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Three Translations of Virgil *The Eclogues and Georgics of Virgil*. Translated by J. W. Mackail. Longmans. *Virgil: Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid i.-vi*. H. R. Fairclough. Heinemann: Loeb Series. *Georgics and Eclogues of Virgil*. Translated into English verse by Theodore Chickering William. With introduction by George Herbert Palmer. Harvard University Press: Humphrey Milford.

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more correct—'yet even this the senate applauded and seemed to lament in the following clause.'

Some other changes are not to the good. The translation at III. xvi. *ad init.*, 'those which have been most celebrated have not always been the most illustrious,' loses the meaning of *alia clariora esse alia maiora*, and is less sensible than Melmoth's 'those which have been the most celebrated have not always been the most worthy of admiration.' Melmoth has the advantage also in X. iv. of expressing *emancipavit* by 'conveyed' rather than by 'realised': *in emancipatione* which follows, and is left untranslated, refers to formalities regularly demanded by Roman law 'in a valid conveyance' of property. In 'sickness which has lately run through my family' for *infirmittates meorum*, VIII. xvi. 1, 'household' would be better than 'family'; *iudiciis*, X. iv. *sub fin.*, implies not merely 'favourable regards' but the emperor's 'powers of discernment'; *praefinire*, X. viii. *sub fin.*, is more than 'limit'; *numeros*, X. xxix., would be clearer as 'muster-roll' than as 'legion.' Occasionally Latin phrases are left untranslated, e.g. *moretur in libertate* in IV. x., which Melmoth, however, represents by 'let Modestus enjoy his freedom'; and *peregrinae conditionis* in X. v. The heading for VII. i. 'To Restitutus' is a puzzling translation to retain of the Latin superscription *Gemino suo*.

A few oversights occur in the printing.

In vol. I., p. 10 *Vitellianae* for *Vitelliana*; p. 98 *asequi*. At p. 192 and p. 286 respectively '(Plin.) iv. 33' and 'Thuc. ii. 403' are impossible references. On p. 319 *eclogas sive, ut multi, poematia* is misrendered in the English by 'Eclogues (as many others have), Little Poems,' where presumably *or* has fallen out and a vagrant comma attaches *ut multi* to the wrong noun. In volume II., p. 18 *illud versum* should be either *illud verbum* or *illum versum*; p. 55 *dipositions*; p. 107 *singlar*; p. 109 *treaties* for *entreaties*; p. 165 *Pannoniod* for *Pannonia*; p. 171 *transforms*; p. 172 *forte* for *sorte*; p. 217 *Russo* for *Ruso*.

The text followed is based on that published by the Bipons Press in 1789 with a revision in the light of the chief modern editions. Some of the important variant readings are recorded in notes; but textual criticism does not come within the scope of this edition, as the preface points out. The biographical index of notable personages in the letters is good so far as it goes; it deals, however, with fewer than thirty names and so cannot convey an adequate view of Pliny's circle. One misses names like Silius Italicus and Martial and Caecina Paetus and Pliny's wife Calpurnia; and, if Decebalus and Pacorus are princes too remote, why should there not be an entry for Trajan himself?

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THREE TRANSLATIONS OF VIRGIL.

The Eclogues and Georgics of Virgil.
Translated by J. W. MACKAIL. Longmans.

Virgil: Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid i.-vi.
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Georgics and Eclogues of Virgil. Translated into English verse by THEODORE CHICKERING WILLIAM. With introduction by GEORGE HERBERT PALMER. Harvard University Press: Humphrey Milford.

Cupido difficilia faciendi continues to give the world new translations of Virgil.

It is all to the good: one cannot have too many: but all remain standing confutations of the statement, so frequently made by the experts of the daily Press, that you need not learn Latin and Greek because you can get all the best of antiquity in translations. This singularly crude judgment no doubt rests, like most popular errors, on a modicum of truth. Greek and Latin poetry (Greek, perhaps, rather oftener than Latin) can be done into English and still retain an appreciable part of itself. Something of the Homeric spirit may survive in a good prose translation: something of the

Horatian effect is not beyond the compass of English verse. But Virgil can only be read in Latin, if he is to remain Virgil: he, and perhaps he alone, has up to the present wholly defied reproduction. Yet poets attempt him, and scholars: and sometimes those who are both scholars and poets.

Here, for instance, are two prose versions, one of the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, one of the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* and half the *Aeneid*. Mr. Mackail's, it may be said at once, is excellent. Nothing could be more faithful, nothing in better taste: there is no expression that is not well chosen. But no version (certainly no prose version) can get over the obvious fact that the Virgilian word is a part of the Virgilian hexameter. It is not really true that all the charm of all the Muses often flowers in a *lonely* word. The magic is partly in the choice of the word: but much more in the indefinable but none the less intimate link of the detail with the whole of the phrase or the line. What Virgil has said cannot be said in any other way. If any master of the English language could do the trick, it would be Mr. Mackail. It is precisely because of his great gifts as a translator that we are more and more convinced that the trick cannot be done: not though the half-penny and even the penny Press confidently assert the contrary.

The Loeb translation is also excellent—indeed, there is very little to choose between Mr. Fairclough and Mr. Mackail. Here and there (but real discrepancies are, as one would expect, very rare) it is possible to say that one is more faithful than the other. If, for instance, Mr. Mackail is clearly right in translating 'prunis lapidosa rubescere corna' (*Geor.* II. 34) 'plums redden on the stony cornel'—Mr. Fairclough sees 'stony cornels blushing on the plum'—*per*

contra, a few lines farther on, the Loeb version may cry quits with Mr. Mackail. In view of the context, most will probably agree that 'in manibus terrae' should rather be rendered 'the land is close at hand' than 'the earth is in hand.' Perhaps, if one may generalise, it is possible to say that Mr. Fairclough is a trifle the more literal, and Mr. Mackail a thought the more impeccably tasteful.

Of course it is still easier to find fault with verse translations. They attempt more: they may rise much higher than prose, and they take the corresponding risk of falling a great deal lower. To translate Virgil into English verse is a noble enterprise, but one that bristles with difficulties. Humanity being what it is, the mere limitations of metre almost inevitably compel a trifle of insertion here and omission there: and, a word too much or too little, and the delicate Virgilian nuance of meaning—no artistry is more subtle—may be lost. It was not therefore to be expected that Professor Williams' version of the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* should be quite as faithful to the exact meaning as Mr. Mackail's or Mr. Fairclough's. Yet (although blank verse is far away from the Virgilian hexameter) metrical effect may reproduce what prose never can: and Professor Williams' blank verse is singularly pleasing: the general result justifies the warmth of his friend Mr. Palmer's Introduction. The translation throughout—which the author had just completed before his death, but not revised—is the work of a good scholar, a man of taste, and a sincere lover of Virgil. As such, Professor Williams would probably have confessed that the added knowledge of Virgilian beauties must always be the translator's best reward, whether he work in prose or verse.

A. D. G.