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1848

Greek Odes--Again

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Repository Citation

Minor, Lucian, "Greek Odes--Again" (1848). *Faculty Publications*. Paper 1305.
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GREEK ODES—AGAIN.

In relation to some passages in the article on Greek Odes, in our December No., we have received the following note :

(*To the Editor of the Messenger.*)

" *Philadelphia, Dec. 17, 1847.*

" DEAR SIR,

" Never having had the advantages of a classical education, I always endeavor to pick up what information I can respecting ancient authors from translations and reviews. In this I have been frequently aided by your most excellent publication. You will, therefore, I am sure, excuse the liberty which I now take with you in regard to an article which appeared in your last number. You therein state that Sir William Jones' fine ode, beginning 'What Constitutes a State?' is imitated from 'Alcman,' and that the Hymn, in honor of Harmonius and Aristogiton, is the production of 'Callimachus.' Now, in looking into the volume of the ancient poets of Greece and Rome, lately published in this city, I see those poems ascribed, the first to 'Alcæus,' and the latter to 'Callistratus.'" As I have no means myself of determining which of the above statements is the correct one, and as the authorities on both sides are thought by many persons to be nearly equal, will you have the kindness to afford me, (as well as some others of your readers here,) further information and evidence on the subject?

'Trusting that you will pardon this trouble,

I am, Dear Sir, with greatest respect,

Yours,

A CONSTANT READER.

In answer to our gentlemanly questioner, whose modesty and deference, we suspect, veil much more learning than he claims credit for,—we have to say,

1. "That our only authority for ascribing the original of Sir William Jones' ode to Alcman, is its being quoted as Alcman's in one among a volume of letters, written from London, by William Austin,

of Boston, in 1801-3, and now in our possession :
and.

2. That our attributing the Hymn in honor of Harmodius and Aristogiton to Callimachus, was a mere lapse of pen and memory, without any special excuse. That we did *once* deem *Callistratus* the right author, is proved by a short article of our writing, in Vol. 2, No. 1, of the Messenger, p. 38; where, in a preface to our former translation of the same ode, (differing slightly from the recent one,) we said,—“The learned are not agreed as to the author of this noble specimen of classic minstrelsy; though by most it is ascribed to Callistratus. Some have set it down to Alcæus; misled, perhaps, by the tyrant-hating spirit it breathes,—so fully in unison with the deep, trumpet tones of his ‘golden lyre.’ Unhappily for the paternity of this ode he died eighty years before the event it celebrates.” We do not doubt that Callistratus is the true author: and we thank our courteous correspondent for correcting our error.

M.
