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I.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH.

SMITH'S Dictionary of the Bible, in the article on the First and Second Books of Kings, by Lord Arthur C. Hervey, publishes a good many statements like the following:

> "It must, however, be admitted that the chronological details expressly given in the books of Kings form a remarkable contrast with their striking historical accuracy."
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> "When, therefore, we find that the very first date introduced is erroneous, and that numerous other dates are also certainly wrong, because contradictory, it seems a not unfair conclusion that such dates are the work of an interpolator trying to bring the history within his own chronological system ; a conclusion somewhat confirmed by the alterations and omissions of these dates in the LXX. As regards these chronological difficulties, it must be observed they are of two essentially different kinds. One kind is merely the want of the data necessary for chronological exactness. Such is the absence, apparently, of any uniform rule for dealing with the fragments of years at the beginning and end of the reigns." "And this class of difficulties may probably have belonged to these books in their original state, in which exact scientific chronology was not aimed at. But the other kind of difficulty is of a totally different character, and embraces dates which are *very exact* in their mode of expression, but are erroneous and contradictory. Some of these are pointed out below, and it is such which it seems reasonable to ascribe to the interpolation of later professed chronologists."
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> "Now, when to all this we add that the pages of Josephus are full in like manner of a multitude of inconsistent chronological schemes, which prevent his being of any use, in spite of Hales' praises, in clearing up chronological difficulties, the proper inference seems to be that no authoritative, correct, systematic chronology was originally contained in the books of Kings, and that the attempts to supply such afterwards led to the introduction of many erroneous dates, and probably to the corruption of some true ones which were originally there. Certainly the present text contains what are either conflicting calculations of antagonistic chronologists, or errors of careless copyists, which no learning or ingenuity has ever been able to reduce to the consistency of truth."

Abundant similar statements, in regard to either the chronology of the Israelite and Judaite kings as a whole, or to particular dates in this chronology, may be found in other ar-

IV.

HENRY VAUGHAN, THE POET OF LIGHT.

IN days when all England rang to the battle of Cromwell against the Crown, it needed the genius of a Milton to make one's self heard above the din. The other singers, like frightened birds, forsook the green groves of Cavalier poetry. A few, such as George Wither, quaint old Quarles, and pious John Donne, waited long and went mostly unrecognized. The times were too hard for slight voices, but George Herbert and John Milton sing out clear and full above the harsh muttering undertone of their generation. And for the rest—they fled away.

Those were not encouraging circumstances for the development of new poets. The Ironsides looked with profound contempt, and even holy horror, upon the wicked madrigals of Sir John Suckling and the unregenerate verses of Robert Herrick. Believers in a doctrine which called upon them to

"Take the sword
Of the Lord
And forward!"

they could not but despise these mere prettinesses, and odd conceits, of England's troubadour era. Their earnest and austere natures never comfortably endured the touch of a lute or a song of love. The only men who could be sure of a popular constituency were they who gave voice to the popular devotion—not altogether in good metre. In fact, this contrast of Puritan and Cavalier, often made since their day, was never more sharply drawn than by this very matter of poetry. Where the Cavalier was dainty, the Cromwellian was grim. One carried his lute and carolled like great Taillefer at Hastings; the other sang his *Venite Exultemus* over the camp fire.

In the winnowing and flailing of time there have been left to us the "Paradise Lost" and the "Church Porch." We have found the epic Milton and the lyric Herbert meeting and expressing more than the transient sentiment of their contemporaries. No bookseller's shelves can be at all complete without them, and the faith in God which sprang up at the angel touch of poetry into an altar flame of holy service, melts into the pure and spiritual worship of to-day. "The flavor of the good," says Buddha, "pervades every place;" and even now their memory is fragrant to us. But, aside from these, whom do we care to know? The name at the head of this article is familiar to nearly all lovers of English poetry. Yet, save for that exquisite elegy, "They are all gone into that world of light," Henry Vaughan is still a claimant for his kingdom. Some, indeed, have gone further and questioned deeper, but to little purpose.

If we ask the excellent Mr. Thomas Campbell concerning this Welsh bard, we may get a very surly answer. With no great courtesy or good judgment, he will be found to have achieved Dogberry's dearest wish, and to have written his opinion thus: "He is one of the hardest even of the inferior order of the school of conceit, but he has some few scattered thoughts that meet our eye amidst his harsh pages, like wild flowers on a barren heath." This is sad nonsense—as if an Arab should curse the frieze of some ancient temple for not being smooth enough to build into the wall of his hut!

It would, indeed, be difficult to find a true and lofty singer who has been so seriously underrated as Vaughan. It is his glory—as it has been his literary shame—that his entire works are purely and consistently devout. He dared, among Cavaliers and as a Cavalier, to borrow the verse of Herrick, in which to praise the God of the Commonwealth. Hence it has needed the long purgation of these centuries, to eliminate passion and prejudice from the sentence which we can now safely pronounce, upon his contemporaries and himself. Old Longinus said, that he called that alone poetry which permanently pleased and was suitable to any age. By this severest of tests Henry Vaughan is at last vindicated and held in honor.

Of those lewd and rakish Cavaliers—whose blasphemous loyalty Robert Browning has too well imitated, and to whose fragile beauty Professor Aytoun, and of late, F. W. Bourdillon are successors—we can say no great amount of good. With Vaughan himself we aver, "When the sun is busie upon a dunghill the issue is always some unclean vermine." But of that better sort who, as he says, "out of a true, practick piety" attempted some lofty strain, we may think with sincere affection. And first among these he sets, (and so must we), his brother Welshman, George Herbert. There were knees in that company which

"Stood for the king,
Bidding the crop-headed parliament swing;"

and yet never bent before Baal.

In his preface, dated at "Newton-by-Usk, near Sketh-Rock, Septem. 30, 1654," our Silurist has expressed so fully his own design, as a poet, that it merits our large quotation. He says, "The true remedy [against vicious and impure writing] lies wholly in their bosoms who are the gifted persons, by a wise exchange of vain and vitious subjects, for divine themes and celestial praise. The performance is easie, and were it the most difficult in the world, the reward is so glorious that it infinitely transcends it; for 'they that turn many to righteousness shall shine like the stars forever and ever:' whence follows this undenyable inference, that, the corrupting of many being a contrary work, the recompense must be so too; and then I know nothing reserved for them but 'the blackness of darkness forever;' from which, O God, deliver all penitent and reformed spirits!"

In this high and thoroughly devout intent we find him always humbly and fervently consistent. And in view of his performance of this loving duty of "communicating his poor talent to the Church, under the protection and conduct of her glorious Head" he may be allowed—even at this late day—to have gained his prayer, "that I may flourish not with leafe onely, but with some fruit also."

As yet, to the most of those who read these pages, Henry Vaughan, "the Silurist," still stands as the shadow of a name. Let him then be called before us, in the lineaments and habit of his life. For, as Stopford Brooke says with a sad truthfulness, "The devotional element in our English poetry which belonged to Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, and some of the Puritan poets, died away in the critical school, which began with Dryden and ended with Pope." Mr. Campbell and his "little couplets" are fine examples, by the way, of that laborious carefulness of expression, through which rapid and original thought can scarcely break its path. That must be a remarkable idea, indeed, which can escape this flattening and smothering process. Like the priest of Isis, in Bulwer's "Last Days of Pompeii," it generally perishes, axe in hand, before its dead wall. The present essayist is therefore entirely against Campbell, and entirely in favor of Stopford Brooke's opinion. And this last critic might even have added, that the pure feeling and honest morality of these rugged men ran, like a fair stream, into the foul swamp of the rhymed drama. When one remembers the moral miasma of Dryden and the sickly sentiment of Pope, he could, indeed, wish that the marsh had been drained before the exhalation of its false prosody poisoned, in his very cradle, poor Cowper, the next real poet of any piety. "French correctness," as Mr. Lyte has acutely observed, "was too much in the ascendant among us" when the standard collections of British poetry were made. Hence, Vaughan received no favor from any side. The times were out of joint, and if religion of the genuine kind was undesirable, a strong and individual verse was even more useless still.

In a singular fashion Keats and Vaughan experienced the same rebuffs. It would appear that whatever does not consult the "commonplace minds," and their present rules and precepts, has always met this fate. And that "Endymion," which did such marvellous work in moulding Tennyson—such work, indeed, that I am personally and credibly informed his copy of Keats was worn ragged, and underscored almost unreadably—that "Endymion" was sneered into insignificance by the shoemaker Gifford. Let such cobblers stick to their lasts forever! Their narrow, time-serving prejudice would deny place to any one with a soul above shoe-pegs! And therefore I am of a mind to place Keats on record, by the side of Vaughan, before I draw the full picture of the only successor of Herbert the devout and Herrick the quaint. "It is just," Keats writes in his preface to "Endymion," "that this youngster should die away: a sad thought for me, if I had not some hope that while it is dwindling I may be plotting and fitting myself for verses fit to live. This may be speaking too presumptuously, and may deserve a punishment: but no feeling man will be forward to inflict it: he will leave me alone, with the conviction that there is not a fiercer hell than the failure in a great object!" If Vaughan had a similar wish it was certainly granted. But such singing does not cease. Tom Hood himself knew it, when he wrote so finely of Wordsworth:

> "Look how the lark soars upward and is gone,
> Turning a spirit as he nears the sky!
> His voice is heard, but body there is none
> To fix the vague excursions of the eye.
> So, poets' songs are with us, tho' they die
> Obscured, and hid by death's oblivious shroud.
> And earth inherits the rich melody
> Like raining music from the morning cloud!

And so, apparently with the confidence of Southey that his name should not "perish in the dust," Henry Vaughan sang and passed away.

We are indebted to two gentlemen, themselves poets of no mean celebrity, for rescuing him from oblivion. Like John Skelton, who deserves rehabilitation on other grounds, Henry Vaughan has found an editor. The Rev. H. F. Lyte is known to us as the author of some of our sweetest hymns. Here, in Fields and Osgood's edition of Vaughan, he appears as the tender and even enthusiastic biographer. That edition was, however, prepared in 1847, and after that date but one voice, to my knowledge, has been raised for the poet's fame, if we except the kind commendation of Dr. John Brown in "Spare Hours" and the passing references of current literature. This voice has fortunately been that of a popular novelist—no less a person, indeed, than George MacDonald, in his "England's Antiphon." A "fit audience, though few," has quietly attended the singer ever since. And if there are those who have made a specialty of Cruikshank's etchings, and of George Borrow's weird journeyings, why should not Vaughan have his own little *coterie?* No wedding guest has ever been more irresistibly detained by any ancient mariner, than has been that poetry-loving and Christ-loving soul, which has chanced upon the verses of the Swan of Usk. Yet there is no loving and careful tribute which, to my knowledge, has found its way into the standard reviews or magazines. Men speak of Henry Vaughan as though it were a sin not to know him—as it is also with them, perchance, a matter of note, that they have eaten mushrooms and been familiar with olives and ortolans. Society will discover anew and rave about Shelley's "Lines to an Indian Air," and go into genteel ecstasies over the "spirit in the feet," which tread its measures, but Vaughan is still too high and clear for a frivolous or sensuous taste. He is a delicacy—no more. Henry Morley, in his presumably exhaustive collection of "Shorter English Poems," drops him out of sight as completely as Henri Taine does Tom Hood. There is not even a nod of recognition. Beeton and Rossetti—as one might suppose—furnish him with ample space, quoting not less than nine poems. "Chambers' Cyclopædia of English Literature"—generally fair to everybody—is, on the other hand, extremely unfair to Vaughan. He is "tinged with a gloomy sectarianism and marred by crabbed rhymes." Of the rest of the standard authorities on English poetry, some (like Taine) omit him altogether; some (like Allibone) fortify their own non-commitalism by quoting both sides; and some (like Rossetti, alas!) plainly know nothing about his nature and his history. Yet Campbell—his harshest critic—has stolen from the despised bard the motive and thought of his "Rainbow," and has even appropriated therein that fine phrase, "the world's gray fathers," applying it, in precisely the same manner as Vaughan, to those who first saw the symbol in the sky. Who would not strive to rescue such a poet from such a robber, when that poet can also claim acquaintance with "the old white prophets," and can say of God in His glory,

"And above all, Thy holy face
Makes an eternal charity?"

But now to biography: Henry Vaughan, called the "Silurist," because he was born among the Silures, a people of South Wales, first opened his eyes upon this fair world in Brecknockshire. In 1621 (or, as some incorrectly say, 1614,) he and his twin-brother, Thomas, came from heaven, by the way of the mansion of Newton-by-Usk. The murmuring river, the high peaks which lifted themselves within his sight, the picturesque scenery, and the pious and cultivated habits of the peasantry, all went to form his taste and his love for the beautiful. The Welsh are a remarkable people, as showing the true, gentle breeding and high love of müsic and poetry, produced through ages by the study of the Bible. Frances Power Cobbe has herself pointed the comparison between the condition of the Irish and the Welsh, and she can ascribe it to no other cause.

Thus the uplift to young Henry's soul came early, and ever afterward this one great thought, of God as the light of men, filled his waking and sleeping visions. At eleven years he and his brother—so Lyte says—were sent to be instructed by Rev. Matthew Herbert,—noticeable name! They then went together to that resort of Welshmen at Oxford, Jesus College. It is an open question whether in the excitement of the time—it was 1638–40—Henry was not actually imprisoned for his devotion to the royal cause. He may have been at Rowton Heath in 1645. In any case, it is faintly traditional that he admired the Cavalier poets enough to look in, once, at the Mermaid, and identify the spot where Ben Jonson—the "great Ben" of his avowed admiration—sat so often, like Falstaff, unbraced and brimming with wit. But as Jonson died in 1637, it is possible he may never have seen those rare assemblages, which were in their prime twenty years before. Yet he certainly spent social evenings at the Globe Tavern, and he was inducted, undoubtedly, into the Bohemian circles of the day. He probably knew Herrick and the later Jonsonians. But then came the death of his brother and that disjointing and unhinging of affairs, which brought him—now a physician—back again to his little native vale. In that quiet round of peaceful labor he was visited, in 1651, by a "severe and lingering sickness," though we cannot judge exactly of its nature. By this he seems to have been, at or about the age of thirty, fully determined upon his literary course. He had, and perhaps always kept, a certain ambition for a name upon the list of English poets. His native country was left at peace, while without it were wars and tumults. Hence he sang

"High and aloof,
Free from the wolf's sharp fang
And the dull ass's hoof,"—

a thing which poor Ben Jonson could never achieve.

It is not probable that Vaughan was ever pressed by poverty. His family were well-born; they came of frugal and long-established ancestry, and his patrimony seems to have sufficed him. Besides this, he practiced medicine—not, however, without pangs of body from sickness, and pangs of mind from loss of friends and relatives in the civil war. But that "tasteless and godless generation" (as Lyte severely calls them) suffered the verse and prose which he offered to them to fall dead. We have reason to believe that, for forty years after the publication of the second edition of the "Silex Scintillans," he gave up authorship entirely, and like Shenstone, paced up and down his graveled garden-walk. These poems, then, are true Sybilline leaves—the rest are destroyed in the slow fires of time. These have been saved by type-metal and printers' ink—as Shelley's were, which he published at his own loss. If there are manuscripts left us still; if the Robert Vaughan of "Hours with the Mystics," be of that family, as from his title-page quotation he should be; if there are those of the poet's family, ait; there have been in the case of Keats and Burns, who have preserved memorials of their ancestor—it may be well to start the inquiry at once. We have no portrait of him, and no poems beyond 1678, at which time certain unauthorized friends published a volume of his pieces entitled "Thalia Rediviva." But in the ark of a God-fearing family, settled in the land for perpetual generations, there must be surely many treasures, which even a shrinking modesty and reserve might be willing to produce.

Let us turn once more to the Silurist himself, as we see him in his verses. His merit consists in a fine originality, of which I take the following specimens literally at random, quoting them as they fall under my eye. He calls "Son-dayes,"

—"God's *walking houre;*
The cool o' the day."

They are

"Lamps that light
Man *through his heap of dark days;*"

or, again,

"The milky way *chalkt out with suns.*"

Let us group a nosegay of these fine expressions. Italics will spoil them.

"A silent teare can peirce thy throne
When lowd joyes want a wing."

"Some called it Jacob's Bed;
A virgin soile which no
Rude feet ere trod;
Where, since he slept there, only go
Prophets and friends of God."

"The unthrift sun shot vitall gold,
A thousand peeces."

"Some syllables are swords."

"Birds, beasts, each tree,
All that hath growth, or breath,
Have one large language, Death!"

"Sleepie planets set and slumber."

"Our foul clay hands."

"But man
Though he knows these and hath more of his own,
Sleeps at the ladder's foot."

"Music and mirth, if there be music here,
Take up and tune his year."

In the poem entitled "Man" we notice:

—"The noiseless date
And intercourse of times."

—"The flowres without clothes live,
Yet Solomon was never drest so fine."

—"He hath no root, nor to one place is ty'd,
But ever restless and irregular,
About this earth doth run and ride;
He knows he hath a home, but scarce knows where."

—"Man is the shuttle, to whose winding quest
And passage through these looms
God ordered motion, but ordained no rest."

And here are still two or three which must not be left unplucked:

"The truth and light of things."

(Which is finer than Matthew Arnold's famous "sweetness and light.")

"Dear, secret greenness! nurst below
Tempests and windes and winter nights."

But, enough. Let him who would know these poems better, read for himself. We can here suffer to pass by us those stanzas often quoted, like "They are all gone into that world of light," and which every one will easily discover. Of this class are "The Timber," "Early Rising and Prayer," and "The

Rainbow," which have adventitiously—one knows not why—usurped the places of finer poems, such as "Man," "Peace" (the true original of Mr. Thomas MacKellar's "My Soul, there is a Country"), "Silence and Stealth of Dayes," "Joy of My Life," "Resurrection and Immortality," (which anticipates Wordsworth), and that exquisitely tender and natural "I Walkt the Other Day." Dr. MacDonald's favorite is "Cock-Crowing," which is full of light and song. That of Mr. Lyte is "The Bird." But the riches are numerous in the little room, and pearls and jacinths are on every side.

No one can well refuse the title of poet, to a man who can contrive and write so smooth a stanza as this:

"He that doth seek and love
The things above,
Whose spirit, ever poor, is meek and low;
Who, simple still, and wise,
Still homeward flies,
Quick to advance, and to retreat most slow."

Nor can one fail to recognize the rays of heavenly illumination in almost every line—breaking through occasional harshnesses and occasional crudenesses—and always leaving upon the mind the trace of a pure radiance. Such expressions as the following will show how frequent is this use of light, as an image and figure of his thought:

"There is in God, some say,
A deep, but dazzling darkness."

"Intimate with heaven as light."

"Bright shootes of everlastingnesse."

"Rove in that mighty and eternall light."

"I saw eternity the other night,
As a great ring of pure and endless light."

"Brush me with Thy light!"

"The sun doth shake
Light from his locks."

"Father of lights, what sunnie seed,
What glance of day, hast Thou confined
Into this bird!"

"There's one more sun strung on my bead of days."

"Thine host of spyes,
The starres."

This last seems better than Tennyson's "cold fires."

As I have before noticed, these examples are literally chosen *ad aperturam libri.* I have found no other method of being fair than to take quotations at random, for Vaughan is an eminently quotable poet. No one can fail, however, in a careful and critical study of his verse, to observe his palpable imitation of both Herbert and Herrick. Yet he masters their methods with an ease and originality, which could make us wish that he had possessed more artful masters. Light is his peculiar trait. In thought and verse, light fills luminously his theology. He is a disciple of John the Divine, and it is one part of his resistance to Puritanism that he loved Patmos better than Carmel. He strongly resisted the dogma of infant damnation, and he held the true faith concerning that "undefiled High-Priest,"

"Whose glorious conquest nothing can resist
But even in babes doest triumph still and win."

On the burial of an infant he wrote:

"Sweetly didst thou expire: thy soul
Flew home unstained by his new kin."

It is an ungrateful task, after all this praise, to mark in the poetry of Henry Vaughan those blemishes which assail eye and ear. But, on the other hand, in spite of strange and unnecessary anti-climaxes (notably in "They are All Gone,") and in spite of faulty rhymes (such as "slaughter" and "laughter," "people" and "sickle,") and in spite of prosaic or trivial expressions (like

"Night *adjourns*,
Stars *shut up shop*, mists *pack away*")

he is so ruggedly and tenderly original, that we forgive him more than this.

These swan-songs of the Usk will so well repay the attention of every true lover of devotional poetry, that I merely quote in full one single example of both merits and defects. It is "The Retreate"—a conception vividly suggesting the "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality":

"Happy those early days, when I
Shin'd in my angell-infancy!
Before I understood this place
Appointed for my second race,

Or taught my soul to fancy aught
But a white, celestiall thought;
When yet I had not walkt above
A mile or two from my first love,
And looking back, at that short space,
Could see a glimpse of his bright face;
When on some gilded cloud or flowre
My gazing soul would dwell an houre,
And in these weaker glories spy
Some shadows of eternity;
Before I taught my tongue to wound
My conscience with a sinfull sound,
Or had the black art to dispence
A sev'rall sin to ev'ry sence,
But felt through all this fleshy dresse
Bright shootes of everlastingnesse.

"Oh, how I long to travell back
And tread again that ancient track!
That I might once more reach that plaine,
Where first I left my glorious traine;
From whence th' inlightened spirit sees
That shady city of palme-trees.
But ah! my soul with too much stay
Is drunk, and staggers in the way!
Some men a forward motion love,
But I, by backward steps would move;
And when this dust falls to the urn
[I] In that state I came return."

This is that Henry Vaughan who died, in the peace of the Gospel, April 23, 1695, aged seventy-three years. He was an affectionate husband and father, by all inference and indication. He was twice married, but we only know that there were two sons and three daughters by the first marriage, and one daughter by the second. No names are left; but the youngest daughter married John Turberville, and "her grand-daughter died single in 1780, aged ninety-two." Otherwise the family of Henry Vaughan has been as modest and retiring as himself. Of his poetry he could say:

"When Thou hast made
Thy begger glad,
And fill'd his bosome,
Let him, though poor,
Strow at Thy door
That one poor blossome."

For he could also say:

"Yet I have one pearle, by whose light
All things I see;
And in the heart of earth and night
Find heaven and Thee."

On his tomb, as though he were indeed the pioneer of other poets, journeying palmerwise, humbly and prayerfully to lead them and their singing upward through night to light, was cut this motto:

SERVUS INUTILIS,
PECCATOR MAXIMUS,
HIC JACEO.
GLORIA! ✠ MISERERE!

It might have been set over the bosom of some patient knight, who had fought his last fight with his face toward Jerusalem, and whose *gloria* and *miserere* were the chariot of fire, and the dropping mantle, of a prophetic rapture. He rests sweetly in that land of his own vision

"Where growes the flowre of peace,
The rose that cannot wither,"

and where he now is

"More and more in love with day."

SAMUEL W. DUFFIELD.