The Classical Review

<http://journals.cambridge.org/CAR>

Additional services for *The Classical Review*:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)

***A History of Greek Literature*, by Thomas Sergeant Perry. Large 8vo. pp. xv. + 877. New York: H. Holt & Co. 1890.**

B. Perrin

The Classical Review / Volume 5 / Issue 07 / July 1891, pp 330 - 331

DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X00179235, Published online: 27 October 2009

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009840X00179235

How to cite this article:

B. Perrin (1891). The Classical Review, 5, pp 330-331 doi:10.1017/S0009840X00179235

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)

A History of Greek Literature, by THOMAS SERGEANT PERRY. Large 8vo. pp. xv. + 877. New York: H. Holt & Co. 1890.

THE preface states that 'this book is an attempt to recount the history of Greek literature, not so much to classical students as to those who have no direct knowledge of the subject.' As there is no lack of good histories of Greek literature for the English reader, histories written by specialists in the field, the question at once arises, What new advantages are offered by a history which comes from a writer of large general culture rather than of professional training for the work? One finds that the author's large reading in other literatures and histories enables him to draw many effective comparisons; and saves him from that fervid exaggeration of the genius and the products of the Greek mind into which the professional Hellenist is prone to fall. In the main, we gain in the book just what we expect at the outset—breadth of view and independence of judgment: we miss also just what we expect—precision of touch and inner perspective.

The author's authorities are usually up to date. Many old superstitions are duly discarded. The theory of an early 'Aryan Home,' for instance, is discredited. But there is too often a second-hand tone to reference or analysis, as when 'silver-buckled' is given as the translation of ἀργυρόδηλος (p. 121). It suggests the German 'mit silbernen Buckeln versehen.'

An 'it is said' often introduces loose statement, as that Sokrates watched with anger the way in which he was caricatured in the *Clouds* (p. 467). The notices that Lucian 'passed through Gaul,' that late in life 'he was reduced to poverty and compelled to fill a minor office in an Egyptian court of law' (p. 831), will not bear scrutiny. All minor writers, and even Appian and Pausanias are summarily and indistinctly treated.

A few positive errors should perhaps be pointed out. Achilles does not drag Hektor's body around the walls of Troy in the *Iliad* (p. 5), but in the *Aeneid*. This is a common error, even among professional Hellenists. The facts are given correctly on p. 43. The population of Attika, not of Athens, is estimated to have been 500,000 (p. 219). The description of the Greek theatre (p. 226 ff.) deals almost wholly with the features of late Roman times, and is full of glaring errors. Choregos and Korymbaios are confounded (p. 231). Neither of them furnished a tripod 'as a reward for the successful tragedian.' The parabasis did not follow the prologue (p. 451), nor did the chorus step from the stage down into the orchestra to utter it. The expenses of preparing the comic chorus were not borne by the city, nor was this 'the case with the tragedy' (p. 452). The oration *On the Crown* is no exception to the rule that 'an oration should not end in a turmoil of excitement' (p. 639). For a long time Plato was regarded as a model of personal beauty, although this reputation rests on a slenderer basis than it did before one of the busts supposed to portray him was 'discovered to be a representation of the younger Dionysius' (p. 692). Is not Mr. Perry referring to the elegant 'bearded Dionysos' among the bronzes of Naples?

In his introduction of translations Mr. Perry misses an opportunity to assist and instruct. They are rarely assigned to their authors, even in the case of such translations as have become integral parts of English literature. Surely the reader will be tempted often to read beyond the extracts given. Nor are the best translations always selected, even on the basis of Mr. Perry's own estimate. After stating that the taste

of the present generation is best satisfied by an archaic prose version of Homer, he gives his lengthy extracts from both *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in Worsley's Spenserian stanza. Hesiod is cited in Chapman's version, with no mention of the source (p. 148). Translations by the same author are introduced with and without quotation marks. In many cases the reader might fairly draw the false inference that the translation given was by Mr. Perry himself.

Of a piece with this careless treatment of the translations is the almost utter lack of cross-references in the text. Very rarely, too, is even a Greek author cited by book and verse and paragraph. In other ways also Mr. Perry lays too great a burden on the general reader, as by introducing variant or new names without explanation. Thus, 'the height of Pergamos' (p. 38), Mentor (p. 84), Cronion (p. 141), should either not be used, or else explained. 'A proud youth would say' (p. 95), and the reckoning by Olympiads (pp. 166, 168), will be dark for the general reader.

Of the pictorial illustrations which form one of the most attractive features of the book, many are excellent, but some are of indifferent quality, and not a few positively bad. They are also occasionally inapposite and anachronistic, as when the Hermes of Praxiteles is used to illustrate the Hermes of the *Prometheus Bound* (p. 269). Conversely, a crude or rude art is used to illustrate a consummate literary work (p. 400). This should never be done except to establish disputed relations. Many illustrations are merely ornamental, and sometimes disturbing rather than helpful. The author evidently employs them χαρίζομενος παρεόντων.

As in the case of the translated extracts, there is no uniformity or precision in the description of the illustrations. Very seldom is the provenience or the present home of a work of art given, or its author, or its position and lesson in the history of art. For examples, there is lack of sufficient motive in the introduction of the famous torso of Apollonios in the Belvedere to illustrate the *Herakleidae* of Euripides (p. 404). On the other hand, this is one of the few illustrations sufficiently described. The so-called 'Theseus' of the East Parthenon pediment cannot in any way illustrate the Theseus of the *Oidipous at Kolonos* (p. 333). 'Penelope at the loom' (p. 5) were better introduced at p. 84, where the text by the way leaves the reader to infer that Penelope persisted in her stratagem even after its discovery by the suitors. The prostrate warrior in the Aiginetan pediment group (p. 133) is now generally named Patroklos, not Achilles. The Diskobolos Casting (p. 580) is not in the palazzo Massimi, but in the Vatican, as the position of the head shows, while the Diskobolos on the opposite page is not 'resting,' but just advancing for the cast. The bust of Perikles given on p. 451 is in the Vatican, not the Louvre. Apollo's shrine on Delos is given (p. 59) where the text alludes to Pytho. The purely ideal warrior figures of the Nereid monument are confidently called Greeks and Persians, and used to illustrate the account in the *Persai* of the sea-fight at Salamis (p. 247). The famous stele of Aristokles, son of Aristion (Murray, *Hist. of Greek Sculpture*, p. 193), is spoken of in the text as 'the statue of one of the soldiers of Marathon,' and entitled 'Soldier of Marathon, from the monument of Aristion' (p. 248). The Nike of Paianios, at Olympia, is described as 'from temple of Nike, memorial of Persian Wars' (p. 539).

In the difficult matter of the transcription of Greek and Roman proper names Mr. Perry is inconsistent.

There is no index of illustrations, and the general index is meagre. From a long list of evident mis-

prints, the following may be noted as specially misleading : Achilles for Achilleis (p. 21) ; Helenus for Helen (p. 96) ; Hermes for Herakles (p. 273) ; Nessus for Lichas (p. 349) ; butte for beetle (p. 474 *bis*) ; formed for found (p. 512) ; Athenian system for Spartan (p. 579) ; horse for noise (p. 592) ; Pliopion for Phokion (p. 622) ; Apollinis for Apollo (p. 788) ; Ermenes for Eumenes (pp. 800, 819) ; Samosata for Samosata (p. 830), etc.

Mr. Perry's book has many attractive features, but all friends of Greek studies must hope for some revision and correction before it is extensively read.

B. PERRIN.

Adelbert College, Cleveland, Ohio.

An Easy Walk through the British Museum ; or, How to See it in a Few Hours. By Louis Fagan, of the British Museum. London. 1891, pp. 98. One shilling.

There is an admirable Guide to the Exhibition Galleries of the British Museum which is sold for 6d., in which each Department is treated by the respective officials of that Department. It was always open to a person of average intelligence to boil down this material into a popular summary : and such a work would have been serviceable for the use of those who have not much leisure time to spend in the Museum.

Mr. Fagan is a subordinate official in the Department of Prints. His *Guide* to the other departments of the Museum is a compilation based on the official publication, flavoured with cuttings from certain archaic Dictionaries of Biography and Mythology. This should have been a fairly easy task to accomplish, but Mr. Fagan has lamentably failed. His book is altogether inadequate as a guide, and it is full of gross blunders.

A PETITION.

To Spring belongs the violet, and the blown
Spice of the roses let the Summer own.
Grant me this favour, Muse—all else with-
hold—
That I may not write verse when I am old.

And yet I pray you, Muse, delay the time !
Be not too ready to deny me rhyme ;
And when the hour strikes, as it must, dear
Muse,
I beg you very gently break the news.

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH.

Εἰς Θάλειαν.

Ἡρος λευκῶϊον· καιροῦ πρόσχημα θερείου
βλάστη ἔφυ θαλερῶν ἢ θυόεσσα ῥόδων.
ὦ μοῦσ', εἰ μὴ πάντα πόροις, ἀλλ' ἐν γε μέγιστον
δὸς μὴ μουσποεῖν ὄντα με γηραλέον.

Ὅψ' ἐδέ γ' αὖ γῆρας προμολόν μ', ὦ μοῦσα,
κατάσχοι,
μηδὲ με πρῶ λείποι σὴ χάρις ἡδυμελῆς.
Κεῖνο δ' ὅταν κακὸν ἡμᾶρ ἄγῃ πολύπικρος
ἀνάγκη,
πρῶς μοι χαλεπὴν, μοῦσα, φέρ' ἀγγελίαν.

LEWIS CAMPBELL.

LINES WRITTEN IN THE VISITORS' BOOK AT VOULCANO (THE ANCIENT ITHOME), May, 1891.

Ἦσυχια θεία, θύγατερ Διὸς, ἣν τέκετ' αὐτὸς
πρεσβίστη χαρίτων ἐν φιλότῃ συνών,
σὸν ἥράτος, ὦ σώτεια, σεβασσάμεθ' ἐνθάδε πρῶν
ἱγμένοι ἀλγεινῆς ἐκτὸς ὁδοιπορίας·
ἢ τις ἔριν παύσασα Λακῶνων ὀβριμοεργῶν
ἥδ' Ἐπαμεινώνδου μακρὰ βιβάντα νόον
Μεσσήνης κρατείεις κρημνώδεος· ἀντὶ δὲ φωνῶν
φυλόπιδος δεινῆς τειχομάχου τε βοῆς,
σεμνῆς εὐμενέων μοναχῶν μόνον ἐνθάδ' αἰοιδῆς
ἡδυμελῶν τε κλύειν ἔστιν ἀηδονίδων.

LEWIS CAMPBELL.