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LITERATURE.

The Book of Sindbad; or, The Story-of the King, his Son, the Damself, 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. Langlois published a translation of the Arabic story-book in 1814, and will think only of our old friend Sindbad the Sailor, whom We (an Englishman, &c.) (London, 1820) eulogised as one of Sindbad the Sage, and whom I shall call "Sindbad the Seaman." This most interesting Sindbad section of the Arabian Nights (558-59) was discussed by R. Holm in his Persiani, etc. (London, 1798), and by Baron Walckenaer (1831) and other Orientalists, one of whom found the Island of Wâk-wâk at Canton instead of Cape Guardafui; and, lately, in his Introduction to India in the Fifteenth Century (Huklulat 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 Aiden and Berbera, built the ruined cities on the Zaniki seaside which were first visited and described by myself, and established the Shii tribe in Zanzibar Island. All this I shall discuss at length in my forthcoming version of the immortal "Nights."

But, in The Book of Sindbad, Mr. Clouston has never done 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. As they (18-110) is the Sindbad translated by Prof. Forbes Elphinstone (Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, xxxvi. 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 Telzas, Aesop's Fables, 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 of these the translation is the same. An old king is at last blessed by Allah with a son, who, after showing himself a thorough "Jumbele Jung," is taken in hand by Sindbad the Sailor, the Don Quixote of the East. Laid, battered, and taught a lesson or two by the simplest of processes—object lessons. Before the young prince is presented to his royal father he is solemnly warned by his preceptor—Sindbad the sage—that the stars threaten him with death if he utter a syllable for seven days. The prince is lovingly embraced by his progenitor, but found to be dull; whereupon one of the hard-faced, aborted bodies, who undertakes to effect a perfect cure. She makes the most impudent proposals, which are at once rejected by the good young man, who is often found in such a situation (taleb); 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 such circumstances, does not wish to be disturbed; the Prince speaks out, and the true-interesting young person is duly put to death.

All this is found in the "Nights" (Nos. 378-380), somewhat "abridged and garbled," as Mr. Clouston writes. In his notes he puts them "put together in a hasty manner" (p. 236); and no wonder, if he has contented himself with "Mr. Lane's admirable translation" (p. 229), which ignores the "Nights," and puts them together in a hasty manner. But it is not only he who is unjustly classed in telling his readers (p. 236, that the Calcutta text "hardly differs from that printed at Bulia," as I know to my cost, a translation from the latter proves to be an outright forgery. The book is said to be an "accumulative reciter's 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 folio, the romance, and the fairy tale, began, like all letters, so far as we know, in ancient Egypt (p. xxvi.); but he seems haunted by the spectre of Hindu antiquity. In one of his notes he says: "Six or seven centuries before the arrival of the Pandit's literary work was probably borrowed, like the theatre, from the Greeks of the Bactrian empire; while the early Christians supplied him with the" (p. xxvi.) The course of literature would be from Persia to India, not vice versa.

To deal with a few details. The older Brazilians, like the Khattais (p. 20), used the left hand for the right. Eastern do not "bite their nails" (p. 23); but taking the finger between the fore-teeth is a sign of regret—"in Abyssinia rage and revenge, as in certain moderns." In a particular occasion, "Har, ou Harir, is common in Arabic (p. 23), as Gard, which suggests A-sardar, etc., generally becomes "sardar" when it means "town," e.g. Darab-sardar (p. 27); and "Rose-Garden of the Lion" (p. 30), should be flower-gardens. "Sagaret" (p. 33) is a queen name for a town in Arabia, which has no p-stutter. Many readers would want a notice of the "eyes" used for the bath in the "Isis" (p. 5); the "Gih-Sarriah," 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 hands, 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 unease." Hiqrib (p. 189) is not the city governor, but the governor's head-chamberlain; an exalted quarter, of an important personage; and "Khalif" (p. 203) should be either "Caliph" or "Khalifah." Finally, we miss a notice of the Toda-Kahani; 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. Sindbad 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. 39); a "fair girl" departed, was diffused from them as the Easters she 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 Is-lam:

"The auspicious hour wherein the pair arrived at that spot was by night a middlemost in the moon. On every bough rose were springing; on every bough was plaintively singing. The tall cypresses 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 thrush-love was proclaiming the advent of Prince the Gladming. The diadem of the Narcissus shone with such sheen, you had said it was the crown of the Faghrur-Kings of Al-Sin Chairs. On this side the northern sapphire, on that the western, scattered in love-tokens white blooms and blossoms like silver pieces at the feet of the rose unscented; the air was musk-scented."

The immense Appendix (pp. 216-238) 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 "Sytapos," 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 prejudiced our judgment as to interest us in a higher degree, because they teach us to deal successfully with a race more powerful, because more united, than any others. Apparently, England is ever forgetting that she is the greatest. Modem 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 Egypt—as Afghanistan in times past and Egypt at present—she falls after a fashion which scandalizes her few (very few) friends. When the late regrettable wars were made upon the gallant Sudan negroes, 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, Mohammad Osman Dukanah, "of the Beard," will go down to posterity as "Mohammad Osman Dukanah"! But is this not this again vae victis in deserto?—Richard F. Burton.

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**Three Translations of Latin Poetry.**

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

The Eneids of Virgil. Translated into English verse by John L. Scott. (Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.)

The Second Book of the Aeneid. Translated into English 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 ascendency of classical studies among us. Even Prof. Thorold Rogers has let his muse idle since his admission to the House. Mr. Baring is bolder, and his bolderness 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 prove 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:—

"Th' sweet, when on the mighty sea the stormy winds raise the main,

To watch from shore another toil with all his might in vain;

Not that the lust of others can to us delightful be,

But that we like to look on turmoil, that our lives are free.

Sweet is it too to view in line the mighty strife of war.

Arrayed across the plains, when from danger stand a few.

But nothing more delightful is than Wisdom's quiet sleep.

Set up on high and walled about with learning well, to keep;"