

HOW WE GOT OUR BIBLE.

(Continued from page 11.)

pierced my hands and feet." This is of course correct, and has been accepted by our translators, although the word in the Hebrew Bible, as we now have it, is נִסְּרָה . Clearly in the process of copying a manuscript some scribe has, by mistake, shortened נִסְּרָה to נִסְּרָ .

The similarity of נִסְּרָ and נִסְּרָה , which were continually being mistaken, the one for the other, has occasioned some strange errors. There is a disputed reading in 2 Sam. 8: 13 which very well illustrates this confusion. It tells of David "smiting of Syria (נִסְּרָה) in the valley of Salt 18,000 men." Now this is certainly a mistake, for the valley of Salt was in Edom, not Syria. And when we turn to the corresponding passage in 1 Chron. 18: 12 we read (referring to the same event) that "Abishai (David's general), the son of Zeruiah smote of Edom (נִסְּרָה) in the valley of Salt, 18,000 men." How did this error in 2 Sam. arise? In English the words "Syria" and "Edom" are very dissimilar, but notice the similarity of the Hebrew forms:

נִסְּרָה = A, R, M = Syria.
 נִסְּרָ = A, D, M = Edom.

Plainly some scribe mistook נִסְּרָ for נִסְּרָה .

Then, sometimes when a scribe was having a manuscript read to him he might confuse words of similar sound. An example of this may be found in Isa. 9: 3. There are two little Hebrew words of similar sound, and rather like each other, too, in appearance, but very different in meaning, viz., נִסְּרָ (not) and נִסְּרָה (to it), and the question here is, which of these ought to be in the text. If we read נִסְּרָ , which appears in the present Hebrew text we have, "Thou hast multiplied the nation; thou hast not increased the joy." This seems like a contradiction of what goes before and follows. The editors of the Hebrew Bibles in the 19th century evidently thought there was an error here, for they placed נִסְּרָה in the margin. The text then reads, "Thou hast multiplied the nation; thou hast increased its joy." And this is the rendering adopted by our Revised Version. Yet when we examine the Hebrew manuscripts extant, we find that they all have נִסְּרָ .

But we can see plainly how this came about. The original manuscript no doubt had נִסְּרָ ; but the scribe in copying had his manuscript read to him, and נִסְּרָ being exactly the same in sound was written for נִסְּרָ .

Illustrations could also be given of the omission of a whole line in copying a manuscript. After writing the last word of a line, and looking back to his manuscript, the scribe's eye would sometimes catch the same word at the end of the next line, and he would go on from that, omitting the whole line between. Remarks and explanations written in the margin were also sometimes inserted in the text by mistake.

These illustrations will suffice to show how, on the human side, some errors crept into the manuscripts of our Bible in the course of the centuries. We shall next look at the facilities which Biblical scholars now have for detecting and removing these errors.

"Some murmur, when their sky is clear
 And wholly bright to view,
 If one small speck of dark appear
 In their great heaven of blue,
 And some with thankful hearts are filled
 If but one streak of light,
 One ray of God's good mercy, glid
 The darkness of their night."

New Year's Greetings to the District 5th Vice-Presidents and Junior Superintendents of the London Conference.

From Mrs. E. Nozell, 5th Vice, London Conference.

50 Joseph Street, Chatham.

Dear Co-Workers,—Permit me to take this opportunity of sending you New Year's Greetings. As we enter on a New Year may each of us be stirred up to a deeper sense of our great responsibility in shouldering the burden of training the youth for Christ.

I am glad to tell you that our "own Chatham District" is prospering in Junior League work. Since October three new Junior Leagues have been organized,—one at Blehnelm, one at Middle Road, Raleigh, and one at Hufman's Corners; with the prospect of four or five more after Christmas. God has greatly blessed us, and we praise Him for it.

I sincerely trust that each District 5th Vice will put forth every effort during the coming year to boom this work. If you know of places where there is

plenty of material for Junior Societies will you let me know? I would be glad to hear from you at any time; glad to hear of your success in this work. Also, let me thank you for so promptly and kindly responding to my letters in the past, and I hope you will often write, telling me of any new plans, or even telling of your difficulties.

Just a word to the Superintendents of Junior Leagues. Dear friends, do not become discouraged! Even the most lively and active youth may have the tenderest heart, and may possess the greatest possibilities for future usefulness. Give him your sympathy and help, and "be not weary in well-doing," for you do not know but that among your boys and girls you may be training a future Wesley, Luther, Frances Haverzal or a Florence Nightingale. But you do know that you are training souls and lives for God.

Let us remember that the new year will only be happy and prosperous in the measure that we do our whole duty to God. That each of us may have a Happy and Prosperous New Year because we do this is the earnest prayer of your friend,

LILLIE NOXELL.

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