

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1884.
No. 646, New Series.

THE EDITOR cannot undertake to return, or to correspond with the writers of, rejected manuscripts.

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LITERATURE.

The Book of Sindibād; or, The Story of the King, his Son, the Damsel, and the Seven Vazirs. From the Persian and Arabic, with Introduction, Notes, and Appendix. By W. A. Clouston. (Privately printed, by subscription.)*

MANY students seeing this name will forget that M. Langles published a translation of the Arabic story-book in 1814, and will think only of our old friend Sindbad the Sailor, whom Lane (iii., ch. 20) Egyptianised to "Es-Sindibad of the Sea," and whom I shall call "Sindbad the Seaman." This most interesting Sindbad section of the Arabian Nights (537-66) was discussed by R. Hole in his *Remarks, etc.* (London, 1797); by Baron Walckenaer (1831) and other Orientalists, one of whom found the Island of Wák-wák at Canton instead of Cape Guardafui; and, lastly, by Mr. Major in his *Introduction to India in the Fifteenth Century* (Hakluyt Society, 1857). But these writers have failed to remark that the mythical voyages along the East African Coast show a familiarity with its geographical and other details dating probably from the days when the Persians under Anushirwan occupied Aden and Berberah, built the ruined cities on the Zanzibar seaboard which were first visited and described by myself; and established the Shirázi tribe in Zanzibar Island. All this I shall discuss at length in my forthcoming version of the immortal "Nights."

But, in *The Book of Sindibād*, Mr. Clouston has nothing to do with our dear old friend. He edits, or rather re-edits, with great care and abundant scholarship, two series of Eastern tales which hardly deserve such honour. Part I. (pp. 13-110) is the Sindibād translated by Prof. Forbes Falconer (*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, xxxv.-vi., 1841), from an imperfect copy in the India Office Library; and since that time no complete MS. has been found to do away with the lacunae, asterisks, and imperfections of the first version. This portion concluded, begins Part II., "The Seven Vazirs," another reproduction of the *Tales, Anecdotes, and Letters* translated from the Arabic and Persian (1800) by Dr. Jonathan Scott, whose knowledge of Arabic, especially of Egyptian Arabic, was elementary (Lane's *Nights*, vol. i., p. viii.).

In both series the *mécanique* is the same. An old king is at last blessed by Allah with a son, who, after showing himself a thorough "dummer Junge," is taken in hand by Sindibád, a profound Ponce de Leon, and taught *omnes res scibiles* by the simplest of processes—object lessons. Before the young prodigy is presented to his royal father he is solemnly

* The printers (Messrs. Cameron, of Glasgow) have done their work well; and the type, though somewhat small, does not pain the eyes.

warned by his preceptor—Sindibád the sage—that the stars threaten him with death if he utters a syllable for seven days. The prince is lovingly embraced by his progenitor, but found to be dumb; whereupon one of the harem-women, who loves his pretty face, undertakes to effect a perfect cure. She makes the most impudent proposals, which are at once rejected by the good young man (such Josephs being often found in Eastern tales); and, as "women whose love is scorned are worse than poison," the Moslem Phaedra falsely denounces the new Hippolytus to the King, who, as Oriental kings always do in books, exclaims "Off with his head!" But the Seven Wise Men (Wazirs, or Ministers), well knowing the results to themselves if such order were obeyed, cause the execution to be deferred by relating sundry tales of the frowardness and malice of women; while the *furens femina*, with dagger, bowl and all, counteracts the effect by adducing some notable instances of man's deceit and desperate wickedness. At last the fatal period ends; the Prince speaks out, and the too-enterprising young person is duly put to death.

All this is found in the "Nights" (Nos. 578-606), somewhat "abridged and garbled," as Mr. Clouston says (p. 135). He finds them "put together in a hasty manner" (p. 256); and no wonder, if he has contented himself with "Mr. Lane's admirable translation" (p. 223), which ignores the "Nights," and cuts them up into chapters and notes. But he is hardly justified in telling his readers (p. 256) that the Calcutta text "hardly differs from that printed at Bulak"; as I know to my cost, a translation from the latter proves most inadequate. Nor can I agree with him in anent the "comparatively recent date" of the work (p. 291). Parts of it, especially the fables proper, date from the dawn of literature. Mr. Clouston evidently knows that the *fabliau*, the romance, and the fairy tale, began, like all letters, so far as we know, in ancient Egypt (p. xxiii.); but he seems haunted by the spectre of Hindu antiquity when he speaks of their tales dating "centuries before our era." The Pandit's literary form was probably borrowed, like the theatre, from the Greeks of the Bactrian empire; while the early Christians supplied him with many a detail for the life of Buddha. The course of literature would be from Persia to India, not *vice versa*.

To deal with a few details. The older Brazilians, like the Khataians (p. 20), used the left hand for the right. Easterns do not "bite their nails" (p. 23); but taking the finger between the fore-teeth is a sign of regret—in Abyssinia of rage and revenge, as certain missionaries had occasion to learn. *Liuri*, or *Hourí*, is masculine in Arabic (p. 25). *Gard*, which suggests *As-gard*, &c., generally becomes *-gird* when it means "town," e.g., *Darab-gird* (p. 27); and "Rose-Garden of Iram" (p. 28) should be flower-garden. "Sapā" (p. 35) is a queer name for a town in Arabic, which has no *p*-letter. Many readers would want a notice of the "clay" used for the bath (p. 94): it is the *Gil-i-Sarshú*, a kind of fuller's earth; and the same should be told that the diamond (p. 111) is held a deadly poison by all natives of Hindustan. The damsel did not "sit on her knees" (p. 110), but on her shins, the painful

posture of polite conversation. In p. 177 the youth's exclamation would be better rendered "I lay at ease till my officiousness brought me uncase." *Ilājib* (p. 183) is not the city governor, but the governor's head-chamberlain—often an eunuch, and always an important personage; and "Khalif" (p. 203) should be either "Caliph" or "Khalifah." Finally, we miss a notice of the *Tota-Kaháni*; or, *Tales of a Parrot*, which for so many years was an examination book in the Bombay Presidency.

It is curious to compare with Arab simplicity and directness the rhetorical luxuriance of the Persians, often redundant and exuberant, and the peculiar allusiveness of their metaphor and imagery. An Englishman is at home in Arab poetry, in Persian he feels entering a new world, and in Sanskrit he is deep therein. *Sindibád* contains not a few traits which are naive in the extreme, such as: "The sword of the pen" (p. 5); "Leave the concerns of Allah to Allah" (p. 11); "When the rose smiles the house becomes a prison" (p. 68); A "robber of great daring, who would have stolen the nose from the face of the lion" (p. 69); "When they [the fair girls] departed, musk was diffused from them as the Eastern gales shed the perfume of the clove" (p. 74); "You have gained the kingdom by the sword, leave it not to the needle" (p. 79). And, to quote no more, the following is a fair specimen of that marvellous racial imagination which enabled the old Greeks to supply most of what is wild and beautiful in El-Islam:—

"The auspicious hour wherein the pair arrived at that spot was, by night a-middlemost the Spring-month, Azar. On every bush roses were springing; on every bough a bulbul was plaintively singing. The tall cypress in the garden was dancing, and the poplar clapped its hands with joy unceasing; while with soft voice from the head of every willow-branch the turtle-dove was proclaiming the advent of Prince the Gladdening. The diadem of the Narcissus shone with such sheen, you had said it was the crown of the Faghfur-Kings of Al-Sin (China). On this side the northern zephyr, on that the western, scattered in love-tokens white blooms and blossoms like silver pieces at the feet of the rose. The earth was musk-scented; the air was musk-laden" (p. 42).

The immense Appendix (pp. 218-378) is interesting to the general reader as tracing the westward course of Eastern fable, and enabling him to appreciate the modifications which it underwent *en route*. Especially valuable is No. 32, "The Seven Wise Masters," where the many who are familiar with the words "Dolopathos" and "Syn-tipas," and nothing more, will find local habitation for the names.

It is impossible not to regret that Mr. Clouston's ample reading and careful labour have been applied to decorating a ruin instead of an edifice; yet we must accord a cordial welcome to this and to every contribution whose object is to revive in England a taste for "Semitic" literature. Our over-devotion to Hindu, and especially to Sanskrit studies, has proved prejudicial to those which interest us in a higher degree, because they teach us to deal successfully with a race more powerful, because more united, than any idolaters. Apparently, England is ever forgetting that she is the greatest Moslem power

now existing. Of late years she has systematically neglected Arabism, and, indeed, actively discouraged it in the examinations for the Indian Civil Service, where it is incomparably more valuable than Greek and Latin. Hence, when suddenly compelled to assume the reins of government in Mohammedan countries—as Afghanistan in times past and Egypt at present—she fails after a fashion which scandalises her few (very few) friends. When the late regrettable raids were made upon the gallant Sudan negroïds, who were battling for liberty and escape from Turkish task-masters and Egyptian tax-gatherers, not an English official in camp was capable of speaking Arabic. Even our energetic opponent, Mohammed Osman Dakanah, “of the Beard,” will go down to posterity as “Mohammed Osman Digma”! But is not this again *vox clamantis in deserto*?

RICHARD F. BURTON.

THREE TRANSLATIONS OF LATIN POETRY.

The Scheme of Epicurus. A rendering into English verse of the unfinished poem of Lucretius, entitled “De Rerum Natura.” By Thomas Charles Baring. (Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.)

The Eclogues of Virgil. Translated into English verse by Edward J. L. Scott. (Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.)

The Sixth Book of the Aeneid. Translated into English heroic verse by J. W. Moore. (Parker.)

THAT a member of parliament should find time to produce an elaborate translation of the whole of Lucretius’ difficult poem is, considering the pressure of parliamentary duties at the present time, a remarkable proof of the ascendancy of classical studies among us. Even Prof. Thorold Rogers has let his muse lie idle since his admission to the House. Mr. Baring is bolder, and his boldness is not altogether unsuccessful. He has chosen as the metre of his translation the fourteen-syllable line. His version is uniformly faithful and on the whole readable. No version of Lucretius not executed by a considerable poet is likely to achieve much more, and it is very unlikely that any considerable poet will ever imperil his reputation by the attempt. We must then take what we can get, and Mr. Baring’s offer is not to be lightly rejected. The metre has, indeed, long ceased to be a favourite with most readers, in spite of Chapman’s *Iliad*; but if any kind of subject might justify it it is such a poem as the *De Rerum Natura*, with its long sentences and close reasoning. The following from the opening of Book II. is a fair specimen of Mr. Baring’s version in a highly poetical passage:—

“Tis sweet, when on the mighty sea the storm-winds rouse the main,
To watch from shore another toil with all his might in vain:
Not that the hurt of others can to us delightful be,
But that we like to look on ills from which ourselves are free.
Sweet is it too to view in line the mighty strife of war
Arrayed across the plains, when we from danger stand afar.
But nothing more delightful is than Wisdom’s quiet steep,
Set up on high and walled about with learning well, to keep;

Whence one may gaze on other folk adown, and see them stray
Hither and thither, wandering in search of life’s true way.
Competitors in character, rivals in rank, each tries
Day after day, night after night, by toil’s excess to rise
To riches’ topmost height, and make the Commonwealth his prize.”

The style is at times a little over-prosaic—

e.g.,

“Opinions which the much revered Democritus lays down,”

or,

“For as we seldom see that dust, *whenever we take a walk*,
Clings to our skin,”

or,

“All by distorted logic *put the cart before the horse.*”

On the other hand, it is often effective by its directness and compactness—e.g.,

“Kings capture towns, are ta’en themselves, join battle, raise the cry
Of sudden fear, as though the hired assassin’s knife were nigh,”

or,

“The black is a *brunette*; the foul and filthy *dégageé*;
The tiny pigmy is a Grace, and brims with wit,
they say;

The over-tall is striking and in dignity excels;
The cat-eyed is a Pallas; skin and bones they term gazelles;
One stutters, cannot talk, she lisps; the dumb is so discreet:
The restless hateful chatterbox a lantern to our feet;

One is *mignonne gracieuse et molle*, who scarce can live for want
Of flesh; and one half-dead with cough is simply *ravissante*!”

The work bears throughout the strongest impress of Munro’s translation; in spite of which it has a character of its own. It is on the whole, perhaps, not quite so readable as Creech.

Mr. Scott’s version of Virgil’s *Bucolics* is of a quite different order. It is the work of an indubitable poet, and it has the affectations as well as the excellences of such a parent. The metre, except in *Ecl.* iv, which is translated into heroics, is eight-syllable, recalling the best specimens of that metre in the seventeenth, and in some cases of the eighteenth, century. Taking it as a whole, the effect is pleasing, at times very pleasing; but there are occasional eccentricities of language which, though perhaps intended to give an original effect, seem, to my judgment, hardly so much felicitous as quaint, or even bizarre.

“And her, whose lot were fortunate
Had cattle never been *create*,
Enamour’d of the snow-white steer,
Pasiphae he tries to cheer.
Ah! *lady*, to thy fortunes blind,
What folly hath *unhinged thy mind*?”

Again, in *Ecl.* ix,

“I’m *ravishing* silently my brain,
Trying to catch the song again,”

suggests ideas which seem very remote from the quietness of Virgil’s language. *Id quidem ago, et tacitus, Lycida, mecum ipse voluto.* In a perhaps larger number of cases these quaintnesses form much of the peculiar charm of Mr. Scott’s version. I may mention, for instance, his use of quadrisyllabic words like “commiserate,” “premeditate,” “concupinage,” “circumstances,” “apparitions,” “comparisons”; and the occasional introduction of common or homely words, such as

“prentice-hand,” “’tis a fact,” “How lean my bull appears, poor wretch!” “Too weighty for my powers of mind,” “His second self shalt thou be styled,” &c. Yet here, too, I would take exception to “marry come up” or “slums,” or “turn and turn about.”

I select a passage of *Ecl.* ii. as a specimen:

“Oh! would it please you share my lot,
The homely fields, the humble cot,
And drive to browse on verdant flags
The flock of goats, or hunt the stags!
Together in the woods with me
You’ll imitate Pan’s melody.
The first who o’er with wax began
To couple several reeds was Pan;
’Tis Pan who watch and ward o’er sheep
And o’er their shepherds loves to keep.
Nor blush to think your lip hath frayed
The reed whereon your fancy played;
For what would not Amyntas do,
To know as much of this as you?”

The Rev. J. W. Moore’s *Sixth Book of the Aeneid* hardly calls for the lengthy preface of nineteen pages in which the author has thought it necessary to give his views of translation. It is, however, well executed, generally careful, and in many passages worthy of comparison with the best heroic versions. There are some passages, e.g., 726 *sqq.*, and not a few isolated couplets or single lines, which are effective and resonant. It is, however, not free from the fatal sin of false rhymes, *gloom, roam; corse, course; descend, ascend*; and it may be doubted whether a complete version of the *Aeneid* in the same style would win its way against those of Dryden, Singleton, Rickards, or even Conington. R. ELLIS.

A Land March from England to Ceylon Forty Years Ago. With Original Sketches. By Edward L. Mitford. In 2 vols. (W. H. Allen.)

THE title of this work inevitably suggests the question, Why has it been kept in MS. for nearly half a century? If it contained matter of interest or value to the public, its tardy issue seems as puzzling as its appearance at this particular time. Nor does the Preface offer any solution of the enigma, although a cursory glance at the Contents makes it at least evident that the book was well worth publishing even at this late period. Considerable historic interest naturally attaches to the record of one of the earliest journeys by the overland route to India, performed mostly in the saddle, and at a time when a large portion of the intervening region was still practically a *terra incognita*. But apart from this consideration, the record itself contains many details that have not yet lost their flavour, bearing especially on the inhabitants, the ruins, and antiquities of the countries traversed. Only the other day an account, with illustration, was given by the *Graphic* of a “new find” at Eskikarahissur, in Asia Minor. But this very object, a curious white marble font or bath of cruciform shape, cut out of a single block six feet by four and a half feet, with a plain cross sculptured on each side, is fully described and figured by our author (i. 105). Other instances might be mentioned which would have entitled him to a high place among the pioneers of Eastern exploration had his discoveries been made known at an earlier date.

His route, nine thousand miles altogether, of