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LITERATURE.

"THE HISTORY OF THE FORTY VEZIRS." *

MR. E. J. W. GIBB is a young Orientalist, who is worthily following the footprints of his master, the famous Turkish scholar, Dr. Redhouse. He began with *Ottoman Poems*, which he translated into pleasing English verse—e.g., the *Carpe Diem* of the bard Mesîhi (fifteenth century), whose refrain caresses the ear—

"Hark! the Bulbul's lay so joyous: 'Now have come the days of spring,'" &c.

The next venture was the "Story of Jewâd," from a volume written in A.H. 1211 (= 1796-7), by Ali Azîz Efendi, the Cretan, and entitled *Phantasms (Mukhayyalât) from the Divine Presence*. Jewâd forms the second flight; the third contains a variety of new stories, which Mr. Gibb proposes to translate, and the first is a *salmi* of sundry tales from the *Thousand Nights and a Night*. Here, among the many contained in the Arabic texts, as Kamar al-Zamân, Prince Amjad and the Ebony (enchanted) Horse, appears the history of Zayn al-Asnâm, the first of the decade which many Orientalists have attributed to Galland's pen, and which now has been traced for the first time by Mr. Gibb to an Eastern source. The dates would admit of a Turkish translation from the French; but the treatment in the *Mukhayyalât* is very different from that of the *Contes Arabes*, to which the Enchanted Boat and the King of the Génies may be credited. If this be a real "find," we may reasonably expect to come upon the other nine "Gallands," and to establish decisively their Oriental origin. More of this in my forthcoming "Supplementals."

The "Forty Vezirs" is attributed to one "Sheykh-Zadeh," † which simply means

* "Or the Story of the Forty Morns and Eves" (Redway, 1886), inscribed to Mr. W. A. Clouston, whose *Popular Tales and Traditions*, &c., are about to be published by Messrs. Blackwood. A handy volume of pp. xl. (preface and table of contents) + 378 + 44, the latter containing three appendices: (A.) stories from various sources, Belletête's excerpts; India Office MS.; Behrmann's excellent German version, and the Quaritch MS. No. ii.; (B.) extracts from *Petis de la Croix*; and (C.) a useful comparative table. The print is clear and good, but somewhat oversized for the page; and an index of names and notes is wanting.

† Mr. Gibb writes the word "Zâda," and he and I have agreed to join issue touching the final aspirate. He omits it, contending justly enough that in Turkish, as shown by nominal and other inflections, it is a vowel. I would always preserve it—with due warning to the reader—for several reasons. Firstly, the omission mutilates the word and may change its sense—e.g., Khojâ (for Khwâjeh) would in Hindostani mean a eunuch. Moreover, the best speakers in Stambul and Shiraz always articulate the *spiritus asper*, although Europeans very often fail to catch the sound; and no educated man would say "Fatimâ" for Fatimeh.

Shaykh-Son; but in one MS. (Add. 7882, British Museum) we find the name of the author Ahmad al-Misri, and we may fairly accept this Egyptian provenance. In p. 125 the tailor of Cairo is preferred to him of Baghdad, and on p. 286 the *mise-en-scène* is the Nilotic capital. Thus, too, we may account for the Persian tone of thought which pervades the narratives. The frame-story is essentially one of the Sindibad-Dolopathos cycle, in which we may include the "Ten Wazirs" of the Bulak text (*Thousand Nights and a Night*). In the "Tale of Jilî'âd and Shimâs" the number of the ministers is seven, as usual in the Sindibad cycle; but the full decade is advised by the Imam al-Jarâ'i.

"Tis meet for a man before entering upon important matters to consult ten intelligent friends; if he have only five, to apply twice to each; if only one, ten times at different visits; and if none, let him repair to his wife and consult her, and whatever she advise him to do, let him do the direct contrary."

The latter is a quotation from Caliph Omar; not, as the Shaykh-Zadeh twice most ignorantly states, from Mohammed; and Tommy Moore has been daring enough to repeat it in the very headquarters of monogamy—

"Whene'er you're in doubt, said a sage I once knew,
"Twixt two lines of conduct which course to pursue,
Ask a woman's advice, and, whate'er she advise,
Do the very reverse, and you're sure to be wise."

A *furens femina* tempts a chaste young prince to no purpose, and accuses him of an attempt upon her virtue. The king, her husband and his father, determines to punish him with death; and is prevented only by the representations and instances of his forty ministers, till the expiry of the forty morns and eves during which the horoscope of the accused forbids him to excuse himself. Thus the tales number, or should number, eighty; for the lady, single-handed, answers all the ministers, very often, it must be owned, very little to the purpose. Not a few of the *fabliaux* are borrowed from the *Arabian Nights*; and I have found several—notably the "Lady's Fourth Story"—in the Wortley Montague MS. of the Bodleian. At last the immodest young person meets with poetical justice. She is tied to the tail of a wild ass (a Persian touch) and, "torn into pieces small even as her ear, she is left upon the shrubs and stones."

Mr. Gibb does not write only *ad clerum*; and thus he has been obliged to "leave in the obscurity of an Eastern language" three whole tales (pp. 353, 366, and 399). No. 2 being exceedingly witty and fescennine. He has had the good sense, when he supplants a broad joke by a *banal* English phrase, to subjoin in a note the original Turkish (p. 109, 140, 199, 215, and 382). Yet some of the *novelle* are highly spiced enough: see the amorous princess in the Eleventh Wazir's story (pp. 381-3); and the truly Turkish and unspeakable version of modest Aesop's "Countryman and his Son." Of the less Milesian I would especially commend the story of the Venus-star and the magical angels, Harut and Marut (p. 167); the explanation of the proverb "Take counsel of the cap that is on thy head" (p. 362); and the Thirty-seventh

Wazir's tale, showing why "men have beaten their wives since the days of Saint Adam" (p. 349).

And here, meseems, it were best to give the reader a sample of the book. The usual misogynic touch, worthy of Jankyn of Oxenford, is found (p. 33) in the following:

"O king, it beseems thee to be not heedless, for many are the lies and tricks of women, so that if one of them but look at her great toe, she will hatch every day two and seventy different plots and tricks."

We have two notable instances of the catch-question, which none can answer save the writer:

"Quoth he, 'What do the kings of the world resemble, and what do their agents resemble, and what do the people resemble, and what do the king's enemies resemble, and what do the sheykhs resemble?' (p. 50). . . . Quoth the prince, 'O, my father, this world resembles a pasture, and these people resemble the sheep that wander in that pasture, and the king resembles their shepherd, and the owner of the sheep is God Most High, and the nobles resemble that shepherd's dogs, and the enemy resembles the wolf, and the sheykhs and the wise resemble the guardians appointed by God Most High over the shepherd, who forbid the shepherd by the order of God Most High whenever he would do evil to the sheep' (p. 51).

And still better—

"It is even as when one day they asked the Holy Apostle, 'What is the root of the Faith, and what is its head, and what is its life; and what is its heart, and what is its seed, and what is its leaf, and what is its place, and what is its fruit?' The Apostle (peace on him!) replied, 'The root of the Faith is the grace of God, and its head is the Word of the Profession, and its life is the Koran, and its heart is sincerity, and its place is the believer's heart, and its seed is knowledge, and its leaf is piety, and its branch is the fear of God, and its core is modesty and generosity, and its fruit is thanking God: even as He saith in His Glorious Word, 'If ye render thanks, surely, indeed, will I give you increase'" (p. 268).

"Pand," or good counsel, so often offered, and so seldom accepted, abounds, as the following two specimens show:

"And the sages have said that eight things bring disgrace upon a man: the first is going to dine at a place without invitation, the second is interfering between another and his wife, the third is giving ear to every one's words, the fourth is slighting the king, the fifth is setting one's self above a great man, the sixth is speaking to those who listen not to one's words, the seventh is begging a favour of an avaricious and indifferent person, and the eighth is going to the enemies' gate" (p. 217).

"Do good to him who doth good to thee; do good to him, too, who doth evil to thee; supply the need of him who asketh a need of thee; love the folk as much as in thee lieth; take heed that thou cast no one's fault in his face; speak not the word which will grieve; if thy neighbour be sick, ask after him; think of others what thou thinkest of thyself; be not treacherous; let thy love be always with the good; never interrupt a person and speak to others; talk not with him who loveth thee not; when with a great man speak not before he doth; ever guard thee against hypocrites and evil women, and trust them not" (p. 303).

Lastly, I am tempted to transcribe the opening of a tale which appears to have the merit of originality:

"In the olden time there was a youth, and

they told him that in a certain city was a wondrous fair woman who had no like in beauty in any place. The youth fell in love with her without having seen her, and he set out for the city, where the woman was. While he was journeying on the road he saw some folks sowing wheat, and after an hour that seed ripened and was cut, whereupon they burned it with fire; and the youth wondered at them. He went on further, and saw a man grasping a stone and trying to lift it, but he could not lift it; and then he put another stone on the top of that stone, and he was able to lift them a little; then he put yet another stone on that, and this time, when he had laid the three stones together, he lifted them up and bare them off. And he wondered at this too. He went on further and saw some people mounted on a sheep, and there were some others who sought to mount but could not. And the youth marvelled at these also. And he passed on and came to the city where that woman was; and he saw an elder seated at the gate of that city. The youth saluted him, and he returned the salutation and asked, saying, 'Wherefore art thou come here?' The youth replied, 'They say that in this city is a beautiful woman; I am come to see her.' The elder said, 'What hast thou seen of wonders on the road thou camest?' He replied, 'I have seen many wonders, things greatly to be marvelled at.' The elder said, 'Tell them, that I may hear.' So the youth related all that he had seen. He asked, 'Knowest thou what those were?' The youth said, 'Nay.' The elder said, 'They who sowed the seed and, when it had reached perfection, burned it, are those persons who perform a good deed and then go and act with hypocrisy and say to the passers-by—'Now have I done a good deed'; and so burn it with their tongues and make it naught. And that man who could not carry the stone and put two other stones on it and then carried them, is he who commits a sin—at first it feels very heavy; he does it again, and it feels lighter than the first time; he does it yet again, and this time he gets used to it and it feels not heavy at all, whereupon he takes it and bears it wheresoever he will. And those people mounted on the sheep, and the men over them, and those others who sought to mount but were unable; that sheep is the world, and those mounted on the sheep are the rich men, and he mounted over them is their prince, and those who were unable to mount are the poor'" (p. 307 *et seq.*).

And now the reader can judge for himself. In my opinion the version is definitive and final, despite the popular saying, "Everything suffers by translation save a bishop." The style is light and pleasant with the absolutely necessary flavour of quaintness; and the notes, though short and few, are sufficient and satisfactory. We may look forward with pleasure and interest to hearing more from Mr. Gibb.

RICHARD F. BURTON.

A History of England. By Spencer Walpole. Vols. IV. and V. (Longmans.)

FIFTY years of English history in five thick volumes is no light matter. Now that Mr. Spencer Walpole's work has been safely carried from Waterloo to Sevastopol, both he and his readers have reason to congratulate themselves on its completion. He has finished with credit an arduous task. We have got what is, in spite of deficiencies, the most adequate account yet presented to us of a great epoch. The Long War was like the damming back of a great river. When it

ended the barriers were removed, the stream of reform began to flow, gathered force, became a flood and spent itself. Between the beginning and the end of the War we step from one world into another; and the Crimean War in turn seems to close this new chapter and launch us upon yet another of our history. The period which Mr. Walpole has chosen has an intrinsic completeness. To have approached nearer to our own times would have carried him into controversial and non-historical ground; and fortunately he found in the triumph of Free Trade at once a climax and a conclusion. Accordingly, in these volumes domestic history terminates with the fall of Lord Derby's first administration; and it is only because foreign and colonial questions do not wind themselves up at the same point that any later events are introduced. Foreign affairs are brought down to the end of the Crimean War; Indian history to the dissolution of the East India Company; and there are two or three subsidiary chapters, a church chapter, a colonial chapter, and a chapter of morals to adorn the tale.

Though a Liberal of the Liberals, Mr. Walpole's sympathy and admiration are mainly bestowed upon the last administration of Sir Robert Peel. In foreign affairs—where his happy gift of lucid and rapid narrative makes him particularly effective—he devotes himself to a skilful and painstaking vindication of Lord Aberdeen. We have been accustomed to regard Louis Philippe as an arch-plotter, Guizot as an almost equally guilty accomplice, and Aberdeen as somewhat of a puppet in their hands. But then our notions have been much tinted by the popularity of Lord Palmerston, and to Lord Palmerston Mr. Walpole is no more a friend than Mr. Greville was. Reconsideration of the despatches has brought him to the conclusion that Aberdeen's policy was wise and successful, and that Guizot and the French king were by no means such double-dealers as they have generally been supposed. In his view, they were rather fools than knaves; and the beginning of the mischief was due more to meddling agents than to the blundering or trickery of the principals.

"Bulwer," says he severely, "had an opportunity in writing the memoir of himself, which he called a *Life of Lord Palmerston*, of defending his own conduct. It will seem to most persons inexcusably insubordinate, and to have justified the severe censure which it elicited from Aberdeen."

But it is round Peel that the interest of the period and Mr. Walpole's enthusiasm gather; and he leads up to Peel's death with skill, and crowns it with a character only too long for quotation. Peel's name is associated with the most beneficial measures of his time; and it is his misfortune rather than his fault that he was compelled to figure in a false light and expose himself to the charge of inconsistency.

"The one reform which will always be associated with the name of Grey was exceeded in importance by the six great reforms which this country owes to Peel. In 1819 Peel reformed the currency; in 1823 he reformed the Criminal Code; in 1829 he emancipated the Roman Catholics; in 1842 he reformed the Banking Tariff; in 1843 he reformed the Banking System; in 1846 he repealed the Corn Laws. Who is that minister whose admirers can boast that his

name can be associated with six reforms so beneficent and so enduring as these?"

These five and thirty years of peace form a period singularly devoid of picturesque or dramatic incident, and crowded everywhere with *bourgeois* detail. A historian who has to face in succession prisons and sewers, factories and mines, baths and washhouses, poor laws and corn laws, budgets, bankruptcy, and banking, has a prospect before him which needs a stout heart. Mr. Walpole has something of the arithmetic sleight-of-hand of the "passionate statistician," but he has fortunately also method and perspicuity; and so intelligible does he make his account of sugar duties and timber duties, and sliding scales and dead-and-gone budgets, that it is with astonishment the reader reflects at the end of the volume that he cannot recall one single thing about them. Mr. Walpole's research in Hansard and the Parliamentary Papers has been considerable, though he is rather too much disposed to take a statement for granted as a matter of fact because it was uttered in debate in the House of Commons. But it is no small merit that he spares us a repetition of the often-told stories of famous debates, and leaves Disraeli and Don Pacifico to those who have told of them before. For the rest, he relies on the ordinary memoirs and books of reference; and, indeed, the early part of vol. v. is almost a rewriting in narrative of Greville, Lord Malmesbury, and Sir T. Martin. He allows himself, now and then, to correct the errors of his authorities in pungent little footnotes, and dissociates himself by antithesis from "ordinary historians" (v. 91); but when he says

"the dreary pages in which Mill and Wilson, Thornton and Marshman, have related the doings of the English in India find few readers, because these authors have contrived to make an account which should have sparkled like a rivulet in the sunshine as dull as a shady pool,"

he is not more infelicitous in the simile than unkind to authors to whom he is not a little indebted.

The chapters on India are, perhaps, the least satisfactory part of the book. Although clear and lucid enough, the ground they cover is too vast for their extent. Rather essays than history, it would, perhaps, have been better not to have attempted them at all. The chapter on the ecclesiastical movements of the period, in addition to a long and irrelevant introduction, and some odd severities upon Luther's supposed debt to Greek mythology and some unheard-of likeness between Bunyan's Deity and "the Jupiter of Homer," contains a very interesting account of the Scotch Disruption, and a suggestive parallel between the Free Kirk and the Tractarians; but it breathes a very unecclesiastical spirit, which is not always the spirit of justice. Elsewhere, on one of the negotiations before the Crimean War, Mr. Walpole says:

"The Latins, on hearing the decision of the Porte that they should be allowed to celebrate mass once a year in the church of the Virgin near Gethsemane, but that they should not be permitted to disturb the altar and its ornaments, declared that it was impossible to celebrate mass on a schismatic slab of marble and before a crucifix whose feet were separated."

The sentiment is that of Gibbon, and he would not have been ashamed of the language.