

heartily to be congratulated on this book, in which each of them have had a share, the one writing it, the other publishing it as one of their 'Asiatic Monographs.' It is sure to remain the standard work on the subject for a long time to come.

M. G.

PROFESSOR DR. NORBERT PETERS. DER JUENGST WIEDER-AUFGEFUNDENE HEBRAEISCHE TEXT DES BUCHES ECCLESIASTICUS, untersucht, herausgegeben, uebersetzt, und mit Kritischen Noten versehen. (Freiburg-i.-Br. : Herder, 1902. 10s.)

The interminable Sirach literature has been greatly enriched by the present publication of the Hebrew text, accompanied by an exhaustive Introduction, in which all the problems connected with it are discussed in a lucid and scholarly manner. The nature and character of each of the four manuscript fragments of the Hebrew are described, and the relation studied in which they stand to one another, then the relation in which each of the Hebrew texts stands to the Greek and Syriac version of Ecclesiasticus. Of all the four the one named *C* seems to belong to the oldest and best recension, and is closely allied with *B* and *D*, whilst *A* represents a somewhat different tradition, though all go back to one and the same original. Needless to say that Professor Peters, in agreement with most of the scholars, holds to the opinion that the newly discovered fragments belong to the long-lost Hebrew original. I belong to the minority who still see in these Hebrew fragments a comparatively late translation, and by no means the old original, and I may soon take the opportunity of justifying my position in this question as to the true character of the Hebrew text. For the time being I am merely stating Professor Peters' views, who proceeds in his Introduction to study each of the old versions, notably the Greek and Syriac. He is forced to admit that the tradition of these versions, and more especially the Syriac, is by no means perfect or

absolutely reliable, just as I have long ago contended. In the Syriac we have only the Western recension, very little, if anything, of the Eastern. And even the Western is thus far often in a rather hopeless condition. The question naturally arises, how, then, can we rely on such texts to decide the true value of the supposed original? The critical principles laid down by the author on pp. 76 ff., which guide him in the attempt to reconstruct the older form from the contradictory readings of the fragments, may be very sound and judicious, but if the material with which we have to manipulate is tainted the result cannot be above suspicion. In order to justify his attempted reconstruction the author gives us a most exhaustive study of each word and sentence of the Hebrew, comparing them also with the other versions. It is an excellent *apparatus criticus* adapted to the purpose of explaining the *modus operandi*, and is very valuable as far as it goes to establish the relation of the Hebrew to the other texts. But many strange things are set down there. Thus, we read on p. 52 that the primitive original text was written with the Old Hebrew characters, and that in this way many mistakes of change of letters can be explained. And on p. 31 we get a list of such changes of letters, due either to the "Old Hebrew script or to the square letters"! It is a statement which goes far to shake our confidence in the scholarship of the author. In the critical apparatus many emendations and corrections are suggested, based either on the readings of the other versions or on internal evidence. The author furthermore states in the Introduction (p. 31) that "many hands and many heads have been at work at this Hebrew text until it assumed its actual form." Is there any other old text in existence, I ask now, of which two such contradictory statements could be made in one and the same breath, that it is the work of many and that it still represents or reflects the old original? By saying it "reflects" I am toning down and placing a charitable construction on the meaning of the author's words. For to him it is only the old text, though greatly altered and manipulated under the influence of the

Greek and Syriac versions. Anyone conversant with the old Hebrew literature must decline to subscribe to these theories, though they are shared also by most of those who have made a more or less profound study of the Hebrew fragments. I do not speak now of the philological aspect of the problem—I will deal with it on another occasion—but simply from that of the history of Hebrew literature. I make bold to say that there is no book in existence in the whole range of the Old Hebrew literature which is based on a Greek text, or having originally been written in Hebrew should have been corrected or mutilated or in any shape or form been changed by means of collations with any version whatsoever. Does anyone, acquainted with the old-world notions, believe that Jews, to whom Greek was the language of Antiochus and of the heathen, would correct their own Hebrew writings with the aid of that subsidiary version, which was only a translation of that original of which they were the possessors? To state such a preposterous view is to ignore the actual state of things. Not one of the numerous Hellenistic writings, such as the works of Aristobul or even Aristeas, has ever been translated into Hebrew. The mere legend of the miraculous translation of the Bible into Greek has penetrated into Hebrew old literature by oral transmission. How much less possible is it to believe that a Hebrew book written by a man high in the priestly hierarchy, living in Jerusalem, should have been later on corrected and altered, often without rhyme or reason, out of the Greek and the Syriac, and to have been so much interpolated and changed that it is almost hopeless to make a clear sense of many a passage as it now stands. If we had not the old translations at our disposal I defy anyone to make head or tail of that Hebrew text, in which every word must be twisted and turned and reduced to its Biblical prototype in order to yield some sense. What a marked difference between the first and the last few chapters, the "Laus Patrum," for this very portion had been preserved in Hebrew, and has been utilized in Old Hebrew poetical versions. The sense was not difficult to

understand ; it is an historical episode narrated in a simple current style, not like the sentences and maxims of the preceding chapters, in which every verse stands by itself like old proverbs and Mashalim. There is no alternative ; either the book is *the* original, or it is a translation. If original, how could doublettes so freely be admitted as is the case with this Hebrew text? Could such doubles be introduced into any book even of remotely canonical value? How admit *variae lectiones* not of a Massoretic character, but simply due to the fact that the scribe had culled them from another version of the book? It occurs only in late works where "Nusha aḥ arina," i.e. another version, is often annotated at the margin. This attitude of the scribe proves, if any further proof be required, that to him the text he was copying was merely a translation from another language, of which other versions more or less akin to it were in existence, which he therefore collated and consulted for the improvement of the text he was copying. This is merely one example out of many for a very common practice of a later age, but to say that the "original" has constantly been corrected from the Syriac by one scribe, that another copyist had done the same with an eye on the Greek, that a third one then mixed both up and, joining them, interpolated from the one and the other and produced the amalgam now found in the Hebrew fragments, does not speak well for Biblical scholarship. This difference of view in the question of origin does not, however, detract from the merit of this valuable book. It will contribute largely to the final solution of the problem.

M. G.

STUDENT'S PALI SERIES : (1) Pali Grammar, 1899 (3 rupees); (2) Pali Buddhism, 1900 (12 annas); (3) Pali First Lessons, 1902 (3 rupees). By the Rev. H. H. TILBE, Ph.D. (Rangoon : American Baptist Mission Press.)

These three little books ought to be very useful to anyone wishing to take up the study of Pali by himself. The Grammar is very simple. No references are given, and rare