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A Great Metrist

Swinburne

A Literary Biography. By Georges Lafourcade. 15s net. (London: Bell.)

This biography of Swinburne is justified, first, by the competence of the author, whose earlier study of the same subject, "La Jeunesse de Swinburne," is a sound piece of work; secondly, by the fact that, apart from independent interpretation, use is made of fresh material, published or unpublished; a prime source has been Mr T. J. Wise's collection of Swinburniana. By way of introduction to the full story of Swinburne's career, two contemporary estimates may be given. The once well-known Madame de Novikoff complained that Swinburne had taken no notice of a letter of introduction she had sent to him, and Mrs Ritchie remarked—"You must not expect Swinburne to behave like ordinary mortals. I don't look upon him as a human being; he is more like a sort of imprisoned spirit who is passing through this world." To which the Russian lady replied—"He has no moral backbone, I suppose you mean." At a private view in the Grosvenor Gallery there was a picture of the Duke of Argyll, with a very white face and very red hair. In the next room was one of Swinburne, in the same attitude, also with a very white face and very red hair. A visitor suddenly exclaimed—"Why, here is a picture of the Duke of Argyll with a devil in him." These remarks seem significant as one becomes aware of the masochism and sadism in Swinburne, his physical and moral aberrations and studies the meaning of much of his poetry and criticism.

Always a Rebel

Born in 1837, Swinburne came off English and Irish blood, of an ancestry Roman Catholic and Jacobite and steeped in eighteenth-century French tradition, with a Gordon connection, and not without literary and artistic tastes. His father was Admiral Swinburne, and evidence is produced that during most of Swinburne's childhood and adolescence there existed a strong antagonism between him and his father. An interesting analysis of the unpublished "Lesbia Brandon" provides material for determining whether Swinburne was what "sun and wind and waters made him" or was merely "what verse and plays and novels made him." At Eton Swinburne attained to a fairly extensive knowledge of Greek and Latin poetry (it is perhaps significant that he disliked Horace and Virgil, preferring Catullus and Ovid), a good acquaintance with some French and Italian classics, and a truly remarkable reading in English literature; in science he had no chance of learning anything. But "as a scholar at school he was always a rebel," and his interest in Eton was personal: "for his masters and their teaching, for his own house-master he felt little interest or affection." For some unknown reason Swinburne left Eton; he thought of the Army, his parents thought of the Church, *mirabile dictu!* but he had not yet become antitheistic and pagan. After an interval that included travel he went up to Balliol. Here, through a society known as Old Mortality, he came under the influence of John Nichol, afterwards Professor of English in Glasgow University; and this influence is said to have been determinant, destroying Swinburne's orthodoxy, giving his politics a republican colour, and informing him with a passion for abstract liberty and against tyranny, and with a feeling for foreign nationalities that was to become a devouring fire when he met Mazzini; the story of Mazzini and Swinburne is very striking in its illumination of the poet's character. At Oxford, too, Swinburne met the high priests of the Pre-Raphaelites and was swept away by the originality and charm of their art.

By-word and Symbol

We now come to the opening of Swinburne's literary career and his friendship with Richard Monckton Milnes, who introduced him to the works of the Marquis de Sade and helped him to discern the original character of his inspiration and to express his own personality with strength, boldness, and confidence. Into his life, too, came Meredith and the robustious W. Hardman, who has put on record his impressions of Swinburne as strongly sensual. At this point there is an acute study of the evolution of Swinburne's powers of poetic expression and the appearance of certain stigmata of character under various influences, personal and literary, notably the influence of Sade. Great names were being added to Swinburne's list of friends—Victor Hugo (whom Mr Wise holds responsible for Swinburne's rhetorical adjectives and adverbs), Baudelaire, Whistler, Landor (who, having accepted the dedication of "Atalanta," acknowledged receipt and wished to know the price of the book), and "Atalanta" carried the critics by storm and brought admiration and friendship from many quarters. The success was followed by a period of nervous strain, intellectual tension, and physical irregularities; he is said to have insulted Tennyson, his wild behaviour led to a threat of expulsion from the Arts Club (he was asked to resign in 1870), and waves of hostility were rising about him. "Chastelard" had drawn adverse criticism, but mild compared with the storm raised by "Poems and Ballads." Morley denounced in Swinburne "the feverish carnality of the schoolboy over the dirtiest passages in Lemprière," and "Punch" referred to him as "Swineborn." From this time till 1880 interest in Swinburne was at its height; he was to some a by-word, to others a symbol. He stood for revolt and the justification of sin, and sowed the seeds from which grew Pater, Wilde, and the whole decadence school. There were critics like Stedman who refused to be obsessed by the subject matter and wrote admirably of the astonishing artistry of the verse, its lyrical splendour, its unique addition to the metric and stanzaic form of English verse.

The Fleshly School

The rest of the story must be briefly touched. By degrees Swinburne came to write more prose and less poetry, to develop his critical faculties, to compose dramatic instead of lyrical poems, and to take a part in politics somewhat puzzling to those familiar with his earlier attitude. He intervened in the Bulgarian atrocities question against Carlyle, whom he styled the "most foul-mouthed man of genius since the death of Swift." Then there is the famous duel with Buchanan, who, in the "Contemporary Review," attacked Swinburne and Rossetti in an article on "The Fleshly School of Poetry." Into the poet's life by this time had come Theodore Watts-Dunton, who came to guard Swinburne, to take him under the same roof and to look after his affairs. The Pines, Putney Hill, sheltered in a quiet, dull atmosphere one whose life had been wild, irregular, a critic and scholar instead of a revolutionary poet. He had been "a bonnie fechter," with a rich vituperation. Emerson was a "foul-mouthed and gap-toothed old dog," and he exchanged with Furnivall such epithets as "Pigsbrook" and "Brothels-dyke"; in his later years the House of Lords and Gladstone and Parnell were tilted at. M. Lafourcade has written an altogether admirable study of Swinburne, both as a man and a writer; the book is one that will repay deliberate reading.

wickets for 52 runs, but Cache and Tyler stayed together while 105 runs were added in just over two hours. Tyler, though scoring much slower than his partner, played sound cricket, obtaining most of his runs late cuts and forceful drives. Cache, eight to leave—well caught at first slip—gave a fine display for two hours and forty minutes well-timed driving on both sides of the wicket and leg-hitting being a feature of his innings, which included seven 4's and eleven 3's. The Army total eventually reached 224 the result of four hours and ten minutes batting.

The School boys maintained a steady rate of scoring against the moderate Army attack, 50 being reached in as many minutes for the loss of two wickets. Bartlett drove with great power, hitting two 6's and three 4's off two overs from Cassels. The last brought off a well-judged catch to dismiss the Dulwich boy, who played bright cricket for an hour. Following Bartlett's departure four wickets fell for the addition of 6 runs and at the close the Schools were 99 behind with two wickets to fall. Scores:—

THE ARMY—First Innings.

R. H. Hewetson (R.A.), c Bartlett, b Jackson	15
Captain G. W. Alexander (Gordon Highlanders), c Watson, b Jackson	7
J. R. Cole (Loyal Regiment), c and b Cameron	6
F. W. Simpson (R.E.), c Seamer, b Cameron	11
C. W. C. Cache (Royal Fusiliers), c Bartlett, b Jackson	108
W. M. Leggatt (R.A.), lbw, b Allen	0
J. W. A. Stephenson (Middlesex Regiment), lbw, b Allen	1
A. W. Tyler (R.A.), b Allen	52
A. J. H. Cassels (Seaforth Highlanders), c Jackson, b Morrison	4
D. W. Forbes (Coldstream Guards), lbw, b Allen	8
C. T. Orton (Royal Warwickshire Regiment), not out	1
Extras, 6. Total	224

THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS—First Innings.

M. Tindall (Harrow), b Stephenson	17
N. S. Mitchell-Innes (Sedburgh), lbw, b Orton	19
D. F. Walker (Uppingham), b Simpson	24
H. T. Bartlett (Dulwich), c Cassels, b Forbes	45
T. M. Watson (Monkton Combe), b Forbes	4
J. W. Seamer (Marlborough), lbw, b Orton	2
R. W. M. Morrison (Tonbridge), not out	3
K. L. T. Jackson (Rugby), b Forbes	1
C. E. Allen (Haileybury), lbw, b Orton	0
Extras, 5. Total (for eight wickets)	130

A. Burns (Oratory) and J. H. Cameron (Taunton) to bat.

BOWLING ANALYSIS.

THE ARMY—First Innings.

	O.	M.	R.	W.
Jackson	22	5	66	3
Allen	28.5	10	48	4
Cameron	22	2	71	2
Watson	2	0	8	0
Morrison	6	1	10	1
Mitchell-Innes	3	0	10	0

AMES'S SOUND BATTING

Going in on an easy-paced pitch at Canterbury, Kent lost four wickets for 113 before rain stopped play a quarter past one. Resuming after the usual luncheon interval, they added 151 runs in two hours while their one other batsman to fall was Chapman. Ames, going in when Woolley was caught low down at slip, seemed at fault when Ashdown, after seven minutes of sound batting, lost his wicket for 85, but he did little wrong in stroke play apart from a sharp chance in the slips when 69. Ames took an hour and a half over 51 runs, but completed his hundred in two hours and three-quarters and took his score to 130. Kent's innings closed for 376, and Glamorgan scored 6 without loss. Scores:

KENT—First Innings.

Hardinge, c Every, b Lavis	1
Ashdown, run out	29
Woolley, c Davies (D.), b Mercer	29
Ames, c Dyson, b Davies (E.)	130
I. Akers-Douglas, b Mercer	12
A. P. F. Chapman, c Dyson, b Jones	67
B. H. Valentine, c Duckfield, b Davies (E.)	55
T. A. Pearce, b Davies (E.)	13
Watt, b Mercer	17
Freeman, b Mercer	9
C. S. Marriott, not out	8
Extras, 16. Total	376

GLAMORGAN—First Innings.

Davies (E.), not out	0
Lavis, not out	6
Total (for no wicket)	6

Dyson, Davies (D.), Howard, M. J. Turnbull, G. J. Jenkins, Every, Duckfield, Mercer, and Jones (W.) to bat.

BOWLING ANALYSIS.

KENT—First Innings.

	O.	M.	R.	W.
Mercer	34.3	4	150	4
Lavis	11	0	50	1
Jones	25	4	57	1
Davies (E.)	25	3	72	3
Davies (D.)	14	2	51	0

Mercer bowled two no-balls and Davies (E.) one wide.

BRIGHT BATTING BY A. STAPLES

By dint of extensive preparation the Leyton wicket was rendered fit for cricket by a quarter past yesterday and afterwards the weather turned to bright sunshine. The pitch, however, remained very slow the greater part of the time, and in the circumstances Notts could be criticised for lack of enterprise about their early batting. Three wickets were down for 10 runs, and not until Arthur Staples went in did runs come at all freely. Scores:—

NOTTS—First Innings.

Keeton, run out	6
Harris, b O'Connor	55
Walker, lbw, b Farnes	14
Gunn (G. V.), st Sheffield, b Eastman	8
Staples (A.), not out	94
Lilley, not out	46
Extras, 7. Total (for four wickets)	220

A. W. Carr, Hardstaff, Larwood, Voce, and Taylor (S.) to bat.

ESSEX—D. R. Wilcox, Outmore, Pope, Taylor, O'Connor, Nichols, Eastman, Sheffield, G. R. R. Brown, Smith (P.), and K. Farnes.

RAIN DELAYS PLAY AT THE OVAL

Rain on Tuesday evening and during the night being followed by intermittent drizzle, play in the match at the Oval yesterday could not be commenced until half-past four. The pitch was very soft and bowlers experienced difficulty in securing a proper foothold. Hobbs stood down from the Surrey team in which making his first appearance was A. Ratcliffe, the Cambridge "blue," who both this year and last put together a three-figure innings in the University match. Surrey at the close of play had done well in the circumstances, in scoring 97 for three wickets. Scores:—

SURREY—First Innings.

Sandham, not out	35
Wilson, c Kennedy, b Herman	0
Ratcliffe, st McCorkell, b Boyes	13
Shepherd, b Boyes	32
Brooks, not out	6
Extras, 11. Total (for three wickets)	86

D. R. Jardine, P. G. H. Fender, Squires, F. J. Brown, Parker, and M. J. C. Allom to bat.

HANTS—Brown, Arnold, Lord Tennyson, Mead, McCorkell, Kennedy, Potheary, Creese, Bailey, Boyes and Herman.

ALL-INDIA'S SLOW BATTING AGAINST WARWICK

A gate of about 6000 to welcome All-India was a gladsome sight for the Warwickshire executive, and the batting of the visitors was, on the whole, worthy of the occasion. Perhaps because the wicket was so trifle slow to begin with runs came rather slowly up to the luncheon interval, when the total was only 8 for one wicket. Continuing the partnership, which began just over an hour before the adjournment, Jeemal and Wazir Ali scored at a faster pace. They were not separated until 97 had been added in ninety minutes. Curiously enough both left at this total. Free hitting by Amar Singh aroused considerable enthusiasm on the part of the crowd. Missed at cover by Bates when 21, he proceeded to make progress by forceful strokes on both sides of the wicket, and claimed 57 out of 75 scored in thirty-five minutes. The innings, which closed for 282, lasted four hours and twenty minutes.

Warwickshire had eighty minutes' batting and started indifferently, losing Kemp-Welch, who played on after helping Croom to put on 35 in forty-five minutes. At 47 Croom was caught at short mid-on his 27 having occupied an hour. Bates and Wyatt were together when 50 was reached in just over an hour. Bates was beaten by a fast ball from Nissar for 63. Then bad light stopped play for the day at 6.25. Warwickshire, with three wickets down are 216 runs behind. Scores:—

ALL-INDIA—First Innings.

✓

John Addington Symonds

(2)

AM HOF,
DAVOS PLATZ,
SWITZERLAND.

July 21 1890

Dear Sir

I write to ask whether you
would care to consider an
essay I have been writing on
"The Platonic & the Danteque
Ideals of Love." It is in
reference to the sexcentenary
of Petrarch, going on at
Florence now. The treatment

I have adopted
seemed to me
not untried to the
Contemporary; & for this
reason I have ventured to
offer it to you.

I do not send the
N^o. unless I hear from you.

Very faithfully yours

John Addington Symonds

AM HOF,
DAVOS PLATZ,
SWITZERLAND.

July 31. 1890

My dear Sir

In reply to your kind
note of the 24th, I beg to
say that the article on
"Platonie & Dante'sque Ideal
of love" will be sent to
you as I can get it type-written.
This takes more time here
than it does in London.

Very truly yours

John Addington Symonds

Recy Wm. Huntley Esq.

DAVIDSON
CHARTERS

Atlantic Ocean

London

CLOSE TO S.W.R. STATION.
15 MINUTES FROM PUTNEY BRIDGE.
5 MINUTES FROM EAST PUTNEY.

THE PINES,

11, PUTNEY HILL, S.W.

14th Aug. 1908

Dear Sir,

Of course the
tercentenary of the birth
of Milton is as interesting
to me as to any of my
countrymen, but I do not
feel inspired to accept
your invitation to write
upon it in the "Contemporary
Review," or anywhere else.
With apologies for delay in writing,
Yours faithfully

Albwinborne

Sir Percy William Bunting

THE PINES

W. PUTNEY HICKS

Mount Pleasant
Boscastle

Cornwall

Aug: 28: 1907

134, LAUDERDALE MANSIONS,
MAIDA VALE. W.

My dear Sir

I am sending you a little
enquiry called "Edgware
Road" - rather unlike
most of my things. If
you do not care for it,
would you kindly send it
back to me here at Boscastle,
where I shall be till Sept. 10.

Yours sincerely

Arthur Symonds

