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Books of Special Interest

Elizabethans

THE WOMEN IN SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS. By AGNES MURE MACKENZIE. New York: Doubleday, Page & Co. 1924. \$4.

OUTLINE GUIDE TO SHAKESPEARE. By PAUL KAUFMAN. New York: The Century Co. 1924.

THE ARTISAN IN ELIZABETHAN LITERATURE. By CHARLES W. CAMP. New York: Columbia University Press. 1924. \$2.50.

A MOST FRIENDLY FAREWELL TO SIR FRANCIS DRAKE BY HENRY ROBERTS. By E. M. BLACKIE. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1924.

Reviewed by TUCKER BROOKE
Yale University

MISS MACKENZIE'S sensible and adequate book should find a place in the Shakespeare libraries. But we fear that, in spite of its crisp style and often witty sanity, it is not likely to have many steady readers. Miss MacKenzie is a Scotswoman writing with somewhat theological prolixity upon two subjects that have a nearly religious attractiveness to the modern casuist: Shakespeare and women. Through almost five hundred pages she narrates the actions and appraises the characters of the enormous list of Shakespearean females. They are ranged in rather jerky and incongruous sequence according to the supposed dates of the works in which they appear—romantic comediennes, historical ladies, and tragic heroines shuffled together in obedience to *anno Domini* precedence. Venus, Lucrece, Tamora, Joan of Arc, and Margaret of Anjou lead the strange procession; Katharine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn, and Miranda bring up the rear.

It is hard to see how any consistent thesis about the poet's treatment of womankind could emerge from so mechanical an ordering of the data, and Miss MacKenzie has increased the inconsecutiveness and much aggravated the length of her book by failing to resist the temptation to retell the story of each play as she reaches it in her progress.

It is in its detail rather than its pattern that Miss MacKenzie's book is interesting. Her discussions of the great tragedies as studies of the influence of "the disastrous woman" (who may in herself be a very noble person, like Desdemona) are at least well thought out and provocative. She has many happy bits of ironic characterization, such as her remark about Queen Gertrude: "She would have made a very lovable cat or dog; but unfortunately she is human." Miss MacKenzie's chief conclusions are that Shakespeare understood women with an accuracy seldom granted to the male, and that he recognized in them qualities much more modern and realistic than are dreamed of in the Victorian philosophy of Mrs. Jameson and Mrs. Cowden Clarke.

Professor Kaufman's "Outline Guide to Shakespeare," dedicated to the members of the Shakespeare Association of America, contains a very large variety of information. Some of the things it deals with are: the facts of Shakespeare's life, documentary evidence about him, synopses of the plays, lists of characters, difficult words, and familiar quotations, a digest of Shakespeare's grammar, and a "working bibliography." It will undoubtedly be of use to many readers. A book of this kind, which attempts to give with the most dogmatic economy of space the essential facts about a host of disputed questions, is one of the very hardest to compile successfully. There must necessarily be much difference of opinion concerning the relative utility of the matter included and still more about the line the author chooses to draw between fact and fiction. A new edition is already in preparation, which will contain both some new matter and some corrections of detail.

Dr. Camp's "Artisan in Elizabethan Literature" is an amiable effort to produce a Ph.D. dissertation upon a subject that is hardly dissertationable. He deals with too many kinds of artisans, touched upon in too many different tones in ballad, play, satire, or chapbook narrative for anything in the way of solid conclusion to emerge, even if the author had been able to gain a real control of his vague subject. Perhaps the only value of the essay is that the compiling of it has made Mr. Camp acquainted with a large amount of Elizabethan literature. There is little evidence that he has read consistently or with discrimination. The "Farewell to Sir Francis Drake,"

written by Henry Roberts in 1585, has been extant hitherto in only two copies. The Lincoln Cathedral copy is beautifully reproduced by Mr. Bruce Rogers for the Harvard University Press in italic and black letter types similar to those of the original. Canon Blackie of Lincoln adds an Introduction. The literary value of the riming heptameter verses and prose epistles of Roberts is small enough, but they have historical significance and are excellent samples of Elizabethan ephemeral writing.

Business Expression

COMMERCE AND CORRESPONDENCE.

By EDWARD H. GROUT. Pitman. 1924.

IT is refreshing to find an author approaching the subject of business expression from the angle of style. This is exactly the approach that Mr. GROUT makes. The extremely well-written preface to the book, together with part one, might well be entitled the philosophy of style as applied to commercial English. Part two—General Commercial Correspondence and Routine—abounds in information pertaining to office practice, trade procedure, secretarial work, and the like subjects. In part three the author treats of correspondence chiefly in connection with insurance of various kinds. "Insurance," he says in his preface, "impenetrates the whole commercial system, and no student can understand commerce who fails to give this factor very serious atten-

tion." Part four contains specimen letters from literature—Chesterfield, Johnson, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Dr. Thomas Arnold, John Stuart Mill and others—included for appreciation as a welcome change from the analysis and criticism that have preceded.

The author's theory, and his exposition of it, are at all times sound; his division and subdivision of content are logical, and his illustrative materials nicely adapted. He himself writes in lucid and animated style, and he everywhere evinces expert knowledge of and experience in the subjects he discusses. There are two regrets that must be registered, however, by any one who examines the book intensively. One grows out of the insufficiency of treatment brought to bear in connection with such words as *lie* and *lay*, *shall* and *will*, *like* and *as*. This list should have been—could so easily and so justifiably have been—extended. The other comes—at least as far as the American point of view is concerned—from the author's sanctioning in exposition and illustration, down-at-heel business letter form and hackneyed business letter expression. The book is probably not best calculated to meet the demands of American secondary schools, yet it has much in it that should recommend it to business schools and colleges *per se*. But the author's thesis is achieved, and excellently. He has succeeded in doing what he set out to do, namely, "to teach appreciation, to teach execution, to transmute perception to the higher processes of conception, with all the qualities of courage, judgment, and disciplined imagination which that implies."

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Frank Moore Colby

By F. DE WITT WELLS

NOTHING could have been more amusing to Frank Colby than any tribute of praise after his death. He who was so tender to any touch of publicity or to a taint of self advertisement would have laughed at anyone who suggested it.

Shy, learned, logical minded with an authentic sense of humor, Frank Moore Colby was one of the great intellects of his generation. I can almost see his whimsical smile and ready out-bursting laugh as I attempt my description of his qualities. Refinement, distinction, subtlety of appreciation, and sensitiveness of mood, were the notable characteristics of his personality.

I hated him at first, when I sat under him at his lectures while he was teaching at Columbia. It was some such humorous subject as sociology, political science, or ancient history I have forgotten which. He told me afterwards that he remembered my quizzical, supercilious expression while he was talking. I have often regretted the time and the intervening years when I did not know him. But what possibility is there of overcoming the inimical current of feeling that runs from the callow college student toward the instructive professor? The grind for the youth and the yet more pathetic grind for the teacher of youth, both prevent the possibility of human contacts, and in the mill of institutional education this is probably inevitable.

Colby was a professor at Amherst, a lecturer on political science, history and economics at Columbia, Barnard and New York Universities, and a continuing editor of encyclopedias. He organized and edited the revised edition of the New International Encyclopaedia, and each year since 1907 edited and himself wrote a large part of the International Year Book. The latter was his constant yearly occupation and vocation. His gathering together, analyzing, arranging, and organizing of essential current world events into a coordinated authoritative volume must have been for a mind like his a continuing grind. I remember he once said that while he was doing his extensive and exhaustive reading for the preparation of the year book his mind felt like a huge coal shute. Tons and tons of facts kept hovering through and he was overwhelmed by the roaring, rushing mass of material. In the end when he had finished it was empty and nothing remained but the clinging dust.

The value of his encyclopaedic work and the importance of his scholastic and editorial attainment are of such recognized standing that I cannot even pretend to speak of them. Sometimes when we were laughing together, for Colby was a man to laugh with, I felt as if our talk, or rather mine, was like the flickering of a butterfly against the background of his almost overwhelming knowledge. Yet, notwithstanding his great comprehension and the virile intensity of his outlook, it was the quality of his imagination and the delicacy and sparkling response of his wit that made him one of the rarest of persons. He could take almost any subject or trivial incident, throw it into the air as a conversational bubble, and keep it there dancing and iridescent with the delicate thrusts and taps of his agile wit. It was as if the soapy vulgarity of ordinary life had been blown into a crystal of imagination. He would toss it with the light touch of a word until it went to the ceiling and then when it was almost falling to the level of commonplace converse, he would breathe on it until it rose colored and fanciful. If it burst there would be the explosion of his laughter and the chuckle of his sympathetic voice. He could keep it floating for a long and delightful period or he would throw out another bubble and another and keep the three in the air with a masterful dexterity.

With threads of gossamer fineness he could weave a network of ideas and suggestions about any subject which came on the conversational horizon. He would draw it into prominence, enlarge on it, blow it into importance, and glorify the usual until it became almost overhanging. Trite and commonplace seems any attempt to put on paper the fanciful quality of Colby's talks; who else could explain the possibilities of the use of toothpicks or the sentimental almost religious value of old and accustomed pipes? I remember his deliberate and anxious explanation of how he folded his clothes at night—the impossibility of sleep unless they were put in a particular way on a chair by his side,—the socks reg-

ularly hung, the garments neatly arranged, his shoes properly placed—all this was essential before he could rest with an easy conscience. Then would follow denunciation, intentionally solemn, of inherited New England inhibitions.

The uselessness of the back collar button was the subject of prolonged discussion. Why should the wearing or not wearing of a back collar button be considered of little importance? It showed the essential character of the wearer. If one were bound by convention one could not do without it. Back collar buttons are unnecessary. Ties would not rise up and collars would stay down even if there were no back collar button. Years of experience justify the abandonment. People might be divided into two classes: those who were emancipated and those who were not. Perhaps there was a certain moral support in a stiffening of uprightness. It was one of the minor luxuries of breaking away from too much restraint. As there was no visible sign of whether one was a wearer or not, there was the possibility of an important secret society. It might be called the Back Collar Button Emancipation League. One never knew until one tried.

Eventually Colby will come to be recognized as the leading American essayist. That he was so acknowledged by certain discerning editors and readers is undoubtedly true, but that the acclaim which will also undoubtedly come after his death should arrive so late will be one of the mockeries at which Colby would have been of the first to laugh. He was always a person apart with a keen Gallic mind. His three volumes of essays "Imaginary Obligations" "Constrained Attitudes" and "The Margins of Hesitation" show the nearest approach to Anatole France that there is in American literature. It is obvious that with a mind like Colby's he should be increasingly drawn toward the logical and unsentimental quality of French thought. His interest in France, in her politics, in French literature, and the speech itself, coming as it did rather late in life, was so intense as to be almost pathetic. Colby would frequent table d'hôtes, go to French boarding houses, or anywhere so that he could talk French. The surest way to get him out of his shell was to ask him to meet a Frenchman. Then he would expand and glow and pour out a flood of French which however unskilful was valuable. He soon became proficient. He read nothing but French newspapers and for months at a time saw only French people. I remember one incident. It was a hot day. He met a Frenchman whom he had asked to lunch on the sidewalk. The Frenchman was mopping his brow, saying "J'ai étouffé," "Qu'est ce que vous avez fait?" asked Colby. "Rien," said the Frenchman. "Rien! mais vous avez dit que vous avez fait quelque chose" "Non, j'ai dit que j'étouffé." The whole lunch was spoiled. He was a professor at one of the provincial universities, Orleans or Nancy, and Colby, although he wanted particularly to find out certain methods of French education, kept returning again and again to the subject of what the Frenchman had done, and not until he had gone did he realize the explanation. It was wholly a strong desire to go to France in the near future. But now that I can no longer hear the communicating laughter of his voice I like to think of him as at least having travelled that far.

The Harvard Press announces that it has become the American agent for the publications of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. Among the recent publications of interest to collectors is "Selected Bindings from the Grennadius Library," with introduction and description by Lucy Allen Paton. The edition is limited to 300 numbered copies, set up and printed at the Chiswick Press, London. One of the most notable features of the famous Grennadius Library is the bindings, which are of surpassing interest not only because they are beautiful examples of the binder's art but also because of the celebrated collections which they have come from. Thirty-eight of them have been reproduced in this book, with all the exactness possible through the high standards attained by color printers at the present time. Dr. Paton's descriptions, together with the lengthy introduction, gives a gratifying glimpse of this unique collection of books.



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