France and England. Their Relations in the Middle Ages and Now by T. F. Tout

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L'ouvrage de M. G. Cohen inaugure de façon éclatante la *Bibliothèque de la Revue de Littérature Comparée*, que dirigent ces deux éminents maîtres Monsieur F. Baldensperger et Monsieur P. Hazard. Il met en relief les hautes qualités d'un enseignement qui, tout en étant fondé sur une érudition du meilleur aloi, sait rester artistique, littéraire et par-dessus tout *humain* et qui, d'ailleurs, n'a pas tardé à devenir des plus populaires parmi les étudiants de l'Université de Strasbourg où il a produit l'effet d'une véritable révélation. Ajoutons que ce livre a eu—chose bien rare pour une thèse universitaire—un grand succès de librairie, qu'il est déjà épuisé et que l'Académie Française a tenu à en reconnaître la valeur en lui décernant le grand prix Broquette, une des plus hautes récompenses qu'elle ait à sa disposition.

LOUIS BRANDIN.

LONDON.

France and England. Their relations in the Middle Ages and now. By T. F. TOUT. Manchester: University Press; London: Longmans, Green & Co. vi + 168 pp. 7s. 6d. net.

Modern Language scholars will find the requisite historical background for their literary or linguistic studies admirably supplied by this short, clear, authoritative account of the relations between France and England in the middle ages. These relations, more intimate and more continuous than those between any other two nations of Western Europe, show a long tradition of general hostility, which historians have amply discussed, but also a strong, persistent undercurrent of affinities, which Professor Tout finds more interesting. His tone is friendly—part of his material served for his course of four lectures at Rennes—he quotes French historians with approval and sometimes frank admiration, and when his documents point irresistibly to the closest conceivable interrelation between the two countries he is less dismayed than Freeman or Stubbs. For the period on which he is an acknowledged master, he arrives at conclusions more cheering and in completer harmony with the impression which the reader derives from mediaeval literature.

However it be with the historians, it is not easy for the student of literature to keep a clear head in dealing with the middle ages. He is apt to read modern conditions into the past, and requires Professor Tout's constant reminder that the meaning of 'nation,' 'France' and 'French,' 'England' and 'English' was not always what it seems. In mediaeval society, essentially cosmopolitan with its great super-national institutions, the Church, the canon law, the religious orders, the University, men understood personal allegiance to their lord better than devotion to a country with ill-defined and fluctuating frontiers. The difference between Frenchmen and Englishmen—there is none that can be proved in race—was particularly shadowy; their political conditions and social customs were largely identical; in ordinary daily life the difference was less marked than now, when French and British fellow-travellers are

apt to range themselves in national camps on such a question as whether the carriage-windows should be open or shut.

Divergence on national grounds is the product of a later age. From the Norman Conquest (neither exclusively Norman nor yet, in the official view, a 'conquest') until well into the Hundred Years' War, there was plenty of fighting, but not as the result of national sentiment. For centuries, large numbers of the inhabitants of this country and of France mingled freely, unhampered by barriers of language or temperament. The picture is not lacking in piquancy: on the English side, Richard Cœur-de-Lion, the perfect *méridional*; the barons who wrested from Jean Sans Terre the charter of English liberty, and thereafter called in the future Louis VIII of France; in the days of Edward I, the Gascon merchant prince mayor of London and, a few years later, mayor of Bordeaux; the true English patriots, with the 'fine old Saxon names' of, let us say, Simon de Montfort or Aymer de Valence; the said Aymer, earl of Pembroke under Edward II, had, moreover, three French wives, of whom the last founded, in the year after Crécy, Pembroke College, Cambridge, on the distinct understanding that in all appointments to the foundation a preference should be given to Frenchmen over Englishmen. Or, on the French side, the great Norman baron Godefroi de Harcourt, who in 1346 invited the English into Normandy; the founding by the English of the Universities of Caen and Bordeaux; those innumerable members of the French-speaking cosmopolitan ruling class, largely French but partly English in blood, whom the French guide-books identify with *la domination anglaise* but who, could they rise from their carven tombs, might well inquire, What is meant by *domination* and what by *anglaise*?

To all such questions—and the Modern Language student will not fail to ask them—Professor Tout provides a dispassionate and reasoned reply. We could have wished he had extended his scope, to describe more fully the infiltration which took place in the reign of Edward the Confessor, and to show how, as a result of the Conquest, not only England but Scotland, Wales and Ireland came under the French influence. The Confessor's French *protégés* left their mark, and the linguist at least would like to hear more about them. The patriotic de Valence was on the English side of the field at Bannockburn; how came an equally patriotic de Bruce to be on the other? But within the limits chosen Professor Tout's book well serves a high purpose. It shows how France and England spring from a common civilization and share to this day a common heritage. It deals with the distant past, but it has on the present a bearing which the author never forgets, and from his life-long study of mediaeval history he brings us in these troubled days a message of hope.

R. L. G. RITCHIE.

BIRMINGHAM.