

PAPERS.

The Literary Form of the Biblical History of the Judges.¹

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FROM the point where David first appears, in the account of Samuel's anointing him for king, 1 Sam. xvi., the books of Samuel might fairly be entitled *The Personal and Public History of King David*. The previous chapters of Samuel, with the books of Ruth and of Judges, would bear well the descriptive title: *The History of Israel from the Death of Joshua to the Anointing of David*. The reign of Saul is transitional. In the history as it is written, this reign hardly comes to the front at all. It is rather an affair which attended the close of the period of the Judges, and the opening years of David's career, than an independent historical fact. The history of the Judges, as recorded in the Bible, extends up to the time of the anointing of David.

It is not intended by this that the written history itself shows any formal division at this line. That is not the case. The history, as a literary production, passes continuously from the times of the Judges to those of David. But the division of its contents sufficiently justifies the limitation proposed for the present paper. Our inquiry is concerning the literary form of the account of the times from the death of Joshua to the anointing of David, as found in the present books of Judges, Ruth, and Samuel.

I. First, what are the parts of which it is composed?

The book of Ruth, in its present literary form, is evidently a complete historical story by itself. Some of the marks of this character are the following :

1. It stands by itself chronologically. It is not a continuation of anything which precedes it, and is not continued in anything which

¹ Read in June, 1884.

follows it. This is equally true whether we think of it in the place which it occupies in our English Bibles, between Judges and Samuel, or in the different places among the Hagiographa assigned to it in the various catalogues, or in the Hebrew Bibles.

2. It comes to a complete close. Any one may see that, having summed up the genealogy of David, in the fourth chapter, the story is at an end.

3. It begins with a certain formula, appropriate for beginning historical stories, — a formula which briefly introduces to us the personages of the story, with their family relations to one another, and their surroundings. This formula, given in full, would include the following seven particulars :

During a certain period in history,
there was a certain man,
of certain lineage,
from a certain locality,
bearing a certain name,
having certain relatives, or connections,
who bore certain names.

This formula appears in the opening of the book of Ruth, in the following words: "And it was in the days when the Judges ruled, and there was a famine in the land. And there went a man from Bethlehem Judah, to sojourn in the fields of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons; the name of the man being Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites from Bethlehem Judah." In this case, instead of saying formally that there was such a man, the interests of variety and of brevity are subserved by placing in the introductory formula the statement that he went to sojourn in Moab.

4. The interest of the story centres rather in the private experiences of the persons mentioned in it than in public affairs; marriage-love and motherhood being prominent among the items which give it interest.

5. The story is a unit, having a single subject, with progress from beginning to end.

6. If it were dropped, it would not be missed. What precedes it joins with what follows, as well without it as with it; perhaps better. This is entirely consistent with the fact that it throws light on all the other historical documents pertaining to the times.

7. It begins with *Waw* consecutive of the imperfect, and not with

Thus far we have been traversing ground which has often been traversed, and arguing conclusions which no one would dispute. It was desirable to argue them, however, so as to see upon precisely what basis they rest, for the purpose of showing that certain other things rest on a basis precisely similar. That the account of Samson and his exploits, beginning with the thirteenth chapter of Judges, the second verse, and extending to the close of the sixteenth chapter, is another of these separate historical stories, is a fact which has not been so generally recognized as it ought to have been. The group of narratives concerning Samson are out of chronological order. They are followed by the account of the Danite expedition, which certainly took place before Samson's time, and are preceded by the sketches of Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon, all of whom flourished later than Samson.¹ The stories concerning Samson come

¹ This last assertion would not, at present, be generally accepted without proof, since it is quite common to regard Samson as the contemporary of Eli. As to the proof of it, the following points may be noted:

1. The proof is not necessary for the purposes of the present paper. If we waive the matter, we yet have, in the other points we consider, evidence enough for our purpose. We might fairly thus waive it, and, having made out our general proposition, infer the date of the events connected with Samson from that proposition.

2. A general consideration of the numerals in the book of Judges, and the chronology they exhibit, would be to the purpose, but cannot be given here.

3. Outside the accounts concerning Samson, three separate Philistine oppressions are mentioned in the book of Judges. The first was in the days of Deborah, Barak, and Jael. Shamgar was the deliverer from it. It is mentioned in Jud. iii. 31: "And after him," that is, after Ehud, "was Shamgar the son of Anath; and he smote the Philistines, six hundred men, with the ox-goad; and he also was one who saved Israel." It is again alluded to in the song of Deborah, Jud. v. 6-8:

"In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath,
In the days of Jael, roads ceased,
While travelers got to going in by-paths;
Government ceased in Israel, ceased,
Until that I Deborah arose,
That I arose, a mother in Israel.
They began to choose new Gods.
Then there was war at the gates!
If there was a shield seen or a spear,
Among forty thousand in Israel!"

This language pretty distinctly implies that the Philistine invasion of the days of Shamgar was contemporaneous with the invasion of Jabin and Sisera. This

to a complete close, at the end of the sixteenth chapter. They begin with the formal opening: "And there was a certain man, from Zorah, from the family of the Danite, his name being Manoah, and his wife being barren," &c. The name of his wife and the date are omitted. The remaining five points in the formula distinctly appear. The personal experiences of Manoah and his wife, her motherhood,

is perhaps confirmed by the fact that it affords a natural explanation of the absence of Judah from Deborah's roll-call of the tribes,—namely, that Judah was invaded by the Philistines, and had enough to do at home.

This same oppression, with the deliverance from it, is again mentioned, by way of reminiscence, in connection with the mention of the second Philistine oppression, in Jud. x. 11: "Did not (I save you) from Egypt and from the Amorite, from the sons of Ammon and from the Philistines? And the Sidonians and Amalek and Maon having crowded you, ye cried unto me and I saved you from their hand." The list includes the deliverance from *Egypt* under Moses, from the *Amorite* under Joshua, that under Ehud, from Eglon king of Moab, who had "gathered unto him the *sons of Ammon* and Amalek, and went and smote Israel" (Jud. iii. 13), that from the *Philistines* under Shamgar, that from the *Sidonians* under Deborah, and that from *Amalek* and *Maon* and Midian (see Jud. vi. 3, 33) under Gideon. That the deliverance from the Philistines is that under Shamgar is apparent from the other names mentioned in the list, and the order in which they are mentioned.

Not long after this first Philistine oppression, and the deliverance under Shamgar, the Philistines themselves, in common with Israel, suffered from the Midianite and Amalekite invasion, whose destructive operations extended "till thou come unto Gaza," Jud. vi. 4. The deliverance under Gideon was for Philistia, as well as for Israel. The forty years of Gideon were followed by the three years of Abimelech, the twenty-three of Tola, and the twenty-two of Jair. Then comes an account of a second Philistine oppression, Jud. x. 7: "And the anger of Jehovah was kindled with Israel, and he sold them into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the sons of Ammon." Then, without any details as to the Philistine oppression thus mentioned, there is given an account of the eighteen years of the Ammonite oppression, with the deliverance under Jephthah. Then follow, in close succession, the sketches of the administrations of Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon, covering thirty-one years in all, and then, in Jud. xiii. 1, an account of a third Philistine oppression: "And the sons of Israel again did the evil in the eyes of Jehovah, and Jehovah gave them into the hand of the Philistines forty years." A fourth oppression, more deplorable than all the preceding ones, is mentioned in 1 Sam. xiii., as having occurred in the days of Saul, after the first rupture between Saul and Samuel.

There is no room for doubt that this is what these writings say. That it presents a view of the matter essentially different from the view taken by many scholars, must be admitted. But for the present, following what the writings say, not raising the question whether they say what they mean, or whether what they say is true, it is evident that they mention these four distinct oppressions.

Evidently, it was during the third, if any, of these oppressions that the ark

the personal exploits of Samson, and his loves, are the topics here presented, almost to the exclusion of even the important public affairs in which he was concerned. These constitute the one theme of the group of stories, and though the unity is more complex than in the previous instances, it is not less real, and is marked by steady pro-

was captured and the other incidents related in the first chapters of I Samuel took place. From this oppression there was a signal deliverance, while Samuel was judge; so signal that the Philistines made no more attacks till after the close of the separate administration of Samuel, I Sam. vii. 13.

Now with which, if any, of these four oppressions, are we to connect the exploits of Samson? It is natural to connect them with one of the four, unless something in the evidence positively forbids. It is now fashionable to connect them with the third of the four, and therefore with the times of Eli. But if Samson was contemporary with Eli, Israel had then two chief magistrates, with their headquarters in the same vicinity. This is indeed not impossible, but it is very improbable. If Samson was contemporary with Eli, he effected no deliverance for Israel; for at the time of Eli's death, the people were still in servitude to the Philistines, and had long been so, I Sam. iv. 9. But the implication in the story of Samson is very decided to the effect that he accomplished a great deliverance for Israel. It was divinely promised concerning him, Jud. xiii. 5: "Because the boy shall be a Nazarite of God from the womb, he being the one who shall commence to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines." From Jud. xiv. 4 and onward, Samson's occasions and exploits against the Philistines are mentioned as part of the Lord's plan for accomplishing the promised deliverance. In Jud. xvi. 30, the expression, "And the dead whom he slew in his death were more than those whom he slew in his life," certainly does not convey the impression that the deliverance promised through him had proved a failure. We have hardly any details as to the condition of Israel during the twenty years when Samson was judge. But when Samson's exploits began, the Philistines asserted their dominion over Israel, in demanding his arrest. When they finally got possession of his person, near the close of his career, it was by fraud, and on an occasion when he had voluntarily placed himself within their territory. This looks as if they no longer had dominion over Israel. It seems, therefore, to be the meaning of the historian, that God accomplished through Samson the deliverance which he promised. But certainly no such deliverance occurred in the times of Eli. If there were positive proof that Eli and Samson were contemporaneous, there are possible explanations which might meet this difficulty; but they are forced and improbable, and there is no such proof. Moreover, the coloring of the accounts of the times of Samson is utterly different from that of the times of Eli. This is easily accounted for, if an interval of time had elapsed, but is otherwise more difficult to account for. In the times of Samson, as in the times of the Danite expedition, the curious numeral 1100 plays its part in the counting of silver. It was 1100 of silver that Micah's mother had lost, and 1100 of silver that each Philistine lord was to pay to Delilah, Jud. xvi. 5, xvii. 3. And in many other particulars, the times of Samson are more like the earlier times in the period of the Judges than the later.

gress from beginning to end. As in the other cases, if the story of Samson were removed to some other part of the Scriptures, its removal would leave no blank in the context where it now stands. And this story, like the others, begins with Waw consecutive of the imperfect.

Another story of the same sort is that of The Childhood and Training of Samuel, beginning with the book of 1 Samuel and extending to the middle of the first verse of the fourth chapter. This story begins with Waw consecutive of the imperfect. Its introductory formula is very complete, omitting nothing but the date: "And there was a certain man, from Ramathaim Zophim, from Mount Ephraim, his name being Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu the son of Tohu the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite; and he had two wives, the name of the one Hannah, and the name of the second Peninnah." The story deals with very important public affairs, but its interest chiefly centres within the households of Elkanah and Eli, and in the personal experiences of the boy Samuel and his mother. It is a progressive unity, though diverse materials are woven into it. If it were separated from its present context, it would leave the continuity unbroken. It comes to a worthy and unmistakable close in the words: "And Samuel became great, Jehovah being with him, and letting none of all his words fall to the earth; and all Israel knew, from Dan and even to Beersheba. For Samuel was confirmed for a prophet of Jehovah's; and Jehovah again appeared in Shiloh, for Jehovah was revealed unto Samuel in Shiloh in the word of Jehovah; and Samuel's word was to all Israel."¹

In its chronological relations, however, and in some peculiarities at

We avoid all these difficulties if we connect the exploits of Samson with the second of the four Philistine oppressions. And when we try the experiment of thus connecting them, we find that it gives us an order of events, and a succession of dates, so clear, simple, and every way probable, as to afford strong probability that this is the true adjustment.

If this view be correct, the story of the exploits of Samson is out of chronological connection at the beginning of it, as well as at its close.

¹ The chapter and verse divisions, as they now exist, obscure this passage extremely. There can be no doubt, I think, that the translation and the construction here given are the true ones. The words "Jehovah again appeared in Shiloh," are antithetical to the statement, iii. 1, "Now the word of Jehovah was precious in those days, there was no open vision." The idea is that there had once been a time when Jehovah was gloriously manifested in Shiloh. For a considerable period before Samuel, this manifestation had nearly ceased. As Samuel came into the exercise of his gifts, it was restored.

its close, this story is somewhat different from the others. Like them, it has nothing directly to do, chronologically, with what precedes it; but it is probably in immediate chronological connection with what follows. It is separated from what follows, however, by the construction. What immediately follows is part of the public history of the nation, and not a continuation of the narrative respecting Samuel. If, therefore, it were a portion of the same discourse, we should expect it to begin with the weak Waw and the subject; but it begins, instead, with Waw consecutive of the imperfect. In other words, instead of taking up this fresh topic as a new thread of discourse, with a: "Now Israel went forth to meet the Philistines," it introduces the topic as if it were either a simple continuation of the previous discourse (which it is not), or else a new discourse in the series (which it therefore is): "*And* Israel went forth."

The chronological connection, apparently, accounts for the fact that the points in the other history which are elucidated by this story are in the context immediately following it. By reading the story first, we better understand what the following account says of Eli, Hophni, Phinehas, and the like; although even without the explanations given in the story, we should easily grasp the following narrative. In this, the present story differs from the four stories previously mentioned, since the passages they elucidate are quite widely separated from the story, instead of being found in its immediate context.

This increases, however, instead of diminishing, the force of the point that the present story, like all the others, might be removed from its connection without destroying the unity of the context. At this juncture, the consideration becomes more cogent than it has hitherto been. We have found it to be true of each of the five stories in detail. As the five succeed each other with no intervals, it is also true of them all together. Try the experiment. Begin a few verses before the close of the twelfth chapter of Judges, read through the first verse of the thirteenth chapter, and then from the middle of the first verse of the fourth chapter of 1 Samuel, and you will find that there is no break, but that, on the contrary, the true order of the history, which had previously been concealed, is made clearly to appear. Beginning with the close of the somewhat full account of Jephthah's career, the narrative is as follows:

"And Jephthah judged Israel six years, and Jephthah the Gileadite died, and was buried in the cities of Gilead. And after him Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel. And he had thirty sons, and thirty daughters he sent abroad, and brought in thirty daughters for his sons from abroad, and he judged Israel seven years.

And Ibzan died and was buried in Bethlehem. And after him Elon the Zebulonite judged Israel, and judged Israel ten years. And Elon the Zebulonite died and was buried in Ajalon in the land of Zebulun. And after him Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite judged Israel. And he had forty sons and thirty grandsons, riding upon seventy asses, and he judged Israel eight years. And Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died, and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the mountain of the Amalekite. And the sons of Israel again did the evil in the eyes of Jehovah, and Jehovah gave them into the hand of the Philistines forty years. And Israel went forth to meet the Philistines for the battle, and encamped upon the Ebenezer, the Philistines being encamped in Aphek. And the Philistines drew out to meet Israel, and the battle was joined, and Israel was defeated before the Philistines," &c.

There is evidently here no break in the verbal continuity of the account. If the five stories were all removed, as the story of Ruth has been, to some other part of the Bible, they would leave the history of the times of the Judges, to all appearance, compact and unbroken. Indeed, it is not till we thus drop the five stories that the account assumes, for the first time, the semblance of a continuous narrative. When we drop them, it becomes evident that the succession of dates in the twelfth chapter of Judges brings the history up to the time of Eli; and that the forty years of the Philistine oppression mentioned in Jud. xiii. 1 are probably the forty years during which Eli judged Israel.

There is one more of these stories. The story of The Anointing of Saul, 1 Sam. ix. and x. 1-16, is indeed in its proper chronological place, and is so far on a different footing from the five. In its conclusion it is not so sharply separated as are the others from what follows. But it begins a new topic, not continuous with what precedes, and introduced, not by the weak Waw with the subject, which would introduce an episode, but by the Waw consecutive of the imperfect, which introduces an independent narrative. It opens with the conventional formula, the date, indeed, being omitted, but the other six points being expressed: "And there was a man from Benjamin, his name being Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Becorath the son of Aphiah, the son of a man of Jemini, a mighty man of power. And he had a son, his name being Saul," &c. The interest of the story centres in the private experiences of Saul and his friends, though it is not, like the others, a story of love and motherhood. The story is a unit, having a single subject, with progress throughout. If it were removed, it would leave no gap in the narrative. There is no more room for doubt as to its character than in the previous instances.

Having thus differentiated these six historical stories from the nar-

natives of public history in which they are imbedded, we shall be able rapidly to complete our analysis of this portion of the literature. In 1 Samuel, from the middle of the first verse of the fourth chapter to the close of the fifteenth chapter and onward, we have a continuous narrative of public history, made up of a series of shorter narratives arranged mainly in the order of time, and connected by Waw consecutive with the imperfect tense. Into the middle of one of these shorter narratives — not between two of them — is inserted the sixth of the historical stories mentioned above, the story of Saul's search for the asses, and his being anointed king. These narratives describe to us the culmination of the Philistine conquest, when the ark was taken, the supernatural rescue of the ark, the winning of Israel's independence under Samuel, with a sketch of his administration, the proceedings by which Saul was made king, the war against Nahash the Ammonite, the confirming of the kingdom, the renewed and complete subjection to the Philistines and the deliverance from it, a general sketch of Saul's reign, and the war against Amalek. They close with Samuel's retirement from active public life, after he had finally broken with Saul.

Turning back to Jud. ii. 6, we read :

“ And Joshua sent away the people, and the sons of Israel went each to his inheritance to possess the land. And the people served Jehovah all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who prolonged their days after Joshua, who saw all the great deed of Jehovah which he did for Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Jehovah, died, at a hundred and ten years of age ; and they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath Heres, in the mountain country of Ephraim, north of Gaash. And all that generation being also gathered to their fathers, there arose another generation after them, who knew not Jehovah, nor yet the deed which he did for Israel.”

These verses are mainly repeated from the closing sentences of the book of Joshua, with slight changes of words and order. It is clear that the continuous portion of the history in the Judges begins at this point. A perusal of it will show that it proceeds with perfect continuity to the point where the story of Samson and his exploits begins ; that is, to the close of the first verse of the thirteenth chapter. The matters which precede the sixth verse of the second chapter are evidently prefatory, and are quite miscellaneous.

This body of writings, therefore, recounting the history of the times of the Judges, divides itself clearly into four parts :

1. First, we have certain prefatory statements, contained in what is now the first chapter of Judges and the first five verses of the sec-

ond chapter. A considerable proportion of these statements are identical, both in their contents and in their phraseology, with matters found in various parts of the book of Joshua. They bear marks of being statements which had been omitted from the following parts of the history, but which, being counted worthy of preservation, and having some connection with this history, were subsequently prefixed to it. They seem, therefore, to have been written later than the connected history which directly follows. To them we will henceforth apply the descriptive term, *The Preface*.

2. Secondly, beginning with the sixth verse of the second chapter of Judges, and closing with the close of the first verse of the thirteenth chapter, we have a continuous narrative of the period from the death of Joshua to the administration of Eli. To distinguish this from the other parts, we will call it *The Public History of the Judges*.

3. Thirdly, we have the six historical stories, namely :

1st, The story of Samson and his Exploits, Jud. xiii. 2-xvi.

2d, That of the Danite Expedition, Jud. xvii., xviii.

3d, That of the Benjamite Civil War, Jud. xix., xx., xxi.

4th, That of Ruth, Ruth i.-iv.

5th, That of the Childhood of Samuel, 1 Sam. i.-iii. and iv. 1a.

6th, That of the Anointing of Saul, 1 Sam. ix. and x. 1-16.

4. Fourthly, we have eight or more consecutive narrations, beginning with the middle of the first verse of the fourth chapter of 1 Sam., and extending to the close of the fifteenth chapter ; giving the history from the death of Eli, which resulted in rendering Samuel especially conspicuous, to the retirement of Samuel from active public life, after the Amalekite war. We will entitle this *The Public History of Samuel and Saul*. The historical story of the Anointing of Saul is inserted in the middle of the fourth of these eight narrations.

II. If our analysis is correct, it ought to assist us in understanding the various critical questions which arise, in connection with these parts of the Scriptures. And the application of the analysis to this use ought to be the best possible test of the analysis itself ; either confirming or disproving it as the case may be. Let us now apply it, therefore, in a few selected problems, among the many in which it is capable of being applied.

(1) We inquire, first, into the relative order in which the parts we have distinguished were written.

The second of the four parts, that which we have called *The Public History of the Judges*, differs from all the rest, in offering a full scheme of chronology for the times concerning which it treats. For

the first portion of the history, extending to the death of Gideon, it gives us a succession of five periods of forty years each, and gives also various other chronological numerals. After that, it has a system of dates by the succession and the years of the Judges.¹

In the Public History of Samuel and Saul, on the contrary, the dates are very meagre; and in all the historical stories, the twenty years of the administration of Samson is the only numeral which is important to the chronology of the period. But, beginning with the reign of David, the books of Samuel give complete dates. The books of Kings do the same, for the periods they cover. So do the books of Chronicles and Ezra and Nehemiah. Apparently this custom was never dropped, in this line of historical writings, after it was once introduced. It seems to follow that the Public History of the Judges, as a literary work, is connected with the continuous history of the times of David, while the Public History of Samuel and Saul, with most or all the six historical stories, belong to an earlier literary period, when less attention was paid to dates.

The Benjamite war, as described in the historical story, finds its chronological place in the continuous history, during the eighty years connected with the name of Ehud, the chronological place of the Danite expedition being directly before it.²

Since the events described in these stories and in the story of Samson thus belong within the scope of the continuous history, and are, some of them, exceedingly important public events, it is quite noticeable that the continuous narrative does not mention Samson nor the Danite expedition nor the Benjamite war. It will account for this to say that the stories were written before the other, and that the writer of the continuous history omitted the events, of which they treat,

¹ See *The Chronology of the Period of the Judges*, in the "Old Testament Student," Jan., 1884.

² The account of the deliverance under Ehud closes with the words: "And the land had rest eighty years." Jud. iii. 30.

That the Danite expedition preceded the Benjamite war appears from the use of the expression "From Dan and unto Beer Sheba," Jud. xx. 1, in the narrative of the war. That the Danite expedition preceded the times of Samson appears from the fact that it gave rise to the proper name Mahaneh-Dan, Jud. xviii. 12, and that it was "In Mahaneh-Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol," that the Spirit of Jehovah began to come upon Samson, Jud. xiii. 25. That both the Danite expedition and the civil war were earlier than the times of Deborah and Shamgar may account for the fact that Benjamin seems to be counted in Deborah's muster-roll, "with the peoples" of Ephraim, Jud. v. 14 and v. 6; this being the natural result of the rape at Shiloh, Jud. xxi. 19-23, for two or three generations after

because he intended to append them, as we now find them appended, to his narrative. On the face of it, therefore, it seems probable that the part of this literature first written was the earlier narratives of the series now beginning with the Public History of Samuel and Saul; that some or all of the historical stories were next written; that these were followed by the Public History of the Judges, written to fill up the gap which still remained in the history; the Preface having been added yet later. That such was the actual order of date in these compositions is at least sufficiently probable to justify us in using it as a working hypothesis in pursuing our investigation.

(2) Again, we look, though but cursorily, for the sources whence these productions drew their historical materials.

For facts contemporaneous with the writings themselves, we have no need to suppose any source other than current knowledge or opinion. For older facts, oral tradition might supposably be a sufficient source. So far as we find no older sources, there is no objection to regarding the several narratives as strictly pieces of original composition. But there is no difficulty in tracing a considerable portion of them to older sources.

These authors made abundant use of the historical monuments which existed in the shape of proper names of places, persons, and clans. "The man went into the land of the Hittites, and built . . . Luz, which is the name thereof unto this day," Jud. i. 26. The fact that, in the Hittite country, there existed this city, in the days of the author, and the tradition as to how it came to exist, were to him sources of historical information. This is characteristic of these writings throughout. "They called the name of that place Bochim," Jud. ii. 5. The name of Heber the Kenite, in northern Israel, becomes significant for his purpose, in Jud. iv. and v. So are

that rape. To prove this is to prove that these events occurred during the eighty years connected with Ehud. But there is independent proof of the same in the statement, Jud. xx. 28, that "Phinehas the son of Eleazar the son of Aaron was standing before" the Ark "in those days." This Phinehas was already a warrior before the death of Moses, Num. xxv. 7, 11. If he lived through the first forty-year period, which included the conquest under Joshua and the deliverance by Othniel, Jud. iii. 11, and then lived to the middle of the succeeding eighty years, he reached an extreme old age. On this interpretation, the expression "The land had rest forty years" must mean, of course, had rest to the end of the forty-year period then current, and must also refer to rest from foreign subjugation only, and not to rest from civil war. But as this is probably the case on any possible interpretation of the record, it cannot be regarded as a serious objection to this particular interpretation.

used as a source of historical information. In writing the account in chapter iv. the historian evidently had the song in his mind. His account is little else than an explanation of the circumstances mentioned in the song which seem to him to need explanation. Then, instead of repeating the remaining circumstances mentioned in the song, he transcribes the song itself as a portion of his narrative. In none of the other instances does the history seem to be greatly indebted to songs which it inserts, so far as the furnishing of matters of fact is concerned.

Other sources, traceable in these documents, are official decisions, couched in official language, not improbably copied from written official documents. For example, we are told in Jud. xxi. 12 that the twelve thousand men whom the congregation sent to smite Jabesh Gilead, and obtain wives for the remnant of Benjamin, found four hundred young women suitable for the purpose, "and brought them in unto the camp, in Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan." It is quite customary to explain this by saying that the book of Judges was evidently written at so late a date that the people who were likely to read it did not know that Shiloh was in the land of Canaan, and needed to be told. But manifestly that is a date which never was and never will be. All such explanations are simply absurd. But the phraseology is perfectly explained, if we remember that here is a case in which men would hardly act without a very explicit commission; and then suppose that we have here an extract from the legal phraseology of that commission. A few verses farther on, in connection with the scheme for the authorized abduction of girls enough to supply the rest of the Benjamites with wives, we have the following immensely formal statement: "And they said, 'Behold the festival of Jehovah in Shiloh from year to year, which is from northward to Bethel, from toward the rising of the sun to the highway that goes up from Bethel toward Shechem, and south of Lebonah' (or 'from the South country to Lebanon')." No such verbiage as this was ever adopted by any historian for the sake of explaining anything to some one who did not know. It is rather the language of a legal document, loaded down with words as a protection against quibbling or evasion. And, indeed, the more closely one studies this narrative,

came to the historian as written sources, or as having been orally handed down. The fact that one of them is from the *book* of Jasher may perhaps turn the scale in favor of the opinion that all were written. At all events, if any one affirms that any of them were unwritten, he affirms what is, at strongest, a mere conjecture.

the more it seems to have been drawn from the minutes of the legal proceedings held at the time, and committed to record. The particulars given as to the Levite and his concubine are quite exactly those which would have been elicited in a legal investigation. The woman's character was not very good. On the face of it, it looked as if she and her husband might merely have got into disreputable company at Gibeah, and suffered the natural consequences. The particulars which prove that this was not the case are given as sharply and clearly as if they had been elicited from the witnesses by an ably conducted examination in court.¹

We have to notice one more class of marks of compilation found in some parts of these writings,— marks which show that some of the narratives which, put together, make up the whole history, were themselves formed by joining two or more previously existing written accounts. In the production, for example, which we have called the story of the Exploits of Samson, there are two separate conclusions. The first is: "And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years," Jud. xv. 20. The second is: "And he judged Israel twenty years," xvi. 31. Repetitions in a story are not necessarily marks of its having been compiled from previously existing sources; but the repetitions in this case probably are such marks.²

And if these be accepted as evidence at all, they must be accepted as evidence of written sources.

(3) This leads us briefly to notice the fact that the writings we are examining are themselves parts of a larger historical work. The evidence which shows that the parts exist, and especially the evidence cited under (1) above, to show the order in which they were written, also shows that the parts are fitted together, along with the narratives which follow them, so as to constitute a single, and somewhat extensive book of history. This book is doubtless conterminous with our present books of Judges, Ruth, and Samuel, though to argue this proposition would lead us beyond the limits of the present discussion. For present purposes, therefore, we cannot insist upon the extent of the whole of which the writings we are considering are parts, but only upon the fact that there is such a whole.

In (2) above, we have been looking at certain marks which show that some of the writings in hand were produced by processes of

¹ For example, Jud. xix. 4-10 or 10-12.

² So are the repetitions to which attention has often been called in the story of David and Goliath, 1 Sam. xvi., xvii.

compilation from previously existing sources, some of which were written. To this it should be added that, so far as the complete work is concerned, the existence of the parts of it, as we find them, is in itself an exhibition of processes of compilation, by which the whole was formed from these parts.

These phenomena enable us to draw certain conclusions as to the character and relative date of the work in hand, even without first ascertaining its extent.

For example, in view of the use of various historical sources, in the construction of this body of writings, a certain contrast between them and the books of Kings or Chronicles becomes very significant. It is said in 1 Kings xi. 41: "And the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the Acts of Solomon?" From this point, this custom of formal reference to the sources of the history is maintained throughout the books of Kings and Chronicles. No such regular custom appears in the writings we have been examining. They contain citations indeed, but not of this formal kind. This contrast is certainly not an accident. We are entitled to infer from it that the producing of the work comprising these writings, in its present form, belongs to a different epoch in history-writing from the producing of the books of the Kings or of the Chronicles, and that an earlier epoch. The same inference is independently justified by the familiar fact that the writings in hand currently speak of the worship on the high places and elsewhere away from the central sanctuary, simply as a fact, without adding those strong phrases of reprobation which are regularly used in the later records. It is further justified by certain contrasts of style and language, since the forms of the later Hebrew appear frequently in Kings, and still more frequently and decidedly in Chronicles, and seldom, if at all, in the writings we are examining. I say "seldom, if at all," in recognition of the fact that phenomena which some critics regard as later forms are confidently explained by others as archaisms.

Since the evidence thus proves that the whole work was produced long before even the earlier of the two great works which treat of the history of Solomon and his successors, it reduces, by this amount, the possible interval that may have occurred between the writing of the constituent parts of the work and the combining of them into the whole which they now form. Again, it is presumable that if much time had elapsed between the production of the parts and that of the whole, we should find traces of this in the differences that would still

exist between the work of the editor and the documents edited ; but such traces, if they exist, are at least indistinct and doubtful. It seems also probable that, if any of the sources of the earlier work were of the nature of extended histories of the period under treatment, these would have been formally cited, just as they are in the later works. Whatever force there is in this consideration is in favor of the idea that the present work is the earliest extended history of Israel in Palestine that was ever written. If this be true, it follows that the documents we have been examining were put together into the whole which they now constitute, not only before the books of Kings were written, but also before the writing of the extended historical works which the books of Kings and Chronicles cite as sources.

In fine, the evidence, so far as examined, indicates the existence of a nearly contemporaneous group of writers, belonging to a pretty early period, who became interested in historical investigations concerning the times of the Judges and the early monarchy, wrote the historical stories and the narratives of public history, and eventually combined the whole into the work as it now stands.

(4) From this we turn naturally to certain indications as to the actual date and authorship of the writings under consideration.

At this point it is, perhaps, well to remind ourselves that we are not considering any of these critical questions completely, on their merits ; but are merely showing how our analysis of the literary form of the writings bears on questions of this sort. The considerations just mentioned, under (3), tend to assign the writings in hand to a quite early date. In addition, the limits of the present paper permit the examination of only a single class of arguments. The various productions which we have found here grouped together seem to display certain *motives* common to the authors, which point out more or less clearly the condition of things which occasioned their being written. For example, the story of Ruth dates the subject of which it treats, verse 1, "in the days when the Judges ruled." It is largely a story of famine, expatriation, misfortune. The stories of the Danite Expedition and the Benjamite War date their subjects "when there was no king in Israel," and every man did what was right in his own eyes ; and this item they make emphatic by frequent repetition, Jud. xvii. 6, xviii. 1, xix. 1, xxi. 25. They, too, picture the times to which they relate as times of great misfortunes, of marauding expeditions, of religious irregularities, times in which property and chastity and life were unprotected, and in which civil war was the horrible remedy

for private aggressions. The other three stories are equally stories of the times of the Judges, that of Saul exhibiting the lack of augustness and magnificence in even the administration of the best judge Israel ever had, and the other two presenting very uninviting pictures of oppression by foreigners and of misgovernment and helplessness at home. The stories indeed bring to light what was admirable and heroic in the times of the Judges; but they make the adverse side stand out with peculiar distinctness. When we notice these facts, one of the motives for the writing of this group of stories becomes evident. There must have been a monarch whose subjects were somewhat discontented, and were grumblingly looking back to the good old days when there was no king in Israel, and every man did as he pleased. And this king must have had one or more wise servants, religious men, patriotic men, men of literary ability, who knew how to write the history of the nation in the form of popular stories which would pass from mouth to mouth among the people, teaching them, along with other and higher lessons, that the good old times were, after all, not so much better than the present.

This phrase is commonly cited as if it were archæological, carrying the date of the events very far back before that of the narrator. But in America, the phrase "the colonial times" was in vogue before the generation of men who fought the revolution and established the republic had ceased to be active. Within fifteen years after the issuing of Abraham Lincoln's proclamation, the negroes at the south had formed the habit of talking about "the times before the wah." It takes only one generation for such forms of speech to become current. Indeed, the men most likely to talk of the days when there was no king in Israel were those whose fathers and grandfathers had seen those days, and had told their boys about them. It was in that particular generation that the reaction was most likely to come, and to need to be met. So far as this item of the evidence is concerned, this is the most natural conclusion as to the date of these stories. They were composed, either in the later years of Saul, or during the reign of David. Next in order, the most natural inference is that some later writer assumed the point of view of these times, for the purpose of writing the stories.

Again, all the six stories except that of Samson are *Ephrathite* stories. The scene of the story of Ruth is Bethlehem Ephrathah, Ruth i. 1, 19, 22, iv. 11, &c. The scene of the opening of the story of the Benjamite war is also the same Bethlehem, Jud. xix. 1, 2, 18, &c. In the story of the Danite Expedition, the Levite who became

priest of Micah, and afterward priest at Dan, was from Bethlehem, xvii. 7, 8, 9, &c. In the story of Samuel, 1 Sam. i. 1, we are told that Elkanah was an Ephrathite. There is no reason for trying to understand this to mean Ephraimite, or something else different from its ordinary meaning. Elkanah was likewise a Zuphite of the Zophite Ramathaim, the Arimathea of the New Testament. The Palestinian survey map locates Arimathea close by Bethlehem; and though some would dispute this location, no one would deny that the Zuphite and the Ephrathite tracts of country were either the same or else contiguous. In the story of the Anointing of Saul, Saul finds Samuel in the land of Zuph, 1 Sam. ix. 5, in the neighborhood of Rachel's sepulchre, x. 2, which is itself near Bethlehem, Gen. xxxv. 19, 20. Different as are their themes, the author or authors of these stories have contrived to make them all stories of Bethlehem Ephratah, the birthplace of King David. This cannot be a mere accident. It binds the composing of the stories, somehow, to the person and to the times of David.

Again, both the stories and the other parts of the history firmly assert the primacy of Judah, combining this, however, with a catholic recognition of the claims of the other tribes. In the first part of Ruth, and uniformly in the other stories which name Bethlehem, the place is spoken of as Bethlehem-Judah. The effect of this is at once to emphasize the Judaite location of Bethlehem, and to recognize the existence of the other Bethlehem. In Ruth, Judah is especially made prominent, both in this proper name and in the special mention of Judah in the blessing in iv. 12,¹ no other tribe being similarly specified; but the customs appealed to are those of Israel, and not of the tribe of Judah merely, iv. 7.² And in the blessing pronounced, Rachel, Leah, and Israel are mentioned before Tamar, Pharez, and Judah; and Rachel before Leah, that is, the mother of Ephraim and Manasseh and Benjamin before the mother of Judah. Again, in the account of the Benjamite war, Jehovah directs that Judah shall first go up, Jud. xx. 18; but the war

¹ "And said all the people who were in the gate, the elders being witnesses: Jehovah make the wife who is entering unto thy house as Rachel and as Leah which two did build the house of Israel; . . . and may thy house be like the house of Pharez whom Tamar bore to Judah, of the seed which Jehovah may give to thee from this young woman," Ruth iv. 11, 12.

² "Now this was formerly in Israel, in the matter of redemption or in the matter of exchange, for settling any affair, a man drew off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbor, this being the custom in Israel," Ruth iv. 7.

itself, the convention of the people which directs it, and the exploits performed in it are throughout attributed to all Israel.¹ In precisely similar ways, in the Preface, Judah is recognized as the first of the tribes, and yet the supremacy is vested in Israel, the nation, and not in any of the tribes. For example, in the very first verse of the book, it is the sons of Israel that inquire of Jehovah: "Who shall go up for us, at the outset, against the Canaanite?" The answer they receive is: "Judah shall go up." The same peculiarity appears in all the details of the chapter. Further, in the rest of the history before the time of David, Judah is so little conspicuous in comparison with the other tribes, that these writings are commonly said to have been drawn from the annals of the northern Israelites, to the neglect of those of the southern. Yet in the story of Samson, xv. 11, 13, the men of Judah exercise the prerogative of arresting and handing over to the Philistines a man who did not belong to their tribe, and who, at or about that time, was judge over Israel, xv. 20, xvi. 31. And these accounts further represent that Judah, either from her own citizens or from her resident Levites, furnished the original priest of the Danite sanctuary, Jud. xvii. 7, and the great king-maker, the prophet Samuel himself. Judah's right to the first place is never lost from sight. Yet with all this, every tribe is mentioned, and its exploits recorded. The deeds of some of the tribes are made more prominent than those of Judah. In certain junctures, as for example, the events of the times of Deborah or of Samson, Judah figures rather discreditably.²

¹ "And he laid hold of his concubine, and cut her in pieces, . . . and sent her into every border of Israel. And it came to pass that every one who saw it said: 'There has been nothing . . . like this, even from the day of the coming up of the sons of Israel from the land of Egypt.' . . . And all the sons of Israel came out, and the congregation was convened like one man, even from Dan and unto Beer-sheba, and the land of the Gilead, unto Jehovah at the Mizpah. And the prominent men of the whole people, all the tribes of Israel, took their places in"—that is, constituted themselves into—"the convention of the people of God. . . . And the sons of Israel said: 'How did this evil come to be?' And the Levite man answered," &c. Jud. xix. 29, 30, xx. 1, 2, 3. The same attribution of sovereignty to Israel continues to appear as the narrative proceeds. See for example, xx. 6, 10, 11, 12, xxi. 1, 8, 10.

² To this same mode of speaking belong the mention of Judah and Israel during this period, which has sometimes been mistaken for an anachronism. A careful examination will show that none of these instances is an allusion to the state of things which existed after the disruption under Jeroboam. Whenever Judah is mentioned in these earlier writings as distinct from Israel, the distinction is differ-

Now it is evident that, to the administration of David, after he became king over all Israel, it was important thus to insist upon the right of Judah to be first, and yet so to affirm it as to avoid offence to the other tribes, and secure their enthusiastic support. It was equally important to assert the unity of all Israel, and to stimulate national feeling. If these writings were produced at that date, they are accounted for by the circumstances of the times. Is there any other so good account of them?

Again these narratives take some pains to define, courteously, the relative position of the non-Israelite peoples. We learn from Jud. ii. 3, that the promise for the extermination of the Canaanites was formally withdrawn; from 1 Sam. vii. 14, that, in Samuel's time, peace was made with the Amorite; and from Jud. i. 28, 30, 33, 35, that the policy of extermination was changed for one which accepted the old inhabitants of the land as tributaries.¹ In several passages in

ent from that which prevailed in the later times. Sometimes, the tribal interests are mentioned, as differing from the national. Such an instance, after the anointing of David, is that in 1 Sam. xviii. 16, where it is said: "Now all Israel and Judah were loving David." It was a matter of course that David should be a favorite with the men of his own tribe. The author here asserts that he was a favorite with the whole nation, as well as with his own section of it, with all Israel as well as with Judah. Sometimes the reference is to the short-lived double kingdom, in the days of Ish-bosheth. But oftenest, the purpose is that already mentioned, namely, to assert the primacy of the tribe of Judah, and therefore, the especial claims of the Judaite royal family of David.

¹ "And I said: 'I will not break my covenant with you forever; while ye, for your part, shall not make covenant with the inhabitants of this land, ye shall break in pieces their altars.' And ye have not hearkened to my voice—how have ye done this? And (now) I also have said: 'I will not expel them from before you, and they shall be to you for (thorns in your) sides,'" &c. Jud. ii. 1-3.

"And there was peace between Israel and the Amorite. And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life." 1 Sam. vii. 14, 15.

"When Israel was strong, he put the Canaanite to tribute-service, and did not utterly take possession of him."

"Zebulun did not take possession of the inhabitants of Kitron and the inhabitants of Nahalol, and the Canaanite dwelt in the midst of him, and they became for tribute-service."

"Naphtali did not take possession of the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and the inhabitants of Beth-anath, and dwelt in the midst of the Canaanite, the inhabitants of the land; the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and Beth-anath coming to be to them for tribute-service."

"And the Amorite persisted in dwelling in Mount Heres, in Ajalon and in Shaalbim, and the hand of the house of Joseph was heavy, and they became for tribute-service." Jud. i. 28, 30, 33, 35.

2 Samuel, 1 Kings, and 2 Chronicles, we learn that the policy adopted by David, and carried out by Solomon, was to treat the Canaanites as tributaries, from whom personal service was due.¹ A special word, **דָּמ**, is used to describe this tribute-service. The same treatment of the Canaanites is described, using the same word, in Josh. xvi. 10, xvii. 13, and in the four places in the first chapter of Judges. The word is but little used, except in these passages. Perhaps the two verses in Joshua should be regarded as notes, mentioning the final outcome of the events there recorded, which outcome was some hundreds of years later than the events. In that case, all the accounts of tribute-service levied by Israel upon the Canaanites belong to the scheme of such service organized by David and Solomon. If, on the other hand, we regard the verses in Joshua as referring to the earlier times, then the verses in Judges must be regarded as citing the older instances partly for the purpose of showing that David's scheme was merely the carrying out, on a larger scale, of the ancient precedents. In either case, all these statements in regard to tribute-service, like the others we have been noticing, point to the time of the reign of David as affording the motives for the writing of this history.

The different subject peoples had already, before the close of David's reign, reached a condition in which they were likely to inquire why so wide a difference was made between them and the men of Israelite descent. They were themselves the subjects of David. The blood of the different races was already largely mixed. In the person of such men as Uriah the Hittite, they had their representatives in the army and in the court, rendering distinguished services to Israel's king. Their women were among the royal wives, and their blood ran in the veins of the princes of the royal house. Why, then, should they not be treated as on an equality with other

¹ "And Adoram was over the tribute-service," 2 Sam. xx. 24. This was in David's time. The details of this service, from the beginning of Solomon's reign to the years next succeeding his death, are given with some fulness in 1 Kings iv. 6, v. 13, 14 (27, 28), ix. 15, 21, xii. 18, 2 Chron. x. 18 and viii. 8. The last of these passages conveniently summarizes the whole, as follows: "All the remaining people of the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivvite and the Jebusite, who were not of Israel; of their sons who remained after them in the land, whom the sons of Israel did not make an end of, them Solomon subjected to tribute-service, unto this day." By the phrase "unto this day" is here meant, not to the time of the writing of the book of the Chronicles, but that of the document here copied into the Chronicles, which document is also in the parallel passage in Kings.

subjects? Why should they be subjected to especial tribute-service, and denied an equal opportunity for entering official positions? The Preface to the book of Judges answers all such questionings as these, by reminding the Canaanite peoples, at least, that, according to the ancient traditional relations between them and Israel, their present condition was one of favor to them and not of hardship, it being the alternative of the policy of extermination which had formerly prevailed. Since human nature is human nature, the later years of King David must often have witnessed the repeating of these questions and of this answer.

And since human nature is human nature, there were, doubtless, in those days, Israelites who protested, in the name of Israelitish orthodoxy, against the policy adopted by the government. They held the true doctrine to be that Canaanite people ought to be exterminated, instead of being employed, in bond-service, to build the house of the Lord. They must have been fearfully scandalized when they found it to be possible that a Canaanite half-breed might even be in charge of the most important departments of the work.¹ They had reason to be scandalized at certain results which followed when Hittite generals, having handsome wives, resided in Jerusalem, in the vicinity of the king's palace. As David's throne was largely dependent on the good will of his people, it must have been necessary to defend the public policy of the king in these matters, even if his private conduct was indefensible. If the making of such a defense was one of the purposes for which the books of Judges, Ruth, and Samuel were written, they accomplished the purpose. The royal descendant of Ruth and of Tamar was himself a standing proof of the fact that mixed blood might be genuinely Israelite, and consistent with the spirit, at least, of the law. The Preface to the book of Judges shows that the withdrawal of the promise of extermination, and inferentially, therefore, of the warrant for it, was not a thing of David's time, but something which occurred early in the period of the Judges. The same Preface either deals with technicalities confined to the reigns of David and Solomon, or else shows that David's policy of substituting tribute-service for extermination was not an innovation, but simply the reviving, under its ancient name, of a

¹ "And the king Solomon sent and took Hiram from Tyre. He was the son of a widow woman of the tribe of Naphtali, his father being a Tyrian man, an artificer in brass; and he was filled with the wisdom and with the understanding and with the knowledge for doing all work in brass. And he came unto the king Solomon, and did all his work," 1 Kings vii. 13, 14.

policy which had been adopted before the records contained in the book of Joshua were written. And as to the policy of permanent peace with the Amorite, involving as it did, the ultimate absorption of all the residents of Canaanitish blood into Israel, David did not originate that, but found it in existence, handed down from the times of Samuel, before Saul became king, 1 Sam. vii. 14.

All these considerations meet, as occasioning the production of these writings, provided the writings were produced while David was king over all Israel, after he had subjugated many of the neighboring peoples. At that time, it was important to define the status of the Canaanites who remained, and to do this in a conciliatory way. It was important to revive, both among them and among the other subjugated populations, any traditions of amity, like those recorded in the book of Ruth, which the past could furnish. Here again, we have evidence as to the date and purpose of these writings, and it agrees with the items previously cited.

To the same effect is the pains taken to account for certain circumstances mentioned in the times of David. For the heroic conduct of the men of Jabesh Gilead, in caring for the body of Saul, 1 Sam. xxxi. 11-13, we need no other reason than their gratitude for the deliverance which Saul had accomplished for them, 1 Sam. xi. ; and their sending to him for help is sufficiently accounted for by the fact that he had just been made king. But by referring to Jud. xxi. 12, we find that there were reasons of affinity between Jabesh Gilead and the tribe of Benjamin, which lay back of these other reasons, and played their part in bringing these others into existence. Or, as another instance, Caleb and the Kenites were somewhat prominent among the southern clans with which David was familiar in his wanderings, 1 Sam. xxv. 3, xxx. 14, xxvii. 10, xxx. 29, and xv. 6. The first chapter of Judges takes considerable pains to account for the presence of these peoples in the localities where David found them, though it does this, to some extent, at the cost of repeating matters written also in the book of Joshua. See verses 12-15 and 16.

Indeed, it is probable, in these cases as in the case of the tribute-service, that these repetitions from the history now found in Joshua are intended and significant. In David's time, the sons of Caleb were largely a shepherd people. Nabal the Carmelite was one of them. The Calebites and the Kenites appear to have been David's fast friends. David married Nabal's widow. He began his reign, as king of Judah, in the Calebite city of Hebron, reigning there seven and a half years, while the contest was being decided between him

and the house of Saul, 1 Sam. xxx. 31, 2 Sam. ii. 1, 2, 11, &c., 1 Kings ii. 11, 1 Chron. iii. 4, and context, xxix. 27, &c. In these circumstances, it is incredible but that the opponents of David were in the habit of speaking contemptuously of this Calebite king, perhaps taunting the Calebites with their relations to the Kenites, who were not all of Israel. Indeed, when we remember that Caleb signifies *dog*, we may quite plausibly claim that we have on record at least one instance of this kind. In 2 Sam. iii. 8, Abner says to Ish-bosheth: "Am I a Caleb's head belonging to Judah? To-day I do a kindness to the house of Saul, . . . that I do not hand thee over into the hand of David," &c. When such taunts in respect to the Calebites were liable to be repeated, there was a reason for calling attention to the account of the location of Caleb, as given in the ancient received history of the nation, adding to it certain particulars, thus showing at once that the Calebites were of the best blue blood of Israel, and that their relations with the Kenites were strictly honorable to both. The account given in the first chapter of Judges accomplishes all this, as well as explains the existence of both a northern and a southern branch of the Kenite family, comp. Jud. iv. 11.

Again, as the story of Saul's search for the asses is not, on the whole, very flattering to that monarch, we may, perhaps, conclude that it was not published in Israel earlier than the time when the breach between him and David had become hopelessly permanent, and, therefore, not earlier than the later years of Samuel the prophet. If circulated in the days of the conflict between the house of David and that of Saul, it had the effect of showing, among other things, that if David was anointed some time before his being accepted as king, so also was Saul; that if David's anointing was private, so was Saul's; that if David's previous occupation was with sheep, Saul's was with asses; that if David's circumstances were narrow, Saul's were more so, and the like. In fine, while it is a story entirely respectful to Saul and his house, its effect is not at all to exalt the antecedents of the line of Saul above those of the line of David. It is just such a story as we might expect to find put into circulation in the interests of the throne of David, not very late in his reign.

All these considerations favor the opinion that our present Biblical history of the times of the Judges was both written and edited in the days of Samuel, David, Gad, and Nathan. It is not claimed that they prove this opinion, but only that they favor it. To make the proof complete, or to overthrow it, we should need to examine a large body of additional evidence, of various kinds, bearing upon the question.