

when a critic turns to these trifling matters. I cannot but express an earnest wish that Mr. Wayte would produce in the same manner an edition of Antiphon, the father of Attic court oratory, and so help in widening the horizon of the people who prosecute what they call "pure scholarship." May I say in conclusion that in nothing does he show his fairness more than in his estimate of the work done by English scholars in the same field?

J. P. MAHAFFY.

#### PERSIAN WIT AND HUMOUR.

Trieste.

MR. CHARLES E. WILSON has sent me his first instalment of Nureddin-i-Jami, the famous author of "Yusuf o Zulaykhá;" and this sixth book of Buháristán he has entitled *Persian Wit and Humour*. The poet is not unknown to the English public. In 1854 Rosenzweig published his *Biographische Notizen*; and in 1879 a compendium of his life was prefixed to a translation of Sáláman and Absál; and the whole was affixed to the fourth edition of Omar Khayyám (Umar-i-Khayyám). This appears to me a mistake. The "Astronomer-poet" must stand alone; it is mere bathos to match him with a Sufistical cento. Mr. Wilson has already made his name as an Oriental, especially a Persian, scholar; and he began, if I remember aright, by assisting the late Hermann Bicknell on a meritorious, but sadly prosaic, version of Hafiz.

The thin volume (forty pages octavo, Chatto and Windus) is daintily dressed in white and gold. After a Preface giving a short sketch of the poet, we debouch upon the "Story" and the "Jest." To the latter we must often unhat as to the oldest of acquaintances; and their chief value is purely genealogical. For instance (Jest iii., p. 6) —

"Bahlúl, being asked to count the fools of Basrah, replied: 'They are without the confines of computation. If you ask me, I will count the wise men, for they are no more than a limited few.'"

Bahlúl, the "madman" with the biting tongue, thus preceded Carlyle by a thousand years. In "Jest iv." we have a most venerable "Irish bull;" in "Jest xvi." Diogenes Redivivus; and so forth.

If I were Mr. Wilson I should omit the headings "Story" and "Jest," and leave the reader to label them for himself. Also, "Jest ix." should be bodily cut out. As far as I am aware, Persian contains no single book of the category "fit-for-placing-upon-the-drawing-room-table." Even the Gulistán, which Jami attempts to rival, would, in literal version, make many a British patriarch stare with all his eyes. Consequently, the translator has the choice of two devices; either stern excision of the peccant part, or preserving the entirety, which must confine it to the inner study. Latin, classical or canine, is but a melancholy compromise.

Mr. Wilson deserves success: the language is well chosen, and the version is doubtless accurate. I hope that we shall soon see the whole Buháristán, which, he tells me, is ready for printing.

RICHARD F. BURTON.

PS.—Mr. Wilson informs me that no prose version has yet appeared of 'Umar-i-Khayyám's quatrains, numbering upwards of five hundred. The main difficulty seems to be the text; MSS. are rare, and mostly corrupt. I have a fair copy, given to me at Hyderabad by the late statesman and scholar, Sir Salar Jung, whose premature death was deplored in India and England; and it is at the service of any scholar who will gird his loins for the uphill task. The admirable poetic version, or rather adaptation,

published by Mr. Quaritch contains only six tetrastichs. Compression makes it over-intense; it is like "Othello" among the tragedies. And it wants a commentary. How many English readers understand No. xxx.?

"What, without asking, hither hurried *Whence?*"

And, without asking, whither hurried *hence!*"

Oh, many a cup of this forbidden Wine  
Must drown the memory of that Insolence!"

This "Insolence" is Sufi to the marrow. And d'Herbelot is so far right that the Tent-maker, by the law of contraries, has won a manner of reputation for sanctity. His forecast concerning his tomb and the rose leaves is held to be a "Kirámat," or minor miracle, the especial privilege of holy men.

#### CORRESPONDENCE.

##### THE ABU SIMBEL INSCRIPTION.

Settrington Rectory, York: June 20, 1885.

MR. PALEY'S paper read before the Cambridge Philological Society, and reported in the ACADEMY of June 16, controverts the unanimous opinion of modern scholars as to the date of the Abu Simbel inscription, which has hitherto been regarded as the fixed starting-point in Greek epigraphy.

Mr. Paley has apparently abandoned the opinion expressed in his *Bibliographia Græca*, that the inscription is a "hoax;" but he still refuses to admit that the King Psammetichus mentioned in the record can be one of the two well-known Egyptian kings of that name (654-569 B.C.), and "confidently affirms that the writing is not earlier than the Peloponnesian war" (431-404 B.C.), putting forward the startling theory that it refers to some hitherto "unknown king" of that period who also bore the name of Psammetichus.

The possibility of the existence of any such unknown Egyptian monarch who reigned while the Persians were masters of Egypt I will leave to professed Egyptologists to discuss. But, as Mr. Paley bases his theory upon the character of the writing, I should like to call his attention to some palaeographical facts which bear upon the question, and which seem to have escaped his notice, since he affirms that the earlier date "is totally at variance with everything previously known about early Greek writing."

The salient characteristics of the alphabet of the Abu Simbel inscription are—the use of the closed *eta*, the *sigma* with three bars, the primitive *theta* with an interior cross instead of a dot, the archaic forms of *alpha* and *chi*, the use of *o* to denote all the three sounds *o*, *ov*, and *omega*, and the survival of *koppa* as a phonetic sign.

As the Abu Simbel inscription is written in an Ionian alphabet, it must be compared with dated inscriptions from Ionia. A fixed point of comparison is afforded by an inscription from Halicarnassus, written by the tyrant Lygdamis, the contemporary of Herodotus, *circ.* 450 B.C. In this record all the above-named archaisms have completely disappeared, showing that the Abu Simbel inscription must be very considerably earlier than the middle of the fifth century, when the Lygdamis inscription was written.

This conclusion is confirmed by the inscriptions from the Sacred Way leading to the temple of Apollo at Branchidae, near Miletus. None of these inscriptions can be later than 494 B.C., when the temple was destroyed by the Persians; and they are believed, with good reason, to range over the greater part of the sixth century. In one of the latest, the inscription of Histiaeus (*circ.* 520 B.C.), *eta* is open, *sigma* has four bars, and the new letter, *omega*, has made its appearance. These tests are also found in the somewhat earlier inscrip-

tion of Chares (*circ.* 540 B.C.), while they are conspicuously absent from the Abu Simbel alphabet.

Hence, instead of the Abu Simbel inscription belonging to the close of the fifth century, as Mr. Paley contends, the palaeographic tests are decisive in placing it considerably earlier than the middle of the sixth, probably about the end of the seventh century, a date which accords precisely with the historical indications of date furnished by the mention in the inscription of Psammetichus as the king under whom the expedition to which the record refers took place. The invention of a hitherto unknown king of this name, ruling over Egypt two centuries later, is therefore encompassed by palaeographical difficulties no less formidable than those derived from historical considerations.

That Herodotus should call the children reared in the camp of the foreign mercenaries of Egypt by the peculiar name by which they designate themselves in the inscription seems to Mr. Paley "marvellous" and incredible. To others it may perhaps seem to be a very curious confirmation of the opinion as to the date of the inscription which is held, as Mr. Paley admits, by "all the eminent modern scholars."

ISAAC TAYLOR.

#### SCIENCE NOTES.

WE must here content ourselves with briefly recording the two heavy losses which the Royal Society has sustained during the week in the death of Sir Edward Sabine, a former secretary, treasurer, and president, at the great age of ninety-four; and of Mr. William Spottiswoode, in the full vigour of his life, while still occupying the presidential chair.

THE Mineralogical Society has just issued a number of its *Magazine* which contains some papers of considerable interest to Scottish geologists. In fact, the greater portion of the number is occupied with communications from Prof. Forster Heddle, of St. Andrews, one of the former presidents of the society. Probably the most notable feature is Dr. Heddle's description of the beautiful green felspar called Amazon stone, which was discovered a few years ago in Sutherlandshire—its only locality in Britain. The mineral was found in a boulder weighing about one hundred tons, on the eastern slope of Ben Bhreck, near Tongue, and was probably derived originally from Ben Loyal. The crystals of Amazon stone are well formed, rich in colour, and of large size, some of them weighing as much as eighteen pounds each.

The annual meeting of the German Anthropological Association will be held this year at Trier, August 8, 9, and 10.

#### PHILOLOGY NOTES.

MR. WILLIAM GUNION RUTHERFORD, who has just been appointed head-master of Westminster School, received the following letter from Prof. Cobet, of Leyden:—

"Ex animo gavisus sum quum in præfatione *Nori Phrynichti* audirem virum doctissimum Rutherford ita dicentem, 'there are unmistakable indications of a return to the old traditions of scholarship as represented in the work of Bentley, Porson, Elmsley, and Dawes,' præsertim quum viderem ea scripta esse ab illo viro, qui antiquam popularium suorum famam vindicare et augere posset. Itaque si mea vox in Britannia audiri posset, lubenter dicerem eruditissimum Britannorum philologis, qui sanam et sobriam majorem methodum admirantur: 'En, habetis virum, qui vobis aliquando Porsonum et Bentleium redditurus est.'"

Among foreign scholars, Mr. Rutherford had also testimonials from MM. A. Chassang, E.