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## Foreign Literature

### Italy in England

L'ITALIA NEL DRAMMA INGLESE.  
By Piero Rébora. Milan. "Modernissima."

Reviewed by MERRITT Y. HUGHES  
University of California

SIGNOR RÉBORA has written his outline of the Italian elements in the English drama between 1558 and 1642 in the scientific spirit, but his devotion to truth is agreeably and sometimes amusingly tempered by a portentous patriotism. His great qualification to write the book—aside from a competent knowledge of the Elizabethan theatre—is his hundred percentism. Strangely enough, his devotion to science is helped by his patriotic prejudices. He writes not as a mere pedant nor even as a mere literary critic, but as a Historian of Culture. As such he finds himself not very regretfully obliged to discuss much that Swinburne swept together as "belonging rather to the historic province of antiquarian curiosity than to the aesthetic or spiritual Kingdom of English Poetry." There is nothing which a Historian of Culture may not discuss and, if his science is attuned to the spirit of *Giovinezza*, there is no Philistine prejudice which he may not indulge with assurance. If, like Signor Rébora, he dislikes the Italian pastoral, he needs only to quote Bacon's remark that, "These things are but toys," and to reflect that De Sanctis's admiration for the Italian pastoral drama is—thanks to the god of these real and earnest times—out of date.

Signor Rébora's patriotism several times becomes evangelical and carries him into an excursus anent the traditional fascination of Italian criticism with "men like Tasso and Guarini, who mask their melancholy and unsocial lubricity under a cloak of idealistic sighs." He commends to his countrymen the claims of Giordano Bruno, of Campanella, or Sarpi, and of Boccacini. He is perturbed by the amorality of Renaissance Italy and of its story-tellers. "An admirable narrator, Bandello, observe the critics," says Signor Rébora, and adds, "Let our notation be that he was a cynical and perverse writer." In the Elizabethan drama he sometimes finds gleams of the moral beauty that he misses in Italy. "Why is it that never a single tragedy in seven centuries of national literature in Italy can boast of a pathetic scene like that of the death of 'The Duchess of Malfi' by John Webster?" he demands. In "the immortality of Ford" he sees "an immortality uniquely to be identified with Italy. Passion is the sole law. What harm is there in incest? What harm is there in any crime, when a strong inclination impels us to it?" "Englishmen," Rébora laments, "when they abandoned themselves to debauchery, often went beyond their corrupt Italian masters," and in Greene's motto, *Consuetudo peccandi tollit sensum peccandi*, he regrets a reminiscence of Aretino instead of observing an anticipation of Pope.

There are many moments in "L'Italia nel dramma inglese" when the author threatens to don the robes of a prophet compounded of Jeremiah, Herbert Spencer and Giovanni Gentile. But he is never in any danger of betraying his country. He follows up his criticism of "The Duchess of Malfi" with a passage congratulating Italy upon having remained mystical and universal, passionate and spontaneous and therefore capable of a high destiny and rich in the elements of great tragedy and of gay comedy, while Protestant England has rationalized, formalized and starved its playwrights of the stuff of which dramas are made.

So, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Italy was England's Helicon. Rébora presses Italy's claims hard in every species of drama written from Lyly to Webster and Ford. He avoids the substance of exaggeration remarkably well, but he is strangely fond of its appearance. "The Italian theatre," he asserts roundly, "in spite of all assertions to the contrary, was the prime source of the Elizabethans." Pace Professor Bond, "Mother Bombie" owes more to the *Commedia dell'Arte* than it does to Terence, and indeed the extempore mimes were "one of the principal channels through which sixteenth century Italy penetrated England. Though details are hard to verify, we believe that a great part of Plautus and Terence, many comic personages, many dramatic situations and many allusions and fragments of information about the manners and the spirit of Italy

found their way into the Elizabethan theatre by way of the *Commedia dell'Arte*." Straight down the conventional rubric of types of plays on the Elizabethan stage Rébora goes, debating the ultramontanism of each, and his series of briefs for the affirmative are an excellent summary of the evidence which research about his subject has collected. Though his conclusions are often vaguely sweeping, the reader is never in any danger of being misled and he always feels grateful for the compact masses of information. Rébora is at his best in his analyses of the Italianism of individual playwrights and of the specific contributions of the Italian novelists—notably of Cinthio as the originator of many English romantic heroines from Greene's Dorothea in "James IV." to Shakespeare's Desdemona. Better, probably, than anyone who has ever written on the subject he understands the motives and the limitations of the very diverse Italianisms of Jonson, of Marston and of Webster, and he states the case for each with sure insight, because, as it happens, all these men are seen more clearly for being viewed in the not always very clear light of his Latin prejudices. His prejudices, of course, give his book its main interest and its unique, if limited, authority.

### Calzada's Life

CINCUENTA ANOS DE AMERICA,  
Volume I. Rafael Calzada. Obras Completas, Tomo IV. Jesus Menendez, Buenos Aires, 1926.

Reviewed by FRANK CALCOTT  
Columbia University Extension

FROM the Argentine comes another autobiography, that of Rafael Calzada. He tells of events and happenings as he saw them, but for the most part he tells of them in the most impersonal manner. He rapidly passes over his childhood; in fact, the whole period before leaving home is sketched with only a few broad strokes. It is not until he finds himself, now an independent young man established in the office of the famous Pi y Margall, that he really finds his stride, and paints a vivid description of the scenes he himself witnessed as a newspaper reporter. These are among the best in the book. In addition, his version of the fall of the Spanish republic in 1874 will be of special interest to historians, while the sketch of Pi y Margall contains personal touches and side lights to be found nowhere else.

In his account of his life in the Argentine the North-American reader will be impressed by the spirit of loyalty to Spain continually manifested in the Spanish colony of Buenos Aires. This feeling makes the group the target for much unpleasant criticism and considerable hard feelings. Calzada himself firmly refused to change his allegiance even when, on one occasion at least, it seemed that to do so would assure his political future. As most of his compatriots, he is continually dreaming of the time when he will be able to retire, return to Spain, and die in peace among his native hills.

Another uncommon feature of this autobiographical sketch of a busy lawyer is the considerable space given to recounting the various Juegos Florales (Floral Games), the annual literary contests sponsored by the business men and organizations of Buenos Aires.

It is a pity that Dr. Calzada yields too often to the temptation to write history, including in the body of the text long lists of names of those present at certain functions, or lists of officers of certain organizations, as well as other purely bibliographical and reference material. This often mars a book which would otherwise be a delightful and interesting narrative.

Volume I is brought abruptly to an end with his marriage at 37 years of age to the 16 year old daughter of the President of Paraguay—another link of the chain binding him to Spain is broken.

### Errata

We regret that "The Annals of the New York Stage" in our "Books of the Spring" on April 23rd was credited to George C. D. O'Neill instead of Professor C. D. Odell; also that Pierre La Mazière's "I'll Have a Fine Funeral" was ascribed to the wrong publishing firm. This latter book is published by Brentano's.

## TO THE LAND OF THE EAGLE

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by  
Anthony M. Ludovici

author of  
"Woman: A Vindication," etc.

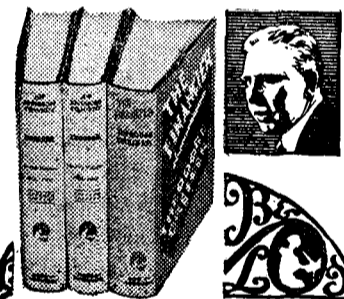
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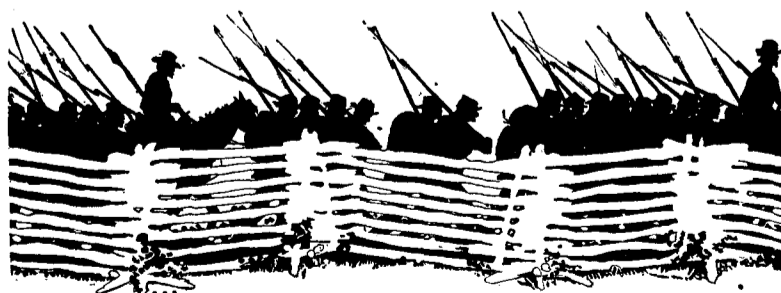
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## Points of View

### Niven's "Wild Honey"

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:

SIR:

I have a very definite protest to make regarding the review of my book, "Wild Honey," in your issue of April 2nd. The very last thing that criticism should burden itself with is imputation, and your review begins thus: "If Mr. Niven hoped that these recollections would adapt themselves to the demands of the novel, he has been disappointed."

I had clearly hoped no such thing. That remark baffles me to explain in view of my first chapter, in which I make a statement that "Wild Honey" is not fiction, but a direct narrative from life, documentary. It is, among other things, a record of a passing phase of life in the west. I lived every moment of this book with these men. I had no desire to conform to a standard, but to write truth. Your reviewer finds my hoboes sentimentalized. To that I can only say that I knew these two men, having travelled with them in the rambling journey which I have recorded. It is a human narrative, a document, not a novel.

By reviewing it as a novel and then condemning it for not being what it was never intended to be (and what I even state in my first chapter it is not), *The Saturday Review* has transgressed one of the first principles of criticism and perpetrated what is a piece of carelessness, or injustice unworthy of its standards.

FREDERICK NIVEN.

### Prohibition Again

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:

SIR:

Only a few days ago have I had opportunity to read the review in your February 5th issue of my "Prohibition at Its Worst," by my respected friend Fabian Franklin, and the comments on that review, claiming it was unfair or biased, by Mr. Alfred H. Holt, February 26th, and Mr. Harold S. Davis, April 16th, together with your two editorial notes in defense of your selection of Mr. Franklin as reviewer.

In the last editorial note you say that "there is left always the resource of a reply," which suggests that you are not averse to allowing me a little space.

First, let me acknowledge with thanks Mr. Franklin's generous tribute to my "standing as a statistical inquirer." He seems mystified that, in this book, I have, as he believes, fallen from grace.

Secondly, let me admit that the changes in the strictness of enforcement of the police in arresting for drunkenness cannot be gauged with any accuracy. Corradini's estimate that, before Prohibition, the arrests were only forty per cent efficient while after Prohibition they were ninety per cent efficient are very rough.

But I would remind the reader that this admission is contained in the book itself, as Mr. Franklin rather grudgingly states.

But Mr. Franklin misses the main point of these drunkenness statistics as I have given them. Their purpose was not at all to offer an exact estimate of my own but to answer the misleading figures of Mr. Shirk, of the "Moderation League." Had not Mr. Shirk, (who had omitted the factor of changing strictness of enforcement altogether) laid great stress on drunkenness statistics, I should have paid little, if any, attention to such statistics; for they are, at best, as Mr. Franklin points out, of very little worth.

The forty to ninety ratio of improvement is, however, the best estimate which has been offered. Though rough, it is not unreasonable. My reason for so believing is twofold; first, my faith in Corradini's conscientious attempt to report the facts and, secondly, my own attempt (since the book was written) to check up his estimate by writing over 600 police chiefs.

The only real substance which I find in Mr. Franklin's criticism is as to applying this forty to ninety ratio indiscriminately to all parts of the country. In my haste to complete the book in the time required I delegated important functions to my able assistants and, it was only when the charts were finished, that I discovered, too late for change, that the charts had all been made with this uniform correction. All I could do was to call attention in certain cases, as in New York and Philadelphia, to the probability of large deviations from the average. In my revised edition I have applied the forty to ninety ratio only to the country as a whole, omitting it in the other

charts. Had Mr. Franklin had this new edition when he wrote his review he would have had no basis on which to make his criticism.

I cannot admit, therefore, that Mr. Franklin has any justification for his conclusion that, while in my other books I have shown fairmindedness, I fail in that regard on the subject of Prohibition.

The only other point made by Mr. Franklin is that my treatment of personal liberty is "puerile" and "absurd," but he is content to apply these opprobrious terms without offering any argument to substantiate them.

I can only conclude that Mr. Franklin has not taken the pains to inform himself on what alcohol, in common with morphine, and other narcotic habit-forming drugs really does to undermine the nervous system, and which justifies the phrase "slavery to drink." It is just because emancipation from this slavery enlarges human liberty that I believe in such emancipation through Prohibition. Of course the slight harm done to the moderate drinker would not justify Prohibition if he never turned into an immoderate drinker. But the fact that there always is harm and never any substantial genuine benefit makes the personal liberty argument rather hollow. Such liberty to do oneself harm may well be sacrificed for the good of the whole, just as long ago the locomotive engineers voted to require total abstinence to make more certain that no locomotive engineer should be drunk at his post. In a sense we are all locomotive engineers in our complex civilization.

IRVING FISHER.

Yale University.

### As to Trade Winds

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:

SIR:

We know a bookseller who would give his personal copy of the Papé "Jurgen" for the gift of tap-dancing to the banjo (he plays one) strains of Swanee River. And P. E. G. Quercus is, we take it, about the sort of bookseller Christopher Morley would be. His conversations are enjoyable and edifying, there is a sprinkling of the newer titles and Jocunda and Young Amherst provide love interest. But why call the serial "Trade Winds"?

Well, we all have our dreams and the newbooks game may be like that. From lower Fourth Avenue it is hard to say. Seen through the turmoil of Macy's incurable price-cutting (and, to boot, every now and then corraling an author to autograph his opus at no extra charge) and Brentano's super-service and Dutton's admirable advertising and Womrath's far-flung libraries—why P. E. G.'s equanimity appears superb.

Yet let the Trade Winds blow. All week we of lower Fourth Avenue, entrenched back of the fifteen-two-for-a-quarter sidewalk tables, battle heroically with rah-rah boys from NYU, co-eds looking for that book by Boccaccio, maiden ladies after the latest fiction and not minding if it is a trifle used, ambitious stock clerks, truck drivers, genealogists, incipient dentists, theosophists, presidents' picture contestants, ladies of the White House contestants, Elbert Hubbard scrapbook culture hounds, amateur magicians, geniuses from the Village yogis, Tarzan addicts, Willdurant philosophers, scenario writers, chiropractors—O a motley mob. All week, we repeat, until Saturday night.

Then we limp home, Froude's *Life and Letters of Erasmus* under one arm and *The Saturday Review* under the other. Erasmus is for Sunday reading but we open the *Review* immediately. And Trade Winds waft us far, far away.

In fine, as literature of escape P. E. G. is grand; and sometimes—well doggone if we don't sometimes wonder if the newbooks game isn't like that.

T. B.

New York City.

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