

A CAMPAIGNER'S BEVERAGE.

INTERPRETERS of all schools of critical or theological opinion are substantially agreed as to the origin and the meaning of the 110th Psalm. That it is a work of the age of David, and that it describes the Divine protection, the Divine assurance of victory vouchsafed to a theocratic king like David, may be assumed as certain. Whether the theocratic king is actually king David, as contemplated by a devout and loyal fellow-soldier, or whether the tradition is right, that David himself is the author, contemplating the conquests of a king who should realize the theocratic ideal better than he had done, is no doubt an interesting question—from one point of view,¹ an important one. But the interpretation of the successive verses of the Psalm, the significance of each detail in its imagery, will be the same either way. The king is described as a conqueror of the same type as David; the manner of his conquests is conceived in terms of the experience afforded by David's.

This applies especially to the last three verses, where the imagery of a military conquest is worked out in most detail. The king who, at the beginning of the Psalm, was invited to share the Divine throne, has now risen from it and gone forth to battle. But the Lord, who was with him in his rest, is with him in his struggles too. The Divine and the human warrior go forth—not *riding* together like Athene and Diomedes, for David appears never to have used a chariot in battle²—but marching side by side and shield

¹ Namely, because of the endorsement of the tradition by the Son of David (Matt. xxii. 43, etc.). The *general* Messianic application of the Psalm would not be affected, if we supposed it rather a prophecy of a type of Christ's kingdom than a prophecy of His kingdom directly. All Christians are content to understand Ps. lxxii. in the former sense.

² In the last campaign in which he took part personally, he "waxed faint," and was then in danger from a sword-stroke. Now even a giant would naturally use a spear to reach a man in a chariot (2 Sam. xxi. 15-17). Of course Doré's picture of the three heroes on horseback is recklessly unhistorical.

by shield. And the Lord, who gave the king the post of honour before, gives him the post of safety now; He stands Himself at his right hand, covering his unshielded side. With such an ally, the overthrow of the king's enemies is assured; at once the kings of the hostile confederacy are slaughtered, and their armies routed. But flight shall not save even the remnant of them; their conqueror¹ is as unwearied in the pursuit as irresistible in the combat. The pursuit is conceived as taking place through a difficult country—perhaps like the scene of David's early wanderings in "the south of Judah;" perhaps more like those of his later campaigns against Edom, Moab, and Ammon—where the fugitives hope to shake off their pursuers by leading them down and up the steep sides of rocky ravines. But the pursuer is not to be shaken off. He may come to the torrent side, like another Israelite hero, "faint yet pursuing," but in the midst of the fatigue he finds fresh supplies of strength. Without any halt he "drinks of the brook *in the way*"—doubtless like Gideon's chosen men, without so much as "bowing down on the knees to drink"—and then "lifts up the head," more ready than before for the next ascent.

Perhaps some apology is due for working out, in full anthropomorphic detail and in prosaic expansion, an image which is only briefly and indirectly suggested by the Psalmist. Of course, even if he realized the image more self-consciously than an impassioned poet usually does, no one can doubt that David and his contemporaries, whatever their precise degree of spiritual enlightenment, must have felt that such crude anthropomorphism could not be more

¹ There is nothing to indicate a change of subject after the fifth verse; yet the last two would be more naturally understood of the king than of his Divine guardian. Possibly, as the Psalmist went on, he felt less and less the distinction of attributes between them; even as St. John sees the "Son of Man" endowed with the features before seen in "the Ancient of Days" (Dan. vii.; Rev. i.).

than metaphorically applicable to their God. But the metaphor which the Psalmist hints at is, apparently, that which we have worked out in detail; and whatever limits may be required in adapting this image to the thing signified, we can take the image in its fullest and most literal sense, as a description of the course of war in David's age, by a man who knew well what war was.

And in one point even a man of peace can share this warrior's experience. The fatigues and the refreshments of marching through mountain country are much the same, whether the march be in pursuit of a flying enemy or only in pursuit of health and beauty. The discouraging labour of crossing a ravine or chine—still more if crossing one after another—is the same; the refreshment derived in doing so from "the brook in the way," is the same too. And experience in either case shows that "the brook in the way" is the safest source of refreshment to look to. "The pure element," says Murray's *Swiss Handbook*, "is never harmful; but wine or brandy takes away the power of the legs." Prophets and Psalmists were not afraid to liken the Lord their God to "a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine," when that image was really suitable; but this Psalmist knew what he was telling of when here he represents the mighty man as refreshed by the brook, not the wine-flush.

In fact, we see the fitness and truthfulness of this image in the few historical descriptions that we have in any detail of David's marches, or of the supplies he required for them. In his pursuit of the captors of Ziklag, recorded in 1 Sam. xxx., we notice both the nature of the fatigues of the march and the absence of wine, even when it might have been useful; when, if not absent, it would certainly have been used. David and his men had marched without straggling from Ziklag to Aphek and back (1 Sam. xxix. 1; xxx. 1). The distance is unknown, but apparently the return took

three days. Then followed—after perhaps one night's delay—a forced march into the southern desert; and this tried the strength of the men, who doubtless were none the fitter for severe labour for having “wept till they had no more power to weep.” Again the distance traversed is unknown, and even the time spent is not stated; but we find that it was the “brook” or ravine of Besor that finally checked one-third of the force. From ver. 21, “where David halted in the ravine,” it appears that they went down to the bottom; but they were unable to face the climb on the opposite side. It was apparently David's forethought that brought them so far, to halt by the brook in the English sense; but they were past “lifting up the head” when they drank of it. This only was gained—that their comrades had no need to leave them any of their water supply.

For it is plain that they were carrying water with them, from the next incident of their march—the recovery of the sick and half-starved Egyptian slave who became their guide. Indeed, “they gave him bread to eat, and made him drink water,” might perhaps be a general, half-proverbial phrase, used for food and drink of any kind; but if so, when in the next verse we are told what the food was which was actually given, we should doubtless be told of the drink, if it had been other than water literally. “They gave him a piece of a cake of figs,” in which there is real nourishment, “and two clusters of raisins,” as a restorative: but he could not eat the dry fruit without drinking, so they gave him water; now wine, if they had had any, would have served the purpose both of the water and the raisins.

Seeing that David's men had started, perhaps only a week before, equipped for what might have been a long campaign (see 1 Sam. xvii. 16), it is not likely that the destruction of Ziklag had made them take less than their

ordinary rations with them. It is indeed likely enough that David's men—mostly adventurers "bitter of soul," and including not a few "men of Belial" (xxii. 2; xxx. 2)—were less to be trusted with wine than either an ordinary national army, or a disciplined force of professional soldiers, such as David gathered round him (apparently with these men as a nucleus) in the course of his reign. But even when he had this disciplined army, though he was willing to have it supplied with wine in such quantities as might be useful, he knew that it was only useful in limited quantities and on special occasions. At the time of his flight from Absalom it was evidently an acceptable supply when Ziba brought "two hundred loaves of bread, and one hundred clusters of raisins, and one hundred of summer fruits (ripe figs?) and a vessel of wine."¹ These supplies, and whatever more of the same sort David had with him, have their uses clearly distinguished. "The bread and summer fruit (figs?) are for the young men to eat; and the wine, that *such as be faint in the wilderness* may drink": the raisins too, probably, would be mostly reserved for the latter purpose (2 Sam. xvi. 1, 2). And, when David's household and household troops had reached Mahanaim—when they had received abundant supplies, and probably reinforcements, from the still loyal chieftains beyond Jordan—among the provisions of all kinds enumerated (xvii. 27-9) there is no mention of wine. Yet the wine of Heshbon and Sibmah was famous over all Israel, and it is incredible that Ammon and Gilead can have been destitute of what Moab excelled in. Doubtless David on his part, and on the other part Shobi, Machir, and Barzillai—all, probably, men used to border warfare in their time, though

¹ We can hardly argue however, that Ziba's one skin (or other vessel of wine) was all that David had or wished for. From 2 Kings iv. 42, 43, we may gather that 200 loaves of bread were ridiculously insufficient to give one meal to 1,000 men; and David must have had more than twice that number. Ziba's two ass-loads might conveniently supply one or two hundred men for a day.

until now on opposite sides—knew that wine was not a necessary item in the commissariat of an army, though it might hold a valuable place among the medical stores.

This paper is not intended as a plea for temperance, but simply to bring together for mutual illustration the facts and the thoughts of David's age. Still, we cannot help noticing that the healthy instincts of primitive man, living a simple and natural life, or one morally above the natural level, exactly anticipated the conclusions to which modern physiology appears to be leading us, slowly and after much oscillation. Mohammed, and Jehonadab the son of Rechab before him, were very likely right in judging that nomads and savages are not to be trusted with wine at all; the experience of the aborigines of America and Polynesia tends to show that they were. David, however, had to do with a people less incapable of self-control; and among them he encouraged the use of wine on occasions of gladness, even of religious gladness (2 Sam. vi. 19). No doubt he, like other Israelite prophets and sages, held that "wine measurably drunk¹ and in season bringeth gladness of the heart, and cheerfulness of the mind"; he might clearly distinguish its functions in "making glad the heart of man" from that of the bread which "strengtheneth" it; but this did not forbid him to allow of its festive use, as well as of its bestowal on "him that is ready to perish, and those that

¹ It does not appear that the Scripture anywhere "defines moderation." Yet it is not so impossible to do so as some total abstainers say. It was done tolerably well 250 years ago by a Christian moralist—George Herbert. His "drink not the third glass" agrees (allowing for the different-sized glasses ordinarily used for beer, light wine, or strong wine) with what is now called "the physiological quantity" of alcohol. But neither David nor George Herbert contemplated the use of ardent spirits; and no doubt the introduction of these, as it has totally altered the physiological aspect of the question, so has introduced new considerations as to its moral aspect. Total abstainers are within their right when, on this ground, they refuse to be absolutely bound by Scriptural precedent. For that very reason, they are less excusable when they falsify by special pleading the evidence of Scripture. It is really as certain that the wine drunk by David, and the Son of David, was fermented, as that it was not distilled into brandy nor "fortified" with brandy.

be of heavy heart" (Ecclus. xxxi. 28; Ps. civ. 15; Deut. xiv. 26; Prov. xxxi. 6). But David knew that wine is not a good beverage to work on, however useful it may be as a restorative after overwork; even as a restorative, he knew that there are good substitutes for it, and for other purposes he treated it as at best a harmless luxury. The only occasion when we can *prove* that he personally used wine is in the shameful story of Uriah's drunkenness; still it is unlikely that in this the king risked notice by a conspicuous departure from his ordinary habits, and we may suppose that he often—perhaps habitually—drank wine with his evening meal in time of peace. But we know that, in his warrior youth, his best-loved luxury was "the water of the well of Beth-lehem that is by the gate" (2 Sam. xxiii. 15).

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RECENT ENGLISH LITERATURE ON THE OLD TESTAMENT.

It is a pleasure to note the appearance of the Third Edition of Dr. Cheyne's *Isaiah*.¹ The work remains substantially the same as in the previous editions, though almost every page bears evidence of careful revision, and shows that the author is constantly on the watch for every fresh fragment of knowledge which may serve to throw new light upon the prophecies. One of the essays at the end of vol. ii.—that on "The Royal Messiah in Genesis"—has been omitted, and a new one on "The Suffering Messiah" takes its place. Dr. Cheyne's work is happily too well and widely known already to need fresh recommendation to Biblical students. Even those who—from widely different standpoints—may regard his critical reserve and absence of dogmatism with suspicion, cannot

¹ *The Prophecies of Isaiah*. A New Translation, with Commentary and Appendices. By the Rev. T. K. Cheyne, M.A., Honorary D.D., Edinburgh; Rector of Tendring, Essex, and late Fellow and Lecturer of Balliol College, Oxford. Third edition, revised. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1884.)