

ther's version, and it illustrates his influence to notice that in the German Polyglot Bible, published in 1849, the editors give the text of Luther and give in the margin the variations of the most important German versions. "It is very perceptible," said Luther, "that Papists, from my translation and other German works, have learned to preach and write in German also, and steal, as it were, my own language from me without giving me the thanks which are my due, but rather use it in new assaults upon me. However they are perfectly welcome, and it is well pleasing to me that I have taught even ungrateful pupils." "I seek not fame. My conscience bears me witness that I have consecrated all my powers faithfully to the work, and no sinister motives have influenced me; for I have not received the smallest recompence, neither sought it, nor yet my own glory. God is my witness, that I have done all from love to God and to the brethren."

Though we speak of this version as Luther's, it must not be supposed that the other reformers had no share in the work. Days and months were devoted to it by others as well as by himself. For many weeks together a large party of the most eminent scholars of Europe, might have been noticed in Luther's rooms. Luther presided, having before him the Latin, Hebrew and new German Bible; Melancthon, an insignificant, spare man, opened his *Greek* books, the Seventy, or the New Testament; Kreuziger had in his hand the Hebrew and Chaldee Scriptures; Dr. Bugenhagen, or Pomeranus, the Vulgate; Dr. Bugenhagen and Justus Jonas, the Rabbinical paraphrases. Each gave his views on the passage under consideration, and Master George Borer marked them down. Days were thus devoted to a single verse. The edition of 1541 contains the results of all these labours; and Luther's own copy—a copy constantly used by him, after having passed through several hands, including Bugenhagen's and Melancthon's—is now in the British Museum.

The version of Luther is the basis of several versions. On it are founded the Belgic version, of 1526; the Swedish version, of 1541; the Danish version, of 1550; the Icelandic or Norse, 1584; the Finnish, 1542; and an early Dutch version of 1560. A German-Swiss translation was made by Leo Juda, 1525-9; and in 1667 a revised version, in the same tongue, was published at Zurich. These languages (the Finnish excepted) all belong, with the German, Saxon, English, and Gothic to the *Teutonic family* of tongues.

#### A SECRET DISCIPLE IN PERSIA.

The following narrative was communicated, some years since, to an English journal by an officer in the East India service. It affords another evidence of the faithfulness with which the Gospel was declared by that devoted servant of Christ, HENRY MARTYN. The account is calculated to cheer those who are engaged in the same calling, whether in heathen or in Christian lands. The good seed of the Word may be finding its way into the hearts of their hearers when they are least aware of it. How striking a comment does the account give upon the text, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit!"

Having received an invitation to dine (or rather sup) with a Persian party in the city, I accordingly went, and found a number of guests assembled. The banquet was served in a court decorated with flowers. The conversation was varied, grave, and gay, chiefly of the latter complexion. Poetry was often the subject; sometimes philosophy, sometimes politics, prevailed. Amongst the topics discussed, religion was one. There are so many sects in Persia, especially if we include the freethinking classes, who dabble in religious subjects by way of amusement merely, that the questions which frequently grow out of such a discussion constitute no trifling resource

for conversation. I was called upon, though with perfect good-breeding and politeness, for an account of the tenets of my faith, and I confess I felt myself sometimes embarrassed by the pointed queries of my companions. I soon found that I could best parry their attacks by opposing one of my antagonists against the other. One of the guests, whom I had never before seen, appeared to be a sceptic; he doubted of every thing; he declared he was not convinced that the scene before him was real; he even maintained the probability of the whole of what we suppose is cognizable by our senses being an illusion. Another sportively remarked that there was nothing real but enjoyment; he argued (evidently in jest) that pleasure was the greatest good which human beings could desire; that, therefore, pleasure was the subject worthy of a man, and his pursuit of it was justifiable, to whatever length it carried him, provided he did not interfere with the pleasure of another, which was the only rule of human conduct. A graver reasoner endeavoured to rebuke both speakers. He dwelt upon the necessity of our being accountable to the Being who made and preserved the World; observed that a sense of religion alone could effectually restrain mankind from the commission of acts inimical to the general good; and quoted many maxims from Sadi and the poets, ending with a passage from the *Pand-nameh*—"If you would escape the flames of hell, purify yourself with the water of piety; if you would walk in the paths of happiness, let the lamp of devotion guide your footsteps!"

Amongst the guests was a person who took but little part in these mock encounters, which seemed to me to be chiefly expedients for the display of wit and repartee. He was a man below the middle age, of a serious countenance and mild deportment. He did not appear to be on terms of intimacy with any but the entertainer. They called him Mahomed Rahem. I thought he frequently observed me with great attention, and watched every word that I uttered, especially when the subject just referred to was discussing. Once I expressed myself with some levity; I fear I was a little corrupted by the example of those around me, many of whom made no scruple of jesting upon points which ought, in their estimation at least, to have been exempt from ridicule. The individual fixed his eyes upon me with so peculiar an expression of surprise, regret, and reproof that I was struck to the very soul, felt a strange, mysterious wonder who this person could be. He perceived that he had unintentionally excited my suspicion, and consequently avoided my looks; but, whenever our glances did meet, each of us was evidently disordered by the collision. I asked privately of one of the party if he knew the person who had so strangely interested me. He told me that he had been educated for a moollah, but had never officiated; that he was a man of considerable learning, and much respected, but was particularly reserved and somewhat eccentric in his habits. He lived retired, and seldom visited even his most intimate friends. My informant added that his only inducement to join the party had been the expectation of meeting an Englishman, as he was extremely attached to the English nation, and had studied our language and learning.

This information mightily increased my curiosity, which I determined to seek an opportunity of gratifying by conversing with the object of it. But he was by no means so forward as I expected. He acknowledged that he knew a little of the English language, but he preferred expressing himself in Persian. He spoke but little, and rather coldly.

The day after the entertainment I paid a visit to the person at whose house it had been given, and spoke to him of Mahomed Rahem. He said he was a much esteemed friend of his, and offered, without waiting for my solicitation, to take me to visit him. I suppressed my joy at the offer, and the ensuing morning was fixed for the interview.

Mahomed Rahem resided in the suburbs of Shiraz. My introducer, whose name was Meerza Reeza, informed me that I should be disappoint-

ed if I expected to see a splendid mansion. Perhaps, he added, you will be better pleased, because you will see many object which will remind you of your native land.

We reached the house of Mahomed Rahem, who received us with great cordiality, and spoke to me in a manner quite free from that reserve which appeared on the former occasion. I was soon charmed with his agreeable manners and even vivacity; for no appearance of frigidity remained. He was a remarkably cheerful and well-informed man.

Our interview was short; we seemed both to feel that the presence of Meerza Reeza was a restraint upon us. I therefore took my leave, after obtaining permission to repeat my visit. I remarked in the dwelling of Mahomed Rahem a neatness and comfort which are extremely rare in Persian houses generally. Even when the proprietor is wealthy and the apartments spacious, there is almost always a grievous absence of what the French term *proprete* in that country. As Meerza Reeza had informed me, I perceived in the furniture of his friend's house several articles of European manufacture, not often found in Persia.

A few days after this, I called alone upon Mahomed Rahem. I found him reading a volume of Cowper's poems! The circumstance led to an immediate discussion of the merits of English poetry and European literature in general. I was perfectly astonished at the clear and accurate conception he had formed upon these subjects, and at the precision with which he expressed himself in English. We discoursed upon these and congenial topics for nearly two hours; and whether I was interested by the novelty of the occurrences, or by the mystery which still seemed to hang about the individual, I know not, but I never felt less fatigued, or, to speak more correctly, I never enjoyed a literary *tête-à-tête* with more relish. Surprised that a man, with such refined taste and just reflection as he seemed to be, could still be enthralled in the bondage of Islamism, or could even relish the metaphysical mysticism of the Soofees, I ventured to sound his opinion on the subject of religion.

"You are a moollah, I am informed?"

"No," said he; "I was educated at Madrussah, but I have never felt an inclination to be one of the priesthood."

"The exposition of your religious volume," I rejoined, "demands a pretty close application to study; before a person can be qualified to teach the doctrines of the Koran, I understand he must thoroughly examine and digest volumes of comments, which ascertain the senses of the text, and the application of its injunctions. This is a laborious preparation, if a man be disposed conscientiously to fulfil his important functions." As he made no remark, I continued: "Our Scriptures are their own expositor; we are solicitous only that they should be read; and, although some particular passages are not without difficulties, arising from the inherent obscurity of language, the faults of translation, or the errors of copyists, yet it is our boast that the authority of our Holy Scriptures is confirmed by the perspicuity and simplicity of their style as well as precepts."

I was surprised that he made no reply to these observations. At the hazard of being deemed importunate, I proceeded to panegyris the leading principles of Christianity, more particularly in respect to their moral and practical character; and happened, amongst other reflections, to suggest that, as no other concern was of so much importance to the human race as religion, and as only one faith could be the right, the subject admitted not of being regarded as indifferent, though too many did so regard it.

"Do not you esteem it so?" he asked.

"Certainly not," I replied.

"Then, your indifference at the table of our friend Meerza Reeza, when the topic of religion was under consideration, was merely assumed out of complaisance to Mussulmans, I presume?"

I remembered the occasion to which he alluded, and recognised in his countenance the same expression, compounded half of pity, half of sur-