Review

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in two places, of the name of a well-known German professor, who contributes the Introduction, is a case in point. In the text, again, there are many errors, which a competent reviser would have noted at once. *Ein paar Kasten* (I, 5) does not mean 'two dressers.' *Schauspiel* (I, 5) is rendered 'tragedy,' though called *eine Komödie* a few lines back. *Krähen* are not 'cranes,' nor *Naturgefühl* 'native feeling.' *Englisch*, in I, 20, does not mean 'English' but 'angelic.' There is nothing typically English in a white night-gown. In I, 21 the words *was nach seiner bisherigen Bestimmung schmeckte von Büchern und sonst* are wrongly rendered, 'whatever, according to his previous opinion, savoured of books and the like.' *Sich zu vergleichen* (II, 2) means 'to come to an agreement,' not 'to compare each other.' 'Imagery' (II, 2) should be 'image.' *Eine Fährte* (II, 3) cannot mean 'a cart'—a mistake made by Carlyle too—but 'one track' or 'one scent.' *Mit dem Rocken* (II, 3) means 'with the distaff,' not 'with her skirt.' The note on p. 89 is inept, as *Schreibtäfel* here means 'note-book,' as might be expected, certainly not 'writing-desk.' In III, 8: 'while the Directress declared' should be 'while he declared to the Directress.' 'On her stool' (IV, 9) should be 'close to his chair.' 'The smallest thing that happens can be seen' (IV, 9) should read, 'Very little that happens.' 'With our hero' (IV, 12) should be 'against our hero.' Thus the sense is perverted right and left. In v, 3, 'But it was not much longer' is just the reverse of *es währte noch lange* and *der ihr nicht passte* (VI, 1) becomes 'which suited her well.' 'Göttinger students' is not English, and the German idiom, 'What were not the Germans!' sounds equally harsh. These errors—and more might be added—must be noted with regret, for the *Ur-meister* is of great interest, even to those who read Goethe only in translations. The philological interest of the original, as an example of Goethe's early prose style, naturally disappears. But much remains. There are more detailed reminiscences of Goethe's youth and a fuller account of his attitude towards the eighteenth century drama, especially of his own earlier efforts in this field. The discussion of Corneille's discourse on 'The Three Unities' is especially interesting; so, too, the enquiry into the origin of our pleasure in the drama. The stages in the growth of the novel—and the pruning too—are now clearly revealed, and the list of Goethe's characters is increased by two.

JOHN LEES.

ABERDEEN.

Phonetic Spelling. A Proposed Universal Alphabet for the rendering of English, French, German and all other Forms of Speech. By Sir HARRY JOHNSTON. Cambridge: University Press. 1913. 8vo. pp. vi + 92.

The object of the alphabet explained in this book is twofold. It is an attempt to solve the immediate practical problem of the transcription of African and other languages for the explorer and the missionary,

and to devise a phonetic notation which may in time be adopted universally. The two problems seem to be essentially different and to call for separate treatment. It is obvious that many things which would be admitted into a notation which is to be mainly utilitarian and practical would be undesirable in the more ambitious scheme of a universal script, and conversely that a universal alphabet would be too elaborate for the special purpose in question.

Another fact that will lessen the value of this alphabet is that it is based on the standard forms of each particular language, and disregards dialectal variations to a very large extent. One of the most fruitful uses to which a phonetic notation can be put is to record the facts of dialect speech, and a system which does not provide the means to do this will hardly commend itself for general use to the philologist.

The notation that the author advocates seems to offend against phonetic principles in several ways. In the specimen on p. 49 I find the following points: (1) The same symbol (d) is used for two different sounds in 'fiksd,' *fixed* and 'stændad,' *standard*. (2) Double letters are retained in certain words to represent a single sound, in other cases a single letter is used. Compare 'lettöz,' *letters*, 'spelliñ,' *spelling*, 'pozessez,' *possesses* and 'wil,' *will*. (3) The sound which in the speech of most people is the 'unstressed' vowel ə is represented in three different ways. First, the symbol ö is used in the words 'pyüöli,' *purely*, 'lettöz,' *letters*, 'yiöz,' *years*. This is the same symbol as the author uses in the words 'föst,' *first*, 'wödz,' *words*. Secondly, certain words have the symbol a which is used for the vowel in 'sam,' *some*, 'wan,' *one*, 'ap,' *up*. Examples are 'akyüt,' *acute*, 'andar,' *under*, 'stændad,' *standard*. Thirdly, a number of words retain their original vowel, e.g. 'sistem,' *system*, 'iven,' *even*, 'kæræktör,' *character*, 'piriod,' *period*. This threefold representation does not seem to correspond to any real distinction in speech.

It is to be feared that the alphabet will not achieve the purpose of its author. At the same time we are indebted to him for a welcome contribution to a very important and very practical problem. Not the least important result of the adoption of such an alphabet would be, as the author points out, the immense gain to students of non-European languages in being able to work at such languages in a Latin script. It will be remembered that the late Dr Sweet in his *Practical Study of Languages* advocates the same thing, and it is time that the fetish of the necessity of studying these languages in their native characters was abandoned. The gain to culture would be very great.

HENRY ALEXANDER.

GLASGOW.