

Literary Notes from Europe

By THEODORE STANTON

MRS. LINDA VILLARI, the English wife of Senator Villari, the celebrated Italian historian, and who has translated into English most of her husband's works, is herself a writer of considerable repute. She has just completed a novel whose scene is laid in Bavaria. The plot turns on the vicissitudes of a stage-struck girl, enrolled in a travelling company, who falls in love with the leading man, "which," Mrs. Villari writes me, "was the end of her 'vocation.'"

Another note reaches me from Italy. Professor Angelo de Gubernatis, who, by the way, has been making a short visit in Paris, where he was much fêted, writes me from Rome: "On March 31st appeared the first number of the *Cronache della Civiltà Elleno-Latina*, the organ of the Società Elleno-Latina, whose aim is to promote all the moral and ideal interests of the Hellenic and Latin peoples." Count de Gubernatis

lectured last winter in Paris and in several Italian cities on this subject, and is now contemplating a tour to some of our American universities and literary centres.

Another famous Continental man of letters has been sojourning in Paris and lecturing before an élite,—Georg Brandes, the Danish critic. I have always remarked a delightful simplicity about Scandinavians, and Brandes is no exception to the rule. It was quite in keeping with this national characteristic that, at a recent breakfast party, where the chief guests were Camille Flammarion and Brandes, the latter should have asked the amiable astronomer for his "autograph, with a sentiment, for his daughter, who was making a collection."

Björnson, who surpasses Brandes in this respect, did not come to Paris this year, though his daughter, wife of the publisher of *Sipplacissimus*, has, as usual,

the winter at the French capital. I learn that her father has been kept in Norway by the demands on his time in connection with the national celebration next December of his seventieth birthday, when a Festschrift in his honor is to be brought out by Iven Lange, the young Danish critic and author. It will contain a biography of Björnson, unpublished letters to his friends, bits of his writings hitherto hidden away in newspapers, etc. Björnson himself is aiding Lange in this work. The latter has been in Norway for some time hunting up the materials.

There is no truth in the item that has been going the rounds of the Paris Press that the ex-Empress Eugénie was engaged upon her Memoirs. The wife of a former Prime Minister of the Second Empire, who does not reside far from the winter home of Eugénie, at Cap Martin, writes me as follows on this subject: "You may say decidedly that up to the present the Empress has never devoted any time to her Memoirs. Will she do so some day? Or will she have them written by a friend? As one can never tell what a human mind may decide, I can affirm nothing as to the future. However, it is not very likely that the Empress, who does not like to revert to the past and who is in very poor health, will bring herself to write or dictate anything."

Still another interesting literary item which has been widely circulated must be declared wholly fanciful. We were told that Prince Nicolas, the literary member of the Grecian royal family, had carried off the first prize of the Athens Academy for a brilliant comedy. I am informed on the best authority that this is a mistake. The prize was won by an unknown competitor, and through some error the authorship of the successful manuscript was attributed to Prince Nicolas, "who could very well have done better," I am further assured.

The contest in the Vienna courts over the possession of the correspondence of Johannes Brahms is still undecided, though, so far, his executor, Dr. Hans

Fellinger, seems to have the best of the fight. The legal heirs of the deceased composer demand the restitution of some four thousand letters found among his papers, which it is supposed they wish to sell. But Dr. Fellinger is anxious to preserve the privacy of the correspondence, and in this view he is supported, among others, by Duke Georg and Princess Marie of Saxe-Meiningen and Frau Clara Schumann, several of whose letters are in the Brahms collection.

The author of "Eve Triumphant" also wishes to keep her private affairs out of print. Writing under the *nom de plume* of Pierre de Coulevain, the reviewers often take her to be a man. So one of her friends proposed that a brief sketch of her be published. Thereupon Mlle. Favre replied: "As to the biographical note about me, I will not have it. I will remain as unknown as possible. I write for my amusement, not for glory or any trashy thing of that kind. I shall not even take the trouble to have my next book translated into English but simply have it copyrighted."

Vicomte de Borrelli, one of the cleverest of French society poets, also never wishes to "boom" his work. Like his father and grandfather, who were generals, he is an officer. But when, a few years ago, he was publicly thanked by his superior for gallant services in the Tonquin campaign and on the same day was awarded the biennial grand prize for poetry by the French Academy, the remarkable coincidence was noted by the Press, and his retired life at Versailles was intruded upon for a moment. M. de Borrelli's literary talents are again being recognized at this moment, when his last play, "La Suhamite," a biblical piece, is applauded nightly at the Théâtre Français.

The recent death at Nice of M. Ernest Gambart recalls a still greater recluse than either Mlle. Favre or M. de Borrelli. M. Gambart began life as a picture dealer and art publisher in London. He it was that early appreciated the then budding talent of "the hermit of Fontainebleau," and prepared

for Rosa Bonheur that excellent English market where she could, to the very end, always dispose of her work. I recently had in my hands a bundle of letters over fifty years old, the correspondence of Rosa Bonheur with her family while she was making her first visit to England and Scotland under

the guidance of M. Gambart, whose name appears in almost every letter. Though there was an occasional ruffle in their relations, they remained friends to the end. Only a year ago, he raised a fine monument to her memory on the edge of the Fontainebleau forest which was the inspiration of her artistic life.

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