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written a tangy book—crammed with dogmatic, violent, often silly and consistently interesting. For people unacquainted with the Shakespeare problem it will provide, for all its one-sidedness, a fascinating introduction.

The problem is: How can we think of the historical Shakespeare—the small town youth who went to London in 1585, probably ill-schooled and certainly a novice to the world—as the author of the plays? He went to London in haste, after a hasty marriage; we lose him in the Elizabethan mist (holding horses, it would seem, at the playhouse door) and then, suddenly, appears "Venus and Adonis," dedicated to the great Lord Southampton.

This Shakspeare (Brooks' spelling) could never have written the plays, says Brooks, and offers pretty good argument. In all this discussion (Part I of "Will Shakspeare") Brooks follows pretty closely, without any acknowledgment, the reasoning of the late G. G. Greenwood, wittiest and wildest of all of the anti-Williams, as Andrew Lang called them. Greenwood's work should be better known than it seems to be. If Scribner's blurb-writer had known it, he never would have called "the destruction of the Johnson legend"—treated in *extenso* in Greenwood's "Is There a Shakespeare Problem?"—the "culmination" of Brooks' study.

The best of the critical part of Brooks' work, to my mind, is the handling of the Sonnets, whose outrageous variety in mood, style and stance have worried even the most orthodox commentators. Brooks, never shy, makes a good deal of sense out of the poems by parceling them out among no less than five writers—Daniel, Nashe, Barnes, Southampton, and, of course, Dyer. Everybody but poor Will!

Brooks makes his case for Dyer—identified as the "affable familiar ghost" of the Sonnets—a bit too good. It is pretty funny to read, in the opening of Part II of "Will Shakspeare," 54 characteristics that the author of the Plays should have had, and then find in Chapter 4 that Dyer possessed, yes! all 54 of them.

Altogether, the case for Dyer is much too thin. It's fun reading, all the same.

Heinrich Heine as Essayist and Prophet

Reviewed by
Klaus Mann

HEINRICH HEINE: Works of Prose. Edited by Hermann Kesten. L. B. Fischer. 346 pp. \$3.

IT MAY be that Heinrich Heine has been overrated as a poet; but he is certainly not adequately recognized as an essayist and cultural critic. If it is true that the verses of Hoelderlin and Novalis possess a grandeur and authenticity which Heine's are often lacking, it is also true that no German poet, and only very few European writers in the 19th century, can compete with Heine in the sphere of creative journalism: he surpasses all of them in political wisdom and poetic charm.

E. B. Ashton's new translations are remarkably good: they maintain the specific melody of Heine's style—this unmistakable blend of irony and sweetness, of flippant and lyric accents. What a delicate task—to find the English equivalents for so many shades from fierce aggressiveness to wistful melancholy, from mordant sarcasm to prophetic inspiration.

Kesten is, like Heine, a German cosmopolitan in exile—not only an ardent admirer and competent student of Heine's work but also, in many respects, a legitimate heir of Heine's ideas and literary idiom. Kesten's biographical introduction is, indeed, a brilliant piece of writing—conceived in a truly Heinean spirit; at once factual and sparkling, elegant and concise.

Kesten shows us Heine as a rhapsodic humanitarian and as a malicious jester; he gives us samples of Heine's engaging wit and of his grim, sagacious realism. There is Heine, the political commentator, in such brilliant fragments as "Liberty and National Character" (from "English Fragments," 1830) and "That Is the Counter-Revolution" (from "French Affairs," 1832), and there is Heine, the reporter, in a very modern, dashing and streamlined style: every foreign correspondent of 1943 would pride him-

self on having written "The Cholera in Paris!"—a striking description of the plague that infested the French capital in 1832.

He is romantic and popular in "Dutch Divertissements"—the basis of Wagner's opera "The Flying Dutchman"; eerie and macabre in "Joseph the Pale"—a very uncanny chapter from his unfinished "Memoirs." There is hilarious wit and an idyllic beauty in pieces like "On Leaving Goettingen" and "The Late Dr. Ascher" (both from "The Harz Journey," 1824), and there



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are movingly tragic tones in "They were emigrants. . ."—a simple, unforgettable description of German refugees on their way to Algiers.

Particularly successful is the choice of literary essays—the lovely portrait of Jessica (from "Shakespeare's Girls and Women," 1838); a very suggestive sketch "On Reading Cervantes" (from "The Town of Lucca," 1830); and—of even more topical interest—two studies on Kant and Goethe (respectively, from "Religion and Philosophy in Germany" and "The Romantic School"). Heine's ambivalent attitude toward Goethe is most revealing of the contradictions and polarities in his own character. The Goethe essay included in Kesten's volume is almost hostile in tone. Yet Heine was undoubtedly sincere

when he wrote to the Olympian in Weimar in 1821: "I kiss the holy hand that has shown me and the whole German people the way to Heaven . . ." Nor did he boast or lie, some years afterward, when he concluded a letter to his friend, Varnhagen von Ense, with these proud, jealous words: "No matter how Wolfgang Goethe may infringe the intellectual law of nations, one thing he cannot prevent; that some day his great name will often be mentioned together with the name —Heinrich Heine."

Heine's intellectual intuition proves almost infallibly penetrating when he deals with the complex and intriguing problem which is to him the German character. Among all his essayistic works "Religion and Philosophy in Germany" (1834) is perhaps the most important one. It is from this book that Kesten has taken the essays on Luther and Kant, and also the characteristic passage about the "German Revolution"—which ends in a grave warning to the people of France. Heine sounds prophetic when he urges his French friends to beware of the Germans. "Keep your powder dry," he advises them, "and remain quietly at your post, rifle on arm. I wish you well and it almost frightened me recently to hear your Ministers were planning to disarm France." When was this sentence written? In 1834? Or a hundred years later?

Kesten presents some of the incredible prophecies that occur in Heine's book "Lutetia" (1842) anticipating a terrific war in which France "could lose her political existence in the most pitiful manner." "That, however," Heinrich Heine continues, "would only be the first act of the great melodrama, the prologue as it were. The second act is the European and the world revolution, the great duel between the destitute and the aristocracy of wealth . . ." And, again: "The future smells of Russian leather, blood, godlessness and many whippings. I should advise our grandchildren to be born with very thick skins on their backs." These words were written in 1842!