

what book had such power of beguiling into forgetfulness one of the noblest minds of the time. He affirmed within himself that it must be a novel. He ventured to approach near enough to read the title, holding, rightly enough, that a book is not personal property, and that his act involved no violation of privacy. He discovered that the great man was reading a Greek play with such relish and abandon that he had turned a railway station into a private library! One of the foremost of American novelists, a man of real literary insight and of genuine charm of style, says that he can write as comfortably on a trunk in a room at a hotel, waiting to be called for a train, as in his own library. There

is a good deal of discipline behind such a power of concentration as that illustrated in both these cases; but it is a power which can be cultivated by any man or woman of resolution. Once acquired, the exercise of it becomes both easy and delightful. It transforms travel, waiting, and dreary surroundings into one rich opportunity. The man who has the *Tempest* in his pocket, and can surrender himself to its spell, can afford to lose time on cars, ferries, and at out-of-the-way stations; for the world has become an extension of his library, and, wherever he is, he is at home with his purpose and himself.

*Hamilton W. Mabie.*

## GERMAN AND SCANDINAVIAN LITERATURE IN 1894.

### II.

That among the multitude of historic physiognomies which have been subjected to fresh scrutiny, that of Goethe stands forth pre-eminent is a matter of course. Thus we have a very precarious piece of research entitled *Faust vor Goethe*, by Dr. J. W. Bruinier, who attempts to prove that the alleged mediæval puppet play of *Faust*, edited by Engel, is a fabrication made up, like a mosaic, of various versions, with an admixture of independent invention; and that accordingly there is no evidence of any German Faust-play antedating Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*, which by this author is held to be the original of the puppet plays. An ambitious but utterly futile contribution to the Faust literature is V. Valentine's *Goethe's Faust-dichtung in ihrer künstlerischen Einheit dargestellt*, which learnedly and elaborately explains what is in no need of explanation, but leaves the dark places as dark as they were before. Exactly the opposite judgment would apply to Professor Erich Schmidt and Bernhard Suphan's edition of the *Goethe-Schüler Xenien*, which (like all the previous publications of the Goethe-Gesellschaft) is a model of accuracy and painstaking scholarship. Ottokar Lorenz's *Goethe's Politische Lehrjahre* is a mere pamphlet, but full of interesting information. To the Goethe literature belongs also

the deplorable revival of the inquiry regarding Goethe's relation to Frederica Brion, the daughter of the parson at Sesenheim. Only a German who has a depression in his cranium as a substitute for the bump of humour could possibly perpetrate with a serious face anything so appalling as Gustav A. Müller's *Urkundliche Forschungen zu Goethe's Sesenheimer Idylle und Friederikens Jugendschichte*. Think of *Urkundliche Forschungen* into the question—not to put too fine a point upon it, as Captain Cuttle would say—of the virginity of a young girl who died eighty years ago. For amazing as it may seem, that is what the whole affair resolves itself into. And not content with having, in one volume, wrought murderous havoc, trampling with heavy, hob-nailed boots upon the delicate flowers of the Sesenheim idyll, the excellent Herr Müller publishes a second volume entitled *Sesenheim wie es ist*, in which, with the same clumsy, thoroughgoing conscientiousness, he tries to destroy the poetry of one of the loveliest episodes in the life of Germany's greatest poets. Well, such are the penalties even of an accidental fame. Poor Frederica!—a mere unhappy fly immortalised in amber. Have, then, the dead no rights which the living are bound to respect?

Amid the unending stream of Goethe literature I note a new *Life*, by Dr. S. M. Prem, which is not without value.

It contains nothing that is positively new, but it is agreeably written by a man who is familiar with the territory he is traversing, and breathes its atmosphere with ease and comfort—which is more than can be said of nine tenths of the biographers.

Among the minor poets whose dust has been disturbed in 1894, Friedrich Hölderlin deserves at least a sigh for his unhappy fate. Herr Müller-Rastatt dedicates to him an elaborate plaint, a sort of prose elegy, which would seem a superfluous thing to do in view of the fact that Litzmann's *Life and Letters* supplies nearly all the information which is here offered. For a very beautiful edition of the letters of Achim von Arnim and Clements Brentano (with most excellent and artistic portraits) we are indebted to Professor Hermann Grimm and Reinhold Steig. How spacious life was in those days, when people had time to pour forth their overflowing emotion in such mile-long confidences! This is indeed, as far as Brentano is concerned, what Lessing called a rescue (*Rettung*)—*i.e.*, a rehabilitation of a much-aspersed reputation. That sturdy old Martin Luther should be in need of such a "rescue" would scarcely occur to any one not a Catholic; but for all that two well-meant and not uninteresting books have recently made their appearance, one devoted to clearing up his relation to the Seventh Commandment (or the German Sixth) and the other to elucidating the many dark points in his journey to Rome. The author of the former work calls himself Lutherophilus, and that of the latter is A. Hausrath.

Out of the wilderness of notable biographical and autobiographical works I have only space to refer briefly to those of *Gervinus*; *Franz Liszt*, by L. Romaine; *Hans Sachs*, by R. Genée; *Sandro Botticelli*, by H. Ullmann; and *Novalis*, by J. Bing. Of all the publications of the year in this line nothing has attracted public attention in the same degree as Theodor von Bernhardt's posthumous collection of letters and diaries, entitled *Unter Nicolaus und Friedrich Wilhelm IV.* and *Die Anfänge der Neuen Aera*. This is indeed the very stuff that history is made of, and in point of importance and brilliancy does not fall behind the rather disappointing *Memoirs* of Talleyrand.

If Germania stands defiant and drunk with victory, her Scandinavian half-sis-

ter, Saga, as behooves one whose greatness is in the past, sits lost in melancholy brooding. It is thus the painters and sculptors represent her, with the ancient Saga-book resting upon her knees, and her large, sad eyes gazing with a vague, reminiscent fire into the dim future. She might, however, take a more cheerful view of the situation. Though her sons no longer go marauding through her world, as in the olden time, at least three of them—Ibsen, Björnson, and Edward Grieg—have made notable conquests during the last decades. Ibsen's last play, *Little Eyolf*, which has appeared, or is announced to appear, in a dozen languages, is for the moment puzzling the critics of the same variety of tongues. Nevertheless it is one of the least mysterious of the riddles of the great Sphinx. It has less symbolism or general obscurity than *Hedda Gabler* and *The Master Builder*, and it shows a stronger grip on character and situations. Björnson, too, has added a fresh and beautiful leaf to his laurels in *Absalom's Hair*, in which he touches his high-water mark as a story-teller. Deeper, subtler, and more marvellously complex psychology than this tale displays I have never found in any modern author. Jonas Lie, the third in the literary triumvirate of the North, has given us a drama, *Lystige Koner* (*Merry Wives*), and Arne Garborg has given us a biography of Jonas Lie, which is far better, cleaner, and sweeter than Garborg's coarse and nasty novels. In these he gives himself great airs as a *fin de siècle* cynic—a *blasé* man of the world—from Jaederen. A comparatively new author, the Rev. Konrad Dahl, who is chaplain to the penitentiary in Christiania, has undertaken in his novel *Arne Livaag* to trace the ancestral influences and contemporary environment which in their combination go to the making of a murderer; and complex though the problem is, he has here made an admirable contribution toward its solution.

In Denmark the year has, as regards literary production, fallen considerably below the average. For all that there is no lack of literary workers in this land. Some sixty odd of them have just joined hands and formed an authors' union; and there are yet some left out in the cold. Among the publications of the year, *Vice-Admiral Just Juel's En Reise i Rusland under Tsar Peter*,

*ved Gerhard Grove* lays claim to more than ordinary interest on account of its vivid pictures of Russian life in the eighteenth century. Another antiquarian labour of great merit is Dr. Ludvig Larsson's critical edition of the Frithjof Saga, the fame of which Bishop Teqnér spread over the world. Unhappily Danish literature, since Hans Christian Andersen died, rarely reaches beyond the boundaries of the shrunken and reduced little kingdom. The smallness of their audience has naturally a depressing

effect upon the authors, some of whom, notably Sophus Schandorph and Holger Drachmann, are worthy of a better fate. The latter's *Völund Smed* (*Weland the Smith*) is a vehement revolutionary manifesto in ringing verse. The poet has flung away finally and forever his silk beaver of Philistine respectability and donned the Jacobin cap of his youth. There are very few people in Denmark nowadays who have the courage to do anything so wildly imprudent.

*Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen.*

## LONDON LETTER.

### VACANT PLACES IN THE LITERARY WORLD.

There were never so many men and women employed in literature as now. The production of books increases, though with comparative slowness, while the number of periodicals grows almost every day. There is no reason to suppose that the limit of demand has been reached. Changes in the education and the tastes of the people may affect the quality of what they ask for; but however that may be, the number of readers grows, and is likely to grow. Successful authors, or some of them at least, have a way of depreciating the rewards of their profession and warning off beginners. The most eminent of the older novelists wrote to the most brilliant of his younger fellow-workers, when the latter was beginning his career, one of the most pathetic dissuasives against the literary profession I have ever seen. Yet, though it may be a bold thing to say, I am convinced that we have not too many good writers, and in certain departments there is assured fame and success awaiting those who will take up the work. I shall try in the present letter to indicate some of these vacancies, and it will be understood that I am speaking solely at present from the editorial point of view.

Although women writers abound, it is very hard to find young ladies who can write the domestic and religious story in an interesting and graceful way. Mr. Heinemann, Messrs. Hutchinson, and the other publishers who have issued the literature of the new woman

are constantly discovering recruits of promise. Those, on the other hand, who have confined themselves to fiction, where marriage and the home are exalted, and where the great Christian assumptions are made, find it very hard to supply the place of writers leaving the field or losing their popularity. For example, where is there nowadays a writer of Miss Muloch's type, with equal popularity and genius? I should not know how to answer this question. There are two ladies of this school, and only two, so far as I remember, who have it in their power to increase the sale of a magazine, and whose books run into twenty thousand and beyond it. Then, when we come to the religious novel, as distinguished from the theological novel, our perplexity is still greater. Some twenty years ago the Church of England was represented very ably by Miss Yonge, and the Non-conformist churches by Emma Jane Warboise. Miss Yonge, happily, still survives, and is doing excellent work; but it cannot be expected that she should retain the ascendancy of her prime. Mrs. Warboise has been dead some years, and, although great efforts have been made, no one has been found to take her place. An Anglican or Non-conformist lady in full sympathy with the religious tenets of her church, and with the power of writing agreeable and fluent narrative, would have an enviable position, and might exercise a great influence. There are perhaps few Eng-