

INDIA.

Her Legends Retold from One of Her Sacred Poems.

THE ILIAD OF THE EAST. A Selection of Legends Drawn from Valmiki's Sanserit Poem, The Ramayana. By Frederika Macdonald. With illustrations by J. Lockwood Kipling. 8vo, pp. 311. John Lane Company.

Even if the legends of India's great epics were valueless as literature, they would still merit translation in popular form. They are the very mind and heart of the India of yesterday, to-day and—alas!—to-morrow. Sir George Birdwood, the distinguished student of Indian arts, only expressed the opinion of every authority on Indian matters when he maintained that people cannot properly understand the art, architecture, politics, philosophy, customs or sentiments of the modern Hindu without some knowledge of the "Ramayana" and the "Mahabharata," the two sacred poems which have dominated the land for twenty-five centuries or longer, in their present written form, and for unknown ages earlier as village tales. Miss Macdonald, in introducing her readers to the Ramayana legends, gives an apt illustration of the confusions besetting the Western student who attempts to interpret Hindu beliefs or practices without substantial knowledge of the language and ideas used throughout "The Iliad of the East." Speaking of the uninformed Christian's frequent endeavor to criticize Buddhism, she says:

Such a reader will inevitably come away with two false conclusions: First, that Buddhism, as a noble counterpart and an anticipation of Christianity, is chiefly interesting by its inferiority. Second, that only wilful disingenuousness or stupid obstinacy can account for the affirmations of critics who describe Buddhism as an intellectual religion independent of supernaturalism. . . . Let us recognize the position of the practical Western reader who is asked to recognize the founder of a new religion of the intellect in a personage who, to start with, enters his mother's side as a fine young white elephant with an abnormal number of tusks. What is such a reader to think of the honest critics who affirm that no supernatural qualities are attributed to Buddha? . . . But these apparent contradictions present no real difficulties to an initiated student. Such an attentive reader has traced the development and transformation of sentiments into thoughts, and of traditional superstitions into true ideas; and he can establish the relationship Buddha's spiritual doctrine has to the ancient legends and myths which form a natural and necessary part of its environment. As for white elephants with five tusks, and precocious infants who preach to their elders immediately after their birth, the initiated explorer knows what to make of them. . . . They are the conventional ornaments which adorn the portico of the Indian temple—outside adornments which show the locality where the temple is reared, but that do not reveal the character of the shrine nor interpret the spirit of the worship that is going on within.

He who would read the curiously wrought tales of Valmiki must constantly bear in mind that the prodigies and fantasies of which the story-teller speaks are but the language of a primitive people who, perhaps for a million years, had been struggling helplessly on a seething plain, where madness comes at mid-day and the tiger and the typhoon at night. Nature was a cruel jumble of merciless powers, and no man could winnow out the chaff of dreams from the substance of fact. When, after weary ages, it finally became clear that all things seen and heard are Maya, or Illusion, and that the mind of man can know the truth only by dint of reasoning, it was too late to slough off the words, phrases and concepts of uncritical ancestors, just as it is impossible for modern Western scientists to escape crude, popular metaphors in describing new facts. The legends of Valmiki, therefore, are highly figurative and poetic, but they are not strictly esoteric. Their allegories are an innocent gauzy dress for moralizing and sentimentality. As Miss Macdonald notes, the Occidental idealist quickly finds himself at home in this old Indian poetry: "his imagination is actually more at home in it than in the sentimental atmosphere of mediæval romance." We may say even more than this: In spite of enormous external differences, the underlying thoughts of the Ramayana are in subtle harmony with all these varieties of modern humanism which here snatched their firebrands of inspiration from the altars of science and scientific morality. This harmony is not a union; it is a consonance of different notes, neither of which can, by any skill of logic, be reduced to the other. "For East is East and West is West." But whoever responds to one note can respond to the other sympathetically, as the stories here recounted will show. In the adventures of the perfect hero, Rama, Miss Macdonald says, we have "the poetical interpretation of life," in which human existence, despite its supposed illusory nature, is contemplated without grief and without disgust, now tenderly, now humorously, now seriously, but always from a lofty moral plane.

This volume contains nineteen tales from the Ramayana, all chosen with a view to bringing out the romantic character of the work. We are first told how Valmiki, the narrator, received the gift of poetry as a reward for the tears of pity which he shed over the death of a heron shot by a hunter. This piece of sentimentalism is followed by the delightful and very Oriental story of Rishyasringa, the anchorite's son, who was brought up "amid reptiles and venomous insects, in ignorance of what is most vile and loathsome in nature," namely, man. In "The Descent of Ganga" the story of India's sacred river is told in the most allegorical language; unless the reader is nicely attuned to Oriental metaphors, he will find this chapter too high flown, and will turn with delight to "The Penance of Visvamitra," wherein is narrated the hard struggle of a mighty king to acquire, first, a miraculous cow—whose udders yielded sugar, honey, mountains of boiled rice, liquors and even armies of indomitable warriors—and,

secondly, control over himself. In this long and lively tale, the folly of war and the glories of renunciation are sharply drawn. Many of the other stories are such as might have been chosen for the use of students in comparative literature: the tale about the death of Jatayu, king of the vultures; the story of Sugriva, "an Ape of a sentimental and mournful disposition"; "The Ancient Vulture Sampati." "The Adventures of Hanuman, Son of the Wind," and others give the readers something more than a vague hint as to the origin of the inspiration that moves novelists of our day and race to write jungle stories. If the suggestion leads to close comparison, the ancient legends will usually be found superior to their modern counterparts, both as stories and as morality pictures. Their simple acceptance of talking animals and wonder working hermits as a part of the natural order of things gives them a charm which no sophisticated age can well imitate. Miss Macdonald has succeeded fairly well in preserving this naïveté; but some readers may find the superlative epithets which the editor has literally translated a little too strange for

LITERARY NOTES.

The latest addition to the series of "Original Narratives of Early American History," published by the Scribners, is an edition of "Winthrop's Journal: The History of New England, 1630-1649." This is printed in two volumes, edited, with an introduction, by Dr. J. K. Hosmer.

M. Arnoult Galopin's book on "The Real Ninon de L'Enclos" has been translated into English and will soon appear. Presumably the heroine of this work will be placed in a kinder light. The whitewash brush is popular to-day among the historical gossips and the truth about a personage not generally believed to be saintly usually turns out to be a warrant for a halo.

A happy idea has been charmingly carried out by Mr. William Amory Gardner, master at Grotton School, in his little volume of travel, "In Greece with the Classics" (Little, Brown & Co.). He describes what he has seen in Greece and translates from ancient literature passages in prose and verse recalled by the scenes visited. This serves at once to fill places of the visible world with the beauty of literature and to make

did not know what to do with his legs. He gaped, his eye was lack-lustered, and he said nothing. It is almost impossible to believe he wrote the works which pass under his name (his wife says he did not write them). He had a great nose like Fitzball or Bardolph, but not so red as the latter's. He has cut off his beard, and the hairs are scanty and scrubby down his lank Don Quixote jaws. I expected a fine gentleman—perhaps a fop like his own Devereux or like Bollingbroke, and I saw a crapulous fossil. He took Mrs. Round down to dinner, but never spoke a word to her, remaining silent or mumbling to himself. I think Cockburn was ashamed of him, and although he asked him especially to meet me he did not venture to solicit my opinion of him. But I told it to him. And he was ashamed of his guest.

A good many of the stories that are told about Disraeli inspire doubt as to their authenticity, but the stamp of truth is upon this one, written down by Dr. Kenealy in 1873:

Brady, M. P. for somewhere, asked Bright to introduce him to Disraeli. Bright did so. Brady said, "Mr. Disraeli, I feel very happy to make your acquaintance. I hear you have written some clever novels. I never read any of them myself, but my daughter has, and she thinks them so fine!" Disraeli drew himself up, and in tones of Mephistopheles replied, "This is praise!" and left Brady very solemnly. Bright ran chuckling about telling every one. Brady returned to his place happy and satisfied that he had done the right thing. So all were content.

Some five hundred years before Christ the last female ruler in the line of the Pharaohs reigned at Thebes. She had many predecessors during thirty-five centuries and some of these ladies are commemorated in a book on "The Queens of Egypt" which Miss Janet R. Buttles has written. The purpose of this history is to give some idea of the social position and power of woman from 4000 B. C. to the disappearance of the Queen of Thebes just mentioned.

Students of the literature of archaeology will await with the keenest interest Mr. R. M. Dawkins's account of the great discovery made by the British School at Athens under his direction during the course of excavations at Sparta. The spades brought to light in the precincts of the shrine of Artemis Orthia a temple presumably dating from the eighth century before Christ.

A subject with which few Western readers are familiar is treated in the book which Mr. E. B. Havell, principal of the Government School of Art at Calcutta, is shortly to publish. He deals with "Indian Sculpture and Painting," discussing them not from the archaeological but from the artistic standpoint. He traces the evolution of the Indian ideal and explains the fundamental differences between it and the standards of Greece and Rome. Modern Indian painting is included in the author's survey, which is illustrated with reproductions printed in colors.

In a book entitled "The Law of Checks, Notes and Blanks" (Victor Van Nostrand), Mr. Thomas C. Simonton has presented, in clear and concise style, free from legal terminology, the law relating to commercial paper and banking generally. He has put into practicable form, for use by men who are not lawyers, as well as men who are, the substance of the statutes and of the decisions of the courts pertaining to negotiable instruments. To this he has prefixed a short discussion of the business of banks and the functions of their officers and directors. His obvious purpose has been to produce a book for the instruction of business men in general, and particularly for the guidance of officers and directors of banks. The latter will find the author's treatment of the question of their liability of special value. The book is carefully indexed and should prove very useful.

The ideals of Christian Science are traversed by Dr. Gerhardt C. Mars in a stout volume which D. Appleton & Co. publish, "The Interpretation of Life." The aim of the author is to "review the whole problem objectively, on the basis of pure reason, and to prevent the results in the ordinary terms of philosophical exposition."

Mr. J. B. Atlay, in the second and last volume of his interesting work on "The Victorian Chancellors," has many amusing anecdotes of eleven famous holders of the Great Seal. One of his most picturesque heroes is Sir Richard Bethell, afterward Lord Westbury, who, with a suave voice and a stately manner, nevertheless had a way of bearing down the foe with almost savage wit. Once, in court, he had to follow a barrister who had delivered his remarks in very loud tones. "Now that the noise in court has subsided," murmured Bethell, "I will tell you honor in two sentences the gist of the case." Mr. Atlay has the following delightful story of this brilliant and dogmatic jurist:

Sir Alexander Cockburn was fond of telling how on one occasion a keeper received a liberal peppering, and a lively, not to say acrimonious, dispute arose between Bethell and his son. "How often, Slingsby," said Sir Richard, "have I remonstrated with you for handling firearms carelessly. You have now apparently shot one of the keepers, whom I can hear vociferating in the bushes." Prompted by curiosity, Cockburn managed to inquire of the injured man which of the two had shot him. "Dang 'em, they both did," was the answer. A year or two afterward Sir Richard, in conversation with the Chief Justice, fixed the date of a certain discussion by the visit "when you shot my keeper, dear Cockburn."

Two books relating to Ireland are soon to be expected. Mr. Arthur Na Clerigh has completed the first volume of an elaborate "History of Ireland." Mr. Sheehy Skeffington has prepared a monograph on Michael Davitt.

AT NIGHTFALL.

(Words for a cadence of Chopin.)
R. C. K. Enser, in The London Nation.
While he rides the spectral avenue,
Night's black cauldron spills its raven hues.
Stars forsake him; shadows cover him;
Deadly trees drip poison over him.
In the fields his steed went cantering;
Through the thorns it stumbles cantering.
In the sun his horn rang merrily;
Weary now, he winds it wearily.
Ghosts of men, that once were friends to him,
Whisper through the gloom like fiends to him.
Eyes of heroes bleach and blacken there,
Whom the dusk has overtaken there.
Sure he knows the night must come on him,
That shall bring the same dark doom on him.
He, too, drop, where others dropped before;
Though he hope not all they hoped before.
Still he smiles serenely, candidly,
Facing night and doom undauntedly.
Still, though every hope be stunted him,
Rides toward the place appointed him.



THE BIRTH OF SITA.
(From the design by J. Lockwood Kipling.)

comfortable reading. But "Lion Among Kings," "Tigers of Men" and "Bull Among Penitents" are forms of address which can be read, with a little practice, so as to heighten the effect.

TELLING THE BEES.

Some Curious Instances of Rustic Superstition. From Notes and Queries.

What follows seems to be new, and was given to me recently in Wiltshire, where the bees are still told if a death occurs in a family.

First—Bees foretell, by their behavior, weather changes sooner than these can be discerned by their owners.

Second—They foretell death when a swarm alights on dead wood.

Third—Or good luck, by alighting on living wood.

Fourth—They awake at midnight on Christmas Eve and hum loudly in their hives to salute the newborn King.

In his "Ethnology in Folk Lore" Mr. G. L. Gomme gives a charming explanation of the fundamental idea underlying the message to the bees:

The bees supplied the sacred mead, and were therefore in direct contact with the gods. . . . The message to the bees is best explained as being given to these winged messengers so that they may carry the news to spirit land of the speedy arrival of a newcomer.

The myths connected with bees alighting on dead or living wood may perhaps find a parallel in Polynesia, where "the dead assemble on a huge tree with dead and living branches, and only those who tread on the living branches come back to life."

In both cases the dead or living wood has a significance connected with life and death, and the bees, in choosing either one or the other, illustrate the idea mentioned by Virgil that they have some divinely imparted knowledge or capacity for it.

Mrs. Mabel Osgood Wright's new book, which has been announced under the title of "The Marks and the Major," is to be called instead "The Open Window." It will be published at once by the Macmillan Company.

the words of the past more vivid. The book commends itself both to the traveller and to the reader at home.

Every now and then some one pays Mr. Kipling the compliment of tracing an idea in one of his poems to a more or less classic predecessor. A correspondent of "Notes and Queries" has discovered that "Tommy," in the "Barrack-Room Ballads," is but an echo of certain sentiments expressed in Otway's "The Soldier's Fortune." Every one remembers the passage—
For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Chuck him out, the brute!"
But it's "Saviour of 'is country" when the guns begin to shoot.

In the old play Courtine says, "These greasy, fat, unwieldy, wheezing rogues that live at home, and brood over the bags, when a fit of fear's upon them, then if one of us pass but by, all the family is ready at the door to cry, 'Heavens bless you, Sir! the Laird go along with you!' On the other hand, "when the business is over," according to this exasperated personage, then one who "goes but to a conventicle twice a week and pays but scot and lot to the parish, shall roar out, 'Faugh, ye lousy, red-coat, rake-hells! hout ye caterpillars, ye locusts of the nation! you are the dogs that would enslave us all,' with more choice abuse."

A new translation into English verse of the first part of Goethe's "Faust" is soon to be given to the world. The author is Sir George Buchanan, an English diplomat who has lived much in Germany. "While endeavoring," he says, "to adhere as closely as possible to the original, my aim has been to reproduce in spirit rather than to translate word for word."

The late Dr. Edward Vaughan Kenealy, who appeared as counsel for the Tichborne Claimant, was well acquainted with many of the celebrities of his time. In the "Memoirs" which his daughter has just published there are some piquant passages. Here is what he had to say in his diary about Lord Lytton:

Dined to-night with the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Houghton, Bulwer Lytton and other senators and ladies. Bulwer Lytton is a clown. He was shabbily dressed, and siddled into the room with slouching air and gait. He held his hat in his hand as though about to drop it, and looked as though he