NEW PUBLICATIONS.

THE GIPSIES.

A HISTORY OF THE GIPSIES: WITH SPECIMENS OF THE GIPSY LANGUAGE. By WALTER SIMSON. Edited, with Preface, Introduction, and Notes, and a Disquisition on the Past, Present, and Future of Gipsydom, by JAMES SIMSON. 12mo. pp. 575. M. Doolady.

Mr. Walter Simson, the author of rather more than half this volume, spent about 14 years, from 1817 to 1831, in collecting materials for a history and description of the Gipsies of his native country, Scotland. With the zeal and perseverance of a genuine antiquary, and something of the intrepidity of the explorer of dangerous and unknown regions, he penetrated into their squalid encampments, hobnobbed with thieves, pickpockets, beggars, and mountebanks, and, to use the words of Sir Walter Scott, who encouraged and assisted him, made himself capable of conversing with any Gipsy whom he met, and learned, like the royal Hal, to drink with any tinker in his own language. The result of his researches was a few articles in "Blackwood's Magazine" and the manuscript of the present "history," which is now given to the world by his descendant in America. Mr. James Simson has added a preface, an introduction, a disquisition, and a great many notes, some of which are interesting. He has also, as he says, taken a great many liberties with the manuscript and rearranged some of the materials. We are not certain that he has improved the book by this means, for the arrangement could not be much worse than it is now. The title is not a misnomer. This is not a "History of the Gipsies," but a collection of many curious facts and anecdotes about the Scottish portion of the tribe, with the addition of a few short and unsatisfactory particulars respecting Gipsies in other parts of the world. The author touched but slightly the vexed question of the origin of this strange people, but the editor has supplied his omission by a theory that they are the descendants of the "mixed multitude" who went up with the Israelites out of Egypt. These refugees were probably slaves, like the Jews; perhaps the progeny of the ancient Shepherd Kings by native Egyptian women. They could not follow the chosen people into the promised land, and probably they parted from them in the wilderness and wandered eastward into Hindostan, whence, after many centuries, they spread themselves over the earth. This theory accounts for the fact that the Gipsies constantly represent themselves to be of Egyptian origin, and also for the striking resemblance between their language and the dialects of certain Hindoo tribes. On entering Hindostan they would find themselves in the midst of a civilized people governed by rigid laws of caste, and little disposed to welcome a horde of strangers who, from their past condition, must have had little idea of religion and little respect for the rights of property. The Gipsies, therefore, would naturally cling together, instead of becoming amalgamated with the Hindoos; and the habits of life engendered by their peculiar isolation would soon become fixed and hereditary. There is no record of the circumstances which drove them out of India. It has been suggested that they fled from the oppression of Tamerlane; but if this be so, it is strange that not even the name of that conqueror has been preserved among the European Gipsies; and, moreover, the heavy hand of the Tartar would have fallen rather upon the higher classes of the Hindoos than upon a poor and despised people like these fugitives from Egypt.

The Gipsies first appeared in Europe at the beginning of the Fifteenth century, being observed in Germany in 1414, in Switzerland in 1418, in Italy in 1422, and in France and Spain in 1427. No information seems to have been obtained from them as to the country from which they last came. They represented themselves to be Egyptian pilgrims, and under that character received considerable respect during half a century; being favored by different potentates with passports and letters of security. Their leaders were probably a better class of vagabonds than the modern representatives of the tribe; though in every country and at all times their manners, habits and cast of features have been the same. On the continent they were horse-dealers, inn-keepers, workers in iron, musicians, jugglers, and fortune-tellers. They roamed about the country, living in tents, and hawking small articles of merchandise; but their chief occupation was theft. Very severe laws were passed in different countries for their extermination or banishment, the only effect of which was to drive them from one district of Europe to another. They first appeared in England about 1512 or earlier, under a leader named Giles Hather, whom they called king, and a woman named Calot, to whom they gave the title of queen, and they are still very numerous in that country, though the progress of civilization has compelled them to abandon many of their disreputable habits. There were Gipsies in Scotland at least as early as 1506, when James IV. wrote a letter to the King of Denmark in favor of Anthonius Gawino, Earl of Little Egypt, a Gipsy Chief. From an edict published by James V. in favor of John Faw, Lord and Earl of Little Egypt, in 1540, it appears that the Gipsies in Scotland were ordered to punish the criminal members of their tribe according to their own peculiar laws and customs. Afterward, however, they were made the victims of the most cruel and barbarous laws, to escape which they generally became nominally clansmen, and assumed the surnames of those chieftains and noblemen who were willing and able to afford them protection. They often intermarried with the European race; but it was most commonly a Gipsy woman who took a "white" man for her husband, rather than the reverse, and the man was then adopted into the tribe, and the children were brought up to speak the Gipsy language and follow all the customs of their mother's people. By repeated intermarriages the characteristic features and complexion of the race have been obliterated, or so much changed, that at the present day it is almost impossible to distinguish a Gipsy at sight. In old times the men used to employ themselves in athletic amusements, such as leaping, cudgel-playing, throwing the hammer, casting the putting-stone, and playing at golf, quoits, and other games; or in tinkering, making horn-spoons, casting rude implements of iron, playing the violin and bag-pipes, or stealing and selling horses. The women did most of the peddling and petty thieving, and drove a thriving business in fortune-telling; though it was only a few of them who pretended to proficiency in the last named art. They had no fixed habitations, but traveled about the country in bands. Each band had its own district, and if one encroached upon the territory of another there generally resulted a desperate and barbarous fight, in which the women bore their full share of the wounds and glory of the day. Whenever they could, the Gipsies lodged in barns and out-houses. A woman was generally sent ahead with an infant in her arms to beg permission of some farmer to pass the night in his barn, and if leave was granted 20 or 30 of the gang were sure to be found at their door before morning. They never forgot a kindness shown them by the country people upon whom they quartered themselves, and rarely or never robbed their entertainers. A great many instances are recorded of farmers who have been assisted in time of trouble, or have had their stolen purses restored to them by Gipsies whom they have befriended. The children were trained to theft under a rigid discipline. They frequently practiced themselves by picking the pockets of each other. Sometimes a pair of breeches was made fast to a string suspended from the tent or outhouse in which they lodged, and the children were taught to abstract money from the pockets without moving them. Those who were most expert were rewarded; those who failed were severely punished. When a youth had been graduated in this branch of the profession a purse or other small object was laid down in an exposed part of the camp, in the sight of all the gang. While the ordinary business of the day was going forward, the pupil was required, by the exercise of ingenuity and patience, to carry off the purse without being perceived. A reward or a beating, according to his success or failure, awaited him. The companies or bands were under the control of a captain whose dignity was generally hereditary. The captains acknowledged a sort of allegiance to superior chiefs, who bore high-sounding titles, as Earls, Dukes, &c. A favorite title of some of the more distinguished magnates seems to have been that of King of Egypt. The Gipsy king of England was a royal and very illustrious one among these vagabonds. The Gipsies frequented fairs in great numbers, though they entered the market-towns singly, or by twos and threes. The chief on such occasions had his headquarters, to which his men repaired with their booty as soon as they obtained it. Some of the chiefs, handsomely dressed, pursued the ostensible occupation of buying and selling horses. When detection seemed imminent they rode off, with all the booty, to some distant part of the country, previously fixed upon, and the rest of the gang followed at leisure. They were well-known at many of the inns in which they used to lodge, and they paid very liberally for all they had, the landlords were careful never to betray them. The chiefs and other Gipsies of the better class, as well as many of the women were fond of rich dresses, were polished in their manners when it suited them to be so, and might readily have been mistaken for persons of gentle blood. Some of the women are remarkably beautiful. They marry very young, seldom remaining single after the age of 20. They are said to be one of the most prolific races in the world. The ceremonies of marriage are very singular. Divorce is common. It is performed over the body of a horse, which is sacrificed for the occasion. The ceremony must take place, if possible, "when the sun is at its height." All the parties concerned in it carry long staves in their hands. A horse without blemish is led forth, and a member of the company is chosen by lot to act as priest on the occasion. He walks round the animal several times, repeating the names of all the persons in whose possession it has been, and extolling its rare qualities. It is then let loose, and several Gipsies set off in pursuit of it. If it is wild and intractable, leaps ditches, kicks, and will not allow itself to be easily caught, the guilt of the woman is looked upon as enormous; but if it is tame and docile, her crimes are thought to be less heinous, and the death of the horse is sufficient to wash them away. But sometimes both woman and horse used to be sacrificed together:

> The individuals who catch the horse bring it before the priest. They repeat to him all the faults and tricks it has committed; laying the whole of the crimes of which the woman is supposed to have been guilty to its charge; and upbraiding and scolding the dumb creature, in an angry manner, for its conduct. They bring, as it were, an accusation against it, and plead for its condemnation. When this part of the trial is finished, the priest takes a large knife and thrusts it into the heart of the horse; and its blood is allowed to flow upon the ground till life is extinct. The dead animal is now stretched out upon the ground. The husband then takes his stand on one side of it and the wife on the other; and, holding each other by the hand, repeat certain appropriate sentences in the Gipsy language. They then quit hold of each other, and walk three times round the body of the horse, contrariwise, passing and crossing each other, at certain points, as they proceed in opposite directions. At certain parts of the animal (the corners of the horse was the Gipsy's expression), such as the hind and fore feet, the shoulders and haunches, the head and tail, the parties halt, and face each other, and again repeat sentences, in their own speech, at each time they halt. The two last steps they make, in their circuit round the sacrifice, are at the head and tail. At the head, they again face each other, and speak; and lastly, at the tail, they again confront each other, utter some more Gipsy expressions, shake hands, and finally part, the one going north, the other south, never again to be united in this life. Immediately after the separation takes place, the woman receives a token, which is made of cast iron, about an inch and a half square, with a mark upon it resembling the Roman character, T. After the marriage has been dissolved, and the woman dismissed from this sacrifice, the heart of the horse is taken out and roasted with fire, then sprinkled with vinegar or brandy, and eaten by the husband and friends then present; the female not being allowed to join in this part of the ceremony. The body of the horse, skin and everything about it, except the heart, is buried on the spot; and years after the ceremony has taken place, the husband and his friends visit the grave of the animal, to see whether it has been disturbed. At these visits they walk round about the grave, with much grief and mourning.
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> The husband may take another wife whenever he pleases, but the female is never permitted to marry again. The token, or rather bill of divorce, which she receives, must never be from about her person. If she loses it, or attempts to pass herself off as a woman never before married, she becomes liable to the punishment of death. In the event of her breaking this law, a council of the chiefs is held upon her conduct, and her fate is decided by a majority of the members; and, if she is to suffer death, her sentence must be confirmed by the King, or principal leader. The culprit is then tied to a stake, with an iron chain, and there coupled to death. The executioners do not extinguish life at one beating, but leave the unhappy woman for a little while, and return to her, and at last complete their work by dispatching her on the spot.

I have been informed of an instance of a Gipsy falling out with his wife, and, in the heat of his passion, shooting his own horse dead on the spot with his pistol, and forthwith performing the ceremony of divorce over the animal, without allowing himself a moment's time for reflection on the subject. Some of the country people observed the transaction, and were horrified at so extraordinary a proceeding. It was considered by them as merely a mad frolic of an enraged Tinkler. It took place many years ago, in a wild, sequestered spot between Galloway and Ayrshire.

The Gipsies, especially those of Scotland, are extremely unwilling to divulge any words of their language, and whenever they are spoken to on the subject they exhibit an extraordinary degree of fear, caution and suspicion. Rather than give information about it they will submit to almost any self-denial. This is partly because the traditional accounts of the numerous banishments and executions which many of their race underwent for merely being "by habit and repute Gipsies" are still fresh in their memories. They entertain the idea that they are a despised and persecuted people, and consequently take all pains to conceal their origin. They also value their language as a means of secretly communicating with each other at fairs and markets. After several years perseverance Mr. Walter Simson succeeded in collecting a few Gipsy words which wonderfully resemble Hindostanee; but his vocabulary is too short to throw much light on the history of the people. They have a word for devil (*Bing*), but it is remarkable that they have no religious belief whatever, so that an old proverb says: "The Gipsy's church was built of bacon and the dogs ate it."

With regard to the present number of the Gipsies Mr. Simson (the editor) affords us no information which we feel disposed to trust. A large part of his rambling disquisition is devoted to the effort to convince us that the race amounts to 100,000 in Scotland, 300,000 in the British Isles, and 4,000,000 in Europe and America; but as he counts every man a Gipsy who has a drop of Gipsy blood in his veins, it is evident that he can have no data upon which to fix his estimate, and that the estimate would be worth nothing if he had. Gipsies, he says, have been in America almost from the time of its settlement. A great many were banished to this country from Great Britain and Ireland during the colonial times. Tented Gipsies have been seen near Baltimore for the last 70 years:

> In New-England, a colony is known which has existed for about a hundred years, and has always been looked upon with a singular feeling of distrust and mystery by the inhabitants, who are the descendants of the early emigrants, and who did not suspect their origin till lately. These Gipsies have never associated, in the common sense of the word, with the other settlers, and, judging from their exterior, seem poor and miserable, whatever their circumstances may be. They follow pretty much the employment and modes of life of the same class in Europe; the most striking feature being, that the bulk of them leave the homestead for a length of time, scatter in different directions, and reunite, periodically, at their quarters, which are left in charge of some of the feeble members of the band.

Perhaps the foundation of the American broom manufacture was laid by the British Gipsies, by whom it may be partly carried on at the present day; a business they pretty much monopolize, in a rough way, in Great Britain. We will doubtless find, among the fraternity, some of these whittling, meddling Sam Slick peddlers, so often described: I have seen some of those itinerant venders of knife-sharpeners, and such "Yankee notions," with dark, glistening eyes, that would "pass for the article." Some of them would live by less legitimate business. I entertain no doubt, what from too general fitness of things, and the appearance of some of the men, that we will find some of the descendants of the old British mixed Gipsies members of the various establishments of Messrs. Potter Funks and Company of the City of New-York, as well as elsewhere. And I entertain as little doubt that many of those American women who tell fortunes, and engage in those many curious bits of business that so often come up at trials, are descendants of the British plantation stock of Gipsies.

There are many Hungarian and German Gipsies in America; some of them long settled in Pennsylvania and Maryland, where they own farms. Some of them leave their farms in charge of hired hands, during the Summer, and proceed South with their tents. In the State of Pennsylvania, there is a settlement of them, on the J——— River, a little way above H———, where they have saw-mills. About the Alleghany Mountains there are many of the tribe, following somewhat the original ways of the race. In the United States generally, there are many Gipsy peddlers, British as well as continental. There are a good many Gipsies in New-York—English, Irish, and continental—some of whom keep tin, crockery, and basket stores; but these are all mixed Gipsies, and many of them of fair complexion. The tin-ware which they make is generally of a plain, coarse kind, so much so, that a Gipsy tin store is easily known. They frequently exhibit their tin-ware and baskets on the streets, and carry them about the city. Almost all, if not all, of those itinerant cutlers and tinkers, to be met with in New-York, and other American cities, are Gipsies, principally German, Hungarian, and French. There are a good many Gipsy musicians in America. "What!" said I, to an English Gipsy, "those organ-grinders?" "Nothing so low as that. Gipsies don't *grind* their music, Sir; they *make* it." But I found in his house, when occupied by other Gipsies, a *hurdy-gurdy* and tambourine, so that Gipsies sometimes *grind* music, as well as *make* it. I know of a Hungarian Gipsy who is leader of a Negro musical band, in the City of New-York; his brother drives one of the Avenue cars. There are a number of Gipsy musicians in Baltimore, who play at parties, and on other occasions. Some of the fortune-telling Gipsy women about New-York will make as much as $40 a week in that line of business. They generally live a little way out of the city, into which they ride, in the morning, to their places of business. I know of one, who resides in New-Jersey, opposite New-York, and who has a place in the city, to which ladies, that is, females of the highest classes, address their cards, for her to call upon them.

The editor believes that he has "conclusively shown" John Bunyan to have been a Gipsy, but on this point there may be a difference of opinion. The disquisition is more remarkable for angry assertion than for argument of any kind, and although it contains a few statements that are well worth reading, it is upon the whole so tiresome, so pretentious, and so quarrelsome that we cannot help thinking the writer has done his ancestor a great unkindness in tacking it to what was originally a valuable book.

Books Received.

[illegible] Notes on Speaking and Spelling. By Henry Alford, D. D., Dean of Canterbury. Reprinted from the second London Edition. 16mo. pp. 287. Dick & Fitzgerald.

Lost but Found; Or, The Jewish Home. By Aunt Hattie. 16mo. pp. 279. Boston: Graves & Young.

Devotions of the Ages; Or, Collects, Texts, and Lyrics illustrative of the Christian Year and of the Offices and Ember Seasons of the Church. By the Rev. N. G. Allen. With an Introduction by the Right Rev. Thomas M. Clark, D. D., Bishop of Rhode Island. 12mo. pp. 242. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co.

The Statutes at Large, Treaties, and Proclamations of the United States of America, from December, 1863, to December, 1865. Edited by George P. Sanger, counselor-at-law. 8vo. pp. 853. Boston: Little, Brown & Company. New-York: Diossy & Cockcroft.

Footlight Flashes. By William Davidge, comedian, Author of "The Family Party" (a comedy), "The Drama Defended," &c., &c., &c. 12mo. pp. 274. The American News Company.

Public Life in Washington; Or, the Moral Aspects of the National Capital, and the Apparent Tendencies of Political Thought and Feeling in Congress and Cabinet. An Address read on Sunday evening, May 7, 1866, to his own congregation, by Henry W. Bellows, minister of "All Souls' Church." 8vo. pp. 26. James Miller.

The Holy Bible, with Illustrations by Gustave Doré. 4to. Parts I., II., and III. Cassell, Petter & Galpin.

The Mormon Prophet and His Harem; Or, An Authentic History of Brigham Young, His Numerous Wives and Children. By Mrs. C. V. Waite. 12mo. pp. 268. Hurd & Houghton.

A Brief Biographical Dictionary. Compiled and Arranged by the Rev. Charles Hole, B. A., Trinity College, Cambridge; with additions and corrections by William A. Wheeler, M. A. 12mo. pp. 4.3. The Same.

The Maiden and Married Life of Mary Powell, afterward Mistress Milton. 16mo. pp. 271. M. W. Dodd.

Scripture Testimony against Intoxicating Wine. By the Rev. William Ritchie, Dunse, Scotland. 12mo. pp. 213. New-York: National Temperance Society and Publication House.

The Literature and Curiosities of Dreams. A Commonplace Book of Speculations concerning the Mystery of Dreams and Visions. Records of curious and well-authenticated Dreams and Notes on the various Modes of Interpretation adopted in Ancient and Modern Times. By Frank Seafield, M. A. Two volumes 8vo. pp. 298, 394. London: Chapman & Hall. New-York: Robert H. Johnston & Co.

Alexander Campbell. An Address by Moses E. Lard. 8vo. pp. 30. Lexington, Ky.: D. T. & J. B. Morton.

Disturbed; or the Comparative Age of the World, showing that the Human Race is in the Infancy of its Being, and demonstrating a reasonable and rational World, and its immense future Duration. By the Rev. R. Abbey. 12mo. pp. 360. Cincinnati: Applegate & Co.

An Essay on the Cause, Diffusion, Localization, Prevention, and Cure of the Asiatic Cholera, and other Epidemics. By William Schmole, Doctor of Medicine and Philosophy. 8vo. pp. 44. Philadelphia: William B. Zieber.

The Starting in Life: a Sunday-School Gift Book, addressed to an elder Boy. 16mo. pp. 32. Protestant Episcopal Tract Society.

Household Troubles: How to meet them. 16mo. pp. 32. The Same.

The Mother's Trials and Triumphs. 16mo. pp. 32. The Same.

How to Rise in the World to Respectability, Independence and Usefulness. 16mo. pp. 32. The Same.

The Worth of Fresh Air. 16mo. pp. 32. The Same.

The Use of Pure Water. 16mo. pp. 30. The Same.

Life and Campaigns of Lieut.-Gen. Thomas J. Jackson (Stonewall Jackson). By Professor R. L. Dabney, D. D., of the Union Theological Seminary, Virginia. 8vo. pp. 742. Blelock & Co.

A Pictorial Homeopathic Treatise on the Diseases of Women and Children. Intended for intelligent Heads of Families and Students in Medicine. By Henry Minton, M. D. 8vo. pp. 461. The Same.

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