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Translations of Tacitus' *Histories* *The Histories of Tacitus*: An English translation by G. G. Ramsay. Murray. *Tacitus: the Histories*. Translated with Introduction and Notes by W. H. Fyfe. Clarendon Press.

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ages, and repeats the error about flowers; his 'propolis' appears to stand for *fucus* and *gluten* alike, and he writes *favorum stabilimentum* for Vergil's *fundamina favorum*. In order to discover the clue to all this, as well as the origin of Vergil's *narcissi lacrimam* in l. 160, we have but to turn to Aristotle *H. A.* IX. 40, οἰκοδομοῦσι τὰ κηρία φέρουσαι τῶν τ' ἄλλων ἀνθέων καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν δένδρων τὰ δάκρυα. Mackail's rendering 'pollen of flowers' for *fuscoque et floribus* does not seem defensible either on scientific or literary grounds.

Mr. Royds remarks that, whereas the ancients universally regarded the queen-bee as male, Xenophon 'in one passage speaks of ἡ ἐν τῷ σμήνῃ ἡγεμὼν μέλιττα.' As a matter of fact, Xenophon makes the leader feminine in more than one passage; but unfortunately he is merely following the grammatical gender of μέλιττα, and in *Cyropaedia* and *Hellenica* he writes ὁ ἡγεμὼν of the queen-bee; so he is no better than the rest.

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TRANSLATIONS OF TACITUS' HISTORIES.

The Histories of Tacitus: An English translation by G. G. RAMSAY. Murray.

Tacitus: the Histories. Translated with Introduction and Notes by W. H. FYFE. Clarendon Press.

TRANSLATORS of Tacitus have sometimes failed to please, because, assuming that his style is abnormal and eccentric in relation to the age in which he wrote, they have endeavoured to reproduce one form of eccentricity by another. If he plays tricks with language (they say), why, then, let us do so too, and we shall be like him. But while Tacitus' style is no doubt a thing apart and a new creation, it is not so in virtue of its general and pervading quality of brevity and pithiness: these are of his age, as he himself says in the *Dialogus*. What distinguishes him is the appropriateness of his epigrams to the subject in hand, and the restraint with which they are employed. He does what his age is doing, only he does it better. You do not find him, like Lucan and Statius, deliberately presenting or manufacturing different facets of a subject so as to be able to make epigrams about it. Apart from this, Tacitus is of his literary generation—at least, as far as can be judged, in the *Histories*: and essays in the bizarre and unusual are therefore out of place for his translators. And as he is above all severe and dignified, and ultra-meticulous in avoiding anything

that might seem to impair the high gravity of his style—witness his reluctance to employ even some harmless technical terms—no translator, clearly, should endeavour to produce a Tacitean effect by journalese or slang. Rather, on this line of reasoning, an English translation which attempts to be to us in some sort what Tacitus was to his contemporaries should employ as good modern literary English as it can. It should choose at will from all our best modern stylists. This rule is so simple that it will doubtless commend itself to everybody.

The English scholarship of our day is fortunate in having produced two excellent translations of the *Histories*—Mr. Fyfe's, published some time ago, and now Professor Ramsay's. Both, as we should expect, are faithful and scholarly: both have a fair measure of success in rendering the epigrams which cost Englishmen much often unprofitable labour, and which French reproduces apparently without an effort; but they differ in their canons of style. Readers must judge for themselves which is the best. Those who prefer plain unadorned Attic (of whom, on the whole, is the present reviewer) will put Professor Ramsay first. Those who look for vigorous rhetoric, and do not object to an occasional phrase that smacks a little of the *Daily Mail*, will rather vote for Mr. Fyfe. Each manner has its dangers, and each has its rewards. It is risky (and, as many

will think, plainly wrong, as inconsistent with the elevation of Tacitus' narrative) to introduce phrases like 'There's no money in that,' and to make Antonius compare his soldiers to 'a lot of helpless idiots'; while it is quite probable that Antonius and his men talked on that level, most certainly it is not Tacitus' level of style in reporting what they said. But though a severe and restrained simplicity may be more consistently pleasing, it cannot be denied that there are moments which call for rhetorical vigour; and it is then that the desire to be above all effective and telling has its reward.

Scholars will never agree about these matters. They may leave carping criticism and rather be thankful that so much has been done by recent translators to familiarise English students with this part of Tacitus' work—now especially when the story of a 'world war' takes on a new interest.

Mr. Fyfe gives us little besides the translation: Professor Ramsay supplies fairly copious and very useful notes and appendices. His Preface and Introduction are both excellent reading.

A. D. G.

THE TEUBNER TEXT OF SENECA'S LETTERS.

L. Annaei Senecae ad Lucilium Epistularum Moralium Quae Supersunt iterum edidit OTTO HENSE. 1 vol. 8vo. Pp. xxxii + 634. Lipsiae in aedibus B. G. Teubneri, 1914. M. 6.60, paper; M. 7.20, bound.

IF one glances at Haase's edition, which was reissued by Teubner at intervals for about forty years from 1852 onwards, the mere increase in size due to the inclusion of a good *apparatus criticus* would give some conception of Herr Hense's labours upon the text of Seneca's letters. We have no longer the *Fragmenta* or the spurious correspondence with St. Paul or the elaborate *Index Rerum Memorabilium*, as in Haase, and yet we have a much larger volume. Compared with Hense's own edition of 1898, the text and *apparatus criticus* occupy, in spite of excisions from the latter, fully a dozen pages more.

Hense's *praefatio* furnishes a sound preliminary introduction to the MSS. on which rest the two divisions of the letters to Lucilius (1-88 and 89-124). He is not disposed to be dogmatic on the relative value of the MSS., and indeed he indicates the possibility of new light being thrown on the problem by the researches of Achilles Beltrami. Meanwhile it is an indubitable advantage over Hense's previous edition to have the continuous collation of P and b for letters 1-88 instead of the partial collation which he

published in 1898. For the second part of the letters (89-124), his introduction indicates the value of the *Bambergensis* and of the collation by Bücheler of that MS., whose loss, along with that of many Byzantine and other priceless codices, we owe to the training of the German guns on the Library of Strassburg in 1870.

Hense admits that he thinks better of O than he did previously; and its readings might, therefore, have been oftener quoted. For example, there is significance in its interlinear insertion of *se* between *fecisse* and *et* at 3, 6, 'illa dicet tibi et diem fecisse se et noctem,' and in its agreement with the alteration in *b* of *potentissimis* to *potentissimus* at 4, 6. Even some of its blunders, like *pariat* for *pareat* in 8, 5 and *togatos* for *togatas* in 8, 8, might have been cited against it.

Hense's attitude towards MSS. of later date than the eleventh century (s) is characteristically rigid and unimaginative. He acknowledges that they are not all derived from the MSS. known to us; but he is so terrified at the presence of interpolation and so enamoured of the need for caution that he will not venture further than to take them as a last resort—'ut ubique hoc teneamus necesse sit, non prius nobis ad eos descendere licere quam omni modo temptatum erit emendationi satis facere ope uetustiorum.' Study of the text of the letters makes it impossible to resist the