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](#)

Verrall's Euripides the Rationalist *Euripides the Rationalist; a Study in the History of Art and Religion.*
By A. W. Verrall, Litt.D., Fellow of Trinity College,
Cambridge. Cambridge: at the University Press. 1895.
7s. 6d.

J. R. Mozley

The Classical Review / Volume 9 / Issue 08 / November 1895, pp 407 - 413

DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X00202564, Published online: 27 October 2009

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009840X00202564

How to cite this article:

J. R. Mozley (1895). The Classical Review, 9, pp 407-413 doi:10.1017/S0009840X00202564

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)

any one of a dozen other origins. Such terminology (examples *passim*, e.g. pp. 15, 52, 64, 67, 70, 73) reduces the student to despair; it is feeding him with the stone of an everlasting 'perhaps.' And, as might be feared, the author does this explicitly quite as often as by the use of loose phraseology. Again and again he prints what can only be called absolutely irresponsible hypotheses, mere conjectures of unverified phonetic laws which crumble away the moment they are examined, and do nothing but cumber the ground: 'the $\bar{e}$ vowel (of the suffix $-\bar{e}$) may be a modification of an original $-a$...so that Lat. *heriem* will exactly correspond to Osc. *heriam*' (p. 344)—a theory which brings the first declension and third and fourth conjugations alike in ruins about our ears, and that without a hint of the danger; 'the o -sound [in Plaut. *voco* = *vaco*] apparently having been produced by the influence of the labial v ' (p. 15)—an influence which mercifully spared the other Latin words beginning with *va-* (e.g. *valeo*, *vapor*), with many more such audacious assumptions which I will not transcribe. Chronology is treated with as little respect as law: *ferbui* 'the classical form' is explained by the late Latin change of v to b (p. 51); the tt of *quattuor* by the cq of Italian *acqua* (p. 113); on p. 38 we read that 'the reduction [of ae to i as in *concido*] was in late Latin seldom carried out'; phonetic changes are 'occasional' (p. 224), 'allowed' (p. 115), 'more and more asserted' (p. 142), 'may happen' (231), being, by the way, continually described as 'interchanges' (e.g. p. 89). Hence we are not surprised to find the appearance of h for f and f for h treated as the same phenomenon¹ and that of o for au , au for o ; nor that 'λύχνος from *λυκνος' and Mr. Wharton's 'Lat. a from I.-Eu. pretonic e ' are regarded with favour. There are traces of a similarly loose grasp of morphological

¹ The fact is, I believe, that h for f (= bh) is Faliscan, and f for h (= dh , gh) is Sabine.

principle, but they are fewer and less serious.

In view of this weakness of method it is to be regretted that Mr. Lindsay so rarely quotes his modern authorities, so that the reader might know whose views he is reading. In itself, in cases where the facts are quite clear, it is purely a matter of taste (and space) whether an author chooses to quote names or not. Even in such cases, where the point is of real importance, a reference might well be added; Zimmer should certainly have been named on p. 523, Wackernagel on p. 165, Bartholomae on p. 462, Osthoff on p. 229. The almost solitary gap in Mr. Lindsay's knowledge that I have noticed is that he does not read the papers published by the Cambridge Philological Society: he has lost in more than one place by ignorance of those by Dr. Postgate and Mr. Darbishire.

But notwithstanding the serious defects that have been pointed out, notwithstanding the grave drawback which they imply to the usefulness of the book, it is, I repeat, a gift of great value to our generation, and one which has cost so much labour that it seems almost inhuman to expect that more should have been spent upon it. Spent however it assuredly will be, but by others. Mr. Lindsay's learning and devoted research have amassed a store of material in which every Latin scholar of his time will find rich plunder. He has succeeded in work which only men of the most solid ability and indomitable industry would have attempted; and in so far as he has failed, it is chiefly because the task as he conceived it was too great for any single scholar, at all events under the ordinary conditions of scholarship in England. In any case, the book retains one sovereign merit; it is absolutely indispensable.

R. SEYMOUR CONWAY.

CARDIFF, 1895.

VERRALL'S EURIPIDES THE RATIONALIST.

Euripides the Rationalist: a Study in the History of Art and Religion. By A. W. VERRALL, Litt.D., Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. Cambridge: at the University Press. 1895. 7s. 6d.

DR. VERRALL has written a work of great originality and ingenuity: but is it a work

that establishes a conclusive basis for future inquirers? I think not; and for this reason, that it pushes certain premisses, which in a degree are sound, up to a point at which they become paradoxical. Not only so: but, in the form in which they are presented, they even tend to defeat the very purpose which Dr. Verrall has at heart.

That purpose is to set Euripides on his legs again. Ever since Schlegel's time, he has been depreciated and ignored. Aeschylus and Sophocles have, by different critics, been raised to the highest rank in the poetical hierarchy; have been reckoned almost, if not quite, the equals of Homer; whereas Euripides has been treated as a kind of peddling fellow, a seller of tawdry wares, showy enough in some patches and scraps no doubt, but wholly lacking in dignity of thought and consistency of design.

How does Dr. Verrall seek to contravene this unfavourable judgment? He tells us that we have all mistaken the main purpose of Euripides; that Euripides was, in reality, a great religious reformer; that, all through his plays, he had one single-minded moral purpose, to exhibit the futility and falsehood of the theology accepted by the ancient Greeks, and in particular the profound delusiveness of the Delphic oracle. And he pursued this purpose, according to Dr. Verrall, not only by casual inuendoes, but even more, and more efficaciously, by an undercurrent of rationalistic meaning in some of his principal tragedies; a meaning palpable to the intelligent part of his hearers, and constituting, in fact, a new story, differing from the story which the drama in each case professes to exhibit, and intended to replace the old story in the thoughts of all right-minded persons, both by its greater worthiness and by the delightful irony with which the new is insinuated under the guise of the old. This contention Dr. Verrall undertakes to make clear by an examination of three important plays of his author, the *Alcestis*, the *Ion*, and the *Iphigenia in Tauris*.

The *Alcestis* may well be taken as a sample of all three. In all ancient mythology, there are few more famous stories, few that have been reputed more touching. Who forgets the pathetic allusion in Milton?

Methought I saw my late espoused saint
Brought to me, like Alcestis from the
grave,
Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband
gave,
Rescued from death by force, though pale
and faint.

Alcestis, we all have understood, laid down her life for her husband; consented to die in his place; and then, after she had thus voluntarily suffered, was by the prowess of 'Jove's great son,' Heracles, and by

the will of the divine powers, restored again to the life which she had left, to gladden the hearts of her husband, her children, and her people. In the literal sense, we none of us believe in this story; but it has a place in our minds; it is not all false, though what true events of past time they were that took this outward guise of fable, and have descended to us through the ages, we know not. It is a story which belongs to that twilight of half-belief, in which all mythology and much even of actual history exists for us, and which, though it has not the force of well-grounded knowledge, is yet a region of peace and light for those who can use without misusing it. Poets have ever delighted in such stories; not because they can resolve them into their primary elements, and elicit the underlying truth out of which they grew; but because of the assistance which such stories furnish towards the understanding of the human heart, and for the vivid representation of real feelings.

Was it not, then, with this kind of motive that Euripides composed his play, the *Alcestis*; not indeed as an actually true history, but as a story symbolical of truth, and rendering truth easier for us to comprehend? Dr. Verrall tells us that it was not; that Euripides had an object very much the reverse of this, namely, to demonstrate how very false the fable was which he seemed to be recording; how impossible it was that Alcestis could really have been raised from the dead; what an 'incubus' on the best interests of society the belief in Apollo was; how idiotic the divine honours paid to such a drunkard and glutton as Heracles! That is the great lesson, according to Dr. Verrall, which Euripides expected his audience to draw from the *Alcestis*; which he inculcated 'with zeal and earnestness'; and with which we, to-day, are to sympathize! And if a disappointed auditor or reader, sensible of a certain want in this account of the matter, should ask, What has become of the story? Dr. Verrall has his answer ready: Euripides, he says, intended to present the human elements of the story exactly as they stood before; it is only the divine, or pseudo-divine, elements that he cuts out. This is the process which is known as 'rationalizing'; and accordingly Dr. Verrall entitles his volume *Euripides the Rationalist*.

In brief, the new story which Dr. Verrall says underlies the old familiar story of the *Alcestis* is this: Alcestis was, through the

oracle, hypnotized into the belief that she was going to die (as she had voluntarily taken upon herself to do for her husband's sake) on a certain day; she fell into a condition simulative, first of the approaches of death, then of death itself; she seemed dead, being in a state of coma; and her husband and friends, having shared with her the belief that she was going to die, now naturally believed her dead, and carried her out for burial. She was not however buried underground; she was placed in a receptacle in which her body was, that very evening, to be cremated. (The acuteness of Dr. Verrall in deducing from the play that this was the manner in which the body of Alcestis was to be disposed of, is great: the point is separable from the rest of his theory, and may I think be considered correct.) Luckily, as we all know, Heracles arrived in the nick of time; but the Heracles of the new story is not the mighty demigod of the old; he is a strong-armed rustic, thirsty and bibulous, whose best quality is a native common-sense which prompts him to hasten to the tomb to see if Alcestis is really dead. Whether by good fortune or by perseverance we are not told, but anyhow he succeeds in reawakening her, and brings her back to her astonished husband.

That, according to Dr. Verrall, is the story which Euripides expected the intelligent part of his audience to understand without difficulty as the true theme of the *Alcestis*. Supposing him to be correct in this, he is no doubt further correct in believing that these intelligent people found the poet's *double entendre* highly amusing and stimulative; and he is careful to remark that the self-sacrifice of Alcestis is not at all destroyed, for as she and all around her genuinely believed that she was going to die, her character is not affected by the fact that this belief was a mistake. The pleasure then to be derived from the *Alcestis* is, Dr. Verrall thinks, twofold; first, as a work of extreme delicacy of wit; secondly, and in a subordinate way, as exhibiting a pathetic and noble, though fundamentally mistaken, disposition in the heroine.

Now my first criticism of this theory is that, though Alcestis according to it remains no doubt noble, she is not, as Dr. Verrall supposes, unaffected as regards her character by this new view of her. She is very much less noble than she was. In fact, it is her mental weakness (which we may pardon, but cannot ignore) that causes her seeming death.

She is overcome in a way not incredible certainly, but still distinctly lowering to her dignity. What, then, ought we to think of her? If Euripides has not, by those gentle hints which a great dramatist must ever be feeling after, supplied an answer to this question, he is as veritable a bungler as ever any adverse critic supposed him to be, though his bungling is incurred in pursuit of a more difficult aim than has hitherto been attributed to him. Where, then, in his delineation of the character of Alcestis, does Euripides present us with those delicate touches which imply that, after all, her heroism is justly subject to a certain amount of tender ridicule; that she had something of Don Quixote in her, in the illusory nature of the struggle which she underwent, as well as in the staunchness of spirit with which she underwent it? Dr. Verrall has not taken the trouble to look for any such passages, because in his view there is no need of them; he thinks that Alcestis is just as heroic on the view that the cause of death was a superstitious weakness of her own as on the view that the cause of death was the shock produced by an all-powerful external agent. But it is impossible to hold with Dr. Verrall here; he has lowered the character of Alcestis, and he is bound to show that Euripides was conscious of this lowered view, and that the poet has suited his expressions so as to make us feel both sides of the character, the side on which we admire and love it but also the side on which we must perceive it to be open to laughter and gentle reproach. I certainly should be much surprised, and I believe that every reader of the *Alcestis* will be much surprised, if Dr. Verrall can produce a single passage that implies in the faintest degree that Alcestis was liable to reproach or ridicule even of the tenderest and least aggressive kind.

If Dr. Verrall were right, the writer with whom Euripides would best be compared, in the style of his mind though not in the scale of his compositions, would be Heine. Heine has exactly that double-edged treatment of religion, that mixture of love and satire in his feeling towards it, that tendency to adore which is ever frustrated by the sight of something in the adored object open to a keen shaft from his quiver, which Euripides ought to display if Dr. Verrall's conception of him be true. But who has ever mistaken Heine's meaning?—whereas Euripides, according to Dr. Verrall, has been a sealed book to all the world from the days of the Alexandrian grammarians

until now, except perhaps to Lucian; for Dr. Verrall (pp. 198 *sqq.*) claims Lucian as entertaining the same opinion which he himself holds. This, however, is a claim which can hardly be admitted. All that Lucian says, in the passage quoted by Dr. Verrall, is that Euripides was a sceptic, and disbelieved in the Greek mythology. This, we have reason to believe, was the case; but a sceptical poet may very well assume belief for dramatic purposes, especially if he thinks that there is some underlying truth in the system which in its actual form he rejects. Euripides had enough of vague religious belief to qualify him for treating sympathetically fables which certainly he did not accept as actual facts.

And now I ought to say something about the character of the arguments with which Dr. Verrall supports his thesis, in so far as the *Alcestis* is concerned. Their general line is as follows: The *Alcestis* is, in regard of its leading characters (except Alcestis herself) and especially as regards the divine personages introduced in it, so ludicrous a composition, that we can only suppose Euripides, when he wrote it, to have been poking fun at his own characters. Apollo, Death, Admetus, Heracles, all come under Dr. Verrall's probe, which is applied keenly, scrutinizingly, and with the rigid determination to note scientifically every deflection on their part from right and rational purpose. Other critics, before Dr. Verrall, have weighed Admetus and Heracles in the balance and found them wanting; but none with anything like Dr. Verrall's severity. It is his object to prove that none of these characters deserves to occupy the stage as seriously claiming our respect; therefore, they occupy it as semi-comic persons, at whom we are to laugh. As we are to laugh at them, it is plain there must be some deep joke in the whole matter: what can it be? Being thus put on the scent to discover something supremely ludicrous, we go on to observe that Alcestis is, according to the play, buried on the very day of her death, and without any proper ascertainment of the fact of death. Clearly, then, the secret is out! She never did die; at least, not on this occasion. That is the piece of fun which the Athenian audience were waiting for all through; and thus we come to the conclusion that wit, and not pathos, is the characteristic quality of the *Alcestis*, and of Euripides generally; and in reading his productions, we need not fear lest we should be uncomfortably moved to tears; but we may legitimately fear lest

his exquisite humour should provoke us to unseasonable laughter.

I have been compelled to give a brief summary of an argument which Dr. Verrall elaborates in a hundred and twenty-eight pages; and as a matter of course, I have been unable to do justice to the subtlety of his observations, or to the care with which he tracks out his case. But, as far as one page can represent a hundred, I believe that I have represented him faithfully. It will not, I trust, be thought disrespectful to him if I am obliged to make my answers to the above arguments somewhat brief also.

First, I must for the sake of clearness say again that, if all the other characters in the play are to be deemed comic, there is no reason why Alcestis should be let off. She is, according to Dr. Verrall, subject to a ludicrous delusion; why, if the piece is really a comedy, is this taken out of the list of the subjects at which we are expected to laugh? It is in fact the very cream of the joke that is taken from us; the comedy centres in her. Is it really Euripides who hinders us from laughing at her? but why should he? However, I will not pursue this point farther. I come to Admetus. As I read the play, Euripides treats Admetus with real respect; with greater respect than we moderns, considering the facts, would be inclined to treat him; but different ages are not always alike in their moral judgments. What ground has Dr. Verrall for thinking that Euripides meant to point the finger of scorn at Admetus? He says, for one thing, that Admetus himself knew that he was liable to censure for cowardice. No doubt, Admetus does express the fear lest his enemies should taunt him with this failing (vv. 950—961); they would of course do so, whether he were right or wrong in accepting his wife's sacrifice of herself on his behalf. But do the Chorus countersign this fear of his? They emphatically do not: they tell Admetus that he could not help himself; they bid him take good heart (τόλμα, v. 983); and their topic of consolation is that Alcestis will receive divine honours, and that she is not to be regarded as a common dead mortal. The Chorus, in any Greek play, is ordinarily the representative of the mind of the poet himself; and I take it that it is so here. Clearly they acquit Admetus. But then, says Dr. Verrall, Pheres, the father of Admetus, charges his son with cowardice. Yes; but it is much more to the point to observe that Pheres never thought of doing so till Admetus

charged him with the same vice. Then, of course, Pheres retorted in self-defence; he could not fail to seize so obvious a weapon. But how odious, says Dr. Verrall (and in this he follows a multitude of other critics), was it for Admetus to fix a perfectly needless quarrel on his father in the way he does! to begin by taunting him with cowardice for not consenting to die in place of the son who is at that moment addressing him! and that too, when Admetus knew that he himself was in danger of hearing the same reproach! It was improper conduct in Admetus, no doubt. But did Euripides think so? That is the question that concerns us. It is to be noted that Admetus does not reproach his father purely out of his own head. Alcestis, on her deathbed, had intimated her feeling on the subject; and the Chorus had expressed the same opinion afterwards. 'Thy father and thy mother forsook thee, though it would have been well for them to die, well for them to save their son, and death would have been honourable to them,' says Alcestis (vv. 290—292); and the expressions of the Chorus (466—470) are tantamount. The ancient Greeks had not the same high notion of the rights of the individual man that we have; and they were much more plain-spoken. Euripides, I should say, did not very seriously blame Admetus for the language he used on this occasion.

But now comes that curious point, on which Dr. Verrall is the first critic to lay stress, that the funeral of Alcestis apparently takes place on the same day as her death. What is the reason of this? I think it is to be found in the nature of the legend. Suppose that Alcestis had been allowed to remain for three or four days laid out in state, before her burial (which is the course that Dr. Verrall thinks ought to have been adopted by Admetus), her soul would by the Greeks have inevitably been regarded as already in Hades. But the legend was that Heracles intercepted her on the way to Hades; that he wrested her from the grasp of Death, who was about to carry her thither (see vv. 24—27 of the play). This conflict had then to take place immediately after the departure of her soul from her body, immediately after her death in short. And yet Euripides did not feel at liberty to omit her burial; that is a sign and token of death too conspicuous not to have a place in a narrative in which death was to be insisted on as real. He was obliged then to represent Admetus as

burying her immediately after her death. Is not this a sufficient reason for the circumstance which Dr. Verrall brings forward? We must not probe into conceptions of this shadowy kind with too minute a logical analysis; but I conceive that the above is substantially the true explanation. But what is Dr. Verrall's explanation? He says that Euripides was designedly casting a slur on Admetus in attributing to him this speedy burial of his wife; and that the poet in fact wishes us to infer that Admetus was afraid of meeting the relations of Alcestis at the funeral, and therefore put the ceremony at a time when those relations could not possibly attend! Not to do Dr. Verrall injustice, let me quote his own words.

'It is impossible,' he says, 'that Admetus should not shrink, as one would shrink from flaying, even although one had never been flayed before, from the thought of walking after the bier of Alcestis, first of a noble train, before the assembled townfolk of Pherae, in the presence of the parents whom he so preposterously maligns, of the kin of his wife (Euripides does not forget them), and of all the curious who could manage to reach the place, knowing that all were saying, to themselves if not audibly,

"See there! alive ignobly, there he skulks!"

His plan is, and all his actions up to the burial have no other object, to escape this horror in the only possible way, by interring his wife, with such ceremony or lack of ceremony as the case might admit, but anyhow instantly, before any one except his household and his chosen associates could know that she was dead' (pp. 57, 58).

Now where, in the whole play, does Admetus show the smallest sign of 'shrinking' from the most public acknowledgment of the facts of the case, of the fact that his wife has taken it upon her to die in his place? He has taken every imaginable means to publish the fact abroad. The knowledge that Alcestis was so to die in his stead is represented as the common property of every one in Greece, and of course of the kinsfolk of Alcestis, among others. (It is only the offended and angry Pheres who threatens Admetus with vengeance from these kinsfolk; otherwise they are unmentioned.) It is true that Admetus feels remorse after her death; but this remorse is by no means intended to be a token of deep-seated guilt. The line which Dr. Verrall quotes,

'See there! alive ignobly, there he skulks!'

and which is spoken by Admetus himself as what he fears his enemies may say of him, receives absolutely no support either from the Chorus or from that other important person, Heracles, who from first to last treats Admetus as a man of conspicuous

integrity and unstained honour. And as such, I am satisfied, it was the intention of Euripides to represent him.

As to Heracles, whom Dr. Verrall also attacks as getting 'very drunk' in the palace of Admetus (p. 26), I will only say that Heracles does not do so. He is flushed with wine, indeed; but he is in his perfect sober senses, his speech is pointed and from his point of view not unreasonable, and he acts, when he has occasion to act, with the utmost promptitude and decision. These are not marks of drunkenness. But no doubt he is jovial; being in ignorance of what has occurred, he is enjoying himself. And I conceive that the reason why Euripides represents him in this way is, that the feeling of having acted with some apparent indecorum is a stimulus to Heracles to endeavour to make compensation for a thing in which he had acted amiss, though in ignorance. It is Admetus, it is true, who has caused him to act amiss; and he gently reproves Admetus for this, as a hero may reprove one who is truly his friend.

My conclusion then is, that both Admetus and Heracles are, as they have always been considered, serious characters, not intended by Euripides to be themes for derision, but on the contrary for admiration; though it does not follow that he thought them in every point unblameable.

And what is to be said of the two other characters whom Dr. Verrall considers to be designedly made ludicrous, 'Apollo' and 'Death'? They appear, as characters, only in the beginning of the play, in a dialogue which takes the place of the ordinary prologue. They are thus not an intrinsic part of the action of the play; and while the main part of the play is entirely serious, it is possible that the dramatist was willing to have some little of the comic element in the prelude to it, especially as the play occupied the place of the ordinary satyric drama (being the fourth in the tetralogy to which it belonged). I incline, in point of fact, to agree with Dr. Verrall as regards this prelude; it reads better, I think, if something of sly humour is regarded as underlying it. But that humour is the principal feature of the play throughout, or that Euripides, in any part of his writings, is distinguished by 'an unsurpassed, and, it may be, unsurpassable wit,' as Dr. Verrall says (p. 91), I cannot think. If it be so, how is it that no ancient critic gives us the least hint of this, as his primary quality? Aristotle calls

him 'the most tragic of the poets': does this look as if Aristotle thought him distinguished, above all things, for humour?

I have dwelt so much on the *Alcestis*, that it is impossible for me here to deal fully with the *Ion* or the *Iphigenia in Tauris*, in both of which Dr. Verrall discerns an underlying story, different from the professed story. From a certain point of view, Dr. Verrall's analysis of the *Ion* may be considered highly successful; but it is the lawyer's, not the poet's, point of view. If Ion, Creusa, and Xuthus had gone before an Athenian law-court, and had requested the judges to sanction for legal purposes the story as it is told in the play, I am afraid that they would have met with a refusal; and that, on the other hand, the gruesome rationalization of it which Dr. Verrall propounds on pp. 152, 153 would have had an excellent chance of being adopted as the true story. But is it not also possible that a court of law might have found some difficulty in affirming the absolute truth of the events narrated in the *Tempest* and the *Midsummer Night's Dream*?

The underlying plot suggested by Dr. Verrall for the *Iphigenia in Tauris* has one great advantage over those which he suggests for the two sister plays; the story is not thereby damaged in its human interest. It is a very great injury to the *Alcestis* (pace Dr. Verrall) to suppose that Alcestis did not die, but was only hypnotized; and it is a very great injury to the *Ion* to suppose that poor Creusa was entirely deluded in the idea that she had recovered her son. But it matters very little whether Iphigenia was miraculously transported to Taurica by Artemis, or was conveyed there quite naturally by a pirate ship. Yet what real reason is there for thinking that Euripides meant to intimate the latter view? The absurdity of the theological machinery is the main reason on which Dr. Verrall relies; and it may freely be granted that it is absurd. When you look into Apollo's conduct, he does not shine here, any more than in the *Ion*. But did Euripides mean Apollo to be scrutinized with this lynx-eyed perspicacity? I think not. In works of imagination one must not always be thinking whether the thing represented is perfectly just or natural. Constantly it is not so, and yet the pleasure of the reader is unimpaired. Do we stop to think, in the *Merchant of Venice*, whether any sensible citizen was likely to leave his daughter under such conditions as to marriage as those to which Portia was sub-

jected? It is absurd, as soon as we look into it; but we choose not to look into it. Just so, Euripides uses his deities to unravel his plot; he does it rather remorselessly, and (being a sceptic) does not mind having a sly hit at them now and then; but, after all, they are necessary to him; and to suppose that his real object was a rationalistic criticism of theology, and that he held the imaginative beauty of his story a minor matter (as Dr. Verrall argues on p. 212) is by no means the conclusion which the *Iphigenia in Tauris* naturally suggests, or at any rate which it has suggested to any one heretofore.

To conclude. The soundest advocate of Euripides in recent times remains, I think, not Dr. Verrall, but Paley. And that particular element in Euripides which is the foundation of Dr. Verrall's theory about him, his theological scepticism, is treated by Paley with much care and perspicacity; though it is possible that future sympathizing commentators may discover more concerning it that has hitherto been made out. In treating of this subject, the *Hippolytus* and the *Bacchae* deserve great consideration; and the interesting articles which Dr. Verrall has contributed to this *Review* on the latter of these two plays (in March 1894 and May 1895) temptingly

invite discussion; but that must not be on the present occasion.

After all, Dr. Verrall deserves our gratitude, not merely for the cleverness of his volume throughout, or for the points which he does really establish (of which I have indicated two in the present review), but for coming forward as an advocate of Euripides at all. The modern world has been unduly blind to the merits of this great poet. Those merits are, first, a naturalness of style, especially in scenes of pathos, in which he is not unworthy to be compared with the very greatest poets; secondly, the admirable construction of some of his principal plays, especially the *Hippolytus*, the *Bacchae*, and the *Medea*; thirdly, a rare beauty of romantic conception, which reaches its acme in the very latest of his plays, a play which doubtless came from his own hand in an unfinished state and received its final touches from another, the *Iphigenia in Aulis*. These are his merits as a dramatist; but he is also a lyrist of the first order. There is one merit, however, which the world, in spite of Dr. Verrall, will hardly assign to him; and that is, the merit of being the rival and the counterpart, in wit, of his inveterate foe, Aristophanes.

J. R. MOZLEY.

APOLLO THE WIND-GOD.

Der Apollonmythos und seine Deutung.
Von Dr. KONRAD SEHRWALD. S. Calvary,
Berlin: 1895. (Berliner Studien für
Classische Philologie und Archaeologie.)
1 Mk. 20.

THIS monograph of thirty-six pages aims at proving that Apollo was originally not a sun-god but a personification of Air. Dr. Sehrwald begins by a short criticism of the arguments which are commonly urged in support of the solar theory, and then expounds his own views on the origin of the god. It appears that Apollo was the pure health-giving air which enwraps the earth, the son of Zeus (who is the upper air) and Leto, who was once turned into a shrew-mouse, and wore a dark robe, whence it is shown that she represents the dark air that permeates the interior of the earth. Hera, being, like Zeus, a deity of the higher atmosphere, with a liking for storms, is

jealous of the young god of the lower air. The battle between the Delian Apollo and Pytho typifies the victory won by the healthy, island-born breeze over the foul vapours which lay over Delphi, the *omphalos* of the world, i.e. over all the face of the earth. The connexion of Apollo and the laurel becomes evident, when we reflect that, according to Pliny, this tree is remarkable as a purifier of the air. The god who first made the earth habitable is naturally the founder of cities. In order that the city atmosphere may be kept wholesome, Apollo was worshipped in the darkest and narrowest streets, and the street-doors were put under his protection (p. 15). The immortal gods fear the arms of Apollo, which can take away their health; for, as Dr. Sehrwald carefully explains, the gods can speak and cry aloud and must therefore breathe. And so, when Apollo bends his bow against the assembled gods, they all