gentleman’s writings for further information, and for corroboration too. Where is his evidence to be found? In the Sicle de Louis XIV (chapitre xxv), containing “Particularités et anecdotes du règne de Louis XIV,” in the middle of which we may read the following: —

“Ces fêtes [namely, of the Carrousel] raniment plus que jamais le goût des devises et des emblèmes que les tournois avaient mis autrefois à la mode, et qui avait subsisté après eux. Un antiquaire, nommé Douvres, imaginait dès-lors pour Louis XIV, l’emblème d’un soleil dardant ses rayons sur un globe, avec ces mots: Nec piritibus impar. L’idée était un peu imitée d’une devise espagnole faite pour Philippe II, et plus convenable à ce roi qui possédait la plus belle partie du Nouveau-Monde et tant d’États dans l’ancien, qu’un jeune roi de France ne donnait encore que des espérances. Cette devise eut un succès prodigieux. Les armoiries du roi, les meubles de la couronne, les tapisseries, les sculptures, en furent ornés. Le roi ne la porta jamais dans ses carrousels. On a reproché injustement à Louis XIV le faste de Louis XIV (chapitre 204)]{Ancient Scottish Poems, p. 244) will answer the question. As to the second of the two lines, that editor says:

“Sed semper variabile,”

and

“Consorti meo Jacobi.”

He asks me how these are to be dealt with? Lord Hailes (Ancient Scottish Poems, p. 244) will answer the question. As to the second of the two lines, that editor says: —

“So it is written in the MS. & but the correspondent word, variable, shows that it should be Jacobo Lie, or perhaps Wyllie.”

He accordingly inserts “Wyllie” in the text of the poem. I do not say he is right in this, but it looks as if he had the same view of Dunbar’s pronunciation of Latin as I have ventured to bring under notice.

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THE ANCIENT SCOTTISH PRONUNCIATION OF LATIN.

(4th S. i. 83.)

MR. VERE IRVING disposites of this matter somewhat hastily. If I am wrong in thinking that the passages quoted from the poems of Dunbar and his contemporaries show that they intended the Latin words there introduced to be pronounced more Anglicana, a reference to Butler’s Hudibras, at least, cannot convict me of error, being singularly irrelevant. It is a mistake to characterise those old Scottish writers as habitually indifferent to the correctness of their rhymes. They occasionally disregarded accent and prosody in order to get their lines to “jingle.” Mr. Irving’s method of settling all difficulties is summary enough. To make, for instance, “heir is” (“here is”) correspond with a Scotch pronunciation of “reverteris,” he proposes to pronounce the vernacular as an heir is. Did Scotchmen of the fifteenth century, when they said “We are all here,” utter the last word as if it were “hair” ? No one reading the “Lament for the Makers” but must be satisfied that Dunbar meant to rhyme the refrain —

“Timmer mortis conturbat me,”

forming the fourth line of each stanza, with the immediately preceding line, according to a fixed rule of pronunciation, whatever it was. The third line of each quatrain ends with such a word as sile (sily), degree, flei, three, Lee (“Lockhart of the Lee”), lie, see, we. On the assumption that the Latin me must receive the broad sound, the words in the mother-tongue do not rhyme with it all unless, following Mr. Irving’s principle, we pronounce them sile, degray, flay, tray, Lay, hey, say, way. A transformation of the like sort has, on a similar assumption, to take place in other passages quoted by me. “Cria” (Cry-a) which Walter Kennedy rhymes with the Latin quia, would have to be pronounced “creea” to accord with quaea. I thank Mr. Irving for referring me to the two lines in the “Testament of Andro Kennedy” —

“Sed semper variable,”

and

“Consorti meo Jacobi.”

Although it may seem rather late, yet I hope Mr. Bates will accept my thanks for his references regarding the cyclic poems. On that subject I have read Mure, Müller, and Wüllner, and I do not expect any older writers will give me any real explanation of what I wish for. This I shall state more in detail, in the hope that Mr. Bates will assist me.

It is quite evident, to any one who examines the epitome of the cyclic poems in the works of Proclus, that the six epics abstracted by him, namely, the Cypria, the Ethiopis, the Little Iliad, the Ilid Persis, the Nosti, and the Telegonia, either commence or end—some of them both—so abruptly, that Proclus could not have seen those cycles in their original state. This fact is so glaring, that Müller (p. 67) perceives that the epitome by Proclus was not drawn from the cyclic poems according to their original forms. But he makes the unwarranted conjecture, that what Proclus saw and epitomised was “a selection made by some grammarian, who had put together a connected poetical description of these events from the works of several cyclic poets, in which...
no occurrence was repeated, but nothing of importance was omitted." But so difficult a problem is not to be solved by a mere hypothesis; and this case is not an exception to the rule. We know that the cyclic narratives as given to us in the epitome by Proclus is, in very many respects, contradicted by Pindar and the Greek tragedians; consequently, what Proclus saw must have been both an altered and a mutilated edition of the cyclics.

Moreover, neither the epitome of the cyclics by Proclus, nor our Iliad or Odyssey, takes the slightest notice of the old Homeric story which represented Achilles as having an invulnerable skin. Yet that story possesses characteristics which show it to be a legend of the very oldest description; and undoubtedly a genuine Homeric composition; and is referred to by Tætzes, by Apollodorus, and by Statius. In short, the oldest traditions are carefully excluded from the epitome of the cyclics by Proclus, and from our Iliad and Odyssey. This is a very suspicious circumstance, which is strengthened by the fact that, although the narratives contained in the six cyclic poems epitomised by Proclus follow each other with the most minute precision, yet Müller has shown valid grounds for believing that the original Ethiopis comprised all that part of the history of the Trojan war from the death of Hector to the destruction of Ilion, and followed in many respects traditions wholly different from the Little Iliad.

In short, as yet, we know less about the cyclic poems than we know about our Iliad and Odyssey. We have been for centuries believing that the cyclic poems were imitations of our Iliad; whereas Aristotle's account of the cyclics, and of our Iliad, shows (unintentionally) that the reverse is most probably the case. The weight of probability is in favour of supposing that our Iliad has been compiled from the genuine old cyclic poems; not as regards narrative, but as regards style, language, characters, and phraseology. On the other hand, the reconstruction of the cyclic narrative would be found to agree with Pindar and the Greek tragedians more than with our Iliad; a powerful argument in favour of the very late date of our spurious Iliad.

I shall conclude by observing, that all the cyclic poems were attributed to Homer until about the time of Aristotle, B.C. 347—a time when to identify the cyclics with men who flourished B.C. 900, B.C. 840, B.C. 776, &c., was simply impossible. But I have said enough to show that a proper inquiry into the cyclic poems has never yet been made, and might worthily occupy the attention of any Homeric Society.

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