

**EXOTICS: ATTEMPTS
TO DOMESTICATE
THEM**

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Exotics: Attempts to Domesticate Them by J. F. C. & L. C.

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TO DOMESTICATE
THEM**

Charles, James Freeman

EXOTICS:

ATTEMPTS TO DOMESTICATE THEM.

BY

J. F. C. AND L. C.

"EXOTIC, *n.* A plant, shrub, or tree, not native; a plant introduced from a foreign country." — *Webster.*



we

L.C.

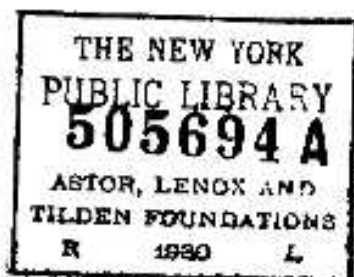
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1875.

✓
1. Poetry - Collection



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ROY WALKER
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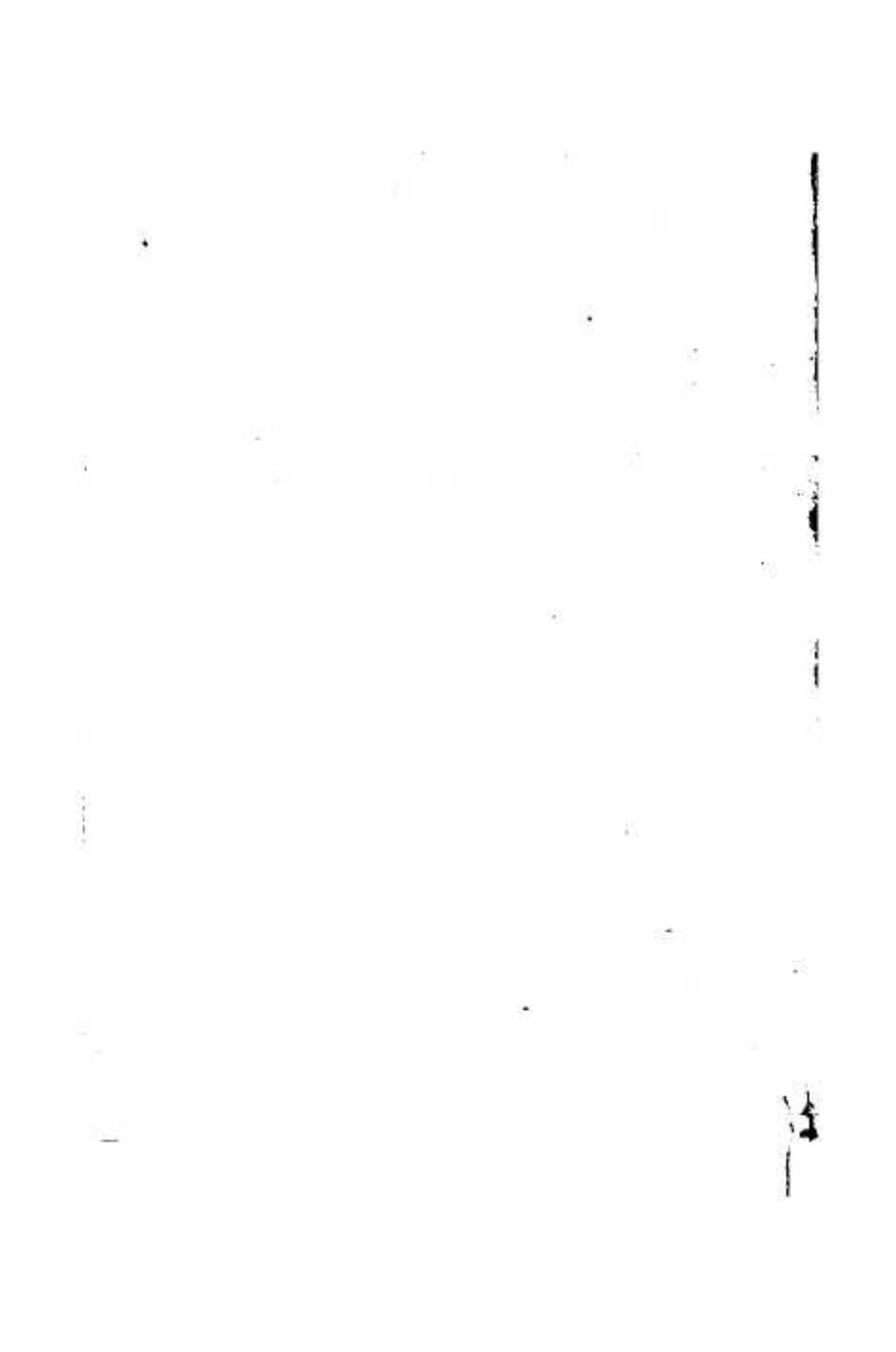
ANSWER FROM C. Q.

SEP

1930

"Calum, non animam, mutant, qui trans mare currunt."

THESE poems, visitors from other climes,
Between whose homes and ours an ocean rolls,
Have changed their language, metre, rhythm, rhymes ;
But — let us hope — they have not changed their souls.



PREFACE.

MOST poetical translations resemble the reverse side of a piece of Gobelin tapestry. The figures and colors are there, but the charm is wanting.

But what is the use of making a translation at all, unless you can infuse into it some of that element which makes the original poem immortal? If the essential spirit, which is the attraction in it, has evaporated, of what advantage is the residuum? You present us with an English version of an ode of Horace or a song of Goethe; and we can only say, "If this were all, Horace and Goethe would not be remembered ten years. Why is it, then, that they are immortal?"

The reason why we who translate are not aware of our own failures is perhaps this, — that we are so enchanted with the original poem that we associate this pleasure with our own version. A translator

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does not see the baldness and prosaic character of his work, because every word suggests to him the beauty which it is meant to represent. So a person travelling through picturesque scenery sometimes makes rude sketches of what he sees, which convey to others no idea of the landscape; but to him they are associated with the light, the color, the perspective, the ineffable charm of nature, and so are valuable to him as souvenirs of the scene.

A successful translation must produce in the reader unacquainted with the original the same sort of feeling which *that* conveys. The ideal of a translation would be one which, if the original were lost, would remain forever as immortal. Without any thought of it as a translation, it should give us so much pleasure in itself as to live a life of its own in literature. Is this impossible? We have some examples to prove that it can be done.

Perhaps, of all authors, Horace is the most difficult to render into a modern language. If you translate him literally, the whole life of the ode is gone. If you give a free version, hoping to retain this vitality, you lose the classic, sharp-cut, and concise expression, where each word has the beauty and value of a gem; and you offer us a pleasant poem, belonging to the modern romantic school of literature. Yet

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even Horace has been sometimes adequately translated. The following lines in Dryden's version of Book III. carmen 29, which is justly said by Theodore Martin to be finer than the original, shows how a great poet can re-create in another language the best life of his author. It has all the energy, conciseness, and perfect expression of the original, with even more of freedom and fire.

"Happy the man, and happy he alone,
He who can call to-day his own;
He who, secure within, can say,
'To-morrow, do thy worst, for I have lived to-day.
Be fair or foul, or rain or shine,
The joys I have possessed, in spite of fate, are mine.
Not heaven itself upon the past has power,
But what has been, has been, and I have had my
hour!'"

The rest of the translation is almost or quite as fine as this. It has a grander swell and more freedom of movement than the original, while it faithfully reproduces the thought, the tone, and the spirit of the Horatian ode.

Dryden was a great poet; but men of less genius than he have sometimes met with success in translating Horace. Take, as an example, Professor Conington's version of Book I. carmen 24, "Quis desi-