

THE VIRGIL SOCIETY.

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88, Kingscourt Road, London, S.W.16

(from a letter to the *Times Literary Supplement*, 18th December, 1943).

The purpose of the Virgil Society is to bring together those men and women everywhere who are united in cherishing the central educational tradition of Western Europe. Among such persons the love of the poetry of Virgil is most likely to be found; and for such persons he is the fitting symbol of that tradition. Virgil is the poet who has been most studied and loved, uninterruptedly through the centuries which divide him from our own; he is the witness to the continuity of our civilization; among Roman poets he is the one whose work has always been the most appropriate within the Christian educational frame.

He is not only the symbol of continuous tradition; he himself, as a poet, was engaged in the very activity which this society aims to undertake. He sought to bring home to the Romans of his day that they were the heirs of a great tradition; that a people with a great past is a people with great responsibilities which should look to a great future; and he saw that the time of Rome's imperial activity was also a time of growing corruption of morals and manners at the centre, which threatened to vitiate the Roman character and policy. He sought to remind his fellow-countrymen of their pristine virtues, and to recall the urban population to the love of the land as the the nursery of Roman strength.

The Virgil Society already includes in its company leading Virgilian

scholars both in and outside the academic world. But its main appeal is not to the professional student; it is to all who are anxious to preserve the educational tradition which the study of Virgil represents, to respect special knowledge and competence, and to honour quality rather than numbers: these concerns are essential to our purpose. Those who share the convictions and aims of the society, even though they have little or no Latin and have never experienced the great music of the Latin verse, should be among our members.

It is our intention that the Society shall have branches throughout the country, with local secretaries, united through the general secretary. Members of these local branches will then have the opportunity of hearing from time to time addresses and papers in support of the ideas which the society has been founded to uphold. We believe that these local branches will, in varying degrees of strength and numbers, play an important part in the intellectual life of the country, in reversing the present descent to vulgarization of taste and debasement of standards.

H.E. BUTLER, T.S. ELIOT, J.W. MACKAIL, MONCREIFF,
R.W. MOORE, V. SACKVILLE-WEST, R. SPEAIGHT.

HYMNUM IN LAUDEM VINI *

Ave color vini clari,
Ave sapor sine pari,
Tua nos inebriari
Digneris potentia.

O quam dulcis creatura
Quam produxit vitis pura,
Omnis mensa fit secura
Tua sola praesentia.

Felix os quod tu lavabis,
Felix guttur quod rigabis,
Felix venter quem intrabis
Et beata viscera.

Ergo vinum collaudemus;
Nos potantes exultemus,
Nos potantes convocemus
Ad beata pocula. Amen.

* From the collection of Joseph Galea.