

EL DORADO.

BY J. HENRY PEACH.

Who gallops down the dusky way,
His armor gleaming in the ray,
That lights to its death the closing day?
Gaily he rides and he sings the while:
"O there's nought so sweet as my lady's smile!
More precious by far than the golden pile
Of far-famed El Dorado!"

Who comes from over the fading dawn,
With sandals' feet and a shaven crown,
With a jovial face and a russet gown?
He sings as he goes of the purple vine,
And the land of the bright, sun-blooded wine,
Whose skies like glowing sapphires shine,
Far richer than El Dorado!

Who comes as the gloaming sets apace?
An aged minstrel, with time-scar'd face,
Whose life, like the sunlight, has run its race!
And he sings to himself as he pauses awhile:
"O the mocking wine is a demon's wile;
And the maiden's lovely, ensnaring smile,
Is false as El Dorado!"

Knight, monk, and minstrel have all passed by;
The gold fades out from the dark'ning sky;
The sounds of life grow faint and die:
But the thought will live in my soul for aye,
That men will plunge into guile and fray
For phantom hopes that glitter and play
Like dreams of El Dorado.

THE REVISED BIBLE.

THE NEW ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE NEW
TESTAMENT—SOME OF THE STRIKING
CHANGES THAT HAVE BEEN MADE.

LONDON, JULY 21.—The Queen's printer, who alone by ancient statute law, is permitted to publish Bibles within the realm, has put his signature upon the last sheet-proof of the new revision of the New Testament, and within a week the first shipment of the bound volumes will be made to America, Canada, Australia, and wherever the English tongue is spoken by Protestants. For many reasons that will readily occur and need not be enumerated, the new revision is an epoch in Protestantism and a world-letter day in all Christian churches the red over. Its advent, looked forward to for over a decade, and the hope of thousands of Christian minds, will be a subject of absorbing interest.

The revision is catholic in its nature; catholic in its form. It is the joint work of the New and Old worlds; of all branches of the Protestant church; of learning and piety joined hand in hand; priest and layman, prelate and scholar, working together. Its origin was in that "cradle of Anglo-Saxon Christendom, the convocation of Canterbury, presided over by the primate of England." The necessity for a revision of the present text has become imperative—how imperative clergymen and scholars alone know—and for many years previously there had been careful inquiry and discussion among the bishops, clergy and theological professors, as well as laymen, in regard to the best means by which it ought to be brought about. The plan that has been slowly maturing under the advice of the most eminent minds in this country and America was presented to the convocation May 6, 1870, by the committee having it in charge. The plan was so well digested, so broad in its catholicity, yet so conservative in its aims, that it met with prompt approval, and the work now completing was begun without delay. The scheme could never have had any hopes of success had it been confined to the established church and it therefore contemplated a union of learning and special fitness for the labor that would embrace the whole world; that would unite all English-speaking races and all denominations; that would produce a text to be accepted in all lands and among all peoples as an "authorized version" and a correct rendering of the original text so far as the original text can be agreed upon by scholars.

The English committee appointed by the convocation comprised the venerable Archbishop Trench of Dublin; the Bishops of Lincoln, Winchester, St. David's, Durham, Salisbury, Bath and Wells, Landaff, Gloucester and Bristol, and St. Andrews; the deans of Westminster, Ely, Litchfield, Rochester, Lincoln, Canterbury, and Peterborough; the archdeacons of Dublin, Canterbury, Bedford, and Maidstone; the professors of Hebrew, Greek, Arabic and special theological branches in the universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh, London, Glasgow, and of the Wesleyan college at Dedbury, the Baptist colleges at London and Bristol, the Congregational college at Glasgow, and the Free Kirk (Presbyterian) colleges at Glasgow, Aberdeen and Edinburgh. To these were added eminent laymen adapted to the work.

The American committee was organized in 1871, chiefly from professors in the leading theological seminaries of the different denominations; the divinity schools of Harvard, Yale, Princeton, New Brunswick, Andover, Rochester, New York, Philadelphia, Trenton, Hartford, Alexandria and other large cities furnishing their ablest scholars. Bishop Lee was the only cis-Atlantic Episcopalian, but such names as Woolsey, Dwight, Schaff, Conant, Oswest, Strong, Van Dyke, Green, Day, Acken, Dewood, Thayer, and Abbott—names familiar and revered not only here, but in critical Holland and erudite Germany—were hailed as an earnest of the hearty acceptance of the scheme by all American denominations, and also their intention to fully deserve half the credit of the work, if not more.

In addition to these committees, Fischendorf, Kennen, Ewald, and nearly a hundred other eminent Bible scholars of the continent (includ-

ing several Catholic prelates) placed their special knowledge, their time, and their manuscript treasures at the disposal of the committee, and, as corresponding members, have rendered assistance of the very highest value.

HOW THE REVISION WAS MADE.

The principles of the revision were markedly conservative. "As few alterations in the present text as faithfulness to the original would permit" was the first and great commandment; but it was understood that "faithfulness to the original," required a great many changes. No change was retained without a two-thirds vote in each committee. The "original text" was selected in the same manner from the oldest and best uncials manuscript.

In America and here, following in part the plan of the King James translators, the committee divided, the Hebraists taking the Old Testament, the Hellenists the New Testament. These did not subdivide the work, however, and each member of the New Testament committee became responsible for the correctness of the entire work.

The method of labor was this: Both committees took up, let us say, the first synoptic. The Americans revised it. The work was then exchanged, and each committee compared the revision with its own. Where they agreed the work was accepted. Where they disagreed the work was again gone over, explained and exchanged, this being continued until agreement was had. There was very little disagreement, however, and the precaution provided for final disagreement was not necessary.

The progress of the work has been kept secret by special arrangement. Alarming reports of sweeping changes have from time to time appeared, frightening the timid and the letter-inspirationists; but nothing was given out by authority until now, when the whole work approved unanimously by the committee, is presented to Christendom for a verdict. In considering the changes that have been made it may be proper to insist upon the fact being kept in view that no more cautious and conservative body of Christian scholars enjoying so wide a reputation and such high respect throughout the world, could possibly be gathered together; that no change has been made in the present English version except by a two-thirds vote in both bodies; that the doubt has always been exercised in behalf of the present version, the necessity for each change having to be proven clearly and unmistakably, and that the only danger has been from the first that the revisers would exercise undue caution and refuse to accept corrections that should be made in the interests of truth because the evidence against them lacked some technicality; producing a work that the non-Christian would not and ought not to be asked to accept as a correct version of the original.

WHY THE REVISION WAS NEEDED.

Great as has been the bulk of information disseminated concerning the Scriptures, some facts of the first importance are little known. One of them is that there never has been a standard text. The editions printed by the Queen's printer for the Bible Society have widely varied, and since King James' day there have been many unauthorized and no authorized version strictly so called. The American Bible Society is even in worse plight, and has of late years been adhering to a text of its own after putting several on the market, while the other societies do not even adhere to one text.

The King James' translators were strictly charged to follow the text of the Bishop's Bible, a revision of the Cranmer Bible, which was a revision of the great Bible, itself the Matthew-Tyndale Bible, without the notes which had its origin in an English translation from the German. The previous revisers were individuals dissatisfied with the version, and their work was without ecclesiastical authority.

The present text of the English version is over three centuries old, and during that time the language has not alone taken on many new words, but it has also dropped many then in use, and found new meanings for old words which have lost their original significance. Let me instance a few obsolete words: "Doves taberning on their breasts," instead of drumming. "The lion filled his den with ravin," instead of plunder; "Neither is there any daysman," instead of umpire. "Ouches," for sockets; "clouds," for patches; "earring," for ploughing; "bruit," for report; "bolled," for swallow, are other examples. The changes in significations, however, are much more important, and lead to error, contradiction, dispute. When we read that the daughter of Herodias said, "Give me, by and by, in a charger, the head of John the Baptist," it is natural to think that she was in no great hurry. But three hundred years ago "by and by" meant instantly, immediately, forthwith, and a "charger" was not a "war-horse," but what our housewives call a dish and yours a platter. "Give me instantly in dish the head of John the Baptist" is quite different from the old form. The "artillery" so often spoken of in the Bible is not our artillery, but literally bows and arrows. "Go to" then meant "come." "let," to hinder; "careless," free from care; "prevent," to anticipate; "admiration," wonder; "botch," an ulcer; "camshire," a cypress; "pommel," a globe, &c.

MISTAKES OF EARLY TRANSLATORS.

The corrections necessary to bring the English text into accord with the language of to-day, many as they are, are insignificant, however,

when compared with the errors of early translators. Three hundred years ago the grammatical niceties of the Greek language were unknown and "Hebrew studies," were in their infancy. Buxtorf published his little Hebrew grammar while the translators were at work, and his larger one after they had finished. In many cases, so weak were they in Hebrew, they were compelled to leave Hebrew words untranslated, not knowing or being able to "guess" their meaning. A familiar instance is the word Belial, which is supposed to be a proper name, but it simply means unworthy, and the phrase "sons of Belial" should properly read "unworthy men;" "Jasher" is not a proper name, but an adjective, meaning upright, and the "Book of Jasher" was the "Book of the Upright." The "Gammadims" (Ezek. xxvii., 11) are warriors; "Pannag" (v. 17) means a candy; "Sheth" means a tumult; "Bajith" an idol temple. Their wild "guesses" often show absurd blunders. The "mules" mentioned in Genesis as having been found were warm springs; "pledges" they turned into thick clay; "fleet" into both piercing and crooked; "curls" into galleries; "leaders" into avenging; "ostriches" into owls; "goats" into satyrs; "droves" into linen yarn; "set up" they render as cast down, and Joseph's "tunic with long sleeves" they transmogrify into a "coat of many colors." Instances might be multiplied until patience was exhausted of their inaccuracy. In the New Testament they were better qualified for the work, and their errors were not so gross, though equally numerous. The grammatical forms upon which so much depends, especially with catholic epistles, where there is close logic, and the place of a word in a sentence may qualify its meaning, are never considered, and they stumble through their work in a "rough and tumble" way more like a schoolboy than a scholar.

Still more important than either the changes of the language or the blunders of translators have been the corrections that have been made in the original text, by the comparison of manuscripts generally, and by the discovery of two very ancient manuscripts of the Bible in particular. A single illustration of this will suffice; Mark says that on the cross the Christ was given wine mingled with myrrh; Matthew says vinegar. The "harmony" that gives Him two drinks is bosh for children; scholars know there is a contradiction. The natural inference is that the writers did not disagree, and that the error arose in copying. By comparing manuscripts the inference is found to be correct, the older codices agreeing upon wine. The two words in the Greek are very much alike, of the same length and differing only in the middle letter. The most violent of atheistical shoemakers, when shown the manuscripts, would not hesitate in his acknowledgment that there was no contradiction, and that the cause of the error was to be found in the carelessness of some copyist of the Greek text of Matthew.

ORIGINAL TEXTS.

Reverence for the Bible is modern. It is, in fact, an outcome of the Reformation. The Greek and the Roman churches respect the Bible; the Protestant reveres—sometimes worships it. In old times copies were made with care, but not sufficient to avoid mistakes, and very few agreed. Very few agree now, except when printed from the same plates, and it not safe to cast stones. The denunciation of those who "added to or took away" has always been confined to Scotland.

When the present translation was made there had been comparatively no comparison of manuscripts for the elimination of errors; there were very few manuscripts available; no very old manuscripts were known; the inaccurate Vulgate (Latin translation) of that day was the staff upon which the forty leaned; and texts known to be corrupt had to be used for want of better. The oldest copy of a manuscript that they consulted was of the Middle ages.

Within the present generation two copies of the Bible, made about 340 A. D., have been brought to light, the pages photographed, and copies distributed among scholars. These are the celebrated "Codex Sinaiticus," found by Tischendorf in a convent on Mount Sinai, and the "Codex Vaticanus," found in the Vatican library at Rome, where for centuries it has reposed unnoticed and uncared for. These two alone have been of priceless value in detecting errors of transcription and in harmonizing discordant passages satisfactorily to the sceptical as well as the credulous seeker for truth. The present version of the Bible is based upon a very few modern manuscripts, not exceeding five in number. That now before us is made up from careful comparison of over twelve hundred, ninety-eight being ancient—from the fourth to the tenth century. In addition, all the quotations by the patristic and early writers have been collected, and the early translations into Syriac, Latin, Gothic, Egyptian, Celtic, Arabic and Slavonic.

Three centuries ago the translators of King James had few aids and little material for the work. Those of Victoria have the accumulated treasure of ten thousand able workers, and storehouses filled with material. Astonishment must be expressed that they have found so little of vital importance to Christianity to condemn in the work of their predecessors—not that they have made ten thousand trivial, and one thousand important changes in the New Testament.

THE TWO VERSIONS COMPARED.

The translation of King James was more a new revision than the ordered translation; the re-

vision of Victoria is more a new translation than the ordered revision. In each case the exigencies of the labor compelled a departure from and compromise with the instructions. In the latter case there is less reason than in the former, but after the first excitement dies away it will not be regretted.

The new revision of the New Testament issued from the University press will at first shock the Protestant world. It is not recognizable as a Bible. The chapters and verses are gone; the running head lines are gone; verses are missing, changed, pared; familiar texts that have become graven on the minds of church people for generations have disappeared, and in their place are words foreign to the eye and strange to the ear. Verbal and grammatical changes may be counted by the tens of thousands.

The first general idea that will strike the scholar, however, is the delightfulness with which the Greek text has been reproduced for the English reader. The narrative is unbroken by disfigurement of chapter and verse, but the capitals, punctuations, and paragraphs, lacking in the original, are, of course, supplied, and for convenience of reference to the present version, the present divisions are marked parenthetically. The misleading headlines disappear finally, without a sign to denote their improper intrusion.

The effect is striking and a marked improvement. The sequence of the gospel narratives, the logic of St. Paul, take on a new appearance and force that is not all owing to the improvement in grammatical construction of the text, although in a first reading it is difficult to distinguish how much is owing to the one and how much to the other.

Take this illustration (Heb. iv., 6-7) which is a fair example of this point:

OLD STYLE.

6. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some one must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief.
7. Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying to David, To-day after so long a time, as it is said, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

NEW STYLE.

Since, therefore, it remaineth that some enter therein, and they who formerly received the glad promise entered not in because of disobedience, he again fixed a certain day, saying so long a time afterwards in David (as hath been said before), To-day if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

OMISSIONS FROM THE TEXT.

The fourth gospel suffers most at the hands of the revisers, the synoptics less even than the Revelation and the catholic epistles least of all. The longest excision is from the fifty-third verse of the seventh chapter to the eleventh verse of the next inclusive. The passage is that of the woman taken in adultery, as follows:

53. And every man went unto his own house.

CHAPTER, VIII.

Of the Adulterous Woman.

1. Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives.
2. And early in the morning he came again into the temple and all the people came unto him; and he sat down and taught them.
3. And the Scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery, and when they had set her in the midst.
4. They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.
5. Now Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?
6. This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.
7. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself and said unto them, He that is without sin among you let him first cast a stone at her.
8. And again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.
9. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last; and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.
10. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?
11. She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more.

The following verse (12), in which Jesus declares Himself the light of the world, is joined upon and is a reply to the scoff of the Pharisees, in the preceding chapter, that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.

The next deletion of any importance is the angelic coloring of the description of the pool of Bethesda in the fifth chapter. The following passage is omitted by the revisers:

3. * * * Waiting for the moving of the water.

4. For an angel went down at a certain season unto the pool and troubled the water; whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

The famous text of the three Heavenly witnesses (1. John v., 7-8) is of course thrown out, the following words being expunged:

7. * * * In heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

8. And there are three that bear witness in earth * * *

Another notable omission of the revisers is to be found in the conversion of Paul as recorded in Acts ix., 5-6. The words expunged are:

5. * * * It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.