

SIDE LIGHTS OF SACRED HISTORY.

Core Examiner, April 1894.

CONTINUED FROM OUR LAST.

My subject does not allow me to pass by another potent aid to the vindication of sacred history found in the discovery, also the work of this century, of the secret of the Cuneiform or wedge shaped inscriptions of Babylon, Niniveh, and other great cities—lost to the world for ages—of Assyria and Chaldaea. However interesting the march of discovery in this direction, it would detain us too long to follow it step by step. I shall therefore confine myself to the results; and surely these are sufficiently remarkable; with the one observation that, differing from the hieroglyphs which are either carved or painted on stone, or written on substances like papyrus, the Assyrian inscriptions are all stamped on freshly-made bricks by a stylus or instrument made in a wedge-like or acute-angle triangular form. The characters were formed by a series of sharp prods, and have been shown to be a quicker and easier modification of earlier image or picture writing, resembling somewhat the hieroglyphs of Egypt. The bricks were then baked either in the sun or in kilns. Each brick was numbered and represents a page; at the foot the first word of the next page was placed, just as in our own books of the last century. Libraries of these bricks have been discovered. Grammars and dictionaries used by the Assyrians themselves have come to vouch for the accuracy of modern research, and with these a host of historical, geographical, and ethnical details that are of infinite service to the cause of the Bible. It was surely a strange experience to read off, one monument buried for nearly three thousand years, the names which the Bible had made the explorers familiar—those of the Kings of Israel, and Judah; of Teglatphalasar, Salmansor Sargon, Sennacherib, and others. What a striking confirmation of the genuine character of the inspired writings!

The way has been a little long, and rather zigzag, I fear. I hope it has not been too wearisome for you as well; but we are now at length in a position to count up our gains—the various lights thrown on the Pentateuch and its compilers by these researches into ancient history.

The first I shall notice is one of considerable interest, especially now when the science of language has acquired such pre-eminence—in the relation between the Hebrew language and that of the Assyrian inscriptions. The analogy is so close as to prove not only kinship but something like identity. It looks as if the Hebrew were the old Chaldaean modified as it would be by intercourse with other races during the times of their migrations. By and by we shall see the solid historical proof of this conjecture. Just now it is referred to for its value as a defence of Moses. A very common objection to the authorship of Moses is the fact that the Hebrew of the Pentateuch is exactly the same as that which were written the psalms and prophecies, the latter many centuries after. Let anyone compare Chancery, who wrote at the end of the fourteenth century, with any modern writer, and he will see the immutability of this objective, which can be verified equally in all living languages. Death alone is unchangeable in language as in everything else. Here then we have a language living and yet unchangeable for a thousand years, if not more. Does not this prove that the Pentateuch is of recent date. Were we compelled to defend immutability in a city of the Chaldees, but whether it was a city or a country—where it was situated remained a puzzle to exercise the ingenuity of commentators until the discovery of Rawlinson's vocabulary of the library of Assinbanipal revealed this secret. The symbols of Mi were at length explained to be the name of a city, so called, and a vast quantity of bricks inscribed with the same symbols found at Megher, in the Chaldaean to the N. W. of the Persian Gulf leaves no doubt as to the site, while revealing the magnificence, and large extent as well as the history of the birthplace of the patriarch. It is possible within the limits of a lecture to touch on some only of the events of Abraham's career as that of the other patriarchs, and, naturally, I choose those only on which light is thrown by recent discoveries. Therefore I pass at once to his visit to Egypt (G. n. xii.) when he received from the Pharaoh of the time "sheep and oxen, and he asses, and man servants, and maid-servants, and she-asses and camels." The absence of horses provoked a remark unfavorable to Moses—these horses figure largely in Egyptian paintings. It is in reality a strong argument in his favor. It shows that he knew Pharaoh could not give horses to Abraham, because these were not introduced into Egypt until the invasion of the Kykos or shepherd kings and begin to appear in the monuments of the 18th dynasty (B. C. 1,600, 1,400). According to the best calculations the reign of the Shepherd Kings began B. C. 1843, while all chronology assigns 2,000 B. C. to Abraham, that is nearly 200 years before. It is probable that a writer, after more than a thousand years, would have shown himself to be accurate in so minute a point as the omission of horses from the list of presents made by Pharaoh to Abraham!

Another striking proof of the truth of the Bible history is furnished us in relation to Abraham's victory over Chodorhor, King of the Elamites, and three others, Amraphil, Arioch, and Thadai, Cuneiform documents prove that Chodorhor, Amraphil, Arioch, and Thadai, were frequently as the first part of royal names, joined with a second part expressing the name of a God. Lagamar is the name of an Elamite deity, and between Lagamar and Labmar the difference is not very great. On the other hand, the name of Arioch has been found and identified with Ari Aker, King of Elam, and the names of the other two, though not found up to the present, are proved to be distinctly Babylonian, a fact in itself quite sufficient to establish the truth of Genesis xiv.

Not so very long ago, in 1854, if not later, this part of Abraham's history was considered a Babylonian myth—one of the class of stories of which St. George and the Dragon may be taken as an example. Chodorhor was a name, the three others the remaining seasons. The fire kings who fought with them represent the five supplementary days added in the Persian and Babylonian Calendar to complete the year, and pages of rare and extensive philological knowledge were poured out to establish this fanciful theory. It all vanishes at the touch of these few simple facts, and I notice chiefly that no one may be staggered by the accumulation of linguistic lore which which it is the fashion in our times to introduce startling theories on the meaning of one or another portion of our sacred books. The learning may be true, and oftentimes is; it may be profound and clear, but it is degraded into a false light when it is compelled to minister to the needs of prejudice growing out of a philosophy as false as it is proud, as blind as it is pretentious.

Keeping exclusively to the monumental evidences, I am justified in passing over the many details of Abraham's life, which nevertheless receive confirmation from manners and customs that are not yet wholly disappeared from the East. Interesting and valuable as these minor lights undoubtedly are, they are beside the scope of the lecture, if for this reason only that they could not have great weight in Biblical controversy. The case of inscriptions and ancient sculptures is quite different. We have seen the evidence of these as regards the first great Scriptural personage—Abraham, and his history. We turn now to another—Joseph—equally a prominent figure in sacred history, but one far more attractive and interesting. The Life of Joseph is a poem in action—the vicissitudes of happiness, misery, and final triumph succeed each other in the most dramatic way; and through them we see the growth of a grand nature—patient in suffering, wise and prudent, and generous and forgiving to a degree rare even among Bible personages of the Old Testament.

This remarkable man lived in Egypt from early youth when he was brought hither as a captive, and consequently we look to Egypt and her monuments for any light that can be thrown on this portion of Genesis—this is from cap. 37 to the end. These monuments are exceedingly numerous, consisting of both pictures and sculptures as well as writings. There is not a nation of antiquity regarding whose domestic, social, and industrial life we have such ample stores of information as have been gathered from these sources; and yet Egyptologists tell us that what has been deciphered up to this is only a drop of water in the bucket compared with what remains. There is, however, one provoking defect in this numerous mass of material for history. Chronology, which is one of the eyes of history, is in a state of almost hopeless obscurity. Rawlinson in his great work on Ancient Egypt, says:—"Modern critics of the best judgment and the widest knowledge, basing their conclusions on identically the same data, have published to the world views on the subject, which are not only divergent and conflicting, but which differ in the estimate that are the most extreme, to the extent of above three thousand years. Bosh gives for the year of the accession of Menes, the first Egyptian King the year B. C. 5702; Unger, 5613; Mariette Bey, and Lenonauit, 5004; Brugsch Bey, 4455; Lauth, 4157; Lepsius, 3852; Bunsen, 3323; Coole, 2717, and Sir Gardner Wilkinson, 2691. It is as if the best authorities upon Roman history were to tell us, some of them, that this Republic was founded B. C. 508, and others in B. C. 5,008!" Yet the materials of history are abundant, and include sources of the most unimpeachable character. But the Egyptians had no era. They cared for nothing but to know how long each human and divine dynasty lasted upon this earth. They recorded carefully the length of the life of each Apis Bull and the reign of each King; but they took no note of the intervals between one Apis Bull and another and omitted to distinguish the sole reign of a monarch from his joint reign with others. But on the other hand there is scarcely a detail of their domestic and social life hidden from us—we know how they were clad; how they eat and drank, and sat at table; their chairs and tables are preserved for us, as well as their war chariots, and weapons offensive and defensive. There is not a form of handicraft from the roughest to the finest of which we have not an exponent in some carving or painting more than three thousand years old. We see their builders at work with line and level and trowel, and we are shown how the gigantic blocks forming some of the latter pyramids were put in position, i. e., by a fearful expenditure of human labour and life. We can follow the husbandman through all the operations of his industry, and see the character of the buildings in which Joseph stored up the corn in preparation for the long famine. As a consequence, innumerable are the instances we meet, which show that the whole world is akin, and there is nothing new under the sun. Thus we have a picture of Menephtha, who met that severe check at the Red Sea when pursuing the Israelites, peacefully sitting down at a game draught. Another with a group of acrobats amusing people at some festival, tumbling, throwing balls in the air—facts not strange to our modern eyes—and in a corner, with all the usual craft of his class in his longitudinal eyes, the thimble-rigger, with deft fingers, cheating a rustic, possibly an Israelite off for the day from the heavy work of making bricks for building pithouses or ramesses, and unfortunately for himself, not endowed with that astuteness modern notions assign, rightly or wrongfully, to his descendants.

No less varied was their literature. There are treated three thousand years old on religion and religious rites, chiefly those of burial—descriptions in pen and pencil of the judgment they believed to follow after death, giving a sufficient answer to Professor Huxley's extraordinary assertion already referred to; books on geometry, astronomy, and medicine, not of very much value these; others on magic, which evidently played an important part in Egyptian life—a host of accounts of every kind, proving that however they may need French or English help now, the Egyptians of olden time were first-rate financiers and accountants. Collections of proverbs, too, have been raked up out of the dust of centuries, but of decades of centuries—just books, almanacs, and even catalogues of libraries. It may bring a sense of relief to a good many of us to learn that the love of light literature is by no means of recent growth in the world, scorned though it clearly was to a certain extent by the intellect of Rome and Greece. Poems and novels—these latter rather of the Mrs. Radcliffe class, using the supernatural very largely—form an extensive part of the literature of ancient Egypt; so we may picture to ourselves the Egyptian dandies of the time of Abraham following with tearful eyes the sad misadventures of innocence oppressed, and finally exulting in the triumph of virtue and the down-fall of villainy; or reading with ready sympathy how the "course of true love never did run smooth"—not unlike her descent of what I do not say her brother, too, of the 19th century of this Christian era.

From such abundant material it ought to be easy to trace what I called the Egyptian coloring of Genesis and Exodus to speak only of them, written by one who grew up to manhood in the Court of Pharaoh, and was, we are told, learned in all the wisdom of Egypt. The truth the touches which bring out what Ebers, by far the best Egyptian scholar of the day calls, the "Egyptian characters of the Books of Moses," are so numerous and so varied in this character, that one knows scarcely which to choose. Joseph, we are told, was sold to merchants on their way to Egypt "with spices, balm, and myrrh," and was sold by them to Potiphar an Egyptian officer in high command. All this is essentially Egyptian. Egypt produced none of these spices, which, nevertheless, were extensively used, especially in embalming the bodies of the dead. On the other hand, her abundant produce, for which she was remarkable down to the period of the Roman Empire and later, until the vile Turkish domination made a desert where a garden, there, as elsewhere, caused her to be the storehouse of the nomadic peoples around her, and was the origin of a brisk trade of which this caravan of Ishmaelites carrying spices to sell, and no doubt, bringing back corn, is one proof, and the subsequent journey of Joseph's brethren with money to purchase corn for Egypt, too, Potiphar is essentially an Egyptian name. Into its composition enter Peta or Pitar, the Egyptian Sun-God, familiar to us through the Royal title Pharaoh. Egyptian kings were considered lesser gods from the time they began to reign.

These, again, this story of Joseph's temptation is thoroughly in keeping with what the monuments relate of the freedom enjoyed by Egyptian women, who were not cooped up in men as they are now, but moved about as freely as in these countries—and in keeping too with a profusion of which their writers make no secret, and on account of which, they often indulge in keen and bitter sarcasm at the expense of the weaker sex. Another eminently Egyptian trait is found in the incident of the dream. Dreams were not interpreted as omens, as they are now, but were added to magic. On an old papyrus are given names of things which were reckoned infallible in producing dreams—these were euphorbia, chamomile, chrysanthemum, and others with ammonia and magnesia. It may not be prudent, and it certainly would not be quite right to try them, as the juice of the euphorbia—though very like milk, I believe, poisonous. The chief baker is a personage of Egyptian history, for a papyrus found in 1854, of the 19th dynasty; that is before the Exodus gives the Egyptian name "tata" to the chief of four bakers mentioned; and what proves the importance of his charge is that it is then said, that he had in stock 114,064 loaves. It would be interesting to know who the Pharaoh was who honored Joseph so highly. But of this we cannot be quite certain yet. It was no doubt one of the Hykos or Shepherd kings, so much is fixed by Mosaic chronology, probably Apapi II., by whose time the original Rudapi had been cut off, and the rulers approached in culture and bearing the dynasties that preceded and followed them.

The entire history of Pharaoh's dreams and their interpretation is marked throughout by Egyptian customs, and has many Coptic words introduced into the narrative. The incidents of shaving—a custom neither Jewish nor Babylonian—is pure Egyptian. Barbers are often seen on the "table" or table, the hair being presented on some states are really false. Egyptian also is the gold chain placed round Joseph's neck, for similar gifts are mentioned frequently as bestowed on men who earned the favor of the monarch by some notable exploit. The king said to Joseph—"At the commandment of thy mouth all the people shall obey." This is the precise formula for conveying supreme authority. It is found on an inscription of XVII dynasty, and again, later on. No writers of the time of Josias could even have guessed it. All that is said about rings and other ornaments is fully borne out by recent discoveries. There is scarcely a museum in Europe that does not contain rings, seals, collars, in very large numbers. Servants go before Joseph crying out "Abrek!" The meaning of Abrek pendants you will seek for till the day of Judgment!" said Luther. But Luther was not a prophet, and could not foresee modern discoveries. Our own version, "bend the knee," is perfectly correct. Egyptian monuments show that the word is used in teaching camels to kneel down to receive their burdens. It arrives to this day in the mouths of the Arabs, who about "Abrok" to make their camels kneel down. It would be tedious to enter into more details, but I am able to say, without fear of contradiction, that every episode of Joseph's history in Egypt—the arrival of his family, his brethren first with presents, the preparation for the

famine, and his entire administration, including the political stroke of buying for Pharaoh the land of Egypt—is not only in accordance with the customs of that people displayed on their monuments, but true to such portions of their history as have come down to us. So that every line almost proclaims itself to be what it really is, an historical record, written by one who was saturated with Egyptian thought and Egyptian manners. We must now take a long stride of more than a century, during which the Hebrews in quiet possession of the land of Gessen flourished accordingly. The richness and fertility of the soil and the abundance of its productions were to them painful memories in after times when wandering through arid deserts on their way to the Promised Land. But the brightness of their horizon was soon to know a sad change. Great political changes were taking place about the middle of the second century after Joseph. What part the sons of Israel had in these we know not, but this we do know that they were not favoured by the new rulers of Egypt, who, jealous of their growing numbers and fearful lest the weight of their power might be thrown in on the side of their opponents, oppressed them grievously, and sought even by means the most inhuman to check the growth, if not wholly to extinguish the race. After a time, the length of which we cannot determine, they were rescued from their oppressors, but only at the price of a wholesale emigration or exodus; and this it is which the book bearing that name relates for us at full length.

There is ample evidence to prove that the persecution of the Israelites occurred in the reign of the reign of Egypt's greatest and best known king, Ramses II., better known to us through the Greek Sesostris; and during his reign also, or perhaps more probably, that of his son and successor, Menephtha, took place the great migration of the Israelites under Moses and Aaron. The sufferings of the people may have begun in Tit's time, but they certainly ended under Ramses II. The Bible narrative points to a time when the country enjoyed interior peace—when prosperity was great—and the king at leisure to undertake vast public works for his own glory, and to enhance the greatness and magnificence of his kingdom. Now, all this coincides perfectly with the circumstances of the reign of Ramses, which lasted more than sixty years—forty-six of perfect peace. Most great works were constructed by him than by any other prince, for to him Egypt owes the magnificent temples of Ibamboul and Ramesium, part of the temple of Karnak and Suher, the magnificent Obelisk of which stands in the Place de la Concorde at Paris; re dug canals in various quarters and ornamented Fayoum, Memphis, Thebes, and Ramses, with his monuments and statues. Unfortunately for the fame of Ramses, these gigantic labors are monuments of cruelties quite as great, for they were done by men and women torn from their homes and compelled to work by the constant use of the stick. The system the French call corvee obtained throughout Egypt—a system of compulsory labor for the State. I don't think we have an English word to express it; if you can imagine the gang system, without pay, and with incessant bastinadoes, you will have some idea what it is, and what an admirable instrument of oppression it would prove in the hands of one willing to use it. Against the unfortunate Israelites it was used with excessive rigor. We have two pictures of Ramses' great works in process of construction—one in the numerous carvings and paintings, as well as the other in the first chapters of Exodus, and they are exactly alike! An Egyptian document of the time of Ramses mentions how a people called "Aperi" or "Abari" were employed by the King in building the city of Ramses, and that they were so numerous that a body of guards or taskmasters were set over them. Exodus says they "built for Pharaoh the cities of Pithoum and Ramses." I think further proof is not necessary.

The greater part of the edifices raised by Ramses, says Brugsch were built of bricks, as we gather from Moses. The sacred writings go into minute details on the subject, and these are of such a nature, they could neither be imagined or guessed by a writer not of the period; only a contemporary could know them. The verification of these details by recent discoveries affords a confirmation both striking and unexpected of the veracity of Moses. The sufferings of the Israelites were—first, they were forced to the hard labour of making bricks and mortar; then they used straw as a bond in making the bricks. This, after a time, they were compelled to provide for themselves—no small hardship when each one was compelled to return a certain number of bricks as his task for the day. I should have said the government was supposed to supply materials and food to men it compelled to labour for it. We have extant returns made by overseers of what they expended in this way, so that the Israelites were victims of injustice as well as of hardship. They dispersed over the country to gather "quas" reeds—straw according to St. Jerome, who saw the difficulty, for the Hebrew for straw is "qeben." Commentators puzzle not a little over the passage without much advantage to anyone. Calmet supposes it was broken straw left in the fields or farmyards as useless; otherwise explanations not less strained; the truth being that Moses uses here not a Hebrew word, but an Egyptian, one signifying "reed," and wishes to designate the reeds that grew in great abundance on the banks of the Nile of the canal that drew the waters of the Nile over a great part of the country. The Jews then made for the building of Pithoum and Ramses mortar and bricks, and in the latter used both straw and reed. So says Exodus. What does very recent exploration of these places show? First, that the walls were well built with mud and mortar. Then that of the millions of bricks well found there some were made with straw, others with reeds, others of the mud of the Nile without any admixture whatever. It is probable that all this was written centuries after the events? Is it probable that such minute details grew out of the popular chants of a people that did not amalgamate with others even when in the midst, and became more and more exclu-

sive and conservative as time went on? This is what modern sophists would have us believe. Verily there are none so credulous as so called philosophers.

In the long and most interesting series of historical pictures belonging to Egypt which are to be found in the great books of Sir Gardner Wilkinson and G. Rawlinson one feature meets us everywhere. It is thus. In every scene represented, the Egyptians are always triumphant; the feeling or national vanity forbade all memorials of these defeats. The facts admit not of the shadow of doubt, for it is easy to distinguish the Egyptian type of head from the Semitic or Jewish, the Negro and some others that figure largely in these representations as captives or supplicants or slaves under the lash of Egyptian overseers. It is confirmed by a strange hiatus in the otherwise complete series of monuments—beginning from the IX dynasty, the age of the Pyramids, and continued down to the Roman Empire—abstaining covering the two hundred years of rule of the Kykos or Shepherd Kings. As a dominant race they incurred the hatred of the native Egyptians, who in the monuments of the 18th and 19th and later dynasties show their contempt and ad spite in an amusing way, always picturing shepherds with some circumstance of ignominy and ridicule. Political disturbances consequent on invasion and conquest no doubt explain the absence of monuments during the first part of that period so humiliating for Egypt, but later on the Kykos reigned in peace, and were not in any way inferior in culture to their predecessors. Egyptologists, therefore, hold that the absence of monuments of this time is due to the deliberate destruction of what would have been memorials of disaster and defeat. This prepares us for the absence of special records of the Jewish misfortunes that led to the liberation of the Jews—the plague by which God smote the whole land of Egypt and brought the proudest of the Pharaohs—Menephtha—to the dust. Egyptian history is silent as to all these—silent, too, as to the disaster that befel the Egyptian army at the crossing of the Red Sea. Yet not wholly silent. The last few years has brought to the knowledge the studious in these matters a son of Menephtha, associated with him in his rule, who must nevertheless have died before his father. There is in the Royal Museum at Berlin a colossal group representing Menephtha and another figure bearing the sign (uraeus) of royal dignity. The inscription tells us it was the prince, the preceding prince—the sharer of his crown, to whom his heart inclines, the chief of archers, the prince Menephtha. Is it credible to see this prince, who died before his father, to whom Lethos, a younger brother, succeeded, that son of Pharaoh to whom the words of Exodus refer, "I have said to thee My son"—that is Israel, as appears from the preceding verses—"Go that he may serve me, and thou wouldst not let him go: behold I will kill thy son, thy first born." How the doom feel on the obstinate king is related in the 12th chapter of Exodus, the writer adding the circumstance that the first born of Pharaoh slain that night "sat on his throne"—an expression pointing to the dignity of Re-pa-ye, "associate in rule"—precisely what the Berlin inscription declares him to have been.

What has been said, I think, sufficient for the purpose of the lecture. Any unprejudiced listener will admit freely that the "side lights" thrown on Bible history are neither few nor dim and uncertain; on the contrary, they shine so clearly, coming from many and unexpected quarters, that by their light the truth of the Mosaic history is brought home to all who hitherto believed by preconceived notions, the outcome of unbelief in the supernatural. It is easy to define our own position. As Catholics we rest on the Church's authority which vouches for the authentic ity and inspiration of the Bible. Fourteen hundred years ago St. Augustine wrote—"I would not receive the Gospels, but that I am moved thereto by the authority of the Church." This also do we say and think of the books of Moses as well. Resting, like the great Fathers of the 4th century on the rock of that unshaken, because infallible teacher, we watch with calmness, unmoved in our faith, the strife that time after time has raged around the writings we hold sacred. And again and again, in ways most wonderful, events have testified our oaths and confidence, as the further progress in knowledge have shown how baseless was the opposition first steps in that vast field offered to our belief. One curious feature of our modern intellectual life cannot fail to arrest attention as we read—I would venture to call it the sophism of finality—"It is not that men think the field of human knowledge is exhausted; indeed, the leading spirits are quite willing to allow that the fringe only has been touched; the delusion is that the end has been reached in what is done—that what is gained is absolutely gained not only in facts, which may be admitted, but in inferences from these facts, which is quite another thing. This delusion is responsible at the present moment for a vast amount of irreligious thought and writing, creating an atmosphere around us, out of which we cannot altogether wrest ourselves. It is not a comfort to us, even who take our stand upon the "rock of ages" to see how vain would fear, how foolish and even delusory misgivings be as to things we are accustomed to regard as settled. Taught by the experience of the past we have learned to distinguish between the youth and the mature developed age of each branch of knowledge, and we note how often it happens that the period of immaturity you h is also the time of widest divergence between science and religion, while progress in the former draws us nearer to the latter. As it was in the past, so we may be certain shall it be in the future. The stream of human knowledge deepening and widening as it goes, will draw near and merge in the clear waters of Revelation forming with them one mighty torrent that shall bear us on even unto God.

CONCLUDED.

Hospford's Acid Phosphates As A BRAIN FOOD.

Dr. S. F. NEWCOMB, Greenfield, O., says: "In cases of general debility, and torpor of mind and body, it does exceedingly well."

NATIONAL PILLS are sugar coated, mild but thorough, and are the best Stomach and Liver Pills in use.

FAST BOYS.

Catholic Columbian.

A fast boy needs money. He is lonesome with it. He has it he must and will. There was a time when he was not fast, and he reverts to it. Bad company made him what he is now. He tires often of his associates, but cannot shake them off. They stick to him while he can procure money. When this fails, they institute, that is all, how it can be gotten. Of course the means is unlawful. At first he is horrified, but does not want to be laughed at, hence is silent. His companions continue their unlawful suggestions. His ear grows accustomed to receiving an account of the successful speculation of others. His sense of justice is dulled. Opportunities are offered, he does not make use of them, but thinks of how he might avail himself without fear of detection. Others have done so, and may he not? His occupation begins to be distasteful. His parents, brothers and sisters notice the change in his disposition. Love assigns another cause for it than the truth. His companions are his confidants. His friends know nothing of the temptations which are assailing him. He is not out of his teens yet, but for all that, he belongs to a club, in some out of the way place, where rents are cheap, a room is rented, and here this club of fast boys meet. Dime novels and flash newspapers strewn the table. All the loathsome criminal trials are read and commented upon, with the relish of hardened criminals. Each new member of this association is the lion of it until his ready cash is gone. They do not openly plan any robberies. They only think and make suggestions of how the thing can be done quietly, without detection. They do not find fault with a criminal act, but call him a fool who finds himself in the meshes of the law. These fast boys are learning all the grades of criminal life. They may grow up without committing open acts which will confine them to State institutions, but nothing can make them love home. They may marry, but their wives and children are half associates. They are meal and bedtime companions. Hunger is no stranger to them. From these families come very many, if not the most of our poor wails, the street arabs. What wonder! They look abroad for what is wanting at home, namely, bread and clothes.

A fast boy is called by his associates, a fine fellow, and he likes the flattery given to him. If he begins to steal from his employer, he will continue until the public prison confines him. We once had some money stolen, and went to the authorities about it. After inquiring the circumstances of the theft, they said the criminal will be caught. We asked, how? The answer was: When people steal once and are not found out, they will do it again. We will put a detective on the watch. They did so, and the whole transaction was laid open. Parents should keep eye on the associates of their children. Girls do not run so much danger from companions of their own sex. Mothers generally have more influence over them than the boys of the family. Fast boys are apt to think little of their mothers and sisters. They have no great respect for their fathers, but rather fear than love them. Their thoughts are not chaste, love with them means complicity of the eyes and hand. Honor, with them, is a convenience for glib conversation. It has no meaning other than that which thieves attach to it, namely, truth to one another. The fast boy is a talking machine with money at hand to commit excesses. He is a post on the street corners. He can talk and has a soul, but it is as streaked as a barber's pole. He stands near the gutter at some street crossing, like some assassin. If he belongs to the country or small towns, the small and big bits of scandal for miles around his home, are known to him. He is an unbridled dictionary, bound in calf, of all the dirt and scandal of the country or town in which he lives. He is worse off than the digger Indian who feeds his body with dirt. The fast boy feeds his soul with it. If you mean any good, he is only sowing his wild oats; we answer death generally finds him, though he may be then an old boy, gathering his harvest. He runs amuck during life, and dies the death he has inflicted on others.

Dear boys do not write to accuse you or hurt your feelings. We have seen whereof we write, and put it before you to give you the truth, and to give you reputation and life. May God preserve you, dear boys, from evil companions, is the heartfelt wish of a priest who loves you. S. S. M.

Good Words to Girls.

A writer advises girls, if they would be happy in the married life to marry a gentleman. He thus defines what he means by the term:

A true gentleman is generous and unselfish. He regards another's happiness, and welfare as well as his own. You will see the trait running through all his actions. A man who is a bear at home, among his sisters and discourteous to his mother is just the man to avoid when you come to the great question which is to be answered yes or no. A man may be ever so rustic in his early surroundings, if he is a true gentleman he will not bring a blush to your cheek in any society by his absurd behavior.

There is an instinctive politeness inherent in such a character, which every where commands respect and makes its owner pass for what he is—one of nature's noblemen.

Do not despair, girls; there are such men still in the world. You need not all die old maids. But wait until the princes pass by. No harm in delay. You will not be apt to find him in the ball-room, and I know he will never be seen walking up from the liquor saloon. Nor is he a champion billiard player. He has not had time to become a "champion," for he has had too much honest, earnest work to do in the world. I have always observed that these "champions" were seldom good for much else.

Be very wary in choosing girls, when so much is at stake. Do not mistake a passing fancy for undying love. Marrying in haste rarely ends well.