THE OGHAM CHARACTER.

The revival of interest in the "Ogham" character, which the last generation attributed to quasi-mythical Tatha de Dannann, and which Dr. Graves, Bishop of Limerick, has very justly reduced to the rank of a comparatively-modern cyphram, makes me hope that these lines will not be without interest to your readers.

El-Mushafjar applied to Arabic (read from right to left).

The late Mr. Petrie, of Kilkivan, who kindly accompanied me to Mecca, applied the "Mushafjar" with complete success to the

El-Mushafjar applied to old Persian, or Pehlevi (read, as above, from right to left).

"Puthork" or old Scandinavian Alphabet, so called, like "El-Abjad," from the letters which begin it.

ICELANDIC.

Actively remarking that one of the "trees" had a cross-bar which does not appear in the others, Mr. Petrie determined it to be the Key of the Cypher, representing the first letter A, or the dipthong AA. He was thus able to read inscription No. 1 as "Aesirylk" (Gods) in the manuscript.

The second, in which the branches to the left of the stem-line are bent downwards, instead of upwards, was equally amenable to treatment, and yielded "Thorins Rdnar" (The Runes).

The subject acquires a permanent interest at the present moment when Dr. Samuel Ferguson is editing, for the Royal Irish Academy, a series of Ogham inscriptions. I see nowhere in the papers which notice the publication, the least allusion to El-Mushafjar, and I venture to hope that the Athenæum will render such neglect unpardonable.

RICHARD F. BURTON.

CHAUCER.

April 5, 1877.

The first sentence in Mr. Furnivall's lively attack on my article on Chaucer in the "Encyclopedia Britannica" rather took me by surprise. "When my friend Mr. Skeat and I," Mr. Furnivall says, "were writing to the Athenæum lately about the spuriousness and late date of 'The Court of Love,' in which we both agreed,—thence confirming the long-settled judgments of our best authority in matters Chaucerian, Mr. H. Bardsley, and of Prof. T. F. Teggart, we were aware that another critic had lately pronounced this poem as well as the 'Dreme' genuine, and generally settled, or unsettled, all the questions to which some of us have been giving the best years of our lives. But, by the kindness of a friend at the Museum, I have been able to read Mr. W. Minto's article on Chaucer's 'Eneida.' Now I am not surprised to learn that Mr. Furnivall has a friend in the British Museum, nor that he has given the best years of his life to the study of the 'Court of Love'; but I must confess it does surprise me that Mr. Furnivall should pretend to have learned my views regarding the authenticity of that poem for the first time two months ago. Rather more than two years ago, when I published a book on English Poets, in which I dealt with this subject, a person using Mr. Furnivall's name, and a singularly good imitation of his peculiar style, wrote several letters to me on the very points which he now himself fondly invites me to go through, asked me to join one of his societies—I forget which—and when I was writing my article on Chaucer for the 'Encyclopedia,' sent me some paragraphs, to which I was unable to find them any purpose.

I must also remark on the point to say that I am not surprised that Mr. Furnivall does not see the same social usefulness in Chaucer's 'Romeo' as I do,

Mr. Furnivall's forgetfulness is worth mentioning, because it throws light on his letter. He professes to prove that in the aforesaid article I have "imagined my facts, my arguments, and my conclusions." It is a pity that Chaucer's father is being abroad with Edward the Third in one expedition when really it was another over easy to entitle it "The Court of Love" and some light-hearted antiquarians! There is a joke of an equally drollish description in Mr. Furnivall's own letter, no doubt put in for his private amusement. "Mr. Minto, unmask the butt-hole and thirty years. He takes the 'Court of Love,' which Mr. Skeat and I have shown... is near the end of the thirteenth century, and considers that it is Chaucer's, soon after the middle of the fourteenth century. How many years does Mr. Furnivall fancy follow that he is, here annihilate?"

All the other points on which I "confuse chronology" and "mix genuine works with spurious" are matters of opinion, in which I do not agree with Mr. Furnivall, with all my respect for his authorities. I have given my reasons twice over, in my book and in the 'Encyclopedia,' for not agreeing with Mr. E. K. and to show that you trouble you by repeating them. Suffice it to say, that they are not the reasons Mr. Furnivall puts into my mouth in his lively letter, as anybody who is interested in the question may see by comparing them.

One thing I may be allowed to say—that I am perfectly open to conviction. I am, in the authorship of the 'Court of Love,' I am simply in this position, that I have not yet seen any evidence against its being Chaucer's which seems to me to be convincing. I hope I shall lose neither my memory nor my temper if Mr. Furnivall should prove that it was written in the latter part of the nineteenth century by himself and Mr. Skeat. It matters very little either way; it does not affect Chaucer's position in literature, nor any critical judgment on the character of his mind or the qualities of his poetry.

W. M. NEWTON.

A MS. OF DANTÉ IN THE BODLEIAN LIBRARY, OXFORD.

Mr. Edmund Hall, Oxford, in the Athenæum of August 21st, 1875, it was announced that Dr. Greg, Palermi, of Rome, while studying the valuable collection of MSS. of Dante in the Bodleian Library, had discovered in one of them the following six tercines, which occur after line 90 of canto xxxiii. of the Inferno:—

Quando custus pereo satelles
Guadet altae carpe exitum vicis
Ejus in nuce semen haec
et reserat horum omnes
Ejus amore vii in posito
Ejus amore vii in posito
Ejus in nunc paratus alii despectus
Semendurium non cura defens
Sed confidamus in uterque

These lines had never been noticed before, and, as Dr. Galeotti points out in his "Remarks on the MSS. of Dante in the Bodleian Library, and numbered 488 in the catalogue of