THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF CLASSICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

SIR JAMES JEANS has recently been explaining to us the cosmic process by which planets and their satellites came to be. Something analogous, I take it, happens in the normal development of any important subject. Under the strong compelling influence of Science the study of Classics, for example, has already been drawn out into a series of peripheral studies, *A*, *B*, *C*, *D*, *E*, which have taken shape as Literature, Philosophy, History, Archaeology, and Language. And these in their turn are beginning to throw off satellites of their own—Epigraphy, Papyrology, and the like.

I am concerned with a small section only of this great mental movement. My business is to set out as simply as possible the successive

stages through which Classical Archaeology has hitherto passed, to indicate its present position, and to form some tentative forecast of its future growth. In so doing I shall have to touch—I hope, with reverent fingers—on the work of not a few honoured names. For this, like all or nearly all of our Cambridge Schools, has been built upon personalities. It is the old story of individual interest, individual devotion, individual sacrifice. A long list of whole-hearted workers has surveyed the field, has dug the foundations, has erected the scaffolding, and course by course has reared the fabric. One thinks of Colvin, and Clark, and Walston, and Middleton, and Ridgeway, and Sandys. And now at the last Sir Perceval Maitland Laurence by his far-sighted and open-handed bequest has given to their construction a stability and a permanence, for which all lovers of the subject must be profoundly grateful. The best justification of his munificence in an age of enforced economy will be a history, however hasty, of the cause that he had at heart.

Classical Archaeology as we understand the term (and I will not be inveigled into defining it) was a product of the Italian Renaissance. Petrarch in a letter[1] to Cardinal Colonna—written, I suppose, in that fine script of his from which our printed italics are derived[2]—tells how he took a ramble through the ruins of Rome, identifying places familiar to him in legend or history but forgotten, as he complains, by the Romans themselves:

> Here was the palace of Evander—here the temple of Carmentis—here the cave of Cacus—here the fostering She-wolf and the Fig-tree called *Ruminalis* or more accurately *Romularis*.

He runs on in this rapid allusive style, noting temples and tombs:

> Here Caesar triumphed; here Caesar fell.

He hurries us past arches and porticoes, columns and statues, pagan and Christian memorials of all sorts. He makes mistakes, of

[1] Petrarch *epist. de rebus familiaribus* 6. 88.

[2] Sir J. E. Sandys *A History of Classical Scholarship* Cambridge 1908 ii. 99.

course, and Lanciani[3] would minimise his merits. But, having been long at the business, I confess to a sympathy with people who make mistakes. And, after all, there is no mistaking a man's enthusiasm, let alone a poet's. In another letter[4] he tells us that, during his stay in Rome, he used to buy oddments brought him by the peasants:

> Often some vineyard-digger would come to me with an ancient gem in his hand, or some gold or silver coin, damaged now and again by the hard tooth of his mattock. He would ask me to buy the thing, or else to puzzle out the features of its portrait-head.

These coins meant much to Petrarch. On the strength of them he urged[5] Charles IV to copy the medallic art of his predecessors, the Roman emperors, and so started modern medallists on the road which led them first to imitate and then to surpass the ancients themselves.

Petrarch's enthusiasm was contagious. Poggio Bracciolini, the famous Florentine scholar,

[3] R. Lanciani *Ancient Rome in the light of recent Discoveries* London 1888 p. 1 ff.

[4] Petrarch *op. cit.* 18. 8.

[5] *Id. ib.* 19. 3.

saw the ruins of Rome becoming yet more ruinous, and detailed their decay in his treatise *On Fortune's Changes*. An initial from that work preserves Poggio's portrait. He himself wrote a beautiful book-hand, and acted as papal secretary for fifty years. It was for Pope Nicolas V that he produced his translation of Diodorus; and another manuscript initial shows him presenting the work to his patron. In his house at Rome Poggio had a chamber, which he called his *Gymnasiolum*, crowded with a collection of statues, marble heads, gems, and coins. All the heads were noseless and most of them deplorably mutilated. But Poggio had insight enough to recognise their beauty, and great was his joy when Master Donatello himself dropped in and praised one of his treasures. In 1427 we find him planning to build in his garden at Terranuova a small Gallery for his antiquities and to combine with it a Library for his manuscripts—in short, to construct the first Museum of Classical Archaeology. All honour to Poggio! Nor did he confine his efforts to Italy. Friends from Rhodes helped

him to further acquisitions. In Chios he heard of three marble heads—a Juno, a Minerva, and a Satyr—said to be by Polykleitos and Praxiteles. But Poggio was cautious and remembered that their vendor was a Greek!

Meantime others were hard at work collecting inscriptions. Cola di Rienzo as early as 1344 was deciphering records on marble and bronze. To him we owe the very first collection of Latin epitaphs. He also discovered an important decree relating to Vespasian, and ventured to expound the same—though he rather spoilt his exposition by taking *pomerium* to mean 'apple-orchard'![6] Ciriaco, who came of a mercantile family in Ancona, was—like Schliemann—a self-taught student of Latin and Greek. He travelled, for trading purposes, far and wide through the Levant. We hear of him in Alexandria, Cilicia, Bithynia, Rhodes, Chios, Samos, Sicily, Dalmatia—even as far afield as Beirut and Damascus. Everywhere with om-

[6] R. Lanciani *op. cit.* p. 6f. H. Dessau *Inscriptiones Latinae selectae* no. 244, 15.

nivorous zeal he made a point of copying Greek and Latin inscriptions, and so put together in a sense the first *Corpus*—three vast and rather miscellaneous manuscript volumes, of which fragments only are now extant. But they suffice to prove his painstaking fidelity. In Rhodes he discovered an inscription in Doric lettering. In Egypt he copied hieroglyphs from the Great Pyramid. And he rightly lays stress on inscribed records as more trustworthy evidence than the manuscript tradition. Larfeld does not hesitate to speak of Ciriaco as the father of modern Greek epigraphy.[7]

To lengthen this list of names would be easy. But I have said enough to show that already, five hundred years ago, the humanists of Italy had made a beginning, a good beginning, with most branches of Classical Archaeology. The fact is, as Symonds puts it, 'The men of that nation and of that epoch were bent on creating a new intellectual atmosphere for

7 W. Larfeld *Handbuch der griechischen Epigraphik* Leipzig 1907 i. 30.

Europe by means of vital contact with antiquity'.[8] *Vital* contact. This implies that they endeavoured, not merely to appreciate, but actually to live, the life of the ancients. They wanted to forget the dark ages and to bring again the brightness of imperial Rome. They were prepared to talk Latin and on great occasions to wear a laurel-wreath. In this vein the architects of the Italian Renaissance attempted to revive the Roman orders, even if they had to be superposed upon a Gothic structure. New combinations of classical features were encouraged, and discrepancies could always be masked by a wealth of decorative detail. Vitruvius, neglected in his own day, awoke to posthumous fame. And the veriest dullard could see that St Peter's dome was but a converted Pantheon.

How much, or how little, of all this galvanised and rather factitious classicism found its way to Cambridge? The British, as Boccaccio laments, were 'slow to learn' (*studiis*

[8] J. A. S[ymonds] in the *Enc. Brit.*[11] xxi. 891.

tardusque Britannus).[9] But I doubt if Boccaccio did much to help them. His manual of mythology was not easy reading, and the early editions of Hyginus offered a disconcerting blend of classical text with medieval woodcuts. However, the British at least possessed a saving sense of humour. Hence they did not adopt the extravagances of the ultra-classical movement, and—if Archaeology affected them at all—it was in a purely external fashion. Cambridge has college-buildings of Elizabethan date that exhibit not a few Vitruvian traits—the First Court of Sidney Sussex, the Second Court of St John's, above all the Nevile Court of Trinity. Earliest, and in some ways most interesting, of the series is the triad of Gateways possibly designed and certainly erected by Dr Caius. The Gate of Honour, as it originally stood,[10] will illustrate my point. Its four-centred arch is of course a perpendicular

[9] Boccaccio *Lettere* ed. Corazzini p. 243, cp. p. 363 *serus Britannus*.

[10] R. Willis and J. W. Clark *The Architectural History of the University of Cambridge* Cambridge 1886 i. 177 fig. 9.

feature thoroughly characteristic of the period. But almost everything else is in the would-be classical style. We see a Roman triumphal arch surmounted by a Roman temple and topped by a Roman tomb. Pelion, Olympus, Ossa! But the critical eye does not at once detect the incongruities, because attention is distracted by the decorative adjuncts—shields and pyramids, obelisks and sun-dials, not to mention the serpent and dove which crown the whole symbolic edifice. Could anything be more eloquent of the age that produced it?

Anglo-classic architects of the next century or so dispensed with unnecessary complications and fell back upon a purer Roman style. Here again Cambridge can boast magnificent examples—Sir Christopher Wren's great Library at Trinity, or a little later James Gibbs' half-finished Senate House and the glorious block at King's that bears his name. Petrarch and his peers would have been proud to go in and out amid such surroundings. Yet, if we are honest with ourselves, we must admit that even these masterpieces here and there have failed to catch