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FOUR QUOTATIONS FROM THE HEBREW BEN SIRA.

IN the notable Hebrew-Persian Dictionary, which in one of Mr. Elkan Adler's MSS. is entitled ספר המליצה (see JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, X, 595), the book of Bar Sira is four times cited, and with reference to words which are unknown alike to the Bible and the later literature. The articles in question are:—

- 1 דעץ כמו צהלה בר סירא
- 2 נתף מוי סתורדן בר סירא
- 3 סנכסיר נורה בר סירא
- 4 עוני ביצים זרד כאיה ספ' בר סירא

In No. 1 the word is explained by another Hebrew word צהלה, one of the ten synonyms for expressing the idea of joy, which are enumerated, among other places, at the end of ch. 34 of the Aboth di R. Nathan (ed. Schechter, p. 52 a). Before צהלה in this passage of the Aboth di R. Nathan comes ריצה. It would seem, therefore, that Ben Sira used דעץ in the sense of ריצה, though there is no other trace of such a use of the word.

In No. 2 we have an Arabism. For נתף, which is translated by the Persian موی سِتْرْدَن "to cut the hair," is the Arabic نَتَف. This root (which is related in idea to נתע, נתק, and נתש) is not elsewhere found in Hebrew. (The fourth work of Jehuda Ḥajjūg, of which some fragments are extant, is called כְּתָאב אֶלְנָתָף = סֵפֶר הַקֶּרְחָה.)

The word used in No. 3 is translated by the Persian کَوْرُ (lignum, quo tectum domus tegitur, Vullers, II, 1367 a). No similar word is known elsewhere in Hebrew. The nearest parallel that one might think of is the Aramaic כשורא (Levy, II, 427).

In No. 4 we have an altogether unknown root (עזג), to which is assigned the meaning "white of an egg" (Persian زرد خایه).

By the title בר סירא (in No. 4 סֵפֶר בר סירא) in these quotations one must not understand the סירא ביתא רבן סירא which was also translated into Persian (see *J. Q. R.*, X, p. 599), for these four words do not occur in that compilation. One must therefore infer that the Hebrew Ben Sira must have been known to the author (who lived in the first half of the fourteenth century). This supposition is confirmed by the fact that these four words are new—for the fragments now so unexpectedly recovered in Cambridge and Oxford have already enriched our knowledge of the ancient Hebrew vocabulary.