

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

et ducit remos illic ubi nuper ararat

Dr. Ryder, in his entertaining 'Ovid, the Flood, and Ararat' (*Greece & Rome* xiv (1967), 126 ff.), has piled coincidence upon coincidence, but has kept his head. The lesson is that in dealing with the vagaries of chance, the level of credulity must be lowered to an almost incredible depth. Otherwise 'that way madness lies'. In this case Dr. Ryder has, in fact, by no means exhausted the coincidences. He has not noticed, for instance, that the last two letters in the names of the pagan Deucalion and Pyrrha, when reversed and put together, make NO-AH, the hero of the Biblical flood. And that is not all. Let us now write down 'Deucalion and Pyrrha' in Latin letters, less the four which we have, to bring Noah to light, already abstracted, thus: *Deucali—et Pirr—*. This is an anagram of the final result; *relicti per uda*, they were the sole survivors over the watery waste.

Thus coincidences *which obviously cannot have anything to do with the case* can be multiplied indefinitely. This warns against being lured by others not so obviously irrelevant. Dr. Ryder ingeniously suggests some solutions but wisely champions none of them. The nearest to credibility is, I think, that *ararat* (α ῥαῤαξ λεγόμενον here in extant Latin literature) was written inadvertently for *arabat* by a monkish scribe whose mind wandered as did that of the Isaiah-conscious copyist who wrote *pardus* for *pagus* in Horace, *Odes* iii. 18. 11–12:

festus in pratis vacat otioso
cum bove pagus.

As for Mt. Ararat in Latin verse, the only time I encountered it was many years ago in the neo-Latin of the late Professor W. W. Grundy, who produced for a College Society a delightful account of Noah's Flood. As I very much doubt if there are any now who remember the occasion, still less the verses, may I immortalize for posterity the few lines I can recall, in which he amusingly described the animals leaving the ark, two by two? The passage ran: '... and after the ark had safely landed on the top of Mt. Ararat

exsiluit Noë, socrisque socrusque sequuntur,
cum grue grus, sue sus, bove bos, cum tigride tigris,
femina rhinoceros cum rhinocerote marito,
et mater crocodilorum patre cum crocodilo.'

Yours faithfully,

L. J. D. RICHARDSON

1 Howell's Crescent, Llandaff.

A GENTLE COMPLAINT

Inveniunt resonam cum debita gaudia vocem,
laetitia his chartis invenienda fuit.
Maeandrique vago signatus nomine, nonne
verteris in tumulto, docte Menandre, tuo?

When joys that should have been
Would *find* an answering sound,
From *Greece & Rome* we glean
That joys should have been *found*.

And some old rambling stream
Usurps Menander's room:
It's fit to make us scream—
And him turn in his tomb.

L. A. M.

The Editors offer their sincere apologies both to Professor Moritz and to Professor Arnott for these two misprints.