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Bevan's *House of Seleucus* The *House of Seleucus*. By E. R. Bevan. 2 vols. with Plates and Maps. Edward Arnold. Pp. xii., 330, 333. Price 30s.

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REVIEWS.

BEVAN'S *HOUSE OF SELEUCUS*.

The House of Seleucus. By E. R. BEVAN.
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Arnold. Pp. xii., 330, 333. Price 30s.

IN dealing with the fortunes of the family of Seleucus Mr. Bevan—whose name is not unknown to readers of the *Classical Review*—has not only broken almost new ground, *relictis Jugera ruris*, a field not specially touched even by German industry, but has reduced that ground to a very tolerable state of cultivation. He says that at some point of his writing his work was 'in a desperately amorphous stage.' That is exactly the condition in which he found the history of the Seleucidae as a whole. But he leaves it in a very different condition. He puts everything that was known of the Graeco-Macedonian Empire in the East—and much that is new or was not generally known—into a coherent shape, and leaves our view of the government a good deal better and clearer. The evidence is of course still very fragmentary, but in his hands each fragment falls into its proper place. In fact Mr. Bevan shows a double ability in dealing with a subject which is in every sense a broken and disjointed one: he is able to co-ordinate little facts and at the same time to seize and follow out the more important threads, the great factors and tendencies of the time. The labour of writing his book, especially that spent upon the arrangement of the small facts, must have been enormous; but the author has his reward. He has produced a historical work of which any writer might be proud, and written what must be for many years the standard work upon the Greek East of its period. Even students who go to original authorities will find it advisable not to read their Polybius without their Bevan.

The name chosen for this profound study, *The House of Seleucus*, may cause at first a certain hesitation. Does it not appear to be a return to that 'personal' way of looking at history which has of late gone so completely out of fashion? And is not all the new evidence which appears in these pages rather general than personal, rather about the people than the House? The latter at least is true. The minute new bits of information which inscriptions yield avail us

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more for the condition of the countries concerned than for their history, and more for the kingdom than the kings.¹ But further reflection shows that the name is not ill-chosen. The only link of the empire to which it belongs is the great House. The fortunes of the latter are the fortunes of the former, because there was nothing else to hold together such a fortuitous concourse of atoms. Mr. Bevan was compelled to string the affairs of many peoples on the thread of the story of one family, just as Professor Mahaffy, when he wrote one of the *Stories of the Nations*, had to call it by no national name, but after Alexander's Empire.

In addition to his other claims upon our gratitude, Mr. Bevan possesses a clear and agreeable style, rising on fit occasions to the dignified or the vivid. He knows how to break the monotony of a wilderness of facts by the insertion of brighter or more impressive passages, sometimes based on Polybius, (as the story of the capture of Achaeus or the flight of Demetrius from Rome), sometimes due to his own power of seeing places or incidents clearly and describing them well.

But, when all is conceded as to the author's power of arranging and wording what he has to tell, it still seemed to me when I reached the end of the book that it wanted a summing-up, a bringing together of the important points of view. The kings have been happily characterized, each as he came, (especially perhaps do we feel this about Antiochus III and Antiochus IV); the details of law or army or administration have been set before us plainly, generally with a caution as to how far the evidence

¹ *E.g.* vol. i. p. 89. where Mr. Bevan says that here and there we have indications of the king's authority reaching the internal administration of Greek cities in Asia. Iasus in conferring *ateleia* has to limit its grant to those dues over which the city has control—*ἀτέλειαν πάντων ὧν ἡ πόλις κυρία ἐστίν*, *C.I.G.* No. 2673. 'At Mylasa it looks as if the right of inflicting the punishment of death was reserved to the king, *C.I.G.* No. 2691 c.' On the numerous data of this sort in the two volumes we can build conclusions of a constitutional, a sociological, and sometimes a religious, character; but they do not often help us to see the kings, or even the history in the special sense, much more clearly.—The point dealt with by n. 6 at p. 105, vol. i., seems to rest on a mistranslation.

really goes; but the great agencies or hindrances which were at work, indicated severally here or there, need to be grouped more, so that we may see where the successes or failures of the Seleucid House were due to what may pass for chance (as the contemporary rise of Rome) or were due to causes which no luck could either create or remove (as the antecedent distribution of populations or the immovable pressure of physical conditions). Mr. Bevan is as conscious of these agencies as we could wish, but they would be better seen in juxtaposition than in isolation.

A division which would embrace in a certain way many of these important points would be on the one hand the difficulties or special problems of the empire, and on the other its work, its task and results.

I. The joint result of circumstance, of the struggle for mere life, and of personal ambition, brought into Seleucus' hands an enormous portion of the conquests of Alexander. But the more monstrous the cattle, the more widespread the lands, the more difficulty there was in retaining them. The kingdom of Lysimachus, that of Antigonus Gonatas, or that of Ptolemy I, might well hope to hang together, if left alone, by its own tolerable homogeneity. But that of Seleucus was cracked across and across at lines of cleavage. The tendency to disintegration, never overcome, was among the first, as it was among the last, of the difficulties of the ruling house. Its inveterate character was due to its resting upon many causes, whose nature and persistence remind us often of the later troubles of the Roman government. For one thing, the empire of Seleucus had to be built and maintained in defiance of serious geographical difficulties.

'The natural clefts of the empire, the fissures which were so apt at any weakening of the central authority to gape, followed geographical barriers. From Northern Syria the western provinces were cut off by the line of the Taurus: on the east the desert separated it from the seats of Assyrio-Babylonian civilization, and beyond that again the mountain-wall of Zagrus fenced Irân. To hold these geographically detached members from a single base is the standing problem. The long struggle for each one has a more or less separate history. (I. 76).

Possibly the real difficulty thus stated was magnified by Seleucus' choice of a capital so far west as Antioch. He could not cut himself off from Greece by settling further away from her, unless he chose to abandon the standpoint of Alexander, his own claim to an abiding connexion with Macedon, and the advantages of a professed

and well-supported civilization higher than that of the East. But yet his capital was too much on one side, and the Upper Provinces naturally tended to fall off. At one time at least a second capital and a viceroy had to be planted in Babylonia at Seleucia. The foundation and permanence of St. Petersburg may be thought a justification for Seleucus, but still St. Petersburg has not yet lived through very much history.

The geographical difficulties brought with them to the Graeco-Macedonian rulers, as they had brought to the Achaemenid kings, the special troubles of a conquest which was never complete. The country protected its own residents against a central government.

'Through all the history of Western Asia there runs the eternal distinction between the civilized cultivators of the plains and lower hills and the wild peoples of mountain and desert. The great monarchies which have arisen here have rarely been effective beyond the limits of cultivation; mountain and desert are another world in which they can get, at best, only precarious footing. And to the monarchical settled peoples the near neighbourhood of this unsubjugated world has been a continual menace. It is a chaotic region out of which may pour upon them at any weakening of the dam hordes of devastators. At the best of times it hampers the government by offering a refuge and recruiting-ground to all the enemies of order. Between the royal governments and the free tribes the feud is secular. The ordinary policy of the Asiatic monarchies has been simply to safeguard the great highways of communication. It obviously follows from the restriction of civilized habitation to the narrow belts of territory just described that the main roads are fixed by nature to certain definite lines. The task set before itself by these governments has been, not that of holding an immense continuous area, but the comparatively simpler one of holding these lines. It is important to remember this in connexion with rapid conquests like that of Alexander. To conquer the Achaemenian Empire did not mean the effective occupation of all the area within its extreme frontiers—that would have been a task exceeding one man's lifetime—but the conquest of its cultivated districts and the holding of the roads which connected them.' (I. 22).

Beyond these obstacles to pacification and unity lay the broad difference of East and West,—a difference which had already led first to the weakening and then to the destruction of the Persian realm, which was to appear again on more than one page of history, and which to-day creates half the troubles of the Turkish Empire. But even in smaller detail there were divisions of language and habits, and—if one may say so of that remote time—of nationality, which distracted the mind of a ruler, para-

lysed his arm, and cost many, even early, losses to his throne. The mixed character of the population, notably in Asia Minor, caused perpetual ferment, disqualified citizens of the new empire from finding a career or settlement in any part of it indifferently, hampered improvement, and favoured pretenders. The North of Asia Minor escaped early from Macedonian control; Pergamus contrived to avoid incorporation; and then these new neighbours immediately set up new troubles, new causes of irritation. These are Mr. Bevan's 'internal questions' presented to the Seleucid court 'by the lesser principalities, Cappadocian, Bithynian, Pergamene'; and we may add the principality of Pontus. By the time of Antiochus I. 'the North of the peninsula has been finally abandoned.' In short Mr. Bevan sees clearly the importance of the ethnological factor in the history of Asia Minor.

'Asia Minor had never had either national or political unity. There was no *people* of Asia Minor. Since dim antiquity wandering races from every quarter had streamed into it, making the confusion of its motley tribe (? tribes) worse confounded. It has furnished ethnologists, ancient and modern, with a puzzle which has the charm of never being able to be found out . . . There had never been a kingdom or empire of Asia, as there had been an Egyptian, an Assyrian, and an Irânian.'

In short, there was a confusion of stocks comparable to that which we see to-day in Macedonia. But we must not suppose that the jarring of religions or cults was wanting in Western Asia too. Professor P. Gardner has remarked that Seleucus and his successors never succeeded, like the Ptolemies, in conciliating the national and religious prejudices of the races over which they ruled; and his words remind us, not only of the Book of Maccabees, but also of other failures and deaths of kings. About Antiochus III, the Great, Mr. Bevan tells how

'the tidings came back to Antioch that he had adventured himself with a body of troops in the Elymaean hills (mod. Lûristân), where the temple of some native god promised great spoil of silver and gold, and had been overwhelmed by the fierce tribesmen.' (II. 119).

Antiochus IV, 'the God Manifest,' marched to plunder a temple of 'Artemis,' and fell back baffled because (as Polybius says) 'the barbarians who dwelled around would not consent to his impiety.'

In short, the empire as put together by Seleucus was but an artificial unity: it had

no natural bond and no diffused native strength of its own. 'A magnificent *tour de force*, it had no natural vitality.'

Beyond the Western borders too of its unwieldy frame there were destructive agencies at work, kingdoms which found their interest in hampering and weakening the House of Seleucus, and which even claimed portions of what it held. When Seleucus III. mounted the throne

'the geographical centre of the Empire, Syria, Babylonia, and the rarer Irânian provinces, were still held, but in the west and east great members had been broken away. The Ptolemaic power ruled the coasts of Southern Asia Minor, even to some extent of Syria, possessing Seleucia and the mouth of the Orontes; the Pergamene power ruled the Ionian and Aeolian coasts, and as much of the interior as was not in the hands of barbarian princes.' (I. 203).

Egypt always coveted something to the North of the isthmus; and warfare, long continued or often repeated, prevented the growth of wealth, of contentment, of institutions and government-machinery, and even of military strength. Both kingdoms—or all the kingdoms—made themselves weak long before they were called on to face the grim earnestness of Rome. Whether different military organization, more able and more supple commanders, might not have given a decisive superiority to one side, and so shortened the waste of time and energy, is a question which Mr. Bevan prefers to postpone. For Pergamus there is a specially good word to be said, but its domestic virtues, unsupported by any real basis of nationality or fighting strength, had little chance in such an age.

'Attalus I presented himself to the Greeks in the most attractive light. Not only was he their champion against barbarism, as indeed the house of Seleucus in its better days had been, but he did everything to show himself an ardent Hellenist and to exhibit at his court a wholesome family-life which would form a contrast in the eyes of the Greek *bourgeoisie* to the barbaric vice and cruelty which were rife in the Seleucid and Ptolemaic courts. His mother Antiochis was a kinswoman of the Seleucid house, and his maternal aunt Laodice was the wife of Seleucus II., but Attalus himself elected for his Queen Apollonis, the daughter of a plain citizen of Cyzicus,—"a woman," says Polybius, "deserving for many reasons remark and admiration," who "rose from a private station to royalty, and kept her high place to the last by means of no meretricious seductions, but by a plain and sober dignity and goodness." Instead of the fraternal feuds and family murders which seemed to be elsewhere the rule in royal houses, the children of Attalus and Apollonis showed the world a delightful picture of simplicity and

natural affection.¹ And whilst the house of Attalus recommended itself to the moral sentiments of the Greek republics, it did so equally to their literary and artistic susceptibilities . . . If the ideal of the phil-Hellenic king, which had been more or less pretended to by all the successors of Alexander, was capable of realization at all, it seemed to be realized in Attalus.' (I. 199).

Deep in the heart too of this distracted part of Asia was planted an element which could neither be expelled nor conciliated nor assimilated, the untamable Gauls. If they sometimes furnished formidable troops to the Syrian kings, they were just as ready to fight them for pay or booty; and, when the Seleucidae were finally driven out of Asia Minor, they left this intractable people to be a trouble to their successors. Mr. Bevan's sketch of these tribes (i. 135-142) is among his most striking passages. Of course it reminds us of Dr. Mommsen's account of the Celts; but it has this advantage, that it is not an impressionist view of Celts in general, but is a definite and precise description of the Celt as he was seen in Asia in a historical age.

Lastly, from the remoter West came an enemy whose soldiers were not purchasable mercenaries, whose plans were not the momentary inspirations of an unstable kingdom. Rome judged her safety to be imperilled by a great Syrian empire; and after many successes of Antiochus III, 'in the moment of its apparent triumph, the house of Seleucus received a terrific blow.'

II. But that blow did not fall until Rome was ready to take up the work of its rival. P. Scipio, to whose advice the Roman victory of Magnesia may have been due, was one of those Roman citizens who were blamed for their addiction to Greek ways; and, whether they liked the task or not, it was just those Greek ways which the Romans had to uphold and propagate when their influence took the place of Seleucid rule. The great House had carried on the traditions of Alexander for a time, and now the duty devolved on Rome for a far longer period. The Seleucid Empire, as Mr. Bevan says, had done 'a great work in propagating and defending Hellenism in the East till the advent of Rome.' When it broke up, 'we see peoples of non-Hellenic culture, Persians, Armenians, Arabs, Jews, pressing in everywhere to reclaim what Alexander

and Seleucus had won. They are only checked by Hellenism finding a new defender in Rome.'

This work was apparently always on the minds of Seleucus and his successors, or at least of every successor who could find a throne firm enough or a moment quiet enough for thinking. But after the interference of Rome with the foreign conquests of Syria, the effort to carry on the internal task seems to have been intensified or at all events hurried.

'While Rome circumscribed the activity of Antiochus as a conqueror, he had great scope left him as the radiant champion and patron of Hellenism . . . The Hellenism which Antiochus propagated went further than political forms, or even real political privileges. It extended to the sphere of social and private life, to the manner of thought and speech, to religious practice. "And King Antiochus wrote to his whole kingdom, that all should be one people, and that each should forsake his own laws." Beneath the naïve phrase of the Hebrew writer there lies the truth that the transformation which he saw going on around him in the life of the Syrian peoples was forwarded by the active encouragement of the court. It worked in with a policy deliberately adopted by those that ruled. Imaginative and sentimental Hellenism was no doubt in part the motive which governed Antiochus, but there were considerations of policy as well. Some principle was needed to unite and fuse a realm whose weakness was that it had no national unity. And Antiochus, like Alexander of whom indeed he often reminds us—an Alexander run wild—sees such a principle in a uniform culture, resting upon a system of Greek cities, obliterating or softening the old differences of race and tradition. It was not exactly a new idea, but it no doubt revived with a new sort of splendour, it stood out more distinctly as an imposing ideal, in the glow and colour it took from the strange fire of Antiochus the Fourth.' (II. 148, 153).

It was hurry which led to the great explosion among the Jews. As Mr. Bevan points out, the initiative in the Hellenizing of Jerusalem came from the Jews themselves. What Antiochus IV wanted was, not an opportunity, but patience to use it.

We cannot now follow our author through his careful definitions of what Hellenism really meant, and of the sense in which we can say that it was propagated or upheld. But it clearly means two things, an outward show or way of life and an inward character, and on both of these elements Mr. Bevan fixes our attention (II. 154, and elsewhere). He does well to distinguish, and even to keep reminding us that the one thing might be propagated, though it could hardly be either valuable or lasting, without the other. But we cannot discover in his pages any final conclusion as to how far

¹ Something of this sort was the boast of Antigonus I (Plutarch, *Dem.* 3); but his son Demetrius (Polioretetes) did not continue to show the world a delightful picture.

and how deep the process of Hellenization went in Asia. To judge of these questions we should of course have to draw evidence from generations far later than the disappearance of the throne of Seleucus; we must know something of the permanence of the tendency, as well as of its depth. A very valuable paper on this and kindred subjects in the *Quarterly Review*, April, 1903, remarks that Macedonians were bad teachers of Greek ways. No doubt they were; but Asia was not limited to them. Asiatics could read the whole of Greek literature, and could have it explained to them by Greeks who had not lost the tradition,—two advantages which medieval Europe and modern Europe have not shared. This, alone, would not create more than a cultivated literary class; but there were countless other agencies at work through which the stream of Greek thought came soaking in. Two things are certain: we cannot speak quite lightly of a tendency which produced Lucian; and we must not put all the parts of the Syrian Empire on one footing.

But, while we suspect that Hellenism as pushed on by the Seleucids and upheld by Rome, went far toward changing the ways of men on the Syrian side of the Mediterranean, if not in Asia Minor, we must not forget the counter-agency, the reaction by which the East tended to spoil the Greek or the Macedonian character of those men and women who settled in her new cities or took service with her new kings.¹ Nor must we look with any favour on the peculiarly mad scheme by which Alexander hoped at once to Hellenize the East and to unify his kingdom, viz. the intermarriage of races. It was not every race, it was probably only the Irânian race, which he wished to marry with his Greeks and Macedonians: but the mixed white races of South America are the nearest

¹ Two well-known passages of Livy, cited in these volumes, speak plainly of this degeneration: but they were written with a purpose.

parallel we can think of to such a union, and the results in America are not yet altogether encouraging.

Dwelling on these fascinating topics, we have cut ourselves off from many other interesting matters of discussion. The question whether the English in India really represent the Greek civilization in contact with the East; the question of how the Greek usage of deifying kings grew up,² are but specimens of the many important topics which these volumes handle or suggest. The concluding chapter, on 'Government, Court, and Army', is a happy reunion of many scattered data on its subjects, and we must allow ourselves two hurried remarks on it:—(i) Mr. Bevan seems to make little of the traditional Oriental luxury of the Syrian court. (ii) We may, he thinks, trace 'the far-off ancestry of our systems of government' to Syria and Egypt (II. 293; compare I. 16): Rome took over much from the 'court and government' or 'court and system' of Egypt or Syria, and we modern Europeans have borrowed 'institutions' from Rome. But here we must halt and protest. This is mixing up different things. Rome took over to a certain extent court-arrangements and etiquette. That 'the God King gave a fixed object of worship among the chaos of local cults' (II. 155) is also, though Mr. Bevan does not say so, a legitimate point of comparison with the Roman Empire. But the *system* of Rome, her government, her institutions, were very different; and ours again are very different from hers.

FRANKLIN T. RICHARDS.

² 'The Deification of Kings in the Greek Cities,' prompted a valuable paper by Mr. Bevan in the *English Historical Review*, Oct., 1901, and he returns to the subject in these volumes (I. 125-6, 177). But his survey of the facts begins with Alexander only, whereas, even if we do not look to anthropology or folk-lore for help, we ought at least to go as far back as the career of Lysander. Πρώτῳ μὲν γὰρ, ὡς ἱστορεῖ Δουῆρις, Ἑλλήνων ἐκείνω βασιμὸς αἱ πόλεις ἀνέστησαν ὡς θεῶ (Plut. Lys. 18). The subject seems to be passed over in Mr. Bevan's index.

HEINZE'S TECHNIQUE OF VIRGIL.

Virgil's Epische Technik. RICHARD HEINZE.
Leipzig. B. G. Teubner. 1903. Pp. x.,
488.

TIME and space prevent my giving much

more than a bare outline of this book. It deserves more than this, for a bare outline must ignore the many interesting side issues and digressions which the book contains—e.g., an excursus on the relations