LITERATURE.

A Grammar and Dictionary of the Malay Language, with a preliminary Dissertation. By JOHN CRAUFURD, F.R.S., Author of "The History of the Indian Archipelago." Smith, Elder, and Co.

Something has been known to the English of the languages of Polynesia since the voyages of Cook and his immediate precursors; but our more intimate acquaintance with the dialects of the islands of the Pacific dates from the commencement of missionary enterprise in that region by the voyage of the ship Duff, and is mainly owing to the labours of missionaries. With respect to the languages of the Indian Archipelago, Marsden may be said to have been the first Englishman who directed attention to them, and that since the beginning of the present century. Of late, within comparatively a few years, great additions have been made to our knowledge of the languages both of Polynesia and of the Indian Archipelago, by missionaries, mercantile and other adventurers, naturalists, and diplomatists, or *quasi* diplomatists. These additions, however, have been for the most part of a fragmentary, superficial, desultory character; and the philological speculations based upon them have been chiefly remarkable for contented shallowness and rash, hasty generalisation.

Mr. Craufurd's contributions to the literature of the Polynesian and Malayan languages are none of them open to the charge. In particular the work now before us is full of matter maturely digested; for its materials have been collected from the most various quarters, and it has been a labour of love, often resumed and laid aside at intervals, but still engaging much of the author's care and attention during a period of full forty years.

The second of Mr. Craufurd's two volumes contains a dictionary of the Malay language; the first a Malay grammar, and a dissertation on the affinities of the Malayan and Polynesian languages. One thing we do especially like about Mr. Craufurd, and that is his unostentatious ungrudging tributes to the merits of other fellow-labourers in the same field. "Without the previous labours of Mr. Marsden," he says, "my book certainly never would have been written, or even attempted." And he enumerates with discriminating praise almost every individual from whose collections or speculations he has derived information. Yet, does his own work evince much originality, and opens a new era in the department of inquiry to which it is devoted.

The grammar of the Malay contains a condensed but clear exposition of the organic character of the Malay language; sufficient to enable the student to understand both its articulate and logical structure. Philologists at home, and all classes of Europeans in the Malayan countries, will be enabled by it to study the language systematically. The dictionary is a very extensive one, containing no less than 15,000 words. What adds to its value (for the reader will recollect that the Malay has become for the Indian Archipelago what the Lingua Franca is for the Levant, and has incorporated many foreign elements) are Mr. Crauford's indications of the various tongues whence non-Malayan words have been adopted. His access to the information required in compiling the grammar and dictionary has been such as to entitle him to confidence. He held administrative office in Java and at Singapore for many years; was brought into intimate intercourse with Malay, Javan, and other natives; and thus became familiarised with their habits of thought and conventional modes of expression, and the natural and artificial objects described by their languages. He obtained from Marsden a copy of his dictionary, corrected by his own hand, and two valuable lists of records. He has enjoyed the assistance of the eminent orientalist Professor H. H. Wilson; he has kept up a close correspondence with intelligent inquirers still resident in the Indian Archipelago; he has consulted naturalists like Brown, Wallich, &c., for the nomenclature of natural history. He is every way qualified to be an interpreter between the Malayan and the European.

The grammar and dictionary contain distinct exhaustive records of the Malayan language; the dissertation embraces a wider field of research. A certain connexion has been observed between most of the languages which are spoken from Madagascar to Easter Island in the Pacific. This connexion has hastily been received as evidence of their all having sprung from one common source; and this theory has on the one hand been propped up by inferences from very superficial knowledge of a few dialects; and has on the other led to erroneous views of many of the dialects. Mr. Craufurd has tried the theory by a searching and laborious analysis, and has proved it to be erroneous. He lays down as a general principle, that the mere existence of words of the same articulate power, with the same meaning, in two languages, does not establish that they are of kindred origin. The similarity of the words must be accompanied by an identity of syntactical or logical structure. Having demonstrated this theory, he proceeds, keeping the principle closely in view, to analyse the dictionaries and vocabularies of an immense number of languages of Madagascar, the Nicobar Islands, the Indian Archipelago, and Polynesia. He shows that the far greater part of them bear traces of original independent syntactical or logical structure. Not satisfied with indicating that each has an original independent vocabulary of its own, he analyses each to show the proportion of foreign words in it, and the sources whence these words are derived.

The most important results of this inquiry may be briefly enumerated. Between Madagascar and Easter Island we find an immense number of languages, the far greater part of which appear to have an independent origin. In these languages, therefore, we find nothing to warrant the assumption that those who speak them are sprung from one common stock. Mr. Craufurd examines the physical characters of the races speaking these tongues to see whether he finds in them any indications of a common origin. Here, too, the result is negative. Having thus established the independent co-existence of so many different languages at the earliest dawn of the historical era, he proceeds to examine the nature and extent of the action and reaction of these languages on one another during that era. He finds five or six cultivated languages in the Archipelago; one in Madagascar; none in Polynesia. He demonstrates that the cultivation of the Malay, Javanese, Bugi, and other cultivated languages, must at first have been self-originated and independent of one another. He then shows how political and mercantile contact has led to the adoption into most of these languages of words and phrases from others. He shows how some have borrowed from others their military, some their mercantile, some what may perhaps be called their scientific vocabularies. He shows how many of them have been influenced and modified by intercourse with tribes speaking Arabic and languages of the Sanscrit family. Lastly, he shows how these cultivated languages have influenced the rude unwritten dialects of the savage tribes. The importance of these researches—conducted as they are with clear-sighted discriminating judgment and superiority to the trammels of mere hypothesis—as contributing to just views of the history and structure of languages—are obvious.

In short, the dissertation prefixed to Mr. Craufurd's grammar and dictionary is a most valuable contribution to the philosophy of language; the grammar and dictionary themselves are works of great practical utility for all whose pursuits as merchants, soldiers, diplomatists, naturalists, missionaries, or mere travellers in search of amusement lead them to visit the Malayan regions, where a knowledge of the Malay language is as generally useful as a knowledge of French is in Europe.