

The Classical Review

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EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

C.B. writes :

The Cambridge performance of the *Birds* was a brilliant piece of work, and showed again, if it was necessary, the direct appeal which Aristophanes makes to a modern audience. All the imaginative qualities of the play came out strongly; the bird-costumes were beautiful individually and in combination, and their movements exceedingly delicate. At their first entrance, in the parabasis, and in the finale there was a real thrill of romance, heightened undoubtedly by the music written by Sir Hubert Parry for the first performance at Cambridge in 1883. As in the *Frogs* and the *Clouds* he caught to the full the quality of Aristophanes' humour, in the *Birds* Parry seized all his imagination and poetry. In other parts of the play one felt that the actors succumbed a little too much to the temptation which besets all modern performances of Aristophanes—that of playing to the gallery. The knowledge that half the audience probably does not understand Greek is a strong incitement to introduce modern touches and to overdo the burlesque and horse-play. The designer of the Cambridge costumes seemed particularly afflicted with this disease, and the introduction of a full-bottomed wig and a white mortarboard were surely unnecessary. Aristophanes will play himself without such extraneous aids, and it was a pity that the actors often allowed the brilliance of the

dialogue to be completely drowned in some irrelevant piece of humorous action.

The general level of the acting was certainly high, and the play went with a magnificent swing. Perhaps the most finished performance was that of Mr. A. R. D. Watkins, of King's, as the Owl (Coryphaeus); his movements were always delightful, and his speaking of the parabasis to Parry's beautiful accompaniment was a real triumph. Peithetairos (A. N. G. Richards, of Magdalene) has a long and rather thankless part, but he showed real dignity, and never let comedy become farce. The Eposps sang his song admirably, and the various *'Αλαζόνες* were full of life—though it was often too modern life. The Poet (F. Wormald, of Magdalene) was particularly attractive. The sacrificial goat was possibly an unauthorised introduction, but Mr. W. H. Fisher, of Emmanuel, gave him a deliciously quiet and humorous personification.

Dr. J. T. Sheppard and Mr. J. Burnaby earned the very hearty thanks of enthusiastic audiences for their production of the play: the amount of work put into it was enormous, and the result a real joy.

CORRIGENDUM TO 'ATAKTA' (PEARSON).

In the current volume, p. 13, col. 2, l. 15, for *'αἰδώς* in 557' read *'αἰδώς*; in 557'.—EDD.

VERSION

Two choirboys sing :

'Who's that gal comin' up the aisle; ain't she a snorter?'

'Hold your tongue, you son of a gun: that's the Bishop's dorter.'

From Prof. Sayce's *Reminiscences*.

- A. εἰπέ, τί χρήμα κόρης ἀφατον τόδε νηὸν ἐσηλθεν
ἄρτι; βαβαί, πνείει Βριμόα· θαυμά μ' ἔχει.
B. σίγα, τηλεβόλου παῖ ἐπεσβόλε, μή που ἀκούσῃ
'Ἀρχιερέυς· κείνου, σκαιέ, φίλη θυγάτηρ.

A. SHEWAN.