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Some Old Testament Notes and Queries.

I VENTURE to offer the following suggestions, dealing with a few O.T. passages, for the criticism of readers of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Gn 6^{16}. We learn from the Icelandic Saga of Kormak that the luck of a house depended on the mete-yard. If the yard was too short, the luck was bad; if too long, good. Is it then grammatically possible to render these words, 'within a cubit shalt thou finish it'? that is, your error must not be more than a cubit. If so, we find here an attempt to secure the luck of the ark.

Gn 49^{24}. Here some authorities read בְּשֵׁם for מִשָּׁם—'by the name of' for 'from thence.' If we accept this reading, it would seem likely that we ought to regard the whole phrase—'By the name of the Keeper of the Stone of Israel'—as the editor's account of the original version of the Song: 'These are the words I found, but I have substituted the Mighty One of Israel for the Keeper of the Stone.' That a divinity was often conceived as residing in a stone might of course be proved by a hundred examples.

Gn $49^{4.18}$. I have long thought that here we have instances of the transference of musical notes to the running text. If for the useless and almost ungrammatical עֲלָה we substitute סֶלָה, we get sense, and at the same time reduce the verse to normal limits. So, too, the whole of v.^{18} might well be taken as the suggestion of the tune to which this part of the song is to be sung. Similarly, in Ps 87^{7}, the hint was long ago given to me by a friend that the real meaning is simply 'Full orchestra and chorus: Tune, All my springs are in thee'; but I do not remember seeing this interpretation in a commentary.

Many scholars are inclined to assign Job 28, with its description of mining, to Zophar the Naamathite. It has struck me that if this view be accepted, we may see why Naamah is represented in Gn 4 as the sister of Tubal-Cain the iron-worker. If Naamah was a city famous for mining, we can understand both why Tubal-Cain should be connected with it and why Zophar should know so much of mining. Again, that Tubal-Cain is the son of Zillah (shadow) may point to the universally recognized connexion between the dwarfs (the regular miners) and darkness. Several of the Norse names for dwarfs are based on this connexion. That Tubal-Cain is a brother of Jubal reminds one of the marked fondness of the dwarfs for music.

Admitting the likelihood of frequent admissions of marginal notes into a MS. text, I cannot see why in Ps 22^{3} 'the words of my groaning' should not be taken as such a note. The phrase exactly describes the contents of vv.$^{2.3}$. So too, in v.^{4}, 'the praises of Israel' is best taken as another marginal note, summarizing the verses that follow. In both these cases sense and metre are alike mended by throwing out these words.

In Sayce's *Hittites*, p. 22, the עַמּוֹ of Nu 22^{5} is treated as a proper name, equivalent to the 'Amma of the monuments: a city in the neighbourhood of Pethor. I should be glad to know if this identification commends itself to scholars; to translate עַמּוֹ, as 'his people,' seems very unsatisfactory.

E. E. KELLETT.

Leys School, Cambridge.

Entre Nous.

ACCIDY.

1. *What is accidy?* 'Accidy' is just an old-fashioned word for a certain kind of melancholy: and it is the fourth of the Seven Deadly Sins. This is a little startling. We are apt to think of it, especially when it occurs in ourselves, as a misfortune to be pitied and perhaps even (see Byron, *passim*) to be proud of. So we are surprised and indignant to find it classed by the Church as one of the Seven Deadly Sins. Yet there it is—ἀκηδία in the old Greek fathers, latinized as *accidia*,

in English, accidy, or if we prefer modern English, plain melancholy. It looks rather as if the Fathers of the Church had made a mistake. Perhaps. We know that they made some rather serious mistakes about the world: and some still more serious ones about God. But we are beginning to find out that though they did not express their knowledge in the terms we would use to-day, they made fewer mistakes about human nature than has often been supposed. Let us see now if they were mistaken here.

What does a modern philosopher like William James say about melancholy? He calls it 'an incapacity for joyous feeling, which may rise to positive and active anguish, a sort of psychical neuralgia wholly unknown to healthy life. Such anguish may partake of various characters, having sometimes more the quality of loathing; sometimes that of irritation and exasperation; or again of self-mistrust and self-despair; or of suspicion, anxiety, trepidation, fear. The patient may rebel or submit; may accuse himself, or accuse outside powers; and he may or he may not be tormented by the theoretical mystery of why he should so have to suffer.'[1]

These are the words of one of the giants of modern mental science. But if we go back eleven centuries we find St. John of Damascus describing the very same state as 'a sorrowfulness so weighing down the mind that there is no good it likes to do. It has attached to it as its inseparable comrade a distress and weariness of soul, and a sluggishness in all good works, which plunges the whole man into lazy languor, and works in him a constant bitterness.'[2] In short, to use a still earlier phrase, the man in this black condition 'despairs of all the labour which he has taken under the sun' and a 'horror of great darkness' falls upon him. This is 'the poisonous morbid mood of accidia'[3] which mediæval Christians found so tormenting, and regarded as a deadly sin.

Nowadays, especially since the Great War, we are quite aware that it exists, but few people seem to think it is blameworthy. Yet look at its consequences. From sadness such as this come forth (as St. Gregory says) 'malice, grudging, faint-heartedness, despair, torpor as to that which is commanded, and the straying of the mind after that which is forbidden.'[4] 'Sloth that will not suffer hardness or penance'; and 'wanhope, that is, despair of the mercy of God.' 'Then cometh somnolence, that is, sluggish slumbering, which maketh a man heavy and dull in body and in soul; negligence or recklessness that recketh of nothing, whether he do it well or badly; idleness, that is the gate of all harms; *tarditas*, as when a man is belated, or held back, before he will turn to God; slackness, that is, he that when he beginneth any good work, anon he will give it up and stop; a kind of coldness, that freezeth all the heart of a man; undevotion, through which a man is so dull that he may neither read nor sing in holy Church, nor labour with his hands in any good work; then waxeth he sluggish and sleepy, and soon will he be wroth, and soon is inclined to hate and to envy.'[5] Does it not seem possible that anything which brings about such ugly consequences is very close to sin? It is true that it is a misfortune, but is it not our own fault? Except in a few cases, where the mind is positively and chronically diseased, this is true. There are, indeed, some who are more naturally prone to such a state than others, but that only means that a greater or less effort is required according to the individual constitution. It is certain that by far the greater part of the suffering endured in this Valley of the Shadow of Death is avoidable, and that the majority of such sufferers accept as a doom those mental idiosyncrasies which ought to be taken only as a challenge.

2. *Who sin by accidy?* It differs from many other sins into which we are tempted to fall in that it is a sin or a malady, or both, to which as a rule it is the finer and more sensitive natures that are subject. It is Wordsworth who says,

> I lost
> All feeling of conviction, and, in fine,
> Sick, wearied out with contrarieties,
> Yielded up moral questions in despair.
> This was the crisis of that strong disease,
> This the soul's last and lowest ebb; I drooped,
> Deeming our blessèd reason of least use
> When wanted most.[6]

[1] W. James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 147.
[2] *De Orth. Fid.*
[3] John Kelman.
[4] *Moralium Liber*, xxxi.
[5] Chaucer, *The Parson's Tale* (condensed).
[6] 'The Prelude,' bk. xi.

For this reason the sensitiveness of youth, especially youth with keen intellect and physical strength somewhat overtasked by growth and hard work, is particularly prone to it, as any sympathetic university or secondary-school teacher knows. The very presence of young enthusiasm makes depression darker when it comes spiritually with doubt, or physically with exhaustion. As the brightest flowers look the dismallest upon dark days, so the brightest natures are the gloomiest when things go very wrong. In the hour of their depression the recovery of belief in God seems impossible, the toil of life unbearable. The awful shadow of the unknown lies heaviest on these; they feel the darkness more, and question it more bitterly. When they sin against their Father, their remorse is so keen that sin seems unforgiveable. As kind as God seems when they are happy and excited, so severe does He seem when they are unhappy. Excessively in enthusiasm for work when all goes well, they are beyond just measure chilled when all goes ill. In the same way the poets (one of whose chief characteristics is unfailing youth) are full of it. The completest portrayal of it in fairly modern English literature is James Thomson's *City of Dreadful Night*, but there is a shorter, though very famous, description of it in Matthew Arnold's 'Summer Night':

Most men in a brazen prison live,
Where, in the sun's hot eye,
With heads bent o'er their toil, they languidly
Their lives to some unmeaning taskwork give,
Dreaming of nought beyond their prison-wall.
And as, year after year,
Fresh products of their barren labour fall
From their tired hands, and rest
Never yet comes more near,
Gloom settles slowly down over their breast.
And while they try to stem
The waves of mournful thought by which they are prest,
Death in their prison reaches them,
Unfreed, having seen nothing, still unblest.

And, surprisingly at first sight, others who feel it sorely are the great humorists, who are often the greatest melancholiacs. In all lofty imaginations there is a touch of sadness, and those who know the most of the value of life know best its brittleness. And these men, with their wit and their humour, their fun, their wide acquaintance with the finest breathings of the human heart, are also very sad men. The man who created Falstaff and ancient Pistol, Beatrice and Mercutio, wrote *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. Most surprising of all, not only is such a mood possible to a Christian, it is in its fullness peculiar to a Christian. There is a depth of darkness which, as Bunyan cleverly changes his text from Jeremiah to tell us 'no man (*but a Christian*) passes through.' Only those who have lived in the glory of God's face can imagine the full bitterness of the times when that face is hidden.

3. *What causes accidy?* What are the causes of this mysterious assault on the energy and integrity of fine minds? If we look into them a little, we shall begin to understand why it has been classed as a sin, alien, as all sin is, to the spirit of Christianity, for of its five chief causes, most are not very creditable, and all are founded on something that has gone wrong with 'the true man God designed.'[1]

A certain proportion of it we can safely dismiss as beginning in that not very noble quality, mere affectation. There are people, especially among those who like to think of themselves as possessing what they call the artistic temperament, who deliberately cultivate a certain amount of melancholy. They like to look in the glass and think how gracefully miserable they are. Like the gentleman in the old play, they say, in effect,

Welcome, folded arms, and fixed eyes,
A sigh that piercing mortifies,
A look that's fastened to the ground,
A tongue chained up, without a sound![2]

But they forget that pose is sometimes dangerous. If we stay too long in one position we cannot get out of it easily, and this is as true of the soul as it is of the arm or leg.

But if we turn to the sincere people we find that melancholy of this kind invariably means that something is wrong. Sometimes, indeed, the cause is merely physical: we are coming to realize

[1] Ibsen, *Peer Gynt*.
[2] Fletcher, 'Hence, all you vain delights.'

nowadays how close is the interaction of body and soul, and how intimately one may affect the other. We look on life through the veil of the physical self, and a change in the veil may deeply affect our outlook. A distinguished scholar used to say that 'he believed in the patience of the saints—except when the wind was in the east.' Closely akin to this type is the melancholy that is part of the natural reaction after a great effort, particularly mental or spiritual. The student knows it well after an examination, the artist after a great creative period, the religious convert only too often after the stress of his new emotions has died down; and the fervent preacher sometimes sees a gloomy universe on Monday. They do not realize it is merely that jaded nerves are distorting their power of perception, just as blue spectacles make us unable to see the full colour of things. Curiously enough, while a great effort may do this, the *absence* of effort, especially when it is habitual, has the same effect. Happiness means vitality, and you can only have vitality when the vital functions are exercised. God did not put us into the world to sit still. So if we do not use the faculties He gave us we cannot expect to have the unclouded outlook on life that comes of the harmonious exercise of our power. Now, this languor, even when it is partly induced by circumstances (it never can be wholly so) may also proceed from selfishness, which is a further cause. A merely self-centred life is bound to have a certain sluggishness of response to spiritual appeals—and no man who cannot so respond is happy: at best he can only drug himself out of thinking.

Physical unfitness, nervous weariness, laziness, selfishness—none of them are very pleasant things. There is a fifth beyond them, a very subtle one, that attacks directly only educated, fairly intellectual people, though through them it may take ill effect on people of less trained minds, as when a quick-witted but mentally untrained working man or a young student accepts the teaching of Nietzsche as a kind of gospel. This cause is intellectual self-centredness—the habit of mind of the man who sees his cosmos in himself, and so builds up an elaborate tower of theory without looking to see if it has real foundations. Stopford Brooke has well described the consequences in the sphere of religion, though in these days we see it also only too often in regard to social and economic problems. In religion, he says, 'they build up theories of theology and explain all things by their theories; but they do not take the pains to bring their theories face to face with the facts of spiritual life. Suddenly their theory is forced into contact with a spiritual fact—the revolt, for example, of the moral sense of men against the punishment of the innocent as an adequate satisfaction for the sin of the guilty—and then the whole theory breaks up into fragments, and they either cling blindly to it in passionate anger, or they are plunged into the despair of eternal night. They become fanatics or infidels. Their dark anger, and their melancholy hopelessness, are alike ignoble.'[1]

4. *What cures accidy?* On looking over the causes already enumerated we see that they all spring from some misuse of the self. A wrong *ideal* for the self causes the 'pose' of melancholy. Too much *regard* for the self causes selfishness and the intellectual egoism referred to in the last paragraph. And it is wrong *use* of the self to neglect its instrument the body or to overstrain or under-employ its energies. Therefore the primary thing is to get right on these points.

The first two remedies are simple and obvious. First, don't caress your disease. We should take Dr. Johnson's advice, 'Make it an invariable and obligatory law to yourself never to mention your own mental diseases. If you are never to speak of them, you will think of them but little; and if you think little of them they will molest you rarely.'[2] Then be quite sure that your body is not deceiving you into, quite literally, a jaundiced view of the Universe. Sydney Smith's famous advice, given in jest, may very well be taken in serious earnest. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and the instruments God has given us to see and work in His universe, and surely it is our bounden duty to keep them in working order.

To attend to these points will probably get rid of the accidia in about six cases out of ten, and so set you free to do what God made you for, whatever that is: we may take it in any case that it was not to mope in a corner. But there are the other cases, and for these the remedy is almost always to get away from oneself. There are several ways of doing this. A method which sometimes has almost dramatic success is to make that most

[1] *Christ in Modern Life*, 239.
[2] Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, ii. 440.

amazing and revolutionary discovery that there are other people in the world besides oneself. The fountains of compassion and sympathy and the desire to help are opened, and the soul is refreshed by them. When one has realized this, the next step is to take Keble's advice: 'When you find yourself, as I daresay you sometimes do, overpowered as it were by melancholy, the best way is to go out, and do something kind to somebody or other.' If this is not available (and there are very few occasions when it is not) one can at least fill the mind with something else than one's own concerns. To quote Dr. Johnson again: 'If I were in the country, and were distressed by that malady, I would force myself to take a book; and every time I did it I should find it the easier. Melancholy, indeed, should be diverted by every means but drinking.'

In the long-run it comes to two things. The first is to keep oneself alive to the perpetual miraculousness of life, in the spirit of Stevenson's appeal to 'The Celestial Surgeon':

> If I have faltered more or less
> In my great task of happiness;
> If I have moved among my race
> And shown no glorious morning face;
> If beams from happy human eyes
> Have moved me not; if morning skies,
> Books, and my food, and summer rain
> Knocked on my sullen heart in vain;—
> Lord, Thy most pointed pleasure take
> And stab my spirit broad awake;
> Or, Lord, if too obdurate I,
> Choose Thou, before that spirit die,
> A piercing pain, a killing sin,
> And to my dead heart run them in.

And with this must go the great grace that is called Fortitude—the grace that makes men undertake hard things by their own will wisely and reasonably. Perhaps the truest Fortitude may often be a less heroic, a more tame and business-like affair than we are apt to think. It may be exercised chiefly in doing very little things whose whole value lies in this, that, if one did not hope in God, one would not do them; in secretly dispelling moods which one would like to show; in saying nothing about one's lesser troubles and vexations; in seeing whether it may not be best to bear a burden before one tries to see whither one can shift it; in refusing for one's self excuses which one would not refuse for others. These, anyhow, are ways in which a man may every day be strengthening himself in the discipline of Fortitude, and then, if greater things are asked of him, he is not very likely to draw back from them. For this we need a quiet and sober Fortitude, somewhat like that which Botticelli painted, and Ruskin has described. Let us hear his description of her.

'What is chiefly notable in her is—that you would not, if you had to guess who she was, take her for Fortitude at all. Everybody else's Fortitudes announce themselves clearly and proudly. They have tower-like shields and lion-like helmets, and stand firm astride on their legs, and are confidently ready for all comers. But Botticelli's Fortitude is no match, it may be, for any that are coming. Worn, somewhat, and not a little weary, instead of standing ready for all comers, she is sitting, apparently in reverie, her fingers playing restlessly and idly—nay, I think, even nervously—about the hilt of her sword. For her battle is not to begin to-day; nor did it begin yesterday. Many a morn and eve have passed since it began—and now—is this to be the ending day of it? And if this—by what manner of end? That is what Sandro's Fortitude is thinking, and the playing fingers about the sword-hilt would fain let it fall, if it might be; and yet, how swiftly and gladly will they close on it, when the far-off trumpet blows, which she will hear through all her reverie!'[1]

A TEXT.

'Be fruitful, and multiply.'—Gen. i. 22.

'That command was, according to the old story, delivered to a world inhabited by eight people. It has been handed down to a world in which it has long been ridiculously out of place, and has

[1] *Mornings in Florence*, iii. 57.

become merely the excuse for criminal recklessness among a race which has chosen to forget that the command was qualified by a solemn admonition: "At the hand of man, even at the hand of every man's brother, will I require the life of man." The high birth-rate has meant a vast slaughter of infants; it has meant, moreover, a perpetual oppression of the workers, disease, starvation, and death among the adult population; it has meant, further, a bloodthirsty economic competition, militarism, warfare. It has meant that all civilization has from time to time become a thin crust over a volcano of revolution, and the human race has gone on lightly dancing there, striving to forget that ancient warning from a soul of things even deeper than the voice of Jehovah: "At the hand of man will I require the life of man." Men have recklessly followed the will-o'-the-wisp which represented mere multiplication of their inefficient selves as the ideal of progress, quantity before quality, the notion that in an orgy of universal procreation could consist the highest good of humanity.'

The words are strong: but it is not a tale of little meaning. It is the passionate appeal for birth control of a man who has a right, by long study of and devotion to sex problems, to make it—Mr. Havelock Ellis.

Mr. Ellis has published a volume of *Little Essays of Love and Virtue* (Black; 6s. net). They deal throughout with matters of sex relationship, and they deal with them plainly. But there is no evil. There is the most earnest and responsible will to save life—moral as well as physical—not to destroy it. In such chapters as those on 'The Love Rights of Women' and 'The Play-Function of Sex' there is even the most heart-searching matter for men and husbands.

SOME TOPICS.

Self-Culture.

The poison of self-culture—no matter how reasonable, how enlightened, how successful—is beyond all words deadly.[1]

[1] E. Lyttelton, *Letters on Education*, p. 14.

Patriotism.

It is a truism that patriotism has been lauded and preached and taught to children as a prime virtue: and that it means the desire for the welfare of our own nation; far stronger than the desire for the welfare of other nations, indeed excluding the latter completely. How has it worked? Devilishly—there is no other word for it. The nations, as civilization spread, became more and more united externally by commerce, that is, by growing identity of interests, but along with that and spurred by it they have been infected with the ego-centric spirit of competition, and the result is Pandemonium, or the rendering the whole of this interesting little planet of ours uninhabitable. Of course our way of pursuing self-interest, being British, seemed in our eyes to be on a higher plane than the German way, and doubtless it was more humane, but it was just as self-centred.[2]

Absence of Mind.

Not only did we 'build up the British Empire in a fit of absence of mind'—I heard John Seeley utter those pregnant words on the platform in 1880—but we had no notion, till Parkin and Chamberlain told us, what it was we had done. Thus we were saved from self-complacency by our native blindness; but to-day there is serious risk that our modern efforts to probe the situation will induce the 'swelled head.'[3]

The Spirit of India.

Rabindranath Tagore's new book, *Creative Unity* (Macmillan; 7s. 6d. net), is his best book. That is our deliberate opinion after much reading of his books. How is it best? In insight, in sanity, in religiousness, in revelation of that which it is always his aim to reveal—the spirit of India.

He says:

'The view of this world which India has taken

[2] *Ibid.* p. 16.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 48.

is summed up in one compound Sanskrit word, Sachidānanda. The meaning is that Reality, which is essentially one, has three phases. The first is Sat; it is the simple fact that things are, the fact which relates us to all things through the relationship of common existence. The second is Chit; it is the fact that we know, which relates us to all things through the relationship of knowledge. The third is Ananda: it is the fact that we enjoy, which unites us with all things through the relationship of love.'

But, more characteristically, he says:

'One day, in a small village in Bengal, an ascetic woman from the neighbourhood came to see me. She had the name "Sarva-khepi" given to her by the village people, the meaning of which is "the woman who is mad about all things." She fixed her star-like eyes upon my face and startled me with the question, "When are you coming to meet me underneath the trees?" Evidently she pitied me who lived (according to her) prisoned behind walls, banished away from the great meeting-place of the All, where she had her dwelling. Just at that moment my gardener came with his basket, and when the woman understood that the flowers in the vase on my table were going to be thrown away, to make place for the fresh ones, she looked pained and said to me, "You are always engaged reading and writing; you do not see." Then she took the discarded flowers in her palms, kissed them and touched them with her forehead, and reverently murmured to herself, "Beloved of my heart." I felt that this woman, in her direct vision of the infinite personality in the heart of all things, truly represented the spirit of India.'

NEW POETRY.

Claude Houghton.

Messrs. Daniel are the publishers of a series of plays for 'A People's Theatre.' Of one of the plays the title is *Judas*, and the author Claude Houghton (3s. 6d. net). It is a powerful play, most unexpectedly moving and even enlightening. Judas is, of course, the villain of the piece, but he is not by any means the villain we have been accustomed to call him. He is an idealist, but without patience. The Kingdom is too long in coming. Christ can bring it, but Judas must force His hand. The idea is not new, but neither Whately nor De Quincey worked it out more impressively than it is worked out here. Especially effective is the character of Ruth, Judas' fiancée. She believes in Jesus, but her love for Judas seems, for a time at least, to overwhelm that.

'Speak not of him.
I would he had not come. Bid him return
To the eternal highway of the heavens:
His love is not our love, his joy not ours—
How should we climb the summit of his hope
To view the smiling splendour of his kingdom?
He is beyond, without, above our reach,
Too fair for our mortality, too fine
For our gross passion: we are of the earth,
Kneaded by nature of earth's earthy clay,
Our passions wax and wane, as seasons pass
Into the years that spell our life and death,
Until our weariness finds peace at last
In earth again. The earth our portion is
As heaven is his birthright. Bid him go.
What shall he say to us, or we to him?
How shall we bear the burthen of his love?
How shall we be as gods? Bid him begone.
He robs our firmament of joy, to dower
An unseen midnight with a spectral glory,
Leaving all dark for us.'

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