THE

ATHENÆUM

JOURNAL

OF

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, THE FINE ARTS, MUSIC, AND THE DRAMA.

JANUARY TO JUNE,

1903.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY JOHN EDWARD FRANCIS, ATHENÆUM PRESS, BREAM'S BUILDINGS, CHANCERY LANE.

PUBLISHED AT THE OFFICE, BREAM'S BUILDINGS, CHANCERY LANE, E.C.,

BY JOHN C. FRANCIS.

SOLD BY ALL BOOKSELLERS AND NEWSMEN IN TOWN AND COUNTRY.

AGENTS FOR SCOTLAND, MESSRS. BELL & BRADFUTE AND MR. JOHN MENZIES, EDINBURGH.

MDCCCCIII.

The Arab Conquest of Egypt and the last Thirty Years of the Roman Dominion. By Alfred J. Butler, D.Litt. (Oxford, Clarendon Press.)

This is a learned monograph—the first of its kind, and of the first importance—on a peculiarly obscure chapter in Egyptian history. That it was never attempted before is due, we suppose, to lack of materials. Hitherto the traditions recorded in the Arabic historians have formed the basis of all accounts of the Mohammedan conquest of Egypt, and these traditions are self-conflicting. The publication of John of Nikiou's chronicle by M. Zotenberg cast fresh doubt on the received narrative, and led to critical examinations of the chronology by Mr. E. W. Brooks, and by Prof. Bury in his edition of Gibbon, and a recasting of the story of the conquest by Prof. Lane-Poole in his recent 'History of Egypt in the Middle Ages.' But Dr. Butler has gone much further than any of these scholars, and has had ampler materials to work upon. There was much to be desired in Zotenberg's translation of Bishop John's work, and Dr. Charles has prepared a new version from the Ethiopic, the MS. of which he generously placed at Dr. Butler's disposal. If only the Coptic original, or even the Arabic translation, were available, much more might be deduced from John of Nikiou than the confused, fragmentary, and disarranged Ethiopic text provides. Then Dr. Butler has had the advantage of using the 'Lives of the Patriarchs,' written in Arabic by Severus, an Egyptian bishop of the tenth century, and has been able to collate the London and Paris MSS. with an earlier copy at Cairo. Had he printed the text of the important passages he cites from this and other unpublished MSS. he would have added considerably to the value of his work. He has ransacked such fragments of Coptic and Ethiopic ecclesiastical writings as are preserved, and has thus supplemented and corrected the Arabic annalists, whose records he has widely compared, though he does not appear to rate their worth very highly. As the result of a minute study of much new material, as well as authorities already known, we have a detailed account of the Arab conquest of Egypt such as no one hitherto has essayed, and a number of entirely fresh views on the subject which can only be partly noticed within the utmost limits of a review. Some of these are obviously correct—as, for instance, the vindication of John of Nikiou's chronology by the explanation that he uses not the Indiction, but the Dionysian cycle; and again, the substitution of the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross for Easter in connexion with Cyrus's last appearance at Alexandria. And if others strike one as far-fetched or founded on insufficient evidence, it must nevertheless be remembered that Dr. Butler is one of the few first-hand authorities on the subject, a master of Coptic traditions, well acquainted with almost every available source, and that he has devoted infinite labour and research to the elucidation of his difficult problem. Any criticisms must be made with diffidence, in full knowledge both of the obscurity of the subject and the learning of the author. One curious lacuna, however, in his apparatus cannot be passed over. Whilst he has accumulated so much new or little-known material, why did he not wait for the publication of the Arabic papyri of the age of the conquest which Prof. Karabacek is now deciphering? The results of these new documents may cast an entirely fresh light upon the subject.

Dr. Butler begins his book thirty years before the Arab conquest of Egypt with the revolt of Heraclius in Pentapolis in 609, and relates the struggle of the emperor with Persia, the Persian conquest of Egypt, the rise of Mohammed, and the Arab invasion of Syria, before he comes to the main subject. With these earlier chapters, interesting and often original as they are, we have not space to deal. They are in the nature of an introduction, and offer little occasion for criticism. We notice, however, that Dr. Butler is not quite correct in taxing Prof. Bury with following Gibbon in his view of the expedition of Nicetas, for in his edition of the 'Decline and Fall' (App. v. to vol. v.) the Cambridge Regius Professor clearly dissociates himself from this opinion. Also, on p. 121, Dr. Butler makes Heraclius "transport his army to the Bay of Issus," on the ground, we presume, that he is recorded to have occupied Pylæ. But this Pylæ was near Constantinople, and not in Cilicia.

The main subject begins with the ten years' persecution of the Monophysite Christians of Egypt by Cyrus, the new patriarch appointed by Heraclius in 631. Here we come upon the key-note of the volume:—

"Admirable as were Heraclius' motives in raising Cyrus, Bishop of Phasis in the Caucasus, to the Archbishopric of Alexandria, his act was, nevertheless, a blunder, and that of the most tragic kind. The whole Christian world had been strangely drawn together as they watched with breathless interest the amazing developments of Heraclius' crusade against Persia. When the infidels were vanquished, when Jerusalem was delivered, and when the Cross was exalted, Copts and Melkites alike had gloried in a common triumph; they rejoiced together also in the vengeance wrought upon the Jews, and shared alike the penance enjoined in expiation of the sin. It was, therefore, the golden moment—the tide which taken at the flood might have led to a real and lasting union. This Heraclius saw: he knew, too, the blind devotion of the age to shibboleths and phrases; but he refused to see that his magic compromise of doctrine might fail to charm the Church of Egypt, or that, if it failed, the very worst way to bring about union was to thrust his message by sheer force down the gorge of those to whom its first savour was bitter.....Still, even under that resolve, he courted disaster in making choice of Cyrus. For this was the evil genius who not only wrecked the emperor's hopes of religious union in Egypt, but who, after making himself a name of terror and loathing to the Copts for ten years, after stamping out to the best of his power the Coptic belief by persecution, made Coptic allegiance to Roman rule impossible; the tyrant who misgoverned the country into hatred of the Empire, and so prepared the way for the Arab conquest; and the traitor who at the critical moment delivered it over by surrender to the enemy. This was the man of evil fame, known afterwards in Egyptian history as Al Mukaukas—that mysterious ruler the riddle of whose name and nation have [*sic*] hitherto confused and baffled historians, but whose identity with Cyrus is now absolutely certain."

This vigorous paragraph would seem to imply more than its author really means. It would seem to imply that but for Cyrus the Copts would not have been disloyal to the empire; yet Dr. Butler admits that in the time of Nicetas "everywhere the native Egyptians hated the rule of Byzantium." It also appears to assume that the surrender to the Arabs was unnecessary, and ignores the similar successes of the invaders in other parts of the empire. Something may be allowed for rhetoric, but the passage makes Cyrus a much more important personage than he has hitherto been accounted. Dr. Butler relies principally upon the passage in Severus's 'Life of the Patriarch Benjamin,' which he translates thus: "Cyrus was appointed by Heraclius after the recovery of Egypt from the Persians to be both patriarch and governor of Alexandria"; and upon the statement attributed to Benjamin about "the ten years during which Heraclius and Al Mukaukas were ruling over Egypt." In an ecclesiastical history "ruling over Egypt" may mean no more than ruling over the Church in Egypt; but apart from this it is singular that no other historian should give Cyrus the high rank of *Augustalis*—if this, indeed, is what Severus implies. It is true the Coptic and Ethiopic Synaxaria are quoted to the same effect, but we do not know the date of these documents. John of Nikiou, who was probably old enough to have seen Cyrus, never calls him anything but patriarch, and the Arabic writers evidently know nothing of his civil authority or his identity with the governor whom they call Al-Mukaukis. Dr. Butler, indeed, cites At-Ṭabarî as saying that "the Mukaukas sent to Memphis an army under command of the Catholicus, who was chief of all the bishops of the Christians, and whose name was Ibn Maryam"; but what Ṭabarî really says (in De Goeje's Arabic text, which Dr. Butler does not appear to have consulted, using instead the Persian abridgment) is that there met 'Amr "Abû- [not Ibn-] Maryam, catholicus of Miṣr, and with him the bishop over the people of devotion" (if so we may interpret *ahl an-niyyât*), and that these two ecclesiastics afterwards returned to the Mukaukis to report the terms offered by the Arabs. It is clear that Ṭabarî had no notion that the catholicus, or patriarch, was the same as the Mukaukis, or that the patriarch was ruler of Egypt. Nor does he style the Mukaukis, as Dr. Butler says, "prince of the Copts"—that is a gloss in the Persian version. Ibn-al-Athîr is needlessly ridiculed by Dr. Butler, for he merely follows Ṭabarî verbatim in this passage, and does not call Abû-Maryam "Catholicus of Memphis (notice the absurdity of this title)," but, like Ṭabarî, "Catholicus of Miṣr" (*i.e.* Egypt), which, for a foreigner, is a not very absurd mistake for catholicus of its metropolitan see. Abû-Ṣâliḥ says that Egypt was governed by "George the son of Mînâ al-Mukaukis," and adds from Al-Janâḥ that "the bishop of the Romans at Miṣr and Alexandria was named Cyrus." Abû-Ṣâliḥ was a Christian, and had doubtless access to Church documents. To pass over others, Al-Makrîzî—who, though he wrote in the fifteenth century, cites early authorities, such as Ibn-'Abd-al-Ḥakam (ninth century) and Ibn-Lahî'ah, for his very detailed account of the conquest, which obviously rests upon a wide

collation of sources—says that while "Al-Mukaukis, the son of Karkab, the Greek," was the ruler, Abû-Miyâmîn was "bishop of the Copts at Alexandria." Of course, Abû-Miyâmîn (obviously Benjamin) is a mistake, since Benjamin had been driven into exile by Cyrus nine years before; but the distinction shows that Makrîzî did not consider the Mukaukis and the patriarch to be the same person.

Indeed, no historian, not even Severus, says that they were the same. Dr. Butler merely deduces their identity from the fact that different authorities ascribe the chief political action of the time, some to the Mukaukis, others to Cyrus. But if Cyrus was the Mukaukis, how is it that the fact was unknown to every historian, Christian or Mohammedan, who wrote about the conquest of Egypt? And why should most of these historians call the Mukaukis "George, son of Mînâ," or "George, son of Karkab," or "Farkab"? This name Karkab, by the way, is not applied, as Dr. Butler supposes, only to the father of the Mukaukis, nor only "far too late in Arabic literature to represent anything but a blunder," but apparently belongs to "Artabûn" (ingeniously and undoubtedly correctly amended by Dr. Butler as Aretion, though few who know Arabic will assent to his suggestion that the governor's other name, Al-A'raj, is a misreading of Jurîj), the governor of the fortress of Babylon under the Mukaukis, for so early a chronicler as Tabarî (i. 2586) writes of "the night attack by Kurkab," obviously referring to Aretion's attack after the failure of the mission of the catholicus and bishop. But whatever the Mukaukis's real name, no historian gives it as Cyrus, and no historian makes him a patriarch, outside the two Synaxaria. One would have thought that the coincidences upon which Dr. Butler dwells with such force — the similar parts acted by the Mukaukis and by Cyrus in different accounts of the war and surrenders—would have suggested their identity to the Egyptian historians as they have suggested it to him; for there is no doubt that these coincidences are remarkable, and make Dr. Butler's hypothesis a very plausible solution of the enigma. But upon no one of the long list of chroniclers did such an identity ever dawn; and whilst admitting freely that the coincidences strongly support this hypothesis, we cannot get over the extraordinary fact that no one suspected it before. What could have been easier than for John of Nikiou or Makrîzî, both of whom in different ages knew the history well, to say once for all "the patriarch Cyrus, called Al-Mukaukis"? Yet it has never been said till now, not even by Amélineau.

Dr. Butler's explanation — or, rather, several explanations—of the title Mukaukis, or Mukaukas, are at least ingenious. He finds Cyrus referred to in a Coptic fragment of the life of Samuel of Kalamûn as "*P-kauchios*, the false archbishop." Now *P-kauchios* may easily become Mukaukis in Arabic; but what does καυχιος mean? Setting aside a previous reference to καυκιον=κοκκίον? and the far-fetched notion of a Byzantine bronze coin (he has not apparently thought of καῦχαι ἐπέων), Dr. Butler suggests either Καυκάσιος or Κόλχιος (meaning, we suppose, Κόλχος or Κολχίκος), because Cyrus was formerly bishop of Phasis in Cholchis, in the Caucasus; or καῦχος, a term which it would not be seemly to disinter from the obscurity of a learned language. Clearly the Coptic "original"—if it be the original—of Mukaukis is as puzzling as the Arabic, which is really not Arabic at all.

We have dwelt upon this question of the supposed identity of Cyrus with Al-Mukaukis because it illustrates the extreme obscurity of the problems which Dr. Butler attempts, with much courage and learning, to solve, and because it is a point which has a great influence upon his treatment of the whole subject. He began, as he tells us, with no prejudices, but rather disposed to accept the ordinary theory that the Copts under a Coptic leader, the Mukaukis, sided with the Arab invaders out of hatred of the persecuting Melkites. In the course of his researches he came to a contrary opinion, and he is now eager to prove not only that the Mukaukis was not a Copt (the Arabic writers sometimes call him a Greek, *Yûnânî*), but also that the Copts did not help the Arabs at all, though betrayed by the insidious patriarch "the καυχιος and false archbishop." We cannot say that he proves his point, for, apart from the very precise statements of the Arabic annalists as to the aid given by the Copts after the taking of Misr, and apart from Makrîzî's story of Benjamin's counselling them to betray Pelusium to the besiegers, the whole gist of the narrative shows that the Egyptians would have welcomed any rule rather than that of Melkite Constantinople; and from what we read in Bishop Sebœus they may very well have believed that the Muslims were religious reformers of an estimable kind—better, at all events, than Imperial Monothelites. They showed no opposition, so far as can be learnt, and whatever persecutions they endured under Arab rule, these were but whips compared with the scorpions of Cyrus. As a matter of fact the warlike hostility or warlike aid of the untrained Copts would have made little difference; "the Copts had simply no existence as a belligerent body," as Dr. Butler admits; but their acquiescence and their assistance in supplies and roadmaking (as John of Nikiou records) were more to the purpose. Nor does one see why Dr. Butler should wax so warm in denouncing the statement of Theophanes that Cyrus paid tribute to the Arabs. Theophanes was perfectly right, according to the author himself. The treaty of Misr, concluded between 'Amr and the Mukaukis (Dr. Butler's Cyrus), stipulated for the payment of a poll-tax, and this was properly regarded as tribute by Heraclius and was disavowed. No doubt it was a mistake, though a natural one, to suppose that this offer of tribute "staved off the conquest of Egypt," for the treaty was a surrender of the country to the Arabs who had already defeated the Romans. Still, it is hardly such a "quagmire" of misrepresentation as the author would have us believe; for supposing Cyrus to be designated the Mukaukis, we think it probable that he concluded the treaty in the hope of gaining time for reinforcements to arrive.

To come to details of the invasion: all that is said about the ex-patriarch Benjamin's advice to the Copts of Faramâ to assist the Arabs (Makrîzî, i. 289) is that Makrîzî and Abu-l-Mahâsin "mention a report that the Copts aided the Arabs at the siege, but it is certainly baseless." Why "certainly," and why "a report"? It may be baseless, but Makrîzî worked upon early and good authorities, and Benjamin in his hiding-place had every reason to aid any enemy of Cyrus. In a foot-note we learn that the fortress of Faramâ "was not finally demolished till Baldwin I. utterly destroyed it before his retreat in 1515-6 A.D." Dr. Butler must mean 1118; but even then it was not "utterly" destroyed. The fact that the Romans did not intercept 'Amr's march is taken as evidence that Cyrus had already formed in his mind a plan for the betrayal of the empire; but surely this was not the only mistake the Romans made in resisting the Arabs in other places than Egypt. Next we come to the visit of the "two bishops," meaning the catholicus and the bishop, to the Arab general, and are told that "Ibn al Athîr seems responsible for this story, which I have examined and refuted in the Appendix." As has been seen, the early authority of Tabarî supports the story, which the Appendix does not refute; it only shows that the names must be wrong—as, indeed, is obvious. Moreover, Dr. Butler goes on to say that "there is reason to think that some sort of deputation headed by a bishop did parley with 'Amr at this time." So, after all, there was no occasion to "refute" it. It need not be said that no credence is given to the "entertaining legend" recorded by Pseudo-Wâkidî of the defence of Bilbais by Armenosa, daughter of Al Mukaukis, on which Dean Butcher based his interesting romance; for how could a patriarch have a daughter? Yet Ibn-'Abd-al-Hakam even speaks of the Mukaukis's wife — a grave ecclesiastical scandal, if it were not a "myth inspired by the fancy of the Arabian Nights." After taking Bilbais, the Arabs arrived at what is now Cairo, for we have no doubt that Dr. Butler is right in identifying Tendunyas with Umm-Dunain. We have little but praise for the careful and exhaustive manner in which he has pieced together the fragmentary and dislocated notices of John of Nikiou, and the conflicting accounts of the Arab chroniclers concerning 'Amr's campaigns, though it is difficult to understand why the Arabs should have set off for the Fayûm before attempting to reduce the castle of Babylon, especially after three successful sieges on the march. Nor do we understand Tabarî to place the battle of Heliopolis "after the capture of Babylon"; but here again Dr. Butler is using the Persian version, which is of weak authority. Nevertheless there is a great deal in his remark on the probable confusion between Bab-el-On (for Babelyûn) and 'Ain Shams (or On). This is one of many happy suggestions in a volume full of original ideas.

In his account of the siege of Babylon, the "Castle of the Beacon," Dr. Butler is on his own ground; for who knows every inch of the famous fortress, now full of Coptic churches, better than their historian? He would be a rash critic who challenged the decisions here reached as to which gate the Arabs attacked, or what defences the castle offered. But we may venture to question whether Tabarî ever

wrote that "the Mukaukas, prince of the Copts, had named Ibn Maryam as commander of the fortress." The Arabic *T*abarî never wrote any such statement, and the theory of a patriarch-commander gains no support from him. Also, the reader, when he comes across the names "Cyrus" and "George the commander of the fortress," must remember that the Arab accounts from which the narrative is wholly derived (for John of Nikiou is here silent) call these persons Al-Mukaukis and Al-A'raj or Al-U'airij. And surely there is more of rhetoric than history in this passage:—

"Al Mukaukas, whose dark and tortuous mind was still haunted by thoughts of surrender, now found his opportunity. The army, which had scorned his counsel, had trusted to the sword: in the battle they had demeaned themselves as Roman soldiers should: yet though they had taken the foe at a disadvantage, by the sword they had fallen. As viceroy of Egypt, Cyrus could see no prospect of driving the invaders out of the country, and this fresh failure only confirmed his evil forebodings. He found the party of resistance weakened and disheartened, and he had little difficulty in securing a gloomy assent to his proposal for reopening negotiations with 'Amr. It is somewhat surprising to find that the terms offered by 'Amr remained the same."

It will be surprising to no one who has studied the universal terms offered by all Arab generals in the early campaigns of Islâm. But would it not be simpler to put aside all question of "dark and tortuous minds," and merely state that the Roman garrison found it could not hold out, and was glad to accept the generous terms offered from the first? John of Nikiou looked upon the fall of Babylon as a divine chastisement upon the Romans for their cruelty to the Copts in the fortress, and Dr. Butler adds:—

"Truly the incident shows what implacable hatred divided the two religious parties among the Christians even at the moment when the fruits of disunion were fatally visible in the triumph of Islâm."

Yet we are told the Copts would have scorned to help the invaders!

We have not space to follow Dr. Butler in his admirable narrative of the subsequent campaigns in the Delta, and the surrender of Alexandria. He is, of course, right in holding that there was no siege, but merely a capitulation of Alexandria, and he has gone a long way towards proving that there was no great library there for the Arabs to burn; the legend of the burning, which dates only from the thirteenth century, may now be disregarded. We think, too, that the learned author has proved successfully most of the difficult chronological data discussed in Appendix D, though we are not clear about Cyrus's visit to Babylon (p. 538). We do not in the least understand why he transfers the treaty of Misr of 640 to the capitulation of Alexandria of 641. He says:—

"This treaty is preserved by Ibn Khaldûn, who quotes it from *T*abarî; but it does not seem to occur in *T*abarî's extant account of the conquest of Egypt: see Zotenberg's edition," &c.

Not only does the text occur with the names of the witnesses and scribe in the Arabic edition of *T*abarî (i. 2588), published ten years ago, but a literal translation with the reference is supplied in Prof. Lane-Poole's 'History of Egypt in the Middle Ages,' pp. 5, 6, a work to which Dr. Butler repeatedly refers. The version given in the present volume is full of errors. This treaty is cited by *T*abarî immediately after the account of Zubair's scaling the wall of Misr and the surrender of the town. It has nothing to do with Alexandria, and its contents show clearly that it was a treaty with the Copts. How Dr. Butler came to confuse this with the capitulation of Alexandria we cannot imagine. The name of Alexandria would undoubtedly have been mentioned if it related to that capitulation; but the text runs, "This is the amnesty which 'Amr ibn el-'Âsî granted to the people of Misr," which, of course, means both the town of Misr and the country of Egypt. That it had a direct relation with the immediately preceding surrender of Misr cannot be doubted.

Anthology of Russian Literature from the Earliest Period to the Present Time. By Leo Wiener, Assistant Professor of Slavic Languages at Harvard. (Putnam's Sons.)

Prof. Leo Wiener intends his anthology to serve the purpose of a history of Russian literature, of which there now begins to be a need. For the work of M. Waliszewski, despite certain merits, is not adequate. The account of early Russian literature in it is condensed into a few pages, and the tone of the book throughout is somewhat depreciatory. The Russian oral literature has been known for some time among us, and the Russian novelists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have found a large circle of readers; but the intervening period from the early legends to the advent of Turgueniev has been virtually ignored. Prof. Wiener hopes to fill this void, and has collected specimens of his authors, to which he has prefixed short biographical notes. The specimens are generally well chosen; sometimes he gives us a version of his own, and sometimes he employs those which have been published by his predecessors. In a preface full of matter he enumerates what has been already done—a small quantity at best, but in the old days the study of Russian was rare. Since the time of the Crimean War, which seemed to make Russia real to us, there has been a gradually growing desire to become acquainted with the history and literature of this remarkable people.

Those who have studied the Russian language have found it a vigorous and flexible idiom; in the literature they have discovered a rich semi-Oriental form—the colour of the literature of the East without its puerility. Prof. Wiener accosts it from all sides. He gives specimens of the *bylini* and the folk-songs, the folk-tales (*skazki*), and the proverbs. These are days in which great importance is deservedly attached to that literature which lives in the mouths of the people. Nor does he fail to call attention with suitable translations to the *bylini* collected by Richard James when he was in Russia at the beginning of the seventeenth century. We hope to see a photographed edition of these issued by the Russian Academy of St. Petersburg. To us the prettiest of them is the 'Lamentation of Xenia, the Daughter of Boris Godunov.' Chronicles, travels in the East, sermons, lives of holy men, make up the bulk of early Russian literature, as indeed they do that of most countries. How meagre our own literature would appear if we took from it Chaucer, and perhaps Piers Plowman! But the Russians had no Chaucer. The long *catena* of their chronicles, written by monks in the cloisters of various cities, Pskov, Novgorod, Suzdal, and others, is a striking feature of Russian literature. They are mostly of a dry character, always excepting the picturesque one which is assigned to Nestor, and, we might add, a few passages from other chronicles, such as that which describes the journey of Zoe, of the family of the Palæologi, to become the wife of Ivan III., the grandfather of the terrible sovereign who has written his name in blood on the annals of Russia. The ordinary reader will not always be charmed with the feast of early Russian literature prepared for him, although Prof. Wiener has done what he could to make the extracts interesting. The 'Domostroy,' or 'Book of Household Management,' in old times was assigned to the priest Sylvester, but according to recent authorities the writer is not known for certainty. There is a brutal tone of patriarchal rule about it, and the complete subjugation of the woman described in it would hardly lead us to expect the self-emancipation of a woman like Sophia, the sister of Peter the Great. If we take the 'Domostroy' and the work of Kotoshikhin, extracts from which are quoted further on by Prof. Wiener, we can reconstruct for ourselves the social life of Russia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Such was the state of old Russian literature; there was, besides, an infantine drama. Plays on sacred subjects were acted, such as the 'Holy Children in the Furnace' and the 'Prodigal Son,' by Simeon Polotski; but there is no truth in the story that Sophia, the sister of Peter, was fond of plays, and translated Molière's 'Médecin malgré Lui.' She has been confused with a younger sister of the great reformer. In Southern Russia religious interludes were acted till quite late in the eighteenth century. A few of these were collected by Prof. Dragomanov. Polotski, the author of some of these religious plays, was a pious versifier, and gave the Russians a translation of the Psalms. He was educated at the High School of Kiev, which was long under Polish rule, and it was there that he imbibed some of the culture of the West. He mentions Latin and Greek authors in his rhymes.

If we bear these prominent names in mind we can understand what progress the Russians had made. They had had the press since 1564; nay, earlier, if we take into account the books in Cyrillic character published at Vilno; but education was at a low ebb, as Mr. Zabielin has shown in his interesting books on early Russian social life. The sons of the aristocracy were taught by the country priest.

And so the curtain closes on the seventeenth century with its picturesque barbarities. Peter looked to the West, and Russia entered into a new condition—would it have been better to let her civilization, such as it was, develope itself on its own lines? Certainly Krizhanich and