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Harris' Translation of Seneca's Tragedies *The Tragedies of Seneca*, rendered into English verse by Ella Isabel Harris, Ph.D. (Yale). London: Henry Frowde, Oxford University Press Warehouse. New York: 91 and 93 Fifth Avenue. 1904. Pp. xii + 464. Price 6s.

Walter C. Summers

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VOGT AND VAN HOFFS' *SATIREN DES HORAZ.*

Satiren des Horaz. Im Versmasz des Dichters
übersetzt von E. VOGT u. F. VAN HOFFS.
Zweite Aufl. Berlin: Weidmann, 1904.
M. 2.40.

THE bulk of this translation was left in MS. by Dr. Edmund Vogt, who died in 1885. His friend Dr. van Hoff's published it, with some additions and corrections of his own, at Essen in the same year, but the alterations since made appear to be so important that Dr. van Hoff's now adds his name as collaborator on the title-page. It may be, however, that this proceeding was adopted not so much from any eagerness to claim a share in the work, as from a generous desire to stand forth as the living champion of a dead friend against hostile criticism. It is evident, from the preface to the first edition, that Dr. van Hoff's will not admit any defects in the translation. Yet it is not really very meritorious. It slurs over the difficult passages: e.g. at ii. 1. 86, where *solvuntur risu tabulae* is translated 'platzen vor Lachen Gericht und Gesetz,' a mixture of two rival explanations: or i. 7. 10, 11 (*hoc etenim sunt omnes iure molesti*, etc.), where the translation—

Natürlich! da alle ja zähe in dem Punkt

Wo sich die Stärke der Kämpfenden zeigt—is either false or highly fallacious. But it is also not very close in passages which are quite easy: e.g. at i. 1. 120, 121 (*ne me Crispini scrinia lippi Compilasse putes, verbum non amplius addam*), the version is

Jetzt kein Wort mehr weiter! Ich käme ja sonst in Verdach noch,

Dasz ich geplündert das Pult Crispins, dem schlimmer als seine

Augen der Mund noch triefert—vom wäzrigen Tugendgeschwätze:

or ii. 6. 14 (*pingue pecus domino facias et cetera praeeter Ingenium*)

Lasz Kohl mir gedeihn auf
der Flur, doch
Nicht im Kopf:

or i. 5. 37 (*in Mamurrarum—urbe*)

In der Stadt des Mamurra, des Geldsacks:

or i. 5. 51 (*villa Quae super est Caudi cauponas*)

Komfortabler fürwahr als Cadiums Schenk-
en!

But, supposing these blemishes to be inevitable and pardonable, the translation is in itself unpleasing, being clumsy and full of false emphasis. Here is a fair specimen, from ii. 6. 65 (*o noctes cenaesque deum!* etc.):

O ihr nächtlichen Mahle, des Neides der
Himmlischen würdig,

Wo ich am eigenen Herde im Kreise be-
freundeter Nachbarn

Schmause, darauf mit dem Tischabhub haus-
bürtiger Sklaven

Drollig begehrlische Schar abfüttere! u.s.w.

Even in Germany a specimen (i. 3), which Dr. Vogt published in his lifetime, did not escape censure. Dr. van Hoff's protested hotly, in the preface to the first edition, that his friend's German was not more cacophonous than Horace's Latin, and that some expansion of the text was inevitable. It may be so, but an Englishman can hardly be expected to praise verse which the *Deutsche Literatur-zeitung* described as 'nicht lobenswerth,' for to us there is only one standard of German translation, and that the highest—the standard namely of Voss and Schlegel and Tieck and Freiligrath.

J. Gow.

HARRIS' TRANSLATION OF SENECA'S TRAGEDIES.

The Tragedies of Seneca, rendered into English verse by ELLA ISABEL HARRIS, Ph.D. (Yale). London: Henry Frowde, Oxford University Press Warehouse. New York: 91 and 93 Fifth Avenue. 1904. Pp. xii + 464. Price 6s.

A TRANSLATION of Seneca's plays is certainly much needed, not only for 'the student of the English drama,' who 'seldom has such com-

mand of Latin as will enable him freely to study Seneca in the original.' But to translate Seneca is no easy task, and Dr. Harris has greatly overrated her strength. The first consequence of this is of course that paraphrase takes the place of translation.

H.F. 210 *antequam laetam domum |*
contingat, aliud iussus ad bellum meat:
'His happy home just reached, another
foe Must be subdued.'

328 quem saepe transit casus, ali-
quando invenit: 'He who oft escapes
At last must meet misfortune.'

420 longa fame | mors protrahatur
lenta: 'Let tardy death Be brought by
creeping famine.'

500 dest una numero Danaïs: 'Of
the Danaïdes one failed to act.'

It may be pleaded that the general sense is at any rate preserved in the above extracts. But no Latin author, least of all Seneca, can be played with in this way. The brilliant, pointed style of our author becomes a mere blur in such passages as:

72 meliusque collo sedit Herculeo
polus (H. kept the sky steadier than
Atlas himself could have done):
'Lightly upon the neck of Hercules
Heaven rested.'

222 prolusit hydrae (young Her-
cules, killing the two snakes, rehearses,
or gives the prelude to, his hydra-
labour): 'And so essayed the hydra.'

241 numerosum malum (of the
Hydra, many monsters in one): not
rendered.

320 fluctuantes more turbati maris...
harenas (the shifting sands of the
desert give to land the perils of the
sea): 'The sands uncertain and the
stormy sea.'

434 obici feris monstisque virtutem
putas? (Lycus ridicules the idea that
Hercules' labours imply *virtus*): 'To
conquer beasts and monsters, then, thou
think'st Is valorous?'

560 populis pluribus (the dead, oi
πλείους): 'these many peoples.'

But inexcusable errors are not rare.

296 sqq. 'When shall I embrace
Hercules again,' reditusque lentos nec
mei memores querar? (reproach him
with a return that is so tardy and
shews no thought for me: *nec* divided
in accordance with a well-known Silver
mannerism): 'nor make complaint of
thy forgetfulness and slow return.'

331 alienā dextrā sceptrā concutiens:
'in his alien hand He holds the sceptre
which that hand usurped.'

391 manat in Sipylō lapis: 'stands a
mournful stone.'

427 effare potius quod nouis thalamis
parem . . . munus (say what bridal gift
I am to get thee): 'What princely
gift Can equal the new bridal I would
give?'

558 euincas iura . . . Stygis: 'would
thou might'st bind.'

611 nocte quiddam grauius: 'what-
e'er is worse than night.'

Carelessness is visible in the not infre-
quent omission of clauses, and in other
respects. On the very first page we read
'The star Arcturus guides the Argive fleet.'
One would naturally refer the last two
words to Agamemnon's expedition. A refer-
ence to the original shews that Dr. Harris
has misled us; the reference is to Greek
fleets in general and Seneca accordingly
writes *classes*. One might add that Arcturus
is by no means synonymous with *Arctos* of
the Latin, but such criticism might be
thought an instance of the pedantry
so natural to admirers of the ancient
classics. More obvious is the fault on the
next page, where we read 'Phoebus bidden
hold his light concealed In Ocean slowly lit
the western sky.' This is likely to give the
'student of the English drama' strange
ideas as to the powers of observation possessed
by the author of the *Quaestiones Naturales*—
unless indeed he 'has such command of
Latin as will enable him to study Seneca in
the original,' when he will read

tardusque Eoo Phoebus effulsit mari.

After this it is perhaps a trifle that
Seneca's rapid lyrics are rendered into
the same heroic blank verse as the rest
of the play. 'It was with some regret
that the decision was reached that
this task [of rendering the choruses in
lyric form] was beyond the translator's
poetic power.' Surely, at the worst, a
shorter blank verse might have been
adopted, e.g., that of Longfellow's *Hia-
watha*.

I have contented myself above with the
first 600 lines or so of the first play in the
collection. I cannot pretend to have ex-
amined thoroughly the rest: will any
experienced teacher accuse me of rash
generalisation on this account? One pass-
age from another part of the book which an
accident brought to my notice deserves
mention as it shews how very unsafe the
book is for the very class for whom it is
intended. A student of the influence of
Seneca on Shakspeare will notice, on p. 134,

'Intrench thyself in snowy Caucasus.'

He will be disappointed to learn that the
original (Med. 43) runs

et inhospitalem Caucasum mente indue.

WALTER C. SUMMERS.