

# The Classical Review

JULY 1901.

THE Executive Committee of the British School at Rome have issued an appeal (dated May, 1901) from which the following are extracts—

The project of founding in Rome a recognised British centre of study and research, offering to British students the advantages which German, French, Austrian, and American students already enjoy in the institutions provided by their respective countries, has been frequently mooted both in this country and by residents in Rome.

Early in 1899 it was taken up in a definite form by the Committee of the British School at Athens; a strong General Committee was formed for the purpose of bringing the scheme before the public and inviting promises of support; and a small Executive was appointed 'to take such further steps as may be necessary pending the transfer of the proposed School to the Committee of the British School at Athens.'

The intention indicated in a circular which was widely distributed in November, 1899, to issue in the spring of the following year an appeal for the Schools at Rome and Athens jointly, was necessarily abandoned owing to the prevailing national emergency. But a small fund was raised which enabled the Committee to make a tentative beginning; a Director (Mr. G. McN. Rushforth, M.A., Oriel College, Oxford) was appointed, and proceeded to Rome in November, 1900; an excellent set of rooms was acquired in January, 1901, in the Palazzo Odescalchi, Piazza SS. Apostoli; and the School was formally opened by Lord Currie, H.M. Ambassador to the Quirinal, on April 11 last.

The work of the School has already begun. The Director, in addition to a full report on the recent excavations, published in the *Times* of January 9, and to assistance given to visitors to Rome at Easter, has delivered an exhaustive lecture, which will shortly be published, on the ancient Church of Santa Maria Antiqua. A monograph on the 'Roman Roads in the Campagna,' by Mr. T. Ashby, late Craven Fellow in the University of Oxford, and now a student at the School, is also nearly ready for publication.

The School, it should be remembered, will not be exclusively classical and archaeological. On the contrary, it is intended to be a centre for all British

NO. CXXXIV. VOL. XV.

students in Rome; and the Provisional Scheme, approved by the General Committee, provides that every period of the language and literature, antiquities, art and history of Rome and Italy shall be considered as falling within its province.

Funds are urgently needed, in the shape both of annual subscriptions and of donations. If the School is to be maintained in a really efficient manner an annual income of at least £1,000 is required. The Committee desire to obtain also a capital sum of not less than £3,000, for such purposes as the extension of the library, the furnishing of the rooms, etc.

Up to the present the annual subscriptions amount to only about £250, and the donations to about £760.

Upon the need for the new School, our correspondent in Rome, Mr. Ashby, writes as follows. The experience which he has gained upon the spot gives his opinion a special value:

I am sure, from my own experience, that for archaeological and other students here in Rome, such a School is a necessity. During the period of my residence here I have met with unflinching kindness from the heads of the German, French, and American Schools, and from Italian archaeologists; but I have always felt the need of some centre for British students; and the warmth and enthusiasm of the welcome which the representatives of other nations have offered to our new School and its director, form in themselves a sufficient proof that its desirability is recognised on all hands, and that its prosperity, if this can be secured, will be beneficial to students and workers of other nations as well as of our own.

We would earnestly commend the appeal to all friends of scholarship and archaeology in this country. Subscriptions may be sent to Dr. Walter Leaf, 6 Sussex Place, Regent's Park, N.W.

*Was muss der Gebildete vom Griechischen wissen?* is the title of a book which appeared in the same year as 'G. H. S.' penned

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his two remarkable 'Letters to a Classical Friend,' the second of which appears in our present issue: and the answer which 'G. H. S.' there returns to the question is an unfaltering *Nichts!* To all of us who hope for the classical literatures, and for Greek literature in particular, a not less magnificent rôle in the future than they have played in the past, and who believe that a serious curtailment in the sphere of this influence will be a serious loss to human culture and education, the frank confessions and outspoken denunciations of this would-be friend who has become a foe, *donnent furieusement à penser*. The curious paradox of 'G. H. S.'s' intellect, his seeming ability to appreciate English poetry and his avowed incapacity to see anything in Greek, his love and admiration of Milton and Shelley and his repugnance to the ancient writings which Milton and Shelley loved and admired, need not trouble us here: this Review is not concerned with *lusus naturae* as such. It is very different with the matter of his criticisms; and *fas est et ab hoste doceri* is a saying the force of which Englishmen at the present time should be the first to acknowledge.

English scholars have heard a good deal lately of the evil effects of 'specialism' in classics. But now it is announced that classics itself is a study only fit for specialists. And this proposition emanates from a member of a University whose classical curriculum and examinations are generally thought to be excellently planned for keeping specialism in its proper place. The circumstance is notable.

Attentive readers of the strictures of 'G. H. S.' will observe that they refer to two quite separate matters. Part of them deal with defects in the modes and methods of classical teaching. Upon the question of particular criticisms there may be different opinions: but his complaint of the labour of learning Greek and Latin most people will consider well grounded. In the phrasing of his complaint, 'sheer fag,' 'grind,' 'labour,' and the like, we have the voice not of his opinions but of his experience; and unfortunately it is the experience of many. So far as the teaching of the schools is concerned, this labour cannot be alleviated by being spread over a larger number of hours. It is hardly possible that there will be more time in the future allotted to classics: it is

more than probable that there will be less. While these lines are passing through the press, a meeting is being held under the presidency of a Regius Professor of Greek 'to urge the necessity of giving modern languages a more prominent position in the educational curricula of the country.' The demands of these subjects can hardly be refused, and it is the classical time-table that must satisfy them. If then Greek and Latin studies are not to fall behind, the load they carry must be lightened.

Another complaint appears at first sight to refer to the character of the classics themselves. They are said to be 'hackneyed.' It is strange that the literature of races and civilisations so different in countless ways from our own should be 'hackneyed.' For unluckily our knowledge of it is not inherited; but every one has to gain it for himself. A great deal—no doubt a great deal too much—has been written *about* the classics; but on this showing the North Pole will be 'hackneyed' too. The solution of the puzzle is not far to seek. What classics has in common with modern literature 'G. H. S.' and others in his case find hackneyed, and the remainder unintelligible. This mixture of course produces nausea; it would be a miracle if it did not.

In reality the two causes of this nausea are intimately connected. What seems at first sight trite and commonplace in Greek and Latin literature, does so because its setting has been imperfectly understood. As intelligence of its surroundings grows, it gains in freshness and brightness, with often the apparently paradoxical result that the original form of a familiar thought appears the most novel of all. It is upon intelligence then that the whole question hinges. Can the classics be taught in such a way that the life and thought of ancient Greek and Roman times shall be a reality to the average student? If they can, he will gain, as the best judges in all countries since the Revival of Learning agree, intellectual profit which can be his in no other way. If they cannot, then classics will become what 'G. H. S.' declares it to be, a study only for the 'specialist': and only specialists will pursue it. This disaster, for such we believe it would be, it behoves all friends of the higher education to take speedy steps to avert.