

looking at the actual position of affairs as they were at the time the negotiations were being carried on, it is obvious that the agreement is even better for England than could have been reasonably expected. Important concessions have been made to Germany, not only in respect to the territory assigned her, but also in regard to her right of way over the intervening British possessions. But such concessions are mutual. They are, moreover, in accordance with civilized ideas. The Suzerainty of Zanzibar is, perhaps, the most valuable of England's acquisitions in Africa, or at least the one which opens up the largest possibilities of trade and commerce. Zanzibar is the most prosperous community on the east coast and the chief centre of commerce; its strategical importance, as a coaling station for the British Navy, is said to be great, while its insular position renders it easily defensible by a great naval power. Moreover, as the London *Times* points out, the principal part of its trade is already in the hands of British subjects from Bombay and other Indian ports, and British protection will no doubt greatly enlarge and stimulate this trade. Still further, a consideration which will weigh heavily with all true Englishmen, the practical control of the policy of the Zanzibar Government will greatly facilitate the work of putting down the iniquitous slave trade. On the other hand, the real value of Heligoland to Great Britain was so small, and the propriety of ceding it to Germany so obvious, that it will be a wonder if any serious objection is taken when the matter comes up in the House. Especially, if it be true, as the *Times* asserts, that the shallowness of the surrounding waters renders the little island valueless for naval or strategical purposes, its cession is not, from a business point of view, a matter worth debating. As we have before said, the question of honour, touching the two thousand British subjects who inhabit it, is the only matter worth considering. As these are really more German than English in race and in modes of thought and life; as the living are to be protected from conscription, and as the consent of a large majority is made a condition of their transfer, there seems really nothing more to be said on that score.

FRENCH INFLUENCE IN ENGLISH LITERATURE.

FEW changes are more marked than that which has taken place within the last fifty years in our estimate of France and the French. Politically, no doubt, England's mercurial neighbour across the channel is regarded somewhat askance: her constant state of unstable equilibrium is standing menace to Europe at large, her pettish jealousy of British occupation of Egypt a source of annoyance to England in particular. Apart from all international political considerations, however, the once prevailing fiction that the only good things that could come out of Paris were wines and fashions is exploded.

Nor is this change one to be surprised at. France has, during the last five decades or so, produced a literature distinctive, novel and lasting, and literature is the chief disseminator of ideas. Her influence has not spread by conquest, still less by language, and in colonization—or exploitation, to adopt a modern nicety of term—she has of late lagged behind her peers. It is her literary men who have carried her influence into other countries, and naturally it is the literary men of these other countries that have been first affected.

In England the results are plainly visible. Such writers as Balzac, George Sand, Flaubert, Ste. Beuve, the brothers Goncourt, Scherer, if they have not affected the sterner spirits among English leaders of thought, have undoubtedly powerfully directed the bent of many ranking immediately beneath them. If Tennyson and Browning show little or no sign of foreign inspiration, Matthew Arnold's admiration for many French men and methods was hearty and outspoken, and it would be easy to detect in our younger poets and prose writers characteristics of matter and form directly traceable to the writers of the Second Empire and of the Republic.

For example—Realism, with all that this has come to mean, was born in France, its birthday being, I suppose, the day of the first representation of "Hernani." And whatever Mr. Hall Caine may prophesy of its future, Realism is at least enjoying at present an extremely green old age.

Style, as an end in itself, was born in France, and has come to be so important a factor in fiction that J. M. Barrie in a recent satire makes one of his *dramatis personæ* a "Stylist."

Then the "Elsmerian," as J. M. Barrie calls him, the writer of the novel of religious doubt, is surely French. It is to Germany, of course, that everyone points on the question of the source of religious doubts. The names of Strauss and Feuerbach and Schleiermacher and the rest of them—though possibly not much more than the names—are in everybody's mouth. It is fashionable also to speak vaguely (yet knowingly) of the Tübingen school of Biblical criticism. But after all, these German channels of scepticism are abstract, intellectual, metaphysical almost,

not at all linked with the practical issues involved. Not so in France. Here religious and ecclesiastical problems have come in contact with the innermost thoughts and daily habits of the people. The struggle between the Clericals and Anti-Clericals, culminating in the laicization of the schools—and even of the hospitals, some have gone so far as to assert—proves this. And as it is with the innermost thoughts and daily habits of the people that the modern French realistic writer of fiction deals, naturally religious doubts form a part of his stock-in-trade. A reference to Renan, to George Sand, and to Daudet will suffice for confirmation.

Again, what may be called "objectionalism," to coin a word at least not more hybrid than "realism," has come to us from France. It is not British. It has nothing at all in common with the freedom of speech of either the older dramatists or the earlier novelists, and to Scott, to Thackeray and to Dickens it was utterly and absolutely unknown. Of a surety it is French. Ten years ago the French novel was looked upon as a distinct species with what logicians call an essential and distinguishing attribute of its own. Five years ago the very adjective "French" had attached to it what in dictionaries is called a "bad sense." To-day these prejudices are not a little obliterated—which, in Carlyle's phrase, is significant of much. Undoubtedly we may thank the French for this—let them interpret the phrase as they like.

English Positivism, though a tempting argument for the existence in English thought and literature of French influence, must be left out of consideration, for Comte was after all merely its supposititious parent; its source being traceable to circumstances broader and more complex than the formulated system of a single brain.

It is well often, in enforcing an argument, to descend to the *hic et nunc* and to point to what is going on under our eyes. If we do this here we shall find abundant evidence of French influence. How many books of quite recent date have helped little by little to spread it over wider ground! The translations of Balzac will at once occur to every mind, also those of George Sand, of Lamartine, of Flaubert, and more recently of Guy de Maupassant. Mr. Philip Gilbert Hamerton's "French and English," first in the form of articles in the *Atlantic Monthly* and then in book form issued from two presses, one an American, the other a Continental, has been widely read. Then there is the little "Story of French Love" called "Madeleine," a translation from Jules Sandeau, and the "Story of Italian Love," a translation from Lamartine's "Confidences." "Pastels in Prose" might also be mentioned. Also that book with the curious title, "The Odd Number," consisting of a translation of thirteen of Guy de Maupassant's *feuilletons*. Quite worthy of mention too are *Paris Illustré* and *Figaro*, especially the Christmas number, both of which find their way into thousands of houses on both sides of the Atlantic. Mr. Vaudam also some six months ago did into English a part of Arsène Houssaye's "Confessions" under the title "Behind the Scenes of the 'Comédie Française' and other Recollections," in which more was to be found than at first sight met the eye. These "Recollections" are extrinsically interesting, not only because they give a vivid picture of the great "house of Molière," in one of the most important eras in its history, the era of Rachel, and not only because this era was contemporaneous with the tumultuous times following the Revolution of 1848, but also and chiefly because they deal with a period when Victor Hugo, when Alfred de Musset, Théophile Gautier, Alexandre Dumas, Sardou, Balzac, Sandeau, George Sand, Scribe, De Vigny—all were flourishing, some already famous, some making their fame, some leaving it behind them.

Arsène Houssaye's recollections are worth dwelling on, for the reason that they exemplify another side of French influence on English literature, and one of far less doubtful benefit than some of those touched upon above. They are typically French in the good sense of that word: sprightly, vivacious, sparkingly witty, abounding in clever allusion and epigrammatic generalization. There is of course a good deal of what the down-right tactless Anglo-Saxon could call frothy sentimentalism, but beneath it there is much keen wisdom in worldly matters, and no little knowledge of the human heart, as beneath all foam there must be running water. The French are agile-witted, quick-thoughted, and—though it is a rash thing to say in plain English—they are more imaginative, more artistic, (for imagination is the very well-spring of art) than their island neighbours. England's imaginative poets, I grant, out-top all that France ever produced. The French poet essays to put on Saul's armour, and it hampers him; he is encased in Académies, Instituts, Comédies Françaises state-supported, traditions, dramatic unities, heroic couplets, what not? The English poet cries with Lear, "Off, off with these lendings!"

But we are not pitting poet against poet. The temperament of a nation is seen in its rank and file; it is the drawing-room and the dinner-table of Albion that must be compared with the *salon* and the *petit souper* of Paris. In which of these is it that the guests take their pleasure sadly? In France talent is given free play, in England talent is labelled "eccentricity," and eccentricity amongst, in another phrase of Carlyle's, "clean, respectable, decent English," is intolerable—and untolerated. Praise? Praise has come when talent was buried. Keats was snubbed, Shelley ousted, Turner unheeded, Carlyle unread, Browning ridiculed. And now—Keats is the head of a school, Shelley is idolized, Turner has whole

galleries to himself, Carlyle is an evangel, Browning is buried in Westminster Abbey. In France talent has free play, so much free play that it not seldom indulges in veritable eccentricities—witness Théophile Gautier's historic red waistcoat, the red republican flag of realism. But this freedom brings about intellectual friction, which naturally produces intellectual heat and brilliancy.

This better aspect of French influence can, I think, be plainly seen in English literature. The crisp, pointed, allusive, incisive and altogether sprightly styles of Andrew Lang, Austin Dobson, Grant Allen, Coventry Patmore, George Meredith, Edmund Gosse, Robert Louis Stevenson, George Moore—the reader can extend the list at his pleasure—all show a common characteristic and that a characteristic otherwise peculiar to French writers of the last half century. There is common to all these that deftness in manipulation of subject, that delicacy of touch, that definiteness and precision of expression, that plenitude of subtle wit and apt allusion typical of modern French style; and above all they one and all bear the hall-mark of excellence—terseness, the distinguishing characteristic of the consummate artist of to-day, whose sole aim is to represent the Idea.

In a paper of this length it is hardly possible to touch even in the most meagre manner on a few of the more salient points of a very large subject, a subject which would tax the powers of even a specialist like Mr. Saintsbury adequately to treat of, and I have left myself no space in which to disavow any intention of running my argument into the ground. On the contrary, I am more than willing to admit that a very large part of the excellences both of matter and style of England's younger masters of prose and poetry is autogenous. Nevertheless, a great literature is a great power, and it is open to no question whatsoever, not only that France has of recent years produced a great literature, but also that it is a literature from the influence of which no future writer can, or will willingly, be free.

ARNOLD HAULTAIN.

THOSE HAPPY EYES.

Those happy eyes! They seek love's throne
In such strange, sweet, angelic wise;
No princess lives but fain would own
Those happy eyes.

Loves queries seek them, love's replies
Spring from them (eyes, and eyes alone,
Make half our "earthly Paradise").

And one whom chance had never thrown
To love, might be repaid his sighs—
His lonely life, by being shown
Those happy eyes.

HUGH COCHRANE.

Montreal.

LONDON LETTER.

[I would have been wise if the friends of the Czar had drawn the attention of His Imperial Majesty to a sketch which came out in *Punch* the last week in May. But this time no doubt the Censor of the Russian Press has blacked out the page, and over Alexander's portrait and the terrible scenes which surround the blindfold Emperor crouching on his throne, hangs an impenetrable curtain. We who saw the picture are never likely to forget it, I think, for of all Mr. Linley Sambourne's successes, this, in its truth and simplicity, may be reckoned the greatest.

And how many successes one remembers since Mr. Sambourne first began to draw for *Punch* in 1867! What delightful calendars full of intricate detail, what charming illustrations of all manner of subjects, grave and gay! Week after week pictures, giving pleasure to thousands, come from the studio on Campden Hill. Yesterday there is Mr. Stanley introducing a dusky maiden to John Bull; to-day the Leader of the House, his arms full, is endeavouring to escape the horns of that rampant animal, Opposition. . . . For nearly half a century the paper has been a necessity to most of us on a Wednesday morning. Its hale middle-age is a fine thing to see. Those ingrates, who perpetually lament the better days of long ago, should compare an early volume with one of, say, this year. There was once the great Leech, it is true, and none of the present members of the staff, brilliant as some of them are, can touch Thackeray's work or Douglas Jerrold's. Still, I take it, Messrs. Tenniel and Keene, Du Maurier, Sambourne and Furniss, can hold their own unabashed, and only to recollect that Mr. Anstey and Mr. Lehmann of "Granta" fame (to say nothing of the editor himself) are among the writers, should be sufficient to make one cease to grumble that to-day there is no successor to the "Snob Papers," or "Mrs. Caudle," or the "Naggletons" of Shirley Brooks. It is human nature to grumble. Someone told me the other day that *Punch* is no longer worth looking at, "for Leech is gone and all the dear old fellows," he said regretfully. At his elbow lay a copy of the paper in which even the unapproachable First Contributors would have found little to condemn, but, for him, *Punch* ceased to be six and twenty years ago when Leech died, and the different qualities of the modern *Punch* draughtsmen are consequently unknown qualities to my friend.