

the wrong. If Brunetière told me that a play by Meilhac and Halévy was better than Molière I should resent it, because the statement would be thrust upon me as a categorical truth. Now Lemaitre actually says that he prefers a play by Meilhac and Halévy to a play by Molière, but he says it so winningly that resentment is impossible. I need not surrender my own judgement. Lemaitre would be surprised if I did. The only result is that I turn to a comedy of Meilhac and Halévy with the keener zest, expecting to find there qualities of a peculiar merit, and an adequate representation of the complex modern world we live in. And why need we be annoyed if the same wayward critic, Lemaitre, makes a book on the Jews by Renan a text for his own reflections? If he tells me about a Noah's Ark that he played with as a child, I shall not quarrel with him provided that he makes literature out of the ark,—and you may be sure he will, because before being a critic Lemaitre has remembered to be an artist. Brunetière, honest fellow that he was, never thought of being anything but a critic, which makes me fear that twenty years hence his books will be so much dead matter. Sainte-Beuve lives because his criticism is human and creative, and because he possesses that passport to immortality—charm. Taine will live because of the vigour of his ideas. Brunetière will be remembered for a time as the most painstaking and erudite critic of his age, and as the man who imported into literature a number of strange terms, “the struggle for existence,” “the variation of species,” “survival of the fittest,”—and others equally cumbrous that we need not remember.

And so is the critic criticised, the judger of men judged, labelled and put away in the cabinet of antiquities.

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