

## BREVIA.

**Sisera and Jael.**—A writer in the October number of THE EXPOSITOR quotes with approval a suggestion of Captain Conder, that Jael's murder of Sisera was in revenge for the insult to her involved in his entrance into her tent. Dr. Stuart suggests that Sisera, "by repairing to her tent, . . . has forfeited his life," and has offered to her a "heinous affront."

But it is worthy of note, that of any affront offered by Sisera to Jael there is no hint whatever either in the Song of Deborah or in the narrative of the book of Judges. Yet, had such affront been a motive of Jael's action, so important an element could not have been in both places passed over in silence.

Moreover, the fugitive entered Jael's tent by her respectful and repeated invitation, *Turn in, my lord, turn in*. Surely acceptance of such an invitation, especially when it offered a way of escape from imminent death, could not be looked upon as an insult. Indeed Jael's words, *Fear not*, suggest that Sisera hesitated to accept her invitation.

Again, it is by no means certain that Sisera intended to enter Jael's tent. Her language suggests rather that he did not. The English words *turn in* are much less definite than their Hebrew counterpart, which almost always, or always, denotes a turning away from a path one is, or ought to be, pursuing. For example, we have it in Judges xiv. 8, in reference to Samson, who "*turned aside* to see the carcass of the lion." So in 1 Samuel vi. 12, of the cattle drawing the ark, who "*turned not aside* to the right hand or to the left." It is often used metaphorically, as in 1 Samuel xii. 20, "*Turn not aside* from following the Lord." The use of such a word suggests that Sisera was merely passing by the tent.

Dr. Stuart speaks of Sisera as running towards the tent of Jael instead of towards that of her husband. But it is doubtful whether they had separate tents. The tent is called that of Jael because she was there, whereas apparently Heber was away. Had he been near, Jael would certainly have told him of her deed, and he would have joined her exultation when showing the corpse to Barak. (This last seems to have invaded no sanctuary by going into the same tent to see his enemy's corpse.) It is most unlikely that a man flying for his life would notice whether the tent was that of a woman or of a man. And we must remember

that Jael was inside the tent, and therefore probably out of sight : for she came out to meet Sisera.

I notice with regret the theological bias which, lying on the surface of his paper, hides from the writer the extreme unlikeness of his explanation. This is revealed in the "sense of relief and gratitude" with which he welcomes Captain Conder's suggestion. A real explanation of Deborah's commendation of Jael's treachery would be indeed welcome to many. But we must carefully sift all relief offered, and ruthlessly reject whatever fails under our scrutiny. Many Bible difficulties test most severely our loyalty to strict scientific methods. But, in time, truth will vindicate itself. And to wait for that vindication is the only course worthy of the servants of Him who said, "I am the Truth."

JOSEPH AGAR BEET.

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NOTE ON PERSONAL "REMINISCENCES OF EDWARD IRVING" BY THE  
WRITER OF THEM.

IN the September EXPOSITOR (p. 220) an expression occurs regarding Mr. A. J. Scott's religious beliefs which I regret having used. It expressed indeed what information from more than one quarter seemed to put beyond doubt. But even if so, it had better have been unsaid of one of rare ability and undoubted sincerity in everything. From information since received I have been led to understand that those who are themselves very true Christians, and knew Mr. Scott well in his later days, regarded him in an entirely different light from what is there expressed. To me this is a far more pleasant recollection of Mr. Scott than that which my information had unhappily left; and as I gladly embrace it, I could wish the expression deleted.

DAVID BROWN.

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