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Westminster Versions Westminster Versions. Edited by H. F. Fox, M.A. Oxford: Blackwell. 1900. 3s. 6d.

H. Rackham

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SHORT NOTICES

BIRTHDAYS IN ANTIQUITY.

Geburtstag im Alterthum. Von W. SCHMIDT.
Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann. 1908. 8vo.
Pp. xvi + 136. M. 4.80.

MR. SCHMIDT has given a careful and systematic account of the birthday celebrations among Greeks and Romans, beginning with those of private individuals, and passing to the birthdays of princes and gods. As to the last-named, they were not sufficiently substantial at Rome to have birthdays, and so the Romans were content to celebrate the festivals of the foundations of their temples. Mr. Schmidt has drawn some important conclusions from his material, for which the reader may be referred to his book; notably (p. 110) as to the phrase *εἰς τρίτην μηνός* (Eur. *Alc.* 321) which Nauck marks *vitiosum*. Mr. Schmidt explains the unlucky character of certain days by the character of the gods who were born upon those days. But he overlooks the explanation of the names of the days of the week which may be found in *Dio Cassius* xxxvii. 19 (see *C. R.* xvii. p. 87). And so some of his arguments about the names of the days of the week fall to the ground. Mr. Schmidt (114 n.) follows Gesenius in saying that 'the Jews originally denoted the months by numbers.' But the Canaanitish names Abib, Ethanin, Bul, which the Jews took over, refer to seasons and not to numbers, and the practice of the older writers in the O. T. is to follow this usage (Deut. xvi. 1). Hence, it is doubtful whether the Greek names of the months were at first numerical, however the matter stood at Rome. Many readers will turn with special attention to the closing pages of the book where Mr. Schmidt starts from the festivals of the private associations at Rome, which were held on the day of the dedication of their temples, when the god came to his home, and conjectures (p. 129) that the Christian societies imitated their pagan neighbours.

In the history of the Church, the Feast of the Epiphany precedes the celebrations of Christmas.

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DE FINIBUS.

M. Tulli Ciceronis, De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum. Libri V. With Introduction and Commentary by W. M. L. HUTCHINSON. Arnold. 1909. 8s. 6d. net.

WE can heartily recommend this book for the University student. It is quite an unpretending book. Miss Hutchinson modestly ascribes any merit it may possess to Madvig; but this is not to do herself justice. It is based on Madvig, as any new edition must be, unless a greater than Madvig should arise; but it was made by a practical teacher with the object of explaining what her pupils really wanted to know. Hence, it is fuller in dealing with the subject-matter of the book, and does not take so much for granted. The present writer is grateful for Miss Hutchinson's help, feeling as he does that Madvig is more proper for those who have already read and understood the main lines of the *De Finibus*. It is a great relief to be spared what one may call the show-notes in which authors let off steam; these notes are few, and to the point.

WESTMINSTER VERSIONS.

Westminster Versions. Edited by H. F. Fox, M.A.
Oxford: Blackwell. 1900. 3s. 6d.

THESE are the renderings into Greek and Latin verse that won the prizes in the *Westminster Gazette's* competitions. To say that they are by Mr. Sidgwick, Mr. Morshead, Mr. Godley, and other hardly less well-known composers is to indicate their quality. It is, indeed, disappointing that the list of winners includes not a single 'dark horse'—no one who has not been a Fellow or Scholar at Oxford or Cambridge. Mr. E. D. Stone, by far the most

frequent contributor, gives a faultless rendering in Latin elegiacs of Henley's *To an Athlete Dying Young*. Its length apart, the piece rather suggests a Greek epigram. Romanes' line, 'Some novel form of wonder to create' (meaning a new orchid or the like), is done into Latin: 'Quod stupeant omnes, arte creare genus,' and in another version, 'Scilicet ut mira rem nouitate creem'; but no ingenuity could make it intelligible to an ancient Roman. But this is exceptional. The choice of English passages (no easy task after all these years of versification) is notably good, both for intrinsic

value and for suitability to the purpose in hand. There are Horatian and Lucretian hexameters, but no relief from the machine-turned Ovidian elegiac. Surely

'Sweet, be not proud of those two eyes'
or

'Know, Celia (since thou art so proud),
'Twas I that gave thee thy renown'

might have sent Mr. Stone to *Cynthia* for a model.

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES AND NEWS

[The editors will be glad to receive contributions to this column.]

GREECE.—Messrs. Wace and Thompson are continuing their exploration of prehistoric Thessaly, and have investigated the mound known as Karamanchayir Magoula, between Velestino and Pharsala. It is one of the largest of its class, a hundred yards in diameter, and the excavators were only able to sink trial-pits to test the stratifications, and to clear a small area revealing some prehistoric houses. One group of these consists of four superimposed, square in form, with walls of unbaked brick on a base of rough concrete. They are distinguished from other primitive houses, such as those at Dimini and Sesklos, by stone buttresses projecting inwards at right angles, one in each wall. In these houses and in the pits was much painted pottery, the lowest levels yielding the now well-known red-and-white fabric; two later varieties seem to be unique. In the later Neolithic period the pottery is coarser, and unpainted. Over thirty clay figurines, some painted, were also found, and contrast strongly with contemporary types from other sites; among other finds were axes, chisels, and flint-knives of polished stone, and clay sling-bullets. The excavators will shortly proceed to investigate another mound at Rachmanti between Larissa and Tempe.

Other operations projected or now in progress are those of the British School at Sparta, directed to the discovery of the Mycenaean settlement; of Dr. Evans at Knossos and of the Italian School at Agia

Triadha; of the German Institute at Tiryns, the American School at Corinth and Peirene, and the French School at Delos. It is also reported that the Americans are to excavate Sardis and Cyrene; the latter news is especially satisfactory.

ITALY.—Professor D. Vaglieri is now excavating Ostia, and has discovered the principal gate, which, as an inscription shews, was constructed by the Senate and people of Ostia and restored by P. Clodius Pulcher. The city wall, which dates from the first century B.C., has also been excavated, and part of the Via Ostiensis. Outside the gate was a base of a statue dedicated to the Fortune of Augustus by Acilius Glabrio, patron of the colony. Another inscription shews that the local Senate numbered 110 members. The water-supply of the city includes a large conduit and a drinking-trough for animals. Numerous tombs were examined, one containing the remains of a young woman with the skeleton of a child in the act of being born! One tomb is that of Domitius Fabius Hermogenes, a Roman Knight and aedile of Ostia, whose name occurs on an inscription in the Lateran Museum.

At Pompeii a new villa has come to light about a mile outside the walls, evidently a country residence, and distinct in type from the ordinary Pompeian house. The walls are covered with life-size mythological subjects. The excavation, begun by a private individual, has now been stopped by the Government.