

I must be very brief. Zoroaster's name, says Dean Stanley, has always been bound up with the beginnings of sacred philosophy. Prof. Monier Williams ascribes to his system "a high spiritual character." It is, he says, "a simple reflection of the natural workings, counter-working and inter-workings of the human mind, in its earnest strivings after truth, in its eager gropings after more light, in its strange hallucinations, childish vagaries, foolish conceits and unaccountable inconsistencies." Of the Zendavesta, and the religion which it represents, we are not, the same writer rightly urges, to measure its importance by the small number of persons whose bible and creed they are, but by their connection with the history of those who were the first among the Aryans to achieve empire, who inherited the glory of the Assyrians and Babylonians, and "were for a time the most conspicuous and remarkable people on the surface of the globe, influencing by their religion and philosophical ideas, by their literature, laws and social institutions the intellectual development of the whole human race." From that point of view the Iranian conquests through Zoroaster may well be put on a par with those of the Indo-Aryans through Buddha. The imprint of their mind on that of the combined Semite and western Aryan world may, rather, indeed, take precedence for the importance of its issues to the influence on those around it of any other community of which we have any record. Apart from its place in the history of religion and philosophy, Persian has had a long and honourable literary career.

When from the Asiatic we turn to the European Aryans, we find ourselves on more familiar ground. I need not linger on the story of Greece and Rome. The history of the former, though so changeful, has been, in a sense, continuous from its heroic age to the present. In the long line of Greek speech and literature there has been no break from Homer to George Phranza,* or even, as Canon Farrar says, to Trioupi. "In no other language," continues the same writer, "which the world has ever heard would it be possible to find the works of writers separated from each other by such enormous epochs, and yet equally intelligible to any one who has been trained in the classical form of the language." Greek poets and historians and philosophers still help to make scholars and thinkers. Their productions have not only contributed to our greatest intellectual successes, but are a living acting force in the work of modern civilization. Even what we owe to Hebrew Greek aided us to win and make our own, and those benefits which Arab culture conferred on mediæval Europe, the Arabs themselves had, in a great measure, learned from the Greeks. It is in the treasures of the Greek language that we look for an account of those "institutions and conceptions which lie at the base of modern civilization, and at the same time it contains the record and presents the spectacle of precisely those virtues in which modern civilization is most deficient." (Farrar's "Greek Syntax.") Nor can Latin justly be called a dead language. Is not Rome, its central home, still the star to which millions of Christendom look for guidance, and, when that guidance comes, vested in full authority, is not the Latin language, the tongue of Cicero, of Tacitus, of Jerome, of Augustine, the medium of the direction or command? Is it not still the language of prayer and solemn rite to masses of people of every clime? Is it not also the common

* With him and Laonicus Chalecomendylas Gerard John Voss closes his list of the Greek Historians of known age. They both wrote after the taking of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453. (Ger. Joan. Vossii *De Hist. Grecis*, l. ii. cap. 30.)