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Thackeray's Translations from Prudentius *Translations from, Prudentius: A Selection from, his Works, rendered in English Verse, with an Introduction and Notes.* By Francis St. John Thackeray, M.A., F.S.A., Vicar of Mapledurham, formerly Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, and Assistant Master at Eton. London : G. Bell and Sons. 1890. Small 8vo. Pp. lxxiii. 231. 7s. 6d.

J. H. Lupton

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editor speaks of his inability to find the construction elsewhere: not to go beyond Pliny's contemporaries, it may be found in his uncle (Pliny, *N.H.* XVIII. 179), in his teacher (Quint. VIII. 6, 75), and in his literary friend (Tac. *H.* V. 6).

As this book will be used largely by learners of Latin we must regret that it takes so little notice of the strange alchemy by which the gold of the language was transmuted into silver. We look in vain for recognition of such subtle and, in their aggregate, revolutionary changes as the almost complete abandonment of the period; the small use of relative words; the fading away of some particles, and the new meanings of others, as *quatenus* (I. 7, 5), *quoque* (I. 8, 6), *an* (I. 18, 5), *alioqui* (I. 20, 2); the iterative subjunctive (I. 12, 7); the subjunctive with *quamquam* (II. 13, 8); the bold use of participles, as *disserentis* (I. 8, 6), *silenda* (I. 8, 15), *dicturo* (II. 11, 14),

iunctis (II. 17, 2); the semi-poetic diction, of which I. 3 is a conspicuous illustration; the naturalization of Greek words, as *bibliopola* (I. 2, 6), *scholasticus* (II. 3, 5), *mesochorus* (II. 14, 7); the modern meanings of ancient words, as *frequenter* and *publico* (I. 1, 1), *defunctus* (II. 7, 7), *numerosus* (II. 14, 7); the shifted position of *igitur* (II. 6, 7); the tendency to begin clauses with verbs, as I. 12, 8—12. Such minutiae are certainly not the essential things for which Pliny deserves a prominent place in our schemes of Latin study, nor are they the license of a single author nor the dross of modern grammarians and pedants; they are the visible and collateral proof of far-reaching changes in a mighty people and civilization, and heralds of the impending collapse of an imperial language.

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THACKERAY'S TRANSLATIONS FROM PRUDENTIUS.

Translations from Prudentius: A Selection from his Works, rendered in English Verse, with an Introduction and Notes. By FRANCIS ST. JOHN THACKERAY, M.A., F.S.A., Vicar of Mapledurham, formerly Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, and Assistant Master at Eton. London: G. Bell and Sons. 1890. Small 8vo. Pp. lxxiii. 231. 7s. 6d.

In the preparation of this choice and tastefully printed little volume Mr. Thackeray has shown the care and scholarship we should have expected from him. The translations extend to about 1500 lines of English, of which the author's own share is nearly 1100, the rest being from the pens of Sir George Young, Dr. Gregory Smith, Mr. Robert Bridges, Mr. R. F. Towndrow, and the Rev. E. D. Stone. These are prefaced by an introduction, treating of the life and times of Prudentius, the social and religious aspect of his age, his language and metre, and the like. On some points it might have been well to consult Rösler's *Der Katholische Dichter, Aurelius Prudentius Clemens* (Freiburg, 1886), as for instance on the curiously designated 'Dittochaeton' (p. liii: comp. Rösler, p. 29 n). At the end is a body of notes, many of them showing considerable research. The reader's convenience is consulted by having the Latin text of the

hymns, which are chiefly from the *Catherinon* and *Peristephanon*, printed opposite the English version. The volume is further adorned with two facsimiles: one from the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, representing Prudentius at prayer; the other a specimen of the famous Codex Puteanus, no. 8084 in the National Library at Paris. As a contribution by the way to the discussion on the date of this MS. (p. 229), the short monograph of M. Léopold Delisle is worth referring to. He entertains no doubt of the autograph written on it being that of Vettius Agorius Basilius, the annotator of Horace; and, as he was consul in 527, this would make the MS. belong to the beginning and not to the end of the sixth century.

Prudentius is by no means an easy author to translate, at least for any length consecutively. An anthology of short pieces might be made from him without difficulty; but his prolixity, his repetitions and fondness for minute details would make a continuous translation insufferably tedious. This may have been one cause of the comparative neglect of him in this country, of which Mr. Thackeray complains. He has not, however, been quite so unrepresented in English versions as his latest translator seems to think. Besides the familiar renderings of Archbishop Trench, and some in rhythmical prose by the Rev. G. Morison, to

which allusion is made, a passage from the *Apotheosis* will be found translated in the *Remains* of Myles Coverdale, Bishop of Exeter. A couple of stanzas may be given from this as a specimen of the quaint metre adopted :—

8

'There is no tooth
Nor nail so small,
Nor ear so little,
But though it fall,

9

Yet perish it shall
Not finally,
But out of grave
Rise certainly.'

A short passage from the *Peristephanon* will also be found translated by Dr. W. Fulke, Master of Pembroke, and a metrical version of the *Ales diei nuncius* was inserted in the Private Prayers put forth by authority of Queen Elizabeth. In more recent times a writer in *Blackwood's Magazine* (May 1821), with the signature T. D., translated part of the *Martyrdom of St. Eulalia*, and the short but striking piece (*Peristephanon*, viii) on a Baptismal Font at Calahorra, standing on the spot where the blood of martyrs had been shed. The lines of Prudentius are here vigorous, and some of them are not unworthily rendered :—

'Haurit terra sacros aut fonte aut sanguine
rores,
Exundatque suo iugiter uda Deo.
Ipse loci est Dominus, laterum cui vulnere
utroque
Hinc cruor effusus fluxit et inde latex.'

'The joyful waters sparkle o'er the brim,
Where martyrs' wounds once pour'd a
crimson flood,
And blest are both—and sacred still to Him
Who shed for us that water and that
blood.'

In 1845 a version of the *Cathemerinon* and some of the other poems, by an anonymous translator, was published by Rivingtons. Though perhaps too suggestive of Scott, many of the lines run well, as do these from the *Martyrdom of St. Eulalia* (*Peristeph.* iii.) :—

'Above, the traceries to the view
In golden lustre glow,
And flowers of many a form and hue
Are carv'd in stone below ;
Well might you deem some meadow there

Blush'd with spring's blossoms sweet
and fair,
Such as kind hands bestow—
The crocus and the violet,
By winter's breath unsullied yet.'

The translations in the work before us vary considerably in merit. This might be expected, both from the extent of ground covered, and from the variety of translators. Occasionally Mr. Thackeray is very happy :

'Perfidus ille Deo, quamvis non perfidus
Urbi.'

'Faithful to Rome, though faithless to his
God' (p. xii.).

'Mens aestuans procellis,' &c.

'The mind in tempests heaving,
Pierced through by sorrow's shaft,
Oblivious of her grieving,
Drinks in the welcome draught.'
(p. 49)

'Fercula nostra Deum sapient
Christus et inluat in pateras.'

'O God, our banquet leaven,
O Saviour, flow thou in our cups to
crown.'
(p. 27)

These and many more such examples catch the eye without research. In the last extract by the way there is an apparent incompleteness in the original which does not seem to have been noticed. As the stanza ends with an invocation to *Trina pietas*, and *Deus* and *Christus* have been specified, it would seem natural to have expected *Spiritus*. This was perceived by Jortin, who conjectured *Spiritus inluat* for *Christus et inluat*. See his *Tracts, Philological, Critical, &c.*, ii. p. 314. One of the weakest of Mr. Thackeray's stanzas, in our opinion, is that on p. 35 :—

'From many a source we men our flames
derive,
Dry wood, or cresset fed with oil's [rich ?]
dew :
Wax taper from the honey-strained hive
We press, or cottons steeped the lamp
imbue.'

Both he and his collaborateurs have shrunk from following Prudentius step by step through long passages. No poet could do so and remain a poet. The Abbé Bayle has indeed struggled manfully through the *Cathemerinon*, and not shirked a single fence. But his *sermo pedestris*, side by side with the poet's lines, reminds us of the

laborious progress of one who follows mounted, along the banks of a river, the course of some swift boatrace on its waters.

Mr. Bridges, in particular, seems to have found a close rendering so impracticable, that he occasionally makes a rather wide detour, as in the seventh stanza on p. 21. But some of his lines are elegant, as—

'The darkness of earth is torn
By the level spears of the morn;
The colours return and play
In the smile of the star of day.' (p. 19)

It would be invidious to compare in detail the workmanship of the several contributors. But a parting homage must in justice be rendered to the very graceful and finished rendering of Mr. Stone with which the collection appropriately ends. If no extract is here given, it is simply because to break it would be to spoil it.

Where the editorial work has been so very careful, blemishes are hard to discover. On p. lix. line 17, *tanto* should be *tanta*. In what is said, p. lxii., about the Lesser Asclepiad, Meineke's canon should be remembered.

J. H. LUPTON.

BATIFFOL'S *STUDIA PATRISTICA*.

Studia Patristica. Études, etc. publiées par l'Abbé P. BATIFFOL. Ier fascicule: *Le Livre de la Prière d'Aseneth: Étude sur l'Origine de ce Livre apocryphe de l'A.T., Texte grec inédit et version Latine inédite du xiii. Siècle* (incomplete, pp. 1—80, 8vo. Paris, Leroux. 1889). 5 frs.

THE first instalment of the Abbé Batiffol's projected series of *Studia Patristica* is a fragment. He has published his dissertation on the 'Prayer of Aseneth,' and a portion of the Greek text, postponing, for unexplained reasons, the completion of the 'fascicule' by the conclusion of the Greek text and the Latin version. But what lies before us, namely the dissertation and nearly all the Greek text, contains the main points of interest. An abridged Latin version, as it now proves to be, of the story of Aseneth, daughter of Potiphra the priest of On (Gen. xli. 45) was published in the *Speculum Historiale* of Vincent of Beauvais, and translated into several languages, including Icelandic. The same Latin version was reprinted by Fabricius (Cod. pseudep. V.T. I. 774 sqq.) in 1723, with a fragment of the Greek original (*ib.* II. 85 sq). The full Latin text used by Vincent was found by Mr. Montague Rhodes James in two thirteenth century mss. in the Corpus Library at Cambridge. In 1885 an Armenian version was published at Venice, and there are traces of Ethiopian and Arabic versions. A Syriac version was published at Leyden in 1870 from a ms. of the sixth or seventh century, where it purports to have been rendered from the Greek by one Moses, from an original in the Episcopal Library at the Syrian Beroea. This Moses, of Aggel, who

is otherwise known as a translator from Greek into Syriac, flourished A.D. 550—570. The Greek story of Aseneth is therefore at any rate as early as the sixth century.

The Abbé Batiffol has superseded the fragmentary text printed by Fabricius (from cod. Barocc. 148, cent. xv.) by the recovery of the entire Greek text from four mss., three (Vat. gr. 803, cent. xi.; Palat. gr. 17, cent. x.—xi.; Palat. gr. 364, cent. xv.) collated by himself, the fourth (Barocc. 147, cent. xv.) by Mr. M. R. James.

Aseneth, daughter of Potiphra priest of Heliopolis, brought up by her father in strict seclusion and in the religion of Egypt, rejects with scorn her father's proposal that she should marry the viceroy Joseph, a mere Canaanite shepherd. But the arrival of Joseph in all his splendour fills her with shame and remorse. An interview takes place, but Joseph orders her out of his sight, as a strange woman. Her father, however, assures him that she is his sister, being like himself a virgin; and, after eight days, the marriage takes place, and Joseph becomes the father of Manasseh and Ephraim. Then follow the years of famine. Jacob on his arrival in Egypt blesses and kisses his son's bride, who returns his salute (according to the Syriac version) 'like one who has come home from a long warfare.' There follows a design against Aseneth on the part of Pharaoh's son, aided by the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, but frustrated by the help of Benjamin and the sons of Leah. Pharaoh's son is killed, Pharaoh dies of grief, and Joseph and Aseneth reign in his stead.

Such are the outlines of the story, and its motive and spirit are so far Jewish rather than Christian. But, so regarded, the story