SOME NEW BOOKS.

Persian Literature.

For a popular account of Persian literature, ancient and modern, we are indebted to ELIZABETH A. REED, who recently performed for Hindu literature a corresponding service. The species of handbook which she has published through Messrs. S. C. Griggs & Co. (Chicago) begins with an outline of the poetry and mythology of the cuneiform tablets; then, with the help of Prof. Darmesteter, reviews the teachings of the Zend Avesta, and finally discusses the masterworks of Persian poetry in mediæval and modern times, which, for convenience, are distributed in seven periods. Only the first five of these periods deserve or receive extended notice. These are best identified by their most distinguished names, to wit, Firdusi, Nizami, Sadi, Hafiz, and Jami. About half of the volume is allotted to the writers of these relatively modern periods, and many specimens of Persian poetry and romance are presented in English translations.

I.

A word about the Zend Avesta, the facts and conjectures relating to which are collected in a chapter of this book. According to the Parsis, Avesta means the sacred text associated with the name of Zoroaster, and Zend its Pahlavi translation. But, by European scholars, the word Zend is used to designate the language in which the greater part of the Avesta is written. As regards antiquity, the Zend language ranks next to the Sanskrit, and there is an agreement of competent opinion that the two languages continued to live side by side long after they were separated from the common stock of the Hindu-European tongues. The Zend Avesta, or sacred books of the Parsis, is a collection of various fragments handed down in the Zend language. The first part of the Avesta proper contains three books, the Vendidad, the Visperad, and the Yasna. The Vendidad is a compilation of religious law and mythological tales; the Visperad is a collection of litanies for the sacrifice; while the Yasna, though composed partly of litanies, also contains five hymns or gathas, written in a different dialect, older than the language of the greater part of the Avesta. These three books are found in manuscripts in two different forms. Sometimes one of them is found alone, or accompanied by a Pahlavi translation, Pahlavi bearing the same relation to Zend which the daughter tongues of Sanskrit do to their parent. Sometimes the three books are mingled together according to the requirements of the liturgy. The second portion of the Avesta generally known as the Khorda Avesta is composed of short prayers recited not only by the priests, but by all the faithful at certain moments of the day, month, or year, and in the presence of the different elements.

The classic authors agree with the Parsis in averring that the books of the Zend Avesta were originally much more capacious than at present, the sacred literature of the Zoroastrians having suffered heavy losses in consequence of the ravages of the Persian empire by Greeks and Arabians. According to the Behistun inscription, Darius Hystaspes was the first to collect the Zoroastrian writings and give them definite form in the Avesta, but his collection perished, and it was not until eight centuries later—the author is mistaken in saying five centuries—that a second attempt was made by the Sassanian king, Shapur II, to gather the sacred books together, either from scattered manuscripts or from oral traditions. Yet, although there are no facts to prove that the text of the Avesta, as we now possess it, was committed to writing before the Sassanian dynasty, Prof. Darmesteter thinks it possible that "Herodotus may have heard the Magi sing in the fifth century before Christ the very same gathas which are sung nowadays by the Mobeds of Bombay." What has come down to us represents the ruins of a religion, as the Parsis are the ruins of a people. There is no doubt that the composition of the extant books of the Zend Avesta extended over a period of several centuries, and it is therefore impossible to attribute them to any single author. It is for this reason that some Orientalists have been led to question whether such a man as Zoroaster ever lived. Even among those who admit that he was a historical personage, the field of his labors and the time to which he belonged are subjects of vigorous controversy.

As regards the interest attaching to the Zend Avesta, the author rightly says that this depends not only on the place of the documents among the earliest records of the human race, but upon the reflection that if Persia had won the battles of Marathon and Salamis, and thus effected the conquest of Greece, the worship of Ormuzd might have become the religion of the whole civilized world. As it is, the worship has only a few votaries upon the soil of Persia, and survives chiefly among the Parsis of western India, whose number is computed at about a hundred thousand. Regarding the popular name, fire worshippers, the Parsis protest against it, as implying that they are mere idolaters. They admit that, in their youth, they are taught to face some luminous object while worshipping God, but they claim that they look upon fire as merely an emblem of divine power. They undoubtedly exhibit, however, a strong national feeling in regard to both light and fire. They are the only Eastern people who abstain entirely from smoking, and they will not even blow out a candle unless compelled to do so.

The modern Parsis believe in monotheism, and use a table as well as knives and forks at their meals. Their prayers are recited in the old Zend language, although neither he who repeats nor they who listen can understand a word that is said. Among the whole body of priests there are perhaps not more than twenty who can pretend to any knowledge of the Zend Avesta, and even these have only learned the meaning of the words, without knowing the language, either philosophically or grammatically. It is also true that the modern Parsis, as distinguished from the ancient Persians, are monogamists. Like the Jews, they do not eat anything which is prepared by a cook belonging to another creed. They also object to beef and pork. Their priesthood is hereditary; none but the son of a priest can take orders. One may note finally that, although the Parsis are greatly attached to their religion on account of its former glory, they have, in many essential points, approached more or less unconsciously the doctrines of Christianity, and, if they could but read the Zend Avesta, they would find that their faith is no longer the faith of the Vendidad.

II.

The whole of modern Persian poetry belongs, of course, to the Mohammedan epoch and is the work of Moslem poets. Nevertheless, the Shah Namah, the great historical and legendary epic by Firdusi, is based in a large measure, on materials collected during the reigns of the Sassanian kings. The manuscript containing the annals was carried away with othe spoils after the great victory of the Mohammedan invaders in A. D. 636. Brought to the Caliph Omar, it was sent by him to the King of Abyssinia, who had several copies made and distributed in different portions of the East. In this way, the work was preserved, and, in the course of years, reached Khorassan, where, in the ninth century, a Persian king of the Ashkanian dynasty caused it to be revised, supplemented, and translated into modern Persian. This became, as we have said, the basis of the Shah Namah, many extracts from which are given in this book, but of which the English reader perhaps can get a better idea from Matthew Arnold's epic fragment of Sohrab and of Rustum.

While Firdusi, the author of the great national epic, who flourished in the ninth century, stands at the head of Persian poetry, Nisami, of the twelfth century, the most conspicuous writer of the second period, was the author of the most pathetic love song in the Persian tongue. His most popular work is a version of the Arabian tragedy of Liali and Majnun, a condensed prose translation of which is presented in this volume. This is one of the five works of Nizami which have been preserved. Of the 20,000 verses originally contained in his Diwan, a collection of amatory lyrics, only a few have come down to our own time.

Sadi, the greatest favorite of the Persian people, was born in the latter part of the twelfth century, while his country was under Turkish rule. It is an interesting incident of his life that he was once captured by the Crusaders and forced to work with Jewish captives upon the fortifications of Tripoli. Sadi, who represents the third period of Persian poetry, lived more than a hundred years, and closed his long life at Shiraz, where it began. He was an accomplished linguist, writing as freely in Arabic as in Persian; he is also said to have been the first to compose verse in the Hindustani dialect. His most capacious work is the Diwan, a collection of lyrics, but the most popular of his writings among European scholars are the Bustan, or Fruit Garden, and the Gulistan, or Rose Garden. The former consists of ten chapters of didactic verse teaching lessons of morality in the form of poetic fables. The Gulistan comprises a number of short stories, each of which is intended to illustrate some cardinal principle. Many of the rules of conduct inculcated seem to have been founded on the proverbs of Solomon. Extracts from both the Gulistan and Bustan are given in the book before us.

The fourth period of Moslem Persian literature, which began at the close of the thirteenth century and continued until the beginning of the fifteenth, represents the highest development of lyric poetry and rhetoric. During this epoch, Persia had many men of culture and talent, but the foremost of these was Hafiz. He was a contemporary of Timur, and was, on one occasion, severely rebuked by the Mongol conqueror for a verse in which he assured his sweetheart that "For the black mole on thy cheek I would give the cities of Samarcand and Bokhara." Timur is reported to have said sternly: "Behold I have taken and destroyed with the edge of the sword the greatest kingdoms of the earth to add splendor and population to the twin royal cities of my native land, Samarcand and Bokhara; yet you would dispose of them both at once for the black mole on the cheek of your beloved." Instead of being daunted by the reproof, Hafiz replied: "It is true, sire, and it is by such acts of generosity that I am reduced, as you see, to my present state of poverty." Timur smiled, and bestowed upon him some magnificent marks of favor.

It is well known that, in his youth, Hafiz sang freely of love and wine, and that his verses dealing with these themes were often fraught with censurable coarseness. As he grew older, however, he became a votary of the Sufi philosophy, and his later poetry contained so many figurative allusions that the Mohammedans called his productions "the language of mystery." Whether, owing to the licentiousness of his youth and early manhood, or to the heresies of his later years, the Moslem clergy at first refused to read the burial service over his body, but his friends obviated the difficulty by strategy, and Hafiz eventually received honorable interment.

The most distinguished figure in the fifth period, and, in the opinion of many scholars, the most illustrious in Persian literature, was Jami, a native of Jam, a small town near Herat. He was the last great poet and mystic of Persia, and he was held to combine the moral tone of Sadi with the ease of Hafiz and the pathos of Nizami. A most prolific author, he is said to have produced ninety-nine different works, which continue to be admired in all parts of Iran and Hindustan.

The sixth and seventh periods are dismissed as containing no poets worthy of notice, and all we hear of Omar Khayyam, who belongs to the first period, is that "his beautiful quatrains are a great improvement upon the rubai of Abu Said, who was his predecessor in this peculiar style of verse, and his rhapsodies upon love and wine prefigure those of Hafiz." The author of this book does not seem to be acquainted with Fitzgerald's remarkable translation or paraphrase of the quatrains of Omar Khayyam; at all events there is no reference to this *tour de force* in the book before us.

A Jewish View of Christianity.

We have had several histories of the Jewish people written from a Christian point of view, but what English readers have long needed is a scholarly, dispassionate, and philosophical study of the subject by one who is himself an Israelite. This want the Jewish Publication Society of America have undertaken to meet in the *History of the Jews* by Prof. H. GRAETZ. We have already had occasion to notice the first volume of this work; the second, which is now before us, covers the period from John Hyrcanus (135 B. C.) to the completion of the Babylonian Talmud, about 500 A. D. To his coreligionists the author's account of the destruction of the Judean State by Titus, of the final revolt of the Jews against Trajan and his successors, of the Jewish communities in the Parthian and Neo-Persian empires and the development of Talmudical dialectics in Babylonia, may seem particularly important, but Christian readers will be most interested in his description of the schools of Hillel and Shammai, which, between them, monopolized the attention of intellectual Jews in the first quarter of the first century, and the chapters dealing respectively with Messianic expectations and the origin of Christianity, with the spread of the Judean race and with the inner life of Judaism. The author is a scholar and a philosopher, quick to see and ready to acknowledge the excellencies of Christianity, yet never does he waver in allegiance to the Jewish faith.

I.

In order to understand the refusal of contemporary educated and high-minded Jews to accept the teachings of Jesus, it is indispensable to recall what had previously been done for the expansion and elevation of the Jewish intellect by the schools of Hillel and Shammai, and especially by the former. It was about the date of the battle of Actium (31 B. C.) that Herod I., finding himself compelled to make some change in the Synhedrion or Supreme Council of Judea, appointed as one of the Presidents the Babylonian Hillel, a man until then unknown. The appointment gave a direction to the spirit of Judaism which has affected that faith down to the present day. Hillel, born about the year 75 B. C., traced back his descent on his mother's side to the House of David. He was particularly distinguished for a winning, dove-like gentleness, an intense love of humanity, which arose from his own humility and from his deep faith in others, and, lastly, for a perfect equanimity, proceeding from his profound trust in God, that never wavered in the midst of trouble. In later ages he was revered as the ideal of modesty and gentleness. Once when he was asked to express the essence of Judaism in one sentence he uttered this maxim: "Do not unto others what thou wouldst not have done unto thyself. This is the principal commandment; all others are the development of that." When dissension and strife arose Hillel was invariably a peacemaker. His beneficence knew no bounds, and he had the rare delicacy of feeling which never humiliates the recipient of a gift, but rather helps him to retain his self-respect. His faith in God raised him triumphantly above every fear. Through his example all the members of his household were imbued with the same faith; so much so that once upon entering the town and hearing a cry of distress, he was able confidently to remark "That cry cannot have proceeded from my house." We are told that Hillel bequeathed a greater number of maxims to his coreligionists than any of his predecessors. Among them occur the following: "If I were not to care for my soul, who would do so for me? If I care for myself alone, what can I effect? If not now, when, then?" "Be of the disciples of Aaron. Love peace. Seek peace. Love mankind, thus lead them to the law." Impressed with the mission of Israel to maintain and teach the pure belief in one God, he exclaimed at one of the festivals at the Temple: "If I (Israel) am here, then is everything here; if I should be wanting, who would be here?" So profoundly revered by him were the doctrines of Judeaism that his indignation was aroused whenever they were used as stepping stones to the schemes of the ambitious. "He who wishes to raise his name, lowers it. He who does not seek the law, does not deserve to live. He who does not progress in learning, retrogrades. He who uses the crown of the law for his own ends, perishes." In after years, Hillel became the ideal of his co-religionists. The impetus given by him to the development of doctrinal Judaism marks an epoch in the history of that faith. He greatly enriched the mass of traditional law that he had imbibed from the Synhedrists. Most important was his logical derivation of the statutes of the law observed in his time. He traced them back to their first principles, and raised them out of the narrow circle of tradition and mere custom to the height of reason. The tradition of the law, according to Hillel, carries within itself its justification and binding power; it does not depend on authority alone. Thus, to a certain extent, he paved the way to a reconciliation between Pharisees and Sadducees by placing before them the principles common to both, from which neither of them could withhold assent. On the one hand, Hillel agreed with the Sadducean principle that a law can be valid only if founded upon scriptural authority; but, on the other hand, he declared that this authority did not merely lie in the dead letter, but was also to be derived from the general spirit of the scriptural writing. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." One of the statutes which Hillel introduced was of widespread interest, and bore witness to his insight into the affairs of life. In the Sabbatical year all debts were by law cancelled. At the time when the State was a republic, based upon moral laws, this was a wise measure for equalizing property; but, at a later period, when capital became a power in itself, the rich were not willing to relieve their less wealthy neighbors from their difficulties by making loans which the debtors might be exempted from paying. On this account, Hillel, without entirely abrogating the existing law, moved that the creditor should give over the debt in writing to the Court, so that the Court might collect it, and the creditor be relieved from the necessity of violating the law.

In Hillel's time the second place of honor in the Synhedrion was held by Shammai, whose characteristics, while ostensibly opposed, in reality supplemented those of his Babylonian colleagues. Shammai himself seems to have been a native of Palestine, and was deeply interested in the political and religious controversies of his country. His religious views were strict to an extreme, yet he was not of a gloomy or misanthropical disposition; on the contrary, he encouraged friendliness in demeanor toward every one. This is indicated by his maxim: "Let your work in the law be your principal occupation; speak little but do much, and receive all men with a friendly countenance." The two Synhedrists, Hillel and Shammai, founded two separate schools, differing from each other as to many religious, moral, and legal questions, and exerting a powerful although divergent influence during the subsequent unsettled times upon events of historical importance.

Hillel and Shammai did not live to see the catastrophe which (A. D. 6) made Judea a province of Rome. The former's death caused widespread mourning, and we are told that the oration at his grave began with the sad cry: "Oh pious, oh gentle, oh worthy follower of Ezra." The people from their great affection for him continued to distinguish his descendants with their favor, and the presidency of the Sanhedrim became hereditary in his family for more than four centuries. All the lustre which illumined his name was bequeathed to the school which he formed, and which inherited and faithfully preserved the spirit of its founder. In all their public dealings the disciples of this school evinced the peacefulness and gentleness, the conciliatory temper which had distinguished their master. They were guided and supported by these qualities during the political storms which long convulsed their country. In the same way as the school of Hillel strove to transmit the characteristic gentleness of their teacher, the followers of Shammai emulated and even exceeded the stern severity of the founder of their school. It seemed impossible to the school of Shammai to be sufficiently stringent in religious prohibitions; the decisions, which they arrived at in their interpretations of the law were generally so burdensome that those which were milder in character were treasured up as rare exceptions. Thus, according to their teachings, no work should be attempted which, if begun before the Sabbath, would, even without the aid of a Judean, need to be completed on the Sabbath. It was by them prohibited on the Sabbath day to give sums of money for charitable purposes, to make arrangements for marriage contracts, to instruct children, to visit the sick, or even to bring comfort to the sorrowing. In their regulations concerning the purity of the Levite, in their person and apparel, their exaggerations brought them very near the excesses of the Essenes. They were equally severe concerning matrimonial law, and only allowed divorce to be granted in the case of the unchastity of the wife. In a word, in the school of Shammai, the pharisaic principles were carried to the very extreme. It was only due to the yielding disposition of the followers of Hillel that peace was not disturbed and that a friendly relationship existed between two schools of such apparently opposite views. The school of Shammai were not only rigorous in their explanations of the law, but entertained stern opinions on nearly all subjects. They were particularly harsh and repellant toward proselytes to Judaism. Any heathen who came to the school of Shammai requesting to be received into the community might expect but a very cold and repellant reception. The school of Shammai cared not to make proselytes. How dangerous to Judaism lukewarm proselytes might be, they had too often seen in the case of the converted Herodians. In spite, however, of their own rigid obedience to the law, they did not exact the same obedience from the Judean troops who were fighting against a national enemy. Originally there had been some hesitation about making war on the Sabbath. But the school of Shammai were unreservedly in favor of it. The siege of a hostile city begun before the Sabbath was not to be raised in spite of the transgressing of the Sabbath laws until the fortress surrendered. These ordinances were instituted by Shammai himself, in whom hatred of the heathen was a passion even more intense than his religious devotion. The school of Shammai had a large number of adherents in the Sanhedrim as well as among the people. Their religious austerity and their hatred of the heathen found more sympathizers than the moderation and peacefulness of the followers of Hillel. They consequently formed a majority and were able to carry all their resolutions.

II.

Such were the schools of thought and conduct which dominated the Jewish mind at the time when Jesus began teaching. The author recognizes that the time had come when the fundamental truths of Judaism, till then thoroughly known and rightly appreciated only by profound thinkers, were to burst their shells and go forth freely among all the people of the earth. The sublime and lofty views of God as to holy living for the individual, as well as for the State, which formed the kernel of Judaism, were now to be disseminated among other nations. The ancient teaching about God and religious morality was to be introduced by Israel into a godless and immoral world. Judaism, however, could only gain admission into the hearts of the heathen by taking another name and assuming a new form, for with its old designation and distinctive features it was not generally popular. But the new form of Judaism, modified by the introduction of foreign elements, became estranged, and eventually placed itself in harsh antagonism to its progenitor. Judaism that had given birth to this new manifestation could take no pleasure in her off-spring, which soon turned coldly from her and struck out into strange, divergent paths.

Prof. Graetz would define Christianity as Essenism intermingled with foreign constituents, and, in common with Renan, he attributes its origin to an overpowering, mysterious feeling which prevailed among the Judean people, and became stronger as their political position grew more and more intolerable. The ever-recurring evils brought upon them by the rapacity of their Roman rulers, the shamelessness of the Herodian princes, the cowardice and servility of the Judean aristocracy, the debasement of the high priests and their families, and the dissensions of rival parties had aroused a longing for the deliverer announced in the prophetic writings—the Messiah—to so great a pitch that any highly gifted individual possessed of outward charm or imbued with moral and religious grace would readily have found disciples and believers in his Messianic mission. The most earnest thinkers of the time had long regarded the political position of the Judeans since their return from the Babylonian exile as a temporary or preparatory state which would only continue until the true prophet arose and Elijah turned the hearts of the fathers to the children and restored the tribes of Jacob. It is pointed out as significant of the pervasiveness of this conviction, that when the people elected the Hasmonæan Simon as their prince, they decreed that he and his descendants should hold that position only until the true prophet appeared to assume the royal dignity, and it was only to a scion of the House of David that, according to prophecy, the dignity belonged.

This ardent longing for the Messiah, and the belief in his advent, swayed all classes of the Judean nation, excepting the aristocracy and those who clung to Rome. These were satisfied with the present, and anticipated harm rather than benefit from any change. During the short space of thirty years a great number of enthusiastic mystics appeared, who, without any intention to deceive, and bent upon removing the load of care and sorrow that weighed so heavily upon the people, assumed the character of prophet or Messiah, and found disciples who followed their banner faithfully unto death. But though it appears that every Messiah attracted ready believers, no one was acknowledged as such by the whole nation. The incessant friction between the various communities and the deep study of the holy books had awakened a critical spirit difficult to satisfy. The nation, moreover, was split into many parties, each entertaining a different idea of the future saviour, and rendering it, therefore, impossible that any one aspirant should receive general recognition as the Messiah. The republican zealots pictured him as delivering Israel from his enemies, destroying the Roman empire, and restoring the golden era of David's kingdom. The School of Shammai added to this representation of the Messiah the attributes of ardent religious zeal and perfect moral purity. The followers of Hillel, less influenced by fanaticism or political views, expected a prince of peace who would bring tranquillity into the country itself and introduce harmony in its relations with all its neighboring States. On one point, however, all were agreed; the Messiah must spring from the branch of David, and thus, in the course of time, the expression "Ben David," the son of David, became identical with the Messiah.

It was the sect of the Essenes that pictured the Messiah and the Messianic time in the most idealistic manner. The great object of their asceticism was to hasten the kingdom of heaven and the coming era. Their adherence would be granted only to him who led a pure and a spotless life, who renounced the world and its vanities, and gave proofs that the Holy Spirit dwelt within him. He must also have power over demons, and inaugurate a system of community of goods, in which poverty and self-renunciation would be the fundamental principles of society. It was from those Essenes that for the first time the cry went forth, "The Messiah is coming! The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" The summons of this forerunner was not addressed to the nations of the earth, but was simply intended to invite the sinners among the Judean people to penitence and reformation. The Essene who set forth this call to the Israelites alone was John the Baptist; our author holds that his name signifies the Essene, that is to say, he who daily bathed and cleaned both body and soul in spring water. It is certain that he led the same life as the Essenes, fed upon locusts and wild honey, and wore the garb of the prophets of old, a cloak of camel's hair fastened by a leather girdle. John seems to have firmly entertained the belief that, if only the whole Judean nation would bathe in the river Jordan, acknowledge their sins, and adopt the strict rules of the Essenes, the promised Messianic time would be no longer deferred. He dwelt with other Essenes in the desert in the vicinity of the Red Sea, presumably in order to be ever at hand to teach the repentant sinners the moral signification of baptism. Bound up with that rite was doubtless the adoption of the Essenian rule of life. There were unquestionably many, imbued with an enthusiastic spirit and saddened by the evils and distress they witnessed, who eagerly responded to the cry of the Essene Baptist. Did the baptized persons return morally improved by their immersion? History does not reply; but Prof. Graetz considers that our knowledge of the state of Judea at the time can easily supply us with an answer to the question. The Judean people did not as a whole, especially among the middle-class citizens, require this violent shock as a means of improvement; they were neither vicious nor depraved, and their form of public religious worship sufficed to keep them in the right paths. It is conceded, however, that by two sections of the people the call of John to repentance might have been needed; that it might have had a beneficial influence upon the higher and the lower classes, upon the aristocracy and the rich, who had been corrupted by Rome, and upon the miserable peasantry, brutalized by constant warfare. But the rich only laughed at the high-souled enthusiast who taught that baptism in the water of the Jordan would bring about the miraculous Messianic era, and the sons of the soil were too obtuse and ignorant to heed the Baptist's earnest cry. His appeal, on the other hand, had nothing in its tenor to offend the Pharisees or arouse any opposition among the ranks of their party, which at the time was predominant. Those of John's disciples who were bound most closely to him, and who carried out his plan of living, kept strictly to the words of the law, and observed all its prescribed fasts. If the Pharisees comprising the schools of Hillel and of Shammai did not greatly favor the enthusiasm and extravagance of the Essenes, they placed themselves in no direct antagonism to the Baptist.

III.

We come now to the author's outline of the story of Jesus, which is peculiarly interesting because drawn from the viewpoint of a philosophic Jew. Prof. Graetz begins by saying that after the imprisonment of John the Baptist by Herod Antipas, his work was carried on by some of his disciples, among whom no one exerted so powerful an influence as Jesus of Galilee. Jesus, which, of course, is short for Joshua, was born in Nazareth, a small town in Lower Galilee, being the eldest son of an otherwise unknown carpenter, Joseph, and of his wife, Miriam, or Mary, who bore him four other sons and several daughters. Whether Joseph or Mary, the father and mother of Jesus, belonged to the family of David cannot, in our author's opinion, be proved. The measure of their son's mental culture can only be surmised from the grade of that existing in his native province, Galilee being at a distance from the capital and the Temple, was far behind Judea in mental attainments and knowledge of the law. The country which, at a later period, after the destruction of the Temple, contained the great schools of Uscha, Sepphoris, and Tiberias, was at that time very poor in seats of learning. On the other hand, morality was stricter in Galilee, and the observance of laws and customs more rigidly enforced. The Galileans were looked upon as fanatical dogmatists.

On account of his Galilean origin, Jesus, in the opinion of our author, could not have stood high in that knowledge of the law which, through the schools of Shammai and Hillel, had become prevalent in Judea. His small stock of learning and his corrupt, half Aramaic language pointed unmistakably to his birthplace in Galilee. The Galileans could not pronounce Hebrew with purity. They exchanged and sometimes omitted the guttural sounds, and thus often incurred the ridicule of the Judeans, who made much of correct articulation. The first word he spoke would reveal the Galilean, and, as his language provoked laughter, he would not often be allowed to lead in the recital of prayers. Prof. Graetz concedes, however, that, whatever may have been the deficiency of Jesus in knowledge, was fully compensated by his intensely sympathetic character. High-minded earnestness and spotless moral purity were undeniably his attributes; they stand out in all the authentic accounts of his life that have reached us, and appear even in the garbled teachings which His followers placed in his mouth. The gentle disposition and the humility of Jesus remind our author of Hillel, whom he may, it is suggested, have taken as his model, and whose golden rule, "What you wish not to be done to yourself, do not unto others," he adopted as the starting point of his moral code. Like Hillel, Jesus looked upon the promotion of peace and the forgiveness of injuries as the highest exhibitions of virtue. His whole being was permeated by the deeper religiousness which consecrates to God not only the hour of prayer, a day of penitence, and longer or shorter periods of devotional exercise, but every step in the journey of life; which turns every aspiration of the soul toward Him, subjects everything to His will, and, with childlike trust, commits everything to His keeping. He was filled with tender brotherly love, which Judaism also teaches toward an enemy, and embodied the ideal of the passive virtues which the Pharisees inculcated: "Count yourself among the oppressed and not among the oppressors; receive abuse and return it not; do all from love to God, and rejoice in suffering."

Prof. Graetz believes that Jesus, from the idiosyncrasies of His nature, must have been powerfully attracted by the Essenes, who led a contemplative life, apart from the world and its vanities. It is certain that when John the Baptist, or, as our author would call him, the Essene, invited all to come and receive baptism in the Jordan, Jesus hastened to obey the call. Although it cannot be proved that Jesus was formally admitted into the order of the Essenes, much in his life and work can only be explained on the supposition that he had adopted their fundamental principles. Like the Essenes, Jesus highly esteemed self-inflicted poverty and despised riches. It is suggested that the following proverbs ascribed to Him seem to bear the Essenian stamp: "Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven." "It is easier for a camel to go through the needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." "No man can serve two masters; ye cannot serve God and Mammon." It is also to be noted that Jesus shared the aversion of the Essenes to marriage: "It is not good," he said, "to marry." Community of goods, a doctrine peculiar to the Essenes, was not only approved of, but positively enjoined by Jesus. Like them, too, He reprobated every form of oath. "Swear not at all," he taught, "neither by heaven nor by the earth, nor by your head, but let your yea be yea, and your nay be nay." Miraculous cures said to have been performed by Him, such as the exorcism of demons from those who believed themselves to be possessed, were often made by the Essenes in, so to speak, a professional capacity.

It is the opinion of our Jewish historian that, after John had been imprisoned, Jesus at first thought simply of continuing his master's work. Like Him, he preached: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," without, perhaps, having then a suspicion of the part he was afterward to play in that kingdom of heaven looked forward to in that approaching Messianic time. Apparently, Jesus felt that, if his appeal was not to be lost in the desert like that of the Baptist, but, on the contrary, bring forth lasting results, it must be addressed not to the whole nation, parts of whom felt no need of regeneration, but to a particular class of the Judeans. Prof. Graetz repeats that the middle classes, the inhabitants of towns of greater or less importance, were not wanting in piety and morality, and consequently a call to them to repent and forsake their sins would be unheeded. Probably the greater number of the middle-class Judeans of the time would have repeated in good faith the declaration made to Jesus by the young man who was seeking the way of eternal life: "From my youth upward I have kept the laws of God; I have not committed murder nor adultery, nor have I stolen nor borne false witness; I have honored my father and mother, and loved my neighbor like myself." The disciples of Hillel and Shammai and the followers of the zealot Judas, the bitter foes of the Herodians and of Rome, were not morally sick, and were not in need of the physician's art. They were always ready for self-sacrifice, and, therefore, in our author's opinion, it was with wisdom that Jesus refrained from appealing to them. Still less was he inclined to attempt to reform the rich, and he was repelled by the higher or aristocratic classes of the Judeans. From these, the warning of the simple, unlearned moralist and preacher, his reproof of their pride, venality, and inconstancy, would only have elicited mockery and derision. With ripe judgment, then, Jesus determined upon seeking out those who did not belong to or had been expelled from the Judean community for their religious offences. Such were the publicans and tax gatherers, shunned by the patriots as promoters of Roman interests, who turned their backs upon the law and led a wild, unshackled life, heedless alike of the past and of the future. There existed in Judea many who had no knowledge of the great truths of Judaism, who were ignorant of its laws and indifferent at once to its history and its prophesied development. These were known as transgressors of the law (Abrianim), or sinners, as they were called, the friends of Herod and of Rome. There were also not a few ignorant handicraftsmen and menials (Am-ha-Arez), who were seldom able to visit the Judean capital or listen to Hebrew teachings, which, indeed, they would probably not have understood. To such as them the teachers of the law, more intent upon expounding doctrine than upon reforming lives, failed to make the law and the prophets intelligible. It was to these outcasts that Jesus turned, to snatch them out of their torpor, their ignorance, and their ungodliness. He felt within himself the call to save "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." "They that be whole," he said, "need not a physician, but they that are sick."

IV.

The author of this history goes on to show how, by word and by example, Jesus raised the sinner and the publican, and filled the hearts of many poor, neglected, and thoughtless beings with the love of God, transforming them into beautiful children of their heavenly Father. He animated them with his own piety and fervor, and improved their conduct by the hope he gave them of being able to enter the kingdom of heaven. That, in the opinion of this Jewish scholar, was the greatest miracle that Jesus performed. Above all things, he taught his male and female disciples the Essene virtues of self-abnegation and humility, of the contempt of riches, of charity, and the love of peace. He said to his followers: "Provide neither gold nor silver, nor brass for your person, neither two coats, neither shoes." He bade them become sinless as little children, and declared they must be as if born again if they would become members of the approaching kingdom of heaven. The law of brotherly love and of forbearance he carried to the extent of self-immolation: "If you receive a blow on one cheek, turn the other likewise, and if one take your cloak, give him your shirt also." He taught the poor that they should not take heed for meat or drink, or raiment, but pointed to the birds in the air and the lilies in the field that were fed and clothed, yet "they toil not, neither do they spin." He taught the rich how rightly to distribute alms: "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." He admonished the hypocrite, and bade him pray in the secrecy of his closet, placing before him a short form of prayer, "Our father which art in heaven," which, it is suggested, may have been in use among the Essenes.

At the same time it is contended, and the point is dwelt upon with emphasis, that Jesus made no attack upon Judaism itself; had no idea of becoming the reformer of Jewish doctrine, or the propounder of a new law. He sought merely to redeem the sinner, recall him to a good and holy life, to teach him that he is a child of God, and to prepare him for the impending Messianic time. He insisted upon the unity of God, and was far from attempting to change in the slightest degree the Jewish conception of the Deity. To the question once put to him by an expounder of the law, "What is the essence of Judaism?" he replied, "Hear, O Israel, our God is one; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. These are the chief commandments." His disciples, who had remained true to Judaism, promulgated the declaration of their master, "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil; till heaven and earth pass, one jot and one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all shall be fulfilled." He must have kept the Sabbath holy, for those of his followers who were attached to Judaism strictly observed the Sabbath, which they would not have done had their Master disregarded it. It was only the Shammaitic strictness in the observance of the Sabbath, which forbade even the healing of the sick on that day, that Jesus protested against, declaring in conformity with the views of Hillel, that it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath day. Jesus made no objection to the custom of offering sacrifices; He merely demanded, and in this the Pharisees agreed with him, that reconciliation with one's fellow man should precede any act of religious atonement. Even fasting found no opponent in him, so far as it was practised without ostentation or hypocrisy. He wore on his garments the fringes ordered by the law, and our author does not hesitate to assert that Jesus belongs so thoroughly to Judaism that he shared the narrow views held by the Judeans at that period when he said: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs; neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet and turn again and rend them."

Wherein, then, in the judgment of our author, did the merit of Jesus consist? It consisted especially in his efforts to impart greater inner force to the precepts of Judaism; in the enthusiasm with which he obeyed them himself; in his ardor to make the Judeans turn to God with filial love, as children to their father; in his fervent upholding of the brotherhood of all Israelites, whether rich or poor—a doctrine subsequently expanded into the brotherhood of man—and, finally, in his endeavors to get these moral laws accepted by those who hitherto had been regarded as the lowest and most degraded of mankind.

V.

Of peculiar interest is the author's account of the causes of the prejudices which undoubtedly existed against Jesus in the Jewish capital and which led to his crucifixion. Prof. Graetz points out that the educated classes could not imagine the Messiah's saving work to be performed by an unlearned Galilean. Indeed, the idea that the Messiah, who was expected to come from Bethlehem, and out of the branch of David, should emerge from Galilee, overthrew the cherished conviction of many centuries. It is probably at this time, in the author's opinion, that the proverb quoted in the gospel of John arose, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" The scrupulously devout took offence at his going about eating and drinking with sinners, publicans, and women of a degraded class. Even the Essenes were displeased at his infringement of rules and customs. The Shammaites were scandalized at his healing the sick on the Sabbath day, and could not recognize the Messiah in one who even for a good purpose desecrated the Sabbath. He also roused the opposition of the Pharisees by the disapproval he expressed here and there of their interpretations of the laws and of the conclusions they drew from them. The zealots, on their part, could not look to Jesus for deeds of heroism, for instead of inspiring his followers with hatred of Rome he advocated peace, and in his contempt for mammon admonished them to submit willingly to the Roman tax gatherers: "Render therefore unto Cæsar those things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's." These startling peculiarities, which seemed to contradict the preconceived idea of the Messianic character, caused the higher and the learned classes to be coldly indifferent to Jesus, and he consequently met with no friendly reception in Jerusalem. These various objections, however, to the mode of life and the tenets of Jesus afforded no ground for any legal accusation against him. Freedom of speech had, owing to the frequent debates in the schools of Shammai and Hillel, become so firmly established a right that no one could be attacked for expressing religious opinions unless he controverted a dogma universally conceived, or rejected the conception of the divinity peculiar to Judaism. It was just in this latter particular that Jesus laid himself open to accusation. The report had spread that he had called himself the Son of God, words which, if taken literally, wounded the religious feeling of the Judean nation too deeply to allow him who had uttered them to pass unscathed. But how was it possible to ascertain whether Jesus had really called himself the Son of God, and to know what meaning he attached to the words? To bring the inner secret of his sect to light it was necessary to seek a traitor among his immediate followers, and that traitor was found in Judas Iscariot. A Judean account, derived from what is here described as a trustworthy source, seems to Prof. Graetz to place in the true light the use made of the traitor. In order to be able to arraign Jesus, either as a false prophet or as a seducer of the people, the law demanded that two witnesses should have heard him utter the criminal language of which he was accused, and Judas was consequently required to induce him to speak where two hidden witnesses might hear and report his words. The aim of the ensuing trial was, according to our author, to determine whether Jesus had really claimed to be, as the two witnesses testified, the Son of God. For it is pronounced impossible to believe that he was arraigned before that tribunal because he had boasted that it was in his power to destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days. Such a declaration, if really uttered by him, could not have been made a cause of complaint. The accusation, then, is assumed to have pointed to the assumed affirmation of Jesus that he was the Son of God. Upon an inquiry being put to him on that score, Jesus at first was silent, and made no reply. When the presiding Judge, however, asked him a second time if he were a Son of God, he is reported to have answered, "Thou hast said it," and to have added, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven." Our author holds that, if these words were really spoken by Jesus, the Judges could really infer that he looked upon himself as the Son of God. From the accounts given by the Christian authorities themselves, there is no proof that, according to the existing penal law, the Judges had pronounced an unjust verdict. All appearances were against Jesus. The Synhedrion received the sanction of the death warrant, or rather the permission to execute it, from the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, who was just then present for the festival at Jerusalem.

Here, however, Prof. Graetz proceeds to draw a sharp and deep distinction between the part taken by the Jewish authorities and by the Roman governor in the crucifixion and the incidents attending it. He denounces as purely legendary the notion that Pilate found Jesus innocent and wished to save him, while the Judeans had determined upon putting him to death. We are reminded that, while Jesus was scoffed at and obliged to wear a crown of thorns in ironical allusion to the Messianic and royal dignity he had assumed, it was not the Judeans who inflicted these indignities upon him, but the Roman soldiers who sought through him to deride the Judean nation. Among the Judeans who had condemned him, there was, as our author insists, so little of personal hatred that he was treated exactly like any other criminal, and had given to him the cup of wine and frankincense to render him insensible to the pains of death. That Jesus was scourged before his execution proves that he was executed according to the Roman penal laws, for, by the Judean code, no one sentenced to death could suffer flagellation. It was consequently the Roman lictors who maliciously scourged with fagots or ropes the self-styled King of the Judeans. It was they also who caused Jesus to be nailed to the cross, and to suffer the shameful death awarded by the law of Rome. Such, says our Jewish historian, with an emotion evidently sincere and but too well justified by history, was the end of a man who had devoted himself to the improvement of the most neglected, miserable, and abandoned members of his people, and who, perhaps, fell a victim to a misunderstanding. How great, adds the author, has been the woe caused by that one execution. How many deaths and sufferings of every description has it not caused among the children of Israel. Millions of broken hearts and tragic fates have not yet atoned for that one death. Jesus is the only mortal of whom one can say without exaggeration that his death was more effective than his life.

In his account of the members of the Christian community, in the years immediately following the death of Jesus, Prof. Graetz remarks—and on this head he is confirmed by Christian historians—that they deviated in no degree from the precepts of Judaism, observing the Sabbath, the rite of circumcision, and the dietary laws; they also reverenced Jerusalem and the Temple as holy places. A characteristic trait was the poverty which they willingly embraced in accordance with the teaching of Jesus. From this self-imposed quality, they were called Ebionites (poor), a name they either gave themselves or received from those who had not joined them. They lived together, and each new disciple was required to sell his goods and chattels, and to pour the proceeds into the common trust. Such were the early or Judean Christians, who were called Ebionites, or Nazarenes, and not, as our author thinks they might have been according to their origin, Essenes. They abstained from meat, and followed the way of the Essenes, whom they also imitated in their practice of celibacy and in their disuse of oil and superfluous garments, a single robe of white linen being all each possessed. For some years, at all events, after the death of Jesus, Christians attracted but little attention in Judean circles, escaping observation on account of the humble class to which they belonged. They formed a little sect of their own, and, in the popular eye, were grouped with the Essenes, to whom, in many points, they bore a close resemblance. The author evidently thinks that they would have dwindled away altogether had it not been for one who appeared later in the midst of them—he refers, of course, to the Apostle Paul—who gave publicity to the sect and raised it to such a pinnacle of fame that it became the preponderant power throughout the Roman world. In a subsequent chapter Prof. Graetz reviews at length the share which, as he conceives, Paul took in the evolution of Christianity.

From the glimpses of this history which we have been able to give the reader, he is probably convinced that, whenever the subject constrains the author to discuss the Christian religion, he is animated by a spirit not unworthy of the philosophic and high-minded hero of Lessing's "Nathan the Wise." M. W. H.

THE WONDER OF JAPAN.

A Seventeenth Century Garden.

From Garden and Forest.

Early in the seventeenth century, and not long after Ieyasu by the selection of Yedo for the Shoguns' capital made it the most important city in Japan, the Prince Mitsukuni laid out within the borders of the city a garden in which to find, after a life of labor, a peaceful old age. This garden, which has been maintained in an excellent state of preservation, is one of the most interesting sights in Tokyo, and, in view of its age and the purity of its style, is certainly one of the most remarkable and instructive pieces of landscape gardening in existence.

In conception and design this garden is Chinese, for the Japanese, with their other arts, brought many centuries ago the art of landscape gardening from China, where what we call the natural style was conceived and brought to a high state of perfection long before it was thought of in Europe. In Japan several examples of good Chinese gardening art exist, all dating from the early years of the seventeenth century, notably the Garden of the Golden Pavilion connected with the Rokunji Monastery at Kyoto and that of Ginkakuji in the suburbs of that city, although none of them compare in simplicity of design and preservation with the Arsenal Garden at Tokyo, in which, probably, the gardening art of China can now be studied better than in China itself.

The Arsenal Garden occupies, perhaps, twenty acres of ground, although it is so skilfully planted that its area may not be ten acres or it may be fifty; of the shape of the piece of ground it covers the visitor can form no idea whatever. In reality it is a parallelogram, rather longer than broad. The garden is entered through a small and rather shabby outer garden of the prevailing Japanese fashion, with a pond of dirty water surrounded with its irregular semi-rustic stone coping and filled with plethoric parti-colored gold fish, with the box and holly plants cut into fantastic shapes, the masses of closely clipped azaleas and enkianthus, the piles of moss-covered rocks as full of associations to the Japanese mind as they are meaningless to ours, with the artificially moulded surface of the ground, the contorted pine tree, the unhappy looking apricots, and the leafless cherry trees. This dreariness and unnatural monotony serve, however, to intensify the pleasure which the visitor feels as soon as he passes the simple gateway in the high masonry wall which surrounds the inner enclosure; then he finds himself in a broad walk paved in the middle for a width of five or six feet, with flat, irregularly shaped stones raised a few inches above the surface, the whole being constructed in imitation of that portion of the Tokaido, the great seacoast highway of Japan, which crosses the pass in the Hakone Mountains.

This path winds gracefully through a grove of live oaks, camphor trees, camellias, and hollies, and in the hottest day of summer affords a retreat as cool as a grotto. On either side the ground rises and falls in natural undulations, and is covered under the trees with a thick carpet of evergreen plants, aucubas, aralias, and many ferns; ascending and descending as it crosses the undulations of the surface, it reaches the shores of a lake at a point where the broadest and most perfect view of the garden is obtained. Here the lake, which occupies perhaps half the area, can be seen in all the simplicity of its design, surrounded by what appear to be high hills clothed to their summit with an unbroken mass of evergreen foliage, through which here and there the tall spire of a great fir tree stands out boldly against the sky. The walk now leaves the border of the lake, and, crossing a small lawn, passes by a tea house, and, plunging into the woods, rises and falls sometimes steeply, at others gradually, as it leads the visitor around the borders of the garden; now it comes to a point from which a vista has been cut through the trees for a view across the lake; now it passes a miniature reproduction of the temple of Kiyomizu at Kyoto, and then by a shrine which commemorates the glory of two Chinese brothers famous because they preferred death to disloyalty; then across an arching stone bridge to an octagonal shrine, so formed in allusion to the eight diagrams of the Chinese system of divination; and then over a rushing torrent which falls with a high cataract into the lake, and by other lawns finally reaches the point where the shore of the lake was first approached. The wonders of this walk are its mystery and quiet, for while it is perhaps not more than half a mile long, it appears, so varied is it in interest, to extend for miles, and, in the midst of a great city, it seems to climb the hills and to cross the ravines of a primeval forest.

The garden occupies what was once probably a perfectly level piece of ground. The soil, taken from the site of the lake, was heaped up around the borders to protect them and to diversify the surface, and then the water which fills the lake was introduced at the highest point of the artificial hills and allowed to fall naturally in a series of cascades; the natural grouping of a few varieties of harmonious trees did the rest, the whole producing a result so quiet and perfect that a visitor standing on the shore of the lake might well imagine himself a thousand miles from any human habitation. The little tea house, where guests are refreshed, the shrines and temples, the bridges and the other structures which make the walk through the garden interesting, are all hidden and do not intrude upon the harmony of the scene. And hidden, too, are the special collections of plants which add to the attractions of the garden without disfiguring it as a work of art. At one point the principal walk passes through a little grove of apricot trees, dear to the hearts of all Japanese, for the flowers which cover the naked branches in February tell them of the coming of spring; in another part of the garden there is a collection of cherry trees which produce their pink and white flowers after those of the apricots have fallen; at one point where the trees recede from the shores of the lake, leaving a grass-covered recess, are a number of wistaria vines, trained over low frames in the Japanese fashion; and in the middle of another little lawn is an iris garden, with irregularly shaped sunken beds separated, like those of a rice field, by narrow walks. Each of these special features makes the garden interesting at a particular time of the year, while they are so carefully placed that they do not interfere with the artistic feeling which controls it and has made it what it is; and it is this grouping of inharmonious units, buildings, and collections of plants in such a way that they do not intrude themselves in the landscape which is the chief merit of this garden and which makes it so worthy of study.

The mere lover of plants, as well as the student of the art of gardening, will find much to interest him in Mitsukuni's creation, for in this garden he will find some of the finest trees that can be seen in Japan, and among them several which are probably as old as the garden itself; and it is interesting to note that, although as a general rule the Japanese cultivate Chinese rather than Japanese plants in their gardens, here the plantations are composed almost entirely of Japanese trees, and that none of the clipped, dwarfed, and distorted plants, which are always a feature in the gardens of the Japanese school, appear here. On the hills above the lake are splendid specimens of the camphor tree, and of the two familiar live oaks of central Japan (Quercus cuspidata and Quercus glauca); nowhere can be seen nobler plants of the two broad-leaved hollies of Japan, Ilex latifolia and Ilex integra; the common Japanese maple, growing here to its largest size, dips its delicate branchlets into the waters of the placid lake, while above it the momi (Abies firma), the handsomest of all the Japanese firs, sends up its straight, massive stems to the height of at least a hundred and fifty feet. Here are thickets of the great arborescent bamboos, which are still largely planted in all the temperate parts of the empire; and in this garden is to be seen what experts declare is the finest plant of the so-called square-stemmed bamboo known.

The garden is admirably kept; indeed, so well kept that the keeping seems to be the work of nature, and the interference of man's hand is barely noticeable, except, perhaps, in the too formal trimming of the margin of the lake at those points where the trees do not grow close down to the water. But, except for this single fault, it is not easy to see how this garden, created before Le Notre was born, and when the art of landscape-gardening was unknown in Europe, could be improved, or how a more natural, restful or delightful spot for all seasons of the year could be made in the midst of a great city.