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***Tiberi Claudii Donati Interpretationes Vergilianaee,
primum ad vetustissimorum codicum fidem recognitas
edidit Henricus Georgii. Vol. II. (Aeneidoslibri VII.–XII.)
Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1906. Pp. 688. M. 12.***

S. E. Winbolt

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continued by Jacobs, and the period now covered exceeds sixty years, and the total of entries is 1513. If the reviewer may adapt a phrase from the compiler's preface, the bare number is eloquent enough.

E. HARRISON.

Tiberi Claudii Donati Interpretationes Vergilianae, primum ad vetustissimorum codicum fidem recognitas edidit HENRICUS GEORGI. Vol. II. (Aeneidos libri VII.-XII.) Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1906. Pp. 688. M. 12.

TIBERIUS DONATUS, who wrote his comments on Virgil for the benefit of his son towards the end of the fourth century A.D., was at least a change from his predecessors: among the ancient commentators 'none but himself is his own parallel.' He is a refreshing parenthesis over which blows no arid blast of bitter verbal criticism. It was not his to cavil at Virgil's innovations of style, his unusual employment of old words or invention of new ones. Whether the Mantuan imitated Homer much or little, well or badly, seems not to have troubled Donatus. The gall of Corvilius Pictor and other *obtrectatores Vergilii* has not found its way into the concoction for which Donatus is responsible. Rather we have a more genial compound to which we may suppose go as simples a little of the traditional lexicography, grammar, and religious antiquities filtered through Probus, Servius, and Macrobius. But only a little of these ingredients. The idea of Donatus' work is original, and would have made his fortune—in the way of posthumous fame—if only it had been carried out with a moderate show of genius. But this is anticipating. The task he sets himself is to advance from line to line of the *Aeneid* and draw out the full connotation of his author's words by means of a full prose paraphrase.

A condensed style like that of Virgil certainly offered a great chance to the first commentator who tried this method. To explain the meaning of the poet by exhibiting the rhetorical connection of clauses, the connection of ideas, consistencies of character, and to show that the arrangement and development of the narrative is as it should be—all this might have meant an immortal work. A few specimens may be quoted of Donatus' manner of handling this method. At the beginning of Book VII it was perhaps worth suggesting that Aeneas was all the more ready to pay funeral honours to Caieta because by crossing the infernal river he had seen how piteous was the case of the unburied dead. Donatus is at pains to explain *Tu quoque*, the opening words, by showing that the incident is connected with the passage describing the funeral rites of Misenus in Book VI. Conington hits this off in a note of four words: Donatus repeats himself four times and

consumes twenty lines. Such long-winded exegesis is characteristic. Such a verbal point as the juxtaposition of *aeternam moriens* is seldom mentioned. *Ossaque nomen . . . signat*. The comment here is to this effect: it is wonderful that whereas the names of the living only with great difficulty are noised abroad, her bones make light of centuries. This surely is a shade too subtle: one notices that Conington is eloquently silent on this point. Here and there Conington adopts something from Donatus, sometimes referring to him by name, but more often tacitly; but the fine metal he has extracted from this mass of over 1200 pages on the *Aeneid* is measured by very small quantities. One cannot help wishing that points such as those offered by in noctem (8), proxima (10), resonat (12), received some comment; but it would not be fair to impute this to Donatus as a neglect, because his avowed purpose is to track sequences of thought; and, moreover, many verbal points which may seem significant to us we may well suppose would have had no interest for the young son whose native tongue was Latin. The pity is that so many of the remarks on subject matter are pedantic and utterly unilluminating. In fact it must be admitted that there is seldom an imaginative flash to brighten up these sombre though conscientious pages. Donatus dearly loves to preach. Having made his remark, he will repeat it in interrogative or exclamatory form in the style of an unskilful sermon preached to the very young. In short we find Donatus honest, unctuous, and dull. But he himself never loses heart: says he quite gaily 'Interea verba ipsa in propositione constituta repetamus, ut intendamus omnia cum suis ponderibus posita.'

We think few English boys of to-day would relish Donatus, and probably few professors. Henry Nettleship found him 'dull and unprofitable.' Sed cui bono? Most of the notes of any value will be found incorporated in Conington: most of the readings of note are given by Nettleship. First comes the importance of a mass of sound fourth-century Latinity, of which the editor of this volume supplies a full index. Second, the professional scholar might do worse than go back to original sources for Virgilian study, in the process of reading Donatus stretching his imagination and occasionally culling the stray remark that others have missed.

If space allowed there are several interesting points relating to Donatus' text we should wish to discuss. How far is a commentary first published so late likely to have survived as its author wrote it? Did Donatus' work suffer in the same way as that of Probus? Ever since its publication in the sixteenth century the multipliers of *variae lectiones* have not been idle, to judge from the apparatus criticus to this edition. But in the midst of our interest not so much in Donatus, as in things about Donatus, we find already in the opinion of our editor *immensum conficimus aequor*.

S. E. WINBOLT.