Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

SOME LATIN INSCRIPTIONS

It has been my fate to travel through the thirty-five volumes of the *Corpus* of Latin inscriptions on several occasions. I have always been following the trail of some solemn subject, like the Roman conception of the state after death or the organization of trade guilds, and have tried to keep my eyes fixed on the path marked out before me. But it has been almost impossible not to catch a glimpse out of the corner of my eye of something amusing, pathetic, or eccentric by the wayside. The journey toward the appointed goal is long enough at the best, but if one is tempted to follow up a bypath every little while, progress becomes unconscionably slow, and I have always reached the end of the road in the thirty-fifth volume with the tantalizing feeling that I have gone blindly past a great many of the serious things which I set out to find, and at the same time that I have missed a great many diverting matters which would have enlivened the long journey. It is my firm belief that matter weighty and matter entertaining should be kept apart and properly labelled, so as to preserve the peace of mind of the reader, and I look forward to the day when the editors of the *Corpus*, and perhaps of other books, will observe this elementary principle of efficiency.

This spring it fell to my lot again to go through the *Corpus*, bnt this time I made up my mind to surrender myself to the pleasures of the journey, not to keep my eyes fixed too unswervingly on the real object before me, but to stop and look at anything which seemed diverting. A few of the things which caught my attention are set down here. They are only haphazard jottings by the wayside. They establish no thesis; they lead to no conclusions, and they are not unduly instructive. They do not even lend themselves to a logical, consecutive treatment. At the most they are "documents of human interest", and perhaps those who have a full and large interest in life in all its simplicity and naïveté may find something in them.

The plain Roman citizen showed little of that reserve—or ought I say, hypocrisy?—with which we Anglo-Saxons cloak

our real feelings. He was willing to let the passer-by learn from his tombstone some of the intimate facts of his life, and something about his relation to members of his family. This willingness to reveal himself sometimes led him to be unconsciously humorous or pathetic, and it is a few of these bits which have been set down here. It is true that the Roman had a great many stereotyped adjectives and formulas to express his emotions in which the real man does not speak, but now and then he breaks through these conventions, and gives us a glimpse of his true self. These are the things that interest us.

The writer of a Roman epitaph wanted to have it read. This is the reason why he put the tombstone by the highway. This is the reason why the first words of an inscription are often a challenge to the wayfarer to stop, or a wish that he may have a pleasant journey if he will read the inscription through. Perhaps it was the same desire to engage the attention of the passer-by that led the composer of an epitaph now and then to add some unusual incident from the life-history of the deceased. Or was it simply that the natural tendency to tell others of an interesting episode finds expression on these tombstones? We of the present day, with our bald record of a name and the dates of birth and death, are sinning against human nature. The genealogist or the antiquary may prize those items, but no one else will care for them. Our grandfathers showed none of that churlish unwillingness to share their life-history with those who came after them, as one may see on strolling through the graveyards at Plymouth, or Nantucket, or New Haven.

From one of these communicative Roman tombstones we learn that Secundus Octavius escaped safely, although only half-clad, from a burning building, but that when he went back for some of his property he was killed by a falling wall, and that his relatives were more grieved at his death than at the loss of their property. On another we read that the deceased, although a gladiator, reached the Biblical age of threescore and ten. Another tells us that Attia Ampliata met her death at the hands of poisoners. One epitaph, of a repentant slave boy, may be worth giving in full:—

> "Vitalis, the slave and son of Gaius Lavius Faustus, and born in his house, lies here. He lived to be sixteen years of age. He was a clerk in the Aprian shop, liked by everybody, but was taken by the gods. Ye who pass by—if I have ever given short measure, so as to profit my father thereby, I pray you to pardon me. I beg you by the gods above and below to honor my father and mother. Fare ye well."

The proud fellow-citizens of Valerius Pudens at Histonium record the fact that he was crowned poet-laureate at Rome when twelve years of age. A certain Justinus puts on his father's stone: "If I had received fuller control of my patrimony, dear father, I should have honored you with a larger monument"; and the parents of a sixteen-year-old boy grieve that "he lived to see his father in his mayoral robes only on the day of his inauguration".

It always pleases me in turning over the pages of the English *Who's Who*, to find, among the important items set down under the name of each eminent writer or statesman, a record of his favorite recreation. In a similar way, since I have a weakness for detective stories myself, it touched a sympathetic chord in me to read in the newspapers that Mr. Balfour gave himself up to the charms of that *genre* of literature on the steamer, when he crossed to this country at the head of the British Commission. Why should n't these interests, which have counted so largely in our lives, find a place in the record on our tombstones? This is what Vitalis thought when he wrote:—

> "While I was still Vitalis and had the vital spark, I built my own monument, and I read my verses upon it, as I pass by. Armed with a license I have scoured the country on foot. With dogs I have hunted hare and even wolves. Then I have quaffed draughts of wine right gladly. The many things which a youth does I have done, because I am going to die."

As a disciple of Izaak Walton I can sympathize with the pleasure which Quintus Marius, as he tells us in his epitaph, felt in spearing fish, while I deplore his method of taking them. The sentiment of good-fellowship between the living and the dead, which is woefully lacking in us, finds frequent expression

on the Roman monuments. On a great rock near a little village in Latium the traveller may see to-day the epitaph of a mayor, in which he leaves the proceeds of a large estate to purchase cakes and wine on his birthday for all the citizens, aliens, married women, and boys in his native town. This is only one of many such inscriptions. It was a pretty custom, too, to provide for the Feast of Roses each year at one's tomb, and to make one's last resting-place a pleasant spot for family and friends to come on holidays. Of course the parvenu took advantage of the opportunity of perpetuating his name by leaving bequests for banquets, games, gladiatorial shows, and public improvements in his native town, but we may overlook his motives in view of the pleasure which he gave to his fellow-townsmen and we will not begrudge him the statue set up in his honor by the local Common Council, since he usually paid for it himself.

As we have already noticed, the Romans were much addicted to the use of conventional adjectives and to formulas in their epitaphs. Two such adjectives, "dearest" and "sweetest" (*carissimus* and *dulcissimus*), occur again and again, and such formulas as "May the earth rest lightly upon her!" are so frequent that the Roman took the trouble to set down only the initial letters. Sometimes a relative or a friend who composed the inscription took a couplet from one of the great Latin poets, but more frequently he would seem to have walked along the highway, and to have copied from some stone a sentiment which appealed to him. This is evidently what a fond husband did for his wife in a certain instance. In the graceful verses on the stone which he chose for his model the deceased was characterized as a woman "of tender age". His strict regard for the truth, however, led him to change this phrase, without doing violence to the metre, to the more exact expression, "of middle age". Some scholars have thought that stone-cutters had little handbooks containing appropriate verses, from which the bereaved husband or wife chose a fitting epitaph. However that may be, we do find stones without dates or names, and this fact makes it look as if stone-cutters had wares ready for hurry orders. One little inscription which has come down to us without names can hardly be of this sort. The lack of characteristic forms in

English for the genders makes it impossible to translate it. It reads: "*amica amico carissimo*". The story of the romance behind it has gone forever. Bearing in mind the desire which we have noticed to interest the passer-by, it is not strange that puns, plays upon words, acrostics, and other literary tricks calculated to arrest the attention, made a strong appeal to the untutored taste of the average Roman.

The use of conventional phrases to describe the departed, or to express the affection or the grief of those who are left behind, naturally makes it impossible in many instances to suppose that a particular epitaph gives us a true picture of the family relations in a given case, but the very crystallization of sentiment, to which so many of these inscriptions bear witness, points to the acceptance of an ideal for the family, and for the relations of husband and wife, of brother and sister. The ideal of womanhood stands out very clearly. Nowhere is it more simply set forth than in the famous inscription of an unknown Claudia: "Charming in discourse, of gentle mien; she kept the house, she carded the wool. I have finished. Go your way!" One husband says of his wife: "She lived eighteen years with me and never did discord arise between us", and this sentiment is echoed in many inscriptions. It may not be significant that women do not often praise their husbands for their complaisant conduct, although a Gallic woman, Magia Chrysia, sets up a stone "To my revered and most devoted husband, who never said a harsh word to me and never wronged me or anyone else". Many of the stones testify to strong friendships. One of the most interesting of these is a memorial at Hadrumetum in Africa, bearing the names of twenty-three friends of a certain Terentius Aquila who have set it up "in memory of his even-handed justice toward the many and his characteristic sense of honor toward his neighbor" (*ob parem in universos æquitatem et proprium in singulos honorem*), a testimonial of which any man might be proud.

The Roman did not forget his four-footed friends, and the tenderness of his feeling toward his dog and his horse which several of the metrical epitaphs reveal, shows a side of his character of which we should scarcely have suspected him. The epi-

taph may be in memory of a Gallic dog, little Pearl, "who lay in the lap of her master or mistress", or of Patrick, "who licked with eager tongue the platter which my hands held out to you", or of Myia, "who would bark savagely if another lay on the floor by his mistress' side", for all the world like Matthew Arnold's "jealous Jock, the chiel from Skye".

Of course, we find a multitude of facts about the lives and occupations of the tradesmen and the artisans who lie beneath the stones. Of the hundreds of professions mentioned let me speak of one only, and of that, for personal reasons, the teaching of Greek and Latin. Many men who followed this calling record the fact on their monuments. Evidently in those golden days the lives of the teachers of Latin and Greek were not harassed, and their days shortened, by the advocates of a Modern School, because on the stone of one of them at Cordova we read: "Sacred to the shades of the departed. Domitius Isquilinus, a teacher of Greek, 101 years old, lies buried here. May the earth rest lightly upon him!" As a professional teacher of Latin, I set down with some reluctance a pathetic inscription from Rome. The epitaph reads:—

> "To Dalmatius, his very dear son, a boy of remarkable talent and learning, whose unhappy father was not permitted to enjoy his companionship for even seven full years, for, after studying Greek without an instructor, he took up Latin in addition, and in three days' time he was snatched from this world. Dalmatius, his father, set up this stone."

Other inscriptions than epitaphs record the struggles of the Roman boy with the Latin language. As one walks along the streets of Pompeii, he sees scratched on the stucco walls of the houses, with painstaking care and just at the height which an urchin could reach, A B C D and sometimes from a more venturesome hand, A X B V C T, while on one wall stand the immortal words A R M A V I R V M Q V E. Sad to say, some of the alphabets are not given in the proper order, and one dreads to surmise what may have happened the next day at school if the incorrect order was repeated under the eye of Orbilius of the rods. But the small boy on his way from school

did not use his stylus for the sole purpose of preparing his lessons for the morrow or of displaying his learning. Some of us who were familiar with the Roman forum many years ago may have noticed the gaming-boards scratched at comfortable points on the floors of several basilicas. I made copies of many of these twenty-five years ago, but when, fifteen years later, I looked for them again I found that they had been worn off by the shuffling feet of the heedless tourist. They furnished mute testimony of one way in which the Roman gamin probably spent part of his time between school hours.

Perhaps it was a schoolboy also who scratched R O M A on the wall, and beneath it drew the head and bust of a stern-visaged woman with a large nose and strong mouth—the only amateur likeness of the Goddess Rome which I know.

The *graffiti*, or scratched inscriptions, are a source of great delight to the frivolous epigraphist, because they show us the diversions of the common people, and record their spontaneous effusions. There are many of them in Egypt, the Mecca of the Roman tourist, on the pyramids, and nearly forty have been found on the statue of Memnon at Karnak. This statue was said to give forth a musical sound when struck by the rays of the rising sun. Romans, Greeks, and Phœnicians came from far and near to hear the marvellous note. Their testimony is explicit, and we cannot doubt the truth of their statements. One of the sightseers, for instance, writes: "In the seventh year of the Emperor Cæsar Nerva Trajan Augustus Germanicus Dacicus, Gaius Vibius Maximus, prefect of Egypt, heard Memnon on February 14, once at nine, and once at nine-thirty in the morning". It is noticeable that most of the cases mentioned occur in February or March, and between the first and third hour of the day. Perhaps some wind prevailing at that hour and season blowing through the statue would account for the phenomenon. Through the irony of fate, the pious restoration of the statue by one of the emperors put an end to the miracle.

The pyramids at Gizeh and the royal sepulchres at Karnak have suffered at the hands of these ancient tourists. One of these has scratched on a tomb at Karnak: "I, Januarius, chief centurion, accompanied by my daughter, Januarina, have seen

and marvelled at the place'', while at Philæ another writes: "I, Lucius Trebonius Oricula, was here''.

Of course, the hastily scratched and painted inscription lent itself readily to the shopkeeper, the innkeeper, the candidate for political office, and the manager of gladiatorial shows, in advertising their wares. An innkeeper at Lyons, Septumanus by name, writes: "Here Mercury promises gain, Apollo health, Septumanus entertainment and dinner. The man who comes here will enjoy life better afterwards. Stranger, beware where you stay''. A wine shop at Pompeii advertises in verse "a drink for one cent, a better drink for two cents, and a mug of Falernian wine for four cents''. Painted notices of rooms and shops to rent greet the visitor, as he walks up the streets of Pompeii, with a startling sense of modernity. One of them tells us that in the gardens of Julia Felix there are for rent for a period of five years "a bath fit for Venus, and shops for the four hundred'', and that "if anyone wants to rent them, he is to come and see us''. No wonder that an ancient wayfarer pitied the burden which one of the walls carried, and expressed his pity in an inscription found beneath the list of notices.

All of these ephemeral inscriptions were intended to catch the public eye. In striking contrast to them is a little group scratched with a stylus on sheets of lead, and buried in all secrecy, and with proper incantations, in the graves of the dead. The process was simple. One wrote on the tablet the name of the horse which he hoped would lose in the coming races, or the name of his or her enemy, consecrated it to the gods below, and surrounded it with the proper cabalistic signs. One of these, found in Africa, reads: "To thee I pray, who dost rule in the realms below; to thee I commend Julia Faustilla. Carry her away quickly. Keep her among those in the realms beneath''. These tablets were much in vogue among jealous maidens, and were believed to be effective in ridding one of a dangerous rival.

Apart from the cursing tablets of which we have just now been speaking, all the other ephemeral inscriptions bring ancient life into close relations with those of the present day, but there is one inscription, this time on a tombstone, which, to the casual eye, at least, links the modern world directly with the ancient,

and with this inscription I will bring my rambling paper to an end. On the tombstone of a certain Cranius Emilius, found in a village in northern Africa, one sees the letters *D. M. S.*, the initials of the well-known pagan dedication "to the shades of the dead" (*Dis Manibus Suis*). On the same stone appear the cross and the crescent. Perhaps the crescent may be connected with the cult of Astarte or Mên, and possibly some scholar has discovered a more correct but more prosaic interpretation of these three symbols, but I have avoided investigating the matter for fear of being disillusioned. I prefer to see in them the three emblems of Paganism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism, and to find epitomized on the monument of Emilius the whole history of northern Africa, at first under the protecting care of Jupiter, then accepting the teaching of the Gospels, to pass in our day under thc control of the Koran.

FRANK FROST ABBOTT.

Princeton University.

MY KITCHEN

Once more the kitchen gleams immaculate,
The floor clean-scrubbed, and every blue-rimmed plate
And shining glass safe in its cupboard space,
The silver pot in its accustomed place;
The kettle on the stove hums softly on,
The clock ticks patiently, my work is done;
And still I turn to look at it once more,
And see the sunshine splashing on the floor
Through windows framed in red geraniums,
And feel the little breeze that softly comes
To stir the curtains hanging whitely there,
And am content because it is so fair.

EDITH HORTON.

Ithaca, New York.