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***The Songs of Sappho*, by James S. Easby-Smith,
Published for Georgetown University. Stormon' and
Jackson: Washington, D.C. 1891. \\$.1.**

J. W. M.

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'the verbal of ἔχω, which is quite rare, shows two forms, this and the more normal one σκετός, also used by Plato.' It is a pity that the editor did not give his reference here: for it will be news to many that Plato used the word σκετός, although ἐπισκετός is found. Nor is μέχρι ποῖ (in 487 C) 'the only instance in Plato of μέχρι with an adverb,' as the editor says, for μέχρι ἔως, μέχρι ἐνταῦθα, μέχρι δεῦρο, μέχρι πάλιν are quoted even in Ast's lexicon, which makes no pretence at being complete. These are some specimens of the mistakes in this edition: but it is fair to say that in the Critical Appendix there is a good deal of interesting matter not put together elsewhere. The book is on the whole well printed, but there are many cases of accents wrongly placed or omitted, as for example on pp. 41, 60, 64 (*bis*), 68, 163, 213, 242 (*bis*), 286, 289: and why is our old friend Stephanus called sometimes Stephanus (p. 287), and sometimes Stephens (p. 33)?

J. ADAM.

The Songs of Sappho, by JAMES S. EASBY-SMITH, Published for Georgetown University. Stormon and Jackson: Washington, D.C. 1891. \$1.

THIS little book consists of a verse translation of the more important fragments of Sappho, and a prose translation of the rest. With the translations is printed a Greek text meant to be that of Mr. Wharton's edition, but crowded with misprints in every page. A short 'memoir' of Sappho is prefixed, of which the quality may be gauged by the following extract:

'Sappho was the Laureate of the Court of Venus, where she shone with a splendour commensurate with the charms she celebrated. She succeeded because she was equal to her theme: the tyranny and tenderness of love. She saw and sang the minutest particle of beauty. She saw, and tremblingly worshipped every flash of tenderness that shot its quivering lustrous over the enchanting body of the fair Venus. No curve, no dimple escaped her comprehensive discernment. Sappho worshipped Venus as a goddess: a goddess can have no fault. She recognized her idol as divine, and this divinity had taught the world, long before Sappho's day, that beauty hath its uses.'

The translations vary in merit. Some have a good deal of spirit; but none are quite free from the qualities which are of all others the most remote from the poetry of Sappho, verbosity and conventionality. Thus Sappho says ὕδωρ κελάδει: in the translation, a 'limpid living stream gurgles in rhythmic hymns'; and her καλλιγύναικος χώρας becomes a land 'famed for maids with locks of golden-tinted hues.' A more favourable specimen is the translation of the fragment (3 Bergk) Ἀστέρης μὲν ἀμφὶ καλὰν σελάνναν:—

Brilliant shine the stars at night
Round about the pale young crescent,
But they glow not half so bright
When the full-orbed moon, senescent,
Floods all earth with silvery light.

If the appalling *senescent* were struck out, this would be excellent.

'I submitted them for criticism,' says Mr. Easby-Smith of his translations, 'to some of the Professors of Georgetown University; and as any edition of Sappho—especially a complete text—is extremely rare, the Faculty determined to publish my work.' The Faculty would perhaps have done better to get some competent person to see the Greek text through the press, and to keep the introduction from speaking

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of 'Epithalmia' (which sounds like the name of some frightful disease), and of the works of 'Ptolemy Hephaeston.'

J. W. M.

Three dramas of Euripides, by W. C. LAWTON. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin & Co.

MR. LAWTON tells us in his preface that this volume is intended as a contribution to literature, not to classical philology: criticism must therefore mainly concern itself with the literary value of these translations. Viewing them from this point, frankly I cannot see any good reason for their publication; the versions are not devoid of merit, but neither are they a literary equivalent of the three great dramas (*Alcestis*, *Medea*, *Hippolytus*) which Mr Lawton has chosen for his labour of love. There is much good sense and evident sympathy with Euripides, but nothing to enlighten dark passages or bring out fuller meaning of phrase or character: in fact, there is much good enough to say, but little valuable enough to print.

What is apparently an endeavour to imitate Euripides' frequent use of resolved feet mars the flow of the blank verse, while a similar attempt to echo the rhythms of the choral odes (at any rate in the *Alcestis* and *Hippolytus*) produces passages metrically unmeaning to an English ear, and as little the equivalent of the graceful lyrics of the Greek poet, as is a 'Pindaric ode' of Sprat the equivalent of an ode of Pindar.

A more serious fault is Mr Lawton's defiance of the primary law that poetry prefers the particular to the general. Why for instance translate ἐλάττει 'forest'? It is especially important in the case of Euripides, whose taste for novelty of expression was carried even to excess, to strive to give as far as possible an equivalent in English for his somewhat 'precious' phrases: to my mind the translator who fails in this one point fails from a literary point of view in all. Compare Mr Lawton's rendering of *Alc.* 473 sq.

'Oh that I could find a helpmeet
Loving as thou, for the rarest of portions
Were it on earth,'

with Browning's—

'Might it be mine
To chance on such a mate
And partner! For there's penury in life
Of such allowance.'

The first is common-place: the second is *commune proprie dictum*.

Again compare the renderings of *Alc.* 797sq.

Mr. Lawton

'Drink with me,
Covered with garlands; and I know the splash
Of wine into the cup will drive from thee
Thy present gloom and sulkiness of soul.'

Browning

'Come drink with me, be-garlanded,
This fashion. Do so, and—I well know what—
From this stern mood, this shrunk-up state of mind,
The pit-pat fall o' the flagon-juice down throat
Soon will dislodge thee from bad harbourage.'

The pathetic passage *Hipp.* 193sq. Mr. Lawton translates as follows:

'Hence passionate lovers of life we appear,
Because of the glamour about it on earth,
Through lack of assurance of living elsewhere,
And ignorance as to the world below.
We with idle tales are deluded.'

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