

Old Testament Notes.

PROF. T. K. CHEYNE.

OXFORD, ENGLAND.

1. "Apples of Gold," Prov. xxv. 11.

תפוחי זהב במשכיות כסף דבר דבר על־אפניו

CIRCUMSTANCES have led me to the reconsideration of this fascinating Hebrew proverb. What was the fruit designated by תפוח? Was it the apple or the quince? But then, why are we told of "apples of gold"? Does not this phrase seem to point to some special kind of fruit different from the ordinary apple? Could the citron be meant—the post-Biblical *ethrög*, which the Greeks called Median apples? If so, Prov. 25¹¹ would of necessity be post-Exilic. Then there is the double difficulty of משכיות, or (cf. ט) משכית, and אפניו; also the insufficient harmony between vs.¹¹ and vs.¹²; and the peculiar phenomenon of ט, which gives vs.¹¹⁻¹² thus:

μηλον χρυσοῦν ἐν ὀρμίσκῳ (Jäger, φορμίσκῳ, 'basket') σαρδίου, οὕτως εἰπεῖν λόγον. εἰς ἐνώτιον χρυσοῦν καὶ σάρδιον πολυτελὲς δέδεται, λόγος σοφὸς εἰς εὐήκοον οὖς.

As to 'apples of gold,' it will probably be admitted that the most natural sense is not 'fruit like gold' but 'artificial fruit made of gold'; for the משכיות are certainly supposed to be of silver. But when we look at the improbable words which close vs.¹¹, may we not consider the question whether a great part of the verse may not be corrupt? A little help can be obtained from ט. In vs.^{11a} we should certainly read כָּתָם for כָּתָף, and in v.^{12a}, as Bickell has seen, λόγος σοφός, or rather σοφοῦ, must be right. We also observe at once that ט did not read במש; Jäger's conjecture is improbable. What ט read, or conjectured, need not detain us; suffice it that ט does not support MT. I think the right correction for במש can be found. It is surely במשכיות (see Ex. 28¹¹ etc.). Consequently זהב תפוחי must conceal the name of some precious stone, or the like. חי זהב is most probably חרוזים, which means, in Cant. 1¹⁰, not 'necklaces' = תורנים, but pearls, or beads, strung together (cf. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Lexicon*, s.v.). There remain the three first letters of

תפוחי; these represent תור. Thus we get as the sense of v.^{11a}, 'A necklace of pearls in sockets of wreathed gold.'

But we see that vs.^{11a} corresponds pretty closely to vs.^{12a}. Therefore vs.^{11b} should correspond to vs.^{12b}. And so most probably it does. חכם occurs twice over in vs.^{12b} (for מוכיח, as Bickell sees, is due to the transposition of the letters חכמ). Read in both passages דבר חכם (Bickell coincides only as to vs.^{12b}). Oddly enough vs.^{11b} gives דבר דבר twice over, and vs.^{12b} חכם virtually twice over. As to the amazing phrase על-אפניו, where Schultens sees an allusion to the tropes of elegant oriental style, it is merely a corruption, either of למקנהו " (spoken) for its purpose," or "with reference to its purpose," or of על-טמיו (ני = מ, פ = ש, א = צ), which is a weakened form of על-אין שמעת. Sense and parallelism alike favour the second alternative.

Read therefore :

תור חרמים במשכבות קחם דבר חכם על-שמשו

The two proverbs, vs.¹¹ and vs.¹², are thus in complete correspondence. But perhaps דְּבַרְיָ would be still better than דְּבַר? The loss of a ך need not startle any one. The sense is, "He who hears with intelligence the words of the wise values them not less than the most costly ornaments." The at first sight startling introduction of the sardius into Ⓢ is easily accounted for. It is designed to distinguish כתם from זהב. Compare Job 31²⁴ χρυσίον (זהב), ²⁶ λίθῳ πολυτελεί (כתם). I have not had the advantage of consulting Baumgarten's *Étude critique* on the text of Proverbs (1890). But had this learned writer cleared up the passage, our new Hebrew Thesaurus (BDB. Part i, 1892) would, I think, have given us notice of it. Wildeboer's judicious but too brief commentary has nothing new to suggest. He thinks (with BDB., Delitzsch, and Strack) that על-אפניו = בְּעֵתוֹ (15²³), which, with vs.¹² before us, does not seem very probable.

2. On Psalm lxx. 3.

In the JOURNAL OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE, xvii. (1898), pp. 207 f., I have retracted my former view of the meaning of כָּל־בֶּשֶׁר יְבֹאוֹ in Ps. 65³, which I can no longer use in illustration of the large-hearted utterance in Mal. 1¹¹. The short article containing this retraction (along with other things) was written early in 1898. In the summer of the same year I had occasion to return to Ps. 65, and the text presupposed in the rendering given in that article no longer seems to