

Review

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The Poetical Works of Giles and Phineas Fletcher. Edited by F. S. BOAS. 2 vols. Cambridge: University Press, 1908-09. 8vo. xxi + 310, xxiii + 368 pp.

This admirable edition of the poems of the brothers Fletcher forms a peculiarly appropriate addition to a series of 'Cambridge' English Classics, for nearly every poem included in it was originally published—to quote from the title-page of Phineas Fletcher's *Sylva Poetica*,—'Cantabrigiæ, ex Academiæ celeberrimæ typographeo.' There was real need for a new critical edition of the two brothers' works, as they have been generally accessible hitherto only in Dr Grosart's editions. Mr Boas pays due tribute to Grosart's immense industry and enthusiasm, but justifies his own labours by allusion to his predecessor's well-known limitations as editor and critic. Mr Boas himself, as his prefaces will show, went about his task with enthusiasm, and he has spared no pains in producing, both from manuscript and printed sources, a thoroughly scholarly text of the poems. Although first attracted to his work by the poems of Giles, he found that Phineas provided far more knotty problems for a textual editor. What Mr Boas claims to have achieved in his two volumes is best stated in his own words. 'The tracing of the evolution of *Locustæ* through its various stages; the reconstitution of the text of *Sicelides* by a collation of the Quarto with the MSS.; the presentation of the shorter poems in an accurate reprint; the systematic analysis of the "reproductions" in Phineas' poetry; and the revindication of his claim to the authorship of *Britain's Ida*—all these have been attempted in this edition.' In two of the tasks here recounted Mr Boas had been largely anticipated by Grosart, but he has dealt with both more systematically and in much greater detail. Phineas's habit of economising his materials extended even to 'repeating almost *verbatim*, with only the changes necessitated by metre or by general setting, passages from his own works.' Such repetitions are found not only, as might be expected, in *Sicelides* and the *Piscatorie Eclogs*, but there are remarkable correspondences between passages in the fisher-play and lines in *The Purple Island* and the *Poetical Miscellanies*. Grosart notes this peculiarity of the poet, but Mr Boas instances a number of remarkable 'reproductions' which had apparently escaped Grosart's notice. Mr Boas builds on another foundation provided by Grosart in his vindication of Phineas Fletcher's authorship of *Britain's Ida*. He has, however, massed his proofs so convincingly as to leave no further room for the doubts which Grosart's arguments from internal evidence left in the minds of many competent critics. This poem, dealing in six brief cantos with the story of Venus and Adonis, was, as all students of Fletcher's works know, printed in 1628 for Thomas Walkley as the work of 'that Renowned Poet, Edmond Spenser.' No critic of any authority has ever accepted the Spenserian authorship of the poem, and Thomas Warton was apparently the first to hint at Fletcher's probable authorship by pointing out, in his *Observations on the Fairy Queen*, the similarity of its style to that of *The Purple Island*. The evidence

which Mr Boas, like Grosart, adduces for definitely assigning the poem to Fletcher is all internal, but it is sufficient. 'Between *Britain's Ida*' Mr Boas writes, 'and a number of Phineas Fletcher's avowed poems there is an intricate series of correspondences, which are different in kind from ordinary cases of parallel or imitation, and which can only be explained by his authorship of *Britain's Ida*.'

In his observations on the 'piscatory' play, *Sicelides*, Mr Boas raises an interesting point. On the strength of certain entries found under the year 1607 in the Account Books of King's College, he hazards the opinion that *Sicelides* was not the sole contribution of Fletcher to the academic drama. The entries refer to an 'Englishe Comodye' performed at King's in 1607, and one of them definitely cites Fletcher's name as its author. Mr Boas thinks it highly improbable that this 'comodye' could have been *Sicelides*, but that it must have been 'one of those numerous products of the academic stage concerning which College Bursars in the faithful discharge of their office have recorded every item involved in their production, but with lofty detachment have not even mentioned their name.'

The editor's task with the works of Giles Fletcher was, naturally, much lighter than with those of Phineas. It should, however, be noted that he reprints for the first time since their appearance in 1611 two elegies, one in Latin and the other in English, on Henry, Prince of Wales. They will not add much to the poet's reputation. This new edition, however, of all the known works of the two poet brothers will, we feel sure, greatly add to the interest taken in their poetry, and so justify the editor's hope that his book will 'lay the foundation of a more critical and considered estimate of their poetic merits than has hitherto been possible.'

W. LEWIS JONES.

BANGOR.

Über Thomas Heywoods The Life and Death of Hector, eine Neubearbeitung von Lydgates Troy Book. Von FRANZ ALBERT. (Münchener Beiträge zur romanischen und englischen Philologie. Heft xlii.) Leipzig: Georg Böhme. 1909. 8vo. 185 pp.

Dr Albert here deals with a rather curious literary phenomenon. In 1614 Thomas Purfoot printed a poem in 5 books called 'The Life and Death of Hector, one and the first of...the Nyne worthies...Written by John Lidgate Monke of Berry, and by him dedicated to...Henry the fift, King of England.' Though said to be written by Lydgate, and carrying no other indication of authorship, the poem, in which six-lined stanzas (*ababcc*) take the place of Lydgate's couplets, is clearly a new version of Lydgate's *Troy Book* by a modern hand. Who was this person, and how closely in subject-matter and style does his work agree with Lydgate's? Where it has passages or expressions not to be found in the *Troy Book*, from what source do they come, and with