

# SONGS AND LEGENDS OF ARMENIA.

AN ARTIST'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE LORD MAYOR'S FUND.

*Songs and Legends of Armenia* illustrated and compiled by Zabelle C. Boyajian. Readers who are curious concerning Armenia and the Armenians may learn more about them from this attractive volume than from many books of heavier erudition. Its compiler, Miss Boyajian, announces in her preface that her main object in preparing it was to publish it as a memorial to an unhappy nation. It is an anthology of translations from Armenian poems, accompanied by a learned and interesting disquisition by Mr Aram Raffi on the epics, folk-songs, and poetry of Armenia. While the work makes no claim to be fully representative of all the interests of Armenian poetry, it is impossible to read its graceful, varied, and musical verses without realising that the choice has been directed by an intimate knowledge of the country's characteristic literature, and that the pieces included are rendered with a skill that knows how to bring over to another language some of its typical accents and inspirations. Mr Raffi's instructive essay shows how the country's poetry reflects memories of its pre-Christian nature-worship and polytheism, and tells some stories from its early epics; and afterwards, coming down to Christian times, makes a brief survey of an extensive and remarkable body of national poetry, which deserves to be much better known than it is in Western Europe. Lord Bryce contributes to the volume a short introduction, which gives some interesting particulars concerning the accomplished Armenian artist who has made it up and illustrated it with colour-compositions of her own, decorative pieces of a striking character and charm, with a novelty and freshness which would be at once accepted as a genial personal originality were it not for a certain warranty it carries on its face of genuine national feeling. The colour work is indeed particularly fine, and will be admired by all who know how to appreciate good work. Few readers and lovers of fine art will be able to look over the volume without sharing Lord Bryce's hope that the time has now come when Armenia "will be delivered from the load of brutal tyranny that has so long cramped its energies."