

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

HENRY RUSHTON FAIRCLOUGH (1862 – 1938)

On February 12, Henry Rushton Fairclough suddenly passed away, seemingly still in the prime of his powers. He was, however, seventy-six.

For thirty-four years he had been a member of this council, coming to Stanford in 1893 as an associate professor of Greek and Latin and continuing as Professor of Latin and Head of the Department until he became an Emeritus in 1927.

He was born at Barrie, Ontario, on July 15, 1862. His early academic life was founded squarely on the old, rigid classical training with much of Greek and more of Latin. He received his B. A. and his M. A. at the University of Toronto in 1883 and 1886, and was awarded his Doctorate in Classics by Johns Hopkins University in 1886. This was followed by an honorary Doctorate in Letters from the University of Toronto in 1922. Thus, we see, in his classical training was embodied a great continuity, involving both the best of the English-Canadian tradition and the best of the older American tradition as exemplified by Warren in Latin, Gildersleeve in Greek, and Bloomfield in Sanskrit. It was a kind of training which is fast disappearing in the modern world, but it still stands as an open challenge to its multiform modern replacements. Professor Fairclough believed this firmly.

As the years passed, here on this campus, his unwearied enthusiasm as a teacher led him far afield, notably to summer sessions at many Universities: Wisconsin, Columbia, Chicago, California, New Mexico and others. There was a great year as visiting professor at the American School of Classical Studies at Rome and even after his retirement, there followed a year of teaching at Amherst and still another at Harvard. At 66 and at 76 he was still young -- still growing and still ever reaching out into the periphery of his lifework; prehistory, archeology, comparative anthropology, and the treatment of Nature by the poets, both ancient and modern.

His notably wide interests are reflected in the Societies of which he was an active member up to the day of his death: The American Philological Association; The Hellenic Society of Great Britain; The Archeological Institute of America; The American Geographical Society, of which he was a Fellow.

Looking at this background, later generations will seek to discover what manner of a man emerged. Perhaps a partial answer may be anticipated by suggestions found in ancient literature, the fuller understanding of which was the basic objective of Professor Fairclough's life. He was, of course, a good Platonic scholar. In fact, he wrote the article on 'Ara, that elusive little particle, for the Campbell and Burnet Lexicon Platonicum, and often fondly recalled that fact that he had read Plato's Republic in his third year of Greek, before entering college. Now, one of the essential unities of Plato's doctrine, whether we

follow Shorey or not, is the quaint concept of the tripartite division of the human soul into the Encephalic, Thoracic, and Abdominal. Plutarch often used this formula in his Roman Lives. The best State and the best life can be attained only where the Encephalic rules and seeks the ultimate Good. This is obviously the ideal life of the scholar. It is also the pasture-land of learning and of Universities. Here, if anywhere, Vernunft is to be found or we are lost and seek in vain. Be this as it may, at any rate, in this realm Professor Fairclough spent forty years of glorious teaching and research, reaching thousands of boys and girls, undergraduates and graduates, many of whom, today, as teachers, are scattered over the land. In addition to this, he found time, somewhere and somehow, to contribute 135 books, texts, translations, articles, reviews and addresses to the literature of his profession and its ancillary disciplines. Time is lacking now to evaluate or even to list these widespread contributions. Many of them are technical and controversial; many are concerned with the music, meters, style, and the inner spirit of ancient literature; many are pleadings and apologies for the old classical training and tradition; all are characterized by an English style, which was definitely the writer's own. Today, suffice it to say, that his translations of Horace and Vergil will be classics for years and years to come; and in his later days, perhaps, it was a sufficient reward to be hailed as "The Dean of American Latinists" and "The best Vergilian scholar of his time."

But this is not all. To follow the formula still farther, be it noted that the Thoracic element of the soul is the more spirited member of the Trinity. Its urge is rather for glory and distinction than for wisdom. To Plato it is the essential soul-element in the life of the soldier. Timocracies are based upon it. It has great respect for personal worth and rank, and demands full recognition for deeds achieved. Professor Fairclough, along with the Encephalic, had also his full share of the Thoracic. He made quick but firm decisions in politics, in religion, and on questions of public policy and he stood grimly by his guns, once the decision was made. He was not, of course, a confirmed militarist, but he recalled with evident pleasure that he had been a sergeant in some youthful military battalion. In the Great War he served overseas in the American Red Cross and finally advanced to the grade of Lieutenant-Colonel, the highest rank in this branch of the service. He was in command of the A.R.C. Commission to Montenegro. There were other commissions -- to France, of course, to Italy, to Greece, to Romania, even to Persia and to many others. The generous, kindly spirit of America, perhaps, never made a more noble gesture to the world than this. She looked upon suffering nations as suffering comrades. She spent lavish millions on the gesture. History has no parallel!

Here, in Montenegro, Colonel Fairclough's work was just as good as Professor Fairclough's work on Vergil and Terence. Kings and countries decorated him and he was rightly proud, both of his work and of the recognition it received.

Finally we come to the least and the most physical element of the Trinity -- the Abdominal, which drives us on ward or mayhap at times downward. When good, it gives to the other elements the strength to endure and to achieve. Professor Fairclough had this element at its best. His health remained unimpaired to the end. His vigor was tireless and a despair to colleagues and friends trailing with him over hills and vales. At tennis, on occasion, he could be all but unbeatable. Mountain-climbing he listed as one of his recreations.

In another figure, with the same formula, Plato envisages Life as the upward coursing of a winged chariot, of which the Encephalic is the charioteer and the Thoracic and the Abdominal are the steeds. Surely Henry Rushton Fairclough was macarius in his anabasis through life. His charioteer and his steeds were good. Here we may ask with Plato, "What greater career may a man ask for, than to see the truth, to live the truth and to teach the truth?"

Musings like these and many, many others occur to those of us who had the great good fortune to know Professor Fairclough intimately back through the years. His was a great life, a useful life, and a happy life! Truly the arboretum of Stanford men has lost another of its noblest trees!

Be it, therefore, resolved that we, the Academic Council, as friends, as colleagues and as comrades are fully cognizant of the loss that has befallen the University and the community at large, in the passing of Emeritus Professor Henry Rushton Fairclough.