

needed, that an ancient Greek play can still hold a mixed or modern audience, even without such accessories as attractive scenery and fascinating dances: for on this occasion the chorus were drawn up in a row at the front of the stage and the background to the bright dresses and shining armour was a plain curtain of dark green.

Outstanding features of a very successful representation were the first scene of the play between Agamemnon and his slave at

early dawn, and the great climax, in which Iphigeneia shakes off her girlish fears and nerves herself to lay down her life for her country:

'Slay me! vanquish Troy! I die not childless since  
through ages down  
Lives in place of home and children this my never-  
dimmed renown!  
Mother mine, the base barbarian to the Greek must  
bend his knee  
Ever. Thralls hath Nature made them! Hellas'  
sons are ever free.' S.

## CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of THE CLASSICAL REVIEW.

SIR,—The Education Department has recently re-issued to the Secondary Schools its Circular on the pronunciation of Latin, and I find that it is again a reprint of the Report of the Committee of the Classical Association (*Proceedings*, Oct. 1906, p. 75-6). In most respects the scheme of the Committee is in agreement with the views of Munro, Roby, and other writers on the subject; but in one important point it differs from them in a very startling manner. I refer of course to the pronunciation of the diphthongs *ae* and *oe*. The Committee recommends that *ae* should be sounded nearly as *ai* in Isaiah (broadly pronounced), *oe* nearly as *oi* in boil, and adds the following Note:

'In recommending these sounds for *ae* and *oe* the Committee is guided mainly by practical considerations, since it has been found by experience that this pronunciation is convenient for class purposes. The Committee regards it as clear that this was the pronunciation given them in early Latin, etc.'

The word 'them' in this Note can only mean the diphthongs *ae* and *oe*, and the sentence as it stands is of course inaccurate. The inaccuracy is no doubt due to a desire for brevity, but it is none the less on that account dangerous and misleading. Indeed it is within my own knowledge that teachers of Latin have been misled by it into believing that when the Romans wrote 'aequos' they pronounced it 'aiquos.'

The late Mr. Munro devoted especial attention to this very point and expressed his views on it with great clearness and force. He held that Latin *ae* and *œ* should have the sound of the Italian open *e* (*è*), and he added that *œ* as a rule, *ae* invariably is represented by *è*: Cèsare, sècolo, etc.

The members of the Committee would no doubt themselves admit the soundness of Mr. Munro's views, which indeed are substantially those of Mr. Roby, Mr. Lindsay and other authorities, but they have introduced their startling innovation owing to the supposed exigencies of school classes. It is on this point especially that I wish to address you. I myself was for some years a pupil and an ardent admirer of

Mr. Munro; and in 1871, having been appointed lecturer in a Colonial University, I at once introduced his pronunciation. Nor did I ever find the slightest difficulty in getting it adopted by the students, who indeed took great pleasure in it. It is true that our pronunciation was not always absolutely correct, and I dare say we sometimes pronounced *caedo* as if it were written *cedo*. But that did no harm, for fortunately we all had brains enough to distinguish the two words by the context; just as we were able to distinguish other pairs of words which are not only pronounced, but spelt the same. In the same way I dare say we sometimes gave the *è* sound instead of the *oe* sound to *foedus*, but that also did practically no harm. I retired from my post in 1908, and my successor has since continued the use of Munro's pronunciation. Now comes the sad part of my story. During my time the Rector of the High School, from which many of our students were drawn, had also, without any difficulty, used Munro's pronunciation. But in 1908 he also retired, and was succeeded by a gentleman who insisted on introducing the *ai* and *oi* pronunciation of *ae* and *oe*, thus causing a discrepancy between the teaching of the High School and of the University.

The Committee, when they first issued their Report, guarded themselves by explaining that they were influenced by practical considerations of what was said to be feasible in schools. But as was to be expected, their Report is now printed and circulated without any such explanation; and it is, and will be, looked upon as a manifesto issued by the most competent scholars in England, declaring what was, in their view, the pronunciation of Latin in the best Classical period. This I look upon as nothing less than a calamity. The only remedy that I can suggest is this. Let the Association apply to Mr. Lindsay, with the assistance, if he requires any assistance, of Professor Strong of Liverpool, to draw up a circular stating shortly what was the pronunciation of Latin during the Augustan period, and let the Classical Schools be recommended to adopt that pronunciation as nearly as they are able.—Yours, etc., S.