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Henry Nettleship

Excerpt

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I.

MORITZ HAUPT.

(PUBLIC LECTURE, MAY 1879.)

THERE have been scholars whose works are monumental, and will be read so long as the historical sciences continue to be seriously studied. There have been others (and their number is far larger), the influence of whose labour has to a great extent been confined to the sphere of their own generation, whose reputation rests rather on their personal power than on the fame of any one work, and who, though strong as writers, were stronger as instructors. Moritz Haupt was one of these last; and it is because he was so, and because I am personally much indebted to his teaching, that I am anxious that his name should not be forgotten in Oxford.

Wishing to make acquaintance with the German University system, and more especially to learn something of the German method of teaching classical philology, I spent four months from April to August, 1865, at Berlin, matriculating and attending lectures as an ordinary student. On asking advice of a competent informant as to the lectures which then stood highest in general repute for ability and usefulness, I was at once recommended to attend Professor Haupt's course on the Epistles of Horace.

I may say without exaggeration that these lectures introduced me to a method of teaching which was wholly unknown at the time in Oxford, and perhaps in England. We learned in Oxford to read the classics, to translate them on paper, to think and talk about them, to write essays on them; but of the higher philology, of the principles and methods of textual criticism, in other words, of the way to find out what the

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classical writers really said, we were taught next to nothing. At least I can only say, speaking for myself, that although I was then beginning to write a commentary on parts of Vergil for Conington's edition, I had to instruct myself, with Conington's assistance, as it were piecemeal, and was without any general knowledge as to the kind of problems which might be expected to meet an editor in dealing with a classical author. Nor was I in reality even aware of the paramount importance attaching to the textual question. My first idea was to say something in the way of comment or explanation on each line of the book before me, and I was thus brought face to face with problems of textual criticism only in detail, and, so to speak, in a reverse order, the general bearings of the problem only dawning by degrees and with great difficulty on eyes untrained to comprehend them.

The first point on which Haupt laid stress was the exposition of his theory as to the principles to be followed in constituting the text of Horace. It was from Haupt, and from no English professor or tutor, that I first learned to appreciate the greatness of Bentley. 'The evil that men do lives after them:' apart from the Letters of Phalaris, Bentley was chiefly known to the ordinary English student of scholarship as having proposed a number of untenable emendations in the text of Horace. It was not generally known (I am speaking of the ordinary run of students) that Bentley's insight and mastery of facts were such as to place him in the first rank of scholars, if not (as was Haupt's own opinion) at the head of them all, and that more may often be learned from the facts collected in a note by Bentley, though his conclusion may be erroneous, than from the cautious dissertations of safer commentators. As Bacon reminds us, truth is oftener born of error than of confusion.

Haupt then made an exposition of his views on the text the beginning and the basis of his lectures on Horace, thus, as I have said, indicating a method which in Oxford at least was unknown. Of the remaining lectures, in which he gave a

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running commentary on some of the epistles of the first book I can only say that although at times they would have been thought too diffuse for the habits and feelings of an English audience, they were full not only of information but of wit, and the good sense which always attends wit, full also of literary allusion and genial play of mind. Besides their occasional diffuseness, they seemed to me to labour under another fault, I mean a recklessness and want of consideration in speaking of other scholars, especially of Orelli, which was inconsistent with fairness, and even with the due observance of literary courtesy. It may be that in England we are over-sensitive in this respect; the freedom of speech which we allow ourselves in politics we think unbecoming in literary controversy. Yet after making all due allowance for difference of manners and for the liberty usual in a German lecture-room, I must own to having experienced a feeling of weariness and repulsion at witnessing this castigation of the defenceless Orelli carried on for four days in the week during a period of three months.

As Haupt died early in 1874, I ought to explain why I have waited so long before speaking of his labours in the field of scholarship and of University education. The complete collection of his *Opuscula*, edited by the distinguished and original scholar Mr Wilamowitz-Möllendorf, was not published till 1876. I had intended to make these *Opuscula* the subject of a public lecture in the October term of last year; but hearing that a work on Haupt as a University Professor, by Mr Christian Belger, was expected to appear this year, I waited for its publication, and was right, I think, in so doing; for the work contains a great deal of valuable and interesting information which would have been otherwise inaccessible. For all that I am about to say on Haupt's life I am indebted to the short biography prefixed to Mr. Belger's volume.

Moritz Haupt was born at Zittau in Saxony in the year 1808. His father, Ernst Friedrich Haupt, whose life extended from 1774 to 1843, had in his youth studied law at Leipzig. He was something of a poet, and in character a man of simple tastes

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and serious tone, of pure and lofty ideas, and withal a fiery temper. Something of all this he bequeathed to his son Moritz, and in particular the taste for poetry in preference to prose, which was very marked from the beginning to the end of Haupt's career. Moritz Haupt began his literary life with a strong admiration for the old German poetry. What first inspired him to study classical philology was reading Gottfried Hermann's edition of the *Bacchae*. This first taught him, as he himself says, what was meant by really understanding an ancient author. In 1826, at the age of eighteen, he left school for the University of Leipzig. Here he became a member of the *Societas Graeca*, or association of students set on foot by Hermann, and working under his direction at the study of Greek. In a letter to Hermann, written five years after his entrance at Leipzig, Haupt addresses his revered teacher in the warmest language of youthful enthusiasm, mentioning at the same time that he is beginning to work upon Catullus, and proposing to send his notes for Hermann's approval.

From 1830-37 Haupt was mostly at Zittau, tending the declining years of his father. His circumstances, full of anxiety as they must have been, were not favourable to the formation of any definite hopes or resolutions for the future; yet those seven years were fruitful in literary effort. Besides writing a number of reviews, he made considerable studies in Old German and Old French literature. A collection of old French songs, mostly of the sixteenth century, made by him at this time, was first published after his death by Hirzel. Besides Old German and Old French, he was also at this time working at Bohemian and the Slavic languages, and preparing editions of the Latin poets Grätius and Catullus.

In 1834 Haupt travelled in company with his father to Vienna, where he made the acquaintance of Hoffmann von Fallersleben. Far more important for his future was a journey made in the same year to Berlin. Here, at the house of Meusebach, he met Lachmann, whose influence, strengthened by a friendship of seventeen years, was strong upon him till the end of his

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life. Much of the severity with which Haupt was accustomed to treat real or supposed incompetence in other scholars, may with probability be traced to a feeling implanted or encouraged by Lachmann. Lachmann was a great scholar; but he was withal one of those literary Puritans with whom generosity, the rarest and finest of all virtues, counts for less than rectitude and strenuous effort; negligence, or indolence, or bad work in general, he regarded as offences to be scourged without mercy. This attitude, which can only be maintained without falling by scholars of the first order of character and genius, was to a certain extent assumed by Haupt throughout the whole of his literary career.

In 1837 Haupt published the *Quaestiones Catullianae* as his *habilitationschrift*, or essay qualifying him for the position of *privat-docent*, the first step in academical promotion. Of this excellent work I shall have more to say when I attempt to estimate the general value of Haupt's contributions to Latin scholarship. As *privat-docent* he lectured first on Catullus and the Nibelungen; and it was mainly on Old German and Latin that he continued to lecture till 1858, the year in which Müllenhoff came to Berlin, when he exchanged Old German for Greek.

In 1838 he published his edition of the *Halieuticon* and of the *Cynegetica* of Gratius and Nemesianus. It seems also that he was at this time to a great extent instrumental in starting the idea of the great German dictionary afterwards begun by the Grimms. In the same year he formed a *Societas Latina*, on the model of Hermann's *Societas Graeca*. A little volume of essays from the hands of its members, dedicated to Hermann, testified, in the following year, to the activity of the new association. A letter of Hermann's, written in this year, gives evidence of the high esteem in which he, as well as others, held the rising young scholar. 'Professor Haupt is daily more and more appreciated, as he deserves to be, and the University to which he belongs may consider itself fortunate. His merits are recognized by his classes, and he thus gains in self-confidence, of which his modesty at first allowed him very scant measure.' This

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was true; Haupt seems at this time to have been liable to moods of diffidence and melancholy. He complains to Lachmann of the 'terrible gaps' in his acquirements, and of the uncertainty of his knowledge. Lachmann replies that the recognition of one's own ignorance is a necessary condition of the scholar's life; 'Why complain of a deficiency which you yourself acknowledge?'

The two past years had been full of interest for all who had the independence of literature at heart. In 1837 the seven Göttingen professors, among them the brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, had been deprived of their office in consequence of the protest they had lodged against the unconstitutional proceedings of the King of Hanover. The Grimms, and those who acted with them, would hear of no compromise with their own conscience, or with tyranny. Other scholars, it appears, were hardly in favour of supporting them to the whole length of their proceedings,—they are always moderate persons on such occasions who stand aloof from extreme action,—and Lachmann himself seems to have thought that Jacob Grimm carried his indignation too far. In 1838 (January) he writes: 'Jacob Grimm is at Cassel, in a restless and discontented mood, far too much so; Wilhelm is quiet and cheerful, because he does not allow politics to interfere with what is, after all, only a question of conscience.' An unfortunate misunderstanding, which was fostered by injudicious friends of Jacob Grimm, arose between him and Lachmann upon this matter, and lasted on into 1840, when it was finally removed. 'There are two sorts of persons,' said Lachmann, 'those who are made for places, and those for whom places ought to be made; it is to the latter class that the two Grimms belong.' And it was in great measure owing to Lachmann's exertions that the Grimms were called to Berlin in 1841.

In 1839 Haupt published an edition of Hartmann's *Erec*, his first important contribution to Old German scholarship. Two volumes of *Altdeutsche Blätter*, consisting of reviews, testify further to his activity in this line between 1836 and 1840. His

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edition of Rudolf's *Gute Gerhard* appeared in 1840. In 1841 he was elected *professor extraordinarius*, a post for which he had been 'designated' three years before. This year was also marked by the publication of the *Observationes Criticae*, a very important essay, in which he continued, with fuller discussion and illustration, the lines of investigation started in the *Quaestiones Catullianae*. He also set on foot in this year the *Zeitschrift für Deutsches Alterthum*, of which he long continued the editor.

The ties which already united Haupt to Gottfried Hermann were drawn closer in 1842, when Haupt married Hermann's daughter Louise. In the same year he edited the *Lieder* of Hartmann von Aue.

Between 1842 and 1848 there is not much to chronicle, except his election as *professor ordinarius* in 1843, at the age of thirty-five. In 1844 he edited Conrad's poem *Engelhard*; in 1845 the *Winsbeke*; in 1847 came his additions to Lachmann's 'Considerations on the Iliad.' The year 1848 was an eventful one for him, on public as well as on private grounds. Like other patriotic persons among his countrymen, he was powerfully inspired with the idea of German unity; and though his political ideas were far from democratic, he was enough of a liberal to become an active member of the *Deutscher Verein*, and in this capacity so eloquent as to draw down upon his head the displeasure of Government. For his speeches in the *Verein*, Haupt, with Otto Jahn, and Theodor Mommsen, was suspended from his office, and (in spite of a formal acquittal) finally dismissed in 1851.

Notwithstanding these troubles, this was a happy time for the distinguished literary society now gathered in Leipzig. Haupt, Mommsen, and Jahn, with the publishers Reimer, Hirzel, and Wigand, formed a congenial circle of friends, in which the scholars and the men of business continually met each other with mutual pleasure and profit. Jahn speaks feelingly of the great benefit derived by scholars from intercourse with educated men of the world. 'A mere scholar,' he truly says, 'is not

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necessarily an educated man ; he has much to learn from the men of practical life, and the new points of view which their knowledge of the world opens up to him.' The society is pleasantly described by the well-known novelist, Gustav Freytag, who came to Leipzig in this year.

'In the year 1848,' he tells us, 'I came to live at Leipzig, as editor and part-proprietor of the *Grenzboten* ; and in the following year I was admitted into the select circle of friends to which Haupt belonged. As I was a pupil of Lachmann, and had a taste for German philology, we had many common interests, and our agreement in politics helped to ensure an understanding between us. Haupt lived a very retired life, especially since he had been under the supervision of the police ; but he was naturally glad at such a time of the visits of a sympathetic friend ; and many a pleasant twilight hour we managed to while away, chattering on his old sofa, in the company of his amiable and accomplished wife. We were fond of taking our serious, reserved friend to a quiet restaurant, where, from this time until he left Leipzig, Haupt joined Otto Jahn, Theodor Mommsen, Julian Schmidt, Solomon Hirzel, and myself, in many a merry meeting. When Lachmann came to Leipzig on his last visit, we managed to catch him as well, and brought him in with a triumphant welcome. The result of these meetings between Haupt and myself was a mutual confidence, which ripened into a steady friendship. He was so kind as to form a good opinion of the easy-going Silesian ; while I, on my part, conceived a heart-felt respect for the rugged scholar, with his scrupulous conscience, his wealth of knowledge, and his force of expression. Till the end of his life I always set great store by Haupt's criticism of my poems ; sometimes I preferred it to that of any one else. As we were sitting over our wine one evening, some years before the appearance of 'Debit and Credit,' Haupt suddenly challenged me to write a novel. The suggestion fell in with my own ideas, and I accepted it. To the 'Lost Manuscript,' however, he contributed more than a suggestion. There is something of Haupt in the character of Felix Werner ; no

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more, however, than a novelist is allowed to borrow from a real character, without interfering with the freedom of his own creation, or overstepping the bounds of discretion and delicacy.

The year 1848 ended in sorrow. On December 31 Haupt lost his father-in-law, Gottfried Hermann, whose death, it need hardly be said, was felt as a calamity far beyond the immediate circle of his family and connections. 'We can ill afford,' wrote Lachmann, 'to lose the pillars of our time-honoured study and discipline, at a time when both seem to be vanishing before our eyes, and the deluge of pitiable nonsense is rising around us.' Strange that in only three years from this time another pillar was to fall; Lachmann himself died in 1851.

Hermann's *Bion and Moschus* was edited by Haupt in 1849, his *Aeschylus* not till 1852. From 1848 begins a series of contributions, now published in the first volume of *Opuscula*, to the Transactions of the Saxon Academy of Sciences, of which he was elected a member in that year. In 1849 he published, besides his edition of Hermann's *Bion and Moschus*, his essay on the *Epicedion Drusi*, so far as I am able to judge, one of the best of his papers. In 1850, a new and now well-known literary journal, the *Litterarisches Centralblatt*, was started, to which he contributed numerous reviews.

Like 1848, the year 1851 was an eventful one for Haupt. He was dismissed from his professorship at Leipzig in consequence of his share in the agitations of 1848, and, far worse, it was in this year that Lachmann died. The intimacy of the two scholars had lasted without interruption and with unabated warmth for seventeen years, and Haupt was to the last at the bedside of his beloved friend.

The influence of Lachmann on the general course of philological study has probably been greater than that of any single man during the present century. Many scholars who never saw him, and to whom he is only known by his books, have been inspired by the extraordinary impulse which he gave to critical method; Greek, Latin, and German philology have alike felt the touch of the magician. That Haupt, whose mind

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was for seventeen years in continual contact with this powerful genius, should have been somewhat dominated by its influence, is not to be wondered at. There can be no doubt that he never shook off a certain prejudice in favour of Lachmann's views, and against the work of scholars who differed from him.

In spite of the congeniality of temperament which drew the two friends together, there were, however, considerable differences between them. Haupt had a great power of dialectic, of sympathetic exposition, of analysing points of criticism in a way intelligible to a large audience. When I was at Berlin there were from eighty to a hundred regular attendants at his lectures. But Lachmann cared to be understood only by the few immediately capable of understanding him. He goes straight to the heart of his subject, and implies that his readers are on the same level of information as himself; the multitude and its requirements do not come within the sphere of his vision. He complained himself of this want of geniality and sympathetic power. Two months before his death he wrote to Haupt, 'In less than ten years' (he was then fifty-eight) 'I shall probably feel superannuated; it is provokingly seldom that I can really inspire a young student either by the subject on which I lecture, or by personal influence. You have the art of speaking well. . . . I cannot imitate the play of your dialectic for a single line; for acquiring your persevering and fruitful learning I have neither the talent nor the power of memory.' Whether Lachmann was right in this modest estimate of his own powers of teaching I have no means of knowing; that he was right in his appreciation of Haupt I can gratefully testify. Belger remarks, that in the philosophical spirit, or what his friend calls the dialectical faculty, Haupt resembled Hermann more than Lachmann did.

In 1851 Haupt published his editions of Horace and of Gottfried of Neifen; in 1853, part of a school edition of the *Metamorphoses*, for the series of classics with German notes, now so deservedly well known, which was started about this time under the direction of himself and Sauppe.

In 1853, at the age of forty-five, Haupt was summoned to