

## OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

### TARES OR NEW WINE.

In walking along the sea shore, you have observed a dark margin line which marks the extreme limit of the ocean waves. It is a curious specimen of order and confusion, as well as a most interesting study. The line of limit itself is symmetrical and well defined, but its composite parts are made up of all sorts of odds and ends. They are fragments of the museum of medley curiosities, which the restless ocean has been disgorging from its watery bosom. Bits of coal and shell, fragments of wood, accumulations of seaweed, and all sorts of heterogeneous materials, make up an omnium collection, out of which diligent searchers occasionally gather articles of value.

It has occurred to us, that this strange medley, of which this sea-line is made up, may be used to represent, at the present time, the actual results of the modern German thought, which the intellectual agitation of the age has cast upon the surface of the British mind.

One of the most assiduous students of this drift-line has been the famous Professor W. R. Smith, of Aberdeen. Out of its rubbish he may have occasionally extracted some beautiful pearl of thought. If we judge, however, the fruits of his labours, by their unsettling and sceptical tendencies we cannot but regret that he has devoted his time and talents to the diffusion of the worst phases of German thought and criticism. Scarcely has he escaped from the punishment due to his former acts of indiscretion in his articles on the "Bible," in the shape of three years' suspension from professional duties, and a public rebuke, when the religious mind of the Presbyterian world is again agitated to its very centre, by his article on the "Hebrew Language and Literature."

Having carefully perused that production, I shall endeavour to give a fair and impartial judgment of its teachings and tendencies, without yielding to that spirit of heresy-hunting, which recently led certain members of an Ontario Presbytery to scent heterodoxy in the pithy remarks of Matthew Henry.

The article opens with an account of the origin of the term "Hebrew," then proceeds to consider the name "Hebrew Language," next gives a history of its "Character and Philological Relations," followed by the "Geographical Sphere and History of Hebrew as a Spoken Language," "The Literary Development of Hebrew"—and is closed with the "Cultivation of Hebrew as a Dead Language."

The article lacks the off-hand, fearless confidence that characterized the former one on the "Bible," and the language is more guarded, as if the shadow of a libel was hanging over the writer.

And the most objectionable views are introduced in such a way as to make it difficult for any Church court to find in them matter of condemnation. Sometimes too, they are put in the shape of an incidental remark in a foot-note.

The Theory of the Literary Development of Hebrew, though not unfolded in any systematic manner, may be stated thus:—

Before us lie the thirty-nine books that compose the Old Testament, and the question to be solved is, "How did they reach their present state?" The question does not deal with their genuineness, authenticity, or inspiration, but with the various stages of their literary progress, until they assumed their present shape and form. Partly from fragments of history and principally from a careful and diligent examination of the books themselves, Professor Smith enunciates the following results:—

The basis of the Old Testament is oral tradition. Far back in the past, the stories of creation and of the fall, the epic of the deluge, the loves of Jacob and Rachel, the lives of Joseph and Moses, and kindred ancient Bible narratives, were handed down, in unwritten poems and carefully transmitted narrative from father to son, and from generation to generation.

In the course of time, further development took place. In sailing across some Muskoka Lake, its distinguished features are the number of islands that dot and diversify its surface. In like manner the lake of oral tradition becomes covered here and there with written lyrics and laws, sometimes engraven on stone, and sometimes otherwise inscribed. This vast body of oral tradition, interspersed with written laws, like the decalogue, and lyrical productions like those of

the "Book of the Wars of Jehovah" (Numbers xxi. 14) and the Book of Jashur, continued to accumulate for an unknown period of time.

Somewhere between David and Amos and Hosea this vast collection of oral traditions, laws and lyrics was sifted, arranged, and put into its present shape.

The authors of this collection were men of great skill and ability, and prepared most graphic and interesting histories out of the heterogeneous collection of poems, legends, old laws, and traditions, at their disposal.

"They tell their tale with sympathy, and often with an undercurrent of dry humour."

"A new epoch begins with the rise of written prophecy in the eighth century—by this time writing and literary knowledge were widely diffused."

Another event that enabled the new prophecy to establish a spiritual and intellectual ascendancy, was the terrible struggle with Nineveh.

This is succeeded by the decadence of prophecy, and the "systematization of the ceremonial law on lines first drawn by Ezekiel."

The memoirs of Ezra and Nehemiah, and the books of Chronicles and Esther are "singularly destitute of literary merit."

And the canon is described as closed with Ecclesiastes, whose "author could speak of the weariness of much study, and the endless sterility of book-making."

A general view of this new theory of the literary construction of the Old Testament is subjoined as follows:—

- I. The Age of Oral Tradition—probably extending to the time of Moses.
- II. The Period of Oral Tradition, Written Lyrics, Legends and Laws—from Moses to David.
- III. The Grand Literary Era of the Hebrew Language, when its first and noblest productions were written—from Moses to Amos.
- IV. The Epoch beginning with Written Prophecy and including the Struggles with Nineveh, and the Captivity—from Amos to Ezekiel.
- V. The Period of Decadence, when productivity ceased and original works were few in number—from Ezekiel to close of Old Testament.

In a second paper I shall give the disastrous and unsettling results of this novel development theory as well as the rearrangement of the books of the Old Testament which it proposes. J.G.

### SEVEN YEARS IN THE INDIAN MISSION FIELD.

India, the beautiful morning land, the land of sunshine and of gold, stretches southward, like a great triangular banner upon the bosom of the ocean, for eighteen hundred miles, with a superficial area of one million five hundred thousand square miles, and contains a population of over one hundred and fifty millions of human souls, speaking forty-two distinct languages and over two hundred dialects.

The Himalayas, as its northern boundary, shelter it from the wild and comparatively desolate continent beyond, while the central table-land supported by the Vindhya mountains and Mahadeva hills—occurring about the 22nd parallel—divide the country from east to west into two almost equal parts, viz., the Gangetic valley, or Hindustan, on the north, and the Peninsula proper on the south.

Of Ganges or Ganga we read in their ancient records that she is the daughter of Himalaya, the Mountain King; that she was the beloved of Indra, with whom she dwelt above the clouds in the region of the blue ether; that the father, languishing for the companionship of his child, sent the winds hither and thither to call her name aloud and shout for Ganga the beautiful. The uprising cry the maiden heard in heaven, and kneeling she prayed the great Indra to permit her to depart. He consented, and Ganga, impatient and joyful, bounded downward and alighted with such vehemence upon the head of the old King that he became angry, caught and held her fast in the tangles of his bushy hair where she still shines upon his brow a glistening snowy crown. So says the legend. This was a realization of the earthly, not altogether pleasant or welcome to the maiden. She entreated for release with tears and promises of future gentleness, and received a partial reprieve by an escape through a fissure in his rocky side called "Gai Muhti," or the cow's mouth, though uninitiated foreigners call it the head waters or fountain of the Ganges. Leaping and laughing with all the joyousness

of youth and recovered freedom, Ganga descended to the plains, but her course here became more sedate and stately, and after many miles of lonely wandering she called to join her many young companions. Thus, broadening and deepening, she swept majestically onward to the eastern sea.

The peninsula to the south, with its mountain girt shores, seems quite a different world from Hindustan. The speech and appearance of the people being in as marked contrast as are the climate and products of the country. So marked is the separation of the countries to the north and south of the central table-land that outside official circles, almost all other information one gets of the other is through the English press. They each have their independent internal government and seaport towns and therefore the contact is slight, except when such events as a famine, cyclone, or epidemic brings them prominently before the world.

The Dekhan or South, as the ancient Aryans called the great central table-land—because it was the southern limit of their settlements, and all which was not Aryan was worth small consideration in their esteem—is upborne, on its northern side, by the Vindhya mountains which extend across the entire country, and on its southern side by the Mahadeva and Aravilly hills.

On observing the Vindhias from their southern aspect they present the appearance of a great weather-beaten coast line now far inland. The hills or spurs are uniform and flat-topped averaging from three to four hundred feet in height, yet sometimes rising to eight hundred above the table-land of which they are more really the abrupt terminations than distinct and independent hills. On their northern side they are precipitous and commence on the very edge of the escarpment to form a water shed for several very considerable rivers.

Parallel to the Vindhias and south are the Mahadeva hills, or rather a series of groups of peaks much less regular in outline than the Vindhias, and composed of different forms of rocks. The elevated but irregularly shaped valley between, gives the Narbudda river. The drainage area of the Ganges reaches at some points to within little more than a mile of the main stream of the Narbudda. The hilly region of the Mahadeva throws up the Pachmarri group of peaks with their grotesquely shaped summits and bold precipitous faces. The intervening hills (Gondwara) seldom reach any considerable height and none equalling Pachmarri. The valley itself is slightly undulating, and broken occasionally by low yet abruptly swelling hills. The soil of the Narbudda valley is extremely rich and mostly under cultivation, the river naturally is fed most abundantly from its southern side, its confluent and tributaries having their sources in the Gondwara hills of the Mahadeva. The waters of these rivers in hollowing out beds for themselves in the soft rich soil, as they pass along, expose many rocks differing in structure, texture, age, occurrence and disintegration.

The Narbudda or "bestower of pleasure," is worthy of mention. It flows over a bed of wild bold crags of marble and sandstone, often in its course breaking into cataracts of exquisite beauty. Like the Ganges it is much beloved by the Hindoos and is one of their sacred rivers. For many years, while the Ganges has been steadily losing its reputation as a rescuer from sin, the Narbudda has been as steadily gaining. So much does this feeling prevail among the people that the great Mela or fair which takes place annually at Hurdwar, the religious centre of the north, has been discontinued and pilgrimages are now to be made to the Narbudda, which is one of the boundaries of Indore state, separating it from British territory, and is only a few hours by rail from Indore city.

The tradition current among the natives regarding the Narbudda is as follows:—

The river Sone courted the Narbudda in the highlands of Omerkuntuk in which they both rise. They slowly advanced to meet one another, like bashful lovers. The bride becoming impatient to know something of the appearance of the bridegroom sent out her little maid Jhola, the barber's daughter, who was to view and report to her. The Sone supposed Jhola to be the bride, and fell in love with her accordingly, whereat Narbudda became enraged, turned short round to the west and has flowed ever since in that direction, leaping rocks sometimes to fall over yawning precipices in her fury, but time calmed her and she reached the ocean at Cambay, placid and smiling.