

THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES.

"The moon was shining bright upon the clearing, and there in the centre, lay the unhappy maid where she had fallen, dead of fear and fatigue. But it was not the sight of her body, nor yet was it that of the body of Hugo Baskerville lying near her, which raised the hair upon the heads of these three dare-devil roysterers, but it was that, standing over Hugo, and plucking at his throat, there stood a foul thing, a great black beast shaped like a hound, yet larger than any hound that ever mortal eye had rested upon."

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greatest work in modern English art, is the painting, not of a face, but of a draped and shrouded back. It would be difficult to find anything grander or more characteristic than the sublime agnosticism of the figure of Death in "Love and Death," with the hand uplifted and the face hidden. This is nothing so easy or so comfortable as a mere faith in love and life. It is a faith in the superhuman, almost in the inhuman powers; a strange and audacious faith in time, death, and judgment.

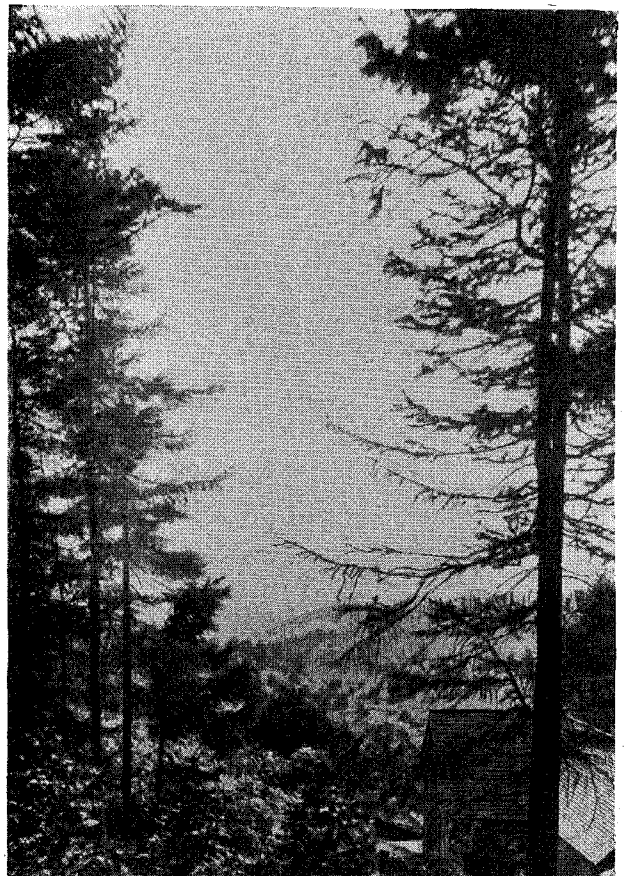
The essay on Mr. Watts, internally considered, is one of the very best in this very interesting volume. Sir Wyke Bayliss raises a spirited and sensible protest against the absurd habit of talking about the fallen and unheroic character of the age, and the unrecoverable beauty of former times. Even among a hundred cants one may have a certain preference for the cants which accelerate and make smooth in comparison with the cants which obstruct and discourage. The whole nonsense about the degenerate world and the glory of Athens and old Florence may be dealt with in two very obvious remarks. There are quite as many men now as there were then who are devoted to great dreams and great labours. And there were quite as many men then as there are now who thought that such people had ceased to appear upon the earth. But it would be difficult to put the case better than Sir Wyke Bayliss puts it against a hopelessness which alone, amid a universe based upon hope, does its feeble best to bring about the very paralysis which it satirises and laments. Another excellent passage in the book is the Epilogue, the parable of the relations of religion and art told in the form of a story about an artist and the decoration of a font. Sir Wyke Bayliss represents in a certain sense an old school of art criticism, the Ruskinian school, which connected art definitely with spiritual and national duties. But that old school was immeasurably more philosophical than the new school of "art for art's sake," for it was at least an attempt at a sane synthesis of human life. Art for Art's sake is in its nature merely a superstition. For anything becomes a superstition when it is absolutely separated from all other

considerations, whether it be religious exercises or scientific research on art, or beer, or foreign stamps. The drunkard, for example, is merely an idolater, and his motto is "beer for beer's sake." Against this view the higher rationalism of Sir Wyke Bayliss and his school stands in creditable protest. We know that the narrow isolation of man's spiritual nature did harm to spirituality. We may be quite as certain that the narrow isolation of his æsthetic sense will do harm to art.

G. K. CHESTERTON.

TWO HISTORIES OF ENGLISH LITERATURE.*

It is difficult to see what purpose can be subserved by the issue of such a work as the "History of English Literature" by Mr. E. J. Mathew. Apart from accuracy, some such qualities as these are essential in a work of this description: first, very careful arrangement; secondly, power of condensation; thirdly, lucidity of style. All these qualities are absent from the work before us. From the explanations given in notes it might be supposed that the work was addressed to the middle forms of public schools, but many expressions employed in the text are ill-adapted to this class of student. The writer appears to have some gift of expounding the qualities of a given book, and when he has an opportunity of describing an author or his work at fair length, his interest in the subject is often communicated to the reader in a sufficiently fresh and natural manner. What is so completely lacking, and renders the title such a thorough misnomer, is any evidence of editorial capacity or sense of proportion. The idyllic picture of Milton's declining years is not a little misleading. It was not so much Queen Mary as Queen Anne who "steadfastly" opposed Swift's advancement in the Church. The dogmatic assumption of Swift's marriage is, to say the least, gratuitous, and the same may be said of



VIEW FROM UNDERSHAW, HINDHEAD, ACROSS DR. CONAN DOYLE'S RIFLE RANGE.

the remark, "The *Conduct of the Allies* brought about the Peace of Utrecht," or a misquotation from Goldsmith's "The Retaliation" (*sic*). Such errors might be found probably upon

* "A History of English Literature." By E. J. Mathew. (Macmillan.)

"A History of English Literature." By A. Hamilton Thompson. 6s. (John Murray.)

every page, and, as the book advances, not only does the writer's judgment more and more desert him, but his English gives out, and he seems unable to construct the most ordinary sentence with propriety. The remarks about George Eliot and the "artificiality" of "Adam Bede" lead up to the following climax: "In 1878 she married a Mr. Cross, and in 1880 she died. The criticism of the present day does not give her a place higher than in the second division of writers. Her notoriety existed for a few years from 1871, and since then has greatly diminished." More grotesque than this is the remark that Frederick Locker described the tender life and private happiness of Government officials, or the addition that "in both kinds of this study he far surpassed the novels of Lord Beaconsfield." The dictum that "Elizabeth Moulton Barrett, wife of Robert Browning, was as a poetess her husband's superior," reminds us of the emphasis with which Queen Victoria assured the poet that she had read and admired his wife's poetry. The critical faculty of the author must have been considerably fatigued when Trollope was described as "in easy grace near to Jane Austen." What is to be said of the following conclusions about Stevenson: "The grace and ease of Thackeray was wanting, and the frequent loose writing of Scott was often far pleasanter to read. The 'New Arabian Nights' was undoubtedly his best in style. Then he learnt his quaint English, and let it become his master; but with all his faults he was the last great novelist of the century"; or the wisdom of such sentences as these: "It is a dangerous thing to be wanting in a knowledge of Thackeray and Scott, in order to form a literary taste upon 'Gemini Cœlestes' or 'Satanæ Maestitiae'?" The section on Charles Dickens is an epitome of the faults in English composition most strenuously to be avoided. "Dickens's humour much resembled that of Sir Walter Scott, because both by its use aroused pleasure and merriment rather than anger and scorn."

A very different type of compilation is "A History of English Literature" (founded on the manual of Thomas B. Shaw), by A. Hamilton Thompson. The old students' manuals were an excellent series, and we are sorry to see their ancient uniform discarded; but the book has literally outgrown its old garments. Moreover, the new stuff is so good that we are inclined to regret that it was thought necessary to use so much of the old material. Shaw's manual was by no means the most brilliant of its fellows. The new students' "History of English Literature" is destined, if we are not mistaken, to take a high place among books of its class. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to put a soul into an old and rather dry book of literary history; but all that diligence in revision and much laborious re-writing can do, has undoubtedly been done. If the book lacks the happy valiancy of Professor Saintsbury's style, it is, as far as we can judge, far more accurate than his Manual can justly claim to be. Professor Saintsbury generously acknowledges the help afforded him by recent writers, such as those in the "Dictionary of National Biography," for example, but he seems frequently to have forgotten to avail himself of their services. Just the opposite course seems to have been pursued here. The omission that we should most like to see rectified in a future edition is that of all reference to recent authorities. Room might well have been spared for some bibliographical information in place of the present appendices, one of them devoted to a highly conjectural order of Shakespeare's plays in which "Romeo and Juliet" is assigned to 1591! As a whole, though, it must be admitted that the book is capitally shaped. The amplitude of space allotted to the 19th century and the abbreviated treatment of the archaic elements of our literature give the book an exceptional interest (to the general reader and critic, if not to the examinee), and the full extent of the innovation will be realised when we explain that the first half of the book ends, not with Milton, but with Swift. Full advantage is taken of this displacement of the centre of gravity, for it is in his appreciations of our more recent writers that Mr. Thompson seems most fully at home. In Chapter II, the statement that Gower's "Speculum Meditantis" is entirely lost will need considerable modification in view of the fact that it has been quite recently edited by Professor G. C. Macaulay, and throws a flood of light upon portions of Gower's career. The descrip-

tion of Greene's "Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay" as dull and incoherent, is extremely unjust. It is not advisable to speak of the "feeble comic interludes" in Massinger's plays, nor can we fathom the writer's exquisite meaning when he observes that "it is not, perhaps, very high praise to say that, as a master of English prose, Samuel Horsley had few equals in his own day." We should like him to mention a period in which more masters of English prose could be assembled than during the last thirty years of the 18th century. The relegation of authors to the limbo of "Notes and Illustrations" is often conducted in a somewhat arbitrary fashion. We shall find Borrow squeezed in between Sir John Barrow and George Brimley, and places are found for the editor of the "Student's Hume," and Charles Allston Collins, which are apparently denied to Blackmore and T. E. Brown. Baroness Tautphœus, Amy Levy, Fawcett, and the author of "Monasteries of the Levant" are ignored, though a column is devoted to Faber, Roden Noel, and Henry S. Leigh. The treatment of Malthus and Mackintosh seems specially functory. The latter did not write "Vindiciae Galliciae."

But we must not leave the book without giving an idea of its excellence. The method which is followed is for the most part strictly biographical, and a succession of likenesses has to be attempted, each in a very few strokes. Few of these are failures, and many attain a high degree of success. Excellent, for instance, are George Eliot, Dickens (though he misdescribes "David Copperfield"), Newman, Stevenson, and Carlyle, especially the account of "Frederick the Great." Cramped though the writer is for space, he manages to devote a whole page to Gladstone, yet he is bound to admit that in a few years his books will scarcely continue to be read. He is not so successful in his attempt to do justice to Disraeli, and does not seem to appreciate "Sybil" at anything like its true value.

THOMAS SECCOMBE.

MISS JOHNSTON'S NEW NOVEL.*

For her new romance Miss Johnston goes again to Virginia—this time to the Virginia of the days of George I.—and "Audrey" is in every way a worthy successor of the two other



MISS MARY JOHNSTON.

brilliant novels she has already given us. Here is the same strong characterisation, the imaginative insight, and descriptive force that gave vitality and colour to "By Order of the Company": the places and people of the story—Gideon Darden, the drunken parson, and his wife; Maclean, the exiled Scot, solacing himself by hunting down in fancy the master he has never seen and who looms on his warped imagination as an enemy, and is reluctantly allowed, on acquaintance, to become a very real friend; Truelove Taberer, the shy; kind little Quakeress, the quaint wooing of whom by Maclean is as ideal as it is whimsical; Hugon, the violent half-breed with his passion for Audrey, who fears him and is shaken at sight of him by vague, dreadful memories of her childhood—they develop and grow up about the reader almost with the vividness and actuality of life itself. Drawn with equal knowledge and sympathy are Marmaduke Haward, and Evelyn Byrd, the woman who loves him but rejects him (though he likes her and would have her marry him) because his liking is not love. But Audrey is, as she should be, the soul and centre of the book, and the

* "Audrey." By Mary Johnston. 6s. (Constable.)