



Lord Beaconsfield.

From a Statuette modelled in Paris, 1878-9, by Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower, in the National Portrait Gallery, Rischgitz Collection.

ROUND THE WORLD.*

Any man can go a voyage round the world and write a book about it when he gets home again; a good many men do, but most of them ought not to, for it is not one in a thousand that has eyes or the desire to see more than the guide-books tell him to look at, and fewer still have so much of cunning in the use of words that they are able to give colour, atmosphere, or anything of living realism to the story of their travels when they come to write it. Sir Frederick Treves is of that very small minority. He has written in "The Other Side of the Lantern" one of those not too plentiful "travellers' tales" that really ought to have been written, for it is interesting and amusing from first to last, and you are the wiser for having read it.

The title is simply the embodiment of a quaintly fanciful conceit that the author casually annotates in a line or two of preface. "A paper lantern, round and red, hangs under a cloud of cherry blossom in a Japanese village. There is a very familiar flower symbol painted upon one side of it. Some children have crossed the green to see what is on the other side of the lantern. A like curiosity has led to the writing of this trivial book." The larger sections of the record are devoted to India and Japan. Starting from Tilbury in a November fog, we are carried out across the Mediterranean, through the Suez Canal and the Red Sea, making flying calls at this and that place by the way, and so to India for a lengthier sojourn, to Burmah, Ceylon, China, Japan, and round by America home. Everywhere it is the people who interest Sir Frederick more than the scenery, though the scenery interests him, too, and nothing of the beauty or the strangeness or the wonder of it seems to escape him. Gossiping delightfully one minute of the history or traditions of the place he is visiting, the next he

* "The Other Side of the Lantern." By Sir Frederick Treves. 12s. net. (Cassell.)

is noting some exquisitely or grotesquely characteristic feature of the street or the town, and all the while he is acutely and most sympathetically alive to the smallest and obscurest of the little comedies and tragedies that are happening about him daily wherever he passes. He knows how to observe and how to describe what he observes, and his descriptions bite into the memory so that certain sights and sounds that haunted him haunt you also after you have closed the book. There still, as he sketched her in a casual three or four lines, is the little Japanese girl-mother holding her baby up laughingly, and calling to it to look at the fish-shaped pennon fluttering bravely in the wind, and you wonder at the baby's curious impassiveness till you notice with a shock that it is blind. There is that light, musical "babble of the clogs" heard in the streets of the Japanese city—the sound is made so audible in the brief paragraph that describes it that hereafter if ever you hear it in reality it must seem familiar to you.

There are no long and laboured descriptive passages, but the book abounds in brilliant and vividly impressionistic word-pictures, such as this of the departure from Tilbury: "The Thames creeps from under the fog, as if it came forth from a tunnel. Here at Tilbury it is a villainous tramp of a river. Dirty, sullen, and strong, it lurches down to the sea. It seems to revel in its dirtiness, for every eddy it turns up brings from the depths fresh realisations of a deeper dirt. It rubs its muddy shoulders along the shrinking banks, so that they are soiled by its touch. Mud and mist replace the glories of stream and sky. Where there may have been fields trodden by leisurely folk, with stiles for them to rest at and hedgerows for them to make love among, there are gullies and dykes of slime, a village of dismal sheds, and a spinney of cranes and derricks. The very grass, struggling up among ashes and rusting iron, looks lean and dissipated."

Take, by way of contrast, the description of the Taj Mahal built on the banks of the Jumna by the Emperor Shah Jahan "over the remains of his wife Arjumand Banu, the wife of his youth."

... "It stands aloft on its marble platform at the end of the garden causeway, a thing of white against the blue sky. It is poised between the masses of green trees which brush the terrace and the unruffled blue. It is like a white cloud, luminous, intangible, translucent. With the first sight of the Taj Mahal comes only a sense of indefinable pleasure. It is no mere feeling of admiration, still less of amazement, no mere delight in a splendid building, because it does not impress one as a building. There is a sudden vision, and with it a sudden sense of ineffable satisfaction, as if in the place of a marble dome the garden had been filled with divine music. . . . The building is pale and unsubstantial, and its walls appear so thin that the fabric is like a shell. One would imagine that a blast of wind would carry it away, or that it would melt before a vicious rain. There is no background for it but the sky, and in the sky are only wheeling kites."

Nearly all these pen-pictures of buildings and cities and natural scenery are edged with poetry, as the sketches of the various peoples who generally fill the foregrounds, and the comments on their habits of life and thought, are shrewd and suggestive, and informed always with a large humanity.

The book is dedicated, by special permission, to the King, and contains forty excellent illustrations from photographs taken by the author.

A. ST. JOHN ADCOCK.

SPAIN IN ENGLAND.*

If we should meet upon the stairs that awful student of Etruscan Inscriptions I fear greatly that, in spite of the recommended tactics, we should allow him to go, rejoicing. Yet even without that irony which is the natural weapon of many a man—if he be fortunate enough to have Anatole France for his creator—we may, some of us, have sufficient—well! call

* "Spanish Influence on English Literature." By Major Martin Hume. 7s. 6d. (Nash.)

it wisdom to cast a doubt on the student's Latin. But, after all, the conduct which I am advocating is for the use of those individuals who can speak pretty well on the spur of the moment. We need not consider those rarest beings who furnish themselves with a repartee, arrange a meeting, provoke an argument, and lead it up to the fatal point. However, when the student writes a book he gives himself far more into your hands. There are several methods of dealing effectively with him. One of those which now prevails—and a very pleasant one if you yourself should have a happy ignorance of Latin—is to mention the fact (which is undoubtedly of sociological value) that the student has frequent recourse to a toothbrush, or the more æsthetic information that a certain portrait painter has declined—being tactful you will not say why—to immortalize the student's mother. Then again, you may have a theory—say that factories have been found wanting because in picturesqueness they compare unfavourably with a cloaked hidalgo (besides being more difficult to write about). With inconsiderable practice you will take your subject—Etruscan Inscriptions, for that matter—and with a charming digression you will devote your article to a condemnation of factories and a glorification of hidalgos, both of which topics appear quite glamorous to your many and stolid British readers—who think that everyone knows as little as you pretend to concerning their secret romance. When you have finished the factories, flout other aspects of civilisation; assert that woad is the only wear, and if at some personal inconvenience you resolve to prove it—I suppose that even in your own garden the stolid British law would run, and hale you forth to publicity.

But for the moment I will avail myself of none of these, although the temptation is peculiarly severe. Major Martin Hume is understood to know as much about Spain and Spanish history and language as Mr. George Wyndham knows of the language of the Picts, and I have no doubt that Major Hume knows a great deal more, seeing that he has written at least one book in the most admirable Spanish, whereas Mr. Wyndham has turned the Pictic language (which now consists of five words) to no such purpose. Let us assume, then, that all things Spanish are an open book to Major Hume—and here we may find a loophole, for it is possible that when such a specialist sets out to write about "Spanish Influence on English Literature" he will see that influence more widely exerted than anyone else, perhaps even more widely than has been the case. Manifold are the complications of "literary influence," for we must distinguish the great winds of thought—such as the Renaissance—which do not blow from any land but, even as love in the thoughts of youth, bend all men equally. Still, on the other hand, if one character be given out of one land or literature into another literature there is influence, however small. Such, in "Love's Labour Lost," is the character of Don Adriano Armado, which, as Major Hume captivatingly shows, must have been taken from Antonio Perez, an exiled Spaniard. This is, indeed, an admirable case, for Antonio was in very life no less a true Spaniard than the shrugging but vivacious foreigner of our drama is a true Frenchman. It is not our business to place upon the stage a person who consumes beef and is very fairly sane, because if he resembles us in so many points we shall not perceive the few wherein we differ; and, broadly speaking, Frenchmen do shrug and are vivacious. Then, if our modern plays are literature and permanent, that Frenchman will exert as durable an influence upon our literature as Antonio Perez, with his affectations, his heroics, and his extravagance. These qualities have been cultivated in England from the days when Lilly wrote his "Euphuës"—who knows whether the failure of Perez would have kept away from our literature that obscurity and involution of style which are still sometimes to be met with? Alas! we read that under the didactic influence of Don Alfonso the Learned it was customary for letters, amorous and otherwise, to be so written that no man could easily comprehend them, and in these times we have so fallen that letters of the most

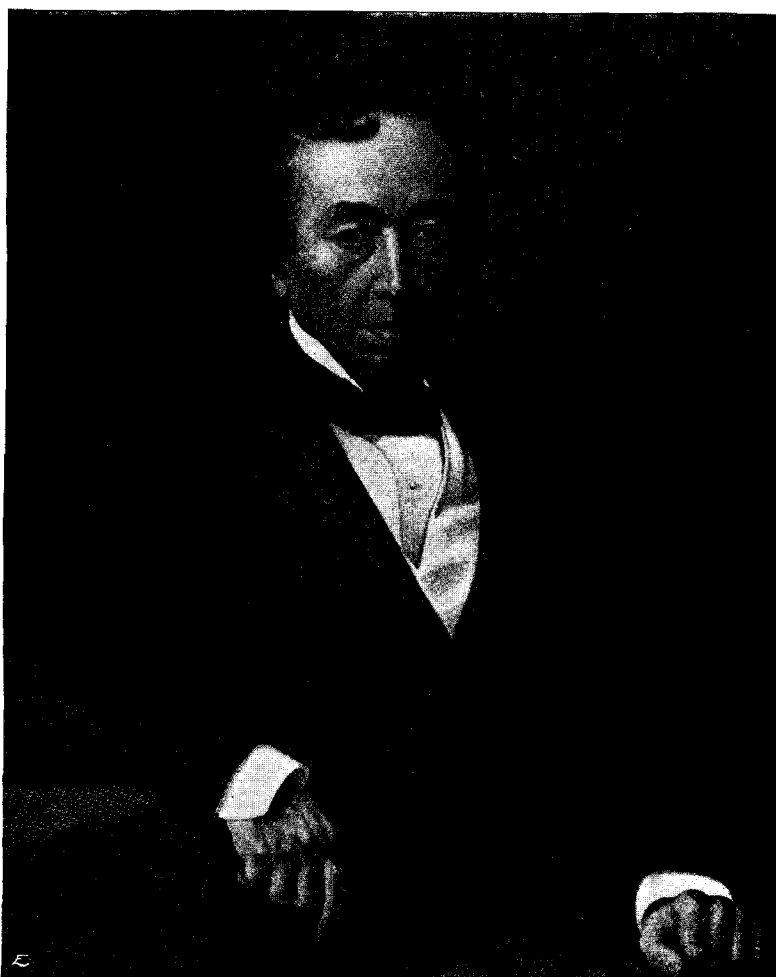
unalloyed (because the most careless) love can be comprehended of jurymen. For these and other benefits we got from Spain, such as the mysticism of Fray Luis de Leon which appears in Crashaw, the "Novelas Ejemplares" which were borrowed by Beaumont and Fletcher, the peripatetic books and the picaresque which are visible in English work from Fielding to Mark Twain, for "Count Lucanor," which was probably not the germ of the "Taming of the Shrew"—for all these Major Hume will give good arguments. Those who want to learn a great deal about the subject will be sure to study this book, whatever I may say; those others who may like to meet some entertainment will rejoice in the light and sarcastic touch which animates our author's erudition.

HENRY BERNARD.

A NEW PLEA FOR BOWDLER.*

In a very handsomely printed volume Mr. Street has collected a second instalment of his fugitive essays, which contain sporadically a great deal well worth resurrection. For he really has something to say—something really of his own. When, strangely often, he says things which for years I have been scolded for saying, he finds me cold. It may be that "invincible ignorance" is too morose to welcome a comrade. But when I think him flatly wrong, he interests, he rouses, he challenges. A good sign this; so few now are worth quarrelling with. Not that I would try ever so briefly to "have words with him" in a single column; but his protest against Bowdlerism shall not go without a hurried counterblast. The subject is too vast to embrace here—too thorny to penetrate; I only ask Mr. Street to weigh one point. Pornography and all vile books which cannot do an atom of good and must do worlds of harm, we both, I suppose, agree to hand over to the Destroying Angel, Mr. Stipendiary and his detective sprites. But there remain piles of excellent, wholesome old books, some which every man ought to read, others which most men like to read, and which are sometimes disfigured, and sometimes—I say it boldly—improved by indecency and coarseness.

* "Books and Things." By G. S. Street. 6s. (Duckworth and Co.)



Engraved by W. Roffe from a
Photo by J. Hughes.

Rischgitz Collection.

Lord Beaconsfield.