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Bréal's Semantics *Semantics: Studies in the Science of Meaning*. By Michel Bréal. Translated by Mrs Henry Cust, with a preface by J. P. Postgate. London: William Heinemann. 8vo. Pp. lxvi, 342. 7s. 6d. net.

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BRÉAL'S SEMANTICS.

Semantics: Studies in the Science of Meaning.

By MICHEL BRÉAL. Translated by MRS. HENRY CUST, with a preface by J. P. POSTGATE. London: William Heinemann. 8vo. Pp. lxvi, 342. 7s. 6d. net.

IN October 1896, Professor Postgate delivered an inaugural address at University College London on the Science of Meaning, which was published in the *Fortnightly Review* for September 1897. In July 1897 M. Bréal, the distinguished professor at the Collège de France,—so well known for his studies on the Eugubine Tables, for his *Mélanges de Mythologie*, and for his *Dictionnaire Étymologique Latin*, to say nothing of the brilliant introductions to the successive volumes of his translation of Bopp's *Comparative Grammar*,—published an *Essai de Sémantique*. The coincidence pointed to the existence of a very wholesome reaction against the dominance of phonetics in the sphere of linguistics. The establishment of phonetic laws, with their constantly increasing delicacy and precision, had naturally fascinated the younger generation of students, who delighted to develop them with a vigour and a rigour that was wholly for good. But it was not by any means wholly for good that the form of a word was regarded as its substance, and that it was forgotten or ignored that after all the function of a word, in this form or in that, was to convey thought from one mind to another. Of course there were always scholars who remembered the vast importance of a study of meanings, their origin and their changes. But to some the study seemed too indefinite, to others too difficult to admit of scientific treatment. So in spite of valuable contributions from scholars like Heerdegen, Paul, Sweet and others, the material stands in need of more careful and complete collection, more thorough sifting, and more systematic arrangement, before even the foundation of an adequate science of Semantics can be laid.

The present volume consists of five sections, which are somewhat imperfectly fused; Dr. Postgate's preface of sixty pages, M. Bréal's *Essai* covering in the translation two hundred and fifty (and not much more in the original), a chapter of twenty pages, giving the substance of a review by M. Bréal of Professor Noreen's

noteworthy essay on Purity of Language, another review of thirty pages, dating from 1887, of M. Arsène Darmesteter's *La Vie des Mots*, and finally Dr. Postgate's lecture, covering twenty-five pages. There is good matter in all of these, but not always in the most effective place, and the book rather suffers from the want of unity.

Dr. Postgate's preface is of especial interest to the classical student, for many, if not most of his interesting illustrations are taken from Greek and Latin. He discusses the fallacy of identifying grammatical gender with sex, here agreeing with Brugmann, illustrates the importance of the linguistic clue in problems of mythology, giving in passing an obviously correct, but frequently ignored interpretation of the hundred heads of Cerberus, protests against the domination of formal logic in grammar, dealing with several of the so-called 'figures of speech,' and tracing them to 'an imperfect differentiation of principal and accessory concepts,' and applies his proposed distinction between 'rhemes' and 'epirrhemes' to the elucidation of divers linguistic problems. To use once more the well-worn phrase, any one who has to deal with the interpretation of ancient authors 'cannot afford to neglect' the frequent hints which Dr. Postgate gives in this interesting preface. His aspiration for the formation of a society 'whose task should be to gather and arrange materials, to furnish direction and advice to individual workers, and to put before the world the fruits of their research' is not perhaps likely to be soon realised. We shall probably go on in an irregular unorganised fashion: but even so, just as in phonetics, progress may be made, as sound methods become more familiar.

The translation of M. Bréal's essay and of the appended reviews reads pleasantly and is free from Gallicisms, though it is an odd slip which turns M. Arsène Darmesteter from a distinguished 'Romance scholar' (*romaniste*) into a novelist. But it is rather to be regretted that it was not more thoroughly edited for an English public. To say nothing of the forms often used for proper names—Georges Curtius (regularly), Isidore de Séville, Grégoire de Tours, Lambes, Octavius Augustus—which ought not to find place in an English book, there are a good many points on which a note from a competent editor would have been welcome.

Dr. Postgate, for example, would not have made himself responsible for the statement that *spatium* = *στάδιον* (even though Curtius says so), that *θέλω ἵνα* is not earlier than the apocryphal Gospels (there are half a dozen instances in the New Testament), that *invitare* is from *invitus* and its proper meaning 'to do violence,' that *felis* meant originally 'female' or *erudire* 'to hew a branch of a tree into shape,' that *truncus* 'mutilated' came from *truncare*, and this again from *truncus* 'a tree-stem,' that in Pompeian electoral inscriptions *facite* means 'unite' not 'vote for,' that *splendidus* comes from *σπλήν*, or that *senatus* is understood with the title *princeps*. It is an awkward choice of an illustration to write 'when the Latins began to say *impruntatum habeo*, "I have borrowed," they inaugurated a mechanism whose richness impressed their imagination: 'of course the mechanism was 'inaugurated' (if one must use so unfortunate a phrase) centuries before *impruntare* was ever coined, if indeed it ever existed. These criticisms, to which others might be added, are not intended to detract from the substantial value of M. Bréal's book, but simply to indicate that the publisher might have done well to secure a scholar like Professor Postgate, not only to introduce the book, but also to revise and edit it.

The essay is divided into three parts: 'The Intellectual Laws of Language,' 'How the Meaning of Words is determined,' and 'How Syntax is formed.' Under these several heads M. Bréal lays down a number of laws, but he is careful to explain that these are not blind and uniform: they are psychological, and tentative, sometimes

logically carried out, more frequently representing 'furtive' attempts at the expression of thought. The most novel of these discussed in the first part is one to which the author gives the name of 'irradiation': it has elsewhere been called 'adaptation.' M. Bréal's point is that a form, e.g. a suffix, accidentally combined with a definite force in one word, is supposed to convey that force of itself, and so is employed for that purpose in other cases. For instance *-sco* has no inchoative force inherent in it, as we see from *pasco*, or *nosco* [the latter example seems dubious], but as it is actually found connected with it in *adolesco*, *senesco*, it comes to acquire it in cases like *pallesco*. A more doubtful suggestion is that *esurio* etc. are of the *i*-conjugation, because they have modelled themselves on *sitio*. The chapter on Analogy treats this prolific source of change in language as a means rather than a cause, and acutely indicates some of its own causes. The chapters on restriction and expansion of meaning are full of interesting but sometimes dubious matter. Is it probable or historically proved that *adulterare* in its wider sense was earlier than, and gave rise to *adulter* in its specific sense. The history of *gain* and *regain* might have been traced a little further with profit; and similarly with *accabler*. There are some excellent remarks on articulated groups. But it is impossible to notice all the points touched on in the twenty-six chapters of this comparatively brief essay. It is perhaps sufficient to say that it will be found everywhere interesting and often original and stimulating.

A. S. WILKINS.

CORRESPONDENCE.

HORACE, *CARM.* I. 9. 1 AND I. 2. 14.

MR. SARGEANT'S remarks on Hor. *Carm.* I. 9 and I. 2. 14 on p. 428 of the last volume of the *Classical Review* prompt a brief note. It is probably unnecessary to assign a definite place as the scene of I. 9, though some commentators on Horace (Nauck, for example) have gone altogether too far in representing the difficulty of seeing Soracte from Rome. But for those who take Rome, or its vicinity, to be the scene

of the poem, a greater difficulty of interpretation arises from the fact that Soracte is not by any means a prominent or characteristic feature in the bounding landscape of the capital. The Alban hills, or the Sabine, are much more impressive. Why did not the poet cite them instead of Soracte?

Some satisfaction may be given these critics, however, from the result of a recent winter residence in Rome when especial