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](#)

Bonnet's *La Philologie Classique La Philologie Classique; six conférences sur l'objet et la méthode des études supérieures relatives à l'antiquité grecque et romaine*, par Max Bonnet, Professeur à la Faculté des Lettres de Montpellier. (Paris, C. Klincksieck: 1892. pp. 224.) 3 fr.50.

C. L. Smith

The Classical Review / Volume 6 / Issue 09 / November 1892, pp 410 - 412

DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X00186779, Published online: 27 October 2009

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009840X00186779

How to cite this article:

C. L. Smith (1892). The Classical Review, 6, pp 410-412 doi:10.1017/S0009840X00186779

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)

had not previously been comprehensively treated; and as suggesting broad lines for future investigation. But it will, perhaps, also be thought that most of Keller's hypo-

theses, and many of his etymologies, require to be submitted to a far stricter process of verification than he has applied to them.

H. NETTLESHIP.

BONNET'S *LA PHILOGIE CLASSIQUE*.

La Philologie Classique; six conférences sur l'objet et la méthode des études supérieures relatives à l'antiquité grecque et romaine, par MAX BONNET, Professeur à la Faculté des Lettres de Montpellier. (Paris, C. Klincksieck: 1892. pp. 224.) 3 fr.50.

PROFESSOR BONNET has published these lectures with the commendable purpose of setting before classical instructors in secondary schools and university students of the classics a succinct account of the whole content of Classical Philology, 'a bird's-eye view,' as he says, 'of the field of which we cultivate a small parcel each year.' Those who remember the admirable letters of 'a French University Professor,' in the first and second volumes of this *Review*, on classical education in France, and particularly the fourth letter (vol. II. p. 49) in which the writer deplores the indifference of his countrymen to the scientific study of classical antiquity, will welcome in this little book a promise of progress, though they will not fail to find in it also a striking confirmation of the report of the writer of the letters. This is conspicuous at the outset in the apologetic tone of the introductory lecture, and throughout the whole series in the pronounced attitude of the lecturer himself. Under M. Bonnet's guidance Classical Philology presents herself to the French student with a very timid step and mien, and, with undisguised apprehension as to the cordiality of her reception, she protests that she does not mean to stay long. M. Bonnet carefully disclaims for his subject the dignity or the unity of a science in the proper sense of that term. It is at best only an applied science. It is a bundle of utterly diverse branches of universal science, bound together by no natural unity. It is in vain that eminent scholars since the days of F. A. Wolf have tried to discover a bond of union between its heterogeneous elements. The centre and heart of classical studies is the reading of Greek and Latin authors; from this he invites his hearers to accompany him on his little excursion

around the borders of the field, and to this, as their normal pursuit, he promises to bring them speedily back. 'The centre of all philological studies, it cannot be too often repeated, is the study of the texts themselves. This study is not only, as it is for the historian, the point of departure: it is the goal as well. Our knowledge of the ancient world is drawn for the most part from texts: it is entirely reasonable that this knowledge should serve to explain the texts, especially those which are the principal sources of general culture for modern peoples' (p. 75)—sources of culture, because they lie at the foundation of classical education. In this fact, and in this only, M. Bonnet finds the tie that binds together the various parts of Classical Philology and gives it the semblance of scientific unity, 'A certain number of different sciences, separated from one another by their natural classification, have been grouped together as a whole and comprised under the name, more or less appropriate, of "Classical Philology," because these different sciences are necessary to those whose profession requires them to make use of classical antiquity, and particularly of the ancient authors, for the education of youth' (p. 10).

M. Bonnet does not shrink from accepting the legitimate consequences of this definition. 'I put it to you, gentlemen,' he says to the young men before him: 'Why do you pursue the courses of which we have spoken? That is the whole question. . . . It is because you wish to devote yourselves to education, and more especially to classical education. Now to follow that career in our public institutions, it is necessary to be *licencié ès lettres*, and, if possible, *agrégé*. To win these titles we submit to examination on the branches which are taught by the Faculty. These subjects are required because they are necessary to the future instructor; and they are necessary because classical education consists essentially in making pupils acquainted with Greek and Latin authors, and through them with Greek and Roman antiquity and all that it

contains for moulding the minds of the young' (p. 9).

This places Classical Philology squarely among professional studies—where, indeed, it belongs—and M. Bonnet is not to be frightened from his position by the charge that he is making it out to be a mere bread-and-butter pursuit, which, he justly insists, does not prevent the cultivation of it in a scientific spirit. He is equally ready to accept a more serious objection, that, on his view, if the reading of the ancient authors in the original should disappear from the programme of secondary education, Classical Philology would perish with it. 'Certainly,' he says, 'there will be, for a long time after the suppression of secondary classical education, scholars who will make a specialty of the study of antiquity; there will be hellenists and latinists, as there are to-day egyptologists, assyriologists, sinologists, and americanists; but this ensemble of particular studies of which we speak, classical philology as it is constituted to-day, will have no reason to exist, and will not exist' (p. 20).

To show how little real unity there is in his *ensemble* called Classical Philology, M. Bonnet (p. 6) draws in imagination a chart of universal history, divided into longitudinal belts representing the various fields of human activity—politics, religion, art, literature, language, science, manners, institutions, commerce, industry—and into transverse sections representing chronological periods. Each of the longitudinal belts may be subdivided according to the actions represented; and place is also to be provided for the subsidiary sciences of epigraphy, palaeography, and numismatics. Having thus made up his chart, M. Bonnet looks for the various topics which constitute Classical Philology. He naturally finds them 'strangely scattered' over the field; for some he scarcely finds any place, and as for the interpretation of the authors—the centre around which all are grouped—it would be waste of time to look for that at all. No wonder he exclaims triumphantly: 'You see, gentlemen, there is no natural unity; let us confess it without any false pride. The unity of Classical Philology is pure convention.'

One cannot help wishing that M. Bonnet, instead of drawing his chart in imagination, had attempted to draw it in reality. He surely would have become speedily aware of the crudeness of his device for representing the complex relations of the various branches of historical science. We all

recognize the importance of the comparative study of institutions, religion, literature, and the rest, which is obviously the basis of M. Bonnet's chart; but it is the comparative method run mad to deny the connexion between the activities of the same people in these several fields. M. Bonnet has been led by his reasoning to say in effect that, for example, Greek art and Greek religion are unconnected things, and on his chart of universal knowledge Roman public life and private life and industry and commerce and literature are scattered here and there with no natural tie to bind them. There could not be a more complete *reductio ad absurdum*.

It is a poor and unworthy conception of Classical Philology that makes it only an appendage of the study of texts. No doubt the texts are the door to the whole science; no doubt they furnish by far the most abundant material for the cultivation of it. They fructify the whole field of Classical Philology, and are as necessary to it as the Nile is to Egypt; but after all, the Nile exists for Egypt, not Egypt for the Nile. The 'study of texts' is necessary in secondary education for training in clear thinking and in clear expression of thought; and the present generation sees nothing better for this purpose than Greek and Latin. But it is quite conceivable that some future generation may see, or think it sees, something better; and, however that may be, this is not their highest function. What gives them their greatest value is the human life that lies behind them and shines through them. This life, the moral and intellectual activity of the two most remarkable peoples of antiquity, separate and yet intimately connected, constitutes, in spite of its multifarious variety of details, an independent and integral subject of human interest—a science in the truest sense, and not merely a 'collection of disconnected topics'; a science to be cultivated and fostered for its own sake—none can be named that is worthier—and one that will not fall into neglect, no matter what may happen to secondary education, until our modern European civilization shall be supplanted by some other, derived perhaps from the Egyptians or the Chinese.

It is a pity—looking at the matter in its practical aspects only—to set before the classical teacher no higher ideal than the readiness to illustrate his text at every point. The result is too apt to be that he will keep his knowledge of classical

antiquity done up in little parcels of pedantic lore and put away in separate pigeon-holes of his memory, to be taken out as needed. This result of his teachings, it is fair to say, M. Bonnet would be the foremost to deprecate—otherwise he would never have written this book. The book itself, in fact, is the best antidote to the pernicious doctrine with which its author has, quite unnecessarily, encumbered an otherwise excellent treatise. It is exceedingly well written. The subjects of the lectures are: the history of classical philology; grammar, rhetoric, and poetic; history and antiquities; history of art and literary history; the study (*i.e.* the establishment and interpretation) of texts. These

'sciences' are treated in a fresh and interesting way and, although the author constantly insists on his view that the last is the common goal of all the rest, I suspect that many a classical student will rise from the reading of these spirited and stimulating discourses with a new sense of the intrinsic unity of this whole department of knowledge, with a conviction that to qualify himself to interpret classical literature he must qualify himself to interpret the life of classical antiquity—a result that will not be achieved by any amount of isolated 'study of texts.'

C. L. SMITH.

Harvard University.

HARTFELDER'S *MELANCHTHONIANA PAEDAGOGICA*.

Melanchthoniana Paedagogica: gesammelt und erklärt von DR. KARL HARTFELDER: pp. lxxviii + 287. Leipzig: Teubner. 1892. 8 Mk.

NOTWITHSTANDING the laborious research which characterized the edition of Melanchthon's Works which occupies the first twenty-eight volumes of the *Corpus Reformatorum*, there remained sufficient material to form the large supplemental volume brought out by Bindseil in 1874. But even his labours left gleanings for subsequent explorers, and a not inconsiderable though somewhat fragmentary collection has been brought together by Prof. Hartfelder, who in the present volume gives us those which serve more especially to illustrate Melanchthon's activity in his chief function of 'Praeceptor Germaniae.' Prof. Hartfelder's researches in the great libraries at Basel, Hannover, Munich, St. Gall, Strassburg, and Weimar appear to have been almost exhaustive, and sixty-four of the pieces in the selection before us are printed for the first time. Many of the fragments are little more than rough notes (much resembling Pascal's *Pensées*) of historical facts or apophthegms which Melanchthon would make use of to illustrate some abstract argument in his lectures, and sometimes simply to arouse the attention of his hearers. How lively was the enthusiasm of his auditors at Wittenberg and how profound their reverence for his teaching, is brought

home to us very forcibly by the interesting series of letters, the *Wittenberger Studentenbriefe*, the majority of which are here printed for the first time. An expression in the first letter, written by Thomas Blaurer to his brother (4 Dec. 1520), strikes the keynote of the series: 'eo loci perductus sum, quo, ni fallor, solo per hoc tempus licet esse vere sapientes de re Christiana.'

The student of Reformation literature will be aided by the Bibliography here given, supplementary of that in the *Corpus Reformatorum*, and occupying eighteen pages. He will also be put upon his guard by a singular revelation concerning a certain sale of MSS. and books by Messrs. Sotheby and Son in 1835, when sixty-three MSS. were catalogued as Melanchthon's own productions, while no less than 600 volumes were represented as having formed part of his library. Of the manuscripts, Dr. Hartfelder states that only *three* were really Melanchthon's, while of the library he says that there is absolutely no evidence that it ever belonged to Melanchthon: 'Es war einfach erlogen, dass diese an sich so herrliche Sammlung alter Drucke einst Melanchthon gehört habe. Die angebliche bibliotheca Melanchthoniana war eine Erfindung der Firma Sotheby and Son in London, die durch dieses Mittel sich auf betrügerische Weise bereichern wollte, ohne übrigens ihren Zweck ganz zu erreichen.'

J. BASS MULLINGER.