Oldcastle-Falstaff in der englischen Literatur bis zu Shakespeare by Wilhelm Baeske

Review by: G. C. Moore Smith

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Syncope of Middle Vowels (§ 60).

Under this heading *cyrtlas* is wrongly given as an example of the syncope of middle vowels after a short syllable. As regards *micel* and *yfel*, it might have been pointed out that in WS. also they are almost regularly treated as longs + shorts.

A few misprints occur. *habbend* appears for *hæbbend* (p. 2, l. 20), *a* for *ā* (p. 11, l. 14 and p. 13, l. 23), *o* for *ō* (p. 13, l. 6), *ea*, *eo* for *ēa*, *ēo* (p. 16, l. 13), *ea* for *ēa* (p. 28, l. 14), *iō*, *eo*, *ea* for their corresponding longs (p. 28, § 29). On p. 36 'diphthongisation of *i* to *iu*' should read 'diphthongisation of *u* to *iu*.' On p. 83 the sign > twice appears for <; and, lastly, there is a misplacement of the signs on p. 60 (last line).

Before closing this brief review, it must be repeated that this treatise is a valuable piece of research, which should prove of great use to all students of Northumbrian. It is based on wide philological knowledge, of which the copious references and the bibliography afford further evidence.

P. G. THOMAS.

Oldcastle-Falstaff in der englischen Literatur bis zu Shakespeare.

Von WILHELM BAESKE (*Palaestra*, L.). Berlin: Mayer & Müller, 1905. 8vo. vi + 119 pp.

In this number of *Palaestra*, the author traces with great thoroughness the development of the character of Falstaff out of that of the historical Oldcastle. He gives a résumé of the contemporary historical data for Oldcastle's life, character, prosecution and death, shows the gradual darkening of the traits of his character by the monastic chroniclers of the fifteenth century, and its rehabilitation and glorification in the early part of the next century by Bale and Fox, and treats finally of its appearance in drama in the *Famous Victories of Henry V* and in four plays of Shakespeare. He shows very well how in the last phase the character received a number of fresh touches suggested by the 'Miles Gloriosus' of Plautus and its analogues in Italian and English comedy: but he does not commit the sin of referring every element of Shakespeare's immortal creation to some earlier source. He recognizes how large a part of Falstaff is Shakespeare's and Shakespeare's only. At the same time we think he might well have gone a little further in this direction. When he finds certain traits in Falstaff which correspond to some statements made by monastic chroniclers but afterwards disregarded, he is apt to see in them some 'indirect influence' of the medieval writers. In most of these cases the coincidence is probably quite accidental.

The dissertation shows industrious reading, sharp observation, and here and there has a sentence of happy criticism. We would ask the author however if he has any ground for his statement in regard to the *Second Part of Henry IV* (p. 89): 'Shakespeare hatte zuerst nicht die Absicht, das Stück zu schreiben, aber der Erfolg des ersten Teiles

ermunterte ihn dazu.' (Does not the last speech in the play point to a sequel?) He has occasionally been careless in the form in which he has left his Latin quotations: 'conjugum' (p. 21) should be 'conjugem' or 'conjugium': 'decius,' 'cerruet' (p. 32) should be 'decies,' 'corruet,' and the quotation at the bottom of p. 21 is left apparently incomplete. His worst slip, though a natural one in a foreigner, is his misunderstanding of the expression (*II. Henry IV*, v. 5. 97) 'Go, carry Sir John Falstaff to the Fleet.' He repeatedly translates this 'auf die Flotte' and on p. 91 adds a note 'Schlegel übersetzt willkürlich "ins Gefängnis."' One may perhaps doubt if he has a first-hand acquaintance with Tennyson's dramatic monologue on 'Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham' when he calls it on p. 119 a 'Ballade.' But these are small blemishes in a work of serious value.

G. C. MOORE SMITH.

John Webster. The Periods of his Work as determined by his Relations to the Drama of his Day. By E. E. STOLL. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Co-operative Soc. 1905. 8vo. 216 pp.

Dr Stoll's monograph on Webster is a very elaborate and very careful piece of work. That he has added very largely to our knowledge of that dramatist we do not think, but his often acute criticism has undoubtedly done much to clear the ground, while he has also been successful in throwing valuable light on minor points of interest. The perseverance and energy with which he has conducted his enquiry is worthy of all respect, and if in some cases the outcome has been disappointing it must be borne in mind that negative results are far from being worthless. No doubt Dr Stoll would claim as his chief contribution to the history of the drama the investigations he has undertaken concerning Webster's dependence on other writers. He has followed the methods used with considerable effect in Professor Thorndike's notable essay on the *Influence of Beaumont and Fletcher on Shakespeare*, which promises to become in a minor way quite an epoch-making work. In this, however, we are unable to agree with him. He appears to us to have entirely misconceived Webster's art. A careful study of Symond's essay—with which by the way he seems not to have been acquainted—should serve to show him how absurdly superficial is his characterisation of Flamineo and Bosola (for instance on p. 124). It is certainly not surprising to find a man who can write thus and who cites *Titus Andronicus* as evidence of the permanence of Shakespeare's individuality even when under external influences, also regarding Webster as a sort of mirror capable of nothing but the reflection of a dominant model. Likely enough that we have been in the habit of thinking of Webster as the author of two tragedies only and of dismissing his other work—which by the way is largely either doubtful or undetermined—as less typical and consequently of less importance. Nevertheless to anyone who is content to judge on a