Dichtung und Dichter der Zeit. Ein Schilderung der deutschen Literatur der letzten Jahrzehnte by Albert Soergel; Literatur in Deutschland. Studien und Eindrücke by Kurt Martens; Masks and Minstrels of New Germany by Percival Pollard; Die Entwicklung der deutschen Literatur seit 1830 by Georg Witkowski

Review by: Karl Holl

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business of a good anthology is not only to give us a nation's great poetry, but to show the width of range of such great poetry. There is a tendency to harp unduly on two lyric strains, which, no doubt, are prominent in the modern German lyric, but are far from being so much so as they are in this volume; we mean what we might call the sentimental-domestic strain, on the one hand, and the patriotic-warlike on the other. We are not always in agreement with Professor Fiedler's selection from quite modern writers such as Nietzsche and Dehmel; but here again the criterion is one of personal taste. We presume that Stefan George is absent from the collection owing to his well-known antipathy to appearing in anthologies.

The notes are not overladen with explanatory matter, as should be the case in a volume of this kind; and what is said is to the point. A valuable feature is the indication of the composers by whom the songs have been set. In this connection, Richard Strauss has composed for men's voices the *Schlachtlied*, No. 26; and one is tempted to suggest that a lyric from Rückert's wonderful *Kindertotenlieder* might have been included to allow Gustav Mahler's name to appear among the composers.

J. G. ROBERTSON.

LONDON.

Dichtung und Dichter der Zeit. Ein Schilderung der deutschen Literatur der letzten Jahrzehnte. Von ALBERT SOERGEL. Leipzig: R. Voigtländer. 1911. 8vo. xii + 892 pp.

Literatur in Deutschland. Studien und Eindrücke. Von KURT MARTENS. Berlin: Egon Fleischel und Co. 1910. 8vo. 193 pp.

Masks and Minstrels of New Germany. By PERCIVAL POLLARD. London: W. Heinemann. 1911. 8vo. viii + 299 pp.

Die Entwicklung der deutschen Literatur seit 1830. Von GEORG WITKOWSKI. Leipzig: R. Voigtländer. 1912. 8vo. vi + 165 pp.

The past four decades of the new German Empire will be associated in future histories of literature with keen conflicts between antagonistic literary opinions and persistent endeavours to get at the real problems and the true ideals of literary production. The comprehensive work of Albert Soergel is a valuable attempt to trace the various stages of the recent development, both in its theory and in its practice; Kurt Martens, himself a poet of considerable standing, gives us a series of studies of individual problems and authors, with which we may not always agree, for example, with the high praise he bestows on Helene Böhlau, but the lucid style of Martens' book, and the marked personality of the author, give it a peculiar charm; Georg Witkowski, who is well known as a historian of literature, discusses the

development of German literature since 1830. Lastly, Percival Pollard is an enthusiastic impressionist whose interest lies in the 'lighter muse' and her chief prophet Otto Julius Bierbaum.

The beginning of the new movement was marked by a complete break with tradition. Karl Bleibtreu's *Revolution der Literatur* strikes the keynote. But for their new ideals the younger German writers had to look abroad; they turned to France, to Balzac's *Comédie humaine*, to Flaubert and to the brothers Goncourt and their 'style impressioniste.' *Germinie Lacerteux* (1864) introduced the new social *milieu* into literature, and Emile Zola, their disciple, broadened the realistic social basis to naturalism *sans phrase*. Zola's *Rougon-Macquart* cycle became a kind of fetish to the first generation of these German writers. Soergel deals clearly with this development and with the theory and method of the 'roman expérimental': but something might also have been said for the influence of Darwin, Russel Wallace and, at a later date, Haeckel on literature.

It was only natural that, with the French example before them, these young writers should have first turned to the novel; that form of literature also afforded the best facilities for illustrating their theories. As to the theories themselves, it might be pointed out that they were not essentially foreign to the trend of German thought in the seventies and eighties; as Windelband¹ has shown, this was a time of 'wertlose und geschichtslose Weltanschauung' which followed the breakdown of German idealism in the fifties. The distinguishing marks of these decades were positivism, psychological analysis and a preponderating interest in the historical point of view, the last being represented in literature by Wildenbruch, the contemporary of Treitschke. The philosophic basis of the new movement has, it seems to us, been unduly neglected by Soergel.

At the beginning of this period there were two main literary centres, Munich and Berlin. The chief organ of the Munich poets was *Die Gesellschaft*, edited by their leader, M. G. Conrad, whose personality reminds us of the 'Kraftgenies' of the eighteenth century. The Berlin group of poets, whose leader was Heinrich Hart, were less united in their views. Heinrich Hart and his brother Julius published in 1882 their *Kritische Waffengänge*, in which they opposed the excessive admiration of Zola; but the latter's influence on both the German lyric and the German novel was considerable. Hermann Conradi, who unfortunately died early, was the most promising member of the group; and Karl Henckell wrote lyrics of some merit, although he never rose to the grand passion of a Herwegh. Heinrich Hart, although also lyrically gifted, is mainly important as a critic; he was the first to give expression to the ethic and aesthetic doctrines of the new time. In fiction there was nothing of importance, and Max Kretzer strove in vain to be the German Zola.

An important literary event in 1886 was the formation of the society 'Durch,' of which Eugen Wolff was one of the founders. It

¹ *Die Philosophie im deutschen Geistesleben des 19ten Jahrhunderts*, Tübingen, 1909.

was Wolff who gave the name 'die Moderne' to the new movement, which set up as its models Tolstoi, Dostoevski and Ibsen and thereby accentuated the ethical and psychological problems. The modern drama was banned from the ordinary theatres, and a new home was formed for it in the so-called 'Freie Bühne,' amongst the founders of which were Otto Brahm and Paul Schlenther. The 'Freie Bühne' opened with Ibsen's *Ghosts*, and on October 28, 1889, Gerhart Hauptmann's *Vor Sonnenaufgang* followed in a performance accompanied by stormy scenes. This play was dedicated to Arno Holz, the chief prophet of 'consequent naturalism,' whose theoretical views had a great influence on the art of the theatre. As a poet, Holz was but mediocrally gifted. Naturalism is closely allied with socialism, as is to be seen in the literature of this time; but socialism also contains the germs of individualism and anarchism, a development which is conspicuous in John Henry Mackay, an eclectic lyric poet of Scottish origin. Even still more of an eclectic is Ferdinand Avenarius, who endeavoured to spread literary taste in his *Kunstwart*, and to whom we owe one of the best anthologies of German lyric poetry.

A higher standard is reached by the novelists; by W. Bölsche, who, however, is better known by his popular scientific works; by Clara Viebig, a powerful writer of unflinching psychological insight, whose later works, however, show a remarkable falling-off; and by Ludwig Thoma, a South German satirist, who has given us a convincing picture of Bavarian peasant life in his *Andreas Vöst*. Higher than these stands Wilhelm von Polenz, the author of *Der Büttnerbauer*; and highest of all, Theodor Fontane, from whose *Irrungen, Wirrungen* Soergel reprints a scene which gives a good idea of the beauty of that work. In the drama the first place belongs to Gerhart Hauptmann. In his analysis and appreciation of Hauptmann's plays to 1898, Soergel does not appear to have advanced beyond the standpoint of Schlenther in his biography of Hauptmann¹; he underestimates *Die Jungfern vom Bischofsberg*, and misunderstands the profound psychology of *Kaiser Karls Geisel*. Soergel only mentions the title of Hauptmann's last drama, *Die Ratten*, which again shows Hauptmann's strength in psychological analysis, and contains, in Frau John, the most successfully drawn of Hauptmann's women. Interesting is Soergel's brief criticism of the rhythm of Hauptmann's language, in which he comes to the conclusion that *Der arme Heinrich* represents 'die Höhe von Hauptmanns Verskunst.' Soergel gives a clear analysis of Hauptmann's novel *Emanuel Quint*, but he might with advantage also have shown how intimately the book is connected with Hauptmann's earlier work. The other dramatists of this period are satisfactorily dealt with; only O. E. Hartleben, of whose personality Pollard gives a more sympathetic picture, seems somewhat undervalued; *Hanna Jagert*, with all its lack of concentration, is a play of considerable literary value.

In Hauptmann's work there are tendencies which point towards

¹ Cp. Robert Petsch, *Gerhart Hauptmann, die Tragödie des 19. Jahrhunderts*, in *Ilberg's Neue Jahrbücher* etc., vol. **xxi**, p. 542 ff.

an abandonment of naturalism; and the theoretical grounds for this abandonment are—though superficially—set forth by Richard Dehmel in his essay on the German 'Alltagstragödie.' The new impulse came again from Romance countries, from Huysmans, Verlaine, Maupassant, Verhaeren, D'Annunzio, Maeterlinck; but the greatest anti-naturalist is himself a German, Friedrich Nietzsche. The centre of this new movement is Vienna, a city where literary traditions were strong and where naturalism had never had much hold. Here the chief dramatists are Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Beer-Hofmann. Greater than the latter is Schmidtbonn, who in his *Graf von Gleichen* has created a play of great beauty and psychological depth, which promises well for his future.

In lyric poetry it is unnecessary to dwell on the originality of Detlev von Liliencron. His influence on his many followers, such as Gustav Falke and Karl Busse, has fostered a kind of unoriginal eclecticism; and to these eclectics must also be reckoned, in spite of Pollard's exaggerated claims for him, Otto Julius Bierbaum. Bierbaum is a pleasant *causeur*, a humourist with an exquisite artistic sense whose style and character are best illustrated by his last publication, *Yankeedoodlefahrt*.

It is difficult to bring the lyric poetry of the time under a single heading. One group of poets is gathered round Arno Holz, with his new ideals of rhymeless verse and his extreme naturalism; others follow Stefan George and form the antipodes of naturalism in their devotion to a formalism that goes back to romantic poets like Hölderlin. Baudelaire, Verlaine and especially the English Pre-Raphaelites are the models of this group; while the symbolism of Maeterlinck is exaggerated to an often incomprehensible mysticism in Mombert and becomes grotesque and fantastic in Paul Scheerbart. All these tendencies in the lyric meet in the poetic individuality of Richard Dehmel—with Liliencron, the greatest modern lyric poet—whose excess of sentiment, however, sometimes leads to exaggeration.

It is difficult to find a single label for the last decade of German literature, 1900—1910; its general aspect and tendencies are too varied, the renaissance of German idealism being perhaps the most characteristic. A lyric poet like Rainer Maria Rilke has naturally some connection with Stefan George, but his Angelus Silesius-like mysticism marks out for him a field peculiarly his own. On the other hand, Arno Holz's theories are to be traced in the work of Otto zur Linde and the 'Charon' poets, although not to the exclusion of individual aims on the part of these writers. 'Back to the primitive' is the motto of this time, that revives Indian 'Schattenspiele' and discovers the original source of poetry in rhythm. An interest is at the same time awakened for a writer whom we regard as the greatest epic poet of modern Germany, Carl Spitteler.

The novel continues to be influenced by romantic and foreign models, French, Russian, Scandinavian, English. Characteristic of it, too, is the 'Los von Berlin' movement, that is to say, the tendency

of decentralisation and the revival of a 'Heimatkunst.' The prophets of this movement are Fritz Lienhart and Adolf Bartels, who, however, have little claim to be regarded as original writers. The novel is much cultivated in South Germany and Austria, but it has not succeeded in arriving at any great achievement. Emil Strauss and Hermann Hesse seem to us unduly praised. In connection with the latter Ludwig Finkh ought to have been mentioned; his *Rosendoktor* has much in common with Hesse's *Peter Camenzind*; and something might also have been said about the Weinheim physician Carillon. The most gifted of the group seems to us Bernhard Kellermann. This writer may not yet have found his final artistic form, but his last novel *Das Meer* is full of high promise. Notable among the North German writers is Georg Hermann, whose *Jettchen Gebert* is, undoubtedly, one of the best modern German novels.

The brothers Heinrich and Thomas Mann occupy a position by themselves. Martens is more penetrating in his characterisation of them, Soergel the more comprehensive. The latter points to the influence of Thackeray on Thomas Mann, but he might easily have said more on this point. Possibly there is also an influence of Ibsen on *Buddenbrooks*, the best German novel of the last decade. The other novelists of the time are adequately treated by Soergel, but some mention might have been made of Wette, as well as of G. O. Knoop, who is sympathetically appreciated by Martens. Among the names which Soergel mentions in the introduction to the drama of this period, a few might have been more fully discussed such as Eduard Stucken, Heinrich Lilienfein, a dramatist of real talent, and Friedrich Freksa.

How unsettled aesthetic taste in Germany was at the beginning of the last decade is seen in the adaptation of the French Montmartre cabaret as the German 'Überbrettl,' in which Pollard finds so much to praise. But in its aesthetic pretensions the 'Überbrettl' seems to us to have been an utter failure. One of its chief personalities is Frank Wedekind, of whom Martens gives an excellent characterisation; and Wedekind, with all his extravagances a really gifted dramatist, has outlived the 'Überbrettl.' Of Karl Schönherr and Fritz Stavenhagen, the latter seems to us to have been the more original; one cannot regard Schönherr's *Glaube und Heimat* as the great tragedy, but Stavenhagen had, in our opinion, given promise of filling a long felt gap in German comedy. There is, further, a neo-romantic and a neo-classic group of poets. To the former belongs Ernst Hardt, whose *Tantris der Narr* never surely deserved the 'Schillerpreis'; to the latter belong Paul Ernst, Wilhelm von Scholz and others. But they are all merely eclectics and experimentalists. Soergel, as well as Martens, concludes with a study on that promising young dramatist Herbert Eulenberg.

Something might have been said on the subject of literary theories in the period under consideration, a matter which is well and fully treated by Soergel; and we must certainly not omit to express our gratitude for the many and well-chosen illustrations in his book.

An index of the artists would be useful in a second edition, where, too, the style might be improved here and there and the numerous misprints corrected.

Professor Witkowski's *Die Entwicklung der deutschen Literatur seit 1830* is not, he tells us, intended to compete with other histories of modern German literature; its particular aim is 'den Lesern Hilfe bei der Wahl der Bücher und zum Genuss und Urteil zu bieten.' But he has by no means restricted himself to this purpose; his lucid treatise strikes out new paths and brings vividly before us the literary development since 1830. The important stages are well defined and due attention given to the various foreign influences. His characterisation of individual authors and of the general trend of thought within special periods is concise and suggestive, although, owing to the limitations of space, naturally somewhat dogmatic. We note particularly the warm appreciation of Lenau and Spitteler, the impartial estimate of Ferdinand Avenarius, the clear discussion of realism (pp. 35 ff.) and of the 'Zeitstimmung' after 1850 (pp. 43 ff.). There are only a few points in which we differ from Professor Witkowski, as, for instance, his too severe criticism of Hugo von Hofmannsthal; we should have wished, too, for a more ample treatment of Wilhelm von Polenz, and surely Vischer's novel *Auch Einer* ought to have been mentioned in the text. The book is supplied with elaborate and valuable notes, which include even so recent a date as the death of Felix Dahn last January. Perhaps it might be added to p. 51 that Adolf Hausrath died some years ago; on p. 64 reference might have been made to the excellent essay by O. F. Walzel on Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach (*Aufsätze*, 1811), and on p. 131 to the book by Kurt Martens which has just been reviewed. But these are trifles. The book leaves the impression on us that Witkowski is singularly well equipped for the task he has undertaken.

KARL HOLL.

LIVERPOOL.

MINOR NOTICES.

The first part (*Inferno*) of this useful work (*Dante's Divina Commedia*, edited and annotated by C. H. Grandgent. London: D. C. Heath and Co.) was reviewed in these pages rather more than a year ago (Vol. v, pp. 124—6). Professor Grandgent now gives us the *Purgatorio* on the same plan. As the previous volume was noticed at some length, we will confine ourselves on the present occasion to a few remarks suggested in the course of a first reading. In a note on l. 19—21, the editor gives a reference to Dr Moore's article in this *Review* (Vol. III, pp. 376 ff.) on the almanack of Profacius, but he omits to mention the all-important point that by the discovery of this