

1. "Cursed be the day wherein I was born !
The day that my mother bare me,
Let it not be blest !
2. Cursed be the man who told the glad tidings to my father,
'There is born to thee a male child ;'
Who made him rejoice greatly.
3. And let that man become like the cities that Iahweh over-
threw, without relenting,
And let him hear a cry in the morning,
And an alarm at the hour of noon !
4. For that he slew me not in the womb,
That my mother might have become my grave,
And her womb have been laden evermore !
5. O why from the womb came I forth
To see labour and sorrow,
And my days fordone with shame ?"

These five triplets afford a glimpse of the lively grief, the passionate despair, which agitated the prophet's heart as the first effect of the shame and the torture to which he had been so wickedly and wantonly subjected. The elegy, of which they constitute the proem, or opening strophe, is not introduced by any formula ascribing it to Divine inspiration ; it is simply written down as a faithful record of Jeremiah's own feelings and reflexions and self-communings, at this painful crisis in his career. The poet of the book of Job has apparently taken the hint supplied by these opening verses, and has elaborated the idea of cursing the day of birth through seven highly wrought and imaginative stanzas. The higher finish and somewhat artificial expansion of that passage leave little doubt that it was modelled upon the one before us. But the point to remember here is that both are lyrical effusions, expressed in language conditioned by Oriental rather than European standards of taste and usage. As the