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THE CRITICAL HERITAGE

ARNOLD BENNETT

Edited by
JAMES HEPBURN



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General Editor's Preface

The reception given to a writer by his contemporaries and near-contemporaries is evidence of considerable value to the student of literature. On one side we learn a great deal about the state of criticism at large and in particular about the development of critical attitudes towards a single writer; at the same time, through private comments in letters, journals or marginalia, we gain an insight upon the tastes and literary thought of individual readers of the period. Evidence of this kind helps us to understand the writer's historical situation, the nature of his immediate reading-public, and his response to these pressures.

The separate volumes in the *Critical Heritage Series* present a record of this early criticism. Clearly, for many of the highly productive and lengthily reviewed nineteenth- and twentieth-century writers, there exists an enormous body of material; and in these cases the volume editors have made a selection of the most important views, significant for their intrinsic critical worth or for their representative quality—perhaps even registering incomprehension!

For earlier writers, notably pre-eighteenth century, the materials are much scarcer and the historical period has been extended, sometimes far beyond the writer's lifetime, in order to show the inception and growth of critical views which were initially slow to appear.

In each volume the documents are headed by an Introduction, discussing the material assembled and relating the early stages of the author's reception to what we have come to identify as the critical tradition. The volumes will make available much material which would otherwise be difficult of access and it is hoped that the modern reader will be thereby helped towards an informed understanding of the ways in which literature has been read and judged.

B.C.S.

TO MY WIFE

I have been a reviewer myself. I once reviewed one thousand books in three years. The first article I insinuated into a London daily was a review. And it appears to me that I am still (in a manner) reviewing. I have even reviewed for the 'Manchester Guardian'! Glorious day! For in the matter of reviewing the 'Manchester Guardian' is a twin summit with the 'Times Literary Supplement'. So that I know about reviewing. And although I have suffered from reviewers, I would always defend them against the charges of the laity.

The wonder is not that book reviews are as dull as they usually are, but that they are as bright as they usually are. For you will kindly remember that during a large part of their time reviewers have to occupy themselves with dull books. What can you say about a dull book except that it is dull?

Further, during a large part of their time reviewers must con books of which the authors have all been consciously or unconsciously engaged in imitating one another. Think of the terrible narcotic effect on reviewers. Talk about reviewers being unwilling to recognise originality! Why, no hart ever panted after a water-brook as a reviewer yearns for originality in a book. There are crises in a reviewer's career when the advent of an original work may save him from the madhouse.

Arnold Bennett, writing in the 'Evening Standard', 1927

Can't something be done to buck up the 'Lit. Suppl.'? It is getting duller & duller, though it always contains 1 or 2 good articles.

Arnold Bennett, writing to F.S.A. Lowndes, who was on the staff of 'The Times', 1920

The Review in the 'Daily Mail' is kind enough but it is execrably written and shows no comprehension of the book whatever. I do not see how any quotation from it would persuade anybody with any experience of other novels or reviews to buy the book. Further, no one who is interested in books cares a fig what the 'Daily Mail' thinks about a novel. (I know I am exaggerating a little but you understand what I mean.)

Further, I hope you will not imitate the extraordinary stupidity of publishers' advertisements (which are notoriously the most futile in the world) and quote the same reviews in all the papers in which you advertise. Extracts which might please the readers of the 'Evening Standard' for example, would leave quite cold the readers of the 'Nation', 'New Statesman', 'Literary Supplement', 'Observer', or 'Sunday Times'. No publisher within my experience has apparently ever thought of this obvious truth.

Arnold Bennett, writing to a member of the staff of Methuen, who had just published 'Mr. Prohack', 1922

Preface

I have restricted this collection to criticism of twenty-four of Arnold Bennett's novels and one volume of short stories. In the Introduction I have sketched the critical reception of all of his books. Discussion of plays, librettos, and film stories is in a section separate from the other material. The criticism is arranged chronologically. I have given special attention to reviews in the 'Staffordshire Sentinel' and the 'Manchester Guardian'. All reviews have been reprinted from their original sources, with typographical errors silently corrected. Long quotations from the novels or long summaries of plots in the reviews have been omitted, with the omissions indicated.

I have given a fairly full account of editions without attempting to be exhaustive. I have not noted translations or editions in English other than English and American. Tauchnitz in Leipzig did issue twenty-seven volumes of Bennett's works in the years 1902-21. George Doran, the American publisher, tried several times to arrange for a collected edition, but Bennett had so many English publishers that it was not feasible. Uniform editions of several novels were issued in 1926 (in the Minerva Edition of Modern Authors) and again in 1949-51. The Arno Press in New York recently issued a facsimile edition of ninety volumes of Bennett's works.

Acknowledgments

My chief debt is to my wife, who helped with searching for reviews and preparing the manuscript. I am also obliged to Nicholas Redman for lending me his file of clippings on Bennett from the 'Daily Express' and other newspapers. Anita Miller kindly gave me information on many reviews, Patrick Quinn gave me reviews of short story collections, and John Ford gave me advice. I am indebted to the late Dr LaFayette Butler and to Charles Tolhurst Butler for repeated helpfulness. Most of the information on sales and contracts derives from Dr Butler's collection of Bennett material. I am also very much obliged to Norman Emery, Deputy Area Librarian, Central Library, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, and to Ian H.C. Fraser, Archivist, University of Keele Library, for providing information and other help. Mrs Lola Szladits, Curator of the Berg Collection, New York Public Library, and the Librarian of the Chichester Library kindly provided information. I relied upon Norman Emery's 'Arnold Bennett, A Bibliography' and Anita Miller's 'Arnold Bennett, An Annotated Bibliography' for many details. Louis Tillier's 'Arnold Bennett et ses romans réalistes' and Margaret Locherbie-Goff's 'La Jeunesse d'Arnold Bennett' were also helpful. Most of my research was done at the British Library in Colindale, and I would like to express my appreciation to the people there. I am similarly obliged to people at the British Library in Bloomsbury, the Central Library, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, and the Manchester Central Library. Several newspapers and publishers kindly provided information: the 'Guardian', the 'Evening Sentinel', Penguin Books, Eyre Methuen, Cassell, Hamish Hamilton, Chatto & Windus, and J.M. Dent. Peter Moore and Joline Goulet provided able secretarial assistance. Lastly I would like to thank the administrators of Bates College for a grant in support of the work.

Forty-nine of the 136 reviews and other items originally appeared in the 'Manchester Guardian', the 'Staffordshire Sentinel', the 'Spectator', and the 'Times Literary Supplement', and I am especially obliged to the editors of the 'Guardian', the 'Evening Sentinel', the 'Spectator', and the 'Times Literary Supplement' for their generosity. Acknowledgments are due to the 'Atlantic Monthly' for No. 58 (Copyright © by The Atlantic Monthly Company, Boston, Mass., reprinted by permission); to the Trustees of the Joseph Conrad Estate for No. 6; to the 'Contemporary Review' for No. 88; to the 'Daily Express' for Nos 81, 103, and 130; to the 'Sunday Express' for Nos 102 and 104; to Associated Newspapers Group Ltd for Nos 44, 74, 85, 98, 121, and 127, from the 'Daily Mail', 'Daily News', 'Daily Chronicle', and 'News Chronicle'; to the 'Daily Telegraph' for No. 91; to Frank Swinnerton and the 'Evening News' for Nos 128 and 135; to the 'Evening Sentinel' (Staffordshire) for Nos 11, 20, 25, 26, 33, 37, 52, 63, 78, 92, 96, and 134; to the 'Guardian' for Nos 5, 15, 21, 28, 32, 38, 49, 53, 60, 65, 75, 76, 79, 89, 94, 99, 105, 114, 123, 126, and 133; to 'Harper's' for No. 73 (Copyright © 1911 by 'Harper's Magazine', all rights reserved, reprinted from the March 1911 issue by special permission); to the 'Nation' (New York) for Nos 59, 67, and 87 (Copyright 1911 and 1915 The Nation Associates); to the 'New Statesman' for Nos 41, 48, 54, 66, 72, 77, 83, 100, 108, 110, 118, and 124, from the 'New Statesman', the 'Nation and Athenaeum', the 'Nation', and the 'Athenaeum'; to the 'New Republic' for Nos 84, 93, and 95; to the 'New York Times' for Nos 17, 55, and 111 (© 1902/10/23 by The New York Times Company, reprinted by permission); to Oxford University Press for Nos 10, 12, 19, 24, 27, 41, 42, 103, and 121; to J.B. Priestley for No. 112 (reprinted by permission of A.D. Peters & Co. Ltd); to V.S. Pritchett for No. 131 (reprinted by permission of A.D. Peters & Co. Ltd); to 'Punch' for Nos 101, 106, and 119; to the 'Scotsman' for No. 22; to the 'Spectator' for Nos 9, 14, 34, 69, 86, 109, 115, and 131; to Times Newspapers Ltd for Nos 122 and 129 from the 'Sunday Times'; to the 'Times Literary Supplement' for Nos 8, 16, 39, 50, 61, 64, 82, and 117; to A.P. Watt Ltd and the Executors of the Estate of H.G. Wells for Nos 10, 19, 27, 40, and 125; to A.P. Watt Ltd and the Executors of the Estate of Dorothy Cheston Bennett for Nos 1, 10, 12, 19, 24, 27, 36, 40, 41, 42, 103, and 121, and for miscellaneous passages from Bennett's 'Journals' and other writings; to Rebecca West for No. 85 (reprinted by permission of A.D. Peters & Co. Ltd); to the Wilmer House Museum, Farnham, Surrey, for No. 12; to The Hogarth Press and Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.,

for No. 113 (from 'The Captain's Death Bed and Other Essays' by Virginia Woolf, copyright 1950, 1978 by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., reprinted by permission of the Author's Literary Estate and the publishers).

I am also grateful to the Staffordshire County Library for permission to quote from a letter from Bennett to Amphilis Carter, and to the Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection, the New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations, for permission to quote from Bennett's manuscript *Some Impressions*.

Abbreviations

- ABM Mrs Arnold Bennett, 'Arnold Bennett', London, 1925
- ABP Dorothy Cheston Bennett, 'Arnold Bennett: A Portrait Done at Home', London, 1935
- DHL 'Collected Letters of D.H. Lawrence', ed. Harry T. Moore, London, 1962
- FH 'Frank Harris to Arnold Bennett: Fifty-Eight Letters', Merion Station, Pa, 1936
- HGW 'Arnold Bennett and H.G. Wells', ed. Harris Wilson, London, 1960
- 'Journal' 'The Journals of Arnold Bennett', ed. Newman Flower, 3 vols, London, 1932-3. Passages are identified by date rather than by page. Bennett kept a variety of journals, and much of the material is unpublished, or published elsewhere. Such material is suitably identified in context or by L&L explained below
- LAB 'Letters of Arnold Bennett', ed. James Hepburn, 3 vols, London, 1966, 1968, 1970
- L&L 'Life and Letters' - issues of this magazine, January and February 1929, containing extracts from Bennett's journals
- L&LC G. Jean-Aubry, 'Joseph Conrad: Life and Letters', London, 1927
- LB Manuscript held by the late Dr LaFayette Butler

xx Abbreviations

LN	'Arnold Bennett's Letters to His Nephew', London, 1936
RP	Reginald Pound, 'Arnold Bennett', London, 1952
SI	Some Impressions, manuscript held at the Berg Collection, New York Public Library
SOT	Material held at the Central Library, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent
SSAB	Louis Tillier, 'Studies in the Sources of Arnold Bennett's Novels', Paris, 1969
TA	Arnold Bennett, 'The Truth About an Author', London, 1903
TTHIM	Arnold Bennett, 'Things That Have Interested Me', London, 1921

In the Introduction I allude to reviews of which I have seen only extracts in publishers' advertisements. I have indicated the publication of such reviews as precisely as I can: 'b. 26 November' means that the review appeared before 26 November in the journal named, in the year named.

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