

SZKICE O LITERATURZE EMIGRACYJNEJ. By *Maria Danilewiczowa*. Biblioteka "Kultury," vol. 289. Paris: Instytut Literacki, 1978. 414 pp. 85 F., paper.

In 1964, two stout volumes, entitled *Literatura polska na obczyźnie, 1940–1960*, appeared in London under the editorship of Tymon Terlecki. Dr. Danilewiczowa's *Szkice o literaturze emigracyjnej* is thus the second attempt at coping with contemporary Polish émigré literature. Written in 1976, it includes more up-to-date information and is also more readable, since the previous venture, although valuable as a reference book, is primarily an inventory, a *bibliographie raisonnée*.

Szkice is at once something less and something more than a history of Polish émigré literature from 1940 to 1976. To its detriment, it completely disregards one genre, drama. On the other hand, the work includes discussions of publishing houses, periodicals, studies in history, and some political disputes. Like its predecessor, the book is at times encumbered by lists of names and titles, but in general the text reads well thanks to bits of reminiscences, amusing anecdotes, and occasionally pungent criticism. As a matter of fact, several studies jostle for space between the covers of this lively and meaty book, which is why, perhaps, the author preferred to call it *Sketches* rather than, say, *History of Émigré Literature*.

For about three decades, from 1942 onward, the author was the director of the Polish Library in London which, thanks to her endeavors, compiled a large collection of Polish books and periodicals from four continents. Danilewiczowa's strategic position enabled her to draw on an impressively large body of publications. Some of her evaluations and analyses, especially those dealing with poetry, are controversial, but the book gives the reader a good idea of the scope, variety, and thematic range of that literature, an orientation in its major trends, and a feel for various literary milieus. By far the best chapters are the initial ones, in which Dr. Danilewiczowa, writing as an eyewitness, manages to evoke vividly the atmosphere of Polish literary life, first in France during the war years and then in London. The chapters themselves are a literary contribution.

The book contains its share of minor factual mistakes. As the editor of the Jerusalem periodical *W Drodze* during two war years, I would like to take advantage of this occasion to correct two faulty bits of information about that newspaper. Contrary to what the author says (p. 104), it was not a weekly but a fortnightly publication, and the poet Broniewski, although he worked at the paper, was never its editor (as stated on page 106).

WIKTOR WEINTRAUB
Harvard University

KÁLMÁN MIKSZÁTH. By *Steven C. Scheer*. Twayne's World Authors Series, no. 462. Boston: Twayne Publishers, G. K. Hall, 1977. 161 pp. \$10.50.

To write intelligently about an author who worked in a language and literary tradition likely to be unfamiliar to one's readers is a difficult enough task in itself. If one must also pay heed to the demands of comparative studies and literary criticism in the process and compress the end product into some one hundred and fifty pages, the task becomes impossible. Steven C. Scheer has nonetheless done the impossible in this very fine analysis of the art and life of Kálmán Mikszáth, Hungary's Mark Twain. Forced by the nature of his assignment "to strike a reasonable balance between necessary plot summaries and the equally necessary critical commentary," Scheer offers the English-reading public a brief but well-rounded picture of Hungary's leading author at the turn of the century and indirectly provides an insight into the social and political milieu in which Mikszáth worked. The plot summaries themselves are a delight to read, intricate though they are, for Scheer has managed in his sketches to render some of the flavor along with the content. He lets Mikszáth himself speak now and then and retells, in capsule form, a number of the charming anecdotes with