

REV. DR. LOUIS LOEWE.

This profound German savant was born at Zulz, in Prussian Silesia, in 1809, and was first educated at Rosenberg, Silesia, subsequently proceeding to the theological colleges of Lissa, Nicolsburg, and Presburg, and the University of Berlin. There can be no doubt that since the death of the great Mezzofanti no living linguist has so nearly approached the Cardinal as the subject of this biography. He may, in his turn, be truly described as " a monster of human languages; a Briarius of the parts of speech," and such being the case we have no hesitation in not only introducing him to the notice of our readers, but in following his remarkable career in somewhat detail.

A desire to cultivate the subject of Oriental languages induced Dr. Louis Loewe in early life to leave Berlin for London. On his way to England he remained for some time in Hamburg, where, at the recommendation of the Russian minister, Baron Heinrich von Struve, he was entrusted with the classification of Oriental coins in the Sprewitz Cabinet, and received, as a remuneration for his work, a number of Dshoodsheed, Bulgarian, 'Abbase and Fatimite coins, which formed the nucleus of his own numismatic cabinet, , containing at present, a very considerable number of valuable coins, procured by him during his travels in the East.

Furnished with letters of introduction, he was, soon after his arrival in London, presented by Mr. John George Children, Secretary of the Royal Society, to his late Royal Highness, the Duke of Sussex, in whom he subsequently found a great friend and Patron. The Earl of Munster, Lord Holland, Sir Alexander Johnston, Sir Gore Ouseley and Professor H.H. Wilson also evinced a great interest in his studies. Miss Emma Roberts introduced him to the Countess of Blessington, (see "The Literary Life and Correspondence of the Countess of Blessington " by Dr. R. R. Madden, Vol. II, p.328). The latter recommended him to Sir Gardiner Wilkinson, and every facility was afforded to Dr. Loewe enter private libraries, museums and numismatic collections. A few months later, the Duke of Sussex gave him letters to his friends in the University of Cambridge - the Rev. E. Peacock, Principal of Trinity College, Rev. E. A. Browne, now Bishop of Winchester, and the Rev. Dr. Samuel E. Lee, Regius Professor of Hebrew when he proceeded there to accomplish his literary searches. Sir Francis Palgrave of the Chapter House Westminster, afterwards introduced him to the Vice-Chancellor of Hall and other friends in the University of Oxford, where he repaired also to that seat of learning for the prosecution of his studies. Dr. Loewe next went to Paris, where he became acquainted with Dr. John Borthwick Gilchrist, the great Hindoostanie scholar, Garcin de Tasse, Sylvestre de Lacy, Quatremere, Reinaud, Letronne, Jaubert, Julien de Paris, General Pepe and Admiral Sir Sydney Smith, the hero of Acre. He passed several months in that city, having frequent intercourse with his learned friends, and was introduced, previously to his leaving Paris, to the Societe Asiatique, by Messieurs Reinaud and Burnouff. On his return to England, Dr Hodgkin introduced him to the Philological Society, where, in the absence of the lecturer for the evening, Dr Bialoblozki,

Dr Loewe was invited to give some account of his studies, and he selected the Egyptian language for his subject. During his sojourn in London he often visited the library of Kensington Palace, and His Royal Highness, the Duke of Sussex, had frequent conversations with him on literary and philological subjects.

With a view of extending his literary researches, and acquiring a better knowledge of Oriental languages, specially the Arabic, Coptic ' Nubian, Turkish, Persian and Circassian tongues, he travelled in the years 1837, 38, and 39, under the auspices of the Duke of Sussex, the Earl of Munster, the Duke of Northumberland (at that time, Lord Prudhoe), and Admiral Sir Sydney Smith, in Egypt, Nubia, a part of Ethiopia, Syria, Palestine, Turkey, Asia Minor and Greece. On his arrival at Alexandria the doctor had the honour of being presented to Mohhammad Ali Pasha, the Viceroy of Egypt, by Monsieur Roquerbe, the Prussian Consul General, to deliver a letter of introduction to his Highness from Admiral Sir Sydney Smith.

The letter was read to him by Artin Bey. He was pleased to ask Dr. Loewe various questions respecting his literary pursuits where he had learnt this or that ; where he wished to go; and how long he thought of staying in Egypt. His Highness then requested from him a translation of some Hieroglyphical inscription, which Dr. Loewe promised to make, and the Pasha ordered that a Firman should be prepared for him, securing to him all the convenience in his researches that he could desire.

In Cairo, the learned subject of our sketch was introduced by the English Consul, Dr. Alfred S. Walne, to Lord Prudhoe, who took a most lively interest in his studies, and afforded him great facilities in their pursuit. He also presented him to Prince Puckler-Muscau, who had just returned from Abyssinia, and to other friends. (See for the Prince's account of Dr. Loewe's translation of a Hieroglyphical inscription on a small bronze figure of Isis in "Die Ruckker" vom Verfasser der –" Briefe eines Verstorbenen" vol. 1. Egypten, p. 220, published by Alexander Dunker, in Berlin, 1846.)

Monsieur F. Fresnel (who was at that time at Djiddah) wrote to Monsieur Perron to let Loewe have any Arabic manuscript he liked from his own valuable library, which he had left with him and two other savants for their perusal. We should mention that Shaikh Moohammad Ayad Ettantavy, afterwards Professor of Oriental Languages in St. Petersburg read with him the most important works in the Arabic and became his great friend. Persian he studied with one of the Professors of the Government School under Shaikj Refa, and Coptic he read with one of the Copti priests recommended to him by the Patriarch (of the Coptic Church).

In Derr, the Capital of Nubia, Dr. Loewe made a long stay for the purpose of studying the Nubian language. In Dijouni, or the lower town of Lebanon, near Zidon, he was the guest for several days of Lady Hester Stanhope (see for an account of his visit in Dr. Millington's work on "The Life of Lady Hester Stanhope."

In Eyn-Zetoon, near Safed, in the Holy Land, he met with ill-treatment by the Druzes, who robbed him of all he possessed, and he had to continue his journey through Palestine in the garb of a bed'aween.

In Damascus the doctor procured some valuable coins, and examined a number of Arabic manuscripts on the religion of the Druzes. When in Constantinople he made a Translation of the Hieroglyphical Inscriptions of the Obelisk in the Atmedan for Sultan Mahhamood, which was presented to His Imperial Majesty by Count Koenigsmark,, the Prussian Ambassador. During an audience which Sir Moses Montefiore, Bart., had with the Sultan Abdool-Madjid in the year 1840, His Imperial Majesty, speaking of that Translation, expressed himself, in presence of his ministers, Rechid Pasha and Riza Pasha, in the most flattering terms.

On his return from the East, Dr. Loewe went to Italy, remaining in Rome nearly eight months to study in the Vatican Library, where, by the kindness of the Cardinals Mezzofanti, Angelo Mai and Lambruschini special facilities were afforded to him for the prosecution of his literary pursuits. Dr. Loewe was met there by Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore. when they invited him to accompany them to the Holy Land : he accepted the offer and found, during that journey, many opportunities for co-operating with them in the furtherance of their benevolent objects.

Soon after their return to England, in the year 1840, when, on the ground of abominable calumnies numbers of Jews had been seized at Damascus and Rhodes; many children imprisoned and almost totally deprived of food; several of the adults seized and tortured until they died, Sir Moses Montefiore went on a mission to Damascus to vindicate the cause of justice and humanity, and prove the innocence of the accused, he selected Dr Loewe in preference to every other as his secretary and interpreter of Oriental languages.

Sir Moses completely succeeded in proving, to the satisfaction of the Viceroy that the Jews of Damascus had been aspersed but considering that his task would be imperfectly performed if he not attempt to move the Sultan in favour of the Jews as well as the Viceroy, he proceeded from Alexandria to the Turkish capital, and a Firman Khat-Shereef, the "Magna Charta" for the Jews in the Turkish dominions.

Sir Moses being a great promoter of education, visited on that occasion the Schools belonging to his people, and finding, most of their children unacquainted with the Turkish language he conferred with the chief and other leaders of the several congregations, and the result has been an unanimous concurrence in his suggestion that the Turkish language and literature should henceforth be taught in all their schools; and he had the gratification of knowing that an order to that effect had been issued by the Haham Bashi, and that it was read in all the Synagogues

Dr. Loewe, to complete Sir Moses' intentions to the utmost of his power, addressed (according to the "Manzari Shark" or "Oriental Observer" of

November 9th, 1840 published in Smyrna) a very large Congregation in the Synagogue at Galata. His audience consisting chiefly of four classes, he used as many languages, and without the slightest confusion, hesitation or difficulty, made his observations and comments to each in rotation. To the learned body he spoke in pure Biblical Hebrew; to the Levantines he spoke Spanish; to the Mediterranean Israelites, Italian; and to the German and Polish portion of his hearers, German.

“The scope of Dr. Loewe evidently was to encourage his auditors to give more attention than hitherto to the acquisition of a Liberal education; and a few more such orations,” the writer of the report says, “would produce great good in this country, where education has for ages been neglected.”

In appreciation of the services, which the doctor rendered on that occasion, a Resolution was unanimously passed at a meeting of The London Committee of Deputies of the British Jews, held at the house of the President, Hanane1 de Castro, Esq., on the 10th of March, 1841, to the effect: that the Board "has heard with extreme gratification from their respected deputy, Sir Moses Montefiore, Bart., that he has received from Dr. Louis Loewe (who accompanied him on his recent mission to the East) the most efficient assistance in the furtherance of the objects of that mission, and in the attainment of the glorious results, which, under the blessing of Divine Providence, has been so happily accomplished.

"And that this Board most warmly appreciates the eminent services rendered by Dr. Loewe, and for which they offer him their most grateful acknowledgement" (A copy of the foregoing Resolution had been transmitted to him by the President).

He was also presented with a costly testimonial, consisting, of two massive silver candelabra, with a suitable inscription on both, and had the distinguished honour of being presented to Her Majesty, the Queen, by Sir Moses Montefiore, the noble chief of the Damascus Mission, on Thursday, March 25, 1841.

In the year 1846, Sir Moses Montefiore was invited by the Russian Government to assist in their deliberations for the improvement of the condition of the Jews in Russia, and he again requested Dr. Loewe to accompany him. Sir Moses was graciously invited by the late Emperor Nicholas, to visit the principal Hebrew congregations in Russia and Poland, and report to him on their general state - on that occasion many opportunities presented themselves to Dr. Loewe, for carrying out the noble intentions of Sir Moses. He delivered addresses, and preached in one of the largest Synagogues before thousands of persons of all denominations.

On his return from Russia, at a meeting of the London Committee of Deputies of the British Jews (held at the house of the President, Sir David Salomons, on July 3, 1841, Sir Moses, on referring to his recent visit to Russia, expressed his appreciation of " the valuable services which Dr. Loewe had rendered to him in his arduous and benevolent

Undertaking," and the President of the Board was deputed, agreeable to a resolution passed on the same evening, to offer its " cordial thanks for his kind co-operation."

Since the year 1839 Dr. Loewe has acted on all occasions, when Sir Moses called upon him to serve in the cause of justice and humanity, to the entire satisfaction of the venerable Baronet, He has accompanied him on no less than eleven of his philanthropic missions. Five times to the Holy Land; twice to St. Petersburg; twice to Constantinople; to Roumania, and to Rome.

The following list of works will show the vast learning of the doctor, and there can be no gainsaying the statement that as an Oriental scholar, a philanthropist, a theologian and a friend of his nation and of his co-religionists, Dr Loewe is without a rival at the present day He has written:-

" The Origin of the Egyptian Language, proved by the Analysis of that and the Hebrew," &c., published in the Asiatic Journal for British and Foreign India, March and April, 1837. London : Wm.. H. Allen, & Co., Leadenhall Street. (See notice of the above publication in the Literary, Gazette and Journal of Belles Lettres &c., No. ,074, London, Saturday, August 19th, 1837.)

"Translation of an important document referring to a decree of Mehemet Ali Pasha, in Egypt, given in a letter from five of the principal representatives of the Hebrew Community in Jerusalem, addressed to a Merchant in London," Published in the Morning Herald, January 26th, 1837. (See London Constitutional, December 21st, 1836.)

"Briefe aus dem Orient " (Letters from the East), publishrd in the Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums Nos. 18 -79, in 18 numbers. Leipzig, 1839.

"Translation of J. B. Levinsohin's 'Effes Dammim' (a Tribute to the memory of the -Martyrs of Damascus), being a series of conversations at Jerusalem, between a Patriarch of the Greek Church and a Chief Rabbi of the Jews, concerning the malicious charge against the Jews of using Christian blood." published by Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1841.

"Pessak Yoshiyadoo, a Discourse delivered in the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Synagogue in Bevis Marks, on the second day of Passover, in the year 5602 A.M. (1842 A.D.)." Printed at the desire of the Gentlemen of the Mahamad. London: J. Wertheimer & Co., Circus Place.

"Tephila al Shig-yonot, a Discourse delivered in the Great Synagogue, on the second (day of the Pentecost, in the year 5602 A-1. (1842 A 1).)" Printed at the desire of the Wardens and Committee of the Congregation. London: J. Wertheimer & Co., (Circus Place).

"Kedoshim teeheyoo. A discourse delivered in the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Synagogue in Bevis Marks on the day of the funeral of His Royal Highness Prince Augustus Frederick, Duke of Sussex, the 4th of Eeyar, 5603

A.M. (May 4th, 1843)" Printed at the desire of the Gentleman of the Mahamad. London: J. Wertheimer & Co., (Circus Place).

"Matteh Dan. The Rod of Judgment, being a supplement to the book "Kuzari," which demonstrates by natural inferences the truth of the Oral Law, transmitted by the sages of Israel, the authors of Mishna and the Talmud, by the Rev. David Nieto, Chief Rabbi of the Spanish and Portugese Congregation of London, in the year 5474 A.M. (1747 AD). Translated from the Hebrew" (The first two conversations) Printed by J Wertheimer & Co., London, 1842.

"TheYork Medal, or The Supposed Jewish Medal, found in York on the removal of Layer Thorpe old bridge et Postcan, in the year 1820," published in the York Courant October 12th, 1843, by William Ross, 7, Tower Place, York.

"A Journey to Egypt and Syria," published in the Asiatic Journal and Monthly Miscellany, July and August 1844.

"Notes from a journal kept during his first visit to Egypt in the year 1837," published in the Voice of Jacob No. 115, &c 1846, by Benjamin Steill, 20, Paternoster Row.

"Lectures on the Samaritans, exhibiting the history, religion, customs, and manners of this remarkable but now nearly extinct people, from the period of their original settlement in the Holy Land to the present day" Delivered in the Jews and General Literary and Scientific Institution, Sussex Hall, and published in the Voice of Jacob January 28th, February 4th, and 11th, 1845.

"Massa Eliezer, a discourse delivered in the Great Synagogue at Wilna, Russia, on occasion of Sir Moses and Lady Montefiroes' patriotic mission to that most important community under the sway. of the Czar, in the year 1846." Printed by J. R. Romm, Wilna, 1847.

"Observations on a Unique Cufic Gold Coin, issued by Al-Aamir beakham Allah, Abu Ali Manzour - ben Mustali, tenth Caliph of the Fatimite dynasty, read at a meeting of the Numismatic Society of London." Printed by J. Wertheimer & Co., Finsbury, and published by David Nutt, 158 Fleet Street, 1849

"A Dictionary of the Ciicassian Language, in two parts: English-Circassin-Turkish and Circassian-English-Turkish containing all the most necessary-words for the traveller, the soldier, and the sailor; with the exact pronunciation of each word in the English language." Published by the Philological Society of London in their Transactions George Bell, Fleet Street, London, 1854.

"Interpretation of a Palmyrean Inscription on a marble bust of the size of life, recently brought from Palmyra" Published in the Transactions of the Syro-Egyptian Society, December 13th, 1853

"Translation of a portion of the First Book of Samuel into the language of Nubia," made during his stay in that country; also a " Translation of a Greek letter addressed to him by the ex-Patriarch of Constantinople" (in answer to an inquiry made by him at the instance of the late Duke of Sussex, respecting the twenty-four Gospels, said to have, been written in Hebrew, and formerly to have existed in Nubia) ; presented to the Anglo-Biblical Institute March 7, 1854

A Lecture on "The interpretation of Egyptian names in the Bible, derived from the study of Hieroglyphics," delivered at the Jews' and General- Literary and Scientific Institution, Sussex Hall, Leadenhall Street, on February 26, 1857; an abstract of which is published in the Jewish Chronicle and Hebrew Observer, March 1, 1857.

"Memoir on the Lemteim Medal," read before the Numismatic Society of London at the Annual Meeting June 25, 1857. Published in the Numismatic Chronicle and Journal of the Numismatic Society, edited by John Yonge Akerman and W. S. W. Vaux. No. LXXII; London; John Russel Smith, 36 Soho Square, 1857.

"Notice of a Mamluk Coin, struck by by command of the Sultan Melik Dhaher Rokn-ed-din Bondokdari;" read before the Numismatic Society. February 19, 1857. Published in the Numismatic Chronicle, No. LXXII; London; John Russel Smith, 36 Soho Square, 1857.

"Meghillat Purim Mizraim; being an account of the deliverance of the Jews in Cairo from the tyranny of Akhmed Pacha, a Viceroy of Egypt, during his revolt from Sultan Sulaiman II, in the year 1524, as heard by Louis Loewe reading in the Synagogue in Cairo, in the year 1837. Published in "Hamagid" No. 7, February 14, 1866, Lyck; also in "Yehudi Hanizchii", Lemberg, 1866; and

"On a Karaite Tombstone" (now in the British Museum), brought from Djuffet Kelea in the Crimea, reprinted from the "Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology," Vol. IV., Part I, 1875. Printed by Harrison & Sons, St. Martin's Lane.

Dr Loewe resides at Broadstairs, and his time is still principally spent in the performing the duties assigned by to him by his avocation, and in various kinds of literary work. He is also within an easy journey of his old friend Sir Moses Montefiore, the venerable champion of Israel, frequently riding over to East Cliff Lodge, Ramsgate, where it is his delight to receive the instructions from the great and noble philanthropist regarding thousands of applications from all parts of the world in the cause of justice and humanity, which are so frequently addressed to Sir Moses Montefiore. Dr Loewe has filled the offices Hebrew Lecturer and Oriental Linguist to the late Duke of Sussex, Head Master of the Jews' College, Finsbury Square, Examiner for Oriental Languages to the Royal College of Preceptors; and in 1868, (which he still holds) Principal and Director of Sir Moses Montefiore's Theological College at Ramsgate.