Thomas Campion and the Art of English Poetry by Thomas MacDonagh

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are so unfortunate, that he would need to rewrite his book in order to make it thoroughly sound in the field of technical research, or to have it show its potential value as an answer to the argument that a professional actor could not have written the plays ascribed to Shakespeare. He has, however, brought the material for such a reply well within reach, and has established strong ground for his claim that only a professional actor could have written them. That he has shown himself ignorant or oblivious of most of the results of English-speaking scholarship in the Shakespearian field is, for the foundations of his work, greatly to be deplored; but even this should not obscure the fact that he has widened the field of Shakespearian investigation and written an interesting and valuable book.

O. L. HATCHER.

BRYN MAWR, PA., U.S.A.

Thomas Campion and the Art of English Poetry. By THOMAS MACDONAGH. Dublin: Hodges, Figgis. 1913. 8vo. 129 pp.

This little book was originally written, the Preface informs us, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts at University College, Dublin. Though it reveals the author as an interesting personality and a zealous student of poetry, it is rather curious in make-up, whether looked at as a thesis or an independent publication. The 'and' of the title, which one would think at first sight to mean 'in relation to,' or something of the sort, appears to have only its common conjunctive significance. In other words, Thomas Campion is discussed in two or three chapters, with a selection from his lyrics; then, in four or five subsequent chapters the forms of English verse are considered, with very little about Campion save by way of incidental allusion or illustration. One is led to expect some concluding chapter, in which the relation of Mr MacDonagh's prosodical doctrines to the poet's theory or practice will be made clear; but this chapter appears to be still unwritten. The only links of which we can be sure are found in the fact that in his *Observations* Campion touched on a number of fundamental metrical problems, such as quantity and accent, rime, pauses, metrical equivalence, and the like, and that on these same subjects Mr MacDonagh wishes to make observations of his own. In general, he believes Campion to have been quite at fault on the subjects of quantity and rime, but right on most others. In all which, as in some appreciative criticism of the songs in the *Books of Aires*, there is much that is good, but little or nothing that is new.

The one notably independent contribution to theory is a doctrine which Mr MacDonagh believes to be 'a truth hitherto unproclaimed,' namely, that there are in our prosody two great types of verse, song-verse and speech-verse, with a possible third corresponding to the chant. Song-verse is temporal in character, being made up of isochronous

units; speech-verse is not. Both involve rhythm, accent, and quantity, but in the latter type another element of importance appears, called (in a term of Campion's own) 'weight.' All this is very interesting, but again not unfamiliar. One is not sure of understanding the theory, because the writer fails to develop it, reserving, he says, the matter of speech-verse to another work; but it would seem to be very much the same thing as Mr Robert Bridges's doctrine of the two types of 'stressed' and 'syllabic' verse, as presented in his *Milton's Prosody*. MacDonagh's speech-verse and Bridges's syllabic-verse are both represented chiefly by the iambic pentameter, and the former describes it as having 'a fixed number of syllables' to a line. He is not familiar with Mr Bridges's work—at least he does not include a reference to it in his bibliography; neither, apparently, does he know A. J. Ellis's system of metrical analysis, with Mayor's criticism of it in his *Chapters on English Metre*. In this system the term 'weight' was introduced as a separate prosodical element¹, but Mayor's question, 'What is meant by it?' has never been clearly answered. Nor do we know how it is used in the present book, for its explanation goes over with the discussion of speech-verse.

In other words, the one matter of individual significance in our author's discussion, his view of the old question as to how we shall analyze and describe the peculiar qualities of our great pentameter measure, is tantalizingly brought forward only to be let go. On the analysis of the lyrical measures which Campion chiefly represents, Mr MacDonagh has no new theory. But his *obiter dicta* are often stimulating, and one may judge him to be a notable *talker* on his subject. He has noted the odd rhythms in the speech of Irish peasants, has persuaded Mr Yeats and Mr George Russell to recite verse to him, that he might study their metrical habits, has experimented in the chanting of Shakespeare's songs to the accompaniment of a real lyre. It would be well if he should be caught, imprisoned, and his stores accounted for by some prosodist more given to consecutive analytical method.

RAYMOND M. ALDEN.

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The Life of Matthew Prior. By FRANCIS BICKLEY. London: Pitman. 1914. 8vo. 295 pp.

During recent years a large amount of new material for a life of Prior has been published, and a biography is therefore more than justified. It is a great pity that Mr Waller has not continued his work, but it is now seven years since he gave hopes of a commentary on Prior,

¹ In Campion the word is not used in distinction from quantity, but as something very like it (or perhaps with the element of accent added). 'As in music,' he says, 'we do not say a strain of so many notes, but so many semi-briefs,...so in a verse the numeration of the syllables is not so much to be observed as their weight and fine proportion.'