

with printed texts. If a novel theory were propounded to him, he could almost instantly produce the evidence required to check it. In composition he could work under the most difficult conditions, and commanded a great variety of styles. Yet the results were never mere centos or imitations, but true reproductions of the manner of the originals which he had in mind. Behind this lay close, patient, minute observation, orderly arrangement, cautious theorising, the result of which were ever generously put at the command of those who consulted him. Much was expected of him, which has been

denied to us by his lamentably early death, but it is to be hoped that there still remains some record of all this store other than the memories of his pupils and personal friends. Certainly what he had collected was no mass of blind and secondhand erudition, but something far more systematic, organised, and vital. He did not express himself easily, and preferred rather to listen and suggest; but it would be a great misfortune to scholarship if it did not prove that the help which his friends enjoyed could be perpetuated and made more widely available.

J. A. S.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE PROBLEM OF HOMER.

To the Editors of the CLASSICAL REVIEW.

SIRS,—Mr. A. Shewan, in his review of Dr. Leaf's *Homer and History* in the *Classical Review*, May, 1916, remarks in a footnote: 'But how the authorities on the *Odyssey* differ! Mr. Thomson makes the wild assertion that "it is impossible to identify a single site described in the poem" (*The Greek Tradition* 221).'

The sentence from which Mr. Shewan quotes occurs in a passage dealing with the comparative absence of 'local colour' in the set descriptions in Homer; and it will be observed that my words are 'a single site described,' not 'mentioned' or 'alluded to.' Mr. Shewan, I fear, has paid no attention to the context of my sentence, although it is the context which defines the meaning of my 'described.'

Not only so. He has quoted half a sentence where he should have quoted the whole — since I really do try to write sentences where the second half has some connexion with the first. The whole runs as follows: 'Half the *Odyssey* is concerned with the adventures of Odysseus in Ithaca, and it is impossible to identify a single site described in the poem.' A single site in Ithaca, I meant. Is that not the natural meaning of the words? It was the meaning in my mind at any rate, and I thought the connexion made it plain.

My point was that you cannot identify places like the Haven of Phorkys or the Cave of the Nymphs or the Farm of Eumaeus. Obviously, if you could, there would be no rivalry between Thiaki and Leukas. Identification is proof, not conjecture.

Such is my 'wild assertion.'

Even if Mr. Shewan understood me as meaning any *Odyssean* site whether in Ithaca or not, he might still have asked himself again if it is a

'wild assertion' to say that none has been identified merely from its description. Pylos, for example, is not in any proper sense described; we identify it partly from its name, partly by an ingenious inference from certain geographical considerations; that is, if we do identify it, for the thing is not absolutely certain. Scheria, the Land of the Cyclops, the Isles of Calypso and Circe are described. They have not been identified. I notice indeed that Mr. Shewan regards Bérard as having 'demonstrated' that Scheria is Corfu. I wonder. Mr. Shewan must think me ridiculously cautious and sceptical. Only he has a quaint way of saying this.

So far as the matter affects myself, I regard it as unimportant and I make no complaint. But the criticism of Homer is important, and this little footnote serves as well as anything else to illustrate Mr. Shewan's point of view. I trust I may be permitted to add a word or two about that, as after his frequent and somewhat pointed references to myself in the *Classical Review* some kind of answer may be expected of me. I will make it as brief as I can.

So far as I understand Mr. Shewan's attitude to the Homeric problem, it amounts to this: 'Every non-unitarian theory of Homer must establish itself by irrefutable proofs; in the absence of these the unitarian theory holds the field.' If I say 'Every unitarian theory must prove its case, otherwise a non-unitarian theory holds the field,' what will he answer? He will answer, no doubt, that the unitarian view 'holds the field' in a different sense from any other because it was the view of the ancients. Now if Mr. Shewan believes that the ancients knew the truth and were not merely conjecturing like the moderns, he is of course entitled to his opinion. But in that case I would point out that for him the Homeric Question is already settled, and he brings to the discussion of other views a closed

mind. But if he confesses that the ancients did not really *know*, what does he think he settles by talk of the *onus probandi* and self-congratulatory murmurs of *beati possidentes*? I do not know what a judge would say about a claim of property made in behalf of a client who cannot be produced. But I do know that all this legal language is entirely beside the point. The problem of Homer is a question of scholarship—that is to say, an open question; and to settle it by authority and tradition is simply the old disreputable dodge of obscurantism.

How can Mr. Shewan fail to perceive that his demand for 'proofs' from other people is absurd? It is absurd because such proofs as would convince him are eternally impossible. If they were possible, there would be no Homeric Question. If he could give such proofs himself, there would be no Homeric Question. He is quite right to argue that his own form of unitarianism (whatever it may be) contains the truth. But to assume that it is true because it is not disproved is the maddest kind of logic.

If Mr. Shewan disclaims making any such assumption, I can only reply (with all respect to him) that he is then to my mind guilty of a still greater critical sin. For I cannot but think that he criticizes every book he reviews from his own standpoint and not from that of the author. He estimates its success or failure by its approximation to or divergence from his own position. He brings to the championship of unitarianism an enviable amount of special knowledge. And in his character of militant champion, as if criticism were a form of controversy, he reviews the books of those who are unable to agree with him.—Yours faithfully,

J. A. K. THOMSON.

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MINOR HORRORS OF PEACE.

DEAR SIR,—The teaching of Classics in the Tropics, especially when the master is thinking rapidly in his native forms of thought, and his pupils are translating Greek or Latin mentally into, *e.g.*, Urdu and orally into English, is beset with sufficient difficulties. But when difficulties as to the preservation of his books have to be faced as well, the situation is almost intolerable.

I entreat any of your readers who have taught in the Tropics to impart suggestions as to the preservation of books from mould and from cockroaches.

Sir, you would certainly be affected as by "lachrymatory shells," if you had, after months of waiting, received a new and sumptuous book, rejoiced in it, read it into the small hours, and then retired, to find in the morning that there had been a cockroach in your bookcase, and that the accursed brute had sucked the gilding off the title and the varnish in big spots off the cover.

I have tried a mixture of copal varnish and turpentine, but I cannot hit the right proportions. The books on which I have experimented are "tacky" and unpleasant to handle, though certainly proof against Blatta and mould.

I have tried photographic negative varnish, but it seems to attract Blatta from every corner. My Khitmaghar tells me to try coconut oil!!!

All my older books are getting white with mould, even though my Chokra spends an hour three times a week on them with a duster.

Anyone who has seen a cockroach-gnawed book in its "duro veneto (or any other colour) cucullo" will feel it his duty to suggest some palliative varnish.—Believe me, Sir, yours faithfully,

EXUL.

THE REFORM OF LATIN GRAMMAR.

To the Editors of THE CLASSICAL REVIEW.

SIR,—The Report of the Joint Committee on Grammatical Terminology is based upon the vicious principle that the method of the Greek grammarians may be directly applied to English, French, German, and Latin Grammars. On the contrary the grammars of these languages must move within the limits defined by their respective idioms. My paper which appeared in the *Classical Review* (February, 1915) was intended to clear the ground among other things for a simplification of Latin Grammar. From the principles laid down in that paper I had already deduced the method followed in the sketch of elementary Latin grammar, which is contained in my *Via Romana*. Unfortunately the extraordinary notice of that book, which appeared in the *Classical Review* of March this year, gave no indication of the contents. Your reviewer, however, declares himself unable to understand any of those statements which I gather from Professor Sonnenschein (*The Year's Work in Classical Studies*, 1915, p. 24) were already anticipated in many quarters. But no one would learn from your reviewer that the book before him contained a scientific outline of Latin Grammar which has received the approval of scholars whose eminence in the sphere of Latin grammar is at least as great as Professor Sonnenschein's. I must be content, at present, to refer Professor Sonnenschein to the *Via Romana* (of which on publication a copy was directed to be sent to him) for a clear statement of my results. Meanwhile I may also refer to papers on 'The Style of the Synoptic Gospels' (*Expositor*, April, 1915), and 'The Semitic Element in the Fourth Gospel' (*Expositor*, May, 1916), where the same principles have led to fruitful, and, I believe, new results in the sphere of Hellenistic Greek.—Your obedient servant,

FRANK GRANGER.

University College, Nottingham.