

should have perished in a war carried on by Israel against the Midianites in Moab has nothing improbable in it when we remember that the third king of Edom 'smote Midian in the field of Moab' (Gn 36³⁶), and that the sword of a successful leader of *condottieri* would naturally be at the service of his neighbours if they could pay him for it. At the time of the Exodus, the Midianites were already occupying a part of Moab (see Nu 22⁴⁻⁷).

Dr. Neubauer once suggested (I think in the *Academy*) that Dinhabah is a Semitized form of Dunip, the famous fortress-city of northern Syria, near Aleppo, and that it was so named by Balaam after the better-known city of the north. If this suggestion has any truth in it, it would be additional evidence in favour of the Hittite origin of the first Edomite king.

That Edom suddenly became formidable during the period which elapsed between the Exodus and the Israelitish invasion of Canaan, has already been inferred by Egyptologists. For the first and last time in Egyptian history Ramses III. made a campaign against 'the people of Seir,' and 'plundered their tents.' This was after the repulse of the Philistines and other invaders of Egypt from the Greek seas, and the capture of Hittite and Amorite princes who had penetrated into Canaan and even to the Egyptian frontier. One of them may very easily have found his way as far as the mountains of Seir. How a Hittite chieftain came

to be also a diviner still remains to be explained. Perhaps a key to the problem may be discovered in the words of Balaam (Nu 23⁷), that he had been brought 'from Aram, out of the mountains of the East.' The East was the home of magic and wisdom, and the highest praise accorded to Solomon was that his 'wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the east country (literally the children of the East) and all the wisdom of Egypt' (1 K 4³⁰).

Inter Alia.

Professor Schiaparelli has discovered the tomb of Nefert-ari, the favourite wife of Ramses II., in the Valley of the Tombs of the Queens, at Thebes. Though the mummy of the queen has disappeared, the tomb itself is in a good state of preservation, and the inscriptions on the walls are numerous and legible.

At Karnak M. Legrain has found a pit filled with statues of all ages, from one of the Sixth dynasty down to others of the Græco-Roman period. It is supposed that they were thrown into the pit when the pagan temples were closed by Theodosius. One of the statues is a portrait of Usertes III. of the Twelfth dynasty, and represents him with features which are Hyksos rather than Egyptian. It would seem, therefore, that a strain of Asiatic blood must have entered the royal house of Egypt long before the days of the Hyksos invasion.

Point and Illustration.

So wonderful, so supernatural, is the story of Madagascar, that it is difficult to believe it is true. It is more wonderful than the story of Japan. There is less of man and more of God in it. The whole range of Christian experience has been accomplished there. Its history is a miniature of the history of Christianity. As Mr. Matthews says,¹ there is no count in that terrible first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans that was not true of the conduct of the native Malagasy. Every item of St. Paul's catalogue of sufferings was repeated in the case of the missionaries. And the light and liberty that came at last came in all the flood of the convulsions of apostolic days.

¹ *Thirty Years in Madagascar*. By the Rev. T. T. Matthews. R.T.S., 1904. Price 6s.

Mr. Matthews has produced a great book. It is quite in touch with its great theme. He has spent thirty years in the island, and knows it well. Yet he has spared no pains to make his book attractive to the uninterested. The style is easy, the illustrations are many, lifelike, and appropriate. To read the book is to be at home in a strange land. Here is one of its scenes—

The Sheep's Rump.—I was six years in Madagascar before I had to perform the marriage ceremony for any of our people. We found the vast majority of the church members and adherents married, and those of the latter who were not could not be persuaded to follow the Christian mode of marriage. They said our agreement was too hard, it was till death. We might take our wives till death, because they were wise and good; but as their women were foolish and bad, they could not consent to take them until

death. Their view of marriage was that of their own proverb, which says that marriage is like marketing—if the parties don't agree, they just separate.

At last one of my deacons, who was a widower, wished to marry again, and he asked me to perform the marriage ceremony. We had the marriage in the station church one Sabbath morning at the close of the service. The deacon and his bride stood up in front of the rail, and I began reading the marriage service. At one part of it I had to ask the usual question—*Efa lāsa va ny vōdidndry? i.e.* Has the sheep's rump gone?

In former times quarrels seem to have been made up, and serious agreements concluded, over the carcass of a slain animal, after which a feast followed (Gn 31⁴¹⁻⁵⁵). Perhaps the marriage agreement was made or concluded over the carcass of a sheep, after which the hinder-quarters may have been handed over to the father and mother of the bride, or her guardians, and the reception by them of *ny vōdidndry* in the presence of witnesses made the marriage legal. It afterwards came about that a small piece of money took the place of the hinder quarters of the sheep; but that still retained the name of *ny vōdidndry*; 'the sheep's rump,' and the reception of that by the father and mother of the bride, or by her guardians, constituted the marriage legal. Not that there was much in the legality; for a man might divorce his wife at any time by simply saying to her, 'Thanks, go!' She could not divorce him, but he could divorce her at any time. We had to ask, therefore, while reading the marriage service, if the legal transaction had taken place, because, if not, we could not go on with the service till it had.

My wife had never read the Malagasy marriage service, I don't think she even knew about the *vōdidndry*; certainly she did not know that we had to ask in the marriage service if that had gone or been received; and hence, when I called out in the middle of the service, '*Has the sheep's rump gone?*' the look of surprise and horror which came over her face was a thing to be remembered. I suspect she feared I had taken leave of my senses.

It would be wise if the great Missionary Societies continued to tell the story of the Boxer riots till the whole world knew it. For there is one word which every page keeps spelling, 'Jesus lives.' Not for any dead Christ, not for any absentee God, would those men and women have gone cheerfully to the death. They counted the loss of all things but dung because they had Christ. The new book¹ is most handsome. Its portraits will go down to posterity in school-books. 'These are the men and women,' Christian China will say in the day of its redemption, 'who died for us, through the love of Christ which constrained them.' And it is not those who died only, though it is a great multitude, who will be remembered.

¹ *The China Martyrs of 1900.* Compiled and edited by R. C. Forsyth. R.T.S., 1904. Price 7s. 6d.

There were some who suffered. Here is a bit out of Mrs. Ogren's narrative—

In Deaths oft.—God only knows the horror and misery of those hours. We had been hoping there would be a turn for the better, but matters only got worse. Here lay my poor delirious husband, who had so lately been strong and cheerful; there our baby, the picture of health and admiration of all when we left home, now a mere living skeleton, lay with his little head rolling down limply on his shoulder, and I—well for me I could not see my own face, and surely there would be little comfort in the sight. My bitter cup of suffering was now full almost to running over. After that awful night my husband seemed to get a little better. I rejoiced to be able to loose his bonds, and in a few days we could join in prayer, and take sweet counsel together from my precious treasure, the Bible; my eyes began to grow better, and the baby too kept improving. How we prayed—I alone, or when my husband's mind was clear enough, both together—that God would end our sufferings and bring us once more among our friends. Now we longed for peace as earnestly as when hidden in the caves of Shensi we longed for the roar of foreign guns.

I was now buying only one bowl of milk per day, and used the other fifty cash to buy meat for my husband's dinner. The jailer scolded me for spending my money on meat. The official also cautioned me several times against wasting money. I longed for some other nutritious food for my husband in his weakness. Once he looked so longingly at baby's milk, and asked to taste it. But though I wished to give him milk, we could afford only one bowl a day to keep Samuel alive. If I had suspected how near his end my husband was, I would have gone at the risk of my life to the official and begged him to help me get more suitable food, and, if possible, save the poor flickering life. As it was, I began giving part of our rice for a little more milk to give my husband. This meant robbing myself of needed food. Still another blow came upon us, when the official, hearing the use I was making of the rice, stopped giving it, and we had only the one hundred cash per day to feed three of us. A few days later our milkman disappeared, as the official had told him not to come. The prison den became intolerable to me. Harder than all the weariness and starvation for me to bear were the filth and vermin. Only those who have been through it know the torture of these swarms of creeping, biting vermin. And the sight of them, added to the tortures of my helpless, suffering dear ones, was horrible to me. The sight of them in such a condition, and I with no chance to care for them in a clean, cheerful place, brought scalding tears to my eyes. But I sought and found comfort from God in prayer. What rest of soul, when for a few moments I could close my eyes to the miseries which surrounded me, and look up to the 'God of all comfort!'

From every stormy wind that blows,
From every swelling tide of woes,
There is a calm, a sure retreat—
'Tis found beneath the mercy-seat.

Mr. John Horne has read much and marked his books as he read. Now he has copied out the

paragraphs or sentences he had marked, given them headings, and got Messrs. Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier to publish the volume. He calls it *Starting Points* (crown 8vo, 2s. 6d. net). Here is a taste of it in three of its shortest quotations—

Superficial Impressions are Deepest.—‘The very word “superficial” is founded on a fundamental mistake about life, the idea that second thoughts are best. The superficial impression of the world is by far the deepest. What we really feel, naturally and casually, about the look of skies and trees and the face of friends—that, and that alone, will almost certainly remain our vital philosophy till our dying day.’—G. K. CHESTERTON.

First Beliefs are Abiding.—‘Whatever the theology about which a man argues and contends, it is the theology of his childhood upon which he acts.’—JOHN ACKWORTH.

Toleration, a Positive Principle.—‘Toleration is far more than the abandonment of civil usurpations over conscience; it means *reverence for all the possibilities of truth.*’—JOHN MORLEY.

Mr. Horne is utterly tolerant. If Mr. Zangwill advocates Judaism well, Mr. Zangwill shall be quoted. He wants to make us begin thinking, not to give us orthodox systems—

Judaism more Practical than Christianity.—Christianity has become impracticable. Now, the Jewish religion was never impossible, but always serene and useful, even in the details of life. The Jew never accepted the doctrine of self-abnegation; he never regarded life as a sacrifice. Browning’s philosophy in this respect approaches most nearly to the Jewish religion. Christianity is a very beautiful thing for special saintly souls, but it will never touch the masses. Christians have one religion which they preach, and another which they live.—ZANGWILL.

Dante and Browning, Browning and Dante; if it is not the one it is the other; not a month passes but some book appears upon them. There is always the risk that we read the books about them, and not Dante and Browning themselves. If we would use the books as buoys, for it does need some buoying up to learn to swim in Dante and in

Browning, and then when we can swim a little throw them away. Mr. Flew’s book¹ would serve the purpose of the lifebuoy well. It is all about Browning, none of it about Mr. Flew, and it does give confidence and some knowledge. The chapters are headed, ‘Concerning the Soul,’ ‘Concerning Faith,’ ‘Concerning Life,’ and so on. Out of the whole of the works the relevant passages are gathered, and strung upon a narrative of simple explanation.

In the chapter on the soul Mr. Flew touches on Browning’s view of the body—

Browning on the Body.—When Archbishop Whately was dying, his chaplain read to him the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and then quoted the words from the Epistle to the Philippians (iii. 20-1): ‘We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change *our vile body,*’ etc. The dying man was pained, and asked for ‘the right thing’ to be read to him. The chaplain then repeated it again, with the rendering with which we are now familiar in the Revised Version: ‘Who shall fashion anew *the body of our humiliation.*’ ‘That is right,’ said the Archbishop, ‘there is nothing vile which God has made.’

Such, I think, was Robert Browning’s view of the material body. Under some conditions he does not hesitate to give it precedence over the soul. Thus—

‘Not bread alone,’ but bread before all else
For these: the bodily want serve first, said I;
If earth-space and the life-time help not here,
Where is the good of body having been?
But, helping body, if we somewhat baulk
The soul of finer fare, such foods to find
Elsewhere and afterward.

Nor does he scruple to say in *Rabbi Ben Ezra*—

Let us not always say
‘Spite of this flesh to-day
I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!’
As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry ‘All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than
Flesh helps soul!’

¹ *Studies in Browning.* By Josiah Flew. Kelly. Crown 8vo, pp. 240, 2s. 6d. net.