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given of the poem by the author, who says that he wrote three books of the Civil War, reaching as far as the first battle of Newbury, 'where the succeeding misfortunes of the party stopped the work.' We must remember that Cowley, in the passage of the Preface of 1656 which was afterwards omitted, because it expressed too much compliance with the existing government, declares that he accounts it no less unlawful to rip up old wounds than to give new ones, and therefore he has been led not only to 'abstain from printing anything of this kind, but to burn the very copies.' What we have here is apparently a portion of the first book.

The editor's work has been done very accurately, so far as we have been able to test it by comparison with the original texts; and all students of English literature must acknowledge an obligation to the Cambridge University Press for these admirable reproductions of early editions. We notice that Mr Waller promises us a third volume, containing further biographical, bibliographical and critical matter relating to Cowley. Perhaps it would be possible to reprint in this volume the Latin comedy, *Naufragium Ioculare* (written for performance at Trinity on Candlemas day 1638), without infringing too much the principle of excluding the Latin poems, a principle which in view of the *Plantarum Libri Sex* must be acknowledged to be sound. There is a copy of the rare first edition of this play in the Cambridge University Library.

G. C. MACAULAY.

The Interpretation of Nature in English Poetry from 'Beowulf' to Shakespeare. By FREDERIC W. MOORMAN. (*Quellen und Forschungen zur Sprach- und Culturgeschichte der germanischen Völker*, xcv.) Strassburg: Trübner, 1905. 8vo. xiii + 244 pp.

English literature has some claim to be the home of Nature-poetry in modern times. The external non-human world has 'existed,' in Gautier's sense, for other times and countries; certain aspects of it have been expressed more poignantly, or more brilliantly, by Dante, or Goethe, or Hugo, than by any English poet. But in no other land has that mute or inarticulate world so continuously, or with such brief intervals, haunted the makers of songs, or told so powerfully upon the course of literary movements, and the complexion of literary ideals. There have been seasons of estrangement; but the Return to Nature has been the *redintegratio amoris* of lovers who have quarrelled. It is not for nothing that Brandes has classed the whole literary movement in these islands which corresponded to the Romanticism of the continent under the rubric of 'Naturalismus': 'Nature' was in any case one of its dominant inspirations. And, at the opposite pole of our literature, the vivid sense of sea and shore in *Beowulf* contrasts with the vaguely hinted Pyrenean background of the *Chanson de Roland*.

Abundance of acute observation has, needless to say, been applied, during the last century, to the more striking examples of this preoccupa-

tion with Nature; and English criticism has latterly been seconded with at least equal acumen, and with more of exact method and minute research, by a distinguished group of French scholars: one need only mention the studies of MM. Morel, Legouis, and Angellier, on Thomson, Wordsworth, and Burns. But the less salient cases, the poets for whom 'Nature' was not a religion, or a principle, but a capacity of being thrilled 'just when you're safest' by a 'sunset touch,' or by the gleam of daisy-spangled lawns through an open study door, and who never thought of writing 'Nature' with a capital N—all this intervening half- and quarter-light of the subject has been little regarded. Nor, in consequence, has any attempt been made, save on a summary scale, to trace the history of the sentiment of Nature through the whole course of English poetry, to distinguish its phases, its varieties, and its degrees. The nearest approach to such an attempt has been made in Germany, by Dr A. Biese, in his *Die Entwicklung des Naturgefühls im Mittelalter und in der Neuzeit* (1887). But England occupies only one section of this study; nor is Dr Biese's command of the obscurer regions of our literature exactly that of an Anglist in the stricter sense. Professor Moorman has thus, in essaying his present task, taken possession of a field which no predecessor was entitled to call his own; and he has done much to establish that title for himself.

His fifteen chapters are distributed very impartially over the nine centuries of literature which close with Shakespeare: three being assigned to Old English, six to Middle English, six to the sixteenth century. The less obviously attractive poets and periods are as diligently worked as the great Makers and the Spacious Times; it was indeed just among these that diligence was most likely to be rewarded. The Middle English Romances are discussed at greater length than Chaucer, the early Elizabethans than Spenser. Nothing like completeness could possibly be achieved within the limits; and it indicates the amount of patient, minute research that has gone to the making of Dr Moorman's book, that we are often made painfully aware of these limits, as we should not be in a study which kept warily within the safe waters of general statement. The treatment is a little scrappy and disjointed, but the scraps are all genuine stuff, 'handwove.' The plan of putting each writer and work separately upon the dissecting-table, and reporting separately the character and constituents of his 'nature-feeling,' makes the book less attractive to the reader than a bolder grouping of the facts might have been, but is perhaps more useful to the student. The distinctness of the historical sequence is won, however, at some cost to the sequence in the kinds and varieties of 'nature-feeling'; and some repetition and overlapping are involved. Flowers, animals, landscape, trees, colour-sense, mountains,—all these and other ingredients of the discussion checker the page; and one would sometimes have desired a more continuous survey of the facts relating to each than the plan permits. But the materials for such a survey are there, and now and then a detached remark throws a mass of apparently unordered facts into luminous perspective. One may notice, for instance,

the distinction drawn between the meagre 'Nature' of the Carolingian, and the relatively abundant and detailed scenery of the Arthurian, romances; the reaction of the alliterative romance against the French school, showing itself in a recurrence to English scenery as well as to a native form of verse; and the varied scope and function of landscape in the Elizabethan drama. The discrimination between first-hand and 'conventional' Nature-painting, one of the fundamental problems of the whole subject, is consistently kept in view, though we are not quite confident that Dr Moorman always does justice—it is scarcely possible within his limits that he should—to the subtler questions which the problem in practice opens up. It is a nice matter, for instance, to assign the true value to the 'conventional' element in Chaucer's landscape. Everyone now recognises that we owe his multitude of May mornings and daisied lawns to no such spontaneous, untaught delight in these things as gave us Wordsworth's celandines or daffodils. But we need not ignore his delight in Nature because it is enriched and directed by his evident delight in the far-off reflection of Nature caught in the verse of Lorris or Boccaccio. The two sources of feeling, however, easily run together; they support and reinforce each other; and when the actual and the traditional scenery are similar, no skill may avail to distinguish them. There is in any case no doubt of Chaucer's general preference, as an artist, for the trim and ordered landscape. But we should say that in this, as in other respects, the genial freedom of Nature won a securer hold upon his sympathies as his mind and taste matured; and that the man who sent forth his pilgrims in admirable disarray to tell their tales, not in symmetrical decades, or in a closed garden, as in the *Decameron*, but as 'aventure, or cas,' or the whim of Harry Bailey might decree, along the Kentish highway, was also by this time no longer quite the poet who had described that severely uniform 'grove' of the *Boke of the Duchesse*, where 'every tree stood by hymselfe, Fro other wel ten foot or twelve.' The Athenian forest where Theseus breaks in upon Palamon and Arcite is no such magnified quincunx as this. But when all is said, it is clear that Chaucer was no fanatical lover of the greenwood, like the singers of Robin Hood and of Gawain.

We have only been able to hint at the rich and varied contents of Dr Moorman's volume. Students of literature will be especially grateful for the care and insight which he has devoted to the Old English poets, too commonly treated as a preserve for the hunter of syntactic or phonetic game. We trust that the second volume, upon the period subsequent to Shakespeare, which we understand Dr Moorman to have in contemplation, may be published in due course. More has been done there, it is true; but the need of a scholarly, acute, and connected survey like the present is no less urgent.

C. H. HERFORD.