Arthurian Legends or the Hebrew-German Rhymed Version of the Legend of King Arthur
by L. Landau

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nothing. (d) A manuscript play attributed to Diamante is at the Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid. To Paz y Melia's query whether this is Montalván's, one must answer, to judge from the lines quoted by him, No. (e) Paz y Melia refers in addition to a 'refundición anterior á 1682.' The Montalván play begins and ends as follows:

PEDRO DE VRDEMALAS.

COMEDIA

FAMOSA.

DE IVAN PEREZ DE MONTALVAN.

PERSONAS DESTA COMEDIA.

Adrian.

Lisarda dama.

El Rey Francisco de Francia.

Laura, y Turino villanos.

Fulgencio.

Gerardo.

Duque de Guisa.

Duque Borbon.

El Almirante de Francia.

Fabricio.

El Conde Arnaldo.

Clara dama.

IORNADA PRIMERA.

Salen Adrian, y Lisarda.

- Adri.* Sin la licencia no fuera,
aunque me dà priesa el Rey.
- Lis.* Cumples Adrian la ley
de amor; pero el Rey te espera,
no te detengas aqui.
- Adri.* Son tus ojos la prision
de los mios: y es razon,
que puedan mas que yo en mi:
y pues en llegando a vellos
nadie està con libertad,
disculpe mi voluntad,
quien sabe que son tan bellos:
que si es Rey, y se detiene,
quando los vea, contemplallos
mal la tendran los vassallos,
si vn Rey defensa no tiene....

Ram. Y con mas razon
al Senado: aqui acaba
la comedia, que su autor
llama Pedro de Vrdeimalas.

FIN.

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Arthurian Legends or the Hebrew-German Rhymed version of the Legend of King Arthur. Edited by L. LANDAU. (*Teutonia*, XXI. Heft.) Leipzig: E. Avenarius. 1912. 8vo. lxxxv + 246 pp.

The fact that these texts are written in the German language but in the Hebrew script will account for the lack of attention with which they have met hitherto at the hands of the average 'Germanist.' They

are but two examples of a Hebrew-German literature of which the first poetic monuments can be traced back to the fifteenth century. There is evidence, however, that the Jews took an active part in German literature even before that time. In a general way, the Jews had a larger share in the dissemination of literature in the Middle Ages than is commonly supposed. From the point of view of comparative literature, the subject presents some interesting problems and possibilities. The Jews, scattered as they were over the face of the earth, with their bi-lingual characteristics and strong religious and literary tradition, were particularly well-adapted to serve as intermediaries between the East and the West. It was largely owing to their mediation that the Talmudic stories found their way into Christian legend; it was mainly through them that Arabic tales and fables were absorbed into Western literature to re-appear in a new garb as the *Gesta Romanorum*, the *Fabliaux* or the *Cento novelle antiche*.

Fascinating as is the subject in its wider aspects, it is no less interesting in its present narrower limits. The text which Mr Landau publishes for the first time with a full critical apparatus is a German-Hebrew romance of the cycle of King Arthur. It has been known hitherto from printed editions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, both in rhyme and in prose. A critical text of two MSS, both in Hebrew-German cursive writing of the sixteenth century and preserved in the Hamburg Stadtbibliothek, is here published for the first time; parallel to it on the opposite page is the text of the edition of 1699 by Wagenseil, thus affording a rapid comparison between the two versions. Dr Landau shows that the source of his text was the thirteenth century Middle High German *Wigalois* of Wirnt von Grafenberg, and not the prose *Wigalois*, as has been assumed until now. Its author was a gleeman of the fifteenth century who had his home in the Mainz-Frankfort-Worms district, in which there had always been a large Jewish population. Thus we see how German literature had penetrated into the Ghettos of the flourishing cities of the Rhine district, a literature not confined to Volksbücher, but comprising actual metrical versions of older romances. The story itself is, as its title the *Artus-Hof* implies, a typical romance of chivalry of the later Middle Ages, with its usual accompaniments of magic properties, of giants and distressed maidens, of enchanted knights and castles. But it makes up for these literary deficiencies by its style. It furnishes a curious combination of the manner of the court poet and the gleeman, with a considerable admixture of Yiddish elements. A further interest—apart from its linguistic peculiarities, apart from the preservation of motives from older sources—is that it shows a medieval romance in the last stages of disintegration, in its transition from the rhymed romance of the sixteenth century to the chap-book of the next. Dr Landau is to be sincerely congratulated on having opened up a new field to German philology, and such an enterprise is in itself something of an achievement.

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