

## ORIGINES CELTICÆ

*Origines Celticæ (a Fragment), and other Contributions to the History of Britain.* By Edwin Guest. Two Vols. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1883.)

A MAN'S foes are indeed those of his own household. More than one literary or scientific reputation has been injured by the injudicious zeal of a writer's friends to publish after his death the fragments and papers he has left behind. It is natural to imagine that the work and suggestions of a scholar must all be equally valuable, and that by omitting to print any portion of it the world may be a loser. But it must be remembered on the other side that a good deal which a scientific worker commits to manuscript is never intended to see the light, and that in any case it is unfair to him to publish fragmentary remains which he has never had the chance of revising and correcting.

Dr. Guest's name is deservedly one of power among all those who have interested themselves in the earlier history of our country. His papers on the Invasion of Britain by Julius Cæsar, on the Campaign of Aulus Plautius, on the Four Roman Ways, and on the Saxon Conquests in Britain, are all models of sound scholarship and careful method. Dr. Freeman acknowledges him as a master, and declares that "whenever they meet on the same ground, he ranks above Palgrave and Kemble." Friends and public alike, therefore, might have expected to find in the fragments of his unfinished work, "*Origines Celticæ*," a fresh monument to his historical sagacity and another contribution of importance to the ethnology of our islands.

But friends and public alike must be grievously disappointed by what is actually placed before them. It would have been far better to spare the paper and ink that has been expended upon it, and, what is of more consequence, the fair fame of the author himself. The "*Origines Celticæ*," which occupy the whole of the first volume and the opening pages of the second volume of Dr. Guest's posthumous works are a barren waste of unscientific theorising and uncritical collection of facts. The work carries us back to an age when the application of the scientific method to history was unknown, when ethnology and comparative philology were as yet undreamt of, and when the most amazing generalisations were built on the chance coincidence of proper names. In our search for the fathers of the Kelts we are transported to the Caucasus, to Egypt, and even to Ur of the Chaldees, and no shadow of doubt is allowed to cross the mind that Kimmerians and Kimbrians and Kymry are all one and the same people. The fact that there were Iberians in Georgia and Iberians in Spain is considered quite sufficient to prove that the early population of the Spanish Peninsula came from the sources of the Euphrates.

Dr. Guest's philology is as wild as his ethnology. He has heard of "Grimm's Laws"; but as their existence is inconvenient to his own etymological mode of procedure he denounces both the "laws" and their observers, though without understanding what they really mean. When Indo-European philology is treated in this way it is not surprising that the Rutennu of the Egyptian inscriptions are connected with the Assyrians of Resen, that initial *k* and *h* are said to interchange in Phœnician, or

that an Egyptian settlement in Kolkhis is declared to admit of "no reasonable doubt."

Dr. Guest's turn of mind, in fact, was literary rather than scientific. Wherever the question was a purely literary one, he displayed erudition, patience, and common sense; where, on the contrary, it was ethnological or philological, he showed himself as helpless as a Jewish rabbi. The old well-threshed statements of Greek and Latin writers are heaped together, and tricked out here and there with references to the discoveries of Egyptian and Assyrian research. How little he knew of the latter, however, may be judged from the frequent mistakes he makes when appealing to them, as when, for instance, he insists on calling Sumer Sommari, or tells us that Assurbani-pal lived in the ninth century B.C.

Had the "*Origines Celticæ*" appeared a hundred years ago they would have been hailed as a profoundly learned and interesting book. There is no place for them in an age when the departments of knowledge with which they deal have been occupied by the method and spirit of inductive science. To know what Dr. Guest really was and of what he was really capable we must turn to the papers reprinted in the second volume of his remains, though even here we shall from time to time be reminded of the literary spirit which accepts what is not disproved rather than of the scientific spirit which doubts everything and holds fast only to that which is proved.

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## OUR BOOK SHELF

*Handbook of Vertebrate Dissection.* Part II. "How to Dissect a Bird." By H. Newell Martin, D.Sc., M.D., M.A., and William A. Moale, M.D. (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1883.)

SOME months ago we noticed in these columns (vol. xxvii. p. 335) the first of a series of Handbooks of Vertebrate Dissection, by Drs. Martin and Moale—"How to Dissect a Chelonian." The second, "How to Dissect a Bird," has now appeared, and, as the type selected is the pigeon, this volume will doubtless be appreciated by a large number of students.

The general arrangement of the book is much the same as that of its predecessor, directions being given how to proceed step by step, so that the student, with its aid, ought to be able to gain a good knowledge of the anatomical characters of a bird. The skeleton, in particular, is described in great detail, and there are four good figures and a diagram of the skull, as well as a figure of the hind limb. It is, however, to be regretted that there are no illustrations of the soft parts, for figures of the skeleton—at any rate of allied forms—can be got in almost any text-book on Comparative Anatomy, while satisfactory drawings of the viscera, &c., are not so easily obtainable.

The directions are on the whole excellent, with one or two slight exceptions. The description of the air-sacs, for instance, is very indefinite, and gives no idea of their true relations. If the authors had glanced through Prof. Huxley's recent paper on the subject in the *Proceedings of the Zoological Society*, and compared the air-sacs of the pigeon with the description there given, there is no doubt that the position of these structures and their relations to the lungs would have been stated more clearly.

We must also call attention to the following points, which are not very accurate:—

Only one pancreatic duct is described instead of three. The inferior mesenteric artery, instead of the median sacral, is stated to be the termination of the aorta.