

ture, when a German scholar, F. A. Wolf, more than a century ago undertook to prove that the poems which go under the name of Homer are not his (if, indeed, such a person ever lived), and did not exist in their present form for centuries after Homer's time, when they were put together out of various independent epic songs, the production of a number of unknown authors, called Rhapsodists. For a time the Wolfian theory carried all before it. Of course there was no external evidence to support it. Like the higher criticism of the Old Testament the contents of the works themselves supplied the only materials for forming a judgment. But notwithstanding the support it received from scholars as learned, and critics as keen as our modern Biblical critics, the attempt to dethrone Homer failed. Towards the close of the last century, a reaction set in, the traditional belief was reinstated. The contention dwindled to nothing. The issue is now dead.

An amusing example of the flimsiness of such criticism is that of Scherer's brilliant analysis of the Prologue of *Faust*, which distributed its parts to their proper periods, widely separated, of Goethe's life, on the ground of deep reaching differences of style and internal inconsistencies, such as were thought inexplicable save on the supposition of composition at different times and subsequent combination. But another scholar, Ehrich Schmidt, publishes the oldest manuscript of the poem, and lo! "it is the 'young Goethe' who wrote the prologue essentially as it now stands, in a single gush; it is the same 'young Goethe,' who assumes the style, at the same time, of an effervescent youngster, and of a cynical grey-beard."

Prof. Margoliouth, a Semitic scholar of the highest repute, mentions in his "Lines of Defence," page 279, a remarkable case wherein the Higher Critics employed their methods