

Review

Author(s): G. E. Hadow

Review by: G. E. Hadow

Source: *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (Oct., 1910), pp. 529-530

Published by: Modern Humanities Research Association

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3712828>

Accessed: 24-06-2016 11:53 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at

<http://about.jstor.org/terms>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Modern Humanities Research Association is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Modern Language Review*

regretted that no account is given of the manuscript except from the catalogue of the Library. It would be interesting to know whether the date 1400, which is there confidently assigned to it, rests on any substantial grounds. It must be a rather remarkable book in appearance, very small and very thick, for it is written in double columns containing each only about a hundred and twenty words, and it has no fewer than four hundred and eleven leaves. It is difficult to say why the original table of contents should be printed at the end instead of the beginning of the book, as in the manuscript, unless to make way for the editor's full account of the contents of the *Confessio Amantis*, which we might well have dispensed with. We owe thanks, however, in any case, to those who have placed within our reach this most interesting literary document.

G. C. MACAULAY.

CAMBRIDGE.

Peacock's Memoirs of Shelley, with Shelley's Letters to Peacock. Edited by H. F. B. BRETT-SMITH. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1909. 8vo. xxviii + 219 pp.

Mr Brett-Smith has done good service in reprinting Peacock's *Memoirs of Shelley*, together with Shelley's letters to Peacock, in a small and convenient volume. The *Memoirs* are too much neglected now that so many longer and more careful studies of Shelley and his work have appeared, but however careful and critical later biographers may be, nothing can have the same vivid interest as an account of the poet from one of his most intimate friends, especially when, as in this case, intimacy does not lead to indiscriminate admiration. The frankness with which Peacock disbelieves all Shelley's tales of mysterious adventure and midnight alarm, is as delightful as the naivety with which the poet accepts his incredulity, and the fact that this put no strain upon their friendship says much for their power of understanding each other. Most important of all, from a biographical point of view, the *Memoirs* give us the true picture of Harriet. The tall, graceful woman, 'her speech the essence of frankness and cordiality; her spirits always cheerful; her laugh spontaneous, hearty, and joyous,' has little in common with the Dora Copperfields amongst whom she is usually classed.

The letters also are of great interest. Not only are the descriptive passages which they contain fine in themselves, but they not unfrequently shew the inception of some thought or phrase which later finds a place in Shelley's poetry. Mr Brett-Smith points out several striking instances of this in comparing the letter of March 23rd, 1819, describing the arch of Constantine, with Act II, sc. iv, ll. 135—9 of *Prometheus Unbound*.

The volume has been edited in scholarly fashion. It is not overloaded with notes, and what comments there are, are interesting and to

the point. The introduction is thoughtful and suggestive; we may be inclined to quarrel with the statement that Shelley's 'instant and joyful recognition of the identity of Scythrop,' was probably due to his feeling 'flattered by the implied compliment,' but Mr Brett-Smith's criticisms are for the most part sound and well-reasoned, and his thumb-nail sketch of the relations between the two friends is so clearly drawn that we are left regretting that the exigences of space apparently forbade its being on a larger scale.

G. E. HADQW.

CIRENCESTER.

Tennyson. By HENRY JONES. (Proceedings of the British Academy, Vol. IV.) London: Henry Frowde. 1909. 8vo.

Tennyson. By W. P. KER. (The Leslie Stephen Lecture for 1909.) Cambridge: University Press. 1909. 8vo. 31 pp.

'The Devil's advocate,' says Professor Ker, 'is always worth listening to, and not always easy to refute.' There is something pathetic in the fact that both these lectures on the most popular English poet of the last century, have a note of half-defiant apology, that they take it for granted that the Devil's advocate will have been busy with the audiences who listen to them. In his own day, the majority of people looked upon Tennyson's poems in much the same light as they regarded the Sistine Madonna: their consummate artistic skill was sufficiently obvious to delight even the uninitiated, and the religious feeling embodied in so exquisite a form was simple enough to appeal to that easily awakened sentimentality which underlies the apparent coldness of the average Englishman, and deep enough to stir a truer and more profound emotion in the hearts of those 'whose very life,' as Professor Jones says, 'rests on moral convictions and religious beliefs which they cannot defend by conscious reasoning.' To many people a statement becomes an axiom as soon as it is put into verse, and men and women who were pained and bewildered by the conflict and turmoil which surrounded the Oxford Movement and the controversy on 'Darwinism,' turned with relief to the sweet and placid morality of King Arthur, or the faith which conquers the pain of *In Memoriam*. And Tennyson has paid the penalty of a popularity founded on sentiment rather than on genuine appreciation. His thoughts are no longer our thoughts, and it is the fashion to speak of him with a certain cheap contempt. No doubt the greatest poets can never become out of date; as Professor Jones puts it, 'No one now believes in the theology of Homer, but still we offer sweet sacrifice to his gods and goddesses.' 'The nobler kind [of thought],' says Professor Ker, 'is not discourse but vision. It does not lend itself to discussion; if it is once apprehended, there is no more to be said.' And both these champions of Tennyson have to admit that he does not as a rule possess this unclouded vision. 'Much of his reasoning,'