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Richter's Drama of Aeschylus *Zur Dramaturgie des Aeschylus*, von P. Richter. Leipzig: B. G. Teubner. 1892. Mk. 6.50.

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existence of an *annual* register of the live stock in the possession of private individuals seems clearly to be established by nos. 51 and 52; but, so far as appears from the Berlin papyri already published, there is no indication of an annual revision of the general census-lists.

It is one of the drawbacks of the method of publication adopted by the Berlin authorities that the editors have no oppor-

tunity allowed to them of expressing their opinions on these and other points raised by the texts which they have transcribed. It is to be hoped that this want may be made good, either in the form of excursus attached to the volumes themselves, or, if that is impossible, at least in the multitudinous columns of the academic press in Germany.

F. G. KENYON.

RICHTER'S *DRAMA OF AESCHYLUS*.

Zur Dramaturgie des Aeschylus, von P. Richter. Leipzig: B. G. Teubner. 1892. Mk. 6.50.

THIS is a book which well repays the easy task of reading it. The author is indeed curiously German in the limits of his horizon. He discusses for instance the views of blood-guilt propounded in the *Eumenides*, without so much as mentioning McLennan, and in a manner which shows that the light thrown on the subject by McLennan's enquiries is wholly unknown to him. Paley and Conington, Patin and Leconte de Lisle, all and every who do not write in the privileged tongue, appear to be ignored: while on the other hand there is much polemic against some German critics who have not at present excited much interest in the world at large and, if we were to judge by Mr. Richter's citations, have not done much to deserve it. Nevertheless Mr. Richter himself is far from repellent to a foreigner. He writes in a clear, simple style: and above all there is in him a straightforward candour, a desire to state the facts and his opinion on the facts, rather than merely to 'score,' which are qualities everywhere rated highly, and will make his discussions as useful to those who may not accept this or that conclusion, as to those who may. Within his circle he appears to be well read; and we have always at any rate the satisfaction of feeling that what lies before us is a real *bona fide* impression, and not a device wrought out to serve some ulterior purpose.

Nothing for example can be more instructive in its way than Richter's account of the *Agamemnon*, which (much as I think it wants, to be even approximately complete) I should, for my own part, like to commend to as many readers as possible. It is needless to say that he, like every one, admires

the play profoundly. His conception of the plot is the traditional conception: and so far is he from any suspicion with regard to it, or any desire to impugn it, that, alone perhaps among those who have handled the subject, he passes without remark the familiar difficulty as to the time of the action. And yet, from his notable candour, from his habit of stating, without reserve and without calculation, his actual feeling and opinion in relation to the particular thing then and there before him, he shows what the traditional theory cannot do, as well as what it can, better and more impressively than any defender of a thesis.

In a final review of the *Agamemnon* Mr. Richter says, that 'it exhibits almost throughout a lively and exciting movement' and that 'the interest of the spectator nowhere flags.' But if we turn back to the details, we find that in this 'almost' are comprised reservations so large as practically to change the main sense of the proposition. First, with regard to the description of the beacons, 'it is,' says the author, 'tedious for us, though it might be not without charm for the Athenian public.' That this as a psychological fact is true, that the unprepared reader does in truth begin to feel impatience in this part of the play, may be ascertained by any one who will experiment upon such readers. And why is this so? Assuredly not for any want of skill in the composition. On the contrary there are few passages of Aeschylus which, detached from the context, would more impress a reader with admiration for the vigour and grandeur of the style. Mr. Richter, without insisting on the point, reveals the cause sufficiently. The only visible or ostensible purpose of Clytaemnestra, in her description of the beacons, is to convince her sceptical hearers 'that her information respecting the fall of

Troy is in all respects true,' and has been transmitted in the manner before alleged. Quite so. But we cannot help seeing, first, that, according to the poet himself, the description does not produce in the hearers any serious and permanent conviction; secondly, that it does not deserve to do so, and does in fact rather aggravate than remove the grounds for astonishment; and thirdly (what is most important of all), that whether the information is believed or not believed, whether the alleged means of communication is or is not trustworthy, are questions in which, upon the common assumption with regard to the subject of the play, we the audience have not the smallest interest. In short, the whole invention of the beacons, in its mechanical aspect as part of the plot, appears *ex hypothesi* to be an ineffectual instrument for doing what nobody wants done. No eloquence, no ingenuity will save such an episode from appearing 'tedious to us'; nor have we, as Mr. Richter well observes in relation to another matter, any reason to suppose that, in these fundamental laws of the intelligence, the ancients were different from ourselves.

We pass to the second *stasimon*; and here we find that, as soon as the reflexions cease to be general, as soon as the chorus begins to deal directly with the facts of the present situation, the spectator, as Mr. Richter honestly says, 'can only shake his head in astonishment' and observe that 'Aeschylus is here guilty of a grave error.' A long and elaborate passage (*vv.* 435-480) describes to us the indignation excited in Argos by the loss of life in the war. What bearing has this upon the matters supposed to be solely in question, the pitiableness of Agamemnon's fall, and the cruelty of Clytaemnestra? Is it intended, as it is certainly adapted, to qualify and abate our sympathy for the king? But, says Mr. Richter, enough and too much, if the king is to be our hero, has already been done in this direction by the powerful exposure of his guilt in consenting to the sacrifice of Iphigenia. We shall mourn the less, not the more, for his fate, because his best friends are compelled to acknowledge that many regard him as a tyrant, who has sacrificed to his ambition not only his family but his people too.

Next the herald enters, and for some minutes we are at our ease; so long as he dilates upon the triumph of Agamemnon and his army, we see where we are, and how we are going towards the mark. But 'the words, in which the herald proceeds to describe the sufferings of the army before Troy,

are for the progress of the story irrelevant,' that is to say, we here drift off again from the purpose for some fifty lines more. And when Clytaemnestra re-enters, we go back once more to the beacons, which we have already found to be 'tedious.' But worse is to come. 'The rest of the act,' says the critic boldly, 'has no foundation in the progress of the story, and would be better away.' And *ex hypothesi* this is indisputable. The narrative of the storm has no relation at all to the future incident on which our prospective attention is supposed to be fixed, nor can it matter *ex hypothesi* whether the herald departs at once or is further detained, or what passes between him and the elders before his departure. Sixty lines more, in a dramatic aspect, of pure waste. Nor does the following *stasimon*, whatever its merits as an independent piece of poetry, bring us any nearer to the road out of which we have wandered. It is linked to the preceding passage already condemned, and, so far as dramatic interest is concerned, all of it except the conclusion must go along with that passage as 'requiring no special remark.'

And now 'at last,' says the relieved expositor, frankly expressing the feelings which inevitably await the reader who takes up the *Agamemnon* with the traditional preface, 'at last appears the hero of the piece.' With the manner in which he is greeted by the elders Mr. Richter does not appear to be perfectly satisfied, nor is this surprising. 'The poet,' he says, 'does not deserve reproach' for making the salutation turn entirely on the topic of sincerity and insincerity, nor (we may presumably add) for enlarging further upon the same subject in the reply of the king. Perhaps not; but since this topic is irrelevant to the situation, as it has been commonly understood, it is felt, and we must agree, that the poet, if he does not deserve reproach, does at least require a defence.

But now the embarrassments of the traditional exposition really are for a time suspended; and Mr. Richter, like others, sails along with comfort and enjoyment till the entrance of Aegisthus. The episode of Cassandra, being regarded as a 'mere' episode, does indeed appear to him 'somewhat largely extended' by the second part and its 'repetitions'; but this judgment is connected, partly at least, with a doctrine which is not inherent in the traditional view, and will be best considered separately.

However 'with the entrance of Aegisthus the difficulty begins again,' as I should put

it and have put it elsewhere from my own point of view. Mr. Richter does not say this; but he exhibits the fact with an openness which was little to be expected and cannot be praised too much.

Aegisthus openly acknowledges that the whole plan of the murder was constructed by him, and represents it as an act of just revenge. Yet once again the feast of Thyestes with its horrible details is exposed for our contemplation. The retrospect of the play, as a work of art, would not have required this additional repetition. For however true it may be that the recollection of that crime impelled Aegisthus to revenge, he is a personage of so little importance, that we cannot take any lively interest in him, or desire to be confronted again with the question, how far it may have been his right, or even his duty, to act as he did.

Nothing could be truer or more to the point. But surely these are reflexions to make an expositor pause and review the road by which he has come. Surely it is somewhat surprising to find that the poet's 'retrospect of the play as a work of art' is so little in accordance with what we have assumed to be his intention, that he insists on presenting us in the conclusion with a person in whom we are not prepared to take interest, with a harangue and a debate upon questions with which we 'have no desire to be confronted.' And all the more so, if we ourselves, in the course of our exposition, have again and again been led by our principles to set aside large portions of the play as 'irrelevant,' 'mistaken,' 'tedious,' 'superfluous,' and 'disproportionate.' It is no object with Mr. Richter to condemn or impeach the structure of the *Agamemnon*: on the contrary he sums up, as we have seen, strongly in its favour, correcting with a bare *almost* his praise of the whole. But if we add together the various passages comprised, on the critic's own showing, in this deduction, they amount upon any reckoning to near a third of the drama; and by reckoning something, as we should do, for those portions, such as the episode of the tapestry, which are but imperfectly explained on the principle assumed, the amount will be raised more near to half of it.

This is the simple truth. So long as we assume that the sole interest of the *Agamemnon* lies in the moral quality of Clytemnestra's act, and that the only incident of importance is the actual death-stroke, so long we must say that the drama is full of extraneous matter, that the poet, admirably as he words everything, is perpetually telling what, with the object proposed, he cannot expect us to hear with interest. We should suppose him to be thinking of something

else. And in fact he is. The parts of the play which Mr. Richter sets aside are precisely those parts which deal, not with the murder itself, but with a matter which no audience, and no competent story-teller, could regard as insignificant or even secondary, the circumstances, that is to say, in which an achievement so extraordinary as that of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra became possible, and the means by which it was effected. The story has necessarily both a domestic aspect and a political. If the politics are neglected, the play inevitably goes to pieces. In the first half there are but two passages, the 'Iphigenia' chorus and the first speech of the herald, which upon the traditional principles are what they should be, which do not detain us needlessly and unwarrantably from the 'entrance of the hero' and real commencement of the action.

If indeed we accepted altogether the view of 'the hero' taken by Mr. Richter, we should have to make our reservations still larger. We must then see, as Mr. Richter does, something not quite harmonious in the narrative relating to Iphigenia. The fate of Agamemnon is tragic partly at least because it is a sudden fall from glory to ruin. But Mr. Richter will have more than this. He thinks that, to make the effect complete, Agamemnon should have an amiable character; he thinks that Aeschylus has represented him so, when he actually appears upon the stage, and that the strong reprobation previously directed upon his conduct in the sacrifice of his daughter, however morally justifiable, is dramatically a drawback and a mistake. I should not myself quite agree with the critic as to the effect produced by Agamemnon when we see him. I think that Mr. Richter overestimates the better points in 'the hero's' behaviour, and overlooks the worse. But this I think is true, that if the intended interest of the play were really so circumscribed as has been commonly thought, then Agamemnon ought to have been more like what Mr. Richter would make him, he ought to have been a better 'hero,' more fully commended to our sympathy. But in fact we are meant, I conceive, to be interested in his fortunes indeed deeply, but not very strongly in him. Certainly nothing detestable is attributed to him; even the sacrifice of Iphigenia may be forgiven, at any rate after his fall, in view of the enormous temptation. In himself, apart from his fortunes, he appears to be just what an average man in his situation would be, neither better nor worse;

gallant and patriotic, but selfish, strongly disposed to regard the rest of the world as his instruments, and little accustomed to consider the feelings of those whom he employs, or the opinion which they may entertain of himself. His part in the piece is not extensive; and the episode of Cassandra, by offering to our sentiments a much more pathetic object (a motive for the episode expressly declared, as we may say, in her final words), effectively prevents us from concentrating them upon Agamemnon, and supports the belief that we were not intended to do so. When the whole scope of the plot is correctly understood, we have no need to make Agamemnon a martyr; and indeed we see that he could not have been so drawn with consistency or likelihood.

The case of Iphigenia introduces us to a matter much discussed in this volume, the attitude of Aeschylus towards the moral problem of fate and the freedom of the will. An English reader will probably think that too much refutation is given to certain critics, whose views, as they here appear, are certainly somewhat perverse. However, if there is really danger in Germany lest readers of Aeschylus should suppose him to lay special stress on the 'freedom' of those who suffer for sin, it is no doubt well that they should be disabused. The contrary is patent: it is patent that Aeschylus, as we know him, though he does not omit to point out that men are not absolutely compelled to sin, is deeply and specially impressed with the undeniable fact, that the pressure of temptation and circumstance is sometimes so strong as to be with difficulty distinguished from compulsion, even by a cool and disinterested mind. He founds on this fact some of his most tragic effects. Both Eteocles and Agamemnon are conspicuous examples. Eteocles when he goes to fight his brother, Agamemnon when he offers up his daughter, do wrong acts which they are, in one sense, quite free not to do; that is to say, there is no physical constraint upon them, and if they had been masters of their passions they might and would have abstained. This the poet shows clearly enough; but he shows at least as clearly the overwhelming strength of the temptation, and the uncontrollable, divinely appointed chain of circumstance by which the temptation is prepared and presented. And as soon as we pass from what is not really disputable, we land in what is really not determinable, in questions upon which each spectator, in a fictitious case as in an actual

case, will decide or incline according to his own character, knowledge, and experience. When Calchas told Agamemnon that if he wished to sail from Aulis he must give up his daughter, he *could* no doubt and he *should* no doubt have let his army break up; he should have deferred his just expedition until, if ever, Artemis should be overruled or better disposed. But how much blame did he deserve for not doing this? How much blame did Cromwell deserve, when he consented to the death of Charles I.? There is no mortal tribunal for such judgments: nor does Aeschylus give, nor was he as an artist required or concerned to give, his personal opinion on the cases which he presents. On the contrary the tremendous interest of them lies just in the fact, that not he nor any unprejudiced person dares to decide with confidence. Interested persons will decide according to their interests, and all will have some reason. In the case of Agamemnon there is room, and room is left by Aeschylus, for infinite shades of opinion, from the elders on the one hand to Clytaemnestra herself on the other, and even beyond these extremes.

There is more, which I would gladly notice, in Mr. Richter's discussion of the *Agamemnon*; but we must pass on, and indeed pass over most of the rest, if we are to keep within reasonable limits. In the *Choephori* Mr. Richter is right in the essential point of laying stress on the divine command and Orestes' fixed resolve to obey it, and right in rejecting all attempts to read into the text any conflict between this and other impulses. We might indeed rightly go further in this direction than he does; for it seems very doubtful whether even after the deed Orestes is supposed to feel what is properly called remorse of conscience. He has certainly ceased to feel it in the *Eumenides*, as Mr. Richter correctly maintains, and even in the closing scene of the *Choephori* we must not fail to observe that it is rather his reason which gives way, than his opinions which change, under the mere physical horror of his position, symbolized and represented by the approach of the Furies. His doubt is not whether he was right in punishing his mother, but whether his mother committed her crime at all. This is madness, but scarcely remorse. However the point cannot be discussed properly without a close investigation of the text. It may be said in passing that some of the chief questions raised upon this scene have been excellently, as I think, and finally answered by Conington. On the scene of

the recognition Mr. Richter takes the middle and commonest view, that the details of it are indefensible but not a serious blemish. He seems indeed to maintain that the mischief could have been cured by simply leaving the details out. But this is scarcely admissible. So far as I see, Electra has just so much reason and no more for entertaining the supposition that the stranger is her brother, as she derives from these 'details' themselves. How much reason this is, and what the data precisely are, is a most important question, which must be reserved for another place.

On the *Eumenides* Mr. Richter has many good observations, notably, for example, upon the arrangements of the opening scene, where he shows, I think, that the natural requirements of the text are not really difficult to accommodate with the disposition which (controverted questions apart) we should assign to the Aeschylean stage. Throughout the book indeed the remarks on the manner of performance are not the least interesting and suggestive. More than once the author calls attention to a point too much neglected, the fondness of Aeschylus for bringing on large numbers of persons, in short, for 'supers.' It is the more necessary to insist on this, because, by the necessity of the case, the indications, in a text denuded of stage-directions, though

sometimes superficially patent, are sometimes such as to escape notice, unless special attention is called to them. On the vexed question of the 'logeion' Mr. Richter apparently inclines to a *non liquet*; and indeed the evidence of the text cannot in strictness compel to a positive conclusion. However inconvenient for a particular scene a particular stage-arrangement may appear to be, it is always possible for the defender of such an arrangement to say that it was 'tolerated by convention'; and to such toleration no limit can be fixed *a priori*. But if we are asked which way the balance inclines, we need not perhaps be so reserved. More and more strongly it appears to me that in the text of Aeschylus there is really no sign of any noticeable and permanent division whatever in the acting-space, and that on the other hand the inconvenience of anything like the 'logeion,' as it was figured till lately, would be so great as we ought not to suppose tolerable, without better external evidence than can in fact be produced.

To sum up—Mr. Richter's book is well worth study, valuable in many of its conclusions, and not less valuable from the way in which, by his clearness and honesty, the author suggests those questions which he may be held not to have answered.

A. W. VERRALL.

SANDYS' EDITION OF THE *LEPTINES*.

ΔΗΜΟΣΘΕΝΟΥΣ ΠΡΟΣ ΑΕΠΙΤΙΝΗΝ. *A Revised Text with an Introduction, Critical and Explanatory Notes and an Autotype Facsimile from the Paris MS.*, by J. E. SANDYS, Litt. D. Cambridge. 1890.¹ 9s.

THIS is a book which in point of general finish, style, thoroughness and accuracy, might well serve as a model for all younger editors. Dr. Sandys seems to have studied everything that has been written on the subject of which he treats, and he has weighed what he has read in the balance of a thoroughly sound judgment and an unerring scholarship. In the case of most volumes submitted to the classical reviewer, as for instance in the endless series of superfluous school-books put out by com-

peting publishers, little more is needed than a brief appreciation, to say whether they should be classed as good, bad, or indifferent; but where a master of the subject puts his heart and soul into a work which makes a real advance on all that has been done before, a work which worthily represents the highest level of English scholarship to the outside world, there the duty of the reviewer becomes more honourable and arduous. Even in our best achievements *aliquid humani superest*, and the prolonged straining of the eye, the anxious balancing of opposite probabilities, sometimes tend to dull and harden the delicate instinct of language, which is after all our best guide to the real force of the words we are examining. It is therefore no presumption when a scholar ventures to criticize the works of those whom he recognizes as authorities in their own department, any more than it is mock

¹ [We greatly regret that owing to a series of unfortunate accidents the review of this excellent edition has been so long deferred. Ed.]