

Review

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insisting on the disciplinary and logical character of poetry. 'It has a logic as severe as that of science, a logic more difficult and more subtle because it is based on more elusive conditions...Poetry, in very truth, is a supplement to everyday life of the most intensely practical character...it knits together (life's) scattered and disparate bits of experience in a revealing way; it organises life afresh, and on a higher plane than that upon which we commonly live.' There is nothing new in all this, but it is put with vigour and conviction, and, after all, the value of criticism lies less in saying something new than in bringing home to us truths with which we ought to be, but are not, familiar. The section on Primitive Poetry contains some interesting suggestions, though perhaps it scarcely discriminates sufficiently between different degrees of poetic sensitiveness in different races. But, of necessity, these remarks are very condensed, and the point which Mr Fairchild makes, if not the only one possible, has a value of its own. His study of poetry as a whole is calculated to stimulate thought and set the reader investigating for himself, and the work which achieves this, fulfils the chief purpose of criticism by compelling us to set up and defend our own standard of right judgment.

GRACE E. HADOW.

CIRENCESTER.

The Middle English Penitential Lyric. By F. A. PATTERSON. New York: Columbia University Press. 1911. 8vo. ix + 203 pp.

A more appropriate title for this book would have been 'The Middle English Devotional Lyric,' for Dr Patterson has extended its limits to include many pieces not definitely penitential, such as the translation of 'Veni Creator Spiritus' (No. 44), the prayer 'To þe gude angell' (No. 46), 'A Morning Thanksgiving and Prayer to God' (No. 48), and, indeed, with few exceptions the whole latter half of the material which he has assembled. In the case of some of these pieces—as, for example, the 'Pater Noster in Anglico (!)'—even the lyrical quality is difficult to perceive. Nor do all of them show that unity of emotion which Mr Patterson accepts as the true test of the lyric (p. 2). For example, 'A Confessioun to Ihesu Crist' (No. 4) is separable into three distinct poems: (1) a prayer to Christ, (2) a prayer to Our Lady, (3) a prayer to angels, saints, etc.

In his Introduction Mr Patterson severely criticises a classification of religious lyrics 'by means of external—almost accidental—names, such as *Prayers to God, to Christ and to the Virgin Mary*' for the reason that 'the unity of the lyric is not expressed by a title chosen from some convenient external feature of the poem' (p. 2). To group various prayers to the Virgin, as German scholars have done, under the heading *Mariengebete*, is to his mind particularly objectionable, 'as a prayer to Mary may express any one of many religious emotions,—it may be a prayer of confession, a supplication for mercy, an avowal of reformation, or an expression of mystic love-longing. In fact, a title

more artificial and meaningless would be hard to find' (p. 3). Nevertheless, the tabular classification which he adopts for his lyrics follows much the same system:

'B. *Poems expressing contrition.*

a. Sorrow for Sin.

II. Non-Liturgical.

a. *Prayers to the Deity.*

b. *Poems to the Virgin Mary.*

c. *Timor Mortis Poems.*

β. Prayers to Be Kept from Sin, and for Aid.

I. Liturgical.

II. Non-Liturgical.

a. *Resolves to Reform.*

b. *General Prayers to the Deity for Protection from Sin.*

c. *Prayers to Christ.*

d. *Prayers to the Virgin Mary.*' (pp. 13—15.)

Moreover, the Prayers included under the last subdivision present a variety of religious emotion almost as wide as that in the collections of *Mariengebete*.

The value of Mr Patterson's monograph would have been increased by limiting it more strictly to the field of penitential verse, and by bringing together a more comprehensive collection of lyrics within that field. The two paraphrases of the Pater Noster (Nos. 39 and 40), for example, might have been omitted, but one is surprised not to find Maydestone's version of the Fifty-first Psalm, 'Mercy God of my misdede.' Other important omissions might be cited, but it is clear that Mr Patterson has undertaken to present specimens rather than an exhaustive collection.

The texts included in the volume are for the most part reprinted from the Early English Text Society and other printed collections, only six of the sixty-nine pieces being printed directly from manuscript sources. The references added in the Notes to versions in other manuscripts might have been considerably extended. For example, No. 4 is found also in Harl. MS. 210 and Camb. MSS. II. 6. 43, Dd. 14. 26, Dd. 8. 2. No. 21, of which it is stated there are 'no variants,' occurs in Harl. MSS. 116 and 2225 and in Ashmol. MS. 59. Under No. 25 reference might also have been made to the closely related 'Orison to þe trinite' (in 12-line stanzas) which is inserted in three MSS. of the *Cursor Mundi* (E.E.T.S. pp. 1454—1459). No. 26 occurs also in B.M. Addit. MS. 31042. Very similar to No. 32 is the Song to the Virgin in Ashmol. MS. 1393, as noted by Chambers and Sidgwick, p. 346. No. 39 occurs

also in the Auchinleck MS., from which it was printed by Kölbing in *Engl. Stud.* ix, 44. No. 52—Richard de Caistre's Hymn—was printed from ten MSS. by Mr Dundas Harford in the *Proceedings of the Norfolk and Norwich Archaeol. Soc.* xvii, 221—244. Five more manuscript copies of the same poem are known to me and even these probably do not exhaust the list. No. 67 occurs also in Royal MS. 17. A. xxvii. Nos. 11, 42, and 44, by a strange slip are ascribed to 'Porkington MS. No. 10,' but are actually taken from Phillipps MS. 8336.

A comparison of Mr Patterson's texts with his printed sources affords gratifying evidence of typographical accuracy. With regard to the texts printed for the first time, one may note that a collation of the *Deus in Nomine Tuo Saluum Me Fac* (No. 21) with the text of this poem printed independently by MacCracken¹ from the same manuscript reveals a series of discrepancies which is disquieting. In 35 cases Patterson prints a final *e* which is lacking in MacCracken's text. Other variations are as follows:

<i>Ll.</i>	<i>Patterson.</i>	<i>MacCracken.</i>
3	sarch	serch
6	ay &	ax y
15	Wher	Ther
20	Gramarcy	Gramercy
23	remembred	remembred
33	fon	foon
34	dispytt	disperpyll
39	fulfyll	fulfille
45	blessed	blesed
51	day	way
54	Salve	Helpe (cf. footnote)
55	finde oder plite	finde in oder plite
58	thyngis	thyng
64	Luyng	Louyng
66	commtable	commvtable
69	contrite	contrite
70	alle lust	all that lust
71	mescheue	myscheue
72	alle hut	all myn hirt

A comparison of these readings leads to the conclusion that this poem has been printed with surprising carelessness either in the *Minor Poems* or in the *Middle English Penitential Lyric*; though without collating the manuscript it is of course impossible to determine which editor is responsible.

Many of the errors and omissions to which attention has been directed in this review of Mr Patterson's monograph are trivial. The volume makes a substantial contribution to our knowledge of the Middle English religious lyric by the closer relationship which it establishes between this verse and the Liturgy of the Church and Latin devotional treatises. The discovery that the Orison in the Vernon MS. beginning 'Lord my God al Merciable' is a close translation of a prayer by Thomas Aquinas is especially interesting. On the

¹ *Minor Poems of Lydgate* 1, E.E.T.S., Ext. Ser. 107, pp. 10—12.

other hand, Mr Patterson certainly goes to an extreme in declaring that 'Latin hymns and devotional Latin poetry had no appreciable influence upon the development of the Middle English religious lyric' (p. 25). To cite a particular instance, No. 43, for which he failed to find a source, is directly based on the hymn *Ave Maris Stella* in Daniel's *Thesaurus Hymnologicus*, I, 204. Numerous other instances might be cited, especially among the poems addressed to the Virgin, in which the Middle English verses are expansions of Latin hymns.

CARLETON BROWN.

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

Early English Classical Tragedies. Edited with Introduction and Notes by JOHN W. CUNLIFFE. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1912. 8vo. c + 352 pp.

Professor Cunliffe is well known by his work on the influence of Seneca on Elizabethan drama, and no one could be more competent than he for the supplementary work he has undertaken in the book before us. He has given us the text of four early plays on the Senecan model—*Gorboduc*, *Jocasta*, *Gismond of Salerne* and *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, and has prefixed to them an Introduction in which he traces the history of Tragedy through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance to the close of the sixteenth century. Notes and a Glossary complete the book, the notes on *Gorboduc* being supplied by Dr H. A. Watt.

The Introduction is a most comprehensive and useful treatment of its subject. Its great omission—the only serious fault to be found with the whole book—is that it gives no account of Seneca's plays and their characteristics of structure and content. Such an account would have put the reader in a position to appreciate the various indications of a return to Seneca seen in Renaissance writers. As it is, an acquaintance with Senecan Tragedy is taken for granted, or left to be deduced by the reader from incidental references made in connexion with later writers.

Professor Cunliffe shows very lucidly how in the Middle Ages the very idea of tragedy as a dramatic form of art faded from knowledge, how it came to be thought that a play was recited by a single speaker, while one or more actors accompanied him in dumb show. (Incidentally he shows the long persistence of a curious error which turned one Calliopius, the scribe of a MS. of Terence, into the poet's friend who recited his plays.) One might think that this view of the manner in which ancient drama was given, might have had some effect in causing the introduction of *intermedii* into the representations of Italian renaissance plays. It hardly appears however from Professor Cunliffe's account that there is ground for assuming such a connexion: though it does seem clear that the Italian *intermedii*, as Professor Cunliffe argues, led to the English Dumb-shows. (It may be noticed that Mr Watt in his note on p. 298 is on this point not in agreement with