HENRY JAMES: AN APPRECIATION.*

All of Miss Cary's work in biography and criticism is marked by the distinct note of *appreciation.* In such a spirit she has studied Rossetti and William Morris, Tennyson, Browning, and Emerson. She brings her reader into close touch with the mental and spiritual traits of each author, and leaves him with a deeper

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impression of the general influences of the subject chosen for study. In her latest volume, a critical interpretation of the novels of Mr. Henry James, she has found a theme well suited to her powers of insight and illumination.

In an introductory chapter various questions are raised regarding the influence of Mr. James upon his readers,—such as whether or not their minds are enriched by his fiction, and whether his work tends to quicken the vision and grasp of beauty in art, in character, and in the external world. From the first we are assured that to Miss Cary, as to all admiring readers of Mr. James, the answers to such queries must be strongly affirmative. Tracing his early work, with its 'promise of triumph over the commonplace,' following his years of ripening amid English and Continental influences, emphasizing his French mode of style with its 'rich density of detail,' Miss Cary reaches her first general assertion of Mr. James's highest ideal as critic and novelist alike, — to combine 'what a critic of painting would call tactile values with the greatest amount of spiritual truth.'

In the second chapter, on 'American Character,' one finds an excellent review of Mr. James's attitude towards the salient and incidental qualities of Americans, from his first studies in 'Watch and Ward' and 'Roderick Hudson' to 'The Ambassadors.' Miss Cary, like her subject, is constantly 'striking matches' for our enlightenment on her theme, while, with keen phrase, she says that Mr. James has written, not a *Comédie Humaine* but, in large measure, a *Comédie Sociale*, dealing with the mental and social contacts of Americans and Europeans. With amusement, that is also echo, we read in the same chapter this sentence, bearing directly upon 'Roderick Hudson' but applicable to much of the author's character-delineation: 'All through the book people explain themselves to each other and explain each other to themselves.' 'The Genius of Places,' that intense feeling which Mr. James shows for certain houses and surroundings, gives theme to another chapter, with special illustrations from 'The Portrait of a Lady.' A consideration of 'The Question of Wealth,' interpreted from their attitude toward wealth of Mr. James's characters, from Isabel Archer and Adam Verver to the stupid and gross spenders in 'The Spoils of Poynton,' leads on to the conclusion that 'appreciation of the two kinds and uses of wealth, the material and the immaterial, —this, perhaps, is the marked characteristic of his representation of society in which the "picture and the idea" are present in such even proportion.' Under the elastic title of 'Imagination' are introduced anew queries regarding the universal truth and the real expressiveness of the novelist's characters. Recognizing that the conscious appreciation of such women as Maisie, Nanda, Maggie, and Maria Gostrey must come slowly, Miss Cary justly lays stress upon the staying quality of their images when once they are impressed. With discrimination she points out that Mr. James does not dissect his characters, but rather he builds them up synthetically and slowly, to gain large effects. Of her author's symbolism and swift psychological images she says, with personal zest: 'From the point of view of one who likes it, such an exercise of the imagination brings back the delicious early sense of living in a fairy-tale, but without the sacrifice of our later sense of reality. We gain from it both the show of things and their significance, both the fable and the moral, both the text and the picture.'

If there is weakness anywhere in this interesting and luminous study it is in the chapter on 'Philosophy.' One wishes that more expansion of Mr. James's moral and psychologic messages had been included. With happy metaphor the author speaks of the difficulties in the way of such study—'It is easy, no doubt, in a wood so closely set with handsome growth, to see only the trees.' Questioning if Mr. James has followed his own ideals as set forth in 'The Art of Fiction,' Miss Cary finds in him a judicial mind and a constant presentation of some moral or intellectual problem, frequently a problem of choice. An exhaustive bibliography by Mr. Frederick Allen King, arranged logically as well as chronologically, is a valuable adjunct to the chapters by Miss Cary.

ANNIE RUSSELL MARBLE.