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**Stewart's Essay on Boethius *Boethius, an Essay*, by
Hugh Frazer Stewart, M.A., Trinity College, Cambridge.
Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh & London, 1891: pp. x.
279. 7s. 6d.**

A. Plummer

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identified as Agrippina a bust in the Naples Museum hitherto unnamed. The bust in the British Museum which bears the name of Otho (ii. 183) has not the least resemblance to the coins. The portraits of Nero which Mr. Baring-Gould gives are all unsatisfactory; judged by the coins, they are bad likenesses, if not caricatures. It is doubtful whether the bust in the British Museum (ii. 246) represents Nero at all, while that in the Uffizi (ii. 226) is probably modern.

In fact this book like many others would have been better for compression. Had there been only one volume the portraits chosen for illustration might have been sub-

jected to a closer scrutiny, and the text might have been confined more exclusively to the matter in hand, namely the discussion of the characters of the Caesars. But even as it is not only the archaeologist but the historian, unless he belongs to the class which ignores the study of individual character, may learn much from the book. Perhaps Mr. Baring-Gould's powerful imagination, which admirers of *Mehalah* know how to appreciate, occasionally runs away with him, but a biographical study of historical characters by a man of his quality cannot fail to be both interesting and instructive.

A. TILLEY.

STEWART'S ESSAY ON BOETHIUS.

Boethius, an Essay, by HUGH FRAZER STEWART, M.A., Trinity College, Cambridge. Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh & London, 1891: pp. x. 279. 7s. 6d.

THIS is an enlargement of the essay which won the Hulsean Prize at Cambridge in 1888. It is in seven chapters; of which the second, fifth, and sixth have been rewritten, while the seventh is entirely new: the first, second, and fourth remain unchanged. These seven chapters treat of (1) the Controversy on Boethius; (2) Boethius and Theodoric; (3) the 'Consolation of Philosophy'; (4) the Philosophy of the *De Consolatione*; (5) the Theological Tracts; (6) some ancient Translations of Boethius's Last Work; (7) Boethius and the Scholastic Problem. And these are followed by two appendices on (A) MSS. of the Theological Tracts; (B) Passages in Chaucer which seem to have been suggested by the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*. The authorities employed are stated at the head of each chapter, and there is a useful index at the end of the volume.

On the whole the volume is bright and interesting, and offers a large amount of information compressed into a moderate compass. Some such qualification as 'on the whole' is necessary: for he who writes on Boethius must treat of topics—notably the Theological Tracts—which only genius of a very high order could make bright and interesting.

The Theological Tracts are Christian throughout and discuss abstruse questions

of Christian doctrine. The *De Consolatione*, the last work of Boethius, written in prison not long before his death, is rightly held to be, not antichristian, but unchristian. Christianity is not attacked, but ignored. Mr. Stewart thinks that 'the circumstances of Boethius's life make it almost impossible to believe that he was other than a professing Christian before he fell into disgrace' (p. 104). He dissents from those who find it difficult to believe that the man who wrote the *De Consolatione Philosophiae* had previously written the Theological Tracts; and also from those who regard the *De Consolatione* as a 'notification of the writer's final withdrawal from the Christian faith.' Yet his own view is not so very different from the second of these two. He puts this imaginary soliloquy into the mouth of Boethius as a prelude to his last work:—'Of what avail, then, that earnest attempt to raise the Faith above the mire of heresy? of what avail that double stroke for old Rome and the Church? Surely it were better, now that death is so near, to put away the memory of such wasted efforts and misdirected energy, and return to the consolation of her *who has never failed me*, whose methods I was wrong to apply to questions both dangerous to attempt and *profitless when mastered*. Come then, Philosophy, *be once more my guide and my teacher!* Show me once again how man in his miserable strivings after partial happiness misses the whole, the only Good' (p. 159). A man who has come to the conclusion that Christian doctrines are profitless even when

mastered, and that philosophy has never failed him and must again become his teacher and guide, is not far off a withdrawal from the Christian faith.

Perhaps the most interesting chapter in the volume is the sixth, on the translators of the *De Consolatione*. And the most interesting section in this chapter, at any rate for the ordinary English reader, is that on King Alfred's famous translation. 'It is in his translation of Boethius that Alfred's personality is most strongly stamped. The theme was a congenial one. He too had had some taste of changing fortune in his own life; he too had felt the shock of a fall from high estate; and though he had now won his way to his throne again, and could look calmly back at the dangers and vicissitudes he had come through, he would not for that reason feel the less sympathy with the Roman patriot whose only crime—no crime indeed in Alfred's eyes—was that he had lent an ear to the prayers of those who would fain be delivered from the yoke of a barbarian tyrant. This very sympathy....led him to identify himself so entirely with Boethius, that the latter is often quite lost sight of, the king taking his place and giving utterance to sentiments of which the Roman never dreamt' (p. 173). Other translations or adaptations of the *De Consolatione* which the author notices are the Provençal poem

Boèce in the eleventh century; that by Notker of St. Gall, which perhaps is a little earlier; the *Roman de Fortune* of Simun de Fraïse in the thirteenth century—the earliest vernacular version after that of Alfred; those by Jehan de Meun, Pierre de Paris, Renaut de Louhans, and other writers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; and lastly Chaucer, whose acquaintance with the Roman philosopher seems to have begun about 1369 and to have gone on until he 'must have known his Boethius almost by heart' (p. 215). Chaucer attempts what Alfred made no pretence at attempting, a literal translation and not a mere paraphrase: and it has a special value as an example of fourteenth century prose. Mr. Stewart has tabulated a number of mistranslations, and points out that (as we might expect) Chaucer is much better in the bits of Boethius which he has done into verse in his poems than in the same pieces as they appear in the set prose translation.

It would perhaps be worth the author's while, in preparing a second edition, to look at articles bearing on his subject in the *Grande Encyclopédie* now being published by Lamirault, Paris, and of which about half has been issued. Great attention appears to have been paid to the bibliography.

A. PLUMMER.

DORIC DIALECTS.

Les Dialectes Doriens, Phonétique et Morphologie. Thèse d'Agrégation présentée à la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de l'Université de Bruxelles, par ÉMILE BOISACQ, Docteur en Philosophie et Lettres. Paris, Ernest Thorin, 1891. 220 pages.

Der Dialekt Megaras, und der Megarischen Colonien von FRIEDRICH KÖPNER.—Besondere Abdruck aus dem achtzehnten Supplementbande der 'Jahrbücher für classische Philologie.' Leipzig, Teubner, 1891. Pp. 530—563. 1 Mk.

It is a time of dialect study. Meister is proceeding with deliberateness; eight years elapsed between his first and second volumes. Hoffmann has given us lately a volume on Arcado-Cyprian, which he calls South-Achaean (cf. *Class. Rev.* Jan. 1892, p. 54).

Shortly after the publication of Hoffmann's volume Boisacq published his treatment of the Dorian group. This book we judge to be his doctor's dissertation. Whatever may be the ultimate position assigned to the volume, it will prove a handy summary pending the publications of Meister and of Hoffmann. Considerations of convenience the author seems to have had in mind, for he has cited Cauer's *Delectus* wherever possible. To the private student of dialects the book can be recommended on this account.

No such feature of practical utility attaches to the little monograph of Köpner.

Every writer on a group of dialects must of course adopt some principle of grouping. Boisacq gives us by way of introduction a sketch of the various groupings that have prevailed. Since the first edition of Gustav