

of 1903, references, evidently made in all good faith, to the 'Ingoldsby Legends' and the 'Bab Ballads.' Neither Barham nor Mr. Gilbert, two writers of equally intoxicating brilliance of nonsense, ever wasted thought on an idea deeper than a pin would scratch. Dr. Garnett's book would have been publicly burned by any government in any age which had really taken seriously the beliefs which it professed in theory. It is a text-book of intellectual anarchy; it is loaded with symbols of revolution; but the air of our century is proof against it, it will never go off with the least damage to our idols.

ARTHUR SYMONS.

BEFORE an attempt is made to supplement in any other way what has already been written about Dr. Garnett from various points of view, a special word of gratitude has to be said for the help and encouragement which he constantly gave to this magazine. Not only did he lend it countenance and authority by acting as one of its consulting editors, but he found time to write for it three very characteristic articles;¹ he was quick to express his pleasure at any contribution of unusual interest which appeared in its pages, and he frequently offered suggestions of subjects which might be written on,

¹ 'Early Spanish-American Printing,' vol. i, pp. 139-146; 'On the De Missione Legatorum Japonensium' (Macao, 1590), vol. ii, pp. 172-182; 'Some Notes on Ancient Writing and Writing Materials,' vol. iv, pp. 225-235.

though the suggestions too often required a learning akin to his own to carry them out. Two quite recent instances of his kindness may be specially mentioned. In the conviction, in which he was probably right, that it is only by an abundance of pictures that a bibliographical magazine can attain a satisfactory circulation, he offered himself to subscribe to provide more illustrations, an offer which could not be entertained, but is very gratefully remembered. Again, only just before last Christmas, when asked for his opinion on the principles by which municipal librarians should be guided in their book-purchases, he wrote for our January number no mere hasty expression of his ideas, but a considered and carefully thought out view of the whole matter, which in its mellow reasonableness seemed to sum up almost all that could be said on the subject. To lose a friend such as this is a grievous loss indeed to those who are carrying on a magazine to work a little closer towards ideals for which there are few enthusiasts, and while the editors of '*The Library*' have individually many other reasons for lamenting Dr. Garnett's death, the loss of his help and sympathy in their difficult task comes specially home to them.

Besides the notes here printed, and the one or two obituaries in the daily papers which appeared to be written from personal knowledge and with personal feeling, some very interesting tributes by Mr. F. M. Hueffer, and by three of Dr. Garnett's women friends—Miss Beatrice Harraden, Miss Agnes Adams, and Miss Alice Zimmern—have been published in the June number of '*The Book-*

man.' Necessarily slight as are all these contributions, they yet point to the possibility that by co-operation some sketch of this unique personality might be evolved which should be different from the ordinary biography, so unflinching in its tedious detail, so swollen with letters no longer interesting, which passes through the circulating libraries, and is dead within the year. 'Every night of his life he went to the pillar-box at the top of the street,' Miss Adam writes in '*The Bookman*.' 'He had an enormous correspondence, and insisted on posting his own letters. His friends who lived near used to say they knew it was ten minutes to twelve when a slow, hesitating step passed their windows. Latterly he leaned heavily on his stick—the stick that used to be Ford Madox Brown's.' It may seem capricious to pick out the record of so small a characteristic as this, and make much of it, but to at least one reader these few sentences brought back the living personality, and with it the sense of individual loss by his death, more than all the columns of formal obituaries.

Dr. Garnett was proud of being a fellow-townsman of Dr. Johnson, and it seems probable that, if his memory endures, it will be, as in the case of Johnson, less for what he wrote than for what he was. There is, indeed, a rather tempting parallelism in the actual literary output of the two men. Against Johnson's *Dictionary* we may set Dr. Garnett's share in the British Museum Catalogue. The biographies of Milton, Carlyle and Emerson need not fear comparison with the once famous '*Lives of the Poets*.' In poetry, '*The Vanity of*

'Human Wishes' and 'London,' adaptations though they be, have more individuality and a stronger ring than Dr. Garnett's graceful verses; but if the scale turns against him at this weighing, the author of 'The Twilight of the Gods' and 'De Flagello Myrteo' might well hope to make a corresponding recovery when these are contrasted with 'Rasselas' and 'Irene.' The epigrams in these two books of Dr. Garnett's are indeed as quotable as the best things in Boswell, and are only too likely to prove the chief memorials of his powers as a talker. The revelation of the authorship of 'De Flagello Myrteo' within a few days of the writer's death may suggest a possible need of waiting a little before the chorus of admiration with which it has been greeted can be accepted as a final verdict. On the other hand, 'The Twilight of the Gods,' which has been enthusiastically praised in so many notices, has won its way to this favour after a most chilling first reception. Amid the gentle regrets now uttered that Dr. Garnett wasted on mere literary and official taskwork time which might have been devoted to producing more such books as this, it is interesting to remember that these intensely characteristic stories found their way to the remainder market with disconcerting rapidity. It would certainly have pleased their author had he ever known that it was the loyal appreciation of his staff at the British Museum that helped them to emerge very quickly from this undignified position. When the remainder-man's catalogue was received in the Printed Book Department, it was promptly taken the round of the different rooms, and the resultant

order for twenty-five copies so surprised the vendor that he refused to execute it except at the very advance of price it was partly intended to bring about.

While Dr. Garnett took the cold reception of his stories with cheerful philosophy, he never pretended to be indifferent to criticism. One of his most characteristic utterances, both for its feline reference and for the genial assurance with which it was spoken, was provoked by overhearing a doubt expressed as to whether authors who knew their own worth really care for the praise of critics. 'Do poets like praise?' 'Do cats like cream?' was his comment, and as he made it there was a delightful beam of amusement in his face, which is good to remember. Before very long the cream for his own '*Twilight of the Gods*' came to him in a form which he greatly appreciated—that of a warm letter of thanks and praise from the late Lord Lytton, with whom he had, I believe, no personal acquaintance. It was typical of his modesty that this touch of sympathy from a single distinguished reader gave him as much pleasure as if he himself had been a raw beginner, and that when he had his own copy of the book bound a pocket was made in one of the covers, and Lord Lytton's letter placed in it.

It is pleasant to know that the success of '*The Twilight of the Gods*' was not wholly posthumous, and that Dr. Garnett lived to see it pass into a second edition. That it was not more quickly appreciated is perhaps no real matter for regret. Not to succeed too rapidly is the surest of all safeguards for artistic integrity. No man of letters of

Dr. Garnett's generous nature and limited official income can ever be quite indifferent to the temptations offered by publishers, and had he been bombarded with applications for more such stories, the pure gold which he extracted from this vein of fancy might have been alloyed with metal less truly characteristic. As it was, he found later on a new literary diversion in the aphorisms of the 'De Flagello Myrteo,' and not many authors have more than two absolutely original books to their credit.

One of the many reasons for hoping that some authentic memoir of Dr. Garnett may be written is that there are already signs that without some really discriminating record his reputation may attract to itself many of the Joe-Millerisms of librarianship. There is much to be grateful for in Mr. Hueffer's article in 'The Bookman,' but it may be wished that he had abstained from the obviously imaginative story of the engraving of a Merovingian buckle, for which Dr. Garnett directed him to about page 274 of the tenth volume of a work to be found on the fourth row of the fifth shelf (*sic*), on the right from the entrance to the Reading Room. Dr. Garnett's feats of memory were too really extraordinary to need embellishment of this kind, and they become much more human and interesting when they are traced to their source instead of being treated as semi-magical prodigies. Even his acquaintance with the names of the Derby winners, by which he amused so many of his friends, was not quite fortuitous, for by a whimsical survival from the manners of an older generation, he was for many years an amused

subscriber to a half-crown sweepstake on the Derby. There is even a tradition that he was once the winner of it, and used his gains to present all his innocent fellow gamblers with flowers.

One may be more more grateful to Mr. Hueffer when he speaks of Dr. Garnett's 'enigmatic and very wonderful presence.' Gentle, easy of approach, and entirely unassuming as he was, it may be doubted whether any man every ventured to take a liberty with him; and for myself, to the end of his days, I paid him the unpleasant compliment of stammering more consistently when talking with him than with any other person in the world with whom I was on the same terms. But however long the query took to explain it was always heard with the same benign smile from the spectacled eyes, and when the end came there was usually some modest disclaimer and then a stream of suggestions, not always precisely to the point, but almost always opening up new vistas and pointing out connections I had never suspected. When time served it was worth while to venture on a story for the sake of the better one with which he was sure to cap it, and which would be made more humorous if it happened to bring in his accustomed pronunciation of the vowel u as short as possible. An anecdote of a bütcher, who exclaimed when he had slain a refractory sheep, 'I've conciliated that one, anyway,' was the only story I remember to have heard him tell twice, and for the sake of the 'bü' in 'bücher' I would gladly have heard it often.

At the time when I first knew Dr. Garnett he had already been a third of a century in the British

Museum. Mr. Fortescue's recollections go back thirteen years earlier than this. Those who remember him in his freshman days are now sadly few. He was a 'tall, lanky youth,' one of them tells me, always reading, and reputed to possess the gift of eating his lunch, going on with his work, and skimming the '*Athenæum*' all at the same time. The newspaper he seems to have read only in the street as he came down to the Museum of a morning, holding it up before him with one hand, while he held bag and umbrella in the other. Perhaps it was this early habit of reading as he walked which accounted for his rather peculiar gait. When he entered the Museum he probably felt himself a Croesus, for the pay of assistants had just been altered from a daily or weekly wage to an annual salary of £130; and for a lad of sixteen to be able to start on a salary of £130 a year was no more common in those days than now. While his appointment illustrates the occasional advantages of the old system of patronage, that of his immediate senior can hardly be quoted on the same side, for the legend runs that he had obtained his post as the only way of acknowledging his services in bringing over to the Queen some Barbary horses as a present from the Sultan of Morocco, and his stay at the Museum was neither very long nor very successful. Two places higher up, and in receipt of about £45 a year more salary, was Coventry Patmore, with whom the young Garnett, already thinking of poetry, associated more than with anyone else. Two places below him was E. A. Roy, who had entered the Museum some ten years earlier

in an inferior grade, and whose merits, as recounted by Panizzi before the Commission of 1850 formed one of the levers by which the position of the staff had been recently improved. It seems that he knew French and Italian fluently, had a cataloguing acquaintance with German and Spanish, and could even transcribe Arabic. Yet 'this young man,' complained Panizzi, 'receives twenty-five shillings a week, and if he catches a cold and is absent he gets nothing during his absence.' Panizzi was a good friend to Garnett, but his admiration for Mr. Roy's merits caused him in 1856 to promote the latter, as the older man, over Garnett's head. Later on he was passed over again, much less justifiably, in favour of Ralston, the well-known Russian scholar, and on this occasion resented the slight so much that until an explanation was offered him he wished to be allowed to resign. But despite this share of official troubles it cannot be doubted that his life at the British Museum, from first to last, was a very happy one. He loved it so much that he very seldom took his full allowance of holidays, and he knew nothing of Museum headaches. The atmosphere produced in winter by its hot-water pipes he used to compare for its warmth and dryness to the air of Egypt, and he seems to have found it sufficiently bracing to keep him in constant health. Would that more of his old colleagues were alive to tell us what he was like in these early days, when he sat first in the King's Library, and afterwards in the Arched Room, and catalogued the old books in their order shelf after shelf!

In conclusion, a few words may be said as to

Dr. Garnett's connection with the Bibliographical Society of which, as Mr. Tedder has already noted, he was one of the founders. Despite the obstacles which his duties as one of the Resident Officers at the British Museum threw in his way, he was a frequent attendant at its meetings, and with the courtesy which never failed him in his intercourse with his colleagues, made a special point of being present when anyone from the Museum was reading a paper. It is no exaggeration to say that his presence by itself sufficed to make a meeting a success, for he chatted delightfully with everyone who went up to him, and could always be relied on for an interesting speech. He had no oratorical gift, and when not entirely at his ease was far from an effective speaker. But here he was among friends; the small audience and the room both suited him, and after some deprecatory remarks as to his own ignorance, he would settle down to play round any subject on which he was asked to speak with a wealth of learning and fancy which was quite delightful. It was the charm of his suggestions that they were almost always far fetched and yet triumphantly relevant. I remember that in speaking of English books printed abroad he pointed out as an example of the haps by which the spread of printing was ruled, that if England had been absolutely supreme at sea, when, under Elizabeth, she was supporting the claim of Don Antonio to the throne of Portugal, the Portuguese islands off the coast of Africa would no doubt have been captured, and proclamations have been issued there in his interest, and thus the appearance of printing in

Africa would have been accelerated by at least fifty years. The speculation was quite to the point, but it may be doubted whether any other human being than Dr. Garnett, who was always fascinated by the might-have-beens of history, would have thought of it.

During the two years that he held the office of President he worked really hard for the Society, and was always ready to promote its interests. He frequently also acted as deputy to his immediate successor, the Earl of Crawford, during the latter's absence from England, and to do this on one occasion came straight to the Society's rooms after completing his last day's work at the British Museum. With some misgivings, lest he might already be a little overwrought, it was hastily resolved that something should be said as to the affection and esteem which he carried with him in his retirement. Dr. Garnett was taken by surprise, but the mingled dignity and cheerfulness of his brief reply were characteristic of his whole attitude to life.

ALFRED W. POLLARD.