

world. But that does not create for it necessarily, an authentic evaluating rôle. Mr. Ford's excursions into values display him to very bad advantage, when they are taken by themselves and not lost in the glamour of his achievement. He shows himself to be nothing of an economist if we mean by that the possession of a grasp of industrial affairs and the ability to generalize their significance. But he does show himself to be extraordinarily alert and far-sighted where his own certain knowledge runs, a point which is well illustrated by his expressed views of the relationship between the farms and the factories of the future.

We have, he thinks, too long assumed that farming is in itself an industry which can earn for men a living in the new sense. He would, therefore, join the farms and the factories, managing them together. It is his conviction that only a very few of 365 days in the year need be given to agricultural work. On the others he would have farmers employed in small local industrial establishments. There are two conspicuous arguments against this and he meets them both tellingly. If the farmer says he must stay at home to care for a few head of stock even when there is no field work to do, he asks what kind of a job that is for a really able man and says, "why not put numerous herds together and run a dairy in modern style"? The cattle will be better bred and better tended, work can be full-time and of a nature to enlist genuine ability. This is good sense. If industrialists say that industries cannot be decentralized to take advantage of this farm reservoir of labor, he answers that their notions are still determined by an old technique which required large factories because steam boilers of large size were most efficient. Actually, he says, we have taken long steps toward reconstructing the Ford industries on this plan.

This is Henry Ford at his best, just because this happens to be a valuable contribution to farming and industrial technique, equally valuable, indeed to both. It is sound, sensible, workable; and Mr. Ford is nearly always equally valuable in matters of this sort which are descriptions of technical advance, of what is being done. The question is why is he not equally sensible and illuminating when he discusses education, continuous business prosperity, the ordinary functions of capital and other such matters. And immediately, on setting down a partial list on one side to be credited to him and on the other to be debited to him, one perceives that they are of different orders. The one requires a marshalling of facts, the other of ideas, the one a measurement of techniques, the other of values, the one a weighing of ponderables, the other of imponderables. Perhaps such a mind as Mr. Ford's finds its greatest handicap in a kind of illiteracy which is an unconscious resistance to the written word. How true it is that communication of ideas in our time is dependent upon a facility in writing. Men whose genius is action very rarely have a sensitivity to written language, indeed, it is not too much to say that they have deep revulsions from it. Such a handicap as this is an extremely significant one. It prevents, for instance, any kind of genuine and significant communication among themselves; it shuts them off, with unbelievable completeness, from contacts with the scholars of their craft, the economists. And there has not been mentioned the tragedy of their exclusion from the solace of literature, which to many others, is one of the great values of this life.

Lack of formal schooling may have something to do with this, yet it seems to go a good deal deeper than this. Mr. Thorndike's division of intelligence into mechanical, social, and abstract, comes to the mind, though suspicions rightly attach to such broad classifications as this. Mr. Ford does seem to be an almost perfect example of the mechanical intelligence clumsily attempting now to function with unaccustomed and uncongenial material. If, then, something of this were perceived generally, little harm would be done by the expression of what really amount to prejudices. But we so easily confuse one kind of success with all kinds of it and assume that since one functions well in some instances he must in all possible ones.

On the whole, judging by results, one could wish that, since he has so much sense, Mr. Ford would have that kind of superior sense which would confine him to his own sort. These things are said now of Henry Ford but they are not more true of him than of numerous others, too numerous others. Truly, it seems, in the making of books there is very little discrimination.

## Hardy the Poet

HUMAN SHOWS, FAR PHANTASIES, SONGS AND TRIFLES. By THOMAS HARDY. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1925. \$2.25.

Reviewed by WILLIAM SAVAGE JOHNSON  
University of Kansas

THE Thomas Hardy of "Human Shows," 1925, is the Thomas Hardy of "Hap," 1866, but with a difference. The young man of twenty-six was near to despair. The poet of today is as clear-eyed and unflinching as that young man, but the world in which he lives has no new terrors that can shake him, and it has stronger hopes and deeper consolations. In his latest volume, as in "Late Lyrics and Earlier," Mr. Hardy's essential sweetness of spirit is more evident than in any that preceded them.

Yet his poetry is no less veracious. The work of Hardy's greatest contemporaries, Yeats, De la Mare, Masfield, in spite of the trend toward realism, has been largely a poetry of escape, through a land of heart's desire, through evocation of the dream consciousness, or through thrilling narrative of adventure or melodrama. But Hardy has stuck doggedly to his Wessex. This volume is full of realistic pictures. Wagons creep over the Wessex hilltops, sheep stand sodden in the rain, gypsies shamle through Dorchester and nobody buys their wares. In such a poem as "Life and Death at Sunrise," we get the very essence of the man Hardy, a poem redolent of the Wessex soil, true to the



Illustration from "Chats on Naval Prints," by E. Keble Chatterton (Stokes).

idiosyncrasies of its humanity, expressing also the poet's individual temperament and written in his characteristic idiom, yet at the same time epitomizing the universal issues of life. Though a fragment, it suggests the epic sweep of Hardy's vision, a gift shared by none of his contemporaries.

The same uncompromising spirit governs his speculation. Years have only deepened in him the conviction that "crass casualty obstructs the sun and rain." Many poems in the new book express the old philosophical ideas in new ways. In "Sine Prole" he views calmly the extinction of his line. As a modern man he sees no reason for desiring its continuance, viewing with contempt "Life's Lottery" and "its dice that fling no prize." In "Genetrix Laesa" he still finds nature's ways a "purbblind blinking" ("as if some imp unruly twitched your artist arm"); in "The Aerolite" consciousness is a germ that has awakened the brute world to suffering and poisoned "Earth's old established innocence."

The narratives of the volume are an illustration of its philosophy. Like their predecessors, these "human shows" exhibit man as the victim of "cynic circumstance" or of some strange madness that is no less an expression of the blind Will that rules us. Such stories as "The Turnip Hoer," "The Fight on Durnoyer Moor," "The Forbidden Banns," repeat in new forms the recurring ironies of existence.

In what respect, then, does "Human Shows" offer any alleviation of this stark spectacle? I have spoken of a hope and a consolation. The hope is a part

of Hardy's metaphysics. It was first clearly expressed in "The Blow," in "Moments of Vision" and in the famous closing passage of "The Dynasts," the hope that some day the universe would become conscious, would evolve an intelligence and a soul, and so "fashion all things fair." It is reaffirmed in one of the most interesting of the new poems, "Xenophanes, the Monist of Colophon," and elsewhere in the volume.

The consolation is of simpler substance, and is implied rather than asserted. It is felt in the deepened sense of the simple human values, loving kindness, fidelity to humble tasks, kindness to animals, love of the beauty of sunset and dawn, star and flower. These remain, "though dynasties pass." Hardy's deep humanity has never been banished by his moments of cynicism or despair or perplexed questioning. It thrills in the lyric, "Any little old song," it shines faintly through his Wessex pictures and stories, "A Sheep Fair," "No Buyers," "An East-End Curate," "A Last Journey;" it mingles with the indignation and horror of "On the Portrait of a Woman about to be Hanged." But perhaps its most complete expression in this volume is in "A Leader of Fashion," a poem in which Hardy has indirectly suggested all the deep and abiding consolations of life that he has been able to offer to suffering humanity.

## Victoria Scores

SHERIDAN TO ROBERTSON: A STUDY OF THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY LONDON STAGE. By ERNEST BRADLEE WATSON. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1926. \$5.

Reviewed by HAZELTON SPENCER  
State College of Washington

THIS is the season's most important book about the theatre, and its form is worthy of its importance. Uncommonly handsome typography and exquisite plates match a text that will be fascinating to the general reader and indispensable to every student of English drama.

The death last April of Sir Squire Bancroft snapped the only surviving link between the beginning of the dramatic renaissance and its apparent close in our time. Though they left the stage before Mr. Shaw had stamped the new school as above all else devoted to the drama of ideas, Sir Squire and Lady Bancroft did much to make the great realists possible. It was they who produced the Robertsonian comedy; it was they who brought naturalness and subtlety and congruity into the service of the new playwrighting; in their company at the Prince of Wales's several producers of the drama of the '90's learned their technique. Concerning the rise of their decent school out of the post-Sheridan slum Professor Watson brings the first account both coherent and scholarly.

More and more we are coming to realize that study of the drama must rest on knowledge of the theatre. It is perhaps not so generally recognized that to understand the theatre we must understand its living background. Professor Watson is fully aware of the significance of sociological and economic considerations. Thus he makes out a good case for the direct influence on theatrical prosperity of the hard times which followed Waterloo, and for the disastrous effect on the drama's intellectual content of the enlargement of the patent theatres and the consequent withdrawal of aristocratic patronage.

It was the young Queen whose vivid interest in the radical movement rescued the theatre from the rabble and made it fashionable again. Professor Watson presents an amusing sketch of her visits to the playhouse, as she tripped along after the comedian-manager, the uncomfortable J. B. Buckstone, who in correct court dress and strict accord with tradition was obliged to walk backward holding two wavering candlesticks to light his sovereign to the royal box. Once "Bucky" tripped and sat down unceremoniously during the course of this ritual, much to the little Queen's amusement—'tis a more charming picture than those usually offered as typical of Early Victorian evenings.

The Queen went frequently to the theatre, and showed special favor to such dramatists as Jerrold and Boucicault, whose works, banal as they seem to us after Shaw and Barrie, or even Robertson, were in their own time a discernible force for natural-



ness. And there were private theatricals at Windsor under the direction of Charles Kean, who was influential in bringing in the more refined style of acting. Professor Watson would almost locate the rebirth of English drama in the Rubens room of the Castle. Score one for Victoria.

In his modest preface the author disclaims attempting to deal with the drama itself. Yet he constantly throws light on it, for his is not the method of the mere philological filing-clerk. Professor George P. Baker, who supplies a foreword, insists that "More than any other book I know, this of Dr. Watson's treats plays and their production in their right relationship—as inseparable,"—an exaggeration of the truth doubtless preferable to yesterday's practice of ignoring it. But Professor Watson himself goes pretty far in his application of this principle.

He finds Robertson's methods as a comic dramatist derivative not so much from the French playwrights as from "the purely English attributes of jollity, homeliness, and eccentric humor which had come to them from no literary influences whatever, but through the new school of English acting." He is less convincing at this point than when he argues that the introduction of stalls and the consequent relegation of the pitites to the extreme rear of the floor made for quieter representation and ultimately influenced dramatic composition in the right direction.

Professor Watson makes a good deal of the lifting of the monopoly of the patent theatres in 1843, which he regards as operating directly to bring on the new drama. The difficulty with this view is, of course, that the stage had to wait two decades for Robertson, and that twenty years is a long period in theatrical history—longer than in the history of any other branch of the literary art.

We must not exaggerate the worth of Robertson himself: it is not till fifty years after the theatres were freed that (unless we attach a Clayton Hamiltonian significance to the juvenile performances of Messrs. Jones and Pinero) we come to the vitally new drama. Surely it is ideas rather than stage trickeries (even important ones like real ceilings and doorknobs) that have marked recent progress in the theatre. Dr. Watson has much to say about pre-Robertsonian managers who wanted to create a new English comedy, but he does not quite succeed in convincing us that they really knew what they wanted.

An ever-present danger, though Dr. Watson is consciously on guard against it, is the tendency to an easy acceptance of the contemporary theatre as the result of evolutionary principles all working together for good. One is prone to hail a Victorian innovation (for instance, the abandonment of the repertory company in favor of the engagement of actors for the run of the piece) as a "service to the drama," merely because it led to the prevailing custom of our own time. While this particular change undoubtedly put theatrical financing on a sounder basis, its artistic consequences have been more doubtful. I am not sure that Dr. Watson always discriminates with sufficient care between commercial and artistic success in the theatre. That this distinction is ignored by some brilliant practitioners and critics does not modify the fact of its existence. If the academic student does not insist on it, who will?

Professor Watson's most important contention is that the trend toward realism in playwriting had begun long before Robertson, and toward realism in production long before the Vancrofts. Even Douglas Jerrold he sees moving steadily in the direction of the frankly contemporary and away from the artificialities of the Sheridanized Restoration comedy on the one hand and the lachrymose moralities of the sentimentalists on the other.

Dr. Watson holds that Robertson was less a comet or revolutionary impulse than the culmination of a progressive tendency due partly to the obvious excellence of French melodrama and partly to the more natural school of acting introduced by Madame Vestris, the younger Mathews, Boucicault, and Fechter. Probably he is right, but it is equally essential to remember that the Robertsonian comedy's intrinsic value is slight. The encouraging thing for English drama about the appearance of Robertson was that he had something to say; while Jerrold, Tom Taylor, and Boucicault had little or nothing. But not till the '90's did men appear who had a great deal to say.

I have noticed a few minor errors. It is per-

haps worth remarking that the opening date of the first Drury Lane was not April 8, but May 7, 1663. The date of reconstruction was 1674, not 1672. The old Haymarket, built by Vanbrugh, and used for Italian opera during Dr. Watson's period, was abandoned to that form of art not in 1707, but in 1708 N. S. The last performance there of the Bettertonians was on January 10, 1708, the occasion being a benefit appearance by Wilks in "Macbeth." Augustine Daly (p. 103) and A Winter's Tale (p. 390), are obvious misprints. Illustrative passages are several times cited twice; this practice is allowable in a dissertation but becomes irritating in a book intended for the public.

Only those who have wrestled with obscure theatrical history can realize the infinite pains that lie behind the production of such a work as this of Dr. Watson's. He will not thank me for suggesting that he ought to go on from Robertson to Shaw, but it is depressingly true that the '70's and '80's now look forbiddingly dark beside the decades illuminated by this volume.

## Literary History

A HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE. Volume I. The Middle Ages and the Renaissance (650-1660). By EMILE LEGOUIS. Translated from the French by Helen Douglas Irvine. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1926.

Reviewed by KARL YOUNG  
Yale University

THIS refreshing book is not to be listed as merely one more conventional manual of English literary history. It is, in the first place, the work of a Frenchman, with his advantage of racial detachment. Although M. Legouis has devoted his three score years to the study of English literature, he still calls himself an "outsider," and apologizes, with engaging modesty, for "the inevitable inferiority of a foreign historian." By way of compensation he rightly claims for himself a certain freedom from partiality. He might have claimed a good deal more, for his foreign inheritance provides him with many an insight denied to the critic for whom English literature is a birthright. Thus M. Legouis can reanimate even so familiar a matter as the French element in Chaucer's poetry.

The rarefied, white light shed over Chaucer's work . . . is exactly the same in tone as that which shone for the poets of the Ile-de-France. A Frenchman may enter Chaucer's country and be conscious of no change of sky or climate. Like the French *trouvères*, Chaucer has a lightness of heart which is not tumultuous but diffused. . . . One line, in which he resumes the youth of his Squire, might be the device of all his poetry:

*He was as fresh as is the moneth of May*

This line is entirely French, the essence of the earliest French poetry. The same may be said of his pitch, neither too high nor too low. His voice, too, has a pure, slightly frail quality . . . perhaps not rich or full enough for the highest lyricism, but wont to keep to the middle tones in which meaning is conveyed to the mind most clearly and exactly. . . . The poet is ruled by intelligence, rather than carried away by passion . . . Chaucer cannot be said to have had a French period. He is always French.

The luminous page from which I quote could have been conceived and phrased only by a Frenchman.

The ultimate usefulness of this volume, however, will arise probably not so much from the detachment of the critic as from his method. Knowing that the history of English literature has already been written in a good many ways, M. Legouis seeks a new way of his own, particularly through differentiating his work from that of his distinguished fellow countrymen, Taine and Jusserand, with whom he inevitably comes into competition. Taine's celebrated "History of English Literature" (1864) is not so much a study of literary art as an imposing essay in philosophy. His deterministic aim was to find in a work of literature evidences of the author's inner nature as moulded by the relentless "laws" of race, surroundings, and epoch. More recent, and still incomplete, is Jusserand's "Literary History of the English People" (Vol. I, 1896; Vol. II, 1904). As the title of his work candidly indicates, M. Jusserand uses literature primarily as a means for displaying English political and social life,—“the people and the nation.”

Since both Taine and Jusserand, then, have taken only a secondary interest in literary art as such, M.

Legouis gains for his own work a happy distinctiveness by making the æsthetic aspect of literature his chief concern. His primary purpose is to set forth literary productions as work of art, "describing their matter and their manner," and thus through a chronological survey to show "the earliest origins, the early gropings, the progress and retrogression and triumph of the artistic sense." The book undertakes to present not so much the social life of England, or the biographies of authors, or their racial and historical background, as the power and charm of the writings themselves.

In accomplishing this undertaking, M. Legouis displays not only the tact, clarity, and judgment which we like to take for granted in a distinguished French critic, but, in addition, certain rarer virtues that contribute greatly toward distinctiveness and utility. For one thing, he avoids the too common practice of telling the reader everything about a literary piece except its content. Before launching into critical observations upon a play or a romance, for example, M. Legouis considerably and skilfully gives his reader a comfortable feeling of acquaintanceship by sketching the plot or fable, and then using this sketch as a frame within which to group his pronouncements upon form, character, and style. This procedure tends to give to the description of a single work a satisfying firmness and completeness. To the countless persons who have yet to read Lyly's "Euphues," Drayton's "Polyolbion," Sidney's "Arcadia," Jonson's "Epicoene," and Webster's "White Devil," M. Legouis's accounts of these moderately significant works will convey not a confusion of historical facts and critical opinions, but an ordered sense of content, structure, personalities, and qualities of expression. In the general impression, however, is often found some delicate or incisive communication of the flavor of the piece under discussion. This effect arises both through discreet quotation and through alluring phrases from the critic's own pen.

Most engaging of all the merits of this book, perhaps, is its unhesitating, but modest, independence. The writer successfully surmounts the barriers of accumulated criticism and gives us almost constantly the feeling of a candid and sensitive nature responding directly to the appeal of the original works themselves. "Most important of all," remarks M. Legouis of Shakespeare, is the frequent complexity of his characters.

. . . No simple principle accounts for them. They have life and life's indefiniteness, and therefore they are not always fully intelligible, but are mysteries. It is even possible to ask whether Shakespeare himself understood them all. . . . Thus it is that many Shakespearean beings, whose reality cannot for an instant be questioned, do not admit of too precise investigation or are differently interpreted by different critics." In conventional literary histories one does not find liberating utterances like these.

Quite aside from its freshness and independence, this book will be particularly welcome to those American readers who think that our own most conspicuous critics are concerned, these days, too exclusively with abstractions and *idées générales*. While we Americans are disputing the meanings of Puritanism, a Frenchman does well in reminding us that the English poets wrote poetry.

Since the issue of the *Saturday Review of Literature* for July 31 went to press we have been informed that "Carlo Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa," by Cecil Gray and Philip Heseltine, which was reviewed by Garnet Smith in the leading article of the number and was credited to Kegan Paul of London, is to be published shortly in this country by Lincoln McVeagh: The Dial Press.

### The Saturday Review of LITERATURE

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Published weekly by The Saturday Review Co., Inc., Henry S. Canby, President, Roy E. Larsen, Vice-President, Noble A. Cathcart, Secretary-Treasurer, 25 West 45th Street, New York. Subscription rates, per year, postpaid: In the U. S. and Mexico, \$3.50; in Canada, \$4; in Great Britain, 18 shillings; elsewhere, \$4.50. All business communications should be addressed to Noble A. Cathcart, 25 West 45th Street, New York. Entered as second-class matter, at the Post Office, at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Vol. III. No. 2.  
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