

OBITUARY

IN MEMORIAM.

THE death of Professor Franz Skutsch, of Breslau University, is the heaviest blow that has fallen on Latin studies in this century. Buecheler and Vahlen were taken from us in their old age when their life-work was practically over, but Skutsch has been cut down at the age of forty-seven. And who can say how many brilliant discoveries, how much re-casting of current theories we have lost by that stroke of fate? Each new number of *Glotta*, the journal which he edited along with Professor Kretschmer, brought from his pen some article which, if not quite epoch-making, at least made a distinct advance in our knowledge of the history of Latin words and their formation. In Etruscan studies too, it was to Skutsch that everyone looked for the final solution of the Etruscan problem, so soon as the publication of all the remains of the language should have been completed. His yearly reports in *Glotta* were the only reliable source of information on the actual progress made year by year in Etruscology.

Skutsch's special field was the history of the Latin language, but his interests covered Latin literature too; and *Glotta* was started with the express design of bridging the gulf between literary and linguistic students. Plautus was his favourite author. His earliest publication, *Plautinische und Romanische Forschungen, I.*, contained a proof, a convincing proof (for everything that Skutsch wrote was convincing), that in the everyday language of Plautus' time, before a word beginning with a consonant, *indē* was pronounced as *ind'*, *exindē* as *exind'* (hence *exin*), *ille* as *ill'*, *iste* as *ist'*, and so on. This Phonetic Law of Latin is known as 'Skutsch's Law.' His papers in *Hermes*, *Rheinisches Museum*, and *Glotta* cleared up, once for all, many obscure points in Plautine Prosody and Metre. Loyalty to his old school teacher, C. F. W. Müller, made him accept (perhaps unadvisedly) Müller's denial of Synzesis (*ēos*, *ēorum*, *ēarum*, etc.) in Plautine scansion, and his article on this

subject in the publication ΓΕΡΑΣ holds a leading place in Plautine literature. Thanks, in part, to his co-operation, the new Teubner edition of the plays has come as near perfection as we can expect from any text based on the materials now at our disposal. To the ordinary student, perhaps, his two little books on Cornelius Gallus were best known. They launched on a sea of criticism, at first adverse but now mostly favourable, a theory that Gallus, and not the youthful Virgil, was the author of the *Ciris*. They illustrate two sides of Skutsch's personality, on the one hand his amazing erudition and that keenness of intellect which enabled him to pierce to the very heart of a subject, on the other hand his freedom from all personal vanity or irritation towards critics. The truth was the only thing he cared about; whether he himself or another researcher discovered it was immaterial to him; if a truer view than his own was presented to him, he relinquished his own without a murmur. The search for truth was certainly for him at least

Too great for haste, too high for rivalry.

As a University Professor he achieved a wonderful success. Too often German students' dissertations are not worth reading; but this could never be said of the Breslau dissertations of his pupils. They cover a large field, Latin literature from Plautus to Firmicus Maternus (an author edited by Skutsch along with his friend, Professor Kroll of Münster), Plautine prosody and vocabulary, the law of the Clausula in the prose of Cicero, Valerius Maximus, and so on. Skutsch was one of the earliest to see the importance of the Clausula law and to use it, soberly and sensibly, for the determination of obscure points in Latin pronunciation as well as for the emendation of Latin texts. In this, as in many other parts of Latin study, he was in the vanguard, or rather at the head, of the army of research. What shall we do now that our protagonist is gone?

W. M. LINDSAY.