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BY JULIA PETERKIN

AUTHOR OF BLACK APRIL

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Foreign Literature

German Poets

VERSE DER LEBENDEN: DEUTSCHE LYRIK SEIT 1910. Edited by H. E. JAKOB. (Second edition.) Berlin: Propyläen-Verlag. 1929.

JUNGE DEUTSCHE LYRIK. Edited by OTTO HEUSCHELE. Leipzig: Philip Reclam. 1929.

Reviewed by A. W. G. RANDALL

THESE two anthologies provide a very comprehensive and on the whole an accurate view of tendencies in contemporary German poetry. Attention at the outset must be called, however, to the rather misleading title of the first volume. It was first published in 1924, and among the living at that date was Rainer Maria Rilke, also Stefan George—who is still with us. Among the not-living, in a physical sense, was Georg Heym, who after a remarkable short literary career was drowned in 1912 at the age of twenty-four. Yet some of his poems are included, but not one poem of the two older poets. This may perhaps be due to publisher's difficulties—it is well known that George never appears in anthologies, but the fact that Heym appears and Rilke—some of whose most remarkable work, in particular his "Sonette an Orpheus" and his "Duineser Elegien," appeared in 1923—does not, strengthens the critic in the opinion that this anthology was designed rather to illustrate certain of the latest tendencies than to give the reader an all-round view of German poetry between 1910 and 1924.

The editor's introduction, in fact, makes this intention plain. A brief sketch of German poetry before 1910 is followed by an account of the way in which the first breach was made in the ranks of the Parnassians by the Jewish poet, Max Brod, and how the assault was driven home by such writers as Georg Heym and Ernst Blass, followed by the whole regiment of the Expressionists, with Franz Werfel and Johannes Becher at their head. It is sometimes assumed that it was the tremendous experience of the war that brought about the Expressionist movement. A careful reading of this anthology, with particular attention to the brief biographical notes at the end, will dispose of the idea. The "Chaotiker," as Herr Jakob calls them, those determined enemies of Renaissance Classicism, of Symbolism, or Parnassianism, began about the year 1910 to make their harsh, loud, intense voices heard above the gentle music of their older contemporaries. They were not mere Naturalists—and Herr Jakob seems to us to go wrong in so classifying them; their affinities were in many respects with the Futurism of Signor Marinetti. But it is true enough that they carried on, in a far more emphatic form, the technique of the Naturalists of the 'nineties and felt the same attraction to the so-called realities of life, that is, according to the Naturalist gospel, the sordid streets of the great industrial cities, the lives of the lower classes and the oppressed victims of the capitalist system. But they also had a certain dynamic energy, and a cosmic sweep which was foreign to an Arno Holz. They hated bourgeois society and the forms of art it had come to favor; they looked for revolution—and certain of Heym's poems were a true prophecy of 1914 and 1919. In their discontent, their concentrated impatience with the state of society in which they found themselves, some of them, such as Walter Hasenclever or Ernst Toller, engaged in actual revolution, and in their poetry approached incoherence and sheer dadaism, the rhetoric of incomprehensibility. For them the war and the revolution which followed it, particularly the Bolshevik element in it, was a fulfilment, and rarely has such a time of chaos, of intense but, as it proved, vain ambitions, been more accurately mirrored in art.

The chaos, however, did not last and much of the verse which gave it expression did not last either. A superior literary gift saved several of the so-called Expressionists from oblivion, and one can hardly doubt that such poets as Franz Werfel and Oskar Loerke will survive in any really representative anthology of twentieth-century German verse. But if we regard Expressionism as not merely the rebellion against Impressionism, but the school of revolt against German bourgeois society, kept in corporate being only by that fact, then it is obvious that the day of Expressionism was over when the bourgeois foundations of German society began to emerge, essentially unchanged, from the flood which had once threatened to overwhelm them.

Had a Soviet system established itself in Germany and maintained itself as it has in Russia, there can be no doubt that the Ex-

pressionist school would have flourished as the only authoritative reflection of German life in German art. This, however, was not to be, and the result of the counter-revolution, as one may perhaps call it, may be seen in the second anthology we have selected for review. Gone is all the pre-occupation with revolutionary politics, gone the strident expression of sympathy with the tramps, the prostitutes, the diseased wage-slaves of the great cities; gone the bursting energy of rhetoric, the cosmic gestures and sharp staccato language of the writers who figure most prominently in the earlier volume. The nightmare of the factories, the mortuaries, the dirty quayside, has given place to the sweet dream of the country, the southern sun, idyllic love, pleasant music, and classical reminiscence. It may be only a reaction, but it is an interesting one to take note of, and like the Expressionist movement, it seems capable of producing at least as many poets who can count on surviving for genuine literary ability.

We may take the virile, confident verses of Richard Billinger as an example, or the deep religious feeling of Ruth Schaumann. The latter is a reminder that the Catholic movement in contemporary German literature is to be taken seriously. The *Gemeinschaftsgefühl*, of which the Expressionists were inclined to claim the monopoly, has been revived under the appearance of a sincere devotion to Catholic ideals; revolution of the common man has yielded place to the religion of the common man. In technique it must be frankly said that these youngest poets have nothing novel to offer; some are even derivative, their dependence on the models of Rilke and Hugo von Hofmannsthal is obvious. But technique is not all-important; Wordsworth did not supersede Pope merely because he rejected the heroic couplet. And so it may well be that these youngest poets of all are the heralds of a new era in German poetry, an era in which the peasant will be as important a theme as the mill-hand, the limpid stream as the town-sewer, the village-child as the patient in the cancer-ward, and quiet confidence as the shriek of despair. For all their insistence that the Impressionists were the real materialists, the Expressionist school, in practice, was largely inspired by a materialist philosophy, and their world was a determinist world, into which God could not enter. The poets represented in Herr Heuschele's anthology form a striking contrast to all this. It will be interesting to see whether their work endures. At least the editor seems justified when he claims that they represent a return to the normal traditions of German literature, a continuation and a renewal of most of the elements which have proved themselves to be permanent in German lyric poetry.

Foreign Notes

"BEFORE the tragic death of his son Philippe in 1923 and his own eventual exile," says the London *Observer*, "Léon Daudet had planned what may be called his topographical reminiscences. Exile had steadied hand and eye, but throughout Paris Vécu (Nouvelle Revue Française) the tragedy is at the back of his mind. Nevertheless, others besides Camelots du Roi can appreciate this book, since it covers most aspects of Parisian life of the last thirty years. Daudet, a pugnacious E. V. Lucas, wanders from quarter to quarter, finding incentives to memory in street after street. Famous names are legion, among them Alphonse Daudet, Jaurès, Barrès, Debussy, Coquelin, Mistral, Steinlen, and Proust."

A monument to Rupert Brooke is to be erected on the island of Skyros, where he is buried. A committee is also arranging for a volume of "International Homage," and for the French and Arabic translations of his poems.

"Divinita Ignote," by Silvio Ferri, throws light on funeral rites of the Greek colonies in the Mediterranean, especially by means of some curious archaic sculpture discovered in Magna Grecia. The volume, which is profusely illustrated, forms part of the "Collezioni Meridionali," edited by Zanotti Bianco, and published at Palazzo Taverna, Montegiordano, Roma.

"The new Turkey," says a dispatch to the New York *Times*, "is having a bad attack of mental indigestion. She has tried to swallow at one gulp the titanic mouthful of a brand new alphabet, and the result is nation-wide mental dyspepsia."

The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received. Many of them will be reviewed later.

Belles Lettres

THE HEART OF HAPPINESS. By ANNE SHANON MONROE. Doubleday, Doran, 1929. \$2.

There is no difficulty in understanding Miss Monroe's popularity, and those who are tempted to a supercilious attitude toward advice columns in a *Ladies' Home Journal* or *Woman's Home Companion*, will be well advised to resist such superiority. The ethics and psychology of Miss Monroe may not be profound, but they run pretty evenly with the plain human facts, and their implications are not quite all on the surface.

DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN BIOGRAPHY. Edited by Allen Johnson. Volume II. Scribner's.

LINKS BETWEEN SHAKESPEARE AND THE LAW. By the Right Hon. Sir Dunbar Plunket Barton. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. \$4.00.

AN ACQUAINTANCE WITH DESCRIPTION. By Gertrude Stein. London: The Scizin Press. \$2.65.

PINDAR'S ODES OF VICTORY. A translation into English verse by C. J. Billson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

WILLIAM CONGREVE. A Conversation Between Swift and Gay. By Bonamy Dobrée. Seattle, Wash.: Number 26 University of Washington Chapbooks.

POLITICAL THOUGHT OF ROGER WILLIAMS. Seattle, Wash.: University of Washington Press.

Biography

SUSAN B. ANTHONY. The Woman Who Changed the Mind of a Nation. By RHETA CHILDE DORR. Stokes, 1928. \$5.

Mrs. Dorr has had no dearth of material to contend with in the preparation of her life of Susan B. Anthony. The copious "History of the Woman's Party" is also a history of Miss Anthony's activities over a period of fifty-three years, and was compiled by Miss Anthony herself, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Ida Husted Harper, and Matilda Jocelyn Gage. As early as 1898 Ida Husted Harper published the first two volumes of her very full biography, and a third volume was added immediately after Miss Anthony's death. These are all excellent sources, but they lack sufficient distance from the subject to give the perspective which the passage of time has now automatically made possible. Yet there are no iconoclastic tendencies in Rheta Childe Dorr's biography of this "Woman Who Changed the Mind of a Nation." Mrs. Dorr is emphatically and at all times "for" Susan B. Anthony. She has profited by the contemporary biographical method in intimacy of approach and detail to give an air of objectivity to a really partisan biography. The book is essentially the "story" of the great feminist, fictional in treatment despite all its brave array of facts.

The contradictory and colorful background against which the battle of feminism was fought furnishes a set to delight the heart of any biographer. Victoria Woodhull flashes cometlike across the votes-for-women sky, poor little Lib Fulton tells Miss Anthony all about Henry Ward Beecher, and the lavender-gloved Charles Francis Train appears on a Kansas platform. A list of all the persons whose lives in some way touched that of Miss Anthony would be the complete list of people of importance of her day. Mrs. Dorr has here made good use of her opportunity; she has not written a great biography, but she has written a very readable one. The chronology is decidedly obscure at times, the author's opinions occasionally project themselves into those of her heroine, and members of the movement who worked with Miss Anthony find fault with several of the dates; nevertheless, Susan B. Anthony becomes a person in these pages.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF OUSÂMA. By Ousâma Ibn Mounkidh. Translated with an Introduction and Notes by George Richard Potter. Harcourt, Brace. \$4.

LOUIS XIV IN LOVE AND IN WAR. By Sisley Huddleston. Harper. \$4.

THEODORE N. VAIL. By Albert Bigelow Paine. Harper. \$4.

BOLIVAR THE LIBERATOR. By Michel Vaucaire. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. \$3.50.

MY LIFE EAST AND WEST. The Life Story of William S. Hart. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. \$4.

EMMA WILLARD, DAUGHTER OF DEMOCRACY. By Alma Lutz. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. \$4.

STRESEMANN THE MAN AND THE STATESMAN. By Rochus Baron von Rheinbaben. Translated from the German by Cyrus Brooks and Hans Hersl. Appleton. \$3.

Fiction

THE BRIDE ADORNED. By D. L. MURRAY. Harcourt, Brace, 1929. \$2.50.

This novel adheres to all the traditional requirements of the historical romance; it concerns a love story, intrinsically simple enough, but set upon by a host of interferences in the shape of religious differences, political strife, and jealous intrigues. What gives the story a modicum of distinction is the intensity of the author's feeling for Rome—that city, which at the end of the period of conflict he describes—the late nineteenth century which saw the end of Papal dominion over the state—emerged "as a bride adorned" and entered into a time of peace. The love of Angela Craven and the Count Ursi Camillo kept pace with the moods of Rome, for the causes which divided the Romans also divided the lovers. When quiet restores them to each other, their experiences slip readily from the reader's mind, but the Rome they lived in is not so easily forgotten. Mr. Murray has given a vigorous interpretation of a particular epoch, and at the same time made real the aspects of the city which have endured.

GOLD DUST. By EDWARD HOLSTIUS. Duffield, 1929. \$2.

The trouble with this first novel is that it lets us down. Starting to be a pleasant tale of clubs in London and week-ends in the country, of gaiety and romantic adventure, it quite unforgivably goes tragic. Mr. Holstius should know, even though "Gold Dust" is his first story, that no reader will stand being cheated. The first chapters, and many others off and on, are almost Wodehousian in their well-bred good humor, their careless romance. From the time that the teller of the story, young George Trafford, saves the mysterious Shirley from being arrested for illegal parking on Bond Street, until we really see what is going on between Jean and the not wholly convincing cad, George Danecourt, we never suspect that we are to be asked for any genuine emotional response to the novel. But soon there is real trouble, and we are put into the awkward position of having to take the characters seriously.

Nevertheless, we manage to enjoy Trafford's adventure of working in the city, and we are even tolerant when Mr. Holstius takes Trafford on a completely phoney business trip to the United States. But the last two chapters completely spoil our pleasure. How in the name of all good sense did those last chapters get written? Can it have been that the author was following the pattern of life rather than the pattern of art?

WILLOW AND CYPRESS. By CATHERINE VERSCHOYLE. Longmans, Green, 1929. \$2.

To interest one's self in this book one must be a woman and a patient one. Bridget Wentworth is an ordinarily sensitive young creature whom the author would have us believe unusual; she passes through a dreary childhood and eventually marries a most preposterous young man. Her father and her mother die and the preposterous young man deserts her. In the midst of her grief she walks out into the woods one day, beholds the willow trees and the cypress, hears a thrush singing, and suddenly realizes the smallness of human woes. From then she goes forward—the implication is forever—in peace. This is indeed being snubbed for one's pains. What is best in the story is borrowed from convention. The rest is sheer artificiality.

SHACKLES OF THE FREE. By MARY GRACE ASHTON. Stokes, 1929. \$2.50.

The paradoxical title stamps this novel as the didactic and pretentious book it is. The author has a *flair* for the discovery of general truths, but she is naively over-impressed with them and instead of insinuating them slyly into her story she has quite brazenly exploited them on every page, and openly begged her audience to read and learn. Her novel, a tale whose lost complications are heightened by a religious issue, is accordingly cumbersome and its characters suffocated with ideas. Numerous characters shackled to a confusing variety of shifting passions grope their circuitous way through a plot revealing a complicated assortment of interrelations. Simple fiction of style and theme would have made for more artistic work.

(Continued on next page)

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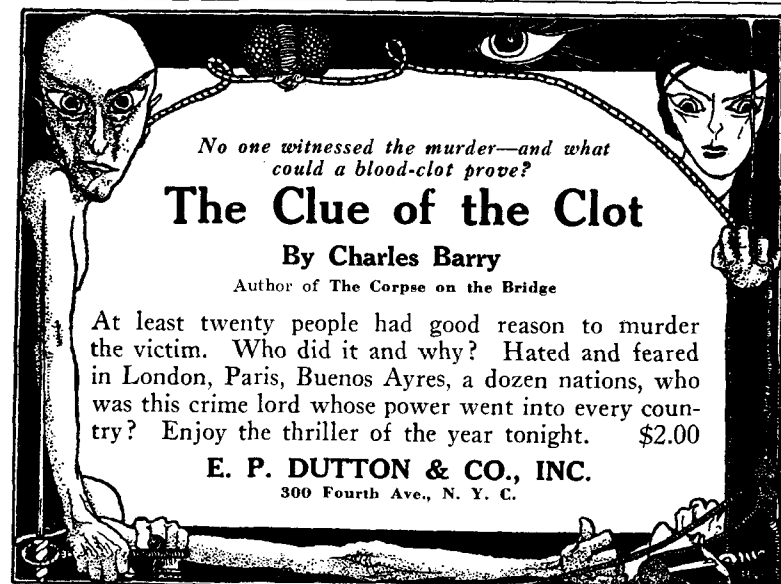
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