



NOTE
ON A SUGGESTED
INDEX OF TRANSLATIONS
OF
Foreign Literature
INTO THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE.



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ALTHOUGH there are many cheap jokes made about translations and translators, *traduttore traditore*, sensible people everywhere acknowledge their value and usefulness. - That a translation does not convey the whole of the beauty and significance of the original may be quite true. It is equally true that the best engraving fails to give all the charm of a painting, but no one therefore thinks it necessary to decry the value of such reproductions. The engraver translates the thought, but the glory of colour evaporates in his rendering. So in literature, the faithful translator can at least give the idea even if he fail to transfer all the charm of style with which it may be clothed in the original. Our own language and literature are remarkably receptive, and an enormous mass of foreign literature has been englished. This material is not so well known as it should be, owing to the casual and fragmentary fashion in which much of it is published. It is tolerably plain sailing when we are dealing with translations of the complete works of a foreign author, but there are many versions, and some of them of great importance, hidden in magazine articles and in volumes of poems and essays. The title of a book will not always give the faintest clue to the fact that it contains versions of foreign literature. Thus a translation of Lokman's "Fables" is in Isaac Pitman's "Memorial of Francis Barham"; W. H. Ainsworth's "Ballads" contains two Latin poems of the Admirable Crichton, and the old French "Combat des Trente," (the lay of the famous battle of Mi-Voie between Britons and Bretons) in English versions. Beranger's "Lyonnaise" appears in Bamford's "Homely Rhymes." Mary Leadbeater's "Poems" include a translation of the Thirteenth book of the *Æneid*, written in the fifteenth century by Maffæus, as well as versions of an elegy of Propertius, and the nuptial song of Catullus, by her brother, Richard Skackleton. The "Poems translated from the Spanish and German," by Henry Phillips, junr., of

Philadelphia, include pieces from Rioja, Escriba, the Romancero, Trüeba, Juan de la Encina, Cristoval de Castillejo, Leonor Blander, Lope de Vega, Zedlitz, Uhland, von Plönnies, Herder, Kerner, Chamisso, Neumann, Max von Oer, Hartman, Reinicke, Heine, Geibel, Gleim, and "The Sun of Sorrow" from an anonymous Swedish author. Dr. Phillips has printed several volumes of translations, including the "Faust" of Chamisso, and the "Poems" of Herman Rollet. The "Nugæ" of Abraham Stansfield includes imitations and translations from Louis von Arentschildt, Ferdinand Braun, Chamisso, Eichendorff, Friedrich Förster, Geibel, Heine, Gustav Hartwig (Hirsch), Hoffman von Fallersleben, Lenau, Lessing, Wilhelm Müller, Emma von Nindorf, Robert Reinick, Jean Paul, Adölf Stöber, Moritz Strachwitz, Uhland, Baudelaire, Chateaubriand, Marceline Desbordes-Valmore, Alfred de Musset, and Jean Reboul. This volume includes a version in blank verse of Richter's famous "Dream," of which there are several prose translations extant, the best perhaps being that of Carlyle. Stansfield's rendering of Reboul's "L'ange et l'enfant" may be compared with that of Longfellow, the great poet to whom we owe, among many other translations, Jasmin's "Blind Girl of Castel-Cuilhé." This version of a poet by a poet may again be compared with the renderings in the appendix to Dr. Smiles's "Jasmin."

Let us take again as a type of a certain class of literature the volume known as "Under the Peak," by William T. Mercer, M.A. (London: J. C. Hotten, 1869). There is nothing in the title that is suggestive of anything, but from the preface we learn that it is an allusion to Victoria Peak, and the sub-title describes the book as "Jottings in verse written during a lengthened residence in the colony of Hong-Kong." It contains amongst other matters renderings of several Chinese vers de Société, of Keying's "Farewell," of the "Man of Loo" from the "New Heô," by Lu Chen of Fokien, of the "Pih Jin Ko" or Ode on Patience, of Sir John Davis's Latin *Alcaics* on the Cave of Camoens, "Trifles from the Tartar," Horace, *Carm. I. 31*, imitated, the "Tea Ballad" written in Chinese by Le Yih-Tsing, also called

Yih-hing, Isaiah xxvi. 4 paraphrased, the Fortunes of Aristæus, from the fourth Georgic of Virgil, and other passages from Sophocles, Moschius, Pindar, Anacreon, Horace, Ovid, Hierocles, Martial, and the Greek Anthology. There are translations from Buchanan, Dante, and Gleim, as well as of two anonymous French poems. Take again N. L. Frothinghams "Merrical Pieces, translated and original" (Boston 1855). Some of the original poems are of great interest, as for instance the "Epithalmium" for Longfellow's marriage, and the translations include the whole of "The Phenomena" of Aratus, the "Cinque Maggio" of Manzoni, and pieces from Propertius, Martial, Goethe, Schiller, Herder, Rückert, Uhland, Zedlitz, and Auersperg (Anastasius Grün).

These examples, taken almost at random, are from the domain of poetry, but the same considerations apply to the other departments of literature. An enquirer for the writings of Jorge Manrique may remember that the "Coplas" have been translated by Longfellow, but a student curious as to the continuation of Virgil may be excused if he forgets or does not know that both text and translation are given by Mary Leadbeater. So much is hidden away in polygraphic books, that many a man must have turned away in disappointment from a library which contained within it, a few yards from him, the very thing he wanted. Poole's "Index to Literature" and Fletcher's "Index to General Literature" have made accessible a mass of important material which in the past has too often been if not "out of sight, out of mind," at least very frequently overlooked. Can there be added to these excellent books another to give some idea of the extent to which the riches of foreign literature have been transferred to our language, and enable us to put our hands at once on the volumes in which we shall find the thinkers and singers of Greece, of Germany, of Italy, of Russia, clothed in an English garb, and ready to teach their lessons to the myriads of the Anglo-Saxon race, in the great republic of the west, and in the continents and islands of the sea where the name of England

"Flames from the austral bounds to the ends of the
northern night."