

necessarily minute, made compulsory by the very breadth of the field? With or without such a classification, a complete subject index is very necessary, or may be inferred from the common practice of bibliographers.

By recognizing, in subsequent volumes of the *Bibliographie*, the reasonableness of making these changes, the Hispanic Society of America will make an indispensable tool out of what is, in its present form, a mere list of titles.

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Ronsard, poète lyrique, Etude historique et littéraire. By PAUL LAUMONIER; Docteur ès Lettres, Maître de Conférences de Langue et Littérature françaises à l'Université de Poitiers. Paris, Hachette, 1909.

It sometimes befalls a literary reputation to be shown so forcibly in one given aspect that every other would seem excluded even for the most independent of investigators. Such, as all know, was the case with that of Ronsard after Malherbe and Boileau had spoken their word; and such its fate once more, as has been less observed, since Romanticists and Parnassians set the great poet of the *Pléiade* upon his rightful throne. For, despite Sainte-Beuve's judicious connection of his name with that of Marot, Ronsard has remained for readers—and in general for critics—of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, not merely a great poet come at last to his own, but a great innovator also, one who broke with national tradition and set the feet of poetry in paths entirely new. As this was the view of himself proclaimed with vigor by Ronsard at the beginning of his career, it is not surprising that it should have obtained in the revival no less than in the eclipse of his reputation.

To rectify this erroneous impression has been in part the task of M. Laumonier in his *Ronsard, Poète Lyrique*. In the course of his exhaustive study, he insists again and again upon the national inspiration of much that Ronsard wrote, upon his instinctive hold on native tradition, upon the ill-restrained Gallic temperament which constantly burst the bonds of self-imposed conventions and brought him back, through the classics, the neo-Latinists, the Italians, to the school of Marot no less than to the mediæval French tradition, broken in some sort by that of the previous century.

But if this conclusion emerges vividly enough for the reader of M. Laumonier's work, it results in fact only incidentally from the task set himself by the author. That task, strictly confined to the treatment of Ronsard's lyric utterance, is to mark the inception and evolution of that utterance, to trace it to its sources and to define its originality. In the course of this undertaking, M. Laumonier traces the growth and variation of Ronsard's taste from the light Gallicism of his early *Ode à Jacques Feletier, Des beautez qu'il voudroit en s'Amie*, to the stringent severities of the posthumous edition of the *Œuvres* of 1587. This survey follows the poet through his discipleship of Horace, his vain-glorious Pindaric flights, his recurring reversions toward the older French poetry, his epigrammatic imitations of Catullus, his draughts of inspiration from the Greek anthology and the neo-Latinists, his debt to Anacreon, his dalliance with, and his abandonment of, the Petrarchistic manner, to the gradual extinction of his lyric vein after the *Nouvelle Continuation des Amours* of 1556.

Every step in this account of Ronsard's lyric development, which constitutes Part I of the present volume, is marked by that scholarly thoroughness which readers of the author's contributions to the *Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France* had a right to expect from M. Laumonier. The contents of each pub-

lished collection of the poet from the *Quatre premiers livres des Odes* of 1550 to the posthumous *Œuvres* of 1587 are in turn analysed, their variations of matter and arrangement from those of previous issues carefully noted, the dates of a great number of the additional poems by acute reasoning and painstaking observation properly established, and finally satisfying bibliographical details provided. A peculiarly felicitous example of this procedure is the treatment of the first collected edition of Ronsard's works put forth by himself in 1560 as a corrective to the versions of his poems issued by careless publishers. Here Ronsard's first attempt towards classification of *genres* is well brought out, as also the early indications of that severe taste which culminated in the exclusions of the 1587 volume.

Part II of M. Laumonier's work is concerned with the sources and originality of Ronsard, and here exact and compendious erudition plays an even larger part than elsewhere in the volume. While, in treating of Ronsard's debts to the classics, he makes good use of his predecessors' contributions to the subject, all that M. Laumonier adduces has the fresh air quality of personal research and verification. But he does not content himself with tracing Ronsard to his classics; he notes, and offers proof of the poet's obligations to the neo-Latin poets of the generation before him or of his own day, calling attention to his borrowings from Pontanus, Jean Second, Navagero, Bembo, the Pseudo-Gallus, Marullus and Macrin. Nor does he neglect to mark Ronsard's use of current ideas, the property of no single poet, but common coin used by countless singers. In a singularly happy passage, for example, he traces the history of that ancient commonplace among the poets, which, under Ronsard's touch, took shape as the immortal *odelette*, "*Mignonne, Allon voir si la rose.*" Here, as throughout M. Laumonier's pages on the sources of Ronsard, the reader must needs be struck by the freedom from parade with which the results of painstaking investigation are set forth and new discoveries introduced. Nor does the author fall into a common error and lose sight of the poet's personal contribution while pointing out his debt to others, his response to external stimuli. Again and again he dwells upon the individual quality of Ronsard's genius, the charm whose real source lay in his temperament and his experience, especially when he celebrated nature, love, or wine.

In Part III of his volume, concerned with the metric of ode and chanson, the critic sets himself to elucidate such questions as the true share of Ronsard in the invention of the ode, rhythmically considered; the poet's debt, in this regard, to his predecessors, to the ancients, to contemporary musicians; the nature of his modifications of the Marotic ode; the essentials of his reform, his methods, and his results. The treatment of this matter is greatly helped by a well devised list of lyric metres used by Ronsard's predecessors and contemporaries, and by a searching analysis, from a rhythmic point of view, of works by Cretin, Bouchet, Lemaire des Belges, and above all Marot, the Marot especially of the Psalms, whose metrical contributions are illustrated by an admirable table. To Marot M. Laumonier gives the credit of a real advance, and points out the effect of his example upon the work of Des Periers, Marguerite de Navarre and other lesser poets, while he gives to the *Vers lyriques* of Peletier, published in 1547, their due meed of honor as marking the definite break with the old lyric *genres*.

In matters rhythmic, liberty and regularity were, so M. Laumonier makes

evident, the watchwords of Ronsard. To secure the first, he freed French verse from the bonds of complicated measures; and he attained the second by the recurring strophe, which he established as a law. This was his real contribution. He did not invent the ode "mesuré à la Lyre," but he did insist that all odes should be so measured, *i. e.*, must be so arranged that music suited to the first strophe would serve also for those that followed.

Such, briefly, is the outline of M. Laumonier's treatment of his interesting subject. If the reader is sometimes tempted to find the exposition unduly long, he is recompensed by the acuteness of observation and the largeness of view which, united to carefulness in detail and unvarying modesty of statement, are the characteristic note of the critic. And yet such modesty does not prevent M. Laumonier from holding his own when differing with established authority. If he disagrees with Froger on Ronsard's arrangement of the *Œuvres* of 1560 or with Blanchmain and Marty-Laveaux on the paternity of the *Dithyrambs*, if he corrects Sainte-Beuve on the chronology of the anacreontics or condemns his view of Ronsard's final expurgations, no less than the views of Colletet, Blanchmain and Marty-Laveaux, he seldom fails to leave upon the reader the impression that he has the weight of evidence with him. Nor does he hesitate to try conclusions more than once with M. Henri Chamard, the strongest authority on the beginnings of the *Pléiade*.

The book is completed by a valuable documentary appendix, an excellent bibliography of Ronsard followed by one more general, and a full index of names and table of contents. The English speaking reader may regret the exclusive nationalism in literature (or perhaps the inadvertence) which from a bibliography including such general works as those of Decrue de Stoutz omits Pater's illuminating essays, C. H. Page's introduction to his *Songs and Sonnets of Pierre de Ronsard*, or Hélène Evers' edition of Colletet's *Notice sur la vie . . . de P. de Ronsard*—a work to which, however, M. Laumonier gives due place in his own edition of the same biography (Paris, 1910).

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Benedetto Croce: *Saggi sulla letteratura italiana del Seicento*, Bari, Laterza, 1911, pp. xxiv, 444.

This volume comprises a series of eight studies, of which the first seven appeared between 1890 and 1900, now reissued in enlarged and corrected form. The eighth is entitled: *Sensualismo e ingegniosità nella lirica del Seicento*, and is intended to serve as an introduction to Croce's anthology of *Lirici marinisti* (Bari, Laterza, 1910), one of the first volumes in the gigantic series of *I scrittori d'Italia*, now in process of publication. This essay, of the whole number, (pp. 377-433) is the most broadly theoretical in its scope; it is also the most essentially new. To it therefore we will confine our few observations.¹

With Croce's methods and views in this essay we are wholly in sympathy. His investigations proceed on the apparent assumption that before we explain the Seicento we must know what the characteristics of the Seicento really are. A vague notion of its general features of course has always existed: critics have been content to leave this conception in its hazy atmosphere, and untiring energy

¹ The others treat of Giambattista Basile, Cervantes in Italy, Spanish influence on Italian Sacred eloquence, the origin and history of Pulcinella; the Neapolitan type in the comedy, Salvator Rosa, Carlo Celano's description of Naples.