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of all three with the actors Angelo and Marianna Morolin in creating a distinctive and artistic Venetian stage.

The edition comprises three plays (one incomplete) and a short series of dialect poems—notable here Le tabachine—as a short study of a local trait, and a Nino-nuna with In morte d'una bambina, verses in popular manner but of fine tone. The comedies are models of current dialect speech and in them the question of Venetian orthography seems for once to have been satisfactorily decided.

The third of the series, I morti, is really but the dialect plan of a play intended for rewriting in Tuscan. It is a study in psychology: a wife, cruelly treated, dies. The unfaithful husband, who has rushed into a second marriage, returns now to a passionate adoration of the dead woman—a passion in fact as productive of evil as his original infidelity had been. The second, I recini da feste, "Earrings," treats the theme of the rich but irascible father, led by the helpless innocence of an infant, to pardon the runaway marriage of his son to a poor girl. This play has no dramatic interest, but it has great keenness of observation and gentleness of manner. To Mr. Fradeletto's observations on the first, La bozeta de ogio, "The Spilling of Oil Brings Bad Luck," we may add the following suggestions: The play is a mosaic of Goldonian themes, suggested principally by Il Bugiardo, Le Barafe Chiusote and L'Avaro. But Selvatico has carefully pondered his art and while his plot revolves about lies and misunderstandings, the falsehoods and mistakes go back to fundamental character traits: in Cate to avarice, in Anzoleta and Bortolo to onestà, a desire to save at all costs the reputation of the family. Piero and Bepo are gondoliers with weaknesses for drink and gaming but thoroughly good fellows. Taken as a class, the characters stand for impulsive honesty, but they are totally unable to resist the temptation to gain good ends by bad means. Hence all the trouble. The "observation is superficial" (p. 10) in the sense that the characters are types, invented to stand for certain traits, and in the sense that the play has after all a mechanical framework. But in the detailed scenes, this is scarcely true; the conduct of the barufa (I, 7), the reading of Siior Tomis by Bepo and Piero (II, 1), Cate's narrative of the rich lady's refusal to kneel beside her at mass (II, 2)—these bits are perfect in their genre. For the rest, the comedy registers a broad social judgment: it recognizes the social problem that exists, when, through poverty and helplessness, fundamentally honest natures are driven to complete ethical irresponsibility.

A. A. L.

The Reconstruction of the Original Chanson de Roland. By Frederick Bliss.

This paper is announced as the introduction to a series the purpose of which is the reconstruction of the original Roland. The author hopes by methods of literary criticism to be able to fashion a text which will be open to fewer objections than those we already possess. "Although the Chanson de Roland has been studied for three-quarters of a century, many of its problems, including several of the most important ones, are as yet unsolved. In the opinion of the present writer, however, a great number of these problems are solvable if the following thesis be proved—that the original Chanson de Roland was a poem of marked and consistent technical excellence."
To prove the "marked and consistent technical excellence" of the original poem, Mr. Luquiens deems it sufficient to establish the merits of a more or less distant relative. "That x (the original) was a poem of marked and consistent technical excellence is practically proved by the following two facts: (1) one of the extant manuscripts, O (the Oxford MS.), is of marked and almost consistent technical excellence; (2) the few technical faults of O may be plausibly attributed to copyists." "These facts, however, need detailed exemplification, for very few investigators have realized them." There are not many students of this epic who will hesitate to concur in the author's general estimate of the literary worth of the Oxford MS., but it is more than questionable that they will approve his logic. "I hope," he continues, "that the foregoing exposition has rendered clear the nature of the Oxford manuscript's technic. If so, I may consider my thesis—that the original Chanson de Roland was a poem of marked and consistent technical excellence as proved." The conclusion of this argument seems hardly warranted by the premises. These "facts" may be proved and "the nature of the Oxford manuscript's technic rendered clear," but how does that establish the greater perfection of the original? "Est-on tenu de se représenter à l'origine un âge d'or où auraient fleuri des poèmes merveilleusement logiques et harmonieux, contre lesquels par la suite des remanieurs stupides se seraient acharnés?" asks M. Bédier (Légendes Épiques, I, 305). Bédier, Gaston Paris and others answer in the negative. Mr. Luquiens replies in the affirmative. "Almost all students of the question have thought that between x (the original) and x' (the progenitor of all redactions) intervened a long process of accretion. To quote Professor Weeks: "To my mind, the process of development was so gradual that, at no stage of the operation could one say: 'Here begins the Oxford version."' No editor who holds this opinion would attempt to reconstruct x. But, if my thesis be conceded, it must also be conceded that between x and x', and between x' and O, there was very little accretion, or indeed change of any kind; that, moreover, it is feasible to reconstruct x, merely by excluding from O whatever is due to its scribe, or to the scribe of x.'" This is a specious argument but one is tempted to inquire why he should "concede" the "thesis" when that thesis is the very subject that is most disputable and requires most careful proof. This thesis is the very heart of Mr. Luquiens' case and is exactly what cannot be conceded in the case of the Roland any more than in the case of any other chanson de geste. To ensure acceptance of his 'thesis' Mr. Luquiens must prove that the process of reworking was a process of pejoration.

"The argument might be made much simpler for any who would accept subjective reasoning." Unfortunately, the question is one of external evidence. Subjective treatment in the realm of Roland-study, found its apotheosis in the work of Bourdillon. Mr. Luquiens' difficulties with the text and with his familiar 'the copyist,' recall inevitably the labors of that all but forgotten editor.

'Voici la marche,' says Bourdillon, 'que j'ai suivie dans mon travail. J'ai commencé d'abord par apprendre à peu près par cœur le texte de mes manuscrits. Cela, obtenus, une fois bien ferme sur ce terrain, j'ai pris l'ordre des idées et j'ai appelé les vers, qui alors, sans peine, sans effort, et d'eux-mêmes, sont venus se ranger sous ma plume et c'est ainsi que notre poème, si l'on peut l'assimiler à une statue, s'est trouvé, non pas sorti du bloc de marbre, mais dégagé des haillons dont la main des hommes pendant plusieurs siècles l'avait affublé. Ce travail s'est achevé de telle façon, qu'en vérité je ne crois pas avoir omis dix vers
appartenant à l'auteur. Quand je voulais m'écarter un peu à droite ou à gauche, je trouvais ses vers pitoyables, clochard par le sens, par la mesure et par la rime, comme s'ils fussent sortis d'une tête battant la campagne, ou bien d'une incohérence d'idées, attestant qu'ils n'ont pu être conçus que par des gens sans littérature ni éducation” (Quoted by Foerster, Alfranz. Bibliothek, Bd. 6, p. ix).

What an invaluable document in the history of humor and subjective criticism! For Bourdillon the original Chanson de Roland sprang perfect at all points from the head of Calypso. It is worthy of note, however, that Mr. Luquiens' favorite codex O was the worst of redactions in the eyes of Bourdillon.

Passing over the cursoriness of the author's 'detailed exemplification' of the excellence of the Oxford MS., his examination fails in convincing force. We fail to see that Marsile, when he cries "Jo nen ai ost qui bataille li danne" (I. 18), is playing upon words. This line stands in unreconcilable conflict with ll. 564-5 which show that Marsile is quite confident of his ability to meet Charles with an army "plus bele ne verrez, Quatre cenz mille chevaliers." Surely there is a lack of seriousness, also, in citing the simple inconsistency between 'deuz un pin' and 'deuz doux arbres' as the only breach in the unity of the Roland. While this is a fault, it does not disturb the action of the poem at all in the measure that it is disturbed by the difficulty mentioned above or by the poetical inconcessences of the introduction of hostages given by Marsile to Charles. "Because the wily counsellor may have thought his despondent sovereign to be in need of some violent excitant," will scarcely be regarded as a successful suggestion to account for Blanchardin's failure to warn Marsile of Ganelon's real intentions. One may be pardoned also if he confesses that Mr. Luquiens' argument for O's presentation of the quarrel scene between Roland and Ganelon has failed to convince him that it is not logically impossible and dramatically inferior to the arrangement of the editors. The need for the reconstruction of such portions as are represented by Stengel's laisses cxix, cxix, cxcx and for Müller's re-arrangement of ll. 1658-1670 seems as imperative as ever to one who is not interested in defending O at all hazards.

Allusion might be made to other details of Mr. Luquiens' criticism. Sufficient has been said, however, to indicate the line of his argument.

The second part of this paper is occupied with a discussion of Stengel's edition, in an effort to show that a text such as Müller's constituted upon the 'Oxford-stemma' alone is superior to a text—Stengel's—constituted from all the redactions. "Müller's text is practically the Oxford manuscript. Therefore it possesses, of course, marked and almost consistent technical excellence. Let us turn to the examination of Stengel's text." The "poetaster" whom Stengel has been unfortunate enough to summon to the footlights is a very reprehensible person. Stengel's edition "is at the same time the most useful and the most harmful of books dealing with the Roland ... it is harmful because ... it is now generally accepted as the authoritative text of the Roland." “The fact that Stengel's supposed X contains over six hundred lines more than O, arouses at the outset suspicions of lack of technic.” It may be more difficult to appreciate the value of such a distinction between Stengel and Müller when it is seen exactly how Müller regarded those fatally redundant six hundred lines. A consultation of Müller's foot-notes will reveal the fact that he regards about one-half of these lines as undoubtedly original. Another one hundred are 'unnecessary,' 'possible,' 'doubtful.' We may conclude from his silence in regard to the remaining two hundred that he
thought them superfluous. Mr. Luquiens appears to misapprehend Müller in more cases than this. "No one," says Mr. Luquiens, "has ever attempted the reconstruction of x (the original poem)." "He (Müller) did not consider the reconstruction of the original poem to be feasible," Müller says: "Ich habe das Original zu rekonstruiren gesucht" (La Chanson de Roland, 2nd Aufl., 1878, p. vi). Again Mr. Luquiens says: "So his (Müller's) formula—to adopt his expression—may be reduced to lowest terms as follows: Never alter the Oxford manuscript to accord with the other reductions except for an imperative reason."

Then, having enlarged upon Müller's "infidelity to his formula," he continues: "In short, to Müller's formula should be added: exclude from the Oxford manuscript whatever may be proved due to copyists." Now compare Müller: "Es finden sich andrerseits im Oxforder Texte mehrere ungehörige Einschiebungen, die dem Ueberarbeiter zugeschrieben werden müssen. Sie sind durch Einklammerung kennlich gemacht" (Müller, op. cit., p. vii). Perhaps an injustice is done to Mr. Luquiens, but Müller seems to have anticipated his suggestions.

There is no such difference, then, between Stengel and Müller as the writer of this paper seems to imply. Stengel's reconstruction is not final. Prof. Stengel himself does not seem to have thought of it as being so. Nevertheless it remains to many the truest representation that we possess of the original. Hence its base value. Müller's text was superseded because it failed to carry out its purpose. "Es ist nun das in der Oxforders Handschrift Fehlende nach den anderen Redaktionen ergänzt.... Einzelne Verse, welche vermisst worden, habe ich in der Sprache des Originals in den Text eingerückt; ganze Tiraden dagegen habe ich nicht in der ursprünglichen Gestalt wiedergegeben gesucht.... Ich habe mich damit begnügt, die entsprechenden Tiraden aus den anderen Redaktionen unter dem Texte mitzuteilen" (Müller, op. cit., p. vii). Müller shrank from thorough-going reconstruction. Stengel attacked his task boldly and his achievement is greater than Müller's because, with all the faults of his text, he has given us a poem undoubtedly much closer to the original than that of Müller. Should we go even so far as to deny high technical excellence to this reconstruction, it would constitute no argument against close approximation to the original.

Had Mr. Luquiens been able to prove that Müller's text possessed all the merits which he claims for it and that Stengel's was as vicious as he asserts, it would scarcely have corrected the fallacies of his reasoning. That he has done even this remains open to doubt.

The task of the reconstruction of the Roland is one which, by reason of its inherent difficulties as well as because of the great names connected with it, might seem calculated to give pause to the most adventurous. Mr. Luquiens appears to be carried away with the idea that he has discovered an easy method. His key is the literary perfection of the Oxford manuscript, from which the unwarranted deduction of the perfection of the original poem. The key, however, is not fitting the wards. Perhaps Mr. Luquiens' main proposition is correct. It may be that the construction of the original Chanson de Roland will be rendered easier by the results of literary criticism. But he has approached the problem with a dangerous and, we think, an unsubstantiated preconception. It will be interesting to follow his speculations in the articles that are to follow.

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