had a great reputation during his lifetime. On one occasion a Roman knight, who sat by his side in the circus at the celebration of some games, asked him, “ Are you from Italy or from the provinces?” His answer was, “ You know me from your reading.” To which the knight replied, “ Are you then Tacitus or Pliny ? ”

Pliny, as we see clearly from several passages in his letters, had the highest opinion of his friend’s ability and worth. He consults him about a school which he thinks of establishing at Comum (Como), his birthplace, and asks him to look out for suitable teachers and professors. And he pays @@1 him the high compliment, “ I know that your *Histories* will be immortal, and this makes me the more anxious that my name should appear in them.”

The following is a list of Tacitus’s remaining works, arranged in their probable chronological order, which may be approximately inferred from internal evidence:—(1) the *Dialogue on Orators,* about 76 or 77; (2) the *Life of Agricola,* 97 or 98 ; (3) the *Germany,* 98, published probably in 99 ; (4) the *Histories* (*Historiæ*)*,* completed probably by 115 or 116, the last years of Trajan’s reign (he must have been at work on them for many years) ; (5) the *Annals,* his latest work probably, written in part perhaps along with the *Histories,* and completed subse­quently to Trajan’s reign, which he may very well have outlived.

The *Dialogue on Orators* discusses, in the form of a conversation which Tacitus professes to have heard (as a young man) between some eminent men at the Roman bar, the causes of the decay of eloquence under the empire. There are some interesting remarks in it on the change for the worse that had taken place in the education of Roman lads.

The *Life of Agricola,* short as it is, has always been considered an admirable specimen of biography. The great man with all his grace and dignity is brought vividly before us, and the sketch we have of the history of our island under the Romans gives a special interest to this little work.

The *Germany,* the full title of which is “Concerning the geography, the manners and customs, and the tribes of Germany,” describes with many suggestive hints the general character of the German peoples, aud dwells particularly on their fierce and inde­pendent spirit, which the author evidently felt to be a standing menace to the empire. The geography is its weak point ; this was no doubt gathered from vague hearsay.

The *Histories,* as originally composed in twelve books, brought the history of the empire from Galba in 69 down to the close of Domitian’s reign in 97. The first four books, and a small fragment of the fifth, giving us a very minute account of the eventful year of revolution, 69, and the brief reigns of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, are all that remain to us. In the fragment of the fifth book we have a curious and interesting account of the Jewish nation, of their character, customs, and religion, from a cultivated Roman’s point of view, which we see at once was a strongly prejudiced one.

The *Annals—*a title for which there is no ancient authority, and which there is no reason for supposing Tacitus gave distinctively to the work—record the history of the emperors of the Julian line from Tiberius to Nero, comprising thus a period from 14 a.d. to 68. Of these, nine books have come down to ns entire ; of books v., xi., and xvi. we have but fragments, and the whole of the reign of Caius (Caligula), the first six years of Claudius, and the last three years of Nero are wanting. Out of a period of fifty-four years we thus have the history of forty years.

An attempt has been made recently to prove that the *Annals* are a forgery by Poggio Bracciolini, an Italian scholar of the 15th century, but their genuineness is confirmed by their agreement@@2 in various minute details with coins and inscriptions discovered since that period. Another important fact has been brought to light. Ruodolphus, a monk of a monastery at Fulda in Hesse- Cassel, writing in the 9th century, says that Cornelius Tacitus speaks of the river known to moderns as the Weser as the Visurgis. In the *Annals* as they have come down to us we find the Visurgis mentioned five times in the first two books, whence we may con­clude that a manuscript of them was in existence in the 9th century. Add to this the testimony of Jerome that Tacitus wrote in thirty books the lives of the Cæsars, and the evidence of style, and there cannot be much doubt that in the *Annals* we have a genuine work of Tacitus.

Much of the history of the period described by him, especially of the earlier Cæsars, must have been obscure and locked up with the emperor’s private papers and memoranda. As we should ex­pect, there was a vast amount of floating gossip, which an historian would have to sift and utilize as best he might. Tacitus, as a man of good social position, no doubt had access to the best information, and must have talked matters over with the most eminent men of the day. There were several writers and chron­iclers, whom he occasionally cites but not very often ; there were memoirs of distinguished persons,—those, for example of the younger Agrippina, of Thrasea, and Helvidius. There were several collections of letters, like those of the younger Pliny ; a number, too, of funeral orations; and the “acta senatus” and the “acta populi” or “ acta diurna,” the first a record of proceedings in the senate, the latter a kind of gazette or journal. Thus there were the materials for history in considerable abundance, and Tacitus was certainly a man who knew how to turn them to good account. He has given us a striking, and on the whole doubtless a true, picture of the empire in the 1st century. He wrote, it may be admitted, with a political bias and a decided turn for satire, but he assuredly wrote with a high aim, and we may accept his own account of it: “I regard@@3 it as history’s highest function to rescue merit from oblivion, and to hold up as a terror to base words and actions the reprobation of posterity. ” Amid great evils he recognized the existence of truly noble virtues even in his own degenerate age. Still for the most part he writes as a man who felt deeply that the world was altogether “out of joint”; the empire was in itself in his view a huge blunder, and answerable more or less directly for all the diseases of society, for all the demoralization and corruption of the great world of Rome, though as to the provinces he admits that they were better off in many ways under the emperors than they had been in the last days of the republic. But his political sympathies were certainly with the old aristocratic and senatorian régime, with the Rome of the Scipios and the Fabii ; for him the greatness of his country lay in the past, and, though he felt her to be still great, her glory was, he thought, decidedly on the wane. He was, in fact, a political idealist, and could hardly help speaking disparagingly of his own day. In his *Germany* he dwells on the contrast between barbarian freedom and simplicity on the one hand and the servility and degeneracy of Roman life on the other. Yet he had a strong and sincere patriotism, which invariably made him minimize a Roman defeat and the number of Roman slain. There seems to have been a strange tinge, too, of superstition about him, and he could not divest himself of some belief@@4 in astrology and revelations of the future through omens and portents, though he held these were often misunderstood and misinterpreted by charlatans and im­postors. On the whole he appears to have inclined to the philo­sophical theory of “ necessitarianism,” that every man’s future is fixed from his birth ; but we must not fasten on him any particular theory of the world or of the universe. Sometimes he speaks as a be­liever in a divine overruling Providence, and we may say confidently that with the Epicurean doctrine he had no sort of sympathy.

His style, whatever judgment may be passed on it, is certainly that of a man of genius, and cannot fail to make a deep impression on the studious reader. Tacitean brevity has become proverbial, and with this are closely allied an occasional obscurity and a rhetor­ical affectation which his warmest admirers must admit. He has been compared to Carlyle, and there are certainly resemblances between the two both in style and tone of thought. Both affect singularity of expression ; both incline to an unhopeful and cynical view of the world. Tacitus was probably never a popular author; to be understood and appreciated he must be read again and again, or the point of some of his acutest remarks will be quite missed. He has been several times translated, but it has always been felt that he presents very great, if not insuperable, difficulties to the translator.

Murphy's translation (a paraphrase we should call it) is perhaps one of the best known ; it was published early in the present century. On this was based the so-called Oxford translation, published by Bohn in a revised edition. The latest translation is that by Messrs Church and Brodribb. There is on the whole a good French translation by Louandre. The editions of Tacitus are very num­erous. Among more recent editions, the best and most useful are Orelli’s (1859); Ritter’s (1864); Nipperdey’s (1879); Furneaux's *(Annals,* i.-vi.), vol. i., Clarendon Press, 1884. (W. J. B.)

TACITUS, Μ. Claudius, Roman emperor from Sep­tember 25, 275, to April 276, was a native of Interamna (Terni) in Umbria, and was born about the year 200. In the course of his long life he discharged the duties of various civil offices, including that of consul in 273, with universal respect. Six months after the assassination of Aurelian he was chosen by the senate to succeed him, and the choice was cordially ratified by the army. During his brief reign he set on foot some domestic reforms, and

@@@1 *Epp.,* vii. 33.

@@@2 See Introduction to vol. i. of Furneaux’s edition of the *Annals* of Tacitus, Clarendon Press Series, 1884.

@@@3 *Ann.,* iii. 65.

@@@4 *Ann.,* vi. 21, 22.