English Literature and the Classics by G. S. Gordon

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Aldermen of all the Cities of Germany in Behalf of Christian Schools,' had declared that God 'gave Greece a prey to the Turks, in order that Greek scholars, driven from home and scattered abroad, might bear the Greek tongue to other countries, and thereby excite an interest in the study of languages.' While Temple may have naturalized the idea in England, one cannot say positively that he originated it. Professor Adamson's comments on certain English courtesy books remind one that a critical record of such productions would form an important chapter in the history of English manners and opinions.

Some further inaccuracies of detail in the book generally may be mentioned. Akenside's *Pleasures of the Imagination* (1744) is dated 1764 (p. 62). Of Perrault's *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes* (1688-94) only the first volume appeared in 1688 (p. 572). Gay's unpublished translations from Ariosto appeared in 1909 (p. 481). Mr Dobson's *Steele* is in the 'English Worthies' series (p. 442). There are obvious misprints of 'Phaetan' for 'Phaeton' (p. 476), 'Fuigallian' for 'Fingallian' (p. 502), and 'Studies of a Bibliographer' for 'Studies of a Biographer' (p. 513).

CARL VAN DOREN.

NEW YORK.

English Literature and the Classics. [Lectures] collected by G. S. GORDON. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1912. 8vo. 252 pp.

The editor writes: 'This book is a collection of nine lectures delivered in Oxford at the invitation of the Board of English Studies in the winter of 1911-12. They were addressed primarily to members of the English School, but in effect to all students of modern literature in the University who cared to hear, from students of ancient literature, something of what the Classics mean in the history of letters.'

It may be said that all the lectures are valuable to students of English literature, because any one literature must illustrate another, because our own literature owes so much to the literature of Greece and Rome, and because in these pages a number of Greek and Roman authors are expounded by men who are masters of their subject. The various lecturers, however, do not all conceive their task in the same way—some being content to interpret the thought of the classical writer they are dealing with, while others go further and trace the influence of the writer on English literature in general or on certain selected English authors. The latter group of lecturers therefore puts students of English literature under a double obligation.

The book opens with Professor Gilbert Murray's lecture on 'Greek and English Tragedy: a Contrast.' Professor Murray perhaps hardly gives us as much as is promised in his title. He emphasizes the religious character of Greek tragedy and shows that within a rigidly restrained form it can give us a truthful psychology. English tragedy, on the other hand, he says, is 'primarily an entertainment.' 'Our

stage demands beautiful women as actresses...our permeating atmosphere is that of love between the sexes.' There is no mention of *Hamlet* or *Lear* or *Macbeth*, or any admission that in them tragedy shows itself in a form which, while different from that of the Greeks, has had scarcely a less spiritualising effect on the minds of men.

Professor Stewart's lecture on 'Platonism in English Poetry' is excellent. Here it is the modern literature which is the main subject. Professor Stewart does not attempt, however, to trace Plato's influence throughout the whole course of English poetry, but fixes the attention of his hearers primarily on Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley. In these—and chiefly in Wordsworth—he finds what he calls 'personal Platonism' (in Shelley it is a little hidden by his non-Platonic tendency to personification, but it is still there). In other words, 'the mood of one who has a curious eye for the endless variety of this visible and temporal world and a fine sense of its beauties, yet is haunted by the presence of an invisible and eternal world behind, or, when the mood is most pressing, *within* the visible and temporal world, and sustaining both it and himself—a world not perceived as external to himself, but inwardly lived by him, as that with which, in moments of ecstasy, or even habitually, he is become one.' The poets who have this mood should, he thinks, be studied first. They will be the touchstone to discover genuine Platonism in the many other poets who use the traditional Platonic apparatus.

The lecture on 'Theophrastus and his Imitators' is by Mr Gordon, the general editor, and is an excellent study of character-writing in ancient and modern times, written with much brilliance and wit.

Mr J. S. Phillimore, in his lecture on 'The Greek Romances,' devotes much of his time to minute questions which can hardly have been interesting to his audience: he makes practically no reference to English literature, which, as Dr Wolff has lately shown, has borrowed from the Greek romances so many motives of novel and drama; and his treatment is merely darkened by his attempts at 'smartness' of expression. A classical friend has drawn my attention to one statement on p. 92: 'The Greeks have never been passionately interested in Religion as the social expression of heroic goodwill [a rather obscure phrase], only as matter for the curious speculations of individual dilettanti.' May it not be maintained, he adds, that Religion was for the average Greek primarily a civic affair, and that when the city state broke down, so did his interest in state religion? It must not be thought that Mr Phillimore's paper is without solid value. It seems, however, less suited for its intended audience than the other contents of the collection.

Mr A. C. Clark's account of 'Ciceronianism,' based on Zielinski, is one of the lectures which will appeal most to the English student, and it is written with an Attic concinnity very refreshing after Mr Phillimore's Alexandrianism. One may question the justice of the statement that 'Johnson's ears seem deaf to music.' Is there not a grave music in many of the periods of *Rasselas*?

There is a lofty seriousness about Mr Garrod's lecture on Vergil, and some freedom of speculation, especially in his development of the thesis 'This poet whom we regard as so typically Roman is half a Celt.' Mr Garrod does not touch on Vergil's influence in England, but his lecture is a very valuable one.

Mr S. G. Owen has put a great deal of careful work into his lecture on Ovid. He is clearly wrong, however, in explaining Golding's 'alate' (*Met.* xv. 288) as 'winged,' 'erected,' rather than = 'of late' (see *N.E.D.*). Not only are Ovid's characteristics excellently shown (pp. 171-173), but Ovid's influence on English writers from Chaucer onwards is examined with a thoroughness which makes this paper a valuable contribution to the history of our own literature. We notice that Mr Owen claims to have proved that Shakespeare read the *Fasti* in the original.

The same praise may be given to Mr R. J. E. Tiddy's lecture on 'Satura and Satire.' The title itself indicates a very useful distinction, and Mr Tiddy shows a masterly ease in discriminating the characteristics of different satirists, Roman and English. He is on more dangerous ground when he dismisses Quintilian's statement that 'Satura' was wholly Roman, as having 'rather less truth than most of those sweeping statements by which literary criticism seeks to arrest the attention of a yawning world.' Between the two authorities, we may perhaps incline to the opinion that Quintilian was in a position to know more of the matter than Mr Tiddy.

The concluding lecture on 'Senecan Tragedy' is by Mr Godley, and as we might expect it contains some fine verse-translations, and is written throughout with brilliancy and *verve*. Seneca's characteristics are so happily touched that we must not complain that Mr Godley has left it to some successor to show in detail the influence of Seneca on the Elizabethans.

It is the best testimony to the merits of this most interesting collection that it leaves us asking for more. We should not be sorry to have some of the same subjects treated again by new hands: and we should certainly welcome lectures on subjects which here find no place, such as Plautus and Terence, the Pindaric and Horatian Odes, the Letter-writers, the Idyll, the didactic poem and the Epic, all in their special relation to English literature.

G. C. MOORE SMITH.

SHEFFIELD.

English Lyrical Poetry. By EDWARD BLISS REED. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press (London, H. Frowde). 1911. 8vo. 616 pp.

This volume is a history of the English lyric from *Deor's Lament* to the works of Mr Alfred Noyes, and though, perhaps, the whole of the ground has been covered before, Professor Reed may justly claim to have given unity to the subject, and to have reduced within the compass of