he is misled by his assumed premises. No reader, I feel sure, so regards it. What we do, in reading such lines, is mentally to adjust syllables to the mere primary rhythm \[\hat{a} x x \mid \hat{a} x x \], and we expect the poet not to make this too hard for us to do.

| Brightest and | best of the | sons of the | morning \& |

presents no difficulty in doing this, and this is, I am convinced, the way in which people read, think of, and remember the line. The difficulty in making dactylic or trochaic verse in English is that our sentences usually begin with an unaccented word, and poets are often hard put to it to get over this difficulty, and come to grief accordingly. Clough's line beginning 'With a mathematical score' (p. 109) is a case in point. He tried the experiment of substituting two weak initial syllables for one strong one, and the result is failure.\(^1\) Had he boldly prefixed them to his first 'beat,' an English reader would have had no more difficulty with the line than with Byron's

Thou who art bearing my buckler and bow,
Should the \|

It should be added that the distinction drawn (pp. 90–1) between heaviness and length, so that long syllables, and also short syllables, may be either heavy or light, is excellent, and helpful in analysis. So, to go back for a moment, is the recognition (p. 70) of 'a foot of two unstressed short syllables preceding a foot composed of two heavy syllables,' where recent criticism tends to scan '... | sweat, and the \mid green \mid corn,' etc. On p. 61 (example 66) I wonder why elision is not brought in to scan 'b' importuning,' 'Equivalence,' with Mr Bridges, is not used in Prof. Saintsbury's sense, but is limited to the classic idea of two short syllables being equal to one long (p. 16), though on p. 17 it seems to have a somewhat wider meaning. The terrible word 'opisthophagic' [backward devouring?] is invented on p. 11, and the archaic 'quantitative' is habitually preferred to the more usual 'quantitative.' The Notes at the end of the book are entirely new, and will naturally invite attention.

Readers must be congratulated on having in this volume the author’s view more consistently and intelligibly put than hitherto, and the author himself on having digested into suitable and permanent shape what before was somewhat chaotic and capriciously assembled.

T. S. OMOND.


Professor Wright says in his preface that writers on the French classical age confine themselves too exclusively to the principal figures and neglect the secondary ones. In his book—'La Fontaine disappears

\(^1\) It is singular that in twenty years Mr Bridges has not ascertained that ‘Inverary’ is a double trochee both in quantity and accent.
somewhat behind a Rapin and a Bouhours,' and to La Fontaine he might have added Mme de La Fayette, whose novel (without its author's name) is only mentioned twice, Malebranche, and Bourdaloue, and to Rapin and Bouhours La Mesnardièreee, Le Bossu, and that prince of dullards, the Abbé d'Aubignac. Now if Professor Wright had given us a real history of the rise of the School of 1660, if he had told us of its long struggle against powerful enemies, and of how, soon after it had obtained a hardly-gained victory, it found itself once more assailed by the same enemies, with fresh weapons and from a new point of attack—if this had been his aim, he would have been justified in his method of procedure. But his book is not in any sense a history, or even a narrative; it is rather a series of disquisitions on different aspects of French classicism. It is true that American undergraduates after reading it will abandon the belief that classicism is 'a play constructed according to the three unities of Aristotle,' but they would have had a clearer idea of what French classicism really is if Professor Wright had confined himself to the great writers and the governing principles.

Another feature of the book to which its author calls attention is that he has tried to show 'that the classicism of the Renaissance deserves almost as serious consideration as that of the seventeenth century.' Accordingly in Part I, which he entitles Foundations, he devotes three chapters (III, IV, V) to sixteenth-century classicism. But can it with truth be said that the classicism of the seventeenth century was built upon that of the sixteenth? 'The spirit of French humanism enters French poetry with the Pléiade.' That is perfectly true, but it marks the difference between the two centuries—between humanism, which is the cult of antiquity, and classicism, which is the adoption of classical forms and classical ideals for the purpose of a truly national literature. The non-continuity between the poetry of the Pléiade and that of the seventeenth century is shown by the fact that Malherbe made a clean sweep of the former.

On the other hand, Montaigne is a real forerunner of the classical age, and this is clearly seen by Professor Wright when he says that 'the most characteristic form of Montaigne's thought is the moral psychology of man,' and that 'Montaigne, like Molière, is a psychological realist' (p. 53). With Montaigne he might have joined Regnier, who is not only 'a great example of a formal satirist' but a predecessor of Molière in his careful observation of social types. Professor Wright is also right in calling attention to the Christianised Stoicism of Du Vair and Charron, which leads through the still more eclectic Stoicism of Malherbe and Balzac to that of Descartes and Corneille.

In chapter vi, which deals with the first half of the seventeenth century, we come to the real foundations of the classical period. These are set forth with knowledge and insight, but there are one or two points that invite consideration. It is true that French classicism was influenced by Jansenism, as instanced by Pascal, Racine, Boileau, and La Rocheffoucauld. Even Bossuet did not press hardly upon the Jansenists, partly because he recognised that they threatened no real danger
to the Church, but partly also because he shared their devotion to
St Augustine. But it was not disillusionment—except perhaps in the
case of La Rochefoucauld—that created the pessimistic view of human
nature common to nearly all the great writers of the reign of Louis XIV.
It was rather the Christian doctrine of the sinfulness of man, which
was as much over-emphasised by Bossuet and Bourdaloue as by Pascal
and Racine.

The part played by the salon in the development of classicism is
sketched on pp. 64–67. A distinction should have been drawn between
the Blue Chamber of Mme de Rambouillet and the salons of inferior
hostesses. It was in these latter, especially in that of Mlle de Scudéry,
that preciosity found a congenial soil, and it is the failure to recognise
this that leads Professor Wright, following M. Fidao-Justiniani, to
declare that ‘preciosity forms part of the early background of French
classicism.’ On the contrary, the School of 1660, especially Molière and
Boileau, recognised in preciosity a formidable enemy. Again, though it
is of course true that there were précieux as well as précieuses, it would
have been well to point out that the term précieux (as a substantive) was
never applied to men, a fact which emphasises the feminine character
of the movement.

Can it be said that the morale des honnêtes gens had ‘Jesuit graces’
or was anti-Jansenist (p. 76)? Neither La Rochefoucauld, who has
enunciated this morale better than any one, nor Molière, who has trans-
lated it into action in so many of his comedies, had any sympathy with
the Jesuits. Alceste is as much of an honnête homme as Philinte, and it
is only in his attitude towards society that Alceste can be said to be
austere like a Jansenist or Philinte accommodating like a Jesuit.

Just as chapters v and vi are the most important part of Part I, so
the strength of Part II (The Structure) lies in chapters vii–ix. ‘In
Bossuet we find the incarnation of seventeenth century classicism’ (p. 49).
There is truth in this, but it might have been expounded with advantage
at greater length. ‘Smooth’ is not a very appropriate description of his
sermons, which deserve far more attention than they get at the present
day, at least from Englishmen. In their absolute sincerity, their hatred
of sin, their ardent love of God, they are extraordinarily impressive
witnesses to the Christian religion, while their reasoned eloquence, their
absolute freedom from affectation, and above all their universality, makes
them noble exponents of the classical ideal.

For this universality as a characteristic of classicism Professor Wright
rightly quotes Aristotle in Butcher’s translation and refers to the latter’s
admirable chapter on the subject. Unfortunately in the passage quoted
there occurs that mention of ‘the law of probability or necessity,’ which
caused such perplexity to Corneille and other writers on the drama, and
which Professor Wright has not very successfully tried to disentangle.
Vraisemblance in the sense of verisimilitude and as a motive for the three
unities was the source of much nonsense, but, as meaning poetic or
imaginative truth in contradistinction to scientific or literal truth, it was
of the highest importance.
Professor Wright has some just and useful remarks on good sense, and reason, and taste (pp. 102-4), and on the subject of taste he quotes pertinent passages from La Bruyère and Sir Joshua Reynolds, and rightly refers to Saint-Evremond, Bussy-Rabutin, and Bouhours. These three last, though their criticism does not go very deep, were all men of discernment, far superior to D'Aubignac or Rapin or Le Bossu, who, because they wrote formal treatises, had a reputation beyond their deserts.

Professor Wright's last three chapters are too slight to be of much value, especially the last, which deals with Art. Nicolas Poussin was too great a classicist and Le Brun's influence on the whole art of his age too important to be dismissed with a page of appreciation. In fact Professor Wright's chief defect is that he disperses his strength too much. He is well and widely informed and his observations are often just, but had he concentrated his thought more, had he carried his investigation deeper, had he borrowed from the great writers of the French classical age something of their constructive power and sense of form, he would have produced a more impressive work. As it is, he has not, it seems to me, done full justice to his powers or shown his wide reading to the best advantage.

A. Tilley.


GIULIO BERTONI. Studi su vecchie e nuove poesie e prose d'amore e di romanzi. Same publishers. 1921. viii + 382 pp. 25 lire

The first of these volumes completes the Ferrara trilogy which the author began, now eighteen years ago, with his Biblioteca estense e la coltura ferrarese ai tempi del Duca Ercole I, and followed up with his less generally known Nuovi studi su M. M. Boiardo; the second gathers together a part of the scattered fruits of that somewhat discursive activity, for which he tells us that his friends have called him to task.

We had rather expected from Professor Bertoni the definitive biography of Ariosto with a critical study of his works in the light of recent investigation and discovery. Instead he has given us an elaborate and picturesque volume, at times more or less popular in treatment, in which Messer Lodovico is represented as the supreme product of the Renaissance at Ferrara, and it is shown how the Orlando Furioso represents the spirit and reflects the life of its epoch. The titles of its four parts indicate the author's treatment: 'Gli elementi costitutivi della mentalità e dell' arte di Lodovico Ariosto,' 'Forme tradizionali e spiriti nuovi della coltura classica e romanzesca dell' Ariosto nell' Orlando Furioso,' 'Prorettori e amici dell' Ariosto in Ferrara fra luci ed ombre di poesia nel Furioso,' 'Usi costumanze e consuetudini della società dei tempi dell' Ariosto nel Furioso.' The minor works—the comedies, satires and