

"Woe to thee, Moab,  
 Thou art lost, thou people of Chemosh,  
 He hath given his sons as fugitives, his  
 daughters to captivity  
 To the King of the Amorites, Sihon;  
 We cast them down;  
 Heshbon is lost even to Dibon;  
 We laid it waste even to Nophab  
 With fire even unto Medeba."

These last, though interesting as specimens of the lyric poetry of the age, cannot be regarded as part of their devotional services. The close of the sojourn in the wilderness, and of the life of Moses, his prophetic and poetic gifts broke forth in two elaborate pieces which partook more of a religious character, which in fact combine poetry, instruction, devotion and prophecy. These are given in the 32nd and 33rd chapters of Deuteronomy. There is something striking and interesting in the fact that the commencement and the close of the utterances of the Hebrew prophet in the wilderness were in the form of elaborate lyrical compositions;—the one on entering, the other on emerging from the desert;—*that* after crossing the Red Sea, this before dismissing the people over Jordan."\*

The first of these is the song, which by command of God, Moses taught the people, as a testimony against them should they afterwards depart from him. "Write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children."—Deut. xxxi. 19. From chapter xxxii. 44, it would seem that Moses not only wrote it, but sang it in the ears of the people. It breathes the spirit of the highest poetry and is more regularly constructed than most of the inspired poetry of scripture. Its object was to confirm the people in the worship and service of Jehovah. With this view it expatiates on his majesty, power and goodness, his mighty acts on their behalf, and warns them of the miseries which apostacy would bring upon them. Other nations had their national hymns in which they sang of the glory of their country. But in this the national anthem of Israel nothing is left for the

people to glory in, all that is good about them is ascribed to the bounty of the creator, all that is evil to the weakness and ingratitude of the creature." The hymn—soaring aloft, full of deep views of the future and the present; composed in a curt, compressed yet highly metaphorical style; pungent, keen, piercing, at the same time abounding in holy earnestness; a witness against the disobedience of the people, a lauding of the God of covenant,—gives us once more a brief sketch of the whole life and doings of the great man of God, who especially had the office assigned him to announce condemnation."†

The second is "the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death." Like Jacob on his dying bed blessing his twelve sons, Moses before going up to the mount to die there, pronounced his blessing on each of the tribes describing its present character and future history. "This stands in marked contrast with the last as containing nothing threatening. After the severe witness borne against them in the former, it is soothing in its nature, inviting Israel to rest in the fullness of Jehovah and encouraging them by religious promises of blessing.

The long period from the sojourn in the wilderness to the time of David was a period of vicissitude and confusion, and but few specimens of its poetry either civil or sacred have been preserved. The Book of Jasher is referred to in Joshua x. 13, and 2nd Samuel i. 18. As in both these cases we have quoted from it poems or parts of poems, it is supposed to have been a book, like the book of the wars of the Lord already referred to, containing odes on the various events of their national history. The first of these quotations contains a magnificent description of Joshua's victory over the Canaanites, when the sun hastened not to go down a whole day. The other is David's lament over Saul and Jonathan, probably the first specimens of Elegiac poetry in existence.

Two other compositions of the same era which have been preserved are more pro-

\* T. Binney.

† O Von Gerlach.