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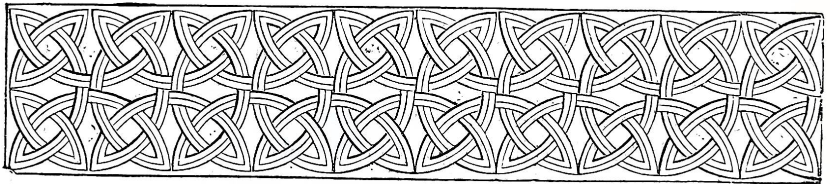

ON THE MIGRATION OF FABLES.

A LECTURE DELIVERED AT THE ROYAL INSTITUTION, ON FRIDAY, JUNE 3, 1870.

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"COUNT not your chickens before they be hatched," is a well-known proverb in English, and most people, if asked what was its origin, would probably appeal to La Fontaine's delightful fable, "*La Laitière et le Pot au Lait.*"* We all know *Perrette,* lightly stepping along from her village to the town, carrying the milk-pail on her head, and in her day-dreams selling her milk for a good sum, then buying a hundred eggs, then selling the chickens, then buying a pig, fattening it, selling it again, and buying a cow with a calf. The calf frolics about, and kicks up his legs—so does Perrette, and, alas! the pail falls down, the milk is spilt, her riches gone, and she only hopes when she comes home that she may escape a flogging from her husband.

Did La Fontaine invent this fable? or did he merely follow the example of Sokrates, who, as we know from the Phædon,† occupied himself in prison, during the last days of his life, with turning into verse some of the fables, or, as he calls them, the myths of Æsop.

* La Fontaine, Fables, livre vii., fable 10.

† Phædon, 61, 5. *μετὰ δὲ τὸν θεὸν, ἐννοήσας, ὅτι τὸν ποιητὴν δέοι, εἴπερ μέλλοι ποιητὴς εἶναι, ποιεῖν μύθους, ἀλλ' οὐ λόγους, καὶ αὐτὸς οὐκ ἦ μυθολογικὸς, διὰ ταῦτα δὴ οὓς προχείρους εἶχον καὶ ἠπιστάμην μύθους τοὺς Αἰσώπου, τούτων ἐποίησα οἷς πρώτοις ἔτυχον.*

La Fontaine published the first six books of his fables in 1668,* and it is well known that the subjects of most of these early fables were taken from Æsop, Phædrus, Horace, and other classical fabulists, if we may adopt this word "fabuliste," which La Fontaine was the first to introduce into French.

In 1678 a second edition of these six books was published, enriched by five books of new fables, and in 1694 a new edition appeared, containing one additional book, thus completing the collection of his charming poems.

The fable of Perrette stands in the seventh book, and was published, therefore, for the first time in the edition of 1678. In the preface to that edition La Fontaine says: "It is not necessary that I should say where I have taken the subjects of these new fables. I shall only say, from a sense of gratitude, that I owe the largest portion of them to *Pilpay*, the Indian sage."

If, then, La Fontaine tells us himself that he borrowed the subjects of most of his new fables from Pilpay, the Indian sage, we have clearly a right to look to India in order to see whether, in the ancient literature of that country, any traces can be discovered of Perrette with the milk-pail.

Sanskrit literature is very rich in fables and stories; no other literature can vie with it in that respect; nay, it is extremely likely that fables, in particular animal fables, had their principal source in India. In the sacred literature of the Buddhists fables held a most prominent place. The Buddhist preachers, addressing themselves chiefly to the people, to the untaught, the uncared for, the outcast, spoke to them, as we still speak to children, in fables, in proverbs and parables. Many of these fables and parables must have existed before the rise of the Buddhist religion; others, no doubt, were added on the spur of the moment, just as Sokrates would invent a myth or a fable whenever that form of argument seemed to him most likely to impress and convince his hearers. But Buddhism gave a new and permanent sanction to this whole branch of moral mythology, and in the sacred canon, as it was settled in the third century before Christ, many a fable received, and holds to the present day, its recognised place. After the fall of Buddhism in India, and even during its decline, the Brahmans claimed the inheritance of their enemies, and used their popular fables for educational purposes. The best known of these collections of fables in Sanskrit is the Pañ*k*atantra, literally the Pentateuch, or the Pentamerone. From it and from other sources another collection was made, well known to all Sanskrit scholars by the name of the Hitopadesa, *i.e.*, Salutary Advice. Both these books have been published in England

* Robert, "Fables Inédites," des XIIe, XIIIe, et XIVe Siècles; Paris, 1825; vol. i. p. ccxxvii.

and Germany, and there are translations of them in English, German, and French.*

The first question which we have to answer refers to the date of these collections, and dates in the history of Sanskrit literature are always difficult points. Fortunately, as we shall see, we can in this case fix the date of the Pañ*k*atantra at least, by means of a translation into ancient Persian, which was made about 550 years after Christ, though even then we can only prove that a collection somewhat like the Pañ*k*atantra must have existed at that time; but we cannot refer the book, in exactly that form in which we now possess it, to that distant period.

If we look for La Fontaine's fable in the Sanskrit stories of the Pañ*k*atantra, we do not find, indeed, the milkmaid counting her chickens before they are hatched, but we meet with the following story:—

"There lived in a certain place a Brahman, whose name was Svabhâva k*r*ipa*n*a, which means 'a born miser.' He had collected a quantity of rice by begging (this reminds us somewhat of the Buddhist mendicants), and after having dined of it, he filled a pot with what was left over. He hung the pot on a peg on the wall, placed his couch beneath, and looking intently at it all the night, he thought, 'Ah, that pot is indeed brimful of rice. Now, if there should be a famine, I should certainly make a hundred rupees by it. With this I shall buy a couple of goats. They will have young ones every six months, and thus I shall have a whole herd of goats. Then, with the goats, I shall buy cows. As soon as they have calved, I shall sell the calves. Then, with the cows, I shall buy buffaloes; with the buffaloes, mares. When the mares have foaled, I shall have plenty of horses; and when I sell them, plenty of gold. With that gold I shall get a house with four wings. And then a Brahman will come to my house, and will give me his beautiful daughter, with a large dowry. She will have a son, and I shall call him Soma*s*arman. When he is old enough to be danced on his father's knee, I shall sit with a book at the back of the stable, and while I am reading, the boy will see me, jump from his mother's lap, and run towards me to be danced on my knee. He will come too near the horses' hoof, and, full of anger, I shall call to my wife, "Take the baby; take him!" But she, distracted by some domestic work, does not hear me. Then I get up, and give her such a kick with my foot.' While he thought this, he gave a kick with his foot, and broke the pot. All the rice fell over him, and made him quite white. Therefore, I say, 'He who makes foolish plans for the future will be white all over, like the father of Soma*s*arman.'"†

I shall at once proceed to read you the same story, though slightly modified, from the Hitopade*s*a.‡ The Hitopade*s*a professes to be

* "Pantschatantrum sive Quinquepartitum," edidit I. G. L. Kosegarten. Bonnæ, 1848.

"Pantschatantra, Fünf Bücher indischer Fablen, aus dem Sanskrit übersetzt." Von Th. Benfey. Leipzig, 1859.

"Hitopade*s*a," with interlinear translation, grammatical analysis, and English translation, in Max Müller's Handbooks for the study of Sanskrit. London, 1864.

"Hitopadesa, eine alte indische Fabelsammlung aus dem Sanskrit zum ersten Mal in das Deutsche übersetzt." Von Max Müller. Leipzig, 1844.

† Pañ*k*atantra, v. 10.

‡ "Hitopade*s*a," ed. Max Müller, p. 120; German translation, p. 159.

taken from the Pañ*k*atantra and some other books; and in this case it would seem as if some other authority had been followed. You will see, at all events, how much freedom there was in telling the old story of the man who built castles in the air.

"In the town of Devîko*tt*a there lived a Brâhman of the name of Deva*s*arman. At the feast of the great equinox he received a plate full of rice. He took it, went into a potter's shop, which was full of crockery, and, overcome by the heat, he lay down in a corner and began to doze. In order to protect his plate of rice, he kept a stick in his hand, and began to think, 'Now, if I sell this plate of rice, I shall receive ten cowries (kapardaka). I shall then, on the spot, buy pots and plates, and after having increased my capital again and again, I shall buy and sell betel nuts and dresses till I grow enormously rich. Then I shall marry four wives, and the youngest and prettiest of the four I shall make a great pet of. Then the other wives will be so angry, and begin to quarrel. But I shall be in a great rage, and take a stick, and give them a good flogging.' . . . While he said this, he flung his stick away; the plate of rice was smashed to pieces, and many of the pots in the shop were broken. The potter, hearing the noise, ran into the shop, and when he saw his pots broken, he gave the Brâhman a good scolding, and drove him out of his shop. Therefore I say, 'He who rejoices over plans for the future will come to grief, like the Brâhman who broke the pots.'"

In spite of the change of a Brahman into a milkmaid, no one, I suppose, will doubt that we have here in the stories of the Pañ*k*atantra and Hitopade*s*a the first germs of La Fontaine's fable. But how did that fable travel all the way from India to France? How did it doff its Sanskrit garment and don the light dress of modern French? How was the stupid Brahman born again as the brisk milkmaid, "*cotillon simple et souliers plats?*"

It seems a startling case of longevity that while languages have changed, while works of art have perished, while empires have risen and vanished again, this simple children's story should have lived on, and maintained its place of honour and its undisputed sway in every school-room of the East and every nursery of the West. And yet it is a case of longevity so well attested that even the most sceptical would hardly venture to question it. We have the passport of these stories *viséd* at every place through which they have passed, and, as far as I can judge, *parfaitement en règle*. The story of the migration of these Indian fables from East to West is indeed wonderful; more wonderful and more instructive than many of these fables themselves. Is it not wonderful that we should teach our children the first, the most important lessons of worldly wisdom, nay, of a more than worldly wisdom, from books borrowed from Buddhists and Brahmans? from heretics and idolaters? Is it not instructive that wise words spoken a thousand, nay, two thousand years ago, in a lonely village of India, should, like precious seed scattered broadcast all over the world, still bear fruit a hundred and a thousand

fold in that soil which is the most precious before God and man, in the soul of a child? No lawgiver, no philosopher has made his influence felt so widely, so deeply, and so permanently as the author of these children's fables. But who was he? We do not know. His name, like the name of many a benefactor of the human race, is forgotten. We only know he was an Indian—a nigger, as some people would call him—and that he lived at least two thousand years ago.

No doubt, when we first hear of the Indian origin of these fables, and of their migration from India to Europe, we wonder whether it can be so; but the fact is, that the story of this Indo-European migration is not a matter of theory, but of history, and that it was never quite forgotten either in the East or in the West. Each translator, as he handed on his treasure, seems to have been anxious to show how he came by it. *Huet*, the learned Bishop of Avranches, had only to examine the prefaces of the principal translations of the Indian fables in order to track their wanderings, as he did in his famous "Traité de l'Origine des Romans," published at Paris in 1670, two years after the appearance of the first collection of La Fontaine's fables. Since his time the evidence has become more plentiful, and the whole subject has been more fully and more profoundly treated by Sylvestre de Sacy,* by Loiseleur Deslongchamps,† and by Professor Benfey.‡ But though we have a more accurate knowledge of the stations by which the Eastern fables reached their last home in the West, Bishop Huet knew as well as we do that they came originally from India through Persia by way of Bagdad and Constantinople.

In order to gain a commanding view of the countries traversed by these fables, let us take our position at Bagdad in the middle of the eighth century, and watch from that central point the movements of our literary caravan in its progress from the far East to the far West. In the middle of the eighth century, during the reign of the great Khalif Almansur, *Abdallah ibn Almokaffa* wrote his famous collection of fables, the "Kalila and Dimna," which we still possess. The Arabic text of these fables has been published by Sylvestre de Sacy, and there is an English translation of it by Mr. Knatchbull, formerly Professor of Arabic at Oxford. Abdallah ibn Almokaffa was a Persian by birth, who after the fall of the Omeyyades became a convert to Mohammedanism, and rose to high office at the court of the Khalifs. Being in possession of important secrets of state, he

* "Calilah et Dimna, ou, Fables de Bidpai en Arabe, précédées d'un mémoire sur l'origine de ce livre." Par Silvestre de Sacy. Paris, 1816.

† Loiseleur Deslongchamps, "Essai sur les Fables Indiennes, et sur leur introduction en Europe." Paris, 1838.

‡ "Pantschatantra, Fünf Bücher indischer Fabeln, Märchen und Erzählungen, mit Einleitung." Von Th. Benfey. Leipzig, 1859.

became dangerous in the eyes of the Khalif Almansur, and was foully murdered.* In the preface, Abdallah ibn Almokaffa tells us that he translated these fables from Pehlevi, the ancient language of Persia; and that they had been translated into Pehlevi (about two hundred years before his time) by *Barzûyeh*, the physician of Khosru Nushirvan, the king of Persia, the contemporary of the Emperor Justinian. The king of Persia had heard that there existed in India a book full of wisdom, and he had commanded his Vezier, Buzurjmihr, to find a man acquainted with the languages both of Persia and India. The man chosen was Barzûyeh. He travelled to India, got possession of the book, translated it into Persian, and brought it back to the Court of Khosru. Declining all rewards beyond a dress of honour, he only stipulated that an account of his own life and opinions should be added to the book. This account, probably written by himself, is extremely curious. It is a *Religio Medici* of the sixth century, and shows us a soul dissatisfied with traditions and formularies, and striving after truth; and finding rest only where many other seekers after truth have found their only rest before and after him, in a life devoted to alleviating the sufferings of mankind.

There is another account of the journey of this Persian physician to India. It has the sanction of Firdúsi, in the great Persian epic, the Shah Nâmeh, and it is considered by some† as more original than the one just quoted. According to it, the Persian physician read in a book that there existed in India trees or herbs supplying a medicine with which the dead could be restored to life. At the command of the king he went to India in search of those trees and herbs; but, after spending a year in vain researches, he consulted some wise people on the subject. They told him that the medicine of which he had read as having the power of restoring men to life had to be understood in a higher and more spiritual sense, and that what was really meant by it were ancient books of wisdom preserved in India, which imparted life to those who were dead in their folly and sins.‡ Thereupon the physician translated these books, and one of them was the collection of fables, the *Kalila and Dimnah*.

It is possible that both these stories were later inventions; but the fact remains that *Abdallah ibn Almokaffa*, the author of the oldest Arabic collection of our fables, translated them from Pehlevi, the language of Persia at the time of Khosru Nushirvan, and that the Pehlevi text which he translated was believed to be a translation of a book brought from India in the middle of the sixth century.

* See Weil, "Geschichte der Chalifen," vol. ii. p. 84.
† Benfey, p. 60.
‡ Cf. Barlaam et Joasaph, ed. Boissonade, p. 37.

In this Arabic translation the story of the Brahman and the pot of rice runs as follows :—

"A religious man was in the habit of receiving every day from the house of a merchant a certain quantity of butter (oil) and honey, of which, having eaten as much as he wanted, he put the rest into a jar, which he hung on a nail in a corner of the room, hoping that the jar would in time be filled. Now, as he was leaning back one day on his couch, with a stick in his hand, and the jar suspended over his head, he thought of the high price of butter and honey, and said to himself, 'I will sell what is in the jar, and buy with the money which I obtain for it ten goats, which, producing each of them a young one every five months, in addition to the produce of the kids as soon as they begin to bear, it will not be long before there is a large flock.' He continued to make his calculations, and found that he should at this rate, in the course of two years, have more than four hundred goats. 'At the expiration of this term I will buy,' said he, 'a hundred black cattle, in the proportion of a bull or a cow for every four goats. I will then purchase land, and hire workmen to plough it with the beasts, and put it into tillage, so that before five years are over I shall, no doubt, have realized a great fortune by the sale of the milk which the cows will give, and of the produce of my land. My next business will be to build a magnificent house, and engage a number of servants, both male and female; and, when my establishment is completed, I will marry the handsomest woman I can find, who, in due time becoming a mother, will present me with an heir to my possessions, who, as he advances in age, shall receive the best masters that can be procured; and, if the progress which he makes in learning is equal to my reasonable expectations, I shall be amply repaid for the pains and expense which I have bestowed upon him; but if, on the other hand, he disappoints my hopes, the rod which I have here shall be the instrument with which I will make him feel the displeasure of a justly-offended parent.' At these words he suddenly raised the hand which held the stick towards the jar, and broke it, and the contents ran down upon his head and face. . . . ." *

You will have observed the coincidence between the Arabic and the Sanskrit versions, but also a considerable divergence, particularly in the winding up of the story. The Brahman and the holy man both build their castles in the air; but, while the former kicks his wife, the latter only chastises his son. How this change came to pass we cannot tell. One might suppose that, at the time when the book was translated from Sanskrit into Pehlevi, or from Pehlevi into Arabic, the Sanskrit story was exactly like the Arabic story, and that it was changed afterwards. But another explanation is equally admissible, viz., that the Pehlevi or the Arabic translator wished to avoid the offensive behaviour of the husband kicking his wife, and therefore substituted the son as a more deserving object of castigation.

We have thus traced our story from Sanskrit to Pehlevi, and from Pehlevi to Arabic; we have followed it in its migrations from the hermitages of Indian sages to the court of the kings of Persia, and

* "Kalila and Dimna; or, the Fables of Bidpai, translated from the Arabic." By the Rev. Wyndham Knatchbull, A.M. Oxford, 1819.

from thence to the residence of the powerful Khalifs at Bagdad. Let us recollect that the Khalif Al Mansur, for whom the Arabic translation was made, was the contemporary of Abderrhaman, who ruled in Spain, and that both were but little anterior to Harun al Rashid and Charlemagne. At that time, therefore, the way was perfectly open for these Eastern fables, after they had once reached Bagdad, to penetrate into the seats of Western learning, and to spread to every part of the new empire of Charlemagne. They may have done so, for all we know; but nearly three hundred years pass before these fables meet us again in the literature of Europe. The Carlovingian empire had fallen to pieces, Spain had been rescued from the Mohammedans, William the Conqueror had landed in England, and the Crusades had begun to turn the thoughts of Europe towards the East, when, about the year 1080, we hear of a Jew, of the name of *Symeon,* the son of Seth, who translated these fables from Arabic into Greek. He states in his preface that the book came originally from India, that it was brought to the King Chosroes of Persia, and then translated into Arabic. His own translation into Greek has been preserved, and has been published, though very imperfectly, under the title of *Stephanites and Ichnelates.** Here our fable is told as follows (p. 337):—

"It is said that a beggar kept some honey and butter in a jar close to where he slept. One night he thus thought within himself: 'I shall sell this honey and butter for however small a sum; with it I shall buy ten goats, and these in five months will produce as many again. In five years they will become four hundred. With them I shall buy one hundred cows, and with them I shall cultivate some land. And what with their calves and the harvests, I shall become rich in five years, and build a house with four wings,† ornamented with gold, and buy all kinds of servants, and marry a wife. She will give me a child, and I shall call him Beauty. It will be a boy, and I shall educate him properly; and if I see him lazy, I shall give him such a flogging with this stick. . . . .' With these words he took a stick that was near him, struck the jar, and broke it, so that the honey and milk ran down on his beard."

This Greek translation might, no doubt, have reached La Fontaine; but as the French poet was not a great scholar, least of all a reader of Greek MSS., and as the fables of Symeon Seth were not published till 1697, we must look for other channels through which the old fable was carried along from East to West.

* Specimen Sapientiæ Indorum Veterum, id est Liber Ethico-Politicus pervetustus, dictus Arabice Kalîlah ve Dimnah, Græce Stephanites et Ichnelates, nunc primum Græce ex MSS. Cod. Holsteiniano prodit cum versione Latina, opera S. G. Starkii. Berolini, 1697.

† This expression, a four-winged house, occurs also in the Pañ*k*atantra. As it does not occur in the Arabic text published by De Sacy, it is clear that Symeon must have followed another Arabic text in which this adjective, belonging to the Sanskrit, and no doubt to the Pehlevi text also, had been preserved.

There is, first of all, an Italian translation of the Stephanites and Ichnelates, which was published at Ferrara in 1583.* The title is, "Del governo de' regni. Sotto morali essempi di animali ragionanti tra loro. Tratti prima di lingua Indiana in Agarena da Lelo Demno Saraceno. Et poi dall' Agarena nella Greca da Simeone Setto, philosopho Antiocheno. Et hora tradotti di Greco in Italiano." This translation was probably the work of Giulio Nuti. There is, besides, a Latin translation, or rather a free rendering of the Greek translation, by the learned Jesuit, Petrus Possinus, which was published at Rome in 1666.† This may have been, and, according to some authorities, has really been one of the sources from which

* Pertsch, *Orient und Occident*, vol. ii. p. 261. Here the story is told as follows:—"Perche si conta che un certo pouer huomo hauea uicino a doue dormiua, un mulino & del buturo, & una notte tra se pensando disse, io uenderò questo mulino, & questo butturo tanto per il meno, che io comprerò diece capre. Le quali mi figliaranno in cinque mesi altre tante, & in cinque anni multiplicheranno fino a quattro cento; Le quali barattero in cento buoi, & con essi seminarò una cãpagna, & insieme da figliuoli loro, & dal frutto della terra in altri cinque anni, sarò oltre modo ricco, & farò un palagio *quadro*, adorato, & comprerò schiaui una infinità, & prenderò moglie, la quale mi farà un figliuolo, & lo nominerò Pancalo, & lo farò ammaestrare come bisogna. Et se vedrò che non si curi con questa bacchetta cosi il percoterò. Con che prendendo la bacchetta che gli era uicina, & battendo di essa il vaso doue era il buturo, e lo ruppe, & fuse il butturo. Dopò gli partorì la moglie un figliuolo, e la moglie un dì gli disse, habbi un poco cura di questo fanciullo o marito, fino che io uo e torno da un seruigio. La quale essendo andata fu anco il marito chiamato dal Signore della terra, & tra tanto auuenne che una serpe salì sopra il fanciullo. Et vna donzella uicina, corsa là, l' uccise. Tornato il marito uide insanguito l' vscio, & pensando che costei l' hauesse ucciso, auanti che il uedesse, le diede sul capo, di un bastone, e l' uccise. Entrato poi, & sano trouando il figliuolo, & la serpe morta, si fu grandemente pentito, & piãse amaramente. Cosi adunque i frettolosi in molte cose errano." (P. 516.)

† Georgii Pachymeris Michael Palæologus, sive Historia rerum a M.P. gestarum, ed. Petr. Possinus. Romæ, 1666.

Appendix ad observationes Pachymerianas, Specimen Sapientiæ Indorum veterum liber olim ex lingua Indica in Persicam a Perzoe Medico: ex Persica in Arabicam ab Anonymo: ex Arabica in Græcam a Symeone Seth, a Petro Possino Societ. Iesu, novissime e Græca in Latinam translatus.

"Huic talia serio nuganti haud paulo cordatior mulier. Mihi videris, Sponse, inquit, nostri cujusdam famuli egentissimi hominis, similis ista inani provisione nimis remotarum et incerto eventu pendentium rerum. Is diurnis mercedibus mellis ac butyri non magna copia collectâ, duobus ista vasis e terra coctili condiderat. Mox secum ita ratiocinans nocte quadam dicebat: Mel ego istud ac butyrum quindecim minimum vendam denariis. Ex his decem Capras emam. Hæ mihi quinto mense totidem alias parient. Quinque annis gregem Caprarum facile quadringentarum confecero. Has commutare tunc placet cum bobus centum, quibus exarabo vim terræ magnam et numerum tritici maximum congeram. Ex fructibus hisce quinquennio multiplicatis, pecuniæ scilicet tantus existet modus, ut facile in locupletissimis numerer. Accedit dos uxoris quam istis opibus ditissimam nansciscar. Nascetur mihi filius quem jam nunc decerno nominare Pancalum. Hunc educabo liberalissime, ut nobilium nulli concedat. Qui si ubi adoleverit, ut juventus solet, contumacem se mihi præbeat, haud feret impune. Baculo enim hoc illum hoc modo feriam. Arreptum inter hæc dicendum lecto vicinum baculum per tenebras jactavit, casuque incurrens in dolia mellis et butyri juxta posita, confregit utrumque, ita ut in ejus etiam os barbamque stillæ liquoris prosilirent; cætera effusa et mixta pulveri prorsus corrumperentur; ac fundamentum spei tantæ, inopem et multum gementem momento destitueret." (P. 602.)

La Fontaine drew his inspirations. But though La Fontaine may have consulted this work for other fables, I do not think that he took from it the fable of Perrette and the milk-pail.

The fact is, that these fables had found several other channels through which, as early as the thirteenth century, they reached the literary market of Europe, and became familiar as household words, at least among the higher and educated classes. We shall follow the course of some of these channels. First, then, a learned Jew, whose name seems to have been *Joel*, translated our fables from Arabic into Hebrew (1250?). His work has been preserved in one MS. at Paris, but has not yet been published, except the tenth book, which was communicated by Dr. Neubauer to a German journal, *Orient und Occident* (vol. i. p. 658). This Hebrew translation was translated by another Jew, Johannes of Capua, into Latin. His translation was finished between 1263—1278, and, under the title of *Directorium humanæ vitæ*, it became very soon a popular work with the select reading public of the thirteenth century.* It was translated into German at the command of Eberhard, the great Duke of Würtemberg, and both the Latin text and the German translation occur, in repeated editions, among the rare books printed between 1480 and the end of the fifteenth century.† A Spanish translation, founded both on the German and the Latin texts, appeared at Burgos in 1493;‡ and from these different sources flowed in the sixteenth

* Directorium Humanæ Vitæ alias Parabolæ Antiquorum Sapientum, fol. s. l. e. a. k. 4: —"Dicitque olim quidam fuit heremita apud quendam regem. Cui rex providerat quolibet die pro sua vita. Scilicet provisionem de sua coquina et vasculum de melle. Ille vero comedebat decocta, et reservabat mel in quodam vase suspenso super suum caput donec esset plenum. Erat autem mel percarum in illis diebus. Quadam vero die: dum jaceret in suo lecto elevato capite, respexit vas mellis quod super caput ei pendebat. Et recordatus quoniam mel de die in diem vendebatur pluris solito seu carius, et dixit in corde suo. Quum fuerit hoc vas plenum: vendam ipsum uno talento auri: de quo mihi emam decem oves, et successu temporis he oves facient filios et filias, et erunt viginti. Postea vero ipsis multiplicatis cum filiis et filiabus in quatuor annis erunt quatuor centum. Tunc de quibuslibet quatuor ovibus emam vaccam et bovem et terram. Et vaccæ multiplicabuntur in filiis, quorum masculos accipiam mihi in culturam terre, præter id quod percipiam de eis de lacte et lana, donec non consummatis aliis quinque annis multiplicabuntur in tantum quod habebo mihi magnas substantias et divitias, et ero a cunctis reputatus dives et honestus. Et edificabo mihi tunc grandia et excellentia edificia pre omnibus meis vicinis et consanguinibus, itaque omnes de meis divitiis loquantur, nonne erit mihi illud jocundum, cum omnes homines mihi reverentiam in omnibus locis exhibeant. Accipiam postea uxorem de nobilibus terre. Cumque eam cognovero, concipiet et pariet mihi filium nobilem et delectabilem cum bona fortuna et dei beneplacito qui crescet in scientia et virtute, et relinquam mihi per ipsum bonam memoriam post mei obitum, et castigabo ipsum dietim: si mee recalcitraverit doctrine; ac mihi in omnibus erit obediens, et si non: percutiam eum isto baclo et erecto baculo ad percutiendum percussit vas mellis et fregit ipsum et defluxit mel super caput ejus."

† Benfey, *Orient und Occident*, vol. i. p. 138.

‡ Benfey, *Orient und Occident*, vol. i. p. 501. Its title is: "Exemplario contra los engaños y peligros del mundo," ibid. p. 167-68.

century the Italian renderings of Firenzuola (1548)* and Doni (1552).† As these Italian translations were repeated in French‡ and English, before the end of the sixteenth century, they might no doubt have supplied La Fontaine with subjects for his fables.

But, as far as we know, it was a third channel that really brought the Indian fables to the immediate notice of the French poet. A Persian poet, of the name of Nasr Allah, translated the work of Abdallah ibn Almokaffa into Persian about 1150. This Persian translation was enlarged in the fifteenth century by another Persian poet, *Husain ben Ali*, called *el Vaez*, under the title of *Anvári Suhaili.*§ This name will be familiar to many members of the Indian Civil Service, as being one of the old Haileybury class-books which had to be construed by all who wished to gain high honours in Persian. This work, or at least the first books of it, were translated into French by David Sahid of Ispahan, and published at Paris in 1644, under the title of *Livre des Lumières, ou, la Conduite des Rois, composé par le Sage Pilpay, Indien.* This translation, we know, fell into the hands of La Fontaine; and a number of his most charming fables were certainly borrowed from it.

But Perrette with the milk-pail has not yet arrived at the end of her journey, for if we look at the "Livre des Lumières," as published at Paris, we find neither the milkmaid nor her prototype, the Brahman who kicks his wife, or the religious man who flogs his boy. That story occurs in the later chapters, which were left out in the French translation; and La Fontaine, therefore, must have met with his model elsewhere.

Remember that in all our wanderings we have not yet found the milkmaid, but only the Brahman or the religious man. What we want to know is who first brought about this metamorphosis.

No doubt La Fontaine was quite the man to seize on any jewel which was contained in the Oriental fables, to remove the cumbersome and foreign-looking setting, and then to place the principal figure in that pretty frame in which most of us have first become acquainted with it. But in this case the charmer's wand did not belong to

* Discorsi degli amimali, di Messer Agnolo Firenzuola, in Prose di M. A. F. (Fiorenza, 1548.)

† La Moral Filosophia del Doni, tratta da gli antichi scrittori. Vinegia, 1552.

Trattati Diversi di Sendebar Indiano, filosopho morale. Vinegia, 1552.

‡ Le plaisant et facétieux discours des animaux, nouvellement traduict de tuscan en françois, Lyon, 1556, par Gabriel Cottier.

Deux livres de filosofie fabuleuse, le premier pris des discours de M. Ange Firenzuola, le second extraict des traictez de Sandebar indien, par Pierre de La Rivey. Lyon, 1579.

The second book is a translation of the second part of Doni's "Filosofia morale."

§ The Anvar-i Suhaili, or the Lights of Canopus, being the Persian version of the Fables of Pilpay, or the Book, Kalílah and Damnah, rendered into Persian by Husain Vá'iz U'l-Káshifi, literally translated by E. B. Eastwick, Hertford, 1854.

La Fontaine, but to some forgotten worthy, whose very name it will be difficult to fix upon with certainty.

We have, as yet, traced three streams only, all starting from the Arabic translation of Abdallah ibn Almokaffa, one in the eleventh, another in the twelfth, a third in the thirteenth century, all reaching Europe, some touching the very steps of the throne of Louis XIV., yet none of them carrying the leaf which contained the story of "Perrette," or of the "Brahman," to the threshold of La Fontaine's home. We must, therefore, try again.

After the conquest of Spain by the Mohammedans, Arabic literature had found a new home in Western Europe, and among the numerous works translated from Arabic into Latin or Spanish, we find in the middle of the thirteenth century a Spanish translation of our fables, called "Calila é Dymna.* This was translated into Latin by Raimond de Beziers in 1313.

Lastly, we find in the same century another translation from Arabic straight into Latin verse, by Baldo, which became known under the name of "Æsopus alter."†

* This translation has lately been published by Don Pascual de Gayangos in the *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles,* Madrid, 1860, vol. li. Here the story runs as follows (p. 57):—

"Del religioso que vertió la miel et la manteca sobre su cabeza.

"Dijo la mujer:—'Dicen que un religioso habia cada dia limosna de casa de un mercader rico, pan é manteca é miel e otras cosas, et comia el pan é lo ál condesaba, et ponia la miel é la manteca en un jarra, fasta que la finchó, et tenia la jarra colgada á la cabecera de su cama. Et vino tiempo que encareció la miel é la manteca, et el religioso fabló un dia consigo mismo, estando asentado en su cama, et dijo así: Venderé cuanto está en esta jarra por tantos maravedís, é compraré con ellos diez cabras, et empreñarse-han, é parirán á cabo de cinco meses; et fizo cuenta de esta guisa, et falló que en cinco años montarian bien cuatrocientas cabras. Desí dijo: Venderlas-he todas, et con el precio dellas compraré cien vacas, por cada cuatro cabezas una vaca, é haberé simiente é sembraré con los bueyes, et aprovecharme-he de los becerros et de las fembras é de la leche é manteca, é de las mieses habré grant haber, et labraré muy nobles casas, é compraré siervos é siervas, et esto fecho casarme-he con una mujer muy rica, é fermosa, é de grant logar, é empreñarla-he de fijo varon, é nacerá complido de sus miembros, et criarlo-he como á fijo de rey, é castigarlo-he con esta vara, si non quisiere ser bueno é obediente.' E él deciendo esto, alzó la vara que tenia en la mano, et ferió en la olla que estaba colgada encima dél, é quebróla, é cayóle la miel é la manteca sobre su cabeza." &c.

† See Poésies inédites du moyen âge, par M. Edélstand Du Méril. Paris, 1854. XVI. De viro et vase olei (p. 239):—

"Uxor ab antiquo fuit infecunda marito.
Mesticiam (l. mœstitiam) cujus cupiens lenire vix (l. vir) hujus,
His blandimentis solatur tristi[ti]a mentis:
Cur sic tristaris? Dolor est tuus omnis inanis:
Pulchræ prolis eris satis amodo munere felix.
Pro nihilo ducens conjunx hæc verbula prudens,
His verbis plane quod ait vir monstrat inane:
Rebus inops quidam . . . (bone vir, tibi dicam)
Vas oleo plenum, longum quod retro per ævum
Legerat orando, loca per diversa vagando,
Fune ligans ar(c)to, tecto[que] suspendit ab alto.
Sic præstolatur tempus quo pluris ematur[atur]
Qua locupletari se sperat et arte beari.
Talia dum captat, hæc stultus inania jactat

From these frequent translations, and translations of translations, in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, we see quite clearly that these Indian fables were extremely popular, and were, in fact, more widely read in Europe than the Bible, or any other book. They were not only read in translations, but having been introduced into sermons, homilies, and works on morality, they were improved upon, acclimatized, localized, moralized, till at last it is almost impossible to recognise their Oriental features under their homely disguises.

I shall give you one instance only.

Rabelais, in his "Gargantua," gives a long description how a man might conquer the whole world. At the end of this dialogue, which was meant as a satire on Charles V., we read :—

> "There was there present at that time an old gentleman well experienced in the wars, a stern soldier, and who had been in many great hazards, named Echephron, who, hearing this discourse, said: 'I do greatly doubt that all this enterprise will be like the tale, or interlude, of the pitcher, full of milk, wherewith a shoemaker made himself rich in conceit; but when the pitcher was broken, he had not whereupon to dine.'"

This is clearly our story, only the Brahman has, as yet, been changed into a shoemaker only, and the pot of rice or the jar of butter and honey into a pitcher of milk. Now it is perfectly true that if a writer of the fifteenth century changed the Brahman into a shoemaker, La Fontaine might, with the same right, have replaced the Brahman by his milkmaid. Knowing that the story was current—was, in fact, common property in the fifteenth century, nay, even at a much earlier date, we might really be satisfied after having brought the germs of Perrette within easy reach of La Fontaine. But, fortunately, we can make at least one step further, a step of about two centuries. This giant step backward brings us to the thirteenth century, and there we find our old Indian friend again, and this time really changed into a milkmaid. The book I refer to is written in Latin, and called *Dialogus Creaturarum optime moralizatus;* in English, the *Dialogue of Creatures moralized.* It was a book intended to teach the principles of Christian morality by examples taken from ancient fables. It was evidently a most successful book, and was translated into several modern languages. There is an old translation of it in

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Ecce potens factus, fuero cum talia nactus,
Vinciar uxori quantum queo nobiliori :
Tunc sobolem gignam, se meque per omnia dignam,
Cujus opus morum genus omne præibit avorum.
Cui nisi tot vitæ fuerint insignia rite,
Fustis hic absque mora feriet caput ejus et [h]ora.
Quod dum narraret, dextramque minando levaret,
Ut percussisset puerum quasi præsto fuisset
Vas in prædictum manus ejus dirigit ictum
Servatumque sibi vas il[l]ico fregit olivi."

PANKA-TANTRA.

A.D.

500—600
531—479. Khosru Nushirvan, King of Persia; his physician, Barzûyeh, translates the Indian fables into *Pehlevi*, s.t. Kalila and Dimna (lost).

700—800
754—775. Khalif Al-Mansur. Abdallah ibn Almokaffa (d. 760) translates the Pehlevi into *Arabic* (ed. de Sacy, 1816).

900—1000

1000—1100
1080. Into *Greek*, by Symeon Seth, s.t. Ichnelates et Stephanites, ed. Starkius, 1697.

1100—1200
1118-53. Into *Persian*, by Abul Maali Nasr Allah (prose).

1200—1300
Into *Latin*, by Baldo, s.t. Alter Æsopus (ed. du Méril).
1251. Into *Spanish*, by order of the Infante Don Alfonso, s.t. Calila é Dymna (ed. de Gayangos).
1250. Into *Hebrew*, by Rabbi Joel.
1263-78. Into *Latin*, by Johannes of Capua, s.t. Directorium humanæ vitæ (print. 1480).

1300—1400
1313. Into *Latin*, by Raimond de Beziers, s.t. Calila et Dimna.
Into *German*, under Eberhard, Duke of Würtemberg (d. 1325), printed before 1483.

1400—1500
1494. Modernized in *Persian*, by Husain ben Ali, el Vaez, s.t. Anvâri Soheili.
1493. Into *Spanish*, s.t. Exemplario contra los engaños.

1500—1600
1590. New, by Abulfazl, for Akbar, s.t. Ayari Danish.
1540. Into *Turkish*, by Ali Tchelebi, s.t. Homâyan Nâmeh.
1548. Into *Italian*, by Ange Firenzuola, s.t. Discorsi degli animali.
1552. Into *Italian*, by Doni, s.t. La filosofia morale.
1556. Into *French*, by Gabr. Cottier, s.t. Le plaisant discours des animaux.
1583. Into *Italian*, by G. Nuti, s.t. Del governo de' regni.
1570. Into *English*, by North.
1579. Into *French*, by Pierre de La Rivey, s.t. Deux livres de filosofie fabuleuse.

1600—1700
1644. Into *French*, by David Sahid d'Ispahan (Gaumin), s.t. Livre des Lumières, ou la Conduite des Rois, composé par le sage Pilpay, Indien (4 cap. only).
1666. Into *Latin*, by Petr. Possinus.

1700—1800
1724. Into *French*, by Galland, s.t. Les Contes et Fables Indiennes de Bidpaï et de Lokman (4 cap. only); printed in 1778 by Cardonne.

English, first printed by Caxton, and afterwards repeated in 1816. I shall read you from it the fable in which, as far as I can find, the milkmaid appears for the first time on the stage, surrounded already by much of that scenery which, four hundred years later, received its last touches at the hand of La Fontaine.

"DIALOGO C. (p. ccxxiii.) For as it is but madnesse to truste to moche in surete, so it is but foly to hope to moche of vanyteys, for vayne be all erthly thinges longynge to men, as sayth Davyd, Psal. xciiii: Wher of it is tolde in fablys that a lady uppon a tyme delyvered to her mayden a *galon of mylke* to sell at a cite, and by the way, as she sate and restid her by a dyche side, she began to thinke that with the money of the mylke she wold bye an henne, the which shulde bringe forth chekyns, and when they were growyn to hennys she wolde sell them and by piggis, and eschaunge them in to shepe, and the shepe in to oxen, and so whan she was come to richesse she sholde be maried right worshipfully unto some worthy man, and thus she reioycid. And whan she was thus merveilously comfortid and ravisshed inwardly in her secrete solace, thinkynge with howe greate ioye she shuld be ledde towarde the chirche with her husbond on horsebacke, she sayde to her self: 'Goo we, goo we.' Sodaynlye she smote the grounde with her fote, myndynge to spurre the horse, but her fote slypped, and she fell in the dyche, and there lay all her mylke, and so she was farre from her purpose, and never had that she hopid to have." *

Here we have arrived at the end of our journey. It has been a long journey across fifteen or twenty centuries, and I am afraid our following Perrette from country to country, and from language to language, may have tired some of my hearers. I shall, therefore, not attempt to fill the gap that divides the fable of the thirteenth century from La Fontaine. Suffice it to say, that the milkmaid, having once taken the place of the Brahman, maintained it against all comers. We find her as Doña Truhana, in the famous *Conde Lucanor*, the work of the Infante *Don Juan Manuel*,† who died in

* The Latin text is more simple:—"Unde cum quedam domina dedisset ancille sue lac ut venderet et lac portaret ad urbem juxta fossatum cogitare cepit quod de p̄cio lactis emerit gallinam quæ faceret pullos quos auctos in gallinas venderet et porcellos emeret eos que mutaret in oves et ipsas in boves. Sic que ditata contraheret cum aliquo nobili et sic gloriabatur. Et cum sic gloriaretur et cogitaret cum quanta gloria duceretur ad illum virum super equum dicendo gio gio cepit pede percutere terram quasi pungeret equum calcaribus. Sed tunc lubricatus est pes ejus et cecidit in fossatum effundendo lac. Sic enim non habuit quod se adepturam sperabat."—*Dialogus Creaturarum optime moralizatus* (ascribed to Nicolaus Pergaminus, supposed to have lived in the thirteenth century). He quotes Elynandus, in *Gestis Romanorum*. First edition, per Gerardum leeu in oppido Goudensi inceptum, munere Dei finitus est, Anno Domini, 1480.

† He tells the story as follows:—"There was a woman called Dona Truhana (Gertrude), rather poor than rich. One day she went to the market carrying a pot of honey on her head. On her way she began to think that she would sell the pot of honey, and buy a quantity of eggs, that from those eggs she would have chickens, that she would sell them and buy sheep; that the sheep would give her lambs, and thus calculating all her gains, she began to think herself much richer than her neighbours. With the riches which she imagined she possessed, she thought how she would marry her sons and daughters, and how she would walk in the street surrounded by her sons and daughters-in-law; and how people would consider her very happy for having amassed

1347, the grandson of St. Ferdinand, the nephew of Alfonso the Wise, though himself not a king, yet more powerful than a king; renowned both by his sword and by his pen, and possibly not ignorant of Arabic, the language of his enemies. We find her again in the *Contes et Nouvelles of Bonaventure des Periers*,* published in the sixteenth century, a book which we know that La Fontaine was well acquainted with. We find her after La Fontaine in all the languages of Europe.

You see now before your eyes the bridge on which our fables came to us from East to West. The same bridge which brought us Perrette brought us hundreds of fables, all originally sprung up in India, many of them carefully collected by Buddhist priests, and preserved in their sacred canon, afterwards handed on to the Brahmanic writers of a later age, carried by Barzûyeh from India to the court of Persia, then to the courts of the Khalifs at Bagdad and Cordova, and of the emperors at Constantinople. Some of them, no doubt, perished on their journey, others were mixed up together, others were changed till we should hardly know them again. Still, if you once know the eventful journey of Perrette, you know the journey of all the other fables that belong to this Indian cycle. Few of them have gone through so many changes, few of them have found so many friends, whether in the courts of kings or in the huts of beggars. Few of them have been to places where Perrette has not also been. This is why I selected her and her passage through the world as the best illustration of a subject which otherwise would require a whole course of lectures to be treated in its completeness.

But though our fable represents *one* large class or cluster of fables, it does not represent all. There were several collections, besides the Pañ*k*atantra, which found their way from India to Europe. The

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so large a fortune, though she had been so poor. While she was thinking over all this, she began to laugh for joy, and struck her head and forehead with her hand. The pot of honey fell down, was broken, and she shed hot tears because she had lost all that she would have possessed if the pot of honey had not been broken."

* Bonaventure des Periers, Les Contes ou les Nouvelles. Amsterdam, 1735: Nouvelle XIV. (vol. i. p. 141). (First edition, Lyon, 1558.) "Et ne les (les Alquemistes) sçauroit-on mieux comparer qu'à une bonne femme qui portoit une potée de laict au marché, faisant son compte ainsi: qu'elle la vendroit deux liards: de ces deux liards elle en achepteroit une douzaine d'œufs, lesquelz elle mettroit couver, et en auroit une douzaine de poussins: ces poussins deviendroient grands, et les feroit chaponner: ces chapons vaudroient cinq solz la piece, ce seroit un escu et plus, dont elle achepteroit deux cochons, masle et femelle: qui deviendroient grands et feroient une douzaine d'autres, qu'elle vendroit vingt solz la piece; apres les avoir nourris quelque temps, ce seroient douze francs, dont elle achepteroit une iument, qui porteroit un beau poulain, lequel croistroit et deviendroit tant gentil: il sauteroit et feroit *Hin*. Et en disant *Hin*, la bonne femme, de l'aise qu'elle avoit en son compte, se print à faire la ruade que feroit son poulain: et en ce faisant sa potée de laict va tomber, et se respandit toute. Et voila ses œufs, ses poussins, ses chappons, ses cochons, sa jument, et son poulain, tous par terre."

most important among them is the Book of the Seven Wise Masters, or the Book of Sindbad, the history of which has lately been written with great learning and ingenuity by Signor Comparetti.*

These large collections of fables and stories mark what may be called the high roads on which the literary products of the East were carried to the West. But there are, beside these high roads, some smaller, less trodden paths on which single fables, sometimes mere proverbs, similes, or metaphors, have come to us from India, from Persepolis, from Damascus and Bagdad. I have already alluded to the powerful influence which Arabic literature exercised on Western Europe through Spain. Again, a most active interchange of Eastern and Western ideas took place at a later time during the progress of the Crusades. Even the inroads of Mongolian tribes into Russia and the East of Europe kept up a literary bartering between Oriental and Occidental nations.

But few would have suspected a Father of the Church as an importer of Eastern fables. Yet so it is.

At the court of the same Chalif Almansur, where Abdallah ibn Almokaffa translated the fables of Calila or Dimna from Persian into Arabic, there lived a Christian of the name of Sergius, who for many years held the high office of treasurer to the Chalif. He had a son to whom he gave the best education that could then be given, his chief tutor being one *Cosmas*, an Italian monk, who had been taken prisoner by the Saracens, and sold as a slave at Bagdad. After the death of Sergius, his son succeeded him for some time as chief councillor (πρωτοσύμβουλος) to the Chalif Almansur. Such, however, had been the influence of the Italian monk on his pupil's mind, that he suddenly resolved to retire from the world, and to devote himself to study, meditation, and pious works. From the monastery of St. Saba, near Jerusalem, this former minister of the Chalif issued the most learned works on theology, particularly his *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*. He soon became the highest authority on matters of dogma in the Eastern Church, and he still holds his place among the saints both of the Eastern and the Western Churches. His name was *Joannes*, and from being born at Damascus, the former capital of the Chalifs, he is best known in history as *Joannes Damascenus*, or St. John of Damascus. He must have known Arabic, and probably Persian; but his mastery of Greek earned him, later in life, the name of Chrysorrhoas, or Gold-flowing. He became famous as the defender of the sacred images, and as the determined opponent of the Emperor Leo the Isaurian, about 726. It is difficult in his life to distinguish between legend and history, but that he had held high office at the court of the Chalif Almansur, that he boldly opposed the iconoclastic

* Ricerche intorno al Libro di Sindibad. Milano, 1869.

policy of the Emperor Leo, and that he wrote the most learned theological works of his time, cannot easily be questioned.

Among the works ascribed to him is a story called *Barlaam and Joasaph.** There has been a fierce controversy as to whether he was the author of it or not. Though for our own immediate purposes it would be of little consequence whether the book was written by Joannes Damascenus or by some less distinguished ecclesiastic, I must confess that the arguments hitherto adduced against his authorship seem to me very weak.

The Jesuits did not like the book, because it was a religious novel. They pointed to a passage in which the Holy Ghost is represented as proceeding from the Father "and the Son," as incompatible with the creed of an Eastern ecclesiastic. That very passage, however, has now been proved to be spurious; and it should be borne in mind, besides, that the controversy on the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son, or from the Father through the Son, dates a century later than Joannes. The fact, again, that the author does not mention Mohammedanism,† proves nothing against the authorship of Joannes, because, as he places Barlaam and Joasaph in the early centuries of Christianity, he would have ruined his story by any allusion to Mohammed's religion, then only a hundred years old. Besides, he had written a separate work, in which the relative merits of Christianity and Mohammedanism are discussed. The prominence given to the question of the worship of images shows that the story could not have been written much before the time of Joannes Damascenus, and there is nothing in the style of our author that could be pointed out as incompatible with the style of the great theologian. On the contrary, the author of Barlaam and Joasaph quotes the same authors whom Joannes Damascenus quotes most frequently—*e.g.*, Basilius and Gregorius Nazianzenus. And no one but Joannes could have taken long passages from his own works without saying where he borrowed them.‡

* The Greek text was first published in 1832 by Boissonade, in his "Anecdota Græca," vol. iv. The title as given in some MSS. is:—*ἱστορία ψυχωφελὴς ἐκ τῆς ἐνδοτέρας τῶν Αἰθιόπων χώρας, τῆς Ἰνδῶν λεγομένης, πρὸς τὴν ἁγίαν πόλιν μετενεχθεῖσα διὰ Ἰωάννου μοναχοῦ* [other MSS. read, *συγγραφεῖσα παρὰ τοῦ ἁγίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰωάννου τοῦ Δαμασκηνοῦ*], *ἀνδρὸς τιμίου καὶ ἐναρέτου μονῆς τοῦ ἁγίου Σάβα· ἐν ᾗ ὁ βίος Βαρλαὰμ καὶ Ἰωασάφ τῶν ἀοιδίμων καὶ μακαρίων.* Joannes Monachus occurs as the name of the author in other works of Joannes Damascenus. See Leo Allatius, Prolegomena, p. L., in Damasceni Opera Omnia. Ed. Lequien, 1748. Venice.

At the end the author says: *Ἕως ὧδε τὸ πέρας τοῦ παρόντος λόγου, ὃν κατὰ δύναμιν ἐμὴν γεγράφηκα, καθὼς ἀκήκοα παρὰ τῶν ἀψευδῶς παραδεδωκότων μοι τιμίων ἀνδρῶν. Γένοιτο δὲ ἡμᾶς, τοὺς ἀναγινώσκοντάς τε καὶ ἀκούοντας τὴν ψυχωφελῆ διήγησιν ταύτην, τῆς μερίδος ἀξιωθῆναι τῶν εὐαρεστησάντων τῷ κυρίῳ εὐχαῖς καὶ πρεσβείαις Βαρλαάμ καὶ Ἰωάσαφ τῶν μακαρίων, περὶ ὧν ἡ διήγησις.* See also Wiener Jahrbücher, vol. lxiii. p. 44—83; vol. lxxii. p. 274—88; vol. lxxiii. p. 176—202.

† Littré, *Journal des Savants*, 1865, p. 337.

‡ The Martyrologium Romanum, whatever its authority may be, states distinctly

The story of "Barlaam and Joasaph"—or, as he is more commonly called, Josaphat—may be told in a few words: "A king in India, an enemy and persecutor of the Christians, has an only son. The astrologers have predicted that he would embrace the new doctrine. His father, therefore, tries by all means in his power to keep him ignorant of the miseries of the world, and to create in him a taste for pleasure and enjoyment. A Christian hermit, however, gains access to the prince, and instructs him in the doctrines of the Christian religion. The young prince is not only baptized, but resolves to give up all his earthly riches; and, after having converted his own father and many of his subjects, he follows his teacher into the desert."

The real object of the book is to give a simple exposition of the principal doctrines of the Christian religion. It also contains a first attempt at comparative theology, for in the course of the story there is a disputation on the merits of the principal religions of the world—the Chaldæan, the Egyptian, the Greek, the Jewish, and the Christian. But one of the chief attractions of this manual of Christian theology consisted in a number of fables and parables with which it is enlivened. Most of them have been traced to an Indian source. I shall mention one only which has found its way into almost every literature of the world:*—

> "A man was pursued by a unicorn, and while he tried to flee from it, he fell into a pit. In falling, he stretched out both his arms, and laid hold of a small tree that was growing on one side of the pit. Having gained a firm footing, and holding to the tree, he fancied he was safe, when he saw two mice, a black and a white one, busy gnawing the root of the tree to which he was clinging. Looking down into the pit, he perceived a horrid dragon with his mouth wide open, ready to devour him, and when examining the place on which his feet rested, the heads of four serpents glared at him. Then he looked up, and observed drops of honey falling down from the tree to which he clung. Suddenly the unicorn, the dragon, the mice, and the serpents were all forgotten, and his mind was intent only on catching the drops of sweet honey trickling down from the tree."

An explanation is hardly required. The unicorn is Death, always chasing man; the pit is the world; the small tree is man's life, constantly gnawed by the black and the white mouse—*i.e.*, by night and day; the four serpents are the four elements which compose the human body; the dragon below is meant for the jaws of hell.

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that the acts of Barlaam and Josaphat were written by Sanctus Joannes Damascenus. "Apud Indos Persis finitimos sanctorum Barlaam et Josaphat, quorum actus mirandos sanctus Joannes Damascenus conscripsit." See Leonis Allatii Prolegomena, *in* Joannis Damasceni Opera, ed. Lequien, vol. i. p. xxvi. He adds: Et Gennadius Patriarcha per Concil. Florent., cap. 5. *οὐχ ἧττον δὲ καὶ ὁ 'Ιωάννης ὁ μέγας τοῦ Δαμασκοῦ ὀφθαλμὸς ἐν τῷβίῳ Βαρλαὰμ καὶ 'Ιωσάφατ τῶν 'Ινδων μαρτυρεῖ λέγων.*

* The story of the caskets, well known from the *Merchant of Venice*, occurs in Barlaam and Josaphat, though it is used there for a different purpose.

Surrounded by all these horrors, man is yet able to forget them all, and to think only of the pleasures of life, which, like a few drops of honey, fall into his mouth from the tree of life.*

But what is still more curious is, that the author of Barlaam and Josaphat has evidently taken his very hero, the Indian Prince Josaphat, from an Indian source. In the "Lalita Vistara"—the life, though no doubt the legendary life, of Buddha—the father of Buddha is a king. When his son is born, the Brahman Asita predicts that he will rise to great glory, and become either a powerful king, or, renouncing the throne and embracing the life of a hermit, become a Buddha.† The great object of his father is to prevent this. He therefore keeps the young prince, when he grows up, in his garden and palaces, surrounded by all pleasures which might turn his mind from contemplation to enjoyment. More especially he is to know nothing of illness, old age, and death, which might open his eyes to the misery and unreality of life. After a time, however, the prince receives permission to drive out; and then follow the three drives,‡ so famous in Buddhist history. The places where these drives took place were commemorated by towers still standing in the time of Fa Hian's visit to India, early in the fifth century after Christ, and even in the time of Hiouen Thsang, in the seventh century. I shall read you a short account of the three drives:§—

"One day when the prince with a large retinue was driving through the eastern gate of the city, on the way to one of his parks, he met on the road an old man, broken and decrepit. One could see the veins and muscles over the whole of his body, his teeth chattered, he was covered with wrinkles, bald, and hardly able to utter hollow and unmelodious sounds. He was bent on his stick, and all his limbs and joints trembled. 'Who is that man?' said the prince to his coachman. 'He is small and weak, his flesh and his blood are dried up, his muscles stick to his skin, his head is white, his teeth chatter, his body is wasted away; leaning on his stick, he is hardly able to walk, stumbling at every step. Is there something peculiar in his family, or is this the common lot of all created beings?'

"'Sir,' replied the coachman, 'that man is sinking under old age, his senses have become obtuse, suffering has destroyed his strength, and he is despised by his relations. He is without support, and useless; and people have abandoned him, like a dead tree in a forest. But this is not peculiar to his family. In every creature youth is defeated by old age. Your father, your mother, all your relations, all your friends, will come to the same state; this is the appointed end of all creatures.'

"'Alas!' replied the prince, 'are creatures so ignorant, so weak, and foolish as to be proud of the youth by which they are intoxicated, not seeing the old age which awaits them? As for me, I go away. Coachman,

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* Cf. Benfey, Pantschatantra, vol. i. p. 80; vol. ii. p. 528; Les Avadanas, contes et apologues indiens, par Stanislas Julien, i. 132, 191; Gesta Romanorum, cap. 168; Homâyun Nameh, cap. iv.; Grimm, Deutsche Mythologie, p. 758-59.

† Lalita Vistara, ed. Calcutt, p. 126.

‡ Ibid., p. 225.

§ See Max Müller's "Chips from a German Workshop," 2nd edit., vol. I., p. 211.

turn my chariot quickly. What have I, the future prey of old age—what have I to do with pleasure?' And the young prince returned to the city without going to the park.

"Another time the prince was driving through the southern gate to his pleasure-garden, when he perceived on the road a man suffering from illness, parched with fever, his body wasted, covered with mud, without a friend, without a home, hardly able to breathe, and frightened at the sight of himself and the approach of death. Having questioned his coachman, and received from him the answer which he expected, the young prince said, 'Alas! health is but the sport of a dream, and the fear of suffering must take this frightful form. Where is the wise man who, after having seen what he is, could any longer think of joy and pleasure?' The prince turned his chariot, and returned to the city.

"A third time he was driving to his pleasure-garden through the western gate, when he saw a dead body on the road, lying on a bier, and covered with a cloth. The friends stood about crying, sobbing, tearing their hair, covering their heads with dust, striking their breasts, and uttering wild cries. The prince, again, calling his coachman to witness this painful scene, exclaimed, 'Oh, woe to youth, which must be destroyed by old age! Woe to health, which must be destroyed by so many diseases! Woe to this life, where a man remains so short a time! If there were no old age, no disease, no death; if these could be made captive for ever!' Then, betraying for the first time his intentions, the young prince said, 'Let us turn back, I must think how to accomplish deliverance.'

"A last meeting put an end to his hesitation. He was driving through the northern gate on the way to his pleasure-gardens, when he saw a mendicant, who appeared outwardly calm, subdued, looking downwards, wearing with an air of dignity his religious vestment, and carrying an alms-bowl.

"'Who is that man?' asked the prince.

"'Sir,' replied the coachman, 'this man is one of those who are called Bhikshus, or mendicants. He has renounced all pleasures, all desires, and leads a life of austerity. He tries to conquer himself. He has become a devotee. Without passion, without envy, he walks about asking for alms.'

"'This is good and well said,' replied the prince. 'The life of a devotee has always been praised by the wise. It will be my refuge, and the refuge of other creatures; it will lead us to a real life, to happiness and immortality.'

"With these words the young prince turned his chariot, and returned to the city."

If now we turn to the story of Joannes of Damascus, we find that the early life of Josaphat is exactly the same as that of Buddha. His father is a king, and after the birth of his son, an astrologer predicts that he will rise to glory; not, however, in his own kingdom, but in a higher and better one; in fact, that he will embrace the new and persecuted religion of the Christians. Everything is done to prevent this. He is kept in a beautiful palace, surrounded by all that is enjoyable; and great care is taken to keep him in ignorance of sickness, old age, and death. After a time, however, his father gives him leave to drive out. On one of his drives he sees two men, one maimed, the other blind. He asks what they are, and is told

that they are suffering from disease. He then inquires whether all men are liable to disease, and whether it is known beforehand who will suffer from disease and who will be free; and when he hears the truth, he becomes sad, and returns home. Another time, when he drives out, he meets an old man with wrinkled face and shaking legs, bent down, with white hair, his teeth gone, and his voice faltering. He asks again what all this means, and is told that this is what happens to all men; that no one can escape old age, and that in the end all men must die. Thereupon he returns home to meditate on death, till at last a hermit appears, and opens before his eyes a higher view of life, as contained in the Gospel of Christ.

No one, I believe, can read these two stories without feeling convinced that one was borrowed from the other; and as Fa Hian, three hundred years before John of Damascus, saw the towers which commemorated the three drives of Buddha still standing among the ruins of the royal city of Kapilavastu, it follows that the Greek father borrowed his subject from the Buddhist Scriptures. Were it necessary, it would be easy to point out still more minute coincidences between the life of Josaphat and that of Buddha, the founder of the Buddhist religion. Both in the end convert their royal fathers, both fight manfully against the assaults of the flesh and the devil, both are regarded as saints before they die. Possibly even a proper name may have been transferred from the sacred canon of the Buddhists to the pages of the Greek writer. The driver who conducts Buddha when he flees by night from his palace where he leaves his wife, his only son, and all his treasures, in order to devote himself to a contemplative life, is called *Chandaka*. The friend and companion of Barlaam is called *Zardan*.*

How palpable these coincidences are between the two stories is best

* In some places one might almost believe that Joannes Damascenus did not only hear the story of Buddha, as he says, from the mouth of people who had brought it to him from India, but that he had before him the very text of the "Lalita-Vistara." Thus in the account of the three drives we find indeed that while the Buddhist canon represents Buddha as seeing on three successive drives, first an old, then a sick, and at last a dying man, Joannes makes Joasaph meet two men on his first drive, one maimed, the other blind, and an old man, who is nearly dying, on his second drive. So far there is a difference which might best be explained by admitting the account given by Joannes Damascenus himself, viz., that the story was brought from India, and that it was told him by worthy and truthful men. But, if it was so, we have here another instance of the tenacity with which oral tradition is able to preserve the most minute points of the story. The old man is described by a long string of adjectives both in Greek and in Sanskrit, and many of them are strangely alike. The Greek *γέρων*, old, corresponds to the Sanskrit *g*îr*n*a; *πεπαλαιώμενος*, aged, is Sanskrit v*r*iddha; *ἐρρικνώμενος τὸ πρόσωπον*, shrivelled in his face, is balîni*k*itakâya, the body covered with wrinkles; *παρείμενος τὰς κνήμας*, weak in his knees, is pravedhayamâna*h* sarvângapratyangai*h*, trembling in all his limbs; *συγκεκυφώς*, bent, is kub*g*a; *πεπωλιόμενος*, grey, is palitake*s*a; *ἐστερήμενος τοὺς ὀδόντας*, toothless, is kha*nd*adanta; *ἐγκεκόμενα λαλοῦν*, stammering, is khurakhurâva*s*aktaka*nth*a.

shown by the fact that they were pointed out, independently of each other, by scholars in France, Germany, and England. I place France first, because in point of time M. Laboolaye was the first who called attention to it in one of his charming articles in the *Débats.** A more detailed comparison was given by Dr. Liebrecht.† And, lastly, Mr. Beal, in his translation of the "Travels of Fa Hian,"‡ called attention to the same fact—viz., that the story of Josaphat was borrowed from the "Life of Buddha." I could mention the names of two or three scholars besides who happened to read the two books, and who could not help seeing, what was as clear as daylight, that Joannes Damascenus took the principal character of his religious novel from the "Lalita Vistara," one of the sacred books of the Buddhists.

This fact is, no doubt, extremely curious in the history of literature; but there is another fact connected with it which is more than curious, and I wonder that it has never been pointed out before. It is well known that the story of Barlaam and Josaphat became a most popular book during the Middle Ages. In the East it was translated into Syriac (?), Arabic, Ethiopic, Armenian, and Hebrew; in the West it exists in Latin, French, Italian, German, English, Spanish, Bohemian, and Polish. As early as 1204 a King of Norway translated it into Icelandic, and at a later time it was translated by a Jesuit missionary into Tagala, the classical language of the Philippine Islands. But this is not all. Barlaam and Josaphat have actually risen to the rank of saints, both in the Eastern and in the Western Churches. In the Eastern Church the 26th of August is the saints' day of Barlaam and Josaphat; in the Roman Martyrologium, the 27th of November is assigned to them.

There have been from time to time misgivings about the historical character of these two saints. *Leo Allatius*, in his *Prolegomena*, ventured to ask the question, whether the story of Barlaam and Joasaph was more real than the Cyropædia of Xenophon, or the Utopia of Thomas More; but, *en bon Catholique*, he replied, that as Barlaam and Josaphat were mentioned, not only in the Menæa of the Greek, but also in the Martyrologium of the Roman Church, he could not bring himself to believe that their history was imaginary. *Billius* thought that to doubt the concluding words of the author, who says that he received the story of Barlaam and Josaphat from men incapable of falsehood, would be to trust more in one's own suspicions

* *Débats*, 1859, 21 and 26 Juillet.

† Die Quellen des Barlaam und Josaphat, in Jahrbuch für roman. und engl. Litteratur, vol. ii. p. 314, 1860.

‡ Travels of Fah-Hian and Sung-Yun, Buddhist Pilgrims, from China to India. (400 A.D. and 518 A.D.) Translated from the Chinese by Samuel Beal. London, Trübner & Co. 1869.

than in Christian charity which believeth all things. *Bellarminus* thought he could prove the truth of the story by the fact that, at the end of it, the author himself invokes the two saints Barlaam and Josaphat! *Leo Allatius* admitted, indeed, that some of the speeches and conversations occurring in the story might be the work of Joannes Damascenus, because Josaphat, having but recently been converted, could not have quoted so many passages from the Bible. But he implies that even this could be explained, because the Holy Ghost might have taught St. Josaphat what to say. At all events, Leo has no mercy for those "quibus omnia sub sanctorum nomine prodita male olent, quemadmodum de sanctis Georgio, Christophoro, Hippolyto, Catarina, aliisque nusquam eos in rerum natura extitisse impudentissime nugantur." The Bishop of Avranches had likewise his doubts; but he calmed them by saying: "Non pas que je veuille soustenir que tout en soit supposé: il y auroit de la témerité à desavouer qu'il y ait jamais eû de Barlaam ni de Josaphat. Le témoignage du Martyrologe, qui les met au nombre des Saints, et leur intercession que Saint Jean Damascene reclame à la fin de cette histoire ne permettent pas d'en douter."*

With us the question as to the historical or purely imaginary character of Josaphat has assumed a new and totally different aspect. We willingly accept the statement of Joannes Damascenus that the story of Barlaam and Josaphat was told him by men who came from India. We know that in India a story was current of a prince who lived in the sixth century B.C., a prince of whom it was predicted that he would resign the throne, and devote his life to meditation, in order to rise to the rank of a Buddha. The story tells us that his father did everything to prevent this; that he kept him in a palace secluded from the world, surrounded by all that makes life enjoyable; and that he tried to keep him in ignorance of sickness, old age, and death. We know from the same story that at last the young prince obtained permission to drive into the country, and that, by meeting an old man, a sick man, and a corpse, his eyes were opened to the unreality of life, and the vanity of this life's pleasures; that he escaped from his palace, and, after defeating the assaults of all adversaries, became the founder of a new religion. This is the story, it may be the legendary story, but at all events the recognised story of Gautama *S*ākyamuni, best known to us under the name of Buddha.

If, then, Joannes Damascenus tells the same story, only putting the name of Joasaph or Josaphat in the place of Buddha; if all that is human and personal in the life of St. Josaphat is taken from the "Lalita Vistara"—what follows? It follows that, in the same sense in which La Fontaine's Perrette is the Brahman of the Pañ*k*atantra,

* Littré, *Journal des Savants*, 1865, p. 337.

St. Josaphat is the Buddha of the Buddhist canon. It follows that Buddha has become a saint in the Roman Church; it follows that, though under a different name, the sage of Kapilavastu, the founder of a religion which, whatever we may think of its dogma, is, in the purity of its morals, nearer to Christianity than any other religion, and which counts even now, after an existence of 2,400 years, 455,000,000 of believers, has received the highest honours that the Christian Church can bestow. And whatever we may think of the sanctity of saints, let those who doubt the right of Buddha to a place among them read the story of his life as it is told in the Buddhist canon. If he lived the life which is there described, few saints have a better claim to the title than Buddha; and no one either in the Greek or in the Roman Church need be ashamed of having paid to his memory the honour that was intended for St. Josaphat, the prince, the hermit, and the saint.

History, here as elsewhere, is stranger than fiction; and a kind fairy, whom men call Chance, has here, as elsewhere, remedied the ingratitude and injustice of the world.

MAX MÜLLER.