Review

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been taken of 'your,' as used in the phrase 'your worm is your only emperor for diet,' 'your water is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body,' and perhaps also in

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

On the whole we can commend this Shakespeare glossary as the best thing of the kind that has appeared, and as very well fitted to take the place of explanatory notes for those whose object is simply to understand the text. In most cases the conspectus of Shakespearean usage which is afforded by such a glossary as this, is far more valuable than the information which is given by a note, and the convenient size of the book and its cheapness ought to make it suitable for general use.

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The Works of Thomas Deloney. Edited with an introduction and notes by FRANCIS OSCAR MANN. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1912. 8vo. xliii + 600 pp.

Mr Mann has rendered a service to Thomas Deloney and to all who can read Elizabethan literature with pleasure. While others have raised the old writer from the ranks of the ballad-mongers to the dignity and estate of an Elizabethan novelist, Mr Mann has established this position in the only final and effective way, by gathering together his author's fugitive efforts into a well printed volume with scholarly notes and an appreciative introduction. At the same time, Mr Mann has put a collection of lively and amusing tales within the reach of this studious generation. For it is something, after studying Nashe's overwrought and erudite tirades or the introspective melancholy of Lyly and Greene, to turn to these stories still fresh with the simplicity of an earlier age, picturing the cheerful aspects of middle class life, telling us of the amusements of 'prentices, their sports, quarrels, love affairs, the *camaraderie* of the guilds, the tricks they played on one another, and the pride they took in their work. Deloney, in spite of what Mr Mann says, was not a realist. The picture is idealised, for we know well from contemporary pamphleteers that the age of Elizabeth was even further from the millennium than our own times. And yet, though Deloney throws over his narratives a zest and an optimism, which was the very soul of the medieval *raconteurs*, his view of life is not confined to the bright side of things. If he tells of penniless 'prentices who married their mistresses or even rose to be Lord Mayor, he also tells of princes and princesses who stooped to be cobblers and serving-maids, of lads who had not the wherewithal to buy a meal, of noblemen who were imprisoned and tortured, and of one ghastly murder which even now makes the reader's flesh creep (*Thomas of Reading*,

chap. xi). There is little or none of the continuity of episodes and development of characters which we expect in a modern novel. *Jacke of Newberie*, *The Gentle Craft* and *Thomas of Reading* are hardly more than pegs on which a number of independent and traditional stories are hung. The charm of the work consists in its directness and vivacity of narration, or again in the skill with which, in *The Gentle Craft, Part I* (his most ambitious attempt at a fashionable book, enriched with the learning of Pliny and the new ideas of the time) he alternates chapters of euphuistic romance with popular drolleries. Sometimes we meet with touches of character which would not be out of place in the best nineteenth century novels, as for instance in the picture of the old friar who could not say mass without his book and spectacles, though he was blind, and in the description of the disreputable, bedraggled host of Bosome's Inn. Above all, Deloney excels in reproducing chance bits of conversation which give glimpses into the speaker's whole manner of life and habit of thought. It would be hard to beat the passage in which Simon Eyer's wife rates her 'prentice Crispine for marrying at his age, or where she describes her consciousness of social advancement when invited to the Lord Mayor's supper, or urges her husband to accept the office of sheriff; or again, the passages where Meg and Gillian exchange amenities, and where the two gallants, with a *ῥῆσις* soon to be followed by *νέμεσις*, boast to each other of the things that they will do to 'lusty Peachey' the master shoemaker; or yet again, the gossip of the housewives (*Thomas of Reading*, chap. xii), varying between the vulgarity of ignorance and the ignorance of superstition; or lastly the fragment of dialogue in which the erratic Tom Drum, 'sitting on a time sadly at work in his masters shop,' is seized with the *Wanderlust* and 'suddenly shrowded up St Hughes bones (i.e. his cobbler's implements) and taking downe his pike-staffe, clapt his pack at his back' informing his employer that he could not stay indoors while the spring sun was shining and the trees were 'deckt with green leaves.'

Thus there are qualities in Deloney's work which should appeal to the most general reader, who cannot enjoy the rather artificial pleasure of recognising familiar allusions in a new author. At the same time Mr Mann's edition is destined primarily for scholars and his first duty is to enable the serious student to see Deloney in his true relation to the literature of the time. With this end in view, he begins with a life of Deloney, about whom, as he shows, very little is known, although he adds a large number of allusions to his author from contemporary writers. Then follows a rather intricate account of the sources and development of Elizabethan prose fiction. Mr Mann shows well how the sixteenth century did not improve on the narrative art of earlier centuries, except in abandoning verse for prose, and why the atmosphere of Elizabethan times hardly favoured the development of the novel in its highest forms. He then traces the two main streams of mediæval literature—the romances and epics which appealed to the aristocracy, and the *exempla* and *fabliaux* which the middle classes loved

—and he explains how they reappeared on the one hand in euphuism and prose pastorals, and on the other hand in jest books, ‘coney-catching’ pamphlets and the first attempts at the picaresque novel. Deloney, he concludes, differed from, or surpassed, Greene, Nashe and others because he ‘attains a clearness of construction and homogeneity of atmosphere which is missing in most contemporary fiction; for he writes straightforwardly, from a simple point of view, fitting his stories into an appropriate framework, and informing them with the same vivid life, so that the whole novel is one in atmosphere, if not in connected incident.’ In the same way he concludes his introduction by an appreciation of Deloney’s poetry, saying something about the character and origin of ballad-sellers and the quality of their work.

Such a sketch of an important field of literature—though, in this case, the sketch is rather diffused and complex—is especially useful when followed by an annotated text of an author who illustrates the principles laid down. Mr Mann explains adequately the allusions and obsolete expressions which confront the reader, and it is a perfect scandal that a commentary which provides so many illustrations to the chroniclers and to Shakespeare, should have no index. But his notes are most instructive where he shows the sources on which Deloney drew for his novels and ballads.

And yet, in spite of the useful information which Mr Mann, with scholarly diligence, has gathered together, we doubt whether he is really familiar with the popular thought and sentiment of the period. Every now and then we meet with gaps which a fuller knowledge would surely have supplied. He might have noticed the similarity between the episode in chap. IV of *Jacke of Newberie* ‘How the maidens serued Will Sommers for his sawcynesse’ and several escapades in the Jest-books and *Fabliaux*. He might have shown how ‘the pictures which Jacke of Newberie had in his house’ in chap. V are introduced to gratify the popular taste for *encomia*, of which the most conspicuous example is *Lenten Stuffle*. He should have given a fuller note on Brainford (*The Gentle Craft, The Second Part*, chap. XI) which figured so largely in the people’s sentiment. In *Thomas of Reading* he twice misses an obvious occasion (i.e. chaps. II and VI) to draw the reader’s attention to the popularity of satires on women such as we find in *The Schole-house of Women, The Proude Wyves Paternoster* and S. Rowland’s *Tis Merrie when Gossips meete*. A similar omission is to be found with reference to the song ‘In praise of a single life’ in *The Garland of good Will*. Crab’s prophecy (*Thomas of Reading*, p. 236) should have been compared with broadside prophecies which at that time were sold in the streets and the prognostications which prominent literary men like Nashe, Breton, Waldegrave and Wither produced. The device by which Sir William Ferris was cured of his obsession (*Thomas of Reading*, p. 253) is far older than the *Decameron* (p. 549). It was known to the physicians of classical times and is described in Reginald Scot’s *Discouerie of Witchcraft*.

Mr Mann’s introduction has several flashes of wit and insight above

the level of the average commentator, but, like the notes, it is not free from lapses. While it is certainly true that prose is the more suitable medium for the novel, the reader would hardly have been convinced of this truth by Mr Mann's unaided arguments. To imply that the Elizabethan novel 'embraces aspects of human life hostile to poetic treatment,' will hardly convince the reader who recalls how great poets have treated such episodes and characters as Thersites, Gorgo, Corydon, and Sir Kay, not to mention obvious instances drawn from *The Romance of the Rose*, *The Canterbury Tales*, *Hermann und Dorothea*, or *Don Juan*. To say that 'Greene, like Deloney, while using the plainer English for ordinary occasions, *relapses* (the italics are ours) into the euphuistic method immediately he takes in hand a romantic subject,' rather reminds one of the familiar proceeding known as putting the cart before the horse. When suggesting the sources of *Merry Tales*, Mr Mann might have mentioned that the compiler almost certainly drew on Erasmus's *Convivium Fabulosum* and *Apophthegmata* and on Poggio's *Facetiae*, and in showing how the jest books foreshadowed the picaresque novel, we cannot imagine why he omitted so important a link as the *Jestes of George Peele*. With regard to Elizabethan vagabond literature, it is by no means certain that 'Dekker added little to his stolen material but the ornamentation of exuberant fancy,' while 'Greene worked into his 'coney-catching' pamphlets much of his own seamy experience.' Some of Dekker's material is as untraceable as Greene's, and though the life history of both bohemians is lamentably scanty, we know that the author of *The Bellman* did not lack opportunities of studying roguery at first hand.

Some readers may regard it as an even more serious defect that this essay goes over the ground covered by other scholars, without referring to their work. When saying that Deloney's novels 'deserved a recognition less belated' (p. xxxi), Mr Mann might have admitted that they were fully recognised three years ago in *The Cambridge History of English Literature* (Vol. III, chap. xvi). If he goes out of his way to state that 'with Petty, and not with Lyly, as M. Jusserand would persuade us, we enter upon the prose literature of the drawing-room' (p. xx) he should have added that Professors Atkins and Feuillerat had already revealed that origin of euphuism. When describing the character of the Elizabethan ballad (p. xxxvii) he should not have omitted mention of the essay prefacing the *Shirburn Ballads*, especially as his own estimate is similar to that of Mr Clark. When he says that 'the continuity of the medieval and Tudor ages has been strangely overlooked' (p. xviii), he himself even more strangely overlooks the research of the last few years. In spite of such blemishes, Mr Mann's edition is meritorious, and the present writer emphasises these details only because the book must soon be in the hands of every serious student of the novel and, it is hoped, of many less specialised readers as well.

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