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](#)

Bywater's *Four Centuries of Greek Learning in England*
***Four Centuries of Greek Learning in England*. Inaugural**
Lecture delivered before the University of Oxford on
March 8, 1894. By Ingram Bywater, Regius Professor of
Greek 1893–1908. 8vo. One vol. Pp. 20. Oxford : At the
Clarendon Press, 1919. 1s. 6d. net.

A. E. Housman

The Classical Review / Volume 34 / Issue 5-6 / August 1920, pp 110 - 111

DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X00013822, Published online: 27 October 2009

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009840X00013822

How to cite this article:

A. E. Housman (1920). Review of Ann Fienup-Riordan 'Hunting tradition in a changing world: Yup'ik lives in Alaska today' *The Classical Review*, 34, pp 110-111 doi:10.1017/S0009840X00013822

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)

some extent continues the same subject, owing to the large number of pairs of brothers who are credited with founding colonies in very early times. In this connexion more might perhaps have been made of the magical importance of twins or, as is seen in the legend of Herakles, of the elder twin. Much of the material naturally consists of names,

which the author rightly characterises (p. 171) as 'spröden Stoff, der . . . viele Irrwege bietet'; but to criticise his conclusions, many of which are not at all obvious, would involve going into much detail and extending this notice beyond due limits. H. J. ROSE.

*University College,
Aberystwith.*

BYWATER'S *FOUR CENTURIES OF GREEK LEARNING IN ENGLAND.*

Four Centuries of Greek Learning in England. Inaugural Lecture delivered before the University of Oxford on March 8, 1894. By INGRAM BYWATER, Regius Professor of Greek 1893-1908. 8vo. One vol. Pp. 20. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1919. 1s. 6d. net.

THIS lecture, which Bywater probably thought too slight for publication, has been found among his notebooks and is issued from the press of his University. It is the business-like performance of a good scholar who did not aspire to be an indifferent man of letters; and readers who wish to hear about the Greek spirit may leave it alone.

The greatest part of it is occupied with matter of the least importance. The renaissance of learning in England is history in which Bywater was at home, and he collects a large number of details which I presume to be accurate and which have some interest of a purely antiquarian sort. But those were the years when we were learning Greek and were not yet in case to teach it: our contribution to the European fund begins with the seventeenth century. In Bywater's account of this period there is nothing which I can gainsay of my own knowledge; though I should have thought that Pearson, of whom Bentley said that the very dust of his writings was gold, and Porson that he would have equalled even Bentley as a critic in Greek if he had not muddled his brains with divinity, deserved more prominence than is given him. The two pages on Bentley himself are excellent; and laymen who wonder at the fame of this tasteless and

arbitrary pedant, and the reverence paid him by every competent judge, will hardly find elsewhere in so small a compass so clear a definition of his unique originality and greatness.

But in Bywater's sketch of Greek scholarship after Bentley there are places where I find his judgment or his knowledge defective. He says with truth that Bentley's chief successors, excepting Taylor and in some measure Toup and Tyrwhitt, were mostly occupied, like Bentley himself, with the poets; and I surmise that for this very reason they were not familiar to Bywater.

The school of Bentley, if the expression may be hazarded, Markland, Dawes, Musgrave, Warton, and the rest, allowed itself to be absorbed in the study of the Greek poets. If I were asked who was the strong man and chief figure in this company, I should say with little hesitation, Richard Dawes.

Warton makes a strange appearance here, though far be it from me to blame Bywater or anyone else for ignorance of his large and empty Theocritus; and I should have liked to watch Bentley from a safe distance in Elysium when he heard the expression hazarded that Warton was one of his school. Although the preeminence assigned to Dawes is disputable, I will not dispute it, and I grudge him no praise; but *strong* is not the right word to praise him with. His special virtue was a preternatural alertness and insight in the two fields of metre and grammar, the more extraordinary because his mere learning was not profound. The *strong* man of the company was Markland, devoid of these peculiar qualities, but superior in range and vigour and general activity of mind.

It is probable that Englishmen are right in counting Porson the second of English scholars, but many judges on the Continent would give that rank to Markland. He is the only one except Bentley who has been highly and equally eminent in Greek and Latin; and I believe that Bentley did him the honour, extravagant I admit, to be jealous of him.

Porson . . . is . . . a model of caution and patience, not an impetuous genius like Bentley or Dawes.

Certainly Porson had less genius and less impetuosity than Bentley, but he had as much genius as Dawes, and Dawes had not much more impetuosity than Porson: those who think he had are misled by the effervescence of his style, and its unlikeness to Porson's constraint. There may have been impetuosity, or at least some lack of caution, in Dawes's canon about *ὁπως μῆ* with the 1st aor. subj. active and middle and his alteration of Ar. *Ach.* 633 and *Pac.* 918, but so there was in Porson's pronouncement on the form of the 2nd pers. sing. pres. indic. passive and his destruction of the metre of *Eur. Med.* 629.

The Porsonian school, Blomfield, Monk, and Elmsley, if I may include him among them, continued Porson's work on the dramatists, though with little of Porson's freshness or felicity of touch.

This is true of Monk, if not of Blomfield, but of Elmsley it is false and

unjust. Elmsley no doubt was distinctly inferior to Porson as an emendator, though still a good one, but he was not much inferior as an observer and discoverer in grammar and metre, and his writing has a candour and a pleasant irony which are graces not easily to be matched. See how Nauck and Wilamowitz speak of him, or hear the words of his great antagonist Hermann:

Est enim P. Elmsleius, si quis alius, uir natus augendae accuratiori Graecae linguae cognitioni, ut cuius eximia ac plane, singularis in peruestigandis rebus grammaticis diligentia regatur praeclaro ingenio, mente ab auctoritatibus libera, animo ueri amantissimo, neque aut superbia aut gloriae studio aut obrectandi cupiditate praepedito, his ille uirtutibus id est consecutus, ut, cum doctrina eius maximi facienda sit, non minus ipse sit amandus atque uenerandus.

And this one slighting mention is all that the Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford could spare for the most famous scholar that Oxford ever produced. He continues 'if the mantle of the master descended on anyone, it was rather on Dobree.' It is very hard to decide between the merits of Dobree and Elmsley: I should say that the mantle came in two and half of it fell on each; Dobree was the shrewder emendator and Elmsley the subtler grammarian.

The statement on p. 15 that 'Porson edited Photius' is not strictly true, and on p. 18 the death of Badham is postdated by five years.

A. E. HOUSMAN.

MY COMMONPLACE BOOK.

My Commonplace Book. By J. T. HACKETT. Pp. xvii+403. Fisher Unwin. 12s. 6d. net.

THIS interesting *farrago* of memorable extracts, both in prose and verse, will be reviewed in other journals upon its general merits; here we have space only to notice what concerns us most. This is Mr. Hackett's diatribe against the 'classical enthusiast' who fails to see 'the inferior state of civilisation among the Greeks, their non-moral character in certain respects, their ignorance and superstition, and their low standard of morality generally'

(p. 371). Not that Mr. Hackett is inimical to classical scholarship—on the contrary, he appreciates 'the beautiful Greek language and its glorious literature'—but he holds that the admiration of the 'classical enthusiast' for these things has perverted his sense of truth. His animadversions are contained in some half-dozen notes in which he criticises adversely the enthusiasm for Greek things of writers like R. W. Livingstone, George Gissing, F. W. Myers, Gilbert Murray, and A. E. Zimmern. Thus he has the courage of his point of view, and might have said with Cicero, '*Amicus Plato,*