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OF
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Summary of Revenue and Expenditure, March 1927 to June 1931.

<i>Revenue.</i>			<i>Expenditure.</i>		
	£.	s. d.		£.	s. d.
Aggregate Contributions from Branches:			Printing, Advertisements, etc.	3	12 10
Bloemfontein	4	0 0	Stationery, Stamps, etc.	7	8 9
Cape Town	13	10 0	Honorarium voted to Stenographer	2	2 0
Grahamstown	17	6	Expenses of General Meeting		
Johannesburg	22	17 0	in Johannesburg	2	10 6
Kimberley	10	0	Publication of First Issue of		
Maritzburg	2	0 0	"Proceedings"	43	15 0
Potchefstroom	5	0	Credit Balance in Savings Bank,		
Pretoria	5	17 6	12/6/31	27	7 6
Stellenbosch	6	11 0			
Wellington	7	11 10			
		63 19 10			
Sale of "Proceedings" (First Issue):					
Cape Town	3	0 0			
Stellenbosch	2	0 0			
Wellington	16	0			
		5 16 0			
Contributions to Publication Fund:					
Hon. Patrick Duncan	2	0 0			
Hon. J. H. Hofmeyr	2	2 0			
Rev. A. Fox	10	0 0			
Johannesburg Branch	2	2 0			
		16 4 0			
Interest on Savings Bank Deposit		16 9			
		£86 16 7			£86 16 7

Stellenbosch,
December, 1931.

C. S. Edgar,
Hon. Treasurer, C.A.S.A.

Latin Letterwriting and Apollinaris Sidonius.

The writing of letters has been a common thing among mankind ever since writing became known. So long as writing was confined to the comparatively few, letter-writing was naturally a feature rather of the upper and educated classes than of the common crowd and the common man or woman had to employ the services of a professional letterwriter, as is still the case in many parts of the world. The difficulties of transport of letters in earlier days also made letter-writing a difficult matter for all but the few. Hence we find, as might have been expected; that the collection of letters which have come down to us are associated with the names of men who were prominent in their day and had therefore special facilities through their wealth or power in communicating with

their correspondents. One must naturally except from this general statement what may be called business letters — many specimens of which have been preserved to us in papyri and other forms, which, although they also are frequently of great value and interest in throwing light indirectly on many matters of social and historical importance, have generally speaking, little interest comparatively when viewed from the literary standpoint. The letter as a genre in literature may be said, although with many exceptions, to have declined in value in proportion as the facilities for writing and conveyance of letters have grown greater. Few take the trouble nowadays of composing letters which are worthy of being regarded as literature when the daily post, not to speak of the telegraph

and telephone and wireless, is at the disposal of every one for any communications which may be thought necessary. Still, even now, there are letterwriters worthy of the name, although they may be regarded as a dwindling race. Apart from the comparatively small number of letters which may be regarded as real contributions to literature, there are very many which may be regarded as of great importance from the historical point of view from the fact that they throw a great deal of light on the events of previous times and on the customs and ways of life and attitudes of mind of the men who wrote them and the men who lived when they were written. This side of letterwriting it may be worth while to look at for a few minutes. As regards the persons who wrote the letters it is obvious that we should expect a good deal of self-revelation in their epistles. Even here, however, there are certain cautions and limitations to be observed, as we shall see perhaps more clearly when we come to say something of the letters in Latin which have come down to us. Human beings are not always absolutely sincere in their letters any more than they are absolutely sincere in their conversation with their fellow-men. To form a correct opinion of the value of a letter as a testimony to facts or opinions, we have to know not only the writer of the letter but also the person to whom it is addressed and the circumstances and inter-relations of both—a knowledge not always easy of attainment. Letters written to an intimate friend with whom one is frank and open are one thing; letters written to a stranger, to a person whom one secretly dislikes or fears, to a great man from whom one expects favours, to a political rival whom one wishes politely to deceive or baffle, are very different things. So also letters written for only one correspondent to read are likely to be very different in character from those which are written for the public. And even in intimate correspondence we all know that it is the rare exception for any one to be perfectly frank. We all have an arcanum in our own personality which is shut up against almost all outsiders and it is only on very rare occasions that we admit a visitor. Yet with all these drawbacks and

limitations letters are still of wonderful value in the way of revelation of the character of the writers. We read between the lines, as the saying goes, and often, when the writers are most intent on concealing their real thoughts, they are most self-revealing.

All these general reflections on letter-writing are obvious enough and would apply to any nation or to any time. When we come to consider Latin letter-writing, we have to consider a narrower field, into which certain definite features enter which modify the general features which are common to all letter-writing. To begin with, it may be said that, so far as we are concerned, Latin letter-writing begins with Cicero. We know of course that letters innumerable were written before Cicero's time. Rome gradually grew to be the great business centre of the world and the heads of great business concerns had of necessity to be in frequent communication with their agents and representatives in all parts of the Roman world. We may not have lost a great deal from the literary or intellectual or spiritual point of view by the utter destruction of all that mass of business correspondence, but we cannot gauge how much we may have lost from the historical point of view, for there can be no doubt that much light would be thrown on the course of events, on questions of custom and social usage, on religion and morals, by incidental allusions even in letters of a generally business character. But apart from business letters, there must have been letters innumerable of a different character passing between relatives and friends in Rome and the provinces—containing not merely family and personal information but frequently political views and criticism of the men and the events of the day, which would have been of infinite interest to us, had time been less unkind to such ephemeral productions as letters. I have said that Latin letter-writing practically begins with Cicero—but happily the great collections of letters which bear the name of Cicero contain also a certain number of letters written by others to Cicero—which not only serve to emphasize for us the pre-eminence of Cicero's style of writing as compared with that of

his correspondents, but also to show how common was the practice of more or less elaborate letter-writing on the part of the men of prominence in Rome. Cicero was fortunate in having a devoted and admiring servant who appreciated his master's greatness and made it his hobby to collect from every source he could all the letters he could lay his hands on. What a misfortune for history and the world it is that Julius Cæsar had not another Tiro to do a similar service. I fancy that a collection of Cæsar's letters would be a treasure trove—always provided that they were letters written with frankness to his friends. And there are many other figures in Roman history from whose hands the historian would give much to have letters. Still, we are fortunate in having preserved to us so much of the voluminous correspondence of Cicero, seeing that he was a man of such wide interests and not merely an orator and a politician but also a man of literary taste and ability. No doubt he had serious limitations in the latter qualities—witness his curious silence in regard to the great writers of his own day, more especially Catullus and Lucretius—but, take him all in all, it is doubtful whether a more valuable collection of letters could have been put together from the correspondence of any one of his great contemporaries than we have preserved to us in the letters of Cicero. And there is one greatly important feature in Cicero's letters which I wish to emphasize in view of what I have to say of succeeding letter-writers. Cicero's letters were for the most part real letters, that is, written by one man to another and meant for that other only to read. It is true of course that some of Cicero's letters were more of the nature of political pamphlets and no doubt meant for a larger audience than a single reader. But, speaking generally, they are genuine letters and, as such, stand almost in a class by themselves in the history of Latin epistolary literature.

At this point I wish to digress, or rather to appear to digress, for the digression has a close relation to my subject, in calling attention to a very general feature of Latin literature as a whole. No one, I think, who has made any study of that

literature, can have failed to be struck by one outstanding feature in its history, namely the way in which the various departments of literature tend to take on a kind of stereotyped form from the influence of one great writer in each of those departments. Of course that tendency is not by any means confined to Latin literature—it may be said to be a more or less universal and perfectly natural tendency, but I think it can be shown to be specially powerful in the literature of Rome. And I think the most potent cause of this is to be found in the fact that Latin literature was on the whole a derivative and imitative literature and that, in consequence of the fact that almost every Latin writer was more or less consciously following the footsteps of some Greek model, there sprang up a curious lack of independence of outlook, an absence of the impulse towards originality, and a tendency to regard certain writers as having fixed for all time the norm of writing in their special departments. Hence arose the natural consequence that writers came to regard as their ideal not the aspiration after some new development which would express their own nature but a close following of the path trodden already by the steps of some great predecessor—approximation to whose greatness was regarded as the standard of excellence. It would be a tempting subject to pursue this thought in detail but it would take us too far from our present aim. Let me content myself with pointing out one very conspicuous instance of this tendency to follow well-trodden paths in the history of what is in many respects the most original of the departments of literature in Latin—namely satire. Lucilius came to be regarded as the founder of that genus of literature and set, as it were, for all time, the fashion after which satire was to be treated—and the more we study his successors the more clearly we see how greatly the example of Lucilius influenced them. And the influence is not unconscious but clearly felt by the writers themselves. Horace looks up to Lucilius as his model. Persius follows suit with the added burden upon his shoulders of striving to out-Horace Horace in his *curiosa felicitas verborum*, and even

Juvenal, who shows greater independence, is still under the shadow of his predecessors. Let us now note how this influence—this incubus of the past as it were—acted upon epistolary composition. Cicero was a name to conjure with; for a long time he held a supreme place in Latin literature—in fact it would be little exaggeration to say that he held it to the end. It will be remembered how a critic so sane-minded as Quintilian puts Cicero on a pinnacle and makes him the standard of judgment. An orator or writer is good or indifferent or bad, according to the degree in which he approaches to or recedes from the norm of Cicero. Let it be remembered also how there gradually grew up at the beginning of the imperial period of Rome that curious dilettanteism in literature among the upper classes, when every man of education seemed to think it incumbent upon him to produce something in the way of literature and to gather his friends around him to hear those productions at those recitations which, as we know from the Younger Pliny and others, became such a feature and such a consummate nuisance in the fashionable circles of Rome. Cicero was of course to a great extent the model on which these dilettanti modelled their eloquence. Now Cicero had left behind him not only his great orations but also a great mass of other writings, semi-philosophical and literary, and his correspondence had been collected and given to the public and had become, as had his other work, a kind of standard of composition. But to the dilettante, it was not a satisfying thing to write anything which was not to be known to and applauded by his contemporaries, and he was not content, even in the case of letter-writing, to wait for posthumous fame. Hence there arose the practice of letter-writing as a genre of literature, of letters addressed indeed to individuals but really written with a view to a wider audience, letters in which naturalness and spontaneity tended to disappear and the writer consciously strove after literary effect and the display of his powers of expression and frequently of his own virtues and lofty sentiments. We cannot know for certain who was the first to write letters of this more or less artificial type and to

preserve them with a view to publication but, as far as we are concerned, the Younger Pliny may be regarded as setting the fashion in this direction. He was in many ways a very admirable person,—a man of great culture and of high character, a first-rate speaker and advocate, a high-minded official and administrator, a friend of princes and, better still, a friend of Tacitus. But he had, in combination with all his many virtues, a rich vein of self-complacent vanity which runs conspicuously through all the letters which he published. He obviously regarded himself as a kind of second Cicero so far as his public oratory was concerned and, as Cicero's fame as a letter-writer was also great, he seems to have deliberately set himself to achieve rivalry with his great predecessor in this direction also. One does not know how to regard this new development of letter-writing. From one point of view it was a distortion of a most natural means of expression and introduced the devices of rhetoric and artificiality into an alien sphere—but from another point of view it seems probable that the example of Pliny has preserved to us a considerable amount of writing of an epistolary character, containing much that is historically valuable, which, if it had not been addressed rather to the public than to individual correspondents, would have been lost to the world in the same way as the mass of ordinary letters between individuals has completely perished.

I intend to give only the briefest possible notice of the letter-writers in Latin between the time of Pliny and the time of Sidonius. Those three centuries and a half were a very interesting time in the history of the Roman empire and one would a priori expect that letters written by men in high position at that time would teem with interest and throw a flood of light on the tendencies of events and on the feelings of those closely connected with them. This natural expectation is bound to be disappointed when the letters are perused. They are generally speaking of a most uninteresting character. Two reasons perhaps may be given for this. The first is the artificiality of the writing. The writer has constantly before his eyes the larger audi-

ence to which his letter is really addressed and is often more concerned with the impression his cleverness and rhetoric will make on the public than with the expression of genuine feeling.

It must be understood of course that there are many exceptions to this general statement. A second reason is that the letter-writers of the period mentioned were predominantly church-men, whose interests were to a great extent narrowed down to matters connected with the church and its fortunes and misfortunes and who, as a rule, had little concern with the secular movements going on around them, which to us now are of far greater interest than the dissensions and heresies of the church. The chief exceptions are M. Cornelius Fronto (about 100-175 A.D.), Decimus Magnus Ausonius (310-395) and Symmachus (340-402), about each of whom a few words may be said. Fronto, like so many of the later Latin writers, was an African, born in Numidia, but spent most of his life in Rome. Africa was, as Juvenal tells us, *nutricula causidicorum* and Fronto gained great distinction in Rome as a pleader and rhetorician. His fame and his high character brought him into close connection with the imperial family and Antoninus Pius made him tutor to his adopted sons Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus. A great amount of correspondence took place between Fronto and his illustrious pupils and the collection of letters which has come down to us from the palimpsests discovered by Mai about a century ago may be said to be as much the composition of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus as of Fronto. There are some 69 letters from Fronto to Marcus and 78 from Marcus to Fronto. To Verus there are eight with six replies, and there are besides some forty letters to various friends. The collection is of course very defective and much of the correspondence has been lost. It may be said, generally, that the letters, from our point of view, are very disappointing. One might have expected in a correspondence with that interesting philosopher-monarch, Marcus Aurelius, a great deal of light on his character and on the problems of his time. Unfortunately for us Fronto was absorbed in the passion

for rhetoric and rhetorical study which was such an obsession of the time: he had been the tutor of Marcus and never lost the schoolmaster's attitude to his pupil and the letters are prevailingly full of rhetorical discussions which leave us very cold. The tone of intense mutual admiration between master and pupils and the fulsome compliments which are exchanged also seem strained and unnatural. Yet it seems probable that they were sincere enough and the more one reads them the more convinced one becomes of their sincerity or at least of their intention to be sincere. One must remember that it is not easy for an ordinary mortal to be quite frank and sincere when writing to a prince or an emperor, and on the other hand Marcus with his semi-poetical nature evidently idealised his revered teacher and had a very real, though exaggerated, respect for him. At all events they dwell on their love for each other in a way which seems to us unnatural and artificial and we rise from the perusal of the letters with a general feeling of disappointment. It is hard to say how far the prospect of the letters being preserved and published may have influenced the tone of some of them, but many of them must no doubt be regarded as genuine letters and it is very doubtful whether Fronto himself had anything to do with their publication.

About the letters of Ausonius a very few words may suffice. Ausonius is a curious figure in the history of literature. He resembles Fronto in the circumstance that he too was the tutor of an emperor — having been appointed in 364 A.D. by the emperor Valentinian to the charge of his son Gratian. In consequence of this he was high in favour at court and held high offices and finally the consulship in 379. But his real life, one may say, centred round Bordeaux, the great University of Gaul, in which he was for many years a professor of Rhetoric, lived a great part of his life and finally died. He could write clever verse of all sorts and came occasionally near to poetry as in the *Mosella*, but most of his work consists of clever trifling. One might fancy him in modern times as a fluent contributor to periodicals of *vers de société* — possibly even as a

clever concoctor of crossword puzzles of the better sort!

A much more interesting figure in the history of Latin epistolary literature is that of the friend and correspondent of Ausonius, Q. Aurelius Symmachus. Like Ausonius he rose to great prominence and dignity in office but was exposed to much greater vicissitudes of fortune owing to his greater strength and independence of character and above all to his championship of the ancient religion of Rome as opposed to the new religion of Christianity. It is an interesting question to determine what was the real attitude of the cultured men of the empire to the newly established religion. Many, no doubt, were sincere believers in it, some were determined upholders of the old cult—witness Julian and Symmachus—many were supremely indifferent and ready to accept the imperial established religion. There was evidently a large number—Ausonius is a striking example—who were quite willing to conform but whose whole culture was deeply dyed in the colours of ancient paganism and whose writings (and very likely, if we could but tell for certain, their speech and thoughts also) were completely pagan in character. Literature found it very difficult to break away from the ancient traditions and one knows from the testimony of such writers as St. Augustine how infinitely hard it was for the man of culture to forget the deities of ancient Greece and Rome with all their endless graces and associations. One cannot help having a much deeper respect for a man like Symmachus, who braved loss and danger for his attachment to the religion of his ancestors, than for that geria! Vicar of Bray, Ausonius, who was quite ready to write a Christian poem or two if it seemed expedient, but to be practically oblivious of Christianity in all the rest of his writings.

Q. Aurelius Symmachus lived in the second half of the fourth century A.D., the dates being roughly 340-410. He was probably educated in Gaul, perhaps at Bordeaux, and soon became prominent in public office. He was twice in some danger, in the first instance through his championship of the pagan religion under

Gratian in 382, and again in 387 when he fell under the displeasure of Theodosius on account of his partisanship for Maximus, who had defeated and slain Gratian. In spite of these setbacks Symmachus was received into favour by Theodosius and became consul in 391 and took an active and prominent part in public affairs probably till his death. He was obviously following the imitative tendency in Roman literature of which we have spoken, a very close imitator of the younger Pliny, although his letters were not apparently published by himself but by his son. They consist of 10 books—the last being, as in the case of Pliny, official or semi-official communications to the emperors under whom he held office—relations as they are called, written by him as *praefectus urbi*. The letters are frankly very disappointing in their contents. The majority are short and insignificant and one wonders why they were thought worthy of preservation—unless it be that they were mostly addressed to men of note and influence in public life and may have been in consequence regarded by Symmachus himself or by his son as indicating the society in which Symmachus moved. The more important letters suffer, like those of the other letter-writers, from the wearisome flattery and endless compliments which seemed apparently to be regarded as a necessary courtesy whenever any reference was made to the writings or doings of a correspondent. Undoubtedly the most interesting production of Symmachus' pen is not strictly a letter but rather a relation or minute to the emperors urging them to restore the Altar of Victory which had been removed from the Senate House, and to preserve the privileges and sanctity of the Vestal Virgins. Even that suffers from the disease of excessive rhetoric, which was endemic, but it is manly in tone and evidently sincere and contains some fine phrases which are worth remembering even although they are somewhat sicklied o'er by the all pervading itch of striving after point and rhetorical smartness. *Amari, coli, diligi maius imperio est—Reddatur saltem nomini honor qui numini denegatus est—Corrigit enim sequentem lapsus prioris et de reprehensione antecedentis*

exempli nascitur emendatio — Suus enim cuique mos, suus ritus est: varios custodes urbibus cultus mens divina destribuit: ut animae nascentibus ita populis fatales genii dividuntur — Aeuum est, quidquid omnes colunt, unum putari. Eadem spectamus astra, commune caelum est, idem nos mundus involvit: quid interest qua quisque prudentia verum requirat? uno itinere non potest perveniri ad tam grande secretum.

Sollius Apollinaris Sidonius (the praenomen Gaius and the cognomen Modestus are somewhat doubtful) lived from about 430 to 489 A.D. He lived to see the end of the Western Empire with the deposition of Romulus Augustulus (whose names seem almost a grim satire upon the glories of Rome's history) and we might have expected to find in his works a vivid picture of the disruption, before the inroads of the barbarians, of that great empire which had played so great a rôle in the history of the West for five hundred years. How far that expectation is met or disappointed we shall see presently. Sidonius was born in the city of the Arverni (Augustonemetum) the modern Clermont and went through the usual course of education in his native town which was of repute as a seat of learning, although not so famous as Bordeaux. He came of a distinguished family of senatorial rank and both his grandfather and father were prefects in Gaul. His mother's family, the Aviti, was also of high provincial distinction and he himself married Papianilla, who was the daughter of that Avitus who became Emperor of Rome for a very brief period in 455 A.D. He was thus brought into close connection with all the distinguished men of his time and a great number of them were his intimate friends and correspondents. The large estates and wealth of his family secured him a life of ease and every prospect of distinction in public life. With his wife he obtained the beautiful estate of Avitacum in Auvergne, of which, in imitation of Pliny's well-known descriptions of his villas (II.17-V.6), he gives an account in the second letter of Book II. (See also *Carmen XVIII*).

In order to understand, to some extent, the position of the Western Roman empire,

or what poor relics remained of it in Sidonius' time, one must remember the huge invasions which had swept over Western Europe and had wrested from Roman rule Spain and the greater part of Gaul. There remained only a small portion of Rome's former possessions in Gaul, with its chief centres at Lugdunum (Lyons) and Auvergne (Clermont) enclosed on the one side by the Visigothic empire which had stretched northwards into Gaul from Spain and on the other side by the Burgundian empire—and even this small portion was itself destined in Sidonius' time to be also swallowed up and absorbed. One must remember too that, although Rome was in a sense dying or dead as an empire, it was in another sense very much alive as a world influence. Horace speaks of captured Greece capturing its wild victor and bringing its arts into rustic Latium (Ep. II.1.156) and even so did vanquished Rome with its victors in turn. The Visigothic and Burgundian empires had to a great extent been Romanised and the gradual extension of Christianity to these formerly heathen and barbaric powers helped on the spread of Roman civilisation and culture. We have, in the second letter of the 1st book, a description by Sidonius of his visit to King Theodoric II, king of the Visigoths, at Toulouse and one can see from that description how greatly the Goths had been changed by Roman influences and how much the court of Theodoric followed the lines of the imperial court at Rome. One result of this partial assimilation of the culture of the barbarians to that of the Romans was an inclination on the part of some of the Romans to attempt a combination of the barbarian powers with the fragments of the Roman empire for the purpose of bolstering up the latter. To ourselves, at this distance of time, the attempt may appear an impossible one and destined to failure, but it is easy to be wise after the event and to many in Sidonius' time the policy seemed a wise one. We must not forget too the extraordinary fascination which the tradition of the Roman empire had for the ambitious leaders of the various northern tribes who swarmed over the former Roman dominions. Students

of history are familiar with the influence which this fascination had over the subsequent history of Europe and how the Roman empire survived, in a way, long after it had ceased to be in any real sense Roman. Avitus, Sidonius' father-in-law, seems to have been specially filled with the idea of employing the former enemies of Rome to support the tottering empire. One must not forget too that Avitus and Sidonius and many of the leading men of Gaul could not possibly have had quite the same feelings towards their so-called barbarian neighbours that the Romans of Italy may have had. They themselves had been, not so many generations back, regarded as barbarians and had only gradually won recognition as integral portions of the Roman empire, so that it was comparatively easy for them to assume that the same process might be repeated with the more recent invaders. It would take us too far afield to enter into all the complicated upheavals and contests of the second half of the fifth century and only the briefest references can be made to the events which influenced Sidonius' fortunes. On the murder of Petronius Maximus in 455, Avitus, at the instigation of Theodoric II, was made emperor and the way seemed open to Sidonius for a brilliant public career under his father-in-law's rule. His expectations, however, were disappointed, as Avitus' reign was short and inglorious, being put an end to in 456 by that extraordinary king-maker and king-breaker Ricimer. Then came an attempt on the part of Gaul to raise another Gaul to the imperial throne, which was crushed by Majorian, the successful nominee of Ricimer. Sidonius seems to have been a bit of a Vicar of Bray in that troubled time. He had composed an elaborate poetical panegyric on Avitus which gained him a statue in the Forum of Trajan, he had been concerned in the agitation in Gaul after the deposition of Avitus, but somehow he succeeded in gaining the favour of Majorian and composed another elaborate poetical panegyric on that new emperor. He was raised to the rank of Count and seemed likely to prosper when Majorian fell a victim to Ricimer's jealousy in 461. Then followed some six years of quiet life

on his estate at Avitacum, but his ambitions were again awakened by the accession of Anthemius to the purple in 467. This new emperor, who was a noble of Byzantium, gave his daughter, Alypia, in marriage to Ricimer and may have considered himself, in consequence, free from the dangers of the great Sueve. He was anxious to have the support of Gaul and welcomed Sidonius when the latter came as spokesman of a deputation from Gaul to lay their desires before the new emperor. Sidonius delivered the third of the poetical panegyrics we still possess in honour of Anthemius' entrance upon his second consulship in 468, and was honoured with the office of Préfet of Rome as a reward. But again fortune played him false. He was innocently involved in a notorious case of peculation and high treason on the part of a friend, Arvandus, the prefect of Gaul. There was trouble also between Anthemius and his son-in-law, Ricimer and, in fine, Sidonius, now elevated to the rank of Patrician, thought it wise to retire from the troubled waters of Roman politics and to return to Avitacum in 469 or a little later. Soon after his return, a complete change came over the tenor of his life. The Bishop of Clermont died and in 471 or 472 Sidonius was invited to accept the bishopric and did so. It may appear strange to us that a man who had shown no special religious bent should have thus been elevated to a high position in the Church, but there are certain considerations which make it easier to understand. One must remember that the old Roman attitude of mind required no special moral or spiritual qualities in officials who had to deal with religious matters. Julius Caesar could be Pontifex Maximus. The augurs could meet and scarce refrain from smiling at their solemn rites. Moreover the bishops had a great deal of secular influence and administrative powers which a man of the world and affairs might probably exercise more efficiently than a spiritually-minded ecclesiastic. Sidonius was of a wealthy and influential family and Roman Gaul — what was left of it — was in a critical position, where his wealth and influence might be of value. He was of high character and his literary and rhe-

torical reputation was quite in harmony with the episcopal tradition. Whatever his defects may have been to begin with, there seems no doubt that he made a right worthy bishop, and one gets the feeling, after reading his productions, that he had really found his *métier* at last, after wandering rather unsuccessfully in the wilderness of high politics.

We need say little of the remainder of his life. It was not a life of indolent ease. Sidonius' see was the centre of the ambitions of the neighbouring barbarian powers and a long struggle took place between the city of Clermont and Euric, the Visigothic king, in which Sidonius played a very patriotic part. The inevitable result took place in 475, when Euric seized Auvergne and Sidonius ceased to be a Roman citizen. He was punished by imprisonment of a mild type for some time by Euric but was ultimately sent back to his bishopric at Clermont. One is sorry to note that in IX.8 of his letters he has rather a fulsome poem on Euric. His last years were busied with his episcopal duties and with all manner of literary productions — some of which we still have while others have been lost. His books of letters belong to this rather grey autumn of his life, and he seems to have had some pleasure in collecting and editing them. They are of course scarcely to be regarded as natural letters but are in the line of Pliny's letters, either originally written with a view to publication, or real letters, edited and modified and touched up for a wider public. We have 149 letters and the number of his correspondents is 109, so that it will be seen that they are addressed to a great variety of persons. About forty of the letters are written to bishops or priests, and the rest chiefly to men of note in the Gallic society to which Sidonius himself belonged or at the courts of the Visigothic or Burgundian monarchs. They undoubtedly throw a good deal of light on the manners and customs of the fifth century, but far less than might have been hoped. Sidonius lives in a sort of artificial world, a kind of water-tight compartment, and he has little clear vision of the fundamental changes which were going on around him. We must not blame him over much. Probably most of us, in

the same situation, would have been equally blind. He probably was unable to imagine that Roman civilisation and culture, in which he was steeped, was fast decaying and that the barbarians, towards whom he confesses a sort of natural aversion (VII. 14. 10), would by and by evolve a civilisation of their own. He and his peers seem to have lived to a great extent in the past, clung tenaciously to the traditions of that rhetorical culture which had been so long the backbone of Roman education, and were unconscious how far it was leading them from reality and making the breach between the speech of the people and that of the upper classes ever wider. The letters of Sidonius clearly show how far what we may call the disease of rhetoric had become endemic in Latin. It seems not too much to say that the more trouble he took with his letters, the more unnatural they became, and that his best letters are those written in haste or with some practical purpose in view, in which he forgets his rhetorical flourishes. It may be noted that the faults of Sidonius' style are, to a large extent, features of Latin style prevalent through all its history, carried to absurd excess. We all know how strong a hold alliteration and assonance and play upon words — whether in actual punning or in less obvious forms — had in Latin from Ennius onwards — and all these features of style are exhibited to the *n*th power in Sidonius. The habit of punning has often been characterised as a disease, and I suppose no one has failed to pass through, at one time or another, that sort of word measles. But we all know how awful the disease may grow if, like dram-drinking, it is indulged in to excess. Sidonius may be held up to the world as a sort of temperance society awful example.

It would be tedious to give instances. Dalton has given numerous examples in his able introduction to the Letters of Sidonius and almost every letter will give some. It has been suggested by some critics that the glaring defects of Sidonius' style are the unconscious working upon him of the barbarian influences around him. Giraldus of Ferrara says "in utroque dicendi genere (i.e. in prose and poetry) Gallianum nescio quid et barbarum redolere videtur." There

may be some truth in that, but one feels that poor Sidonius would writhe in anguish in his grave, if he could hear the aspersion that he, who regarded himself as the succes-

sor of the illustrious line of the great authors of Rome and the upholder of the Latin language and culture, was after all but a provincial semi-barbarian.

Virgil—A Bimillenary Review.

Ladies and Gentlemen,—

My first business is to thank the members of the Classical Association of South Africa for the entirely unexpected and, I fear, unmerited honour of electing me as their President at the last Annual General Meeting held in January at Cape Town. At that meeting important arrangements for the future administration of the Association, of which this, the first similar meeting in the north, is the outcome, were approved and adopted, and it is to be hoped that they will be found to work satisfactorily in practice. My second duty is to tender my sincere apologies for not being present here to-night in person, and to express my thanks to Professor Haarhoff for his kindness in consenting to act as my deputy.

To return for a moment to the Presidency—I can hardly fail to recognise how distinguished are the predecessors I have been called upon to follow in the persons of Mr. Hofmeyr and Professor Ritchie, whose able Presidential addresses will still be fresh in your memories. For myself, as doubtless for all of you, Prof. Ritchie's address in January last was tinged with regret through the intimation which accompanied it, that it might be regarded as his last public utterance. Since then, his retirement, I understand, has become an accomplished fact, and I am fain to take this opportunity of referring, in a word, to Prof. Ritchie's services to the cause of the Classics in South Africa during a professional career of such duration as has fallen to the lot of few men in any country. Nor has his influence been confined to his strict métier of classical scholar and teacher; in a wider administrative capacity, in which connection we would recall his Vice-Chancellorship of the old University of the Cape of Good Hope, and his long and valued service on the Joint Matriculation Board,

he has during half a century played no small part in shaping the course of higher education in South Africa. The sincere good wishes of generations of past students and, I am certain, of every member of this Association, will accompany him in his well-earned retirement, which we trust he may yet be spared for many years to enjoy. [Prof. Ritchie died at Entebbe in Uganda on September 7th, 1931.]

To the President of a Classical Association whose year of office coincides with that which marks the bimillenary of the birth of Virgil—an event which Classical Associations, wherever they exist, are seeking to commemorate, in some fashion, at the present moment—a theme for a Presidential address is presented which is as dangerous as it is obvious and alluring. From the point of view of his audience, it is almost foredoomed to be disappointing. He who, at this time of day, would attempt an appreciation of a great world-poet who has acquired a definite label, and a reputation which may be regarded as static, in the course of long centuries during which he has been seen and tasted and handled in schools and universities and out of them, is almost inevitably faced with one of two fates: if he confines himself to what is common knowledge, he is merely wearisome; if he claims to say something new, he is immediately suspect, owing to a perfectly natural presumption on the part of his hearers, and possibly, if he be frank with himself, on his own, that if the something was really there, it was almost bound to have been discovered long ago. That is the dilemma with which I feel myself confronted in respect of my present subject; and let me say at once that I have decided to make shipwreck on the Scylla of boredom rather than on the Charybdis of condemnation for straining at the far-fetched and the fanciful—for seeking, in the