

The Classical Review

MARCH 1887.

EDITORIAL.

THE general aim of the promoters of THE CLASSICAL REVIEW has been already explained in a Prospectus which has been widely circulated; but it may be well in our first number briefly to recapitulate what was there stated as to the scope of the Review, and to point more directly to the results which we hope may follow from its establishment.

As regards its subject-matter, the Review will deal with all that concerns the language, life, and literature of Greece and Rome down to the year 800 A.D. in the case of the Western, and the year 1453 A.D. in the case of the Eastern Empire, as well as with the history of classical scholarship up to the present time. Oriental languages and history, and general or comparative philology, will be included only in so far as they are directly related to the languages and history of Greece and Rome. But the Review will embrace all that is written in Greek and Latin down to the dates above mentioned, without regard to the distinction commonly made between sacred and profane literature.

It is evident that it will be necessary to define our subject still further if it is to be brought within reasonable compass, so as to admit of thorough treatment in the pages of THE CLASSICAL REVIEW. This limitation we hope to gain, in the first place, by taking as our starting point and chief concern the interpretation of the ancient texts. We do not propose to deal with Philosophy, or Law Theology, or in the abstract, but with their literary basis. Thus Theology, so far as it enters into our plan, will be not speculative or systematic, but mainly critical or exegetical. Another limitation will arise out of our manner of treating the subject. Our aim is not so much to provide original matter as to supply an index and chronicle of all that is being done in the field of Classical Antiquity as above defined.

It is thought that a publication based on these lines will supply a real want which has long been felt in this country. Whereas in Germany there are more than twenty periodicals devoted to the exclusive study of Classical Antiquity, some of them coming out as often as once a week, English scholarship has produced up to the present time no single periodical of frequent or even regular issue which devotes itself to the different requirements of classical students. For notes and news of classical and archæological interest, as well as for reviews of classical books, scholars have had to depend almost entirely on the journals of general literature, in which only a very limited space could be allotted to any special department.

We hope then to make THE CLASSICAL REVIEW a critical record of the work of the year, so far as regards English publications, by noticing within three months of their

appearance, all that are not unmistakable cram-books or of a merely elementary character; and in regard to foreign publications, by independent notices of the more important books, and by short summaries of the various philological, archæological, and theological reviews so far as they fall within the province marked out; attention will also be called to articles or paragraphs of interest to classical scholars which may be found in other publications. In regard to unprinted matter, information will be given by Correspondence from our own and from foreign universities, by Reports of Exploration and Discovery, and in other ways.

A further use of the Review will be to serve as a receptacle for notes and queries and adversaria of any kind. It constantly happens that a scholar in the course of his studies makes an emendation or strikes out a new interpretation of a disputed passage, or lights upon an interesting illustration, or discovers inaccuracies in some work of authority; yet nothing comes of his discoveries because he does not know where to send them. We hope that *THE CLASSICAL REVIEW* may become the natural depository of such fragments of knowledge, each perhaps apparently unimportant in itself, but in the aggregate capable of leading to results of great interest and value. At present there is perhaps no country which produces so large an annual crop of scholars, with so small a comparative result in the shape of permanent contributions to classical learning, as our own.

Again, we shall hope, at least until our pages are fully occupied in the ways above described, to insert short original articles, which will usually be of a less elaborate kind than those which are admitted in the existing philological journals. Such articles will from time to time be especially adapted to the requirements of younger scholars.

To sum up briefly the benefits we anticipate from the establishment of *THE CLASSICAL REVIEW*, if we succeed in carrying out the above programme: they are first, that writers will no longer work in the dark, as they have too often done in former times, but will at any rate have an opportunity of ascertaining what is being done abroad, and will also have the satisfaction of knowing that their own work will be tested by competent critics within a reasonable period of time; secondly, that schoolmasters and others interested in education will learn what books to recommend to their pupils, and may perhaps gather hints as to improved methods of teaching from our foreign correspondence; thirdly, we hope to turn wasted power to account by inducing some who are at present unproductive scholars to take a more active part in promoting the advancement of learning; fourthly, perhaps it is not too much to hope that some who have been prejudiced against classical education may chance to cast their eye on these pages and discover that to classical scholars at any rate 'Classics' means something more than writing verses in a dead language, though even for that much-decried accomplishment we think there is something to be said, and indeed propose to give occasional specimens of it in our columns. Lastly, we hope that *THE CLASSICAL REVIEW* may be used as an organ of intercommunication between scholars in all parts of the world, and thus foster the feeling that all are engaged in a common work, and enable each to profit by the experience of others.

It must, of course, take time before the ideal of a Classical Review here shadowed forth can approach to realization. But the editors believe that it is perfectly capable of being realized, and that in proportion as it is so, it will tend very greatly to improve the condition of classical learning in England.