

**ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE
CLASSICS: SIX LECTURES
DELIVERED BEFORE THE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD**

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Anthropology and the Classics: Six Lectures Delivered Before the University of Oxford by
Various

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ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE CLASSICS

SIX LECTURES DELIVERED BEFORE
THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

BY

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PREFACE

ANTHROPOLOGY and the Humanities—on verbal grounds one might suppose them coextensive ; yet in practice they divide the domain of human culture between them. The types of human culture are, in fact, reducible to two, a simpler and a more complex, or, as we are wont to say (valuing our own achievements, I doubt not, rightly), a lower and a higher. By established convention Anthropology occupies itself solely with culture of the simpler or lower kind. The Humanities, on the other hand—those humanizing studies that, for us at all events, have their parent source in the literatures of Greece and Rome—concentrate on whatever is most constitutive and characteristic of the higher life of society.

What, then, of phenomena of transition ? Are they to be suffered to form a no-man's-land, a buffer-tract left purposely undeveloped, lest, forsooth, the associates of barbarism should fall foul of the friends of civilization ? Plainly, in the cause of science, a pacific penetration must be tolerated, nay, encouraged, from both sides at once. Anthropology must cast forwards, the Humanities cast back. And there is not the slightest reason (unless prejudice be accounted reason) why conflict should arise between the interests thus led to intermingle.

Indeed, how can there be conflict, when, as in the case of each contributor to the present volume, the two interests in question, Anthropology on this

side and Classical Archaeology and Scholarship on that, are the joint concern of one and the same man? Dr. Evans both is a leading authority on prehistoric Europe, and likewise, by restoring the Minoan age to the light of day, has set Greek history in a new and juster perspective. Dr. Lang is an anthropologist of renown, and no one, even amongst his peers, has enriched the science with so many original and fertile hypotheses; nevertheless he has found time (and for how much else has he found time as well!) not only to translate Homer, but also to vindicate his very existence. Professor Murray can turn his rare faculty of sympathetic insight now to the reinterpretation of the music of Euripides, and now to the analysis of the elemental forces that combine and crystallize in the Greek epic. Principal Jevons is famous for his brilliant suggestions in regard to the early history of religion; but he has also laboured in the cause of European archaeology, and his edition of Plutarch's *Romane Questions* is very precious to the student of classical antiquities. Professor Myres, whilst he teaches Greek language and literature as the modern man would have them taught, and is a learned archaeologist to boot, yet can have no greater title to our respect than that, of many devoted helpers, he did the most to organize an effective school of Anthropology in the University of Oxford. Finally, Mr. Warde Fowler, living embodiment as he is in the eyes of all his friends of the Humaner Letters, both is the historian of the Graeco-Roman city-state, and can wield the comparative method so as to extort human meaning from ancient Rome's stately, but somewhat soulless, rites. Unless, then, dual personality of some dissociated and morbid

type is to be attributed to these distinguished men, they can scarcely fail, being anthropologists and humanists at once, to carry on nicely concerted operations from both sides of their subject, just as the clever engineer can set to work on his tunnel from both sides of the mountain.

It is but fair to add, however, that in the present case the first move has been made from the anthropological side. The six lectures composing this volume were delivered during the Michaelmas Term of 1908, at the instance of the Committee for Anthropology, which from the outset of its career has kept steadily in view the need of inducing classical scholars to study the lower culture as it bears upon the higher. Anthropology, to be sure, must often divert its attention to lines of development branching off in many a direction from the track of advance that leads past Athens and Rome. For us, however, and consequently for our science, the latter remains the central and decisive path of social evolution. In short, the general orientation of Anthropology, it would seem, must always be towards the dawn of what Lecky so happily describes as 'the European epoch of the human mind'.

Lastly, a word may be said in explanation of the title chosen. 'Anthropology and the Classics' is exactly suited to express that conjunction of interests of which mention has already been made—the conjunction so perfectly exemplified by the life-work of each contributor to the volume. But some myopic critic might contend that, however well fitted to indicate the scope of the work as a whole, the title hardly applies to this or that essay taken by itself. It surely matters little if this be so; yet is it so?

Dr. Evans's lecture is introductory. To gather impetus for our imaginative leap into the classical period we start, it is true, from the cave-man, but have already crossed the threshold in arriving at the Cretan. Homer, Hesiod, Herodotus—the claims of these to rank as classics are not likely to be assailed. There remain the Roman subjects, magic and lustration. In what sense are they classical? Now, to use the language of biology, whereas Greek literature is congenital, Roman literature is in large part acquired. Therefore it includes no 'songs before sunrise'; for it the 'father of history' cannot be born again. Spirit no less than form is an importation. In particular, the magico-religious beliefs of Latium have lost their hold on the imitator of Greece and the Orient. Yet primal nature will out; and the Romans, moreover, were a pious people who loved to dwell on their *origines*. To appreciate the greatest of Latin classics, Virgil—to glance no further afield—one must at least have gained the right to greet him as fellow-antiquary. For the rest, these essays profess to be no more than *vindemiatio prima*, a first gleaning. When the harvest has been fully gathered in, it will then be time to say, in regard to the classics both of Greece and of Rome, how far the old lives on in the new, how far what the student in his haste is apt to label 'survival' stands for a force still tugging at the heart-strings of even the most sophisticated and lordly heir of the ages.

R. R. MARETT.

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