

SPECIAL
ARTICLES

Our Contributors

BOOK
REVIEWS

THE BIBLE AND POETRY.—IV.

By R. G. Macbeth, M.A.

There are many false and imperfect definitions of poetry abroad in the world. There are myriads of rhymsters and versifiers everywhere, but the select and elect company of poets is not a large one. There are some who seem to imagine that language measured off into lines of equal length and some semblance of similar ending constitutes poetry. Hence the deluge of stuff that comes in the spring or that attends upon any great national event. One of the American humorists tells us that he was, when a lad, asked by his uncle to put into poetry the exploit of an ancestor who for some distinguished service was presented with a deed of land by the country. But said the uncle, do not give us poetry at the expense of truth—stick to the facts. The youthful versifier took the legal document and chopped it into four line stanzas. When this was done he went to his uncle's room to read him the production. He got through some three stanzas—and then he dodged and the bootjack broke the looking-glass. The humorist's story has a moral, and one almost wishes that there were more men, like this uncle who refused forcibly to have his poetic sense offended.

Lord Macaulay says that poetry is the art of doing by means of words what the painter does by means of colors, and few would try to improve on any of Macaulay's definitions in the sphere of literature. What does a painter do by means of colors? He teaches great lessons incidentally, but his main function is to deal with things so as to awaken within us a wonderfully new and emotional appreciation of them. This the poet does with words. Hence it follows that poetry need not be in the form of verse at all, and every student of literature knows that some of the loftiest poetry does not wear the dress of verse upon the printed page.

In this as in other spheres the Bible is the pre-eminent Book. It abounds in "thoughts that breathe and words that burn." It has no rhymes but it has the vivid parallelism characteristic of Hebrew literature. There is no effort at verse as we sometimes understand that word, but there is a rhythmic and majestic movement about the language which is much more intense in its effect. There are songs and elegies and flashes of drama in the Book. The warchant of Deborah has a vivid and impetuous force that compels the duller reader to see the scenes that are therein depicted. The lament of David over the slain of Gilboa is one of the noblest of elegiac poems with a tenderly passionate tribute to friendship as exemplified in the attachment that existed between himself and Jonathan. The tragic and glowing language of Job depicting the struggle of the soul with its own doubt and with the empty and therefore cruel platitudes of society, is dramatic poetry of the loftiest type. The battle songs of the book of Psalms which became the inspiration of Puritans and Covenanters in the fight for the supremacy of conscience have no parallel in our day. We have some great war-odes, but they lack the gleam of the sword of God against His enemies which causes the battle songs of the Hebrews to flash inspirational fire. We have in many lands great national and patriotic hymns and they are great in the degree in which they keep the religious element to the front, but they all pale into insignificance before the 137th Psalm, which gives such passionate and burning expression to the love of country. In that psalm we can see the mourning exiles by the rivers of Babylon and witness the protest of

their souls against the mirth which their captors demanded. We hear the walling cry for the sight of the homeland and the very willow trees sigh in sympathy with the one who said: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning." When language compels us thus to see and hear it is the language of truest poetry. The home of this language is the Bible.

Paris, Ont.

FACTS FOR THE NEW MOTHER.

By Leora Jacques.

How many mothers realize what an amount of evil and suffering they are causing to be brought into the world just because either from a lack of moral courage, or else through an inexcusable blind ignorance, they allow their daughters to be educated in all the accomplishments, the art of pleasing and of being agreeable, while letting the study of their own physical structure and mental attitude concerning parental influence go wholly neglected.

How many mothers think they are wholly up-to-date in their daughters' education when they have given them instructors in physical culture and domestic science.

Few realize that the most important subject to generations yet unborn and to their own coming families has been neglected.

It is awe-inspiring when one stops to think of the power of parental influence.

Very few mothers realize that they have a greater power to shape the destiny of the nation and of the coming ages than was ever given to man through the ballot.

The responsibility of the coming mother is appalling.

Whatever she thinks about earnestly and desires with her whole soul her offspring to become will stamp itself on the brain of the child and do much to form its disposition and character.

As a "continual dropping of water makes an impression on a stone" so a continual assertion of whatever a mother wishes her child to become will make an impression on the growing brain that will wear away the stone of inherited tendencies. And the mother's mind has the power to modify all the inherited tendencies of centuries whether for good or for evil. If she will just set herself about the noble work God has given her to do; but she must do it earnestly, faithfully and confidently.

Surely, if years are not too important to be spent on one study or hobby, then a few months are not too precious to spend on a noble human being.

Mothers, throw off the yoke of so-called modesty and let your daughters be taught this most of all important study.

If you do not understand it yourself give them books to read that will teach them, books that will make them bright, earnest, thoughtful, helpful wives and mothers.

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Life, even at the outset, is full of temptations and dangers, which to be met and avoided, require instruction and warning. Far, far better that this instruction should reach the boy and girl early in life, from the lips of the wise and loving parent or teacher, than from the loose tongues of playmates, servants or business acquaintances. Such knowledge must come to every young person, sooner or later, then let it come from the Godgiven source—the parent—and let it come early enough to forestall the temptation and the danger.

TACTFUL TREATMENT.

Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men.—Matt. 4:19.

These words refer primarily to the apostles, but in a secondary and important sense to all true ministers of the Gospel. Not long ago an old minister went out to visit in a new missionary field, to which he had been recently appointed. He found in a small shack a man living alone like a hermit. This man was intelligent, had respect for religion and the Sabbath, but never went to church. The last time he attended church he had put on a new suit of clothes, and the wild young men of the congregation spat on it. He said:

"The boys whisper at the seats near the door, and hinder me from hearing the sermon, and they defile my coat with tobacco juice."

To win him back, thought the old minister, if I succeed, it will be little short of a miracle, but I must try. He found a key to solve the problem in his name. It was Israel.

"Do you know," said the minister, "that you have the grandest name in the world? Do you know the meaning of Your name?"

"Well, I think it was a people who lived in Egypt and went to a land of milk and honey."

"Yes, the Israelites migrated to Palestine, but that does not give the meaning. Israel, my friend, means in Hebrew, 'the strength of God.' Jacob was afraid of his brother Esau and sent great presents forward to pacify him, but he stayed on the other side of the brook and during the night wrestled with an angel. That angel was the Angel of the Covenant, Christ pre-incarnate. The struggle was strenuous and great, and Jacob said 'I will not let thee go except Thou bless me.'"

He prevailed. Of course he was permitted to prevail, for to show him his weakness in a combat with Omnipotence, and keep him humble, the glorious Angel put forth an atom of his strength, and the sinew of Jacob's thigh shrank immediately, and he was ever afterwards lame. But he prevailed and obtained the blessing, and the angel then and there gave Jacob a new name—that name was "Israel," which means "the strength of God."

Well, let me tell you, my friend, I am going to preach on the Divinity of Christ next Sabbath, for I am a strong believer in that great fundamental doctrine of our holy religion, and I will bring this name forward in my discourse. Will you come and hear it? He came, and was thereafter a steadfast attender on divine worship, but he wisely avoided the company of the boys near the door.

Those who send 75c in January to Mr. T. B. Mosher, Portland, Maine, will receive the *Bibelot* for the year, and will get full literary value for their money. The number for October is "The Little Crow of Paradise and other Fantasies," by J. H. Pearce. These are very brief, quaint stanzas, but each contains a living idea, and is in a way a suggestive allegory. The tale of how the crow was humanized by sorrow, and through a deed of mercy found its way to the gate of Paradise is very beautiful.

It is the story of all His delaying. Never is there in it any hint of indifference, any possibility of forgetting. If we will but take it rightly, the hindrance is to secure that which we long for. It is only His staying to lift us up into a greater faith, that we have a richer, greater, fuller blessing than we ever should have dared to ask.—Mark Guy Pearse.