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about this, and the admission of the pupil's hand is really, on the good old Jewish principle of *אני*, an argument for the cardinal's veracity. Moreover, we may throw a sop to the expert, and plead that the pupil is later than the master, and therefore inclined to the end rather than the beginning of his century.

Anyhow, the picture the book gives us of the cordial relations between Jew and Christian in mediaeval Italy is quite as fine as anything painted in it by even Giotto the master. The cardinal ordering a Jew's prayerbook to be illuminated for a bookworm by the finest artist of the day. The Pope signing and sealing permission for that same bookworm to read the book and treasure it. The Jewish vagrant scribe discoursing to these great dignitaries of the Church on the glorious learning of his Rabbi. Are we quite as broad-minded nowadays? How many Jewish millionaires are there who would pay as much for a Barmitzvah present to his own son and heir or make so edifying a choice? How many Jewish bidders were there for this very little book?

E. N. ADLER.

LAY POEMS OF BAGDAD.

(AN UNKNOWN HEBREW DIVAN OF ALCHARISI'S TIME.)

DURING a visit to Aleppo in the fall of last year, I felt the keenest disappointment at the poor results achieved after a systematic search for literary treasure in what—from a distance—seemed so rich a quarry. I delved and groped in the recesses of the huge Genizah of the oldest and one of the largest Synagogues now existing, but though the dust was more acrid, and the work far dirtier than that of Fostat, the matrix was modern, and the dirt not pay dirt. I left the ancient city discouraged and disgusted, but just as I reached the gate a poor man hurried up with a bundle of pages which he offered me. I did not want to take it, but by way of polite negative, offered him half a mejidieh. "It is yours," he cried, and passed me the bundle, which I accepted without enthusiasm, though with a sort of idea that it might serve as "Reise Literatur." When, however, I came to examine it, I found that it was veritable treasure-trove—better than anything I had consciously acquired. It turned out to be the Divan, or rather a very large fragment of the Divan, composed by an Eastern poet, probably of Bagdad, who was on terms of intimacy with the son of Maimonides, and most of the other Hebrew worthies of his time. Its style is not unlike that of the Tahkemoni, and of the same date. The volume contains 281 poems

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¹ A kinsman of Maimonides; cp. Kaufmann, *Revue d. Études Juives*, VII, 152, and Steinschneider, *H. Bibl.*, XVI, 10.

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I showed the precious volume to Professor Steinschneider in Berlin. That venerable bibliographer was at no loss to trace or place it. By the aid of his JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW list of Arabic names, he found that one of the poems, the 179th, had been published as far back as 1855 in the third volume of רחליון, and by himself! It was from a fragment of two leaves, formerly in MS. Hunt. 525, at the Bodleian. It was afterwards taken out of that volume and bound up with others as MS. Opp. add. 4to 151. The number in Neubauer's Catalogue is 2424 (4). In the Oxford fragment three poems are numbered 281 to 283. My no. 179 is that numbered 282, but though the order is different we may assume that the original Divan had at least a hundred more poems than my copy¹.

The poem numbered 283 in the Bodleian Fragment was also deemed of much importance. Graetz devotes a long note to it in the seventh volume of his History (pp. 481 et seq.). The poem begins נניד עם אל אשר מכל סרניו, and is ascribed by him to be in praise of Mordecai ibn Alcharbija, the Sa'd al Dawla, or "Saad-Addaula" as he is generally called. For his father's name we have in our MS. in the heading to 164, אלהרבי. From the scanty material before him, Graetz was able to assign the authorship of the Fragment to an Eastern poet of the end of the thirteenth century. The Divan now before us makes this assumption a certainty, and our historian's happy combination of audacity with accuracy is again justified.

For the rest, we can glean something of the author's personality from the Divan. We know the people with whom he corresponded and those who were his patrons. His name may perhaps have been Obadiah (160), and he would seem to have had to mourn the loss of three sons—Isaac, Eleazer (8, 19), and Jacob or Abu'l sa'adat (224). He was apparently a native of Bagdad (Babel or Adina or בנראר as he calls it), and, though a Rabbinit, was on friendly relations even with Karaites.

¹ To complete this index, add the following names which occur in the Oxford fragment:—Abraham, 281; Alcharbija, 283; Chalafta, 281; David, 281; Mordecai, 283; Phineas, 280, 281; Saadia, 281; Samuel, 280.

The side-light the MS. throws upon the Persian Jews of the time is extremely valuable. What one can glean about them from contemporary records has hitherto been most scanty. Maimonides and his son corresponded with some Persians; Alcharisi, the European poet traveller, belittled them. Benjamin of Tudela catalogues the ten Roshe Yeshiba of his day. Bar Hebraeus, or rather his "continuator," celebrates their great but unfortunate statesman, the Saad-Addaula, but nobody has hitherto quite lifted their veil of Oriental secrecy. Dr. Israel Lévi, in an ingenious essay in the *Revue des Études Juives*, attributes to him the tomb of Mordecai, still revered by Hamadan Jews as that of *the* Mordecai, and not a mere "מֵרְכֵי הַזֶּמֶן" as many a Nagid was called in the thirteenth century. I cannot pretend to adjudicate upon his theory, but it is certainly supported by the fact that an inscription on Esther's tomb says it was built in 1307 by the physician, Abu Shams, the son of Awhad (?).

The Persian names of our MS. are most instructive. To this very day, every Persian Jew has a double name—a biblical one for his family, his friends, and his co-religionists, and a Moslem name for business and the state.

The book itself is written in a fine thirteenth-century Persian hand on brown Oriental paper, large 8vo, double columns, twenty lines to the page. Professor Steinschneider wants me to publish it in the סִקְיָי נִרְדָּמִים. It certainly is a precious addition to our knowledge of the Babylonian Jews, and I do not know whether to be glad or sorry that in this respect it exceeds any of the 157 Hebrew Persian MSS. I have managed to collect from the Persian Jews of to-day in their own homes.

E. N. ADLER.