

A Paraphrase of the Song of Deborah.

BY PROF. THOMAS H. RICH.

That the strong in Israel laid bare their strength ;
 That the people came to battle willingly ;
 Praise ye the Lord !

Hear, O ye kings of earth ! ye princes, lend your ear !
 I, of the Lord, I fain would sing ; would touch the harp,
 In honor of the Lord, the God of Israel !

Lord, when Thou wentst our from Seir ;
 When Thou didst march from Edom's field ;
 Earth quaked ; yea, heaven dissolved ;
 Yea, clouds dissolved in rain !
 Mountains shook at presence of the Lord ;—
 Sinai there, at presence of the Lord,
 The God of Israel !

In days of Shamgar, Anath's son ;
 In days of Jael, idle lay the ways ;
 And such as follow trodden paths,
 Went ways circuitous.
 Idle lay the villages in Israel—idle,
 Until I, Deborah, arose—arose,
 And like a mother wrought for Israel.

He chose new gods ;
 Then war was at his gates ;
 Nor shield appeared, nor lance,
 'Mong Israel's forty thousand men.

My heart goes out to the leaders of Israel ;
 To the people that came to battle willingly ;
 Praise ye the Lord !

Ye, who on white asses ride ;
 Ye, who on rich carpets sit ;
 And ye, who tread the way, in toil for bread ;
 Muse on the victory !

For voice of archers at the water troughs—
 There be rehearsed the righteous acts the Lord hath done ;
 His righteous acts done for his villages in Israel.

Then from their refuges on high,
 The people of the Lord came to their gates again,
 No foe to fear !

Awake, Deborah, awake !
 Awake, awake, the triumph sing !
 Up, Barak, Abinoam's son,
 And lead thy captives to captivity !

Then, a remnant of the nation's noblemen,
 Down to the battle came ;
 The Lord among those heroes—joy to me—
 Came down to Jezreel !
 From Ephraim—they rooted in Mount Amalek.
 Next thee Benjamin, joined with thy hosts.
 From Machir, leaders with their trains came down ;
 And out of Zebulon they onward march,
 With captain's staff.
 And princes of Issachar with Deborah league ;
 And Issachar like Barak brave,
 Down to the vale his feet impel.

By streams of Reuben, were determinations great.
 Why tarrying still amid the fold ?
 Is bleat of flock so sweet to hear ?
 At streams of Reuben, were deliberations great ;
 But none the battle sought !

Gilead beyond Jordan rests ;
 And Dan—why sojourns he in ships ?
 Asher by the seashore abides,
 And at his havens resteth quietly.

Zebulon is a people that accounts it nought to die !
 And Naphtali, of mountain home !

Kings came ; they fought.
 Then kings of Canaan fought ;
 At Tanaach, by waters of Megiddo—
 Spoil of silver failed to take !
 The Heavens against them fought ;

The stars their courses left to fight with Sisera.
 Kishon's brook swept them away—
 Brook of ancient days—Kishon's brook.
 My soul contemns their strength !

Then hoofs of horses smote the ground ;
 For on and on their warriors dashed—
 A troubled multitude !

Curse ye Meroz, saith the Angel of the Lord ;
 Curse, curse ye her inhabitants,
 Coming not to help the Lord—
 To help the Lord amid the heroes of the land.

Jael, Kenite Heber's wife—
 Let her, beyond women blessed be !
 Beyond women, who in tents abide,
 Let her blessed be !
 Water he asked, she gave him milk ;
 In costly bowl she offered cream.
 But deep his sleep, within her tent,
 Her hand out to the nail she stretched,
 And her right hand to hammer used in toil ;
 And hammered Sisera ; she brake his head ;
 And crushed, and pierced his temples through.
 At her feet he sank, he fell, he lay ;
 At her feet he sank, he fell ;
 Where he sank, there he fell—a *worthless* thing.

Through the window there looks forth, and cries aloud—
 Through the lattice—the mother of Sisera :
 Why does his chariot delay to come !
 Why step his steeds so slow !

The wisest of her princesses reply—
 But her own word she still repeats unto herself—
 "Surely they booty find and share ;
 A maiden, two maidens, for each man ;
 Booty of garments bright for Sisera ;
 Booty of garments bright, with needle wrought ;
 A garment bright, on both sides wrought—
 Booty for me to wear !

So perish *all* who hate Thee, Lord !
 But them who love Him—
 Let them like the sun go forth,
 In strength of victory !