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THE PAST TENSES OF THE SUBJUNCTIVE IN EXPRESSIONS
OF WISH.

THE use of the past tenses of the Latin Subjunctive in expressions of wish involves a difficulty which seems to me not to have been fully faced by grammarians, nor have I dealt with it in my paper on the *Unity of the Latin Subjunctive*;¹ but I have recently been led to think that its solution may be found on lines analogous to those which I have there adopted for the explanation of other Subjunctives.

How does it come about that the Past Imperfect and the Past Perfect Subjunctive express unfulfilled wishes of the *present*, e.g. *utinam adforet Aeneas* (*Aen.* I. 575), 'would that (= I wish that) Aeneas were (now) here'; *utinam adfuisset* 'would that (= I wish that) he had been there (at some point of time in the past)?' The analogy of other uses of the past tenses of the Subjunctive would lead one to expect *utinam adesset* and *utinam adfuisset* to express a *past* wish relating to the then future, corresponding in past time to *utinam adsit*, which expresses a wish as to the future from the present point of view. Compare other uses of the Present and Past Imperfect in simple sentences: *quid agam?* 'what am I to do?', *quid agerem?* 'what was I to do?'; *malim* 'I should prefer' (= 'I am likely under certain circumstances to prefer'), *mallet* 'I should have preferred' (= 'I was likely under certain circumstances to prefer'); and similarly in subordinate clauses: *impero ut abeas* ('you are to go away'), *imperavi ut abires* ('you were to go away'). On this analogy, I say, *utinam adesset* ought to express a *past* wish—a wish which was entertained by some one in past time. Yet this is not the meaning actually found in ordinary cases. The only instances in which the Past Imperfect Subjunctive in wishes has the meaning which it ought on analogy to have are cases like Plautus, *Most.* 183, *ita ego istam amarem*, which is simply the *ita Philolaches te amet* of 182 thrown

into past time, in dependence on *ad-urasti*, and Horace, *Sat.* II. 2. 124, *ita culmo surgeret alto* (if, as most commentators think, this clause is to be treated as analogous to *sic te diva potens Cypri . . . regat* of *Odes* I. 3. 1). These examples, therefore, suggest no explanation as to how the usage in question came to be developed—the usage in which the past tenses denote a *present* wish that something were now or had been in the past otherwise than it actually is or was.

But these tenses become at once intelligible if they be regarded from a different point of view—as expressions of obligation, i.e. as denoting what *ought to have happened* (what was to be done), just like the past tenses in *at tu dictis, Albane, maneres* 'you ought to have abided (you were bound to abide) by your word,' *Aen.* VIII. 643, *eadem me ad fata vocasses* 'you ought to have called (you were bound to call) me to share your fate,' *Aen.* IV. 678, which correspond in past time to *hoc commentemur, mihi crede* in present time, 'believe me, we ought to meditate (we are bound to meditate) on this,' *Cic. Tusc.* I. 31. 75: the words *mihi crede* show that this is not an ordinary 'hortative' subjunctive. The close connexion between wishes and expressions of obligation is shown by the fact that one is often in doubt as to which translation should be adopted in particular instances; *tecum ludere possem*, *Catull.* 2. 9, and *di facerent sine patre forem*, *Ovid, Met.* VIII. 72, are, no doubt, clearly wishes; on the other hand, *obruerent Rutuli telis, animam ipse dedissem*, *Aen.* XI. 162, and *omnis per mortis animam sontem ipse dedissem*, *Aen.* X. 854, are ambiguous; they are translated as wishes by Conington (prose transl.) and Mackail; but Blase in his *Tempora und Modi* (p. 154) takes all instances in which there is no *utinam* (except *Catull.* 2. 9) as expressions of obligation.²

¹ Published by Mr. John Murray, London, 1910.

² In support of this view Dr. Blase (in a recent letter) appeals to the expressions of self-

From this point of view the past tenses present no difficulty. Does the explanation which I have offered involve difficulties of any other character? I do not see that it does. From Greek it receives only confirmation. What we ordinarily find in Greek for an unfulfilled wish in the present is either an expression of past obligation in the Indicative, e.g. ἀνδρὸς . . . ὄφελλον ἀμείνονος εἶναι ἀκούεις, literally 'I ought to have been (= would that I were) the wife of a better man,' *Il.* VI. 350, or εἶθε with a past tense of the Indicative. My suggested explanation of the Past Subjunctives of Latin would also be strictly parallel to such an English expression as 'Poor Jones should have been here' = 'Oh that poor Jones were here.' An expression of past obligation easily passes into an expression of present obligation. The same extension of the past into the present is seen in conditional sentences, e.g. *Aul.* 742 *nam ni vellent, non fieret* 'for if they had not willed it, it would not have happened' easily passed into the meaning which it generally (though not always) has in classical Latin, 'if they did not will it, it would not be happening'; cf. *Mil.* 1262 *videres pol, si amares*.

I hold then, that the original form for expressing unfulfilled wishes was a subjunctive denoting what *was to be done*, without *utinam*, as in the instances quoted above from Catullus 2. 9, Ovid, *Met.* VIII. 72, *Aen.* X. 854, XI. 162: e.g., *adesses* 'you ought to have been present.' The *utinam*, which is present in the large majority of instances, is, I take it, a later addition, made for the purpose of differentiating the two meanings of 'obligation' and 'wish.' In order to show explicitly that a sentence with the Past Imperfect or Past Perfect Subjunctive was intended by the speaker to express wish as distinct from obligation, *utinam*, which had already estab-

lished itself in wishes with the Present Subjunctive (*utinam adsis*), was transferred bodily and without regard to its origin to sentences of the other type; and there it became *necessary* wherever wishes of this form had to be distinguished from expressions of obligation, though it no longer admitted of grammatical analysis as an interrogative adverb.¹ With the Present Subjunctive such analysis involves no difficulty: *utinam adsis*, originally a question, 'how are you to be present?' but equivalent in meaning to *adsis* without *utinam*; cf. the Greek πῶς ἄν with the Optative, an equivalent of the Optative alone. Whether the Latin Subjunctive and the Greek Optative in such questions was of 'potential' origin (i.e. denoted 'can') or not, is a question with which I need not trouble myself or my readers here. But I will add that in my opinion² the Subjunctive both in *adsis* and in *utinam adsis* may quite well be regarded as expressing what *is to be done*: *adsis*, 'you are to be present according to my desire'; *utinam adsis*, 'how are you to be present according to my desire?'

I find, then, in the constructions of the Latin Past Imperfect and Past Perfect Subjunctive in wishes a confirmation, so far as it goes, of my theory as to the fundamental meaning of the Subjunctive. In some expressions of wish at any rate the Subjunctive is in origin an expression of what *is* or *was to be done*, as in so many (or, as I hold, all) other uses of the Subjunctive. But it was not my object in starting on this line of inquiry to find a confirmation of my general theory: my present suggestion is based entirely upon the difficulty (on any theory) of explaining the use of the past tenses in wishes.

While I am speaking about expressions of obligation I should like to call attention to a curious instance of the 1st pers. plur. Present Subjunctive which I have come across lately. In

reproach which precede, *debueram poenas* (*Aen.* X. 853), *vivendo vici mea fata* (*Aen.* XI. 160), and compares Plaut. *Mil.* 730, *divos dispertisse vitam humanam aequom fuit; vitam longinquam darent . . . adimerent*. Ovid, *Met.* VIII. 72 (to which he adds *Heroides* 10. 133) he also takes as expressions of obligation, remarking that the sense of wish arises from the fact that *di facerent* is equivalent in meaning to *utinam*.

¹ I have assumed (with most grammarians) that *utinam* is originally interrogative; but Dr. Blase says he sees no reason why it may not be regarded as indefinite.

² I have given my reasons in the paper referred to above.

Pliny, *Epist.* IX. 13. 7, the writer describes how he attacked Publicius Certus in the Senate, but without mentioning his name. For a time he spoke *maximo adsensu*, but when he came to his veiled attack he was met with protests on all sides. One senator cried *sciamus quis sit de quo extra ordinem referas*; another *quis est ante relationem reus*? Now what does the *sciamus* mean? It might no doubt be translated 'let us know,' but the meaning of the word 'let' would not be that which it has when it translates an ordinary 'hortative' Subjunctive; for *sciamus* is not a request addressed to the company of which the speaker is a member. It must mean 'we ought to know,' 'we

must know,' or, freely, 'tell us.' I wonder whether some reader of the *Classical Review* could supply me with a precisely similar instance.¹

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¹ I am of course aware that some grammarians would explain this as an expression of Resolve—*sciamus* = 'we are resolved to know,' 'we want to know'—but I am sceptical as to this being a fundamental meaning of the Subjunctive, as I have explained in the paper referred to above, p. 24. Thus, for example, *maneam opinor* (Plaut. *Trin.* 1136) seems to me to mean not 'I think I am resolved to remain' (which is, indeed, strictly speaking, nonsense), but 'I think I ought to remain,' 'I think I had better remain'; cf. the instance quoted above from Cic. *Tusc.* I. 31. 75.

NOTES

ON SOPH. *PHIL.* 830 ff.

ὄμμασι δ' ἀντέχοις
τάνδ' αἴγλαν, ἃ τέταται τανῶν.
ἴθι ἴθι μοι παιῶν.

THE interpretation of αἴγλαν has perplexed the commentators, and few, I suppose, are satisfied with any of the solutions which have hitherto been given. In a note on Eur. *Phoen.* 950 I argued that an explanation should be sought from those passages where persons in extreme wretchedness are said to have their eyes wrapped in darkness: Aesch. *Theb.* 215 πολλάκι δ' ἐν κακοῖσιν τὸν ἀμήχανον | κάκ χαλεπᾶς δύας ὑπερθ' ὀμμάτων | κρημμαμενᾶν νεφελᾶν ὀρθοῖ, Soph. *O.C.* 1684 νῶν δ' ὀλεθρία | νῦξ ἐπ' ὄμμασιν βέβακε, *Ai.* 706 ἔλυσεν αἰνὸν ἄχος ἀπ' ὀμμάτων Ἄρης (with the contrast of φάος immediately following). Thus darkness becomes synonymous with misery, light with comfort. Fr. lyr. adesp. 139, 7 (PLG. iii.⁴ p. 733) τὴ δ' ἀμαχανίας πόρον εἶδες ἐν ἄλγεσιν, | καὶ λαμπρὸν φάος ἄγαγες ἐν σκότῳ, προφερεστάτα θεῶν (sc. Τύχα). And that is the sense of φάος in the well-known *Ani.* 599 νῦν γὰρ ἐσχάτας ὑπὲρ | ρίζας δ' τέτατο φάος ἐν Οἰδίπου δόμοις. Although Campbell put it for-

ward as a tentative suggestion,¹ the editors have been deterred from adopting this simple view by the consideration that it seems strange to use a word which primarily denotes light to describe the healing power of sleep. But it is really just as remarkable that Antigone (in *O.C.* 1684), after referring to the departure of Oedipus to the *unseen* world, should speak of night as closing over the eyes of the *survivors*. This shows the established character of the metaphor. There is, moreover, a strong reason why the mention of αἴγλη should at once import the notion of healing comfort, and prepare the way for the prayer of v. 832. Now, it is unnecessary to prove that παιῶν was an ἐπίκλησις of Asclepius; but it is perhaps less familiar that he was also known as αἴγλη. Thus in a remarkable series of glosses to be seen in Bekk. *anecd.* p. 354, 15 ff. (partly recurring in Suid. *s.v.* αἴγλη), we find καὶ παιδιά τις ἐκαλεῖτο αἴγλη· καὶ ὁ Ἄσκληπιός. There may be some who will not credit this statement, although it goes back to the respectable authority of Pausanias the

¹ See also Professor Platt in *Classical Quarterly*, v. p. 25 f.