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ART. I.—*The Bible, the Missal, and the Breviary; or Ritualism Self-illustrated in the Liturgical Books of Rome: Containing the Text of the entire Roman Missal, Rubrics, and Prefaces, translated from the Latin; with Preliminary Dissertations, and Notes from the Breviary, Pontifical, etc.* By the Rev. George Lewis, of Ormiston. Edinburgh, 1853: pp. 809.

MR. LEWIS claims this as the first full English translation of the great Roman Liturgy.* The Missal is not to be found in any other spoken language. One Voisin, in the seventeenth century, who presumed to make a French version, was anathematized for his pains, and the book is not extant. Before the present undertaking, Hussenbeth's was the most complete English translation, and he gives all that is necessary for the information of the unlearned in following the service. The small volumes which are in the hands of the worshippers in these churches, are not missals or mass-books, but guides to the observance of what the priest is performing at the altar,

* The copy followed is "The Roman Missal restored, according to the decree of the most holy Council of Trent; published by order of the holy Pius V., and revised by authority of Pope Clement VIII. and Urban VIII. Augmented with the new Masses granted by the indulgence of the Apostolic See. Mechlin, 1840."

one who pretends to offer a judgment upon the subject of which they treat; and, though they may embrace more that is still matter of doubt, can no more be set aside by a sneer than can the works of Newton or Laplace.

ART. VII.—1. *The Old Testament, translated into Arabic*, by Eli Smith. Beirut. 8vo. pp. 160.

2. *The New Testament, translated into Arabic*, by Eli Smith. Beirut. 8vo. pp. 16.

THE Arabic language is one of the most interesting and important in existence. It claims the honour due to venerable age; for though its extant literature is comparatively recent, its use as a vernacular dialect runs back to a remote antiquity. We have little reason to doubt that the language of Arabia has been as permanent and uniform as her population and her manners. It is also interesting from its affinities to other tongues, belonging to the great Semitic family, and holding a distinguished place between its Hebrew and its Aramaic branches. Its internal structure is marked by a rare combination of simplicity and richness. Though destitute of compounds, and of that variety of moods and tenses, to which the Greek owes so much of its exquisite expressiveness and flexibility, the Arabic possesses a surprising variety of what grammarians call *conjugations*, but what might have been more accurately designated *voices*, in which, by a slight change of vowels, or the simplest consonantal addition, the most delicate distinctions, of a certain kind, may be expressed with all precision. This, with the almost fabulous extent of its vocabulary, entitles it to a conspicuous position in the foremost rank of dead or living languages. But over and above this venerable age and these intrinsic qualities, the Arabic possesses an historical interest, not only as the instrument by which invaluable stores of ancient learning were preserved, when Europe was involved in

darkness, but also as the vehicle and depository of a strange religious faith, the living force of which, for good or evil, has as yet been scarcely weakened. The Arabic language is essential to Islam, or as it is the fashion now to call it, *Islamism*, a form to which *Christianityism* would be a fair equivalent. The Koran, as a sacred book, exists in Arabic exclusively, every translation used by Moslems, if we err not, being always accompanied by the original; a vast advantage, which the Christian Church might almost envy, and which she may hereafter emulate. To this and other causes may be traced a further distinction of this noble tongue, that while it has preserved itself astonishingly free from all admixtures, it has entered as an element into the formation of so many others, we may say of all, in which the Mohammedan faith is professed or its worship offered. The chief examples of this fact are those afforded by the Persian and the Turkish languages; as unlike Arabic in their ultimate basis and original structure as they are to one another, and yet each exhibiting not only an Arabian dress, or alphabetic character, but an immense mass of Arabic vocables, incorporated with or without modification into the body, both of the written and the spoken language. Another interesting circumstance connected with this language, at the present moment, is its prevalence around the old historical centres of the world, and more especially the mastery which it has now maintained for ages over Palestine and Egypt, and the whole coast of North Africa, as well as in its proper and original domain. As to its actual extent as a vernacular, we venture no assertion, but we might quote high authorities in favour of the statement, that it is spoken over a wider surface, although not by greater numbers, than any other language. The local variations of its dialects are proved by philological comparison to be far less than they appear, when clothed in the discordant and empirical notation of unlearned travellers. A striking illustration of this fact, as well as of the one previously mentioned, is the recent announcement, among other signs of progress and new means of influence in the rescued and resuscitated Turkish empire, of a newspaper to be published at Constantinople, but designed for the most distant circulation, and therefore to be printed in the Arabic language—which must consequently be regarded as

a more effective and far-reaching instrument than any other of the tongues conventionally known as "oriental."

But while we watch with interest the subsidizing of this noble ally in the service of mere civilization, we feel still more deeply the importance of employing it to circulate divine and saving truth. There is no other form of living human speech, in which a version of the Bible seems so much a matter of course, or rather of necessity. On looking back to see what has been done in former times, it seems at first sight as if nothing more were needed. But a closer inspection shows that of the many Arabic versions which are spoken of in books, a very large proportion are without immediate value, as mere versions of versions, and a large proportion of what still remains is in the shape of partial limited translations. Thus the famous version of Saadia Gaou, so far as printed, is confined to Isaiah and the Pentateuch, and even in manuscript, so far as we know, extends only to Hosea and the book of Job. Out of many partial versions, and some mediate ones, a whole Bible may be and has actually been compiled. But such a book must be unequal and devoid of that homogeneous unity, which is nowhere more desirable than in translation. For this and many other reasons we regard a new and masterly translation of the Bible into Arabic, as one of the most useful and most interesting projects that can be proposed, both in a literary and religious point of view, but at the same time one of the most difficult and dangerous. We should tremble to see it in the hands of a smatterer or a sciolist, however zealous or devout; but in the same proportion we rejoice to know that it is actually in the hands of the only man perhaps now living, to whom it could be safely and implicitly entrusted.

These remarks have been occasioned by the first sheets of a new Arabic version of the Pentateuch, and a single sheet of Matthew, printed at Beirut, in Syria, under the eye of the translator, Eli Smith. The advantages possessed by Mr. Smith for this important task, are various in kind and extensive in degree. Unusual strength of mind, and soundness of judgment, a thorough early education, long experience as a working missionary, intimate acquaintance with the language, both as written and as spoken, unlimited command of native counsel

and assistance, a position in the midst of oriental habits and of Arabic associations, are combined in his case with access to the exhaustless stores of European learning. Not the least of Mr. Smith's advantages and qualifications for a work like this, is his long familiarity with literary labour of other kinds. The Bible ought not to be translated by a man who can do nothing else, and who has trained himself, if he is trained at all, for this exclusively. The more varied his experience, the wider the sweep of his acquirements and his culture, the more likely is he to succeed in this most arduous and delicate of all employments. To say nothing of the other fruits of Mr. Smith's exertions, we may specify his essential aid in two important services of exploration—one in Armenia, and the other in the Holy Land—because, for some inexplicable reason, perhaps from the vagueness of his surname, he is now seldom mentioned in connection with his two associates; and yet they have themselves borne witness to his large share both in their bodily and mental labour. The Arabic philology of Dr. Robinson's great work on Palestine belongs exclusively to Mr. Smith; and no man could have handled it with more acuteness, judgment, and precision. At the present moment, he is prominent among the first of living Arabic scholars. While his knowledge of books can scarcely be inferior to that of any French or German Orientalist, it must be combined, in larger proportions than in any of that class, with experimental knowledge of the spoken language. When to these philological accomplishments, we add the moral and religious qualities belonging to this veteran in the new crusade against Mohammedan and pseudo-Christian error, we have said enough to justify our strong expressions as to his preëminent fitness for the great work of translating the whole Bible into Arabic. Besides all this, it is to be remembered that Mr. Smith holds a high place among that distinguished corps of labourers in the East, who have done so much honour to themselves and to their country, in the eyes of the most watchful, not to say most jealous, representatives of Christian Europe; so that even English generosity and candour have, in high and public places, awarded them the first rank among modern missionaries.

Of the version itself we shall not presume to speak as critics.

We can only say, that by a simple and empirical comparison of what we have before us with the Arabic of lexicons and printed books, we have been strongly impressed with the simplicity and purity of its diction, which affords a grateful evidence, not only of the writer's learning, taste, and judgment, but of the wonderful extent to which the old Koranic Arabic is level to the comprehension of the modern oriental reader. The only outward circumstance with which we are disposed to quarrel, is the almost too complete assimilation of the work to an English Reference or Family Bible, with its figures in the text and citations in the margin. Even as to this question, which is one of usefulness, and not of show, we would not for a moment weigh our judgment against that of the translator; but we candidly confess that, as a matter of mere taste, we much prefer the aspect of the specimen of Matthew, which is free from these useful but disfiguring encumbrances.

We sincerely hope that this great work may be continued and completed by the same hand, without interruption or undue delay, from loss of health or any other providential hinderance. There are no lives more precious to the Church, than those of competent translators of the Bible, whose places every day of fresh experience makes it harder and harder to supply, and for whose preservation, therefore, the whole Christian world is bound to pray.