The wanderings of plants and animals from their first home

Hehn Victor
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THE WANDERINGS
OF
PLANTS AND ANIMALS
FROM THEIR FIRST HOME.

BY
VICTOR HEHN.

EDITED BY
JAMES STEVEN STALLYBRASS,
EDITOR OF GRIMM'S "TEUTONIC MYTHOLOGY," ETC. ETC.

London:
SWAN SONNENSCHNEIN AND CO.,
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1888.
To the

RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE

THIS BOOK IS

(By Permission)

Respectfully Dedicated.
THE history of our Domestic Animals and Cultivated Plants is a subject of absorbing interest to the educated man, and (if he knew it) to the uneducated man too. It forms no small part of the history of Man himself and his slow advance to civilization.

We cannot afford to kick down the ladders we have climbed by. If our venerable friend the “lowing Steer” has now “doffed the weary yoke” for good and all, and even his quite recent successor Dobbin bids fair to be driven off the field by a mechanical substitute, “the divel’s oän teäm;” yet, some three or four thousand years ago, with our first wooden plough just invented, and the steam-plough still a long way ahead, what could we have done without “the ox and the ass to ear the ground”?

And we have not quite done with our old friends yet; not till we have learnt to relish milk and beef manufactured without the aid of milkmaid or butcher; not till the invalid, advised to “take horse-exercise,” consents to take it alongside Master Tom in the day-nursery. And not then. The Iron Horse was to have exterminated his prototype of flesh and blood, but Dobbin seems inclined to stay; nay, if we except the plough-horse and the stager, he is in greater request than ever.

And who can state the sum of our obligations to the sheep, the pig, the camel, the dog, and even poor mousing Puss? Or why should Chanticleer and his family, with other bipeds of the poultry-yard, be forgotten? And much the same may be said of Cultivated Plants—the grains, the potherebs, garden-flowers, fruit-trees, timber, and even ornamental trees.
Now the history of the Plants and Animals of Europe—of their reclamation from a wild state to the service of man, and their distribution in their present _locale_—is susceptible of two or three different methods of investigation, which sometimes clash, and lead to opposite conclusions. It is certain that _some_ of them are not natives of the countries where we find them; that they have been imported from abroad. But which of them? whence, and along what route? how early, and by whom? Our answers to these questions will be different, accordingly as we lean chiefly on Natural Science, or on Ancient History, Literature, and even Language.

The purely scientific man will judge chiefly by the suitability of soil and climate. If he finds a plant flourishing pretty abundantly in Greece or Italy now, and knows of no climatic or geologic changes that would exclude its having flourished there 5,000 years ago, he will at once pronounce it indigenous, and scout the notion of its having been imported.

But now listen to the scholar, and he may tell you that Homer never mentions such a plant; that later poets speak of it in a vague way as something very choice and very holy, and always in connection with some particular deity: they may have tasted its fruit, may have seen the figure of its flowers (probably conventional) in emblematic painting or carving, but have not the faintest notion of its shape or size, whether it be a grass, a shrub, or a tree; till at last, in the time of Darius or Alexander, the plant itself emerges into clear visibility. Your inference will be, that it came to Greece within historical times.

Or suppose the plant _was_ common in Greece in Homer's time, so common that all memory of its introduction had died away, except in half-mythical traditions, say of the migration of a tribe, the founding of a city, and so forth;—is such Tradition to be despised? Why should not the plant have been imported a thousand years before Homer? Who knows how long Phoenician commerce, colonization, and conquest had been active, how long "great Zidon" and "the strong city Tyre" had stood?

Lastly, where History, Literature, and even Tradition fail us, may not the modern science of Language come to our aid? Suppose the name of the plant stands isolated in Greek, but has its root and a family of relations in Hebrew or Persic; that it can be
traced along the coast of Asia Minor and across a string of Ægean Islands to the south of Greece, or round by the Euxine and Thrace to Northern Greece, following the very track of Phoenician commerce or Iranian conquest and migration;—can we doubt whence the name and the thing must have come?

Professor Hehn thinks that of late years the Scientist has had too much his own way, that it is time for the Historic and Philologic methods to come into play, and have their say. Hence his book, which he modestly calls a historico-linguistic sketch. "Sketch" is a light word for the load of learning he pours out before us. Comparative Philology is not the thing of lucky guesses that the Etymology of our fathers used to be; it has well-ascertained laws, which raise it to the dignity of a science.

He holds that Europe owes much more to Asia than the mere botanist and mere zoologist are willing to admit. In particular, that the Flora of Southern Europe has been revolutionized under the hand of Man; that the evergreen vegetation of Italy and Greece is not indigenous, but is mainly due to the sacred groves planted round the temples of Oriental gods and goddesses; that in this way the laurel has followed the worship of Apollo, the cypress and myrtle that of "Ashtoreth of the Zidonians" (Aphrodite), the olive that of Athena, and so on. At the same time, the reverence for the Olive, the Vine, the Fig, &c., was not all superstitious fancy, but founded on their value to man as the source (and therefore symbol) of a higher type of life.

He has much to say on the Indo-Europeans or Aryans at the time of their settling in this continent. He is inclined to place their status as to culture not so high as most recent writers have done. He even thinks they stood at a lower stage of civilization than the builders of the Lake-villages in Switzerland; that instead of these being a "mysterious pre-Aryan race," they were Aryans at a comparatively advanced stage, for they cultivated barley, wheat, and flax, &c. In fact, the low condition of the Aryans on entering Europe, and their subsequent obligations, both to other Aryans (Iranians) in Asia, and above all to the Semitic race in Palestine, form perhaps the central idea of the whole book.

The Translator has judged it best, for the convenience of the
PREFACE.

common reader, to banish from the body of the book many Greek and Latin citations—on which the Author rather prides himself—and disquisitions on the exact value of ancient words. In revising her Translation for the press, I have taken the liberty to restore some of this omitted matter, where it seemed essential to the argument. If too much has been omitted, the Translator apologizes to the learned Author on the ground that she wished his book to be read. Readers with an appetite for philology will probably still find an abundant feast in the "Notes," which are translated in full.

J. S. S.