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Two Books on Platonic Theory *La Théorie Platonicienne de l'Amour*. Par Léon Robin, Agrégé de Philosophie, Professeur au Lycée d'Angers, Docteur ès Lettres. 1 vol. in 8 de la Collection Historique des Grands Philosophes. Paris: Félix Alcan, 1908. Fr. 3.75.

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the words 'Roman literature came too late.' This is, of course, a tenable view, perhaps even the orthodox view. But it tends to confuse two things which are distinct. Except on a theory of the progressive degeneration of mankind, chronological 'lateness' has nothing to do with inferior imaginative quality. 'It was hard,' Mr. Butler goes on to say, 'for the imitative Roman to be original.' No doubt. But, cleared of the ambiguity of terms, is this anything more than an identical proposition?

Apart from a certain fallacy involved (as it seems to the present writer) in this fundamental point of view, Mr. Butler's particular criticisms are usually just and sound. One may question a few of them. Is Ovid really 'the most heartless of poets'? Is it the case that 'Alexandrian learning becomes more

prominent and more oppressive' in the post-Augustans than it had been in the Augustans themselves? Is it true that the verse of Petronius 'at its best has a charm and fragrance of its own that is almost unique in Latin'? But against these few judgments, which are, to say the least, questionable, are to be set many others which are excellent; and nothing could be better than Mr. Butler's general summing-up of the period: 'It produced a few men of genius, while even in the works of those who were far removed from genius, the very fact that there is much refinement of wit, much triumphing over technical difficulties, much elaborate felicity of expression, makes them always a curious and at times a remunerative study.'

J. W. MACKAIL.

TWO BOOKS ON PLATONIC THEORY.

La Théorie Platonicienne de l'Amour. Par LÉON ROBIN, Agrégé de Philosophie, Professeur au Lycée d'Angers, Docteur ès Lettres. 1 vol. in 8 de la *Collection Historique des Grands Philosophes*. Paris: Félix Alcan, 1908. Fr. 3.75.

THE general reader who has questioned the origin of the phrase 'Platonic friendship,' or 'Platonic love,' will find the idea traced to its source in this little volume. After a careful comparison of the *Lysis*, *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, it is shown that 'Epos, be it physical or intellectual, is a *μανία* which arises by divine inspiration in a soul that is neither entirely perfect nor entirely depraved and stimulates it to the acquisition of that in which it is lacking, viz., immortality, whether after the flesh or after the spirit. To the *Phaedrus* we owe the particularly philosophic view of 'Epos, through which it is described as a process akin to that of the Dialectic of *Republic* vi.: the soul, being by nature partly mortal and partly immortal, is filled at the sight of a beautiful object with reminiscence of the idea of Beauty which it once beheld in the Supraceutical Region at the time of its pre-natal existence, and, if the course of his passion be chastened and controlled by the recollection of his

divine vision, the Lover may rise gradually, together with the Beloved, to renewed contemplation of Beauty and Truth. Therefore intellectual is superior to carnal love in precisely the same degree as the eternal perfection of the idea transcends the fleeting mutability of its copy.

M. Robin is not convincing when he descends to the chronological problem of the *Lysis*, *Symposium*, *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus*, and boldly places the *Phaedrus* not merely after the *Lysis*, *Symposium* and *Phaedo*, but probably the *Timaeus*, ranking it with the *Laws* as a product of Plato's old age. While freely acknowledging that the stylometric indications in favour of this should be discountenanced as being of doubtful value, he avows that the *Phaedrus* must be on the one hand posterior to the *Phaedo* and *Republic*, owing to its allusion to the Theban Simmias (242 A.B.) and the tripartite division of soul (here accepted as a matter of course), and on the other hand contemporaneous with the *Timaeus* and the *Laws* because of the affinity of myths in the one case and the identity of the proof of immortality in the other. In regard to the tripartite division of soul, one can only say that M. Robin has here and elsewhere made too rigorous inferences from the mythical element of the

Phaedrus; and the fact that the proof for immortality in the *Laws* is the same as that of the *Phaedrus* need not have all the significance he imagines. When one examines the dialogues from the point of view of their central metaphysical doctrine, viz., that of the ideas, one feels that the interval between the ideal theory in the *Phaedrus* and in the *Philebus* or *Timaeus* is too great to be bridged over by any of the ingenious arguments adduced by M. Robin.

It is gratifying to note that M. Robin, in spite of his prejudice in chronology, is content to make the *ἔργον* of the *Phaedrus* slightly inferior to Dialectic; *ἔργον* is an activity of composite soul functioning as Reason and Sensation, Dialectic is the activity proper to it in its purest form of Reason.

One cannot but demur to a statement on p. 137 to the effect that Plato positively believed in the existence of *δαίμονες* because of the important place taken by these divinities in the doctrines of his successors.

Apart from a few debatable points of this kind the book furnishes an interesting study of an aspect of Platonism that has as yet, perhaps, been insufficiently emphasised.

MARIE V. WILLIAMS.

La Théorie Platonicienne des Idées et des Nombres d'après Aristote. Étude Historique et Critique. Par LÉON ROBIN, Docteur ès Lettres, Agrégé de Philosophie, Professeur au Lycée d'Angers. 1 vol. in-8 de la *Collection Historique des Grands Philosophes*. Paris: Félix Alcan, 1908. Fr. 12.50.

THE appearance of this comprehensive work by M. Robin, together with a promise of further volumes dealing with the same subject, seems to speak of a revived interest in the old problem concerning the Platonic ideas and numbers. The present volume is the first link in a chain of evidence through which the author hopes 'to ascertain the probable significance of the philosophy of Plato.' His point of departure is, strange to say, a study of Aristotle and his successors, the examination of the Platonic dialogues

themselves being reserved for another occasion. By following this route he hopes to escape from being carried away by the blasts of modern doctrine, which have served to blind the eyes of many an interpreter of Plato. Whether one expects him to succeed or not, the boldness of the scheme certainly commands admiration, and he has assuredly spared no pains to make his investigation as complete as possible.

As regards the plan of the book, we find the subject-matter conveniently divided into books and chapters, which deal successively with the 'Theory of Ideas' in general, the Platonic theory of numbers and figures, and the *στοιχεῖα* or foundation principles of the ideas. The uniform method is to give first a detailed reproduction of Aristotle's exposition of the topic, then an account of the Aristotelian critique, with finally a critical examination of the critique itself. Here one may mention the need of a shorter *résumé* of the Aristotelian evidence; it is decidedly a strain to be obliged not merely to read through the almost incoherent remarks of Aristotle, but to retain them in mind long enough to enable one to appraise M. Robin's comment aright. One would welcome either a shorter paraphrase of Aristotle, with references to the text, or a tabulated outline of his subject-matter as an appendix to the paraphrase as now given.

With M. Robin's assessment of the value of Aristotle's criticisms one cannot but agree. For the most part these criticisms by their perversity, inappropriateness, and incoherence are rendered even more futile than some of the doctrines criticised, and that is saying much. M. Robin's favourite device is to refute Aristotle by a *tu quoque* argument, showing that the latter's views possess the same vices as those he imputes to Plato; this does not prove, of course, that Plato was in the right, but when one considers how much store Aristotle set by his own doctrine, it effectually prevents one from paying any serious attention to his diatribe.

The general conclusion reached by M. Robin's research into the *Metaphysics* is that it embodies largely a Neo-Platonic phase of the Ideal Theory. With this no one can quarrel, but one cannot help lamenting