

Underwoods by Ben Jonson

Review by: Percy Simpson

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apparent. If the above remarks have been chiefly devoted to pointing out errors and defects, the blame does not rest with the reviewer. Countervailing merits have been sought, and sought in vain. The common sense displayed in the general introduction is rendered nugatory by the results there attained being contradicted in other parts of the work. The labour expended on the notes is largely misapplied owing to a failure to distinguish between what is relevant and what is not. Professor Collins' reprint of Greene's plays will serve until a better is produced, but to put forward careless and superficial work of this kind as a final edition is a gross insult to English scholarship.

W. W. GREG.

*Underwoods.* By BEN JONSON. Printed at the University Press, Cambridge. 1905. 8vo. 165 pp.

This beautiful reprint of the *Underwoods* amply realises the primary aim of the publishers, to produce an artistic book; the type is bold and closely set together, and stands out effectively on a well-balanced page. Jonson's half-forgotten lyrics, with their slender vein of inspiration, reappear in a form as far removed as possible from the clumsy printing of the original text. But readers of this *Review*, while fully appreciating the charm of the typography, will be keenly interested in the reprint from a further standpoint. The text follows the 1640 Folio, in the second volume of which the poems first appeared as a pendant to *The Forest* of the earlier volume. They had a separate title-page, and this is reproduced; but, as no clear intimation of the source is given, it would naturally be inferred that the poems were a separate issue. The paging of the Folio was continuous for the *Masques* from 1616 onwards, the *Underwoods*, the later *Entertainments*, and the fragment of *Mortimer*; by a freak of the printer the running head-line of 'The Vnder-wood' was extended to the *Entertainments* which immediately followed, with the result that they are reprinted in the new edition. Yet Jonson's prefatory note is given in which he expressly limits the title *Underwoods* to 'these lesser poems.' The old text has been reproduced with two slight touches of revision: capital J and U are printed consistently, and lower-case letters at the beginning of a line have been corrected. Misprints, however, and faulty punctuation have been retained—such a portent as 'Cacoches,' such lack-Latin as 'in mortem Salium ter quatient humum,' such sense and grammar as

All good Poëtrie hence was flowne,  
And are banish'd.

In the old Folio these points cause no difficulty; the reader is on the alert and corrects instinctively. But, reset in clear and comely type, they are disturbing and incongruous; they do more than catch the eye, they offend it, and one longs for the bare minimum of correction needed to eliminate mere inartistic blemishes. The reprint appears to add some errors of its own. 'Donner's' (p. 29) should be 'Donnor's';

'knowes to doe *In* true respects' (p. 31) should be 'It'; 'But though Love thrive' (p. 62) should be 'For'; in 'And must be bred, so *as* to conceale his birth' (p. 63) 'as' should be deleted; and in 'He vexed *rime*, and busied the whole State' (p. 100) the correct reading is 'time.' The original text, as in so many books of the time, underwent correction while the sheets were passing through the press; for instance, the 'roioits' of p. 67 was corrected in most copies. But for the variants here cited I believe that the Folio was not responsible, and a list of minute differences might be added. Worse still, there are a group of errors due to such an elementary mistake as misreading 'f' for 'l': thus, p. 26, 'is loath to leave, *Left* Ayre, or Print' (where 'lest' = least); p. 72, 'Or *left* that vapour might the Citie choake'; p. 95, 'grow The *fame* that thou art promis'd'; p. 133, 'the *feat* That she is in' (poor Lady Digby is in heaven; at least Ben thinks so); p. 147, 'thy *foster* bed' (a double blunder, with 'mollis thorus' to correct it on the opposite page); and p. 151, 'Wives, and *fell's*' (where 'sell's' = selves). The text then is far from flawless; in an edition which is sure to revive interest in the *Underwoods* it is a pity to place needless obstacles in the way of the reader.

PERCY SIMPSON.

*The Gospels of St John, St Matthew and St Mark in West Saxon.*  
 Edited from the MSS. with Introduction and Notes by JAMES W.  
 BRIGHT (*Belles Lettres Series*: I. Early English Literature).  
 3 Vols. Boston and London: D. C. Heath, 1904, 1905. 16mo.  
 xl+280, 147, and 84 pp.

These three dainty volumes form part of a series of reprints of the English classics, of the type with which we have of late become so familiar: they are neatly bound little pocket editions, clearly and accurately printed.

The *Belles Lettres Series* is, however, honourably distinguished from its predecessors by containing a special section devoted to reprints of Old English classics prior to the year 1100; and the three gospels form part of a set, which is already reaching considerable dimensions, of editions of the shorter documents in Anglo-Saxon prose and verse. The three West Saxon gospels are particularly welcome, since good editions have for some time been difficult to procure. In the early days of English philology Anglo-Saxon was chiefly valued as a weapon of the theologian, bent on proving his case by an appeal to the usage of the English church in the 10th or 11th century. Accordingly, as early as 1571, these gospels were issued by the Protestant printer, John Daye: 'published for a testimony' of the use of the scriptures by the Saxon Church in the vulgar tongue. But in later times these versions have suffered somewhat from neglect: they have been overshadowed by subsequent more exciting discoveries in the field of Old English. Though several times printed in collections of Bible translations, such as those of Junius in 1665, Bosworth in 1865, and particularly in the