

vocabulary excellent. One only wonders here and there whether the modernist Euripides might have been a more suitable model than the older tragedians.

κελευθοποιοὶ χερσὶ φασγάνων τ' ἀκμαῖς  
πεφύγαμεν  
seems a very happy turn (if somewhat lengthy) for 'we cut our way home'; or again

βοῶν θύων, πρόχειρος οἷς ἔρπει σφαγῆ  
ἠθροισμένοι  
for 'penned like beasts in a slaughter-house.'

Certainly these two versions seem to indicate that the writing of Greek and Latin verse is not yet passed entirely out of fashion in our schools.

A. D. NIGHTINGALE.

#### SOME TRANSLATIONS AND OTHER BOOKS.

*The Story of Aeneas: Virgil's Aeneid translated into English Verse.* By H. S. SALT. Pp. xv + 304. Cambridge: University Press, 1928. 8s. 6d. net.

*The Aeneid of Virgil translated, with an Introductory Essay.* By FRANK RICHARDS, M.A. Pp. xiv + 361. London: John Murray, 1928. 15s. net.

*The Agamemnon of Aeschylus: An English Version.* By SIR HENRY SHARP. Pp. 73. Oxford: University Press, 1928. 2s. 6d. net.

*Lusus Homericus.* By ALEXANDER SHEWAN. Pp. 55. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1928. 2s. 6d. net.

*And Other Poems.* By JOHN MAVROGORDATO. Pp. 139. London: Cobden-Sanderson, 1927. 5s. net.

THE *Aeneid* possesses an irresistible attraction for the translator. The Poet Laureate in his *Ibant Obscuri* has enumerated fifty-four English versions published down to the year 1916, of which thirty-seven are in verse. It will, we think, be generally conceded that the decasyllabic is the only English metre in which any approach to the stately march of the Virgilian epic is possible. Conington's translation in the ballad metre is far from expressing the dignity of the *Aeneid*, while the use of any metre which approximates more nearly than the decasyllabic to the length of the hexameter, such as that used by William Morris, seems alien to the style and spirit of the original. Of decasyllabic metres, the heroic couplet, used by Dryden in his version, is apt to become monotonous, and is too cramping a medium to reproduce the liquid flow of the hexameters.

In the two translations before us Mr. Richards has chosen blank verse,

Mr. Salt a decasyllabic metre with an irregular sequence of rhymes, such as is found in Milton's *Lycidas*. Mr. Salt's experiment is new, and has, like blank verse, the advantage that it is unhampered by the couplet or stanza, and can therefore reproduce the structure of the Virgilian period, while at the same time the presence of rhyme gives variety and interest to his version. In a few passages containing formal utterances, such as oracles or prophecies, the heroic couplet is used with good effect—for instance, in the famous passage *Aen. VI.* 123 ff. An ideal version of the *Aeneid* will probably never be made, but Mr. Salt's experiment was well worth making, and has achieved no small measure of success.

Mr. Richards follows a more beaten track in using blank verse, and he employs exactly the same number of lines as the original. The difficulty of writing good blank verse is notorious. Mr. Richards, in spite of the occasional use of an inverted accent or an unstressed foot, has not entirely avoided the monotony which only the greatest writers of blank verse seem able to escape; but his version is scholarly, and at its best certainly succeeds in giving something of the spirit of the original. His introduction is admirably adapted to give the general reader an idea of the character and contents of the poem.

Translations of the *Agamemnon* are probably even more numerous than those of the *Aeneid*. Sir Henry Sharp's rendering has much to recommend it, especially as a version for acting, the purpose for which it is mainly intended, though for the general reader also the clear stage directions should be most helpful to the understanding of the play.