Review

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REVIEWS.

L'exotisme américain dans la littérature française au XVI^e siècle.
By GILBERT CHINARD. Paris: Hachette et Cie. 1911. 8vo.
xvii + 246 pp.

M. Chinard, who is Maître de Conférences at Brown University, Providence, has chosen an interesting as well as an appropriate subject, and has treated it in an interesting fashion. That subject is the influence of the discovery and conquest of America on French Literature in the sixteenth century. Of his ten chapters five (I, II, IV, VI, VII) deal with the discoveries themselves and the narratives relating to them, while the remaining five are concerned with the influence of these discoveries on ideas and literature. The chief writers who come under M. Chinard's survey are Rabelais (c. III), Ronsard (c. v) and Montaigne (c. IX). Rabelais's sources are never very easy to detect, they are so various, so haphazard, so unexpected. You may be hot on a literary trail, when you are suddenly checked by what another investigator convincingly shews to be a personal reminiscence. You come upon what evidently seems a personal touch, and it turns out to be a translation from some contemporary Latin writer. It may be said, however, as a general rule that when Rabelais borrows he does it unblushingly, and without any attempt to cover up his tracks. For that reason it seems to me that M. Chinard's quest into Rabelais's geographical sources has not led to results which are sufficiently precise to be convincing. He would doubtless have modified his chapter if he had known that one source at any rate is certain, viz. the *Novus Orbis* of Simon Grynaeus. This volume contains among many other pieces a Latin version (at fifth hand) of the Travels of Marco Polo and a summary of Peter Martyr's Fourth Decade, both of which writers M. Chinard believes to have been used by Rabelais¹. I am glad to see that he contemplates a special study of the influence of Marco Polo, which he thinks is considerable. I cannot say that I have found much trace of him. I had thought indeed that Rabelais's unicorn (v, 29) owed something to his rhinoceros, until Mr W. F. Smith pointed out to me that it comes straight out of Pliny.

As regards the influence of Jacques Cartier's narrative we seem to be pretty much in agreement, though personally, since M. Lefranc's

¹ *Modern Language Review*, II, 316 ff.

discovery of the real Jamet Brayer I have become sceptical as to the identification of Rabelais's pilot with the Breton seaman. A still graver doubt would seem to rest on the identification of Xenomanes with Jean-Alfonse of Saintonge, first proposed by Pierre Margry, for M. Sainéan has recently shewn that his *Cosmographie*, which the *Hydrographie* deposited by Xenomanes with Gargantua was supposed to represent, is nothing but a defective translation of the *Suma de geografia* of Fernandez de Enciso (Seville, 1519)¹. It does not, however, follow that Jean-Alfonse, because he was an ignorant and dishonest writer, was not a capable navigator. In fact what we know about him shews that he was. He may still therefore be meant by Xenomanes, and he may still have written or left notes for an *Hydrographie* of which Rabelais had heard, but which is now lost. But it is also possible, and it would be quite in accordance with Rabelais's fantastic humour, that Xenomanes represents somebody who was not a pilot at all.

In the last words of his chapter on Rabelais M. Chinard couples Mandeville and Marco Polo as adventurous and imaginative travellers. This is unjust to Marco Polo, whose narrative is generally regarded as a tolerably faithful record of what he saw, though, in accordance with a common practice of travellers which was still honoured in the sixteenth century, he inserted information which he had got from hearsay or *ouy dire*. That surely is the point of Rabelais's satire in the chapter on the Country of Satin which has disconcerted M. Chinard. Why, he asks, does Rabelais, who had such confidence in Cartier that he made him Pantagruel's pilot, put him among writers who wrote *par ouy dire*? There are only two ways, he says, out of the difficulty. Either Jamet Brayer is not Jacques Cartier or the chapter is not by Rabelais. I thoroughly agree with him in rejecting the latter alternative, but though I contemplate the first alternative without a pang, there is yet a third alternative, namely, that Rabelais while believing in Cartier's skill as a navigator and in his general trustworthiness as a narrator, ventured to doubt whether all his information was the result of first-hand observation.

If M. Chinard then has not definitely added to our knowledge of Rabelais's geographical sources, he has at any rate written an interesting and suggestive chapter, and he has done well in laying emphasis on Rabelais's attitude to mediæval traditions. It is just because of the mixture in Rabelais of the mediæval spirit with that of the Renaissance that he is so complete a representative of his age.

On the other hand as regards Montaigne, M. Chinard has made a real addition to his known sources. He shews that passages in his essay *On Cannibals* (I, xxx) are borrowed, sometimes without the alteration of a word, from a translation of Girolamo Benzoni's *Historia del Mondo nuovo* (Venice, 1565), made by Urbain Chauveton, a zealous Protestant. Benzoni, a Milanese, who had spent fourteen years in America, judged the conduct of the Spaniards with great severity, and

¹ *Rev. des études rabelaisiennes*, x (1912), 19 ff.

Chauveton supplemented his translation with a *Brief discours* of his own on the massacre of the French Protestants in Florida. M. Chinard analyses this pamphlet at some length in his seventh chapter, and praises it highly for its literary qualities. As its date is 1579, it follows that the opening part of Montaigne's essay *On Cannibals* was written in that year as the earliest, and therefore not long before the publication of his *Essays* in 1580. Another possible source, according to M. Chinard, for this essay is Jean Léry, a gentleman of Burgundy, who published in 1578 an account of Villegagnon's expedition to Brazil.

The other essay of Montaigne's which is largely concerned with the New World is that *On Coaches*, written probably in 1586 or 1587. M. Chinard well points out the difference in tone between the two essays. While the earlier one is inspired by the writer's curiosity and love of humorous paradox, the later one is eloquent with sympathy for the unfortunate inhabitants of Mexico and Peru, and with indignation against their Spanish conquerors. 'We are so accustomed,' says M. Chinard, 'to see in Montaigne the sceptic, that we too often forget that he was a man, and that he sometimes steeped his lips in the milk of human kindness.' I read this remark with pleasure, for it shews that M. Chinard's eyes have been opened to the error of the view that Montaigne is a pure sceptic, and that he could not be eloquent on behalf of virtue and things of good repute. Interesting, too, is the suggestion that between the first publication of the *Essays*, and that of 1588, Montaigne had progressed in a moral sense, 'that his conception of the world had been enlarged, and that he had become really better.' This is just the opposite to M. Strowski's view. But here I must reluctantly leave M. Chinard; there are many other interesting things in his book, but space forbids me to notice them.

ARTHUR TILLEY.

CAMBRIDGE.

Herder als Faust. Eine Untersuchung. Von GÜNTHER JACOBY.
Leipzig: Felix Meiner. 1911. 8vo. xii + 485 pp.

Günther Jacoby, dem wir eine sehr förderliche, wenn auch etwas breit gehaltene Untersuchung und Bewertung der ästhetischen Lebensarbeit Herders und ihrer Berechtigung gegenüber den Anschauungen Kants verdanken¹, versucht sich hier auf dem Gebiete der Literaturgeschichte. Leider mit wenig Erfolg. Was er in seinen ermüdend breiten, mit Wiederholungen übersättigten und oft in deklamatorischem Stil gehaltenen Ausführungen zu beweisen sucht, ist die Behauptung 'dass Herder Goethes Faust ist, und zwar der Faust des ersten Teiles bis zum Auftritt im Auerbachkeller.' Es sollen also nicht bloss Züge von Herders Charakter, Anschauungen von ihm verwertet sein (womit die Forschung längst rechnete), sondern Herder, der mit Goethe in Strassburg

¹ G. Jacoby, *Herders und Kants Aesthetik*. Im gleichen Verlage, 1907.