

feel surprised should the telegraph flash through the country the intelligence of a Fenian raid.

The calling out of our gallant volunteers has certainly lessened the chances of an attack; and we hardly need add, that we trust our anticipations, as expressed above, may not be verified.

HOMERIC TRANSLATIONS.

ON no author have the fangs of the translators been so ruthlessly employed as on Homer. If it be true that, on account of the physical infirmity of blindness, and because of his poverty, he suffered much humiliation during life, it is no less the fact that he has suffered much after death, at the hands of the translators, the commentators, and the critics. The German scholars, whose special avocation it would seem to be to analyze with equal gusto and assiduity the chemical properties of tobacco, meerschaum pipes, Greek roots, misty metaphysics and everything else which appals wise men by its difficulties, have long taken Homer under their patronage, and have succeeded in rendering that which was sufficiently perplexing before, still more hard to understand. And of these scholars, Wolfe was the first to start the theory that there were several Homers; and ever since this proposition was mooted, the arguments for and against it have been as numerous as the number of angels, which, in the middle ages, were supposed to be able to balance themselves on the point of a needle. For our own part we would be as ready to believe in a dozen Shakspeares or Walter Scotts, as to believe there were a dozen Homers; the question, however, does not come within the scope of this article, our object being to glance at the subject of Homeric translations.

Some weeks ago, the Saturday Reader announced that Mr. Matthew Arnold, was preparing a translation of the "Iliad" in hexameter verse, or the same measure in which Longfellow has written his *Evangeline*. This Mr. Arnold is or was a professor of poetry in the University of Oxford—has achieved somewhat of a reputation as a poet—has taken a prominent part in the battle of the hexameters, and has been very unjust in his criticisms on the Homeric translations of many an abler man who preceded him. Now, if Mr. Arnold has a right to differ from others, they have a right to differ from him—professor of poetry though he boast himself. Let any of our readers who has a copy of the book, take up Longfellow's "Evangeline," and then say whether in spite of a subject of deep pathos, treated with much skill and with much of the versifier's art in the collocation of words, the hexameter can ever be placed in consonance with the genius of our language. The English language, though almost as comprehensive as the wants of a Shakspeare or Milton might demand, has none of the inflections which chime in so naturally and mellifluously in the language of antiquity, or in the modern Italian; it has none of the music which the breezes make in the groves of Greece or in Vallambrosa; but it has a nobler and sterner music, such as that which the waves create when they lash and foam upon the rocky shore, or such as that which the tempests produce when they tear up by its roots the "gnarled and unwedgable oak" and thunder through the crashing pine forests of the North. It is the language of command, of strength, of prerogative, rather than the language of the lute or the lyre; and a man of thrice the genius of Mr. Arnold will never be able to attune it to the cadence required for rendering it able to represent, in a natural or popular manner, the easy flowing, melodious hexameters of the Iliad.

The "translation" which has been most widely read is that of Alexander Pope. The great scholar Bentley said the truth, and mortally offended Pope at the same, when he pronounced the "translation" to be a very good paraphrase, but not Homer. But the easy versification, unjustifiably diluted though it be, and the high reputation of Pope, secured it a place in the world of letters, which it has long, and will longer retain.

Since Pope's time there have been many "translations." That by the poet Cowper is very creditable to his industry, but not so creditable to his genius; his rendering of Homer reflects

too much the peculiar temperament of Cowper, and is too cold, too impassable for the warm, impetuous bard, who sang the downfall of magnificent Troy.

In later days, we have snatches of translations from the pens of Walter Savage Landor and the Hon. W. E. Gladstone. In both cases they reflect credit on these two gifted scholars, and it is a pity that the world has not received more from the hands of those who could do so well.

The last translation is that by Lord Derby. It has met with great success; for the translator is not only a lord, but a man of talent. The work has been well received by the organs which lead English literary opinion, and has been widely welcomed by the reading public themselves. There is no doubt it is a work of much merit, and the production of a scholar—but who except a poet can ever hope to succeed in making a perfect translation of the great original? If we dare hazard an opinion on anything that came from the pen of Lord Derby, we would say that his translation is too mechanical, too statuesque, too polished—it is the work of a man of talent, not that of a man of genius; there is too much of the head, and too little of the heart in it. It bears the same relation to the original as does a plaster-of-paris copy of the Apollo Belvedere to the eloquent, faultless, almost life-endowed marble in which the "bearer of the silver bow" remains to testify to the wonderful art of the ancient sculptor, long after shrines and temples have vanished for evermore.

Tennyson has rendered some pieces of Homer very beautifully. But has he the fire, the energy, the rapidity necessary to re-embody in English verse, the whole of the "Iliad"? Has he pinions strong enough to wing an equal and sustained flight, with the eagle world, who now soars to the summit of dread Olympus, and gazes unfrightened and unhurt, while Zeus flings his red thunderbolts on every side—who now descends to the courts of the hoary Neptune, and then mounts upwards to describe the flights of gods and men, as they met in the intoxicating rush and horrid turmoil of the battle—who now paints nature as she appeared in the flush and fervency of her youth, and then changes his note when Ilium has fallen, and tells us with poet's power and witching art, the wandering of Ulysses—has Tennyson the courage and the genius to maintain such a fight with Homer? If he has, he ought to exhibit the fact to the world.

In our opinion, some of the finest translations that have appeared, first saw the light in the columns of Frazer's Magazine, some twenty years ago. They were from the pen of a man of wonderful ability, a great scholar, and a man who loved Homer, and who knew him better than any man of the time—we allude to William Maginn, LL.D., the gifted witty and versatile Morgan O'Doherty, of the *Noctes Ambrosianae*. These productions were called by the translator, "Homeric Ballads," and caused a great deal of attention. They are in all styles of versification, and have the true Homeric ring, melody and rapidity. In our next issue we will revert to these ballads, and we are sure our readers will be thankful for the specimens we will be enabled to lay before them. We shall also endeavour in our next to treat the subject with more comprehensiveness.

MINING RIGHTS.

We understand that a work on Mining Rights and Privileges in Lower Canada has been prepared by Mr. Adolphus M. Hart, Advocate, Montreal, and will be published shortly if a sufficient number of subscribers can be obtained. The work will comprise the following chapters:— I. Of Property in Mineral, and the rights of the Crown. II. Of the mode of conveying Mineral Lands. III. Of the alienation of Mining Rights by will or descent. IV. Of the rights belonging to the owners of Mines, the injuries they may sustain and their remedies. V. What the grant or lease of Mining Lands should contain, special covenants, &c. VI. Of Joint Stock Associations and Acts of Incorporation. We believe the MS. has been submitted to several of the Judges of the Superior Court, and that each has spoken in high terms of its usefulness and importance.

LITERARY GOSSIP.

The London *Morning Star* has secured the services of Mr. James Greenwood, the brother of the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and the veritable "Lambeth Amateur Casual," who wrote such a spirited account of his workhouse experiences for the latter journal; and this gentleman has just commenced a series of "descriptive sketches, from the personal observations and experiences of the writer, of remarkable scenes, people, and places in London."

ANOTHER hitch has occurred in the progress of the second volume of the "Life of Cæsar," further cancels and alterations having been decided upon by the French Emperor. It will contain the War with the Gauls. Report further says that the Emperor is also examining Napoleon's Memoirs, to select those portions which are to be published in the edition which is to appear on the occasion of the Exhibition of 1867.

We understand that a five-act historical play has just been written by Mr. Martin F. Tupper, with a view to its representation in the spring; the subject is, "The Life and Death of Raleigh."

THE next number of *Temple Bar* will contain the experiences of a regular "casual" who happened to be in the Lambeth shed on the night Mr. Greenwood slept, or rather lay waking, there. Mr. Parkinson has found this clever vagabond, and he will supply to the article such notes and editing as it may require.

SOME time ago, it was stated that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had discontinued a translation of Homer, which he had been engaged upon for years, on account of the publication of Lord Derby's translation. Mr. Gladstone, it was said, declined publishing in rivalry to his political opponent, or rather of appearing to rival him. Whatever determination was then made, we believe the resolve of not continuing a translation has now been cast aside, and in due time another Homer in English will appear bearing on its title-page the name of the Chancellor of the Exchequer as the translator.

A LITTLE anecdote of Victor Hugo and his son is now appearing in certain Continental journals. The son, M. Charles Hugo, one day heard Mlle Le Hoene spoken of in the most flattering manner, and he begged to be introduced to her. Not at all displeased with the young lady, he a short time after asked her hand; but her grandmother (the young lady was an orphan) refused, on account of her poverty. To this the lover replied, "My father will think that a matter of no importance when he knows my wishes." He told M. Victor Hugo his desire to marry Mlle. Le Hoene. The father replied, "Very well, but don't mention the subject to me again until I get my book out." The proof-sheets of his "Songs of the Streets and the Woods" were then engaging his full attention, and when he is preparing a work for the press, or seeing it through the printer's hands, he will hear of nothing else. After the appearance of the volume, he arranged the marriage, gave his son a sum of money equal to £5,000, married them, and promised that they should live with him as soon as he completed the mansion he is now building.

IT is erroneously supposed that "Robinson Crusoe" first appeared piecemeal in the *Original London Post*; or *Heathcote's Intelligence*, a small folio journal, which was commenced on the 19th December, 1718. The first volume, "The Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe," was published in octavo on the 25th of April, 1719; and the second, "The Further Adventures," on the 20th of the following August. It was not till the 7th of October, in the same year, that the *Original London Post* commenced giving two pages of "Robinson Crusoe," beyond its two pages of news, &c. "The Further Adventures" were not concluded in that paper till the 19th October, 1720. Mr. W. Lee, in *Notes and Queries*, calls attention to this fact, we presume because "Robinson Crusoe," as published in *Heathcote's Intelligence*, is a book sought after by book-collectors, under the impression that it is the purest text, and fetches almost its weight in gold when sold by public auction.