



## A GOOD PAGAN.\*

Those of our readers who are familiar with Archdeacon Farrar's instructive and delightful work: "Seekers after God," may recall that, in his chapters on the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, he pays a deserved tribute to Mr. George Long's translation of the imperial philosopher's writings. "My quotations," he says (in a note on page 268 of Messrs. Macmillan & Co.'s fine edition of his book), "from Marcus Aurelius will be made (by permission) from the forcible and admirably accurate translation of Mr. Long", and he continues: "In thanking Mr. Long, I may be allowed to add that the English reader will find in his version the best means of becoming acquainted with the purest and noblest book of antiquity." These few words of acknowledgment should be sufficient commendation—if commendation were needed—for the tasteful little volume just issued by Messrs. Bell & Co. George Long, one of the most remarkable of modern scholars, left to the world no legacy more prized than "The Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus." His version first appeared in 1862, and eleven years later, six years before his death, he brought out a carefully revised edition of the *Life and Philosophy*. The task was one of admitted difficulty owing to the chaotic condition of much of the text and, notwithstanding the enthusiastic reception of his performance by critics of approved learning and taste, he confessed his failure to remove some of the perplexities of the sadly corrupt original. What he succeeded in doing was, nevertheless, a rare triumph of erudition and industry, and what he could not do it is safe to conclude that no other scholar could accomplish. His reputation, said Matthew Arnold, is a guarantee of fidelity and accuracy. The reviews and magazines were equally fervent in their eulogies. But it is not merely as a translation that the book is of rare value. The portrait that Mr. Long has drawn of the great and good man, whose "Meditations" are among our richest heirlooms from antiquity is wonderfully life-like. We seem to be conversing with a contemporary rather than reading about one who ceased to live nearly two millenniums since. The book is not to be read to satisfy curiosity, but for instruction and edification. No one can read the *Life*, the *Philosophy* and the *Thoughts* without being a gainer by the task. It is a privilege to pass some hours in converse with such a mind. "The two best exponents of the later Stoical Philosophy were," says Mr. Long, "a Greek slave and a Roman emperor"—Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. Both by precept and example these worthies laboured to improve themselves and others. This service they still discharge by their writings that have come down to us, and by the record of their lives. With Seneca, they form the theme of Dr. Farrar's treatise, already mentioned. Mr. Long, while conceding that Seneca "has said many good things in a very fine way," hesitates to place him on the same plane with Marcus and Epictetus, though Jerome has given him honourable mention in his calendar of illustrious Christians, and it was once believed that he had corresponded with St. Paul. The letters on which this belief was based are now pronounced a forgery, and, as Mr. Long says, Seneca's life and writings must be taken together. The most serious charge against Antoninus is that he allowed the Christians to be persecuted. Mr. Long cannot admit that such a man was an active persecutor, but he does not deny (as his own words testify to the fact) that he had a poor opinion of the Christians, whom he knew mainly as disturbers and dangerous to the State. We must, however, refer our readers to the volume itself for fuller information on this and other points. Those who have not yet studied "The Thoughts" cannot err by possessing themselves of a copy of this dainty edition, reprinted from Mr. Long's latest revision.

## HANDBOOK OF FOLK-LORE.†

We have already given an outline of the work of the British Folk-Lore Society, of which Mr. Andrew Lang is actually president. It was established in 1878 for the purpose of collecting and preserving the fast perishing relics of popular tradition. As there was some uncertainty as to what was properly included under the name, it was deemed well that a manual setting forth the aims, comprehensiveness and limitations of folk-lore should be prepared and printed for the use of enquirers and collectors. Mr. G. L. Gomme, formerly honorary secretary, now director of the Society, was already engaged on an introduction to the science, when in 1888 a discussion arose on the question, and the Council, on learning the fact, resolved to avail itself of his assistance. Mr. Gomme soon found that his manuscripts would require considerable modification and so he began the work afresh. The undertaking was attended with a good deal of difficulty and some unavoidable delay

\*The Thoughts of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. Reprinted from the Revised Translation of George Long. London: George Bell & Sons, York street, Covent Garden.

†The Handbook of Folk-Lore. Edited by George Laurence Gomme, Director of the Folk-Lore Society. London: Published for the Folk-Lore Society by David Nutt, 270 Strand.

occurred, but it has at last been brought to a successful conclusion, and "The Handbook of Folk-Lore" has just been published by Mr. David Nutt, 270 Strand, London. It bears evidence of thorough (we might almost say of exhaustive) research on the part of Mr. Gomme and his co-workers. The arrangement of the subject is in accordance with the classification in Mr. Gomme's original scheme and comprises twenty-three headings. In the first place we are told what Folk-Lore is in an instructive chapter, which deserves careful study. In all stages of his career man has attempted to explain the natural phenomena surrounding and affecting him. Hence arose the mythology of tribes and nations, and within the circle of almost all human society, savage or civilized, exist old beliefs, old customs, old memories which are relics of an unrecorded past. It is the study of these relics that is indicated when we speak of folk-lore—the stored-up knowledge of the people. The subjects that make up the body of such survivals of the habits of thought and social or ceremonial usages of remote ages, are divided into four main groups—superstitious belief and practice; traditional customs; traditional narratives and folk (or popular) sayings. These again are subdivided according to the peculiar characters of the superstitions, customs, narratives or sayings. Superstitions, for instance, may be associated with trees or plants, with animals, with leechcraft, with magic or divination, or with beliefs relating to a future life. Customs may be connected with festivals, with games, with ceremonies; folk narratives, with the nursery or child life, with heroic exploits or with drollery of some kind; with the Creation, with the Flood, or with localities, or may be the themes of old ballads; folk-sayings may take the form of nursery rhymes, of proverbs, or may be extant in nicknames or rhymes pertaining to localities. A most important class of superstitions is associated with great natural objects, such as mountains (as M. Reclus has pointed out in his monograph "La Montagne"), islands, lakes, rivers, wells, caves, and even the sea, the "great globe itself" and the heavenly bodies. Of these, as of the other classes of superstitions, customs, tales and sayings, the Handbook gives ample illustration. Each class is dealt with separately, and in every case a list of questions, to which it is essential for the folk-lore enquirer to find answers if possible, is appended. Under the head of "Goblinism" (that class of spirits which "assume a form and possess characteristics more or less like mankind") a long enumeration is given of the names that still prevail in various localities, such as "brownie," "fliberty gibbet," "cloutie," "gudeman," "hop o' my thumb," "nickle ben," "puck," "old nick," etc., and the goblins or demons indicated by these or other names are classified according to the characters attributed to or the offices assigned to them. In the same way witchcraft, leechcraft, magic, are dealt with, and then the various popular customs, games and ceremonies, the several kinds of folk-tales, ballads, songs, nursery rhymes, proverbs and other divisions of the subject are fully and carefully treated. The chapter on ballads and songs has a literary as well as scientific interest. In his work on "Comparative Literature"—one of the volumes of the International Scientific Series—Prof. Posnett, of University College, Auckland, New Zealand, looks upon some form of choral song as the primary source from which all literature has developed. Mr. Gomme assigns the folk song precedence over the folk tale in point of antiquity. What are known now as nonsense rhymes are, he thinks, in many cases, relics of a lost language, the words having been handed down from so remote a date that the meaning has long been forgotten. Nursery rhymes and other jingles are among "the waifs and strays of folk-lore." Bargain-making formulae were superstitious guarantees against treachery in times when the laws of contract were little known. Here is an example:

As sure's death  
Cut me a breath  
Ten mile aneth the earth,  
Fite man, black man,  
Burn me t' death.

If the bargain was broken, the breaker knew what doom to expect. The 22nd chapter gives general instructions as to the collection of folk-lore, and the following and final chapter gives some useful hints for the prosecution of folk-lore research in the library. Lord Rayleigh, in addressing the British Association, drew attention to the accepted fiction that what has been once published is known. Yet often, he added, the rediscovery in the library may be a more difficult and uncertain process than the first discovery in the laboratory. Exemplifications of this truth are not wanting, and they are the clever ones who delve among the forgotten treasures of ancient literary and scientific workers and bring up therefrom things old as new. In the case of folk-lore, this industry is as necessary as it is honourable. "In every case the extract should be written out in the exact words of the original and precise reference (edition, volume, page and date) should be given to the work from which the extract is taken." The sources recommended for consultation are early and mediæval chronicles; reports of legal proceedings and law treatises; lives of the Saints; old homilies and Latin sermons; early Christian Fathers; classical writers; early topographical works; local histories; books of travel; old newspapers; chap books; tracts of various kinds and manuscripts in the British museum and the other great storehouses of world-learning. The "Handbook of Folk-Lore" is thus, it may be seen, entirely worthy of its name and does credit to Mr. Gomme and his coadjutors. These are chiefly the Hon. J. Abercrombie, Mr. Edward Clod, Mr. E. W. Brabrook, Mr. E. Sidney Hartland and Mr. Joseph Jacobs.

## JACQUES DE VITRY.\*

A name which closely resembles that of the famous mediæval preacher was borne by a man who played a rôle in Canadian history which the members of his race would gladly forget. Denis de Vitry is separated from Jacques de Vitry by nearly six centuries, and in character and career the gulf between them is no less marked. The name of the ecclesiastic seems to indicate that he was born at Vitry-le-François, in the Department of Marne, nineteen miles from Châlons. The ground for preferring this locality to Vitry-le-Brulé, in the Department of Seine, five miles from Paris, is the former existence there of a monastery of St. James (Sancti Jacobi de Vitriaco), after whom the future churchman may have been named. The date of his birth is uncertain; but as he was ordained in the year 1210, he was probably born early in the ninth decade of the twelfth century. Little is known of his family; but as he was a regular Canon, it is conjectured that he was of gentle, if not noble, stock, though his virtue and learning may have won him the distinction. He is known to have pursued his theological studies (*quibus fervebat immodicè*) at the University of Paris. He celebrated his first Mass in the Convent of Oignies, whither he was drawn by his friendship for the saintly Mary of that house, whose life he afterwards wrote. It was by her advice that he resolved to devote himself to preaching, in which he was destined to attain such eminence. Foulques, Bishop of Toulouse, whom Count Raymond the Sixth had driven from his See, induced him (it is said) to preach the crusade against the Albigenses. But he soon abandoned that task to preach the worthier crusade against the Saracens. In this he was so successful that the Canons of the city of Acre elected him Bishop of that See, and he was consecrated by Pope Honorius the Third. He thence proceeded to Genoa, whence he sailed for his distant diocese, which he only reached after being twice nearly wrecked. The relation of his voyage and subsequent experience in the Levant abounds in striking illustrations of the time. In the movement of the crusaders Jacques de Vitry had a prominent share. After the lamentable result of the Egyptian expedition, he tried to obtain release from the burden of his bishopric; but, though summoned by the Pope to the Council of Verona, he had to return to Acre, and it was not until Gregory the Ninth had replaced Honorius that he was permitted to resign. After his return he continued to preach the crusade against the Moslem, and in 1228 was created Cardinal and Archbishop of Tusculum. The remainder of his life is involved in obscurity. He is known to have acted the part of mediator in the quarrels between the Pope and the Emperor, and in 1239 he was elected Patriarch of Jerusalem by the clergy of Palestine. His death is believed, on the evidence of a letter of Pope Gregory, to have taken place soon after. His works are historical, biographical, homiletic and epistolary. Of the first of these classes are his "History of the East" and his "History of the West." His "Life of Mary of Oignies" is the only extant example of the second class. His "Letters" belong to the third. Of the fourth, with which the work before us is concerned, are his "Sunday and Saints' Day Sermons" and his "Popular Sermons" (*Sermones Vulgares*). It is from these that the "Exempla," just published by the Folk-Lore Society, have been culled. There are seventy-four sermons in the collection, addressed to prelate and priests, to canons and secular clergy, to scholars, judges and lawyers, to hermits and recluses, to hospitalers and nurses, to pilgrims and crusaders, to husbandmen and artificers, to sailors and soldiers, to young men and maidens, to man-servants and maid-servants, to married, unmarried and widowers—in fact, to "all sorts and conditions of men." Prof. Crane's "Introduction," from which we have already quoted, is rich in various and recondite information. He shows (so far as scanty extant data on the subject permit) to what extent the use of *exempla* in sermons had prevailed before Jacques de Vitry's time and how copiously his illustrations were employed by the preachers of succeeding ages. He also informs us that until recently it was practically unknown that so bountiful a supply of popular tales, valuable for the light they shed on the habits of thought of by-gone ages, was contained in early homiletic literature. In fact, no attempt had been made to give a general view of the subject until his own paper on "Mediæval Sermon-Books and Stories" was published in 1881 by the American Philosophical Society. When he undertook the work, however, he was not aware that Mr. T. Wright's selection of Latin stories edited for the Percy Society (Vol. VIII, 1842) contained a number of Jacques de Vitry's *exempla*, though without mentioning the source of them. When his work (save the introduction) was in the printer's hands, he received a copy of Cardinal Pitra's *Analecta Novissima Spicilegii Solismensis*, containing selections from the *Sermones Vulgares*. But his own *Exempla* will not be deemed superfluous, especially as the Cardinal's book is destitute of comparative notes, and besides, by the editor's confession, it teems with faults. His humility is an ecclesiastical virtue, we must not take His Eminence's self-reproaches too seriously. But, even if they were entirely groundless, no one can examine Prof. Crane's work and pronounce it *de trop*. The Latin text of the *Exempla* constitutes less than a third of the volume. The rest is the precious fruit of earnest research in every direction that promised to elucidate the theme as an illus-

\*The *Exempla*, or Illustrative Stories, from the "Sermones Vulgares" of Jacques de Vitry. Edited, with introduction, analysis and notes, by Thomas Frederick Crane, M.A., Professor of the Romance Languages in Cornell University. London: Published for the Folk-Lore Society by David Nutt, 270 Strand, W.C.