from admitting with Mr. Nicoll that "The Way of the World" has "no sentiment in it, no realism," he finds Millamant and Mrs. Marwood "figures of an intense realism," and interprets Congreve as the poet of disillusion whose vital sympathy lends even a tragic touch to the comic vision. Mr. Dobrée's danger lies in imposing sometimes too heavy a weight upon a slender fabric. Not quite content with building up a case for Congreve's "wicked" *jeunes premiers* as gentlemen whose manners are little removed from ours and whose sowing of wild oats represents "the common-sense attitude current even in Victorian days," he must needs press on to a dangerously dogmatic conclusion: "Once they have come to marriage, they show the utmost sincerity." Is it so sure that all Congreve's fifth act conversions would be sustained if the curtain were to go up again for a sixth act? Was that the Way of the World then, or even in Victorian days?

The wide divergencies in substance and style between Mr. Nicoll and Mr. Dobrée may be illustrated more broadly. Mr. Nicoll's section on The Comedy of Manners closes thus:

The chief things to remember about the development of the comedy of manners are, that it was not the principal fare of the theatres from 1664 to 1700, and that it was not even distinctively of the Restoration age at all. Some of its principal exponents live after the death of Charles.

This is the conclusion of an annalist of facts, not of an analyst of Restoration

comedy. One might object, in passing, to the inconsistency in stressing a point of chronology quite at odds with the author's habitual use of the term "Restoration" and with the very title of his volume. But the real issue lies deeper. Are these negative injunctions as to the facts, in reality, "the chief things to remember about the development of the comedy of manners?" Mr. Dobrée in his final summary prefers positive praise, declaring that Wycherley's "Country Wife" "can take its place among the great masterpieces of the ages," and finding it "hard to imagine that in any civilized age" "The Country Wife" and "The Way of the World" "will not be regarded as glories of our literature, gems of our theatrical inheritance." Mr. Nicoll, as historian, has faced an arduous task arduously. Unconsciously, perhaps, his tone tends to harden into that of a taskmaster, toward his own work as well as toward that of others. Mr. Dobrée, as critic, follows an ardent quest ardently. He is quite content to be carried away by his subject even at possible risk to his own control.

Mr. Krutch's work, less exhaustive in scope than Mr. Nicoll's and less emotional in expression than Mr. Dobrée's, centers on Jeremy Collier's famous onslaught on the English stage. He reviews the Restoration comic tradition and follows the course of sentimental comedy through the first quarter of the eighteenth century. His general conclusions confirm fully the rational interpretation of Collier as the popular spokesman—not the unique prophet—of the rising opposition to the license of Restoration comedy, the voice through which an inevitable movement toward reform became articulate. He reinforces the verdict against those earlier extremists who sometimes magnified and sometimes belittled Collier's real position. Mr. Krutch's chief service is in enlarging the immediate materials and general background for study of the English stage reformation rather than in establishing new critical theories.

It is a matter of serious regret that only Mr. Dobrée attempts any bibliography which includes the recent "literature of the subject" (to adopt the generous phrase), and that his is so scanty that, were it not for a single entry, it would seem that American publications were intentionally excluded. Had Mr. Nicoll, for example, attempted to list even incidentally the output of historical and critical studies, editions, and texts of Restoration drama published in the quarter-century since Ward's revision of his master-work on English drama, he could hardly have risked his sweeping initial assumptions as to the task of the present historian of Restoration drama: "The works of which he treats have been, rightly or wrongly, neglected by scholar and by layman alike. . . . The whole period is one which for long has been untouched." Mr. Nicoll's extravagant generalizations, which would be discredited even by many an undergraduate student of Restoration drama, contrast oddly with his painstaking "Hand-list of Restoration plays." Mr. Krutch essays a difficult and desirable bibliography of critical works between 1660 and 1700, but the whirligig of time has brought in strange revenges in admitting Buckingham's burlesque, "The Rehearsal," but not Dryden's "Essay of Dramatic Poesy," his "Defence," or his "Essay of Heroic Plays"—or, for that matter, such works as Howard's critical prefaces. More satisfactory is his extended bibliography of the Collier Controversy. Oddly enough, both Mr. Krutch and the special Collier bibliography in the "Cambridge History of English Literature" misdates the central work, Collier's own "Short View" (1688 and 1696, for 1698). But far less explicable is Mr. Krutch's neglect, while commenting on the work of his predecessor, Dr. Ballein, to make any acknowledgement of the "Cambridge History" bibliography.

The real issues raised by the more serious oversights of all three of the works under present review are not concerned with chance misprints or technical details of bibliography. The tendency to disregard obvious and important sources of reference, especially when it leads at times to false conclusions as to general facts or as to the author's own merits, concerns perhaps even more the general reader than the specialist who is less likely to be misled. The very fact that these three works on Restoration drama make significant and varied contributions to historical and critical study entitles them to serious, but not indiscriminate, regard. By a happy coincidence they renew scholarly interest, at home and abroad, in Restoration drama, at a time when Congreve's "Way of the World" has had stage revival both in London and New York.

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Foreign Literature

German Plays

JUAREZ UND MAXIMILIAN. By FRANZ WERFEL. Vienna: Paul Zsolnay Verlag, 1924.

VINCENT. By HERMANN KASACK. Potsdam: Gustav Kiepenheuer, 1924.

KOMODIE DER VERFUHRUNG. By ARTHUR SCHNITZLER. Berlin: S. Fischer, 1924.

DIE GEGENKANDIDATEN. By LUDWIG FULDA. Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta, 1924.

GEWALT. By ERNEST LISSAUER. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1924.

DAS LEBEN EDUARDS DES ZWEITEN VON ENGLAND. By BERTOLD BRECHT. Potsdam: Gustav Kiepenheuer, 1924.

Reviewed by A. W. C. RANDALL.

MOST drama is in one sense historical, but it is remarkable how many German plays there have been in the past six months or so which deserve the description in the stricter meaning of the word. The mere rendering of historical facts was probably not the first intention of the writer of any of the six above-mentioned most important examples, but in every case the result is a useful pendant to the history-book, an imaginative illumination of the bare events which, without this aid, would fade from the memories of most of us. Franz Werfel, for instance, has "fixed" for us the character of the ill-fated Emperor Maximilian of Mexico, and of the subordinate actors in that Hamlet-like tragedy, in a way that no prose-rendering of the facts could do. In this penetrating, moving study we seem to live through those days when the idealistic Emperor, under pressure of his advisers, countenanced the shooting of civil prisoners and thus gave the last most serious shock to the unsteady edifice of his rule. Cajoled, flattered, misled, and yet a man of whom, in the last resort, it could be said that his character was his fate, Maximilian finds himself inexorably confronted with the Mexican national will as incorporated in Juarez, a figure who, although never on the stage, is made familiar to us and becomes one of the protagonists of the drama. As everyone knows, the Emperor, being at length captured and condemned to death, finds even the intervention of Garibaldi with Juarez unavailing. The closing scenes are of remarkable pathos and beauty, particularly when the faithful medical attendant, Basch, offers Maximilian a drug, which the Emperor proudly refuses. This is a finely written historical tragedy.

In "Vincent" Herr Kasack, whose dramatic and poetical gifts deserve to be better known outside Germany than they apparently are, has taken the two months of Vincent Van Gogh's life at Arles with Gauguin—a peculiarly fit subject for dramatization, so intense a summary is it of a wayward and eccentric but indubitably great genius. The drama culminates with Vincent's departure for Paris. As he parts from his friend—his reason had already given way—he is made by the dramatist to give an inspired summary of his art:

But the great nurse Life will sing to me, when twilight falls across my eyes. The wind has brought such longing to me. Oh, she will sing me a lullaby. There the cypresses turn to dark green, the fields and the vineyards will light up, the corn will rustle, soft like the sea with its little sailing ships going up and down. Oh, the gardens of Arles. My yellow house is all forlorn. All the flowers, the sun-flowers, the yellow flowers . . . from women's hands. . . the yellow flowers sway like suns over the sea. A woman's face will be near me . . . but in her eyes . . . a world whence colour has gone. He gives a cry.

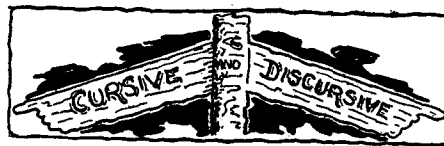
This, too, is an effective dramatization of a well-chosen episode.

From the point of view of conventional stage craft the next two dramatists, Arthur Schnitzler and Ludwig Fulda, are more practised hands, but their method suggests an older, more superficial generation of writers than either Herr Werfel or Herr Kasack. No one would mistake the author of the "Komödie der Verführung" for anyone else but Schnitzler. The amorous intrigue of pre-war Vienna found in him its perfect dramatic historian. The series of intrigues and lighthearted seductions set forth in this play take place in July, 1914, and far away—very far away, but still to be heard amid the badinage, the passionate whispers—there is the boom of the guns. Here is a Vienna Europe will not see again. Ludwig Fulda's subject, on the other hand, is a Germany Europe is very much engaged in contemplating at the moment. He has written a comedy of electioneering in Re-

publican Germany, where husband and wife get themselves, unknown to each other, nominated as rival candidates. Neither is inclined to take off the gloves in the way their respective party organizations desire, but ultimately they are stirred into bitter personalities, only to find that each has a scandal to use against the other. The vituperation Suse and her followers conduct against her husband results in his being assaulted by some violent members of their party. Wifely affection thereupon overcomes electioneering passion and the rival candidates retire. It is an entertaining if rather farcical sidelight on present-day German political conditions.

The last two plays are adaptations—Bertold Brecht's of Marlowe's play, with the sensation heightened, if possible, and the psychology modernized to fit the ideas of one of the foremost younger representatives of the Expressionist school of drama, Ernst Lissauer's of a well known episode in Prussian history, namely, the morganatic marriage of the Duke Leopold of Anhalt-Desau, Frederick the Great's general, with Anneliese Fehse, an apothecary's daughter. So altered and compressed are the facts and the characterization, however, that Herr Lissauer, in accordance with the rules laid down by Lessing, has given all the historical figures new names. Thus the "old Dessauer" becomes the Herzog Ludwig Ernst and the comedy is mainly of the taming of his outrageous temper. It is not a very distinguished work, but its performance seems to have given pleasure to German audiences, who would be familiar, from their school days, with the romantic story on which it is based.

A most important undertaking has just been initiated with the publication of the first two volumes of "Correspondence Générale de J. J. Rousseau" (Paris: Colin), a definitive collection of the letters of Rousseau which is ultimately to fill twenty volumes. The edition was begun under the editorship of Theophile Dufour, head librarian of the public library of Geneva, and has been carried on since his death by P. P. Plan. M. Dufour bestowed upon the preparation of this edition an astounding amount of the most painstaking labor between 1864, when he began his investigations for it and his death in 1922. He made most exact and accurate studies of the letters stored in public libraries and private collections, got access to manuscripts everywhere, and followed up documents that passed through the auction rooms and commentaries upon Rousseau manuscripts.



By THE PHOENICIAN

FOR a long time we have secreted in our desk, not wilfully but because of the condition of our desk, a letter that now comes to light, a letter that passed between two prominent *littérateurs* in the fall of 1923 relative to the merits of a printer of remarkable quality, one *Shmuel bar Aiwass bie Yaqubh Murad de Shirabode* (Americanized to *Samuel A. Jacobs*). He is an Assyrian typographer who makes some very beautiful books. He set up *E. E. Cummings*'s "Tulips and Chimneys" in his shop on Warren Street. The writer of the letter and he kept watches and sometimes at two o'clock would emerge with ink on their fingers into the moonlight and amble across City Hall Square to an all-night eating place. But now the letter:

"Flanked by the chauffeurs and night-hawks who patronize the place in the small hours, he would bring out his copy of *Hafiz* in the original and read it to me, translating as he went, to prove that *Hafiz* was the *E. E. Cummings* of his day. '*Hafiz* is very much like *Cummings*,' he would explain, 'and *Lawrence* is more like *Sadi*. *Hafiz* never used the same form for two poems, and he didn't use any of the conventional forms of the day. And you know'—here *Jacobs* grins, for he had quite a job working out all the problems raised by *Cummings*'s unusual use of spaces, punctuation and lower case—'*Hafiz*,' he says, 'played the same pranks with Persian that *Cummings* does with English, for the same reason.' Then, while the taxi-drivers stared, this priceless printer would intone some immortal line by the bard of Shiraz—*Jacobs*'s home town, as his name shows—and match it with a more comprehensible line from *Cummings*. 'There's something really creative,' he would say. And I agree with him." In *Aesthete* 1925 appears a flagrantly amusing little magazine, probably of brief life, whose first issue is addressed to the editors and critics of New York, and to sundry others. Its leading article is entitled "Little Moments with Great Critics" by *John Brooks Wheelwright*, in which percentages, compiled by a mysterious *Walter S. Hankel*, allot *Mencken*—28.8 per cent, *John Farrar*, one-half of one per cent, *William Lyon Phelps*, one per cent, and *Ernest Boyd*—5.61 per cent

Santayana, *Paul Elmer More*, and *T. S. Eliot* come off best in this tabulation, illustrating the attitude of certain younger writers toward the older critics. Much of the polemic of this number is aimed at *Ernest Boyd* and *Mencken*, and said *Walter S. Hankel* is much in evidence as the new *Frank Harris*. As *Matthew Josephson* so wittily says of him, his editorial genius is unusually pronounced.

As I look over the miserable, warted faces (so like those in the subway!) of all the other noted editors of the land, I am drenched with a vague revulsion.

No one but *Matthew Josephson* could possibly have achieved such delicate irony! His, like *Hankel*'s, is a formidable intellect. We-el, I wouldn't take that too seriously! Last November *George Sterling* wrote us saying that *Robinson Jeffers*'s poem "Tamar" is "surely the most terrible poem in English. 'The Cenci' is nothing to it." We'd like to see that poem!—*Jeffers* (when there) lives down on Mission Point (near Carmel, California) in a beautiful stone house with a stone tower to it that he built himself, hauling the granite. *Lewis Freeman Mott*'s biography of *Sainte-Beuve* (he wrote a former biography of *Ernest Renan*) should prove an interesting volume. It is now available. *Anne Kimball Tuell* has written of "*Mrs. Meynell* and her Generation." Her volume is a critical study of the poet against her proper background. *W. E. Woodward* and *Sinclair Lewis* have planned a walking trip through Touraine. *Lincoln MacVeagh* announces a novel of which we have hopes. It is "Moon Harvest" by *Giuseppe Cautela*, a barber in the Pershing Square barbershop in this city. It is the romance of an Italian immigrant, written with turns of phrase possible only to an ingenious discoverer and prodigal user of the riches of a foreign tongue, and it possesses beauty and glamour. *Pascal D'Angelo*'s "A Son of Italy" and *Louis Forgione*'s "Reamer Lou" have preceded it, but it seems to us that *Cautela*'s prose is quite superior in texture to either of these. Last Friday evening the *Pictorial Review* gave a dinner to *Mrs. Edward MacDowell*, the first recipient of the *Pictorial Review*'s annual achievement award, in recognition of her work in establishing and maintaining at Peterborough, New Hampshire, a colony where creative artists can live at a nominal cost and work in a congenial environment. We cast our hat into the air when we heard of the award, as we cannot possibly praise *Mrs. MacDowell*'s achievement too highly.

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