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Ancient Hebrew Poetry.

LECTURE BY THE SHEIKH.

At the Liverpool Muslim Institute, Brougham Terrace, on Sunday night, May 24th, H. E. Sheikh Abdullah Quilliam Bey Effendi (B.A., F.G.S., LL.D.), Sheikh-ul-Islam of the British Isles, gave a lecture to an interested audience on "Ancient Hebrew Poetry."

Billal Quilliam Effendi, S.S.C., who presided, conducted a brief but impressive preliminary religious service. The Sheikh said:—

Some few weeks ago I spoke on "Arabian Poetry," and, as far as was possible in the course of the lecture, gave some examples of Arabian Poetry, and also of some modern authors in poetical style, and described the mode in which ancient Arabian poetry had risen to its present highly cultivated condition, from the first beginnings of which we have any record, so far as Arabian poetry is concerned. On that occasion I ventured to touch somewhat lightly on the analogy that exists between some of the expressions used in Arabic Poetry with those in Hebrew poetry, and I pointed out that the word which is translated from the Hebrew into the English word "Seer," bears a very close resemblance to the Arabic word for the same thing—I mean in appearance as well as being identical in the meaning—and that "Seer" in Hebrew and Arabic alike, means not only one who foresees the future, as it means in English, but also has the significance of diviner, soothsayer, and poet.

I did not then attempt, and it was not convenient at that time, to say much more about Hebrew Poetry, but to-night I propose to address myself more particularly to "Ancient Hebrew Poetry," and to point out wherein it differs from Arabian, and wherein there is any resemblance between the two, not in the verse, as we understand the term "verse," but in the method of composition and of utterance.

Now the samples of Ancient Hebrew poetry that survive the lapse of time have come down to us from very remote periods, and in that respect they differ from the remains of ancient Arabian poetry, because Arabian poetry arose at any rate, not more than 100 to 125 years before the advent of our holy Prophet. What I mean, thereby, is that no exact, no authentic records exist of Arabian poetry of an older date, although

such poetry undoubtedly did exist, of which we have examples in "Saj," which is a kind of rhymed prose, and from it came the style of poetry which is called "Raja;" but the remains of those ancient forms of poetry, and of other forms derived from them, which have been so ably classified by the Arabian grammarians and writers, from about 100 to 200 years after the Hegira, or the flight of the Prophet from Mecca, are few, and it was not till a century, or a century and a quarter before the coming of the Prophet, in the "days of ignorance," as they are called, that Arabian poetry was reduced to writing. Before that time, when the Arabs, as yet, could not write; their poetry was preserved by word of mouth, and remembered by frequent repetition, and in this manner were probably committed to writing, at a subsequent date, the poems of those Arabian authors who had become famous a century or a century and a half before the advent of the Prophet, or in the first century after the Hegira, or flight of the Prophet.

In these respects, then—in age, and in the absence of authentic records—Arabic poetry differs from Hebrew, because undoubtedly the Jews kept a chronicle of the history of their nation, and without going so far as to say that the five books of Moses, called the "Torah," were actually written by Moses, in their present form, and without going so far as to say that certain other books of the Old Testament were equally written by the persons to whom they are ascribed, we must at least admit that ancient records of their poetry did exist among the Jews, and that, at any rate, at the period of the rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem, contemporary with Ezra, the Jews were able to write, and to keep chronicle of national events. Most of the books ascribed to Moses and other writers may have been fabricated by Ezra and his band of scribes, at the rebuilding of the Temple; but, if so, I venture to say that they merely reduced to writing that which already was tradition, and drew on the recollection of the people for the composition of the books of the Old Testament. We find proofs of that theory in the manner in which the political effusions have been segregated from the accompanying prose, and we find there a primitive style of expression, in Hebrew poetry, of which we have no analogy, so far as Arabian poetry is concerned.

I mentioned, just now, that the primitive style of Arabian poetry was "Saj," that is to say, rhymed prose, or lines which terminated with a word rhyming with the word that terminated the next sentence. That does not seem to have been the primitive style of Hebrew poetry, although we did find some specimens of "Saj" in the Old Testament, notably the "Song of Lamech," which I quoted in a lecture given in the early part of April. A much more appropriate name for it, I think, would be the "Lamentation of Lamech." Herder, a great authority on Hebrew poetry, who lived about 150 years ago, calls it the "Book of the Sword." That seems to me to be a rather far-fetched title, and a more appropriate term would be the "Lamentation of Lamech," for it is a lamentation, as you will see from the language used by the author:—

"And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech hearken unto my speech; for I have slain a man to my wounding and a young man to my heart.

If Cain shall be avenged seven-fold, truly Lamech seventy and seven-fold."

That is much more like a lamentation than a song, and it occurs to me, or I think it would occur to anyone who has studied the subject, that the portion I have read is only an extract from a much longer poem; that some Hebrew poet put into choice language the words used by Lamech to his wives, when deploring the fact of having, most probably by accident, killed a man, or committed manslaughter by misfortune. We have, in the above extract, I repeat, only a portion of a much longer poem, all that is now preserved of it; and yet slight as it is, if you searched the whole of the Old Testament through you could not find a more symbolical piece of poetry, more typical of the ancient Hebrew style, than the lines that I have just quoted. And for this reason, that the lines contain the very elements which constitute Hebrew poetry, and yet they are elements which are not generally found together. The style, in the first place, is very similar to "Saj," but combined with it is a species of rhythm running through the lines, not often met with in Hebrew poetry, for most Hebrew poetry has neither rhyme nor rhythm—a matter with which we will deal later on.

The "Lamentation of Lamech" contains a third characteristic of Hebrew poetry, what is called Parallelism. Now I want you to

notice that quality of Parallelism, because you find it in scarcely any class of poetry, except ancient Hebrew. It is a species of repetition, in the second line, of what has occurred in the first; a kind of enforcing on the attention of the reader, in the second line, of something which the poet had already expressed in the first. Here you have such a repetition very distinctly in the "Lamentation of Lamech."

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
Ye wives of Lamech, hearken into my speech."

You see the poet makes Lamech repeat himself putting the same idea, "Hear my voice," into slightly different language: "For I have slain a man to my wounding, And a young man to my hurt."

There, again, the second line is only an enunciation of what is clearly contained in the first line, in slightly different words. Again:

"If Cain shall be avenged seven-fold,
Truly Lamech seventy and seven-fold."

You will find a Parallelism in the Book of Lamentations, in the Psalms, in the Song of Solomon, and so on, and I could give you a number of illustrations in proof, of which I will content myself with one—Psalm 121:—

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,
from whence cometh my help.

My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved;
he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord is thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.

The sun shall not smite thee by day,
nor the moon by night.

The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; he shall preserve thy soul.

The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for ever-more."

Parallelism runs through the whole of that short Psalm. We have another example in the "Song of Deborah," in the Book of Judges, showing the ancient form in which the Hebrew poets expressed themselves not in religion, not in rhyme, not in rhythm, but in a species of verse or utterance, which was truly characteristic of Hebrew poets, and belonged to them, with a peculiarity that is shared to the same extent, by the poets of no other nation. The "Song of Deborah" runs as follows:—

"Lord, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchedst out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water.

The mountains melted from before the Lord, even that Sinai, from before the Lord God of Israel.

The inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel, until that I, Deborah, arose, that I arose a mother in Israel.

They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera.

The river of Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon.

Then were the horse-hoofs broken by the means of prancings, the prancings of the mighty ones."

The above lines show how frequently Hebrew poets, in the second line, merely repeated what they had already said in the first, for the sake of emphasis.

Some people may say:—"Oh! but that is not poetry." It all depends on what you call "Poetry." Different nations, different customs in poetry, as in other things. What is one man's meat, may be another man's poison. The inhabitants of one part of the earth, eat birds' nests, and consider them a delicacy; we eat the birds, but would not touch the nests. We like eggs, but we like them fresh; some other people will eat only eggs that are stinking. And so it is the same with national ideas of what constitutes poetry. What in England to-day is considered poetry, was not so considered even in England in the time of Chaucer. And if the standard of poetry can vary in one country, from generation to generation, is it not likely to vary much more as between different countries? The form matters very little; what constitutes real poetry is the fervour of its feeling, even what is prose in form, may be poetry in fervour, and tested by that standard the "Song of Deborah" is very exalted poetry indeed. In England, poetry may rhyme, or it may be in blank verse and sometimes the blank verse is far finer poetry than the rhymed, or that which has only a pleasant jingle of verse to recommend it. And, like us, the ancient Hebrews had their own ideas of poetry. Their poetry might have neither rhyme nor rhythm, it might be destitute of "feet," or metre; but it was poetry, and had the character of true poetry, all the same. In many instances these old Hebrew poets introduced manners

and customs which were strange to their own fellow-countrymen. Thus, in some of the Psalms, the first line of a verse begins with the Hebrew letter "Aleph"—that is to say, "A"; the second line would begin with "Beth," or "B"; the third line with "Gimel," or "D"; the fourth with "Daleth," or "D," and so on to the end of the Psalm and of the Alphabet, every first line beginning with a letter of the Alphabet in regular sequence to the end. The same thing occurs in the Book of Lamentations and in the Psalms, and in other portions of the Old Testament. I could give numerous instances, but it is unnecessary to do so; the fact is incontrovertible. Again, a line may begin with "M" and end with "Ma"; the next line would begin with "Ma" and end with "Mb"; the third line would begin with "Mb" and end with "Mg," and so on, consecutively with each letter of the Alphabet to the end. Another peculiar characteristic of Jewish poetry is the kind of chorus which runs through it. A verse would be sung, and then three or four others, after which the singer would return to the first verse and bring it in again as an antistrophe, and many of the Psalms seem to have been sung antiphonally, that is to say, by two opposite choirs, one of which, as it were, answered the other. In my opinion, an ignorance of that fact is the reason we do not appreciate the Jewish Psalms as we would do if we sang them as they were originally sung, by way of responses between two choirs. If you were to read the Psalms in that way, or sing them, you would find that they have quite a different sound, and a much more significant meaning than they have when read straight through, as is our English custom.

With one exception, the Hebrews seem to have had no idea of epic poetry, and that one exception is remarkable. And yet there exists ample material in Jewish history for a grand epic poem. Just imagine what Homer, Virgil or Firdhausi, the great Greek, Latin and Persian poets would have made of the same material. Any one of the three would have produced an epic poem from Hebrew history such as the world has never seen; but the opportunity was missed by the Hebrew poets, or it did not occur to them, except in the Book of Job, and it is significant that the only epic poem in the whole of the Bible, the Book of Job, is believed to have been composed not by a Hebrew writer, but by an Arab, and to have been afterwards translated into Hebrew. It is an epic poem because of the grandeur of the themes on which it

dwells, God's ways with men, as illustrated in the dialogues between Job and Bildad the Shuhite and Eliphaz the Temanite, winding up with the restoration of Job from his poverty to more than his former prosperity. I may be asked, "What about the Song of Solomon? Is not that an epic poem?" I am not going to discuss the "Song of Solomon" at present. It would be a theme for a whole lecture, and even that would not exhaust it. Attempts have been made to convert the "Song of Solomon" into a magnificent epic by representing it to be symbolical of Christ's relation to His Church on earth; but that is only possible by incorporating the headings of the different chapters, as if they were parts of the Hebrew original, whereas they are interpolations by commentators, who do not so much as explain what Solomon said, as what the commentators would have liked him to have said, in order to support their theory that it is the "Love of Christ for His Church" which is the theme of Solomon, whereas the whole Song is, in all probability, the love-sick utterance of some king or chief to the particular lady of his palace or harem, with whom he happened, for the time being, to be enamoured and between whom there passed that discourse which is as music to fond lovers, but to outsiders sounds more like clotted nonsense. Let me remind you that the headings to chapters in the Bible are no part of the Bible itself, any more than the preface; and that neither chapters nor verses exist in the original, and that their classification for the sake of convenience and distinction has, in some instances, led to confusion by destroying the context. Some parts of the "Song of Solomon," magnificent, I admit; but I deny the symbolical meaning which has been attached to them by Christian commentators; they describe not the love of Christ and His Church but of a couple of very earthly loves indeed, and some of the passages are mere erotic rubbish.

If you want real sublimity in Hebrew poetry, go to the Book of Isaiah. There, indeed, you will find grandeur of thought and utterance. What could we find better than "Oh, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and drink"? If you prefer short, epigrammatic sentences to flowing periods, you have them in the Book of Proverbs, which contains little crisp sentences that carry conviction to the mind, and enforce great truths in words that are easily remembered; but it should be said that many of the proverbs there brought together are not original and are not peculiar to the Hebrew

race. You will find similar proverbs among the records of other nations; among the Hindoos and the Chinese, and among the ancient Persians—the same incidents and ideas and thoughts, in almost the identical words.

I have said something about the Hebrew custom of beginning each line of poetry with a separate letter of the alphabet successively to the end. It has been debated whether that was done as an aid to memory, at a time when printing did not exist, and writing was practically unknown. I venture to say the idea was for no such object. It may have been an aid to memory, but the object was much more to show the cleverness of the writers than to help their readers. It was a common practice among the Turks and the Persians to exhibit their cleverness in the same way. In some Turkish poems you will find that the writer has introduced his name in the course of the poem, not literally, but figuratively. Suppose the poet has named "Jameel-ud-deen," that is, "obedient to the Faith," in the centre of the poem perhaps, he would work in the word "Jameel-ud-deen" not as a proper name, but as a phrase pertinent to the development of the poem. Or suppose the poet's name was "Abdul-Aziz," that is, "Servant of the Word," he would work it into the poem in a way that would be consistent with the sense, and that might easily cause his name to be passed over as not the name of the author at all. All the same, his name would be there, and it would serve, if need be, to identify him as the author of the poem. The practice is almost unknown in English, although attempts have been made to read Bacon's name into some of Shakespeare's plays as the author of those plays. But it is quite a common thing in Turkish poems, and Turkish poets also work in their names in another way, each line beginning with a letter of the poet's name, exactly in the same way as the English anagram, or acrostic. To be able to do such a thing was looked upon as a clever feat in poetry, and it is so still regarded in England for a certain class of poetry, and the ancient Hebrew poets were also adepts at it.

And now I want to call your attention to one particularly striking instance of a peculiarity of Hebrew poetry to which I have already referred—the prevalence of "Saj," as in Arabic poetry. It occurs, chapter xxxii., and reports a conversation which must have been only a fragment of a much more extensive discussion, and in a less poetic vein than is here recorded. Moses and Joshua are

coming down from Sinai, where Moses has received the Ten Commandments from God. Moses had left Joshua half way up and rejoined him on their return to the Israelites' camp. It was on descending that they heard the sound of merry-making. And Joshua say to Moses: "There is a noise of war in the camp." Moses replied: "It is not the voice of men that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of men that cry for being overcome, but the noise of them that sing do I hear." Now one of two things. Either the ancient Hebrews were so full of poetic ideas, and had such a command of poetical language, that they always spoke in the grand style depicted between Moses and Joshua; or the poet has cast the ordinary conversation of Moses and Joshua on the occasion into poetic form: "There is a noise of war in the camp," says Joshua; to which Moses replies, "The noise of them that sing do I hear," and in his anger at the people's ill-timed mirth, he flung away the tablets of the law that God had just previously given him, and they were dashed to pieces. Undoubtedly we have here a highly poetical description of a conversation between Moses and Joshua and only a fragment of what must have been said on the occasion. That, I venture to suggest to you, is the true explanation of the passage, and it is a far more probable explanation than the ordinary one, which would have us believe that the Israelites habitually spoke in the high-flown diction here quoted. That we have only a fragment of the conversation, as well as a poetic version of the plain prose of what was said, is evident from the brevity of the passage quoted. A good deal more must have been said. Moses had been with the Lord face to face on Mount Sinai, and he returned, transfigured by the glory of Jehovah, to his companion Joshua. Just then sounds of merriment came from the camp of the Israelites. They had forgotten the God who brought them out of Egypt, through the Red Sea and the Wilderness, and had fed them with manna, and they had made them a golden calf to worship. And Moses, dreading God's anger, hastened to propitiate Him. He returned to Jehovah, saying, "Oh, Lord, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt not forgive their sin, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." That, no doubt, is a highly poeticised version of the language which Moses would use on the occasion to deprecate God's anger against the apostates, and it would seem to indicate that the parallelism between the pas-

sages, separated though they are by several intervening verses, points to the fact that they once formed part of a whole, continuous passage which has become dislocated, and that to get at the full account of the episode we must put them together again. Numerous other instances occur in the Bible of the same kind of parallelism, but I need not labour the point.

I come now to another matter on which I would like to speak a few words; I refer to that peculiarity of ancient Hebrew poetry known as Amplification. By that, of course, is meant an enlargement of any idea. Take an apple as an illustration. You would say:

"See, how round is the apple!

How red are the cheeks of the apple!

How pleasant it is to the taste!

How it matures from a tiny bud until it becomes a small globe!

How pleasant it is to the taste!

How pleasant and useful to mankind!"

And so on. That is Amplification, in a rough and ready fashion, which is polished by the poets into a more elaborate metre. We have an example of such amplification in Job's imprecation on his birthday:

"Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, 'There is a man-child conceived.'

Let that day be darkness: let not God regard it from above; neither let the light shine upon it.

Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it: let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it."

There, again, you have amplification; the same idea running through several verses, dwelt upon and repeated again and again, in different words, it may be, but with one idea pervading them all. Amplification of that kind is a peculiarity of the Hebrews.

While Greek, Latin and English verse has metre, Hebrew poetry is destitute of it. When discussing Arabian Poetry, as I pointed out in a previous lecture, great stress was laid on the necessity of compliance with the rule of the metre by the ancient Greeks and Romans. Each line was to have so many syllables, or "feet," and no more, and these rules must be observed or the poem was condemned as very unpolished and barbarous. We have the same strict adherence to metre in certain forms of English poetry, more especially the hymnology of the Church and the Nonconformists. In any English hymn-book you will meet with the letters "C.M." meaning "Common Metre"; "L.M." meaning "Long Metre," and "S.M." "Short Metre," and

sometimes the letters are accompanied by figures; for instance, 6—8-7's or 6—10-11's, and so on. The meaning is that there are so many syllables in each line. Let us follow it out:—

“Come ye that love the Lord
(six syllables)

And let your joys be known;
(six syllables)

Join in the song with sweet accord
(eight syllables)

With an-gels round the Throne.”
(six syllables)

The hymn is therefore composed of 6-6-8-6 feet, and that is the common metre of the hymn, all through, of which I have quoted only one verse. Again:—

“God moves in a mys-te-ri-ous way
His won-ders to per-form;
He plants His foot-steps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.”

Here we have a common metre throughout of 8-6-8-6 feet, metre, rhythm, or whatever you like to call the swing of the verse. Now there is nothing of that kind in ancient Hebrew poetry, or very little; perhaps I should say it is remarkable for being absent. And yet that is strange, for both Josephus and Philo claim that tetrametres and hexametres were well known in Hebrew poetry, that is, verse of four and six feet or syllables. If that be so, none of it has come down to us. How is that? Have all the specimens of metrical Hebrew poetry been lost? Or were Josephus and Philo saying something which was not exactly true when they claimed that the Jews had metrical as well as other kinds of poetry? It is a characteristic of the Jews, and has been from their very beginning as a nation, to glorify their race above all other on earth. They are the “favoured nation,” the “chosen people of God,” a “peculiar people,” set apart by God from the Gentiles to be an immemorial witness, by their history, to His existence. Both Josephus and Philo had received a classical training; they were learned in all the works of the Greeks and Romans, and they knew the classical laws of metre, and it is, perhaps, not going too far to say that in literary remains intended to glorify their fellow-countrymen they should make the Jews out to be at least as polished a people as the Romans who had conquered them, and perhaps still more cultured than the Romans, by way of compensation for

their inferiority in arms. As I have said, the Jews are a boastful race, and when they boasted of their exploits they were not always careful of the truth. They had to economise it in order to boast. And their boastings were neither truthful nor in good taste. See how they glorified Jacob over Esau, although Jacob robbed his elder brother of his birthright, and was one of the meanest and most contemptible brothers that ever lived. Or take the case of Ismail (Ishmael) and Issac (Isaac). They try to make out that Abraham bestowed his favour on Isaac because he was a Jew, and not an Ishmael, because he was an Arab; and many other things are ascribed by the Jews to Isaac which are really to the credit of Ishmael, the sacred records being altered, and things interpolated so as to give colour to their claim that it was Isaac, and not Ishmael, who was Abraham's favourite son, and therefore we hear of the Covenant with God on Mount Moriah. Again, in the case of the Amorites and the Moabites, we are asked to believe that they were the children of Lot by incestuous intercourse with his daughters, simply to throw discredit on them in order to disclaim all relationship with these two tribes. And I suppose that Josephus and Philo followed the same course of natural self-glorification, and made the Jews to be past-masters in the art of poetical metre, equal to the Greeks and Romans, whereas that the Jews knew nothing of metrical poetry is pretty sufficiently proved by its absence from all the books of Hebrew poetry extant, and by the failure of a single specimen of their alleged skill in this department of poetry to survive the lapse of time down to the present day. It is, therefore, a fairly safe conclusion to draw that Hebrew metrical poetry never had any existence outside the imagination of Philo and Josephus.

Let me say that in discussing the question of Hebrew poetry I have had no desire to pour contempt on their poetry; far from it. At the same time I have tried to show you that those who have written on the subject of Hebrew poetry have not always said that which was correct. For instance, Barnes quotes Herder, and I think Loth, in his essay on Hebrew poetry, quotes to the same effect that the Hebrews were such a peculiarly religious people, beyond all others, that nothing secular or vain was allowed to intrude itself into their poetry. They were the “chosen people.” Egyptian theology was a long way ahead of Hebrew. It was the

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The Crescent.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 27th, 1908

The Editor of THE CRESCENT is always happy to receive literary contributions, sketches, articles on Islamic matters, and news paragraphs. They should be addressed to the Editor, *The Crescent*, as early as possible in each week.

All Letters intended for the Editor should be addressed—

His Excellency

Sheikh ABDULLAH QUILLIAM BEY EFFENDI

Faril-et-lu Effendi Hazratlarca,

Editor of "The Crescent,"

6, MANCHESTER STREET, LIVERPOOL.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

Jumma Prayers were celebrated at the Mosque, West Derby Road, on Friday last, by Brother Billal Quilliam Effendi. There was a large attendance of the faithful.

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At the Liverpool Mosque on Sunday night, May 24, after the conclusion of his lecture, the Sheikh exhibited some interesting geological specimens which he had obtained for the Muslim Museum. These were handed round and commented on. The whole museum is about to receive a thorough overhaul, including a rearrangement of the specimens, and it is hoped at an early date to have a lecture or informal address on the subject.

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On Sunday evening last, the 26th day of Rabia-al-awal, 1326 (corresponding with the 26th day of May, 1908), a very interesting lecture was delivered by Mr. S. H. Pritchard, at the Liverpool Mosque, his subject being "Evolution in the light of Modern Geology." The chair was taken by H. E. Shekih Abdullah Quilliam Bey, Sheikh-ul-Islam of the British Isles, and there was a large attendance.

Our readers will be sorry to hear that there is a probability of our gifted brother, Yehya-en-Nassr Parkinson, leaving the country, we feel sure for the country's loss. Brother Parkinson is a sweet singer of Islam, a gifted poet, who has frequently contributed to the "Crescent" and some of whose poems have been published by Messrs. Keegan Paul, Trench & Co., under the title, of "Lays of Love and War." Born at Kilwinning, in Scotland, in 1874, Brother Parkinson, has had a varied career, which will be still further diversified, should he adhere to his determination to accept an invitation from Abdul Karim Jamal, of Rangoon, to proceed to Burmah. Brother Parkinson has frequently lectured at the Liverpool Mosque, with great acceptance. He proposes sailing from Liverpool, which will afford the local Islamic community an opportunity of giving him a hearty send-off, and at the same time bidding him a sad farewell. But though lost to the Mosque, he can never be lost to Islam at large, and greater experience of the joys and sorrows of life—and we wish they might be all joys that await him at Rangoon—will only serve to vivify and beautify his undoubted gift of song.

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Europe's Powder Magazine.

At present we can afford to stand more or less aside from the clash of direct antagonisms which has so unpleasantly revealed itself in the Balkans. It is obvious that there can be no question of immediate war. It is possible that the construction of rival railways may do more than anything else for the development of Balkan prosperity and the improvement of conditions in Macedonia. But, however long the new factors may be in coming to their full strength, the crises of the future are preparing.—"Telegraph."

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Bat Interrupts Church Service.

A strange occurrence is reported as having happened during a Sunday morning service in a Leicestershire church. A large bat suddenly flew out from among the timbers of the roof and flitted about among the members of the congregation, greatly to the alarm of some of its more timid members. One lady, having her umbrella with her, at once opened it, and sat and knelt under it as the service proceeded. The clergyman, seeing that the attention of the congregation was being diverted in a very undesirable way, decided to dispense with the sermon, and with reasonable haste dismissed the congregation.

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ancient Egyptians, rather than the Jews, who were a "peculiarly religious" people. *If ever there was a people who made religion their daily life it was the ancient Egyptians; and yet we are taught by the Bible—the Hebrew Bible, remember—to regard them as heathen! In a previous lecture I quoted from the Egyptian "Book of the Dead," as it is called, a collection of poems in a devotional vein that reaches a higher standard of spiritual exaltation than the Hebrews ever attained. Indeed, the Hebrew religion has been greatly influenced by Egyptian theology, and we trace the influence of their Egyptian surroundings during four hundred years in much of Jewish poetry. But it does not befit Islam, or those who believe in Islam, to throw contempt on the religion of other peoples, and their theological aspirations. Such a spirit of bitterness is no part of Islam. We have our belief; other people have theirs but all we claim is that Islam is the best religion, because the simplest and the most logical. We do not say to other religionists that they should not follow their own bent; on the contrary, we say they ought to follow that form of faith which makes the strongest appeal to their capacity for belief. It is a matter in which each must be his own judge. The Koran Shereff teaches that God never intended people should be all of one faith; that they were constituted differently, and that there were more ways of getting to heaven than one. As one piece of ground grows flowers the best, and another cereals, and another vegetables, so we believe it is with human beings; they are so constituted by God that different religious faiths make different appeals to them, but we do not doubt that if they worship the one true God, in spirit and in truth, God will incline favourably to them, and will bless them. Mussulmans, I repeat, firmly believe that theirs is the best religious faith. We contend that all human beings should think of the Deity as One, and should endeavour to serve Him; and we maintain that he who does so, obeying the commands of the Deity, honouring His will, and the great teachers whom the Deity has sent into the world as His prophets and ambassadors, above all Mohammed, the greatest prophet of God—we believe that all such good Mussulmans, members of that most excellent of all religious faiths which we call Islam, will ultimately attain an eternity of bliss in Paradise. (Applause.)*

TO CONVERSE WELL.

Don't speak in a low, monotonous voice. Conversation is like a song. It needs pronounced accent and a great variety to keep up a sustained interest.

Don't tell long stories of personal experiences. One who has the habit of making personal recitals takes the lion's share of conversation, and doesn't give the listener a fair chance.

Don't ask trifling questions. Don't air your prejudices. Neither contributes to the grace of conversational art, the essence of which should be sympathy.

Don't talk of melancholy or gruesome matters. Give the talk a happy turn. Don't ride conversation too hard. Leave breathing spaces in the talk. It is not essential that every moment that two people are together should be filled with a flow of words.

Don't deaden and hinder the conversation by being too accurate over details. Don't go back and add appendices to a subject after you have once finished with it.

Ambitious Women.

The desire to be neat, graceful, attractive and dainty is no unworthy ambition by any means.

Such a desire does not necessarily crowd out other ambitions.

In fact, cleanliness and good care of the body are stimulating habits and fit one for better work.

The business woman who goes about in dust-spotted, unbrushed garments, and whose hair is flying to the various winds of heaven, is not the one who succeeds, for, no matter how fine her mind may be, or how far-reaching is her ability, no business man or woman wishes his or her office marred with a picture of feminine neglect or untidiness.

Many a woman has been tremendously benefited by becoming interested in sane, hygienic, rational beautifying.

It helps a woman to retain her youth, than which there is nothing sweeter or more beautiful.

If every secret thought of love blossomed into a deed, how much more might we make of our family life and of our friendships!

* * *

Good-humour is better than medicine, no matter how well the ill-natured pill be sugar-coated.