

Review

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A later *glosa* of the *Saudade minha* than those here given are the *voltas* of Soror Violante do Ceo (1601–93), and it is interesting to notice that Soror Violante must have known the verse quoted by D. Carolina in the *Zeitschrift für rom. Philologie* some years ago, and here, p. 91, from a MS. of the Visconde de Juromenha, since she writes:

este quando
que a ser logo tarda.

In fine this tiny volume on every page raises or solves some attractive problem of literature or philology.

AUBREY F. G. BELL.

S. JOÃO DO ESTORIL.

Ludvig Holbergs Samlede Skrifter. Med Understøttelse af Carlsbergfondet udgivne af CARL S. PETERSEN. Vols. I and XIX, I. Copenhagen: Gyldendal. 1913. 4to. xv + 690 pp. and 40 pp.

Ludvig Holberg som Historiker. Av FRANCIS BULL. Christiania: H. Aschehoug og Co. 1913. 8vo. 181 pp.

Om Holbergs historiske Skrifter. Af SIGURD HØST. Bergen: J. Grieg. 1913. 8vo. 184 pp.

Holbergs Unge Dage. Med forskjellige Bidrag til det historiske Tidsbillede. Av VILJAM OLSVIG. Christiania: Gyldendal. 1912. 8vo. xvi + 655 pp.

Holberg og England. Av VILJAM OLSVIG. Christiania: H. Aschehoug og Co. 1913. 8vo. 346 pp.

The Comedies of Holberg. By OSCAR J. CAMPBELL (*Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature*, vol. III). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press (London: H. Milford). 1914. 8vo. ix + 363 pp.

Comedies by Holberg: Jeppe of the Hill, The Political Tinker, Erasmus Montanus. Translated from the Danish by O. J. CAMPBELL and F. SCHENCK, with an Introduction by O. J. CAMPBELL (*Scandinavian Classics*, vol. I). New York: The American-Scandinavian Foundation (London: H. Milford). 1914. 12mo. xv + 178 pp.

Ludvig Holberg is one of those sincere, clear-sighted, matter-of-fact personalities who stud the literature of Europe in the eighteenth century more liberally than that of any other age. It has been said that he is not sufficiently original to justify his study by others than special students of Scandinavian literature; but this is not quite fair to him; it does not take count of the fascinating personal note that runs through all his writings; he grows rapidly on the reader with closer acquaintance. Moreover, he shows us better than any other man of letters of his time north of the Alps, how the spiritual culture of Latin Europe mirrored itself in the northern mind. This is his special

significance from the point of view of comparative literature. Putting his dramatic achievement—and it is as a dramatic writer he is best known and appreciated—even at its lowest, he adapted the comedy-type of Molière to the Germanic mind, and made that writer a force in German and Scandinavian literature which he would not otherwise have become. And even if we cannot put a finger on many points of direct indebtedness, it seems probable that Holberg learned how to assimilate Molière from his English predecessors, the comedy-writers of the Restoration; just as our Drydens and Vanbrughs peopled Molière's plays with English men and women, so Holberg filled them with his Danish fellow-countrymen.

It is not so long ago since one might have been justified in complaining that the materials available for the understanding of the fantastic world of Peder Paars and Jean de France, of Niels Klim and Jakob von Tyboe, were scant; there was Prutz's old-fashioned German book on Holberg, now some sixty years old, and Brandes' attractive and appetising monograph, written in 1884; there were also the more special studies on the comedies by Rahbek, Legrelle and Skavlan. But in recent years the literature on Holberg has swelled enormously, and goes on growing at an increasing rate; one can imagine the accommodation of the little Holberg library in Bergen—with which the present writer has pleasant associations—being by this time taxed to its uttermost. I propose to deal here with some of the more recent publications which are concerned with the greatest of the Dano-Norwegian men of letters.

With the financial aid of the Carlsberg Fund, which is doing so much to further Scandinavian literary research, a beginning has been made to a magnificent *édition définitive* of Holberg's works; when this is completed, few, if any, writers of the eighteenth century will possess a nobler monument. The new edition opens with Holberg's historical writings: the *Introduction til de Europæiske Riges Historie* (1711), with its *Anhang* (1713); and the *Introduction til Natur- og Folkeretten* (1716), another volume containing the variants and critical apparatus. The whole is under the editorship of Carl S. Petersen of the Royal Library in Copenhagen.

Holberg as a historian is the theme of two recent Scandinavian studies, which naturally cover, to a large extent, the same ground; but they are sufficiently supplementary to each other to be both worth careful attention. Herr Bull's is the more scholarly and thorough-going; and he restricts his attention mainly to the historical works in the narrower sense of the word; while Herr Høst writes with a view to a wider audience and discusses at greater length works such as Holberg's imitation of Plutarch, the *Helte- og Heltinde-Historier*, which, only by a stretch of the definition, may be included in the category of historical writings. It is interesting to observe, with the help of these two studies, how Holberg the historian gradually emancipated himself from the uninspiring methods of the Renaissance, how, at the hand of Pufendorf, he breathed life into the writing of history, how he not

merely chronicled, but also tried to elucidate the organic movement of national development. Holberg is a disciple of Pufendorf, as everybody was who left his mark on history-writing in the early years of the eighteenth century; his *Introduction til de Europæiske Riges Historie*¹ is closely modelled on Pufendorf's *Einleitung zu der Historie der vornehmsten Reiche und Staaten so jetziger Zeit in Europa sich befinden* (Frankfort, 1682–86). Herr Bull makes a careful comparison of the two works with a view to estimating just how much is the work of the great German, how much is Holberg's. The result of this comparison is a vindication of Holberg's originality, not so much in respect of matter, as in his attitude to and criticism of the historical facts.

There is one point, particularly interesting to us, which neither of these Scandinavian critics of Holberg's historical studies faces fairly, and that is Holberg's possible indebtedness as a historian to England. Holberg himself said of his *Introduction*: 'I commenced this work in England when I had an opportunity of consulting the books from which the materials are taken in the Bodleian Library, and when I was animated with the desire of becoming an author before I had acquired a beard².' This was in 1706–7, and possibly both critics might have had a little more to say on this point had they had before them the abundant materials which Herr Olsvig has brought to light in his new work on *Holberg og England*.

Viljam Olsvig is the most industrious of Holberg scholars, and had already some five or six studies to his credit before he began, three years ago, with *Holbergs Unge Dage*, what appears to be intended to form a many-volumed and exhaustive biography of Holberg. Olsvig's books are, frankly, not very readable works, being rather the foundation for books than books themselves. They are thrown together without order, or any consideration for proportion, even, for that matter, for relevancy. But by his indefatigable research, Olsvig has thrown light on many dark places in Holberg's life; he has justified his labours, and made the re-writing of much of the early chapters of Holberg's life necessary. His object is not merely to arrive at accurate data as regards Holberg's life, but also to re-create the *milieu*, to reproduce the atmosphere of Holberg's youth; one cannot, however, help thinking that a more intuitive writer might have achieved more in this direction with a less expenditure of printer's ink. The second volume on Holberg's visit to England is even a greater effort at reconstruction than the first. Holberg, in his autobiography, describes this visit in some seven or eight pages; Herr Olsvig expands this to 340! Holberg tells us briefly that 'after a voyage of four days we arrived at Gravesend, a town situated at the mouth of the river Thames.... On

¹ This work was translated into English in 1755: *An Introduction to Universal History*. Translated from the Latin of Baron Holberg. With Notes, Historical, Chronological, and Critical. By Gregory Sharpe. London, 1755; new ed., 1787; and even before this, there had appeared an abridgement in Latin and English.

² I quote from the English translation of Holberg's autobiography (*Memoirs of Lewis Holberg, written by himself in Latin, and now first translated into English*), published as vol. xii of a series of *Autobiographies*, London, 1830, p. 34.

leaving Gravesend we proceeded on foot to London. I acted as interpreter for my companion, who was ignorant of the English language, and could only attempt to make himself intelligible by signs. We stayed a short time in London, where I took care to see everything that was shown for nothing¹. This is all Holberg has himself to say about London; but, on the strength of it, Olsvig proceeds to reconstruct the London of 1706, and describe with excessive minuteness all that Holberg might possibly have seen and experienced. All this is, of course, not without its value; but there is ground for complaint that Olsvig has failed to draw conclusions commensurate with the fulness of his research. What did Holberg really owe to England and Oxford? We know that he has written on English history and English political life with fulness of knowledge and peculiar insight—the evidence will be found fully set forth in Olsvig's book; but how far was his general outlook on the art of history-writing influenced by us? What share had Oxford in his advance—if advance it was—on Pufendorf's beginnings? This, it seems to me, is a question that still awaits fuller discussion than it has received in any of these works before us.

Holberg's Danish history, *Danmarks Riges Historie*, remains his historical masterpiece; and one must guard against taking his other, later historical writings too seriously. His *Ålmindelig Kirkehistorie* and especially the mechanically compiled *Jødisk Historie*, with its solemn discussion of the social conditions before the Flood, make the impression of being only hackwork undertaken under pressure from some publisher. The *Heltehistorier* and *Heltindehistorier*, on the other hand, although hardly history, are attractive specimens of Danish prose in an age when good prose was far to seek north of the Alps; moreover, they throw a suggestive light on the men and things that interested the early eighteenth century; show how closely greatness and moral greatness were identified; and how the romanticism of the human spirit—not to be quenched by the most logical rationalism—found an outlet in the literary exploitation of the wonders of the Orient. In Denmark as in France and England, Saladin and Aurung-Zebe were names to conjure with, names that set even the most soberly disciplined fancies roving. The criterion of moral greatness is not so self-apparent among the 'heroines,' amongst whom Holberg included Renaissance *grandes dames* like Catarina di Medici—compared with Agrippina—whose activities could not be described as 'moral.' But the collection also includes our own Elizabeth—as well as our two Marys—and the unhappy Eleonora Christine von Uhlfeld, for whom Holberg finds a parallel in Lady Jane Grey. Holberg had evidently more in view here than merely to provide the readers of the *Heltehistorier* with supplementary female interest; he seems to have been of the opinion that women were intellectually just as able to play important rôles in the history of the world as men, were the opportunities offered them. Professor Campbell in his study of Holberg quotes (pp. 358 f.) an

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 18, 25.

interesting suggestion by Professor Schofield that Holberg might possibly have been influenced by the example of the Anglo-Saxon scholar, Elizabeth Elstob, who defended vigorously a woman's right to become a scholar and insisted that a woman's intellect was inferior to a man's not by nature, but because of her inferior education.

Professor Campbell's book, the first monograph on Holberg in English, deals mainly with him as a dramatist. It is an attractively written book which will induce many readers to turn to the excellent translations of three of Holberg's plays, *Jeppe of the Hill*, *The Political Tinker* and *Erasmus Montanus*, which Mr Campbell, together with Mr F. Schenck, has contributed to the series published by the American-Scandinavian Society¹. These translations are lively and natural, and reproduce with great skill the broken Danish and the verbal quips of the original; but is it quite fair to describe Herman von Bremen by the traditional 'tinker'? It can hardly be claimed that Holberg's comedies had any measure of influence on our English dramatic literature. For the Germans, on the other hand, his dramas were a factor of magnitude, which has not yet been estimated at its full importance, and that in spite of the useful reprint of the old translations by Detharding and others, published by Hoffory and Schlenther². In any case, Holberg's plays have incontestable merit, and occupy a niche of their own in the European literature of the early eighteenth century.

From the point of view of literary research Mr Campbell's work is somewhat disappointing, being, in the main, an amplification of Rahbek's and Skavlan's results. He has set out to correct the view, maintained by Legrelle, that Molière's example was the main factor in Holberg's art; but he has not added materially to the evidence already adduced by Scandinavian investigators with regard to Holberg's indebtedness to the *Commedia dell'Arte*, as represented by Gherardi's collection. A comparison of Holberg's plays with the printed text is not enough here; we must also know something of the form in which the Gherardi scenarios were performed on the Danish stage before Holberg came forward as a rival to Gherardi. From Overskou we know that Montaignu had played the Gherardi repertory from 1715 onwards³; but details of that repertory are wanting. And obviously the first step towards a complete understanding of Holberg as a playwright is an

¹ It may be recalled that three other comedies, *Henry and Pernilla*, *Captain Bombastes Thunderbolt*, and *Scatterbrains* (i.e., *Den Stundesløse*) were published in English translation in 1912 by Lieut.-Col. H. W. L. Hime. *The Babbling Barber (Gert Westfaler)* was translated in 1826; *The Blue-aproned Statesman* and *Erasmus Montanus* by T. Weber, Copenhagen, 1885. This, as far as I am aware, exhausts the list of our translations of Holberg's comedies.

² *Dänische Schaubühne: Die vorzüglichsten Komödien des Freiherrn Ludwig von Holberg in den ältesten deutschen Übersetzungen*, herausg. von F. Hoffory und P. Schlenther, 2 vols., Berlin, 1888. It is noticeable that M. G. Belouin, the author of an able study of the origins of the modern German theatre (*De Gottsched à Lessing*, Paris, 1909), virtually ignores Holberg; on the other hand, the statement of a recent English critic that Holberg's plays formed the principal part of the repertory of the Schönemann company is an exaggeration.

³ *Den danske Skueplads*, Copenhagen, 1854, i, pp. 123 ff.

investigation of the conditions prevailing on the Danish stage of his time.

Professor Campbell naturally makes out a strong case for English influence on Holberg's dramas; but this, as he has himself clearly felt, is a difficult and elusive matter. There is an obvious danger in attributing too much to the effect of Holberg's visit to England, in respect of his dramatic work. He was in England in 1706-7, and he did not begin to write comedies until 1721. Considering that Holberg, as far as we can see, had little interest in the theatre when he was in England, and remembering all the varied experiences Holberg had come through in the interval, it seems safer to reduce the claim of direct influence of the English theatre to a minimum. The strongest proof—perhaps we might say, apart from the names of the characters in *Don Ramudo*, which come from the Dryden-Davenant version of *The Tempest*, the only strong proof—of an influence of the English drama is the fact that Farquhar's *Recruiting Officer* supplied an episode in *Erasmus Montanus*. Possibly Holberg saw that play in London in 1706; it was, at least, performed then, as Professor Campbell shows, although hardly one of the things that were 'shown for nothing' to which Holberg's limited resources obliged him to restrict himself. That, on the other hand, Holberg was directly influenced by Ben Jonson seems to me entirely unproven; and had Mr Campbell been more familiar with recent literature on the motive which forms the framework of *The Taming of the Shrew*¹, he would have been more cautious before endorsing the claim of the older Scandinavian critics that that play had—directly, at least—served Holberg as a model for his *Jeppe paa Bjerget*. Mr Campbell's most valuable contribution to our knowledge of Holberg's sources is the evidence he brings forward of his extensive borrowings from the *Tatler*, of which Olsvig had given a hint in his *Det store Vendepunkt i Holbergs Liv* (1895).

In spite of the limitations I have indicated, his book on Holberg deserves a hearty welcome, as pioneer work in the best sense; Professor Campbell has given us an attractive account of this great Northerner, who told with pride—if not in immaculate English—that he had been taken for an Englishman, and whose mental attitude and mental constitution had so much in common with those of our people in the eighteenth century.

J. G. ROBERTSON.

LONDON.

Keys to the Baskish Verb in Leizarraga's New Testament, A.D. 1571.
By E. S. DODGSON. London: Humphrey Milford. 1915. Svo.
624 pp.

Most persons when confronted with the gigantic construction of the Basque verb are content to salute it in awe and pass by on the other

¹ See A. von Weilen, *Shakespeares Vorspiel zu der Widerspänstigen Zähmung*, Frankfort o. M., 1884.