VII.—THE CAPRICORN OF THE SECOND LEGION, SURNAMED AUGUSTA, AND THE GOAT OF THE 23RD REGIMENT ROYAL WELSH FUSILIERS.

By M. le Commandant R. Mowat of Paris.

[Read on the 24th of April, 1907.]

In the following lines I purpose to demonstrate that the capricorn, for four centuries the emblem of the second legion Augusta in the British Isles, has not altogether perished elsewhere than in the remembrance of antiquaries, and that it is preserved at the present day, though unconsciously, by one of the most gallant of British regiments.

Richard Cannon, in his Historical Records of the British Army, 23rd Foot (Welsh Fusiliers), 1850, page 2, says:—'On the 17th of March, 1689, king William III. authorized lord Herbert to raise a regiment of infantry; some circumstances, however, occurred which prevented his lordship from assuming the duties of his appointment, and the colonelcy was conferred on his relative, Charles Herbert, on the 10th of April following. The regiment was formed of men raised in Wales and in the adjacent counties, and consisted of 13 companies of 3 serjeants, 2 drummers, 3 corporals, and 60 private soldiers each; the headquarters were fixed at Ludlow, in Shropshire. This regiment was raised with 11 others (the 22nd and 24th were only retained) to aid in the deliverance of Ireland from the power of king James, who landed

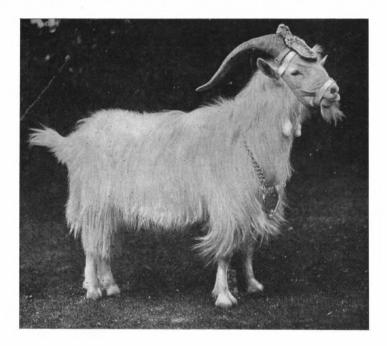
^{&#}x27;Towards the end of the reign of the emperor Augustus, the Roman army numbered twenty-five legions, on three of which he conferred the privilege of bearing his own surname: firstly, legio II. Augusta, then in Upper Germany, next in Britain after the year 69; secondly, legio III. Augusta, in Africa during the whole empire; thirdly, legio VIII. Augusta, in Pannonia (nowadays Hungary), later in Upper Germany, in Moesia and finally in Italy.

from France at Kinsale on the 12th March, 1689.' But major J. H. Lawrence-Archer, in his book, *The British Army: Its Regimental Records, Badges, and Devices*, 1688, page 228, asserts that the first thirteen companies were raised in the Welsh Marches in 1686 and were embodied in a regiment in 1689.

On the other hand, from Grose's Military Antiquities, 1812, vol. I., page 152, note *, one gathers the following:—'The Royal Regiment of Welsh Fusiliers has a privileged honor of passing in review, preceded by a goat with gilded horns, and adorned with ringlets of flowers; and although this may not come immediately under the denomination of a reward for merit, yet the corps values itself much on the ancientness of the custom. Every 1st of March, being the anniversary of their tutelar saint David, the officers give a splendid entertainment to all their Welsh brethren, and after the cloth is taken away, a bumper is filled round to his royal highness the Prince of Wales (whose health is always drunk to first on that day), the band playing the old tune of 'The Noble Race of Shenkin,' when a handsome drum-boy, elegantly dressed, mounted on the goat richly caparisoned for the occasion, is led thrice round the table in procession by the drum-major. It happened in 1775, at Boston, that the animal gave such a spring from the floor, that he dropped his rider upon the table, and then, bounding over the heads of some officers, he ran to the barracks with all his trappings, to the no small joy of the garrison.' The poor boy died in consequence of his fall (see also major Donkin's Military Collections, 1777, New York, page 138).

The Welsh Fusiliers go by the nickname, 'The Nannies,' a familiar denomination most likely connected with the grant of some favour by queen Anne, perhaps the privilege of marching past with their pet animal (see Richard Trimen's The Regiments of the British Army Chronologically Arranged, 1878).

The old custom is carefully kept up² and the Welsh Fusiliers never leave their goat behind wherever they move, either when they change garrison or when they campaign abroad. Certainly few of them ever heard of the story told of the Argians, who were



directed by an oracle, some 2500 years ago, to go on conquest of an empire under the guidance of goats; this object having

² Abstract from *The Standard*, Friday, March 2, 1906: 'The 1st Royal Welsh Fusiliers, stationed at Aldershot, celebrated St. David's Day in the customary fashion. At daybreak bands played and every man turned out with a leek in his cap. There was a general holiday. Old members of the regiment paid visits, among them General Luke O'Connor, who, as a sergeant, won the Victoria Cross at the Alma. The regimental pet, the Welsh goat, presented by the King, was paraded round the barracks with gilded horns and wearing massive silver ornaments,'

been attained, Karanos, their king, religiously continued the practice of arraying goats in front of his ensigns whenever he marched his army.³

The narratives of the Crimean War have not omitted recording that the pet animal of the Welsh Fusiliers was wounded at the battle of the Alma, where a company of the regiment commanded by the present general, Sir D. Lysons, G.C.B., were the first to exchange shots with the Russians. On their return from their last campaign against the Boers with their faithful companion, the animal was for them an unexpected cause of trouble, for the custom-house officers, strictly enforcing the regulations against the importation of foreign cattle, would not allow the landing of the goat, and it was not without some difficulty that the prohibition was exceptionally withdrawn after application to superior authorities. The animal died, however, soon after and was succeeded by a splendid specimen of his tribe bred in the king's own stables.

The above figure shows the white goat bearing on its forehead the scutcheon of Wales strapped to its horns. On St. David's day (1st March) the horns are gilded afresh. David, Cambrian Dewy, who succeeded St. Landaff in the episcopal see of Caerleon and died in the year 542, transferred it to Menevia; since then this last city has taken his name, St. David's, *i.e.* St. David's city.

It is obvious that a military custom, intermixed with reminiscences of local hagiology, dates from a remote epoch, and that its origin is to be searched for in the earliest middle ages. Is it possible to retrace it historically? I am not able to answer the question; all I can say is that some years ago I opened an inquiry into the matter, but I never heard of any answer to the question, which I laid before the public, under the following form, in *Notes and Queries* of 20th March, 1880, p. 235:—

³ Justinus, Historiae, viii. 1.

A Custom of the British Army.—What regiments in the British army have adopted the custom of keeping a tame animal trained to walk ahead of the troops on parade days and even into action, as is recorded of the white goat belonging to the 23rd Royal Welsh Fusiliers at the battle of the Alma? How is this custom historically accounted for? What publications (title and author) can afford any information on the subject? I should be grateful to any person who would favour me with help in the inquiry I pursue for an archaeological and scientific purpose.

In the absence of an answer or explanation of any sort, I now venture to propose at least an attempt to that effect. For this purpose it is necessary to bring back the reader at once to the last days of the Roman domination. He must remember that the soldiers of the empire, bound to military duties for a period of twenty-five years, with the prospect of certain advantages and citizen's privileges at the end of their service, gave up all hope of returning to their far-distant native countries from which they had been cast away since their youth, and considered their camp and quarters as their definitive home, to which they were affectionately attached by a prolonged habit. Hence the origin of so many towns grown out of the settlements built by petty merchants in the vicinity of camps whose veterans formed the nucleus of an increasing population. most perceptible when the Roman government, incapable of resisting the pressure of barbaric invasions, decided upon recalling their officials and administrative agents of all sorts, and left their troops to provide for themselves, since it had become materially impossible to withdraw them, as Aurelian had done in the years 270-275, when he evacuated Dacia, the present day Roumania, and concentrated his army on the left side of the Danube, in that part of Lower Moesia which he named 'Dacia Felix,' in remembrance of the abandoned province.

Let us now examine what took place on the western boundaries of the empire, in Gaul, Spain and Britain, at the beginning of the fifth century. As for Gaul, we are indebted to Procopius for most precise, as well as precious, information. This Byzan-

tine writer, who lived in the sixth century (i.e. in the year 565), relates an extraordinary event which deserves to fix our attention. After having told the struggles between the Armoric populations and the Franks of Clovis I., ending in a treaty of alliance which both parties concluded in 497, he adds:- 'The Roman soldiers who had been quartered at the extremities of Gaul, finding it impossible for them to return to Rome, and being unwilling to join the heretic Arians, their foes (that is to say, the Wisigoths of Alaric II., king of Aquitain), gave themselves up to the native Armoricans and to the Germanic Franks, with their ensigns, and adopted the country which they had formerly guarded for the empire. They have preserved and handed down to their posterity the customs of the Roman militia, and they still maintain them. They even now bear of the corps in which they had been formerly enlisted, and it is under their own original ensigns that they They are invariably attached to the ancient discipline and, Roman-like in all their doings, they still make use of the Roman soldier's leg-bandages.'4 The course adopted by the imperial troops in Gaul is not an isolated fact; a similar instance is recorded of those of Spain in a like circumstance, when they transferred their allegiance to Sisebut, king of the Wisigoths, in the years 612-621, according to the positive statement of Isidore, bishop of Seville: - But when after prince

⁴ Procopius, Bell gothic. i., 12: καὶ στρατιῶται δὲ Ῥωμαίων ἔτεροι ἐς Γάλλων τὰς ἐσχατιὰς φυλακῆς ἔνεκα ἐτετάχατο. Οἱ δὴ ὄυτε ἐς Ῥώμην ὅπως ἐπανήζουσιν ἔχοντες ὀυ μὴν οὕτε προσκωρεῖν ᾿Αρειανοῖς οὖσι τοῖς πολεμίοις βουλομένοι σφᾶς τε ἀυτοὺς ξὲν τοῖς σημείοις καὶ χώραν ἢν πάλαι Ῥωμαίοις ἐφύλασσον, ᾿Αρβορύχοις τε καὶ Γερμανοῖς ἔδωσαν, ἔς τε ἀπογόνους τοὺς σφετέρους ξύμπαντα παραπέμψαντες διεσώσαντο τὰ πάτρια ἤθη, ἃ δὴ σεβόμενοι καὶ ἐς ἐμὲ τηρεῖν ἀξιοῦσιν. Ἦκ τε γὰρ τῶν καταλόγων ἐς τόδε τοῦ χρόνου δηλοῦνται, ἐς ὃυς τὸ παλαιὸν ταττόμενοι στρατεύσαντο, καὶ σημεῖα τὰ σφέτερα ἐπαγόμενοι οὕτω δὴ ἐς μάχην καθίστανται νόμοις τε τοῖς πατρίοις ἐς ἀεὶ χρῶνται καὶ σχῆμα τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἔν τε τοῖς ἄλλοις ἄπασι κᾶν τοῖς διαδήμασι διασώζουσιν.

Sisebut had assumed the regal sceptre, the Goths were raised to such a degree of prosperous fortune that they forced to submit to their arms not only the land, but also the seas, and that they commanded those Roman soldiers to whom Spain herself had seen so many nations subservient.'5

Concerning Britain, Zosimus asserts that this country gave example to Gaul. 'The inhabitants of Britain,' says he, 'having taken up arms, released the cities of their island from the incursions of the Barbarians; the Armorican coast and the other Gaulish provinces, following their example, expelled in the same manner the Roman governors and established a new government among themselves.' And farther on:—'The emperor Honorius sent letters to the cities of Britain, urging them to provide for their safety by their own means.' From this we learn that in the year 409 events had taken in Britain the same course as later in Gaul and in Spain.

We are now well acquainted with the state of mind prevailing in the Roman army and among the western populations of Europe when the empire began to break up in the fifth century, and we are enabled to understand the change that took place in the social and political condition of the ancient world at the dawn of the dark ages.

- ⁵ Isidorus Sevillensis, *Historiae Gothorum*, *Vandalorum*, *Suevorum*: 'Sed postquam Sisebutus princeps regni sumpsit sceptra, ad tantae felicitatis virtutem provecti sunt (Gothi), ut non solum terras, sed etiam ipsa maria suis armis adeant, subactique serviant illis Romani milites quibus servire tot gentes et ipsa Spania vidit.'
- 6 Zosimus, Hist. vi., 6: ὅι τε οὖν ἐκ τῆς Βρεττανίας, ὅπλα ἔκδυντες καὶ σφῶν ἀυτῶν προκινδυνεύσαντες ἢλευθέρωσαν τῶν ἐπικειμένων Βαρβάρων τὰς πόλεις. Καὶ ὁ ᾿Αρμόριχος ἄπας καὶ ἔτερας Γαλατῶν ἐπαρχίας, Βρεττανοὺς μιμησάμεναι, κατὰ τὸν ἶσον σφᾶς ἢλευθέρωσαν τρόπον, εκβάλλουσαι μὲν τοὺς Ὑωμαίους ἄρχωντας ὀικεῖον δὲ κατ᾽ ἐξουσίαν πολίτευμα, καθιστᾶσαι.

Ibid., vi., 10: 'Ονωρίου δὲ γράμμασι πρὸς τὰς ἐν Βρεττανία χρησαμένου πόλεις, φυλάττεθαι παραγγέλλουσι.

By an extraordinary coincidence it happens that at each of the three western extremities of the empire a town is to be found retaining in its name a striking reminiscence of the legion once quartered in that part of the country; the Latin word 'legion' itself is still preserved almost intact under the shape of 'Leon' in the territorial nomenclature of Spain, of Brittany in France, and of Wales in Great Britain.

Leon in Spain, once the capital of a medieval kingdom, now reduced to the proportions of a simple province, had been formerly chosen by the imperial legate for the headquarters of the seventh legion, surnamed Gemina; it was the residence of its commander, 'Praefectus legionis Septimae Geminae Legione,' according to an official document compiled in the reign of the emperor Honorius, about the year 420, of which several old manuscript copies are extant in the principal libraries of Europe, at Oxford, Paris, Munich, etc. Thereby it is stated that, at the beginning of the fifth century, the prolonged stay of that legion in the same place had given rise to a town denominated, in the ablative case, 'Legione' translatable into 'at the Legion.'

The same word 'Leon,' clearly a contraction of legione, occurs in the names of several boroughs or villages of France, among which one stands as the most conspicuous, Saint Paul-de-Léon, sometimes incorrectly spelt Saint Pol-de-Léon, in the department of Finisterre, also wrongly spelt Finistère even in the Dictionnaire des Postes. It is a small city built near the sea-side of the Channel, where a Welsh priest of noble extraction, Paul Aurelian, who had been educated in the monastery of St. Iltud, and who came over to that part of Gaul in order to evangelize the natives, founded a bishopric, about the year 535, parallel to the episcopal see founded by his school companion David at Caerleon. The surrounding country is popularly known as 'le Léon,' or 'le pays

⁷ Notitia dignitatum utriusque imperii, part. Occid., xlii., 26.

léonais': pagus leonensis is a saving that occurs repeatedly in the Life of S. Paul Aurelian, a dated from the year 884 by the monk Wrmonoc who compiled it. From what legion is this denomination derived? The Notitia dignitatum answers the question when it states that the Roman garrison consisted of an auxiliary troop of Moorish infantry drawn from Africa and surnamed 'Osismiaci,' in consideration of the Osismii, a Gaulish people to whose land they were appointed, 'Praefectus militum Maurorum Osismiacorum, Osismiis.' In a previous paragraph this troop, trained to the legionary discipline, is registered as of the twelfth rank in a list of eighteen legions specially denominated 'pseudocomitatenses,' distinct from the 'comitatenses' legions and from the 'palatine' legions.9 Notwithstanding such a distinction, it was officially entitled to the current qualification of legion, as a generic designation. It may be added that the Benedictine monk, Dom Morice, displayed real sagacity when saying:—'The Romans garrisoned for a long while St. Pol-de-Léon with their legions, and it is apparently from these legions that the country has borrowed its name.'10 More fortunate, we are able to name with precision the corps which he only guessed or suspected; it was the pseudocomitate legion of Osismian Moors.

Coming at last to Britain, I gather in the territorial nomenclature of Wales the compound name Caerleon applied to two places. The most famous is Caerleon-on-Usk (Monmouthshire), i.e., 'The camp or city of the legion,' which received its name from the second legion Augusta, quartered for the most part on the site occupied by Isca, capital of the Silures, which left its own name to the river Usk. Many inscriptions recording this legion have been found on the spot and in the neighbourhood.

Acta Sanctorum, apud Bolland. mensis martii, xii., vol. ii., p. 115, cap. iii., 29;
p. 118, cap. v. 46. Cf. Revue Celtique, v., 1883, pp. 441, 452.

⁹ Notitia dignitatum, Occid. v., 256; xxxviii., 13, 17.

¹⁰ D. Morice, Histoire de Bretagne, 1750, II., Catalogue des évêques, p. 38.

To sum up, when at the taking of Rome by the Ostrogoths of Alaric I. in 410, Honorius with his court fled to Ravenna and abandoned not only the provinces but even the half of Italy to its fate, everywhere the imperial army exhibited the wonderful spectacle of thoroughly disciplined corps, preserving their military organization and loyally transferring their allegiance to the natives with whom they faced their foes on all sides, in the north the Caledonian Picts and the Hibernian Scots, on the eastern and southern coasts the Scandinavian Northmen and the This helps us to understand how far the Germanic Saxons. inhabitants adapted to their own use the Roman customs and dress still recognisable in the picturesque costume of the clans; the round shield, clupeus, and the broad sword, gladius major or claymore, made their last appearance so late as the year 1745 on the battlefield of Preston. Even the Gadhelic word clann, meaning offspring, descendants, answers pretty well the old Roman gens, as exemplified by the Fabian gens who singly fitted out 306 warriors, all bearing the family name Fabius, against the Veians. The clan system, with its variegated plaids, most likely remnants¹¹ of the military cloak (paluda) worn by the soldier when he left the civilian's toga, appears as an inheritance of the Roman troops who swarmed between the two northern lines of defence, each corps distinguishing itself by the painted ornaments of its shield, such as may be seen in the curious coloured drawings of the Notitia.

Let us now return to the second legion Augusta which sent many detachments to the various stations of the Roman Wall, and which marked its stay by numerous inscriptions. Coins of the Britanno-Roman emperor Carausius, on which the name of this legion is inscribed around the figure of a sea-goat, seem

[&]quot;I leave to competent philologists the care of proving or of refuting an etymological connexion between the Scotch word plaid and the latin word 'paluda,' quoted by Varro, Ling. lat., with its derivative 'paludamentum.'

to prove that the capricorn was its emblem. These coins are rare and generally incompletely struck in some part or other. In 1848, when John Doubleday, of the British Museum, prepared the catalogue of coins for the *Monumenta Historica Britannica*, he knew none of that description save the specimen kept in the Hunterian collection at Glasgow. Since then, four examples have entered the National collection in London. Owing to the



kindness of Mr. Herbert A. Grueber, I am able to reproduce them here with a fifth one which I purchased for my own collection. They may be described thus:—

Obv.: IMP CARAVSIVS P F AVG. Bust of Carausius, radiated, to right.

¹² H. Petrie and T. Sharpe, Monumenta Historica Britannica, 1848, fol. p. clxi., pl. viii, 22, Rev.: Leg II avg; in exergue, ML. Sea-goat turned to left, the fore-legs hanging downwards, or sometimes stretched forwards.

No. 1 is noticeable for the perfectness of the type showing distinctly the scales that cover the hind part of the animal; No. 5 is remarkable for the mint mark in exergue, QML (or perhaps RML), hitherto unpublished, Q(uarta officina) M(onetae) L(ondinensis).

The capricorn is also the well-known type of silver coins of Augustus, and on these it certainly represents the zodiacal sign



under which he was born on the 25th September, 63 B.C.¹³ Hence we are led to infer that the same figure conveys a somewhat similar astronomical signification when it occurs on other coins, for instance, those of Gallienus and Carausius; consequently, if the legend inscribed around it points to a legion, this figure symbolizes the anniversary day on which the legion was formally constituted, that is to say, in a figurative way, the birthday of its golden eagle, solemnized by the consecration of the small temple built for the purpose of sheltering the revered ensign. At Leon, in Spain, no less than six inscriptions¹⁴ have been found, purporting that they had been put up in honour

 $^{^{\}rm 13}$ Suetonius, August.xciv.: Tantum mox fiduciam fati Augustus habuit, ut thema suum vulgaverit, nummumque argenteum nota sideris Capricorni quo natus est percusserit.

¹⁴ Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, 11. nos. 2552-2556,

of Jupiter by the seventh legion Gemina on the anniversary day of its eagle, or of other minor ensigns specially assigned to the cohorts, ob natalem aquilae, ob natales signorum.

Cassius Dio gives very precise information on this subject:—'The Eagle is the name of the small temple (νεως μικρός) wherein the golden eagle is deposited at the winter barracks of every legion registered in the official list, and never taken out but when it leads the whole legion on march.' Two coins of Augustus give an accurate idea of these military chapels; on one, a gold denarius belonging to the medal room of the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris, the legionary eagle is visible between two

cohortal ensigns; on the other, a silver cistophorus of the same collection, a cohortal ensign stands solitary in the centre. The building, open on all sides so as to allow a free sight of the inside, consists of a cupola supported by columns decagonally or octagonally arrayed.

The attention of visitors to the Blackgate



 $1'2'' \times 1''$

museum at Newcastle-upon-Tyne is called to a block of sculptured stone described by Mr. Robert Blair in the Catalogue, p. 71:

149.—From Corstofitum, Corchester. Presented by Mr. Robert Harle, of Corbridge. Leg(Ionis) II avg(vstae) coh(ors) [III]. 'The Third Cohort of the Second Legion surnamed Augusta.' This stone was probably placed in the front of some building reared by this regiment. In the upper part of the stone we have a carving of the sea-goat and Pegasus, the badges of the Second Legion, and the crescent moon.

¹⁵ Cassius Dio, Hist. xl. 18.

Hitherto the precise object for which this curious stone was carved has rather remained in uncertainty; but now Dio's information has prepared us to guess safely that it entered into the structure of the small temple, *nedicula*, built by the third cohort of the Second Legion for keeping its ensign under cover, yet in constant sight of officers and men. It was most likely fitted in the frontal upper part as a title of the building. The lunar crescent, between the confronted figures of Pegasus and Capricorn, represents the horoscope of the third cohort, showing that the consecration day of the temple was marked by the respective positions of the moon and the two constellations in astronomical opposition.

A similar sculptured stone, preserved in the British Museum, was found at Benwell (Condencum), and is described in Bruce's Lapidarium Septentrionale, No. 33.

This sculpture represents the square banner or flag, vexillum, of a draught from the same legion, between Pegasus and Capricorn; we may suppose on the authority of Cassius Dio that such a minor ensign would have been simply adorned with the name of the emperor in red letters.

The sea-goat is not exclusively connected with the second legion on coins of Carausius; it occurs also with the twenty-second surnamed Primigenia, and still more with those of the first Adjutrix, of the fourteenth Gemina, of the twentieth Valeria Victrix, and of the thirtieth Ulpia. The consequence of this statement is of some importance, since we can no more properly consider that animal as the distinctive badge of either one or the other of these six legions. In point of fact, it symbolizes the anniversary day on which the legion was constituted and officially entered in the army list, a date celebrated with religious ceremonies and adequate festivities.

¹⁶ For other zodiacal figures connected with legions on coins, such as the Ram, the Bull, the Lion, the Centaur, see Domazewski's memoir entitled 'Die Thierbilder der Signa' in the 'Archaeologisch-epigraphische Mitteilungen' of Vienna, xv, 1892, pp. 182-193.

No doubt the sea-goat carved in front of the eagle's temple and typified on the brass currency of Carausius contributed to keep up at Caerleon the tradition of the capricorn in connexion with the legion's name. Hence the custom of keeping in the barracks a pet animal, as a substitute recalling the fancy capri-



15" × 10".

corn, easily grew up when the garrison, converted to Christianity at the same time with the civil population, pulled down the pagan temple of the legionary eagle. It must also be remembered that when the Roman empire collapsed, everywhere the populations, destitute of proper authority, turned their eyes towards the clergy, who had acquired great influence in consequence of

their higher degree of instruction and of their moralizing predications; they readily took for their temporal advisers monks and missionaries who had only pretended to be their spiritual guides. Hence the preponderance secured in all cities by the bishops, owing to their personal popularity. David, the zealous apostle of Wales, could not be forgotten by his countrymen when he departed; the commemoration of his death was yearly celebrated and piously substituted for the heathen but inveterate festivity of the legionary sea-goat. In that way, the old natalis aquilae was transferred to the new natal day of the saint, that is to say, to the anniversary day of his death on the 1st of March; according to canon law the celestial birthday dated from the end of mortal existence.

Throughout the Middle Ages, the custom of parading the pet animal on the saint's day may have been preserved by the civic guard or the military garrison at Caerleon and handed down to the regiment of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers when it was raised in Wales.

Such is the explanation that I propose to folklorists, well aware that the mysterious byways of popular tradition and legends start from events or simple facts fallen into oblivion, but sometimes restorable by rational criticism.

Postscript.—At the moment of closing this paper, I consider it my duty to publicly present my heartfelt thanks to Prof. John Rhÿs, of the British Academy, for having kindly read the manuscript sheets before they were sent to the printer.

