

## SIR T. MARTIN'S TRANSLATIONS.\*

SIR THEODORE MARTIN has given us another of those delightful volumes of translations which have established his position as our best interpreter of the poetry of other tongues. It needs a poet adequately to translate poetry, and Sir Theodore Martin has himself given evidence of the possession of poetic gifts. His translations are not more remarkable for their fidelity than for their perfect ease and grace of movement. They are never forced or crabbed, and may be read with less effort than most of our original verse. Among the great names of Germany, Goethe and Heine have hitherto chiefly engaged his attention, but on the present occasion he mainly devotes himself to Schiller and Uhland, adding a few pieces from Goethe, Müller, Lingg, Freiligrath, and two or three renderings from the Romain. From Schiller he has taken, among other things, the 'Song of the Bell,' which gives its name to the volume, and several of the best-known ballads and romances. As one sample of his work we may choose the closing lines of the well-known ballad, 'Hero and Leander,' beginning at the point where Hero finds Leander's body:—

'Tis he, who even in death forlorn,  
Has kept the oath that he had sworn.  
One glance, and all is known!  
No wailing cry her anguish speaks,  
No tears stream down her bloodless cheeks,  
Despair has made her stone.  
With hopeless stare she seems to scan  
The bright sky, the blank ocean-flow,  
And to her face so marble-wan  
There mounts a noble glow.  
'Dread Powers, I see your workings here.  
With force implacable, austere,  
You urge your rights divine.  
Swift close to my life's course is this,  
Yet I have drunk rich draughts of bliss,  
A glorious lot was mine.  
Living, within thy shrine have I  
Thy consecrated priestess been;  
A joyful sacrifice I die,  
Venus, to thee, great Queen!  
Her white robe far behind her swept,  
As from the turret's edge she leapt  
Down, down into the wave;  
Her hallowed corpse the god receives,  
Where slow his watery kingdom haves,  
And is himself her grave.  
Well pleased he eyes his prey, then turns  
To bear it to his realm below;  
And pours from his exhaustless urns  
The streams that ever flow.

We miss something of the music of the original, but the rendering is marvellously close and successful. One of Sir Theodore's translations is Schiller's version of the story of the lady who sent her lover into the lions' den after her glove. It forms the subject of Leigh Hunt's 'The Glove and the Lions' and Mr. Browning's 'The Glove.' In an interesting note Sir Theodore points out that the story is first found in a Spanish ballad, in which it differs widely from the accepted version.

\*The Song of the Bell, and other Translations from Schiller, Goethe, Uhland, and others. By Sir Theodore Martin, K.C.B. (William Blackwood and Sons. 7s. 6d.)

## The Story of the Glove and the Lions.

The ballad, Mr. Ormsby adds, is delightfully Spanish. According to it there was no love attraction at all between the pair. The glove was dropped simply as a test of the knight's worth then and there present; and as Don Manuel was famous for deeds of derring-do, he considered that it was for him specially to accept it. The deliberation with which he goes about the trial is deliciously Spanish. There is nothing sudden or undignified about his action—no leaping or jumping, or anything of that sort. Like a grave, stately Spaniard, he draws his sword from his belt, wraps his mantle round his left arm, and enters the den as if he were walking a minuet. His speech to the lady is equally characteristic of Spain. 'Take it,' he says, 'and another time, for the sake of a wretched glove, do not put so many good gentlemen in risk of honour; and if any one thinks I have not done well, let him step out upon the award, and try the question like a good knight.' To this Doña Ana says she does not wish any one to stir; suffice it, that she has proved Don Manuel's superiority; adding, in pretty clear language, that he may have her for the asking, as the sort of husband she wants is one who is valiant, and dares to punish evil. This Don Manuel thinks is not a bad way of putting the point, and the upshot is that their hands are joined then and there.

Of Uhland, too, we have several poems, from which we choose his 'Serenade,' shorter pieces lending themselves more easily to quotation than ballads.

What soft low sounds are these I hear,  
That come my dreams between?  
Oh, mother! look, who may it be,  
That plays so late at e'en?  
'I hear no voice, I see no form,  
Oh, rest in slumber mild!  
They'll bring no music to thee now,  
My poor, my ailing child.'  
It is not music of the earth,  
That makes my heart so light.  
The angels call me with their songs—  
Oh, mother dear, good-night!

Sir Theodore has a spirited rendering of the famous war song in which Freiligrath gave voice to the feelings that roused the whole German people at the outset of the Franco-German War. We select the closing stanzas:—

Germania now, let come what may,  
Will stand unshook through all;  
This is our country's festal day;  
Now we betide thee, Gaul!  
Wee worth the hour a robber thrust  
Thy sword into thy hand!  
A curse upon him that we must  
Unbare our German brand!  
For home and hearth, for wife and child,  
For all loved things that we  
Are bound to keep all undefiled  
From foreign ruffianry!  
For German right, for German speech,  
For German household ways,  
For German homesteads—all and each,  
Strike home through battle's blaze!  
Up, Germans, up, with God! The die  
Clicks loud—we wait the throw.  
Oh, who may think without a sigh,  
What blood is doomed to flow!  
Yet, look thou up, with fearless heart!  
Thou must, thou shalt prevail!  
Great, glorious, free as ne'er thou wert,  
All hail, Germania, hail!  
Hurrah! Victoria!  
Hurrah! Germania!

Nor can we refrain from quoting from the same poet's touching lines entitled

'Love, love ever,' one of the most successful renderings in the book.

Ah! cruel words are quickly said,  
So keep close guard upon your tongue.  
'They never were meant to wound!' you say,  
But he goes on his way, and his heart  
Wrung.

Oh, love, as long as love you can!  
Oh, love, as long as love you may!  
The time is coming when you will stand  
By graves, and weep the hours away.

Then you will kneel down beside his grave,  
And bury your streaming eyes—alas!  
They never will look on his face again!  
Deep in the long damp churchyard grave  
And you'll cry, 'Oh, look, look down on  
Weeping here by thy grave in vain!  
Forgive my words if they hurt! Oh, God,  
They never were meant to give thee pain.  
But he sees and he hears you not, nor comes  
Again to be clasped to your breast. Alas!  
The lips that kissed you so oft will ne'er  
Say, 'I forgave thee long ago!'

'Twas so! Long since he forgave you, but  
Many and many a hot tear fell  
For you, and the bitter words you spoke;  
But hush! He roseth, with him 'tis well.

Oh, love, as long as love you can!  
Oh, love, as long as love you may!  
The time is coming when you will stand  
By graves, and weep the hours away.

There are only three pieces from the Romain, but they open up an attractive vein of song. Take, for instance, the robber chief's directions for his tomb—

Oh, make my tomb, and make it both low  
and high, that so  
I may have space to battle, if need be, with  
the foe!

And in the wall upon the right an open  
dow make,  
That when beneath the melting snow  
Spring begins to wake,  
The swallows fluttering by to me the joy-  
news may bring,  
And I may hear the nightingales in May's  
morning sing!

Finally, Sir Theodore has given us translations of two mediæval Latin poems, one, 'The Jovial Priest's Complaint,' attributed to Walter de Mapes, and the other, 'The Monk's Dream,' a simple discussion between the body and the soul as to the responsibility for their joint sins. Altogether, the volume is a singularly attractive one, and will be specially appreciated by readers who are acquainted with the choice flower of German poetry in the original.

## JANE AUSTEN.\*

It is almost a pity that Jane Austen has been included in the 'Eminent Women' series. It is true that she is an eminent woman now, though most certainly not in her own time, but her life was so utterly commonplace and devoid of interest that few people care to read it. It is true a relative piously wrote a biography which made all that could be made of the lady, but the book, which was published in 1870,

\*Eminent Women Series. Edited by John Ingram. Jane Austen. By Mrs. Charles Malles. (W. B. Allen & Co. 3s. 6d.)

had but a very limited success, and in his introductory remarks the writer, who was present at her funeral in Winchester Cathedral, says: 'Of events her life was singularly barren; few changes and no great crises ever broke the smooth current of its course. Even her fame may be said to be posthumous; it did not attain any vigorous life till she had ceased to exist. Her talents did not introduce her to the notice of other writers or connect her with the literary world, or in any degree pierce through the obscurity of her domestic retirement. Then in an unfortunate moment Lord Brabourne found Jane Austen's letters, which were never intended for the public eye, and gave them to the world, which was very much disappointed with the gift. Mrs. Charles Malden, undeterred by the ill-success of her predecessors, has taken up the hopeless task, complaining in her preface truly that 'the life of Jane Austen, which extended over only forty-two years, and was chiefly passed among her own nearest relations in the quiet of a country parsonage, varied only by an occasional visit to London or Bath, or to the seaside, affords but little material for a biographer to deal with,' and thus this little volume is chiefly filled up with extracts from her novels, with which the general reader is already familiar. It is hard work—so the ancient Israelites found it—to make bricks without straw, and as to criticism, the only one which Mrs. Malden has quoted which is not in Mr. Austen Leigh's biography, is that of George Eliot, who spoke of Jane Austen as 'the greatest artist that has ever written—the most perfect master of her means to her end.'

One thing, and one only, is well brought out by Mrs. Malden, and that is the perfect good sense and absence of all affectation displayed by Jane Austen through the whole course of her career. We do not know whether Mrs. Malden is aware of it—she makes no remark to that effect—but assuredly that is the effect produced on the mind of the reader. On one occasion this is particularly apparent. Jane was in London in attendance on her brother, who was ill; the doctor in attendance was the Prince Regent's physician, and knew the Prince to be an enthusiastic admirer of the lady's works, even to the extent of keeping duplicate copies of them at his various residences. He told the Prince Regent of her being in London, whereupon the Prince's librarian was deputed to wait on her, who told her that the Prince would be happy to accept the dedication of any future novel she might write. Miss Austen, perhaps, was struck with the ludicrousness of the idea, and wrote to the librarian to ask if he thought the Prince really meant it. The reply of the librarian is amusing. 'The Prince would be happy to accept the dedication of any of Miss Austen's future novels,' but then adds, 'the librarian requests the lady

to delineate in some future work the habits of life, and character, and enthusiasm of a clergyman who should pass his time between the metropolis and the country, who should be something like Beattie's Minstrel.

Silent when glad, affectionate though shy.

And in his looks was most demurely sad;  
And now he laughed aloud, yet knew not why.

Neither Goldsmith nor Lafontaine in his "Tableaux de Famille," have, in my mind, quite delineated our English clergyman, at least, of the present day, fond of, and entirely engaged in literature, no man's enemy but his own. Pray, dear madam, think of these things.' Miss Austen replies:

'I am quite honoured by your thinking me capable of drawing such a clergyman as you gave the sketch of in your note of November 16, but I assure you I am not. The comic part of the character I might be equal to, but not the good, the enthusiastic, the literary. Such a man's conversation must be at times on subjects of philosophy and religion, of which I know nothing, or, at least, be occasionally abundant in quotations and allusions which a woman like me, who knows only her own mother tongue, and has read little in that, would be totally without the power of giving. A classical education, or, at any rate, a very extensive acquaintance with English literature, ancient and modern, appears to me quite indispensable for the person who would do any justice to your clergyman, and I think I may trust myself to be, with all possible vanity, the most unlearned and uninformed female who ever dared to be an authoress.'

Truly, few ladies had a greater fund of good sound common-sense than Jane Austen, but she rather underrates herself. She was fond of music, writes her nephew, and had a sweet voice both in singing and in conversation. In a fashion she played the piano, and in the evening she would sometimes sing to her own accompaniment some simple old songs. She read French with facility, and knew something of German. 'Aunt Jane,' writes a niece, 'was a general favourite with children, her ways with them being so playful, and her long, circumstantial stories so delightful.' Her handwriting was excellent, as was her needlework, both plain and ornamental. It is recorded of her that she was especially great in satin stitch. These are minor matters. Mrs. Malden overlooks them, but they illustrate character, and thus become of importance. From one remark we find Mrs. Malden has given herself a little trouble in order to write her sketch. In referring to the death of Jane Austen in 1817 she adds: 'I can find no mention of her or her writings in any newspaper or periodical of the day.' We also learn a little about

#### Jane Austen's Birthplace.

Steventon, where Jane Austen was born, may be seen from the railway between Basingstoke and Popham Bosoon; but the parsonage has long been pulled down. It is said to have been a square, comfortable-looking house on the other side of the valley to the present one; it was approached from the road by a shady drive, and was large enough to contain not only all the Austens and their household, but

at different times many other people as well. It had a good sized old-fashioned garden, which was filled with fruit and flowers in delightfully indiscriminate confusion, and sloped gently upwards to a most attractive terrace. Every reader of 'Northanger Abbey' will identify this terrace with a smile. From the parsonage garden there was a curious walk to the church; it was what the natives of Hampshire call 'a hedge,' which may be explained to those who are not natives of Hampshire, as a footpath, or even sometimes a cart track, bordered irregularly with copse wood and timber, far prettier than the ordinary type of English hedge, and forming a distinctive characteristic of the county. Jane Austen displayed her Hampshire origin when she made Anne Elliott, in 'Persuasion,' overbear Captain Wentworth and Louisa Musgrave in the hedge-row behind her, as if making their way down the rough, wild sort of channel down the centre.

It seems to us that it would have been better to have republished Jane Austen's Memoir, as written by her nephew, than to have got Mrs. Malden to write a new volume in which she omits many characteristic details given by the nephew, and makes up for her absence of matter by lengthy extracts from Jane Austen's novels. 'Her writings,' continues Mrs. Malden, 'were, in fact, her life, and an attempt to give anything beyond the very briefest sketch of her career must resolve itself into a criticism of those writings. By these she is known to her many admirers, and it is with the hope of making them even better known and more widely appreciated that this little book is offered to the public.' Such is the author's apology, and it is good so far as it goes. Jane Austen deserves all that can be said of her. Her lines also were cast in pleasant places, and she had a goodly heritage. When she was born eminent women happily had not come into fashion. They are the product of a more restless and unhappy age.

#### RAILWAY WORKING & MANAGEMENT.\*

If any one is competent to give an account of *The Working and Management of an English Railway*, it is Mr. George Findlay, the General Manager of the London and North-Western Railway, with his thirty-five years' experience of what, all things considered, must be regarded as our premier line. The volume, in which he endeavours to perform this task in a manner intelligible to the public, is much more thorough and systematic, if somewhat less popular, than Mr. Acworth's book dealing with the same subject, which we noticed recently. Mr. Findlay practically confines himself to a description of the working of the North-Western, but his account is applicable in the main to the other lines as well. He is no less businesslike as an author than as a manager, and has succeeded in conveying a wonderful amount of information

\* *The Working and Management of an English Railway*. By George Findlay, General Manager of the London and North-Western Railway. With Numerous Illustrations. (Whitaker and Co. 7s. 6d.)