

# The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the  
Extension of the Religious-Parliament Idea

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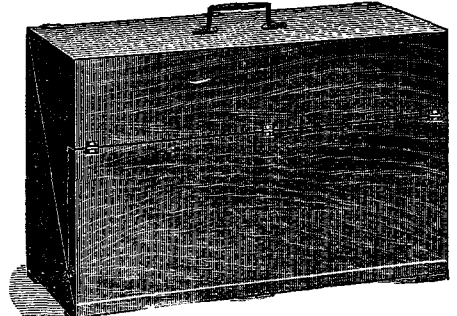
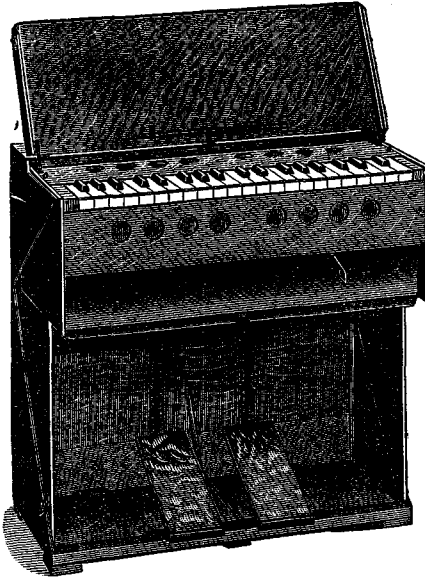
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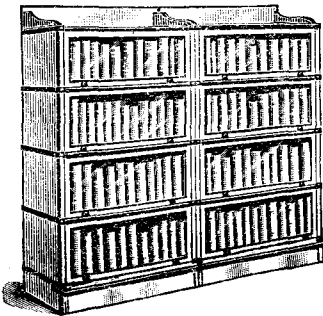


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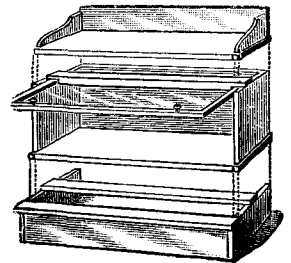
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## SOLOMONIC LITERATURE.

BY MONCURE D. CONWAY.

### SOLOMON AND THE SATANS.

WHEN Solomon ascended the throne, Jerusalem must have been a wretched place without any art or architecture, with a swarming mongrel population, mainly of paupers. The holy ark was kept in a tent, and the altar of unhewn stone accurately symbolised the rude condition of the people, among whom Solomon could find no workmen of skill enough to build a temple. It is not easy to forgive him for compelling a good many of them into the public works; but it was probably no more than a national conscription of the unemployed paupers in Jerusalem, chiefly on fortifications for their own defence. There was apparently no slave-mart, and it seems rather better to conscript people for public industries than, in our modern way, for cutting their neighbor's throats. Most of them were the remnants of tribes that once occupied the region, much despised by the Israelites, and probably they looked on Solomon's plan of building Jerusalem into a city of magnificence, giving everybody employment and support, as a grand socialistic movement. An Ephraimite, Jeroboam, who tried to get up a revolt in Jerusalem does not seem to have found any adherents. The only people who complained of any yoke—and their complaint is only heard of after some centuries—were the priest-ridden and prophet-ridden Israelites who had become fanatically excited about the strange shrines built for the king's foreign wives, and the splendid carvings and forms in the temple itself. Probably the first two commandments in the decalogue were put there with special reference to some Solomonic cult with an æsthetic taste for graven images and foreign shrines.

There can be little doubt that Solomon, by his patronage of these foreign religions, detached them from the cruel rites traditionally associated with them. Among all the censures pronounced against him none attributes to him any human sacrifices, though such are ascribed to David and Samuel. (1 Sam. xv. 33, 2 Sam. xxi. 9.) The earliest rebukes of sacrifice in the Bible are those attributed to Solomon. "To do justice and judgement is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice" (Prov. xxi. 3). "By mercy and truth iniquity is atoned for" (Prov. xvi. 6). "Mercy and truth preserve the king; he upholdeth his throne by mercy" (Prov. xx. 28). "Deliver them that are carried away to death: those that are ready to be slain forbear not thou to save" (Prov. xxiv. 11). "Love covereth all transgressions" (Prov. x. 12).

Solomon may not indeed have written these and the many similar maxims ascribed to him, but they are among the most ancient sentences in the Bible, and they would not have been attributed to any man who had not left among the people a tradition of humanity and benevolence. Had the royal "idolator" or his wives stained their shrines with human blood the prophets would have been eager to declare it. Two acts of cruelty are ascribed to Solomon's youth, in the book of Kings: one of these, the execution of Shimei, carried out his father's order, but only after Shimei had been given fair warning with means of escape; while the other, the execution of Adonijah (Solomon's brother), if true, is too much wrapped up in obscurity to enable us to judge its motives; but it cannot be regarded as historic.

The second historiographer of Kings, setting out to record Jahveh's anger about Solomon's foreign wives and shrines (1 K. xi.) says, with unconscious humor, that Jahveh raised Satan against him,—two Satans. One of these was Hadad, an Edomite, the other Rezon, a Syrian. The writer says that this was when Solomon was old, his wives having then turned away his heart after other gods. Fortunately, however, this writer has embodied in his record some items, evidently borrowed, which contradict his Jahvistic legend. One of these tells us that Hadad had been carried away from Edom to Egypt, when David and his Captain Joab massacred all the males in Edom; that he there married the sister of Pharaoh; and that he returned to his own country on hearing of the death of David and Joab. When this occurred, Solomon, so far from being old, was about eighteen. The Septuagint (Vatican MS.) says that Hadad "reigned in the land of Edom." We may conclude then that on the return of this heir to the throne Edom

declared its independence, nor is there any indication that Solomon tried to prevent this. Another contradiction of this writer is a note inserted about Rezon the Syrian,—“He was an adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon.” Not therefore a Satan raised up by Jahvah against Solomon when in old age he had turned to other gods. Rezon “reigned over Syria,” and there is no indication of any expedition against him sent out by Solomon. Bishop Colenso (*Pentateuch*, Vol. III., p. 101), in referring to these points, remarks that we do not read of a single warlike expedition undertaken by Solomon.<sup>1</sup>

The remark (1 Kings xi.) about the Satans set against Solomon is more applicable to the Shiloh traitors, Ahijah and Jeroboam. Jeroboam,—a servant whom Solomon had raised to high office,—was instigated by Ahijah, a “prophet” neglected by Solomon, to his ungrateful treason. Ahijah pretended that he had a divine revelation that he (Jeroboam) was to succeed Solomon on account (of course!) of the king’s shrines to Istar, Chemosh, and Milcom. If the narrative were really historic nothing could be more “Satanic” than the lies and treacheries related of those self-seekers. Were the story true, the failure of these divinely appointed “Satans” to overthrow the kingdom of Solomon, who did not arm against them, must have been due to his popularity. In after times this impunity of the glorious “idolator” would have to be explained; consequently we find Jahveh telling Solomon that, offended as he was by the shrines, he would spare him for his father’s sake, but would rend the kingdom, save one tribe, from his (Solomon’s) son. That this should be immediately followed by the raising up of “Satans” to harass Solomon and Israel, Jahveh having just said the trouble should be postponed till after the king’s death, suggests that the whole account of these quarrels (1 K. xi. 14–40) is a late interpolation. Up to that point the old record is unbroken. “He had peace on all sides round about him. And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, from Dan to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon” (1 K. iv. 24–25).

Jahveh, in his personal interview with Solomon (1 K. xi. 11–13), said, “I will surely rend the kingdom from thee and will give

<sup>1</sup> The marriage of Hadad with Pharaoh’s sister and that of Solomon shortly after with Pharaoh’s daughter might naturally, Colenso says, lead to some amicable arrangement between these two young princes, representing respectively the ancient domains of Jacob and Esau, and the Bishop adds the pregnant suggestion: “Thus also would be explained another phenomenon in connexion with this matter which we observe in the Jehovistic portions of Genesis—viz., the *reconciliation* of Esau and Jacob” (Gen. xxxiii). That Solomon was on good terms with Edom appears by the fact that his naval station was in that land (1 K. ix. 26).

it to thy servant." That is, as explained by the "prophet" Ahijah, to Jeroboam. As a retribution and check on idolatry the selection, besides violating Jahveh's promise to David (1 Chron. xxii), was not successful: after the sundering of Israel and Judah into internecine kingdoms, Jeroboam, King of Israel, established idolatry more actively than either Solomon or his son Rehoboam. On Jeroboam, his selected Nemesis, Jahveh inflicted his characteristic punishment of visiting the sins of the fathers on the children: as David was left the seduced wife whose husband he had murdered, while his son was executed; as Solomon was left in peaceful enjoyment of his kingdom and none of the sinful shrines destroyed, while his son bore the penalty; so now Jeroboam, elect of Jahveh, built golden calves, surpassed Solomon's offences, and vengeance was taken on his son Abijah, who died. This Abijah left a son, Baasha, who, undeterred by these fatalities, continued the "idolatries" with impunity for the twenty-four years of his reign, the punishment falling on his son Elah, who was slain after only two years reign by his military servant Zimri. And this Zimri, who thus carried on Jahveh's decree against idolatry, himself continued "in the ways of Jeroboam," the shrines and idols themselves being meanwhile unvisited by any executioner or iconoclast until some centuries later.

In Josiah there arrived a king, of the line of David, who might seem by his fury against idolatry to be another "man after God's own heart." He pulverised the images and the shrines, he "sacrificed the priests on their own altars," he even dug up the bones of those who had ministered at such altars and burnt them. He trusted Jahveh absolutely. He went to the prophetess Hulda who told him that he should be "gathered to his grave in peace." He was slain miserably, by the King of Egypt, to whom the country then became subject.

Josephus ascribed the act of Josiah, in hurling himself against an army that was not attacking him, to fate. The fate was that Josiah, having exterminated the wizards and fortune-tellers, repaired to the only dangerous one among them, because she pretended to be a "prophetess," inspired by Jahveh. Her assurances led him to believe himself invulnerable, personally, and that in his life-time Jerusalem would not suffer the woes she predicted. Josiah, "of the house of David," seems to have thought that his zeal in destroying the shrines which his ancestor Solomon had introduced, mainly Egyptian, would be so grandly consummated if he could destroy a Pharaoh, that he insisted on a combat. Pharaoh-

Necho sent an embassy to say that he was not his enemy, but on his way to fight the Assyrian: "God commanded me to hasten; forbear thou from opposing God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not." Here, however, was the fanatic's opportunity for an Armageddon: Pharaoh had appealed to what Solomon would have regarded as their common deity, but which to Josiah meant a chance to pit Jahveh against the God of Egypt. On Jahveh's invisible forces he must have depended for victory. So perished Josiah, and with him the independence of his country.

Solomon, the Prince of Peace, had made the house of Pharaoh the ally of his country. Josiah carries his people back under Egyptian bondage. Solomon had built the metropolitan Temple, whose shrines, symbols, works of art, represented a catholicity to all races and religions,—peace on earth, good will to man. Josiah, panic-stricken about a holy book purporting to have been found in the Temple, concerning which the King by his counsellors consulted a female fortune-teller, makes a holocaust of all that Solomon had built up.

#### THE SONG OF SONGS.

The praise of the virtuous woman, at the close of the Proverbs, is given a Jahvist turn by verse 30: "Favour is deceitful and beauty vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." But the Solomonists also had their ideas of the virtuous woman, and of beauty, these being beautifully expressed in a series of dramatic idylls entitled *The Song of Songs*. To this latter, in the original title, is added, "which is Solomon's"; and it confirms what has been said concerning the superstitious awe of everything proceeding from Solomon, and the dread of insulting the Holy Spirit of Wisdom supernaturally lodged in him, that we find in the Bible these passionate love songs. And indeed Solomon must have been superlatively wise to have written poems in which his greatness is slightly ridiculed. That of course would be by no means incredible in a man of genuine wisdom—on the contrary would be characteristic—if other conditions were met by the tradition of his authorship.

At the outset, however, we are confronted by the question whether the *Song of Songs* has any general coherency or dramatic character at all. Several modern critics of learning, among them

Prof. Karl Budde and the late Edward Reuss, find the book a collection of unconnected lyrics, and Professor Cornill of Königsberg has added the great weight of his name to that opinion (*Einleitung in das Alte Testament*. 1891. Pp. 236). Unfortunately Professor Cornill's treatment is brief, and not accompanied by an analysis of the book. He favors as a principle Reuss's division of Canticles into separate idylls, and thinks there has been imported into the collection of songs an imaginary system and significance. This is certainly true of the "allegorical" purport, aim, and religious ideas ascribed to the book, but Professor Cornill's reference to Herder seems to leave the door open for further treatment of the Song of Songs from a purely literary standpoint. He praises Herder's discernment in describing the book as a string of pearls, but passes without criticism or denial Herder's further view that there are indications of editorial modifications of some of the lyrics. For what purpose? Herder also pointed out that various individualities and conditions are represented. This indeed appears undeniable: here are prince and shepherd, the tender mother, the cruel brothers, the rough watchman, the dancer, the bride and bridegroom. The *dramatis personæ* are certainly present: but is there any drama?

Admitting that there was no ancient Hebrew theatre, the question remains whether among the later Hellenic Jews the old songs were not arranged, and new ones added, in some kind of *Singspiele* or vaudeville. There seems to be a chorus. It is hardly consistent with the general artistic quality of the compilation that the lady should say "I am swarthy *but comely*," or "I am a lily of the valley" (a gorgeous flower). Surely the compliments are ejaculations of the chorus. And may we not ascribe to a chorus the questions, "Who is this that cometh up out of the wilderness?" etc. (iii. 6-10.) "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" (v. 9.) "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness leaning upon her lover?" (viii. 5.)

As in the modern *vaudeville* songs are often introduced without any special relation to the play, so we find in Canticles some songs that might be transposed from one chapter to another without marring the work, but is this the case with all of them? The song in the first chapter, for instance, in which the damsel, brought by the King into his palace, tells the ladies of the home she left, and of maltreatment by her brothers, who took her from her own vineyard and made her work in theirs, where she was sunburnt,—this could not be placed effectively at the end of the book, nor the

triumphant line, "My vineyard, which is mine own, is before me," be set at the beginning. This is but one of several instances which might be quoted. Even pearls may be strung with definite purpose, as in a rosary, and how perfectly set is the great rose set, the hymn to Love in the final chapter! Or to remember Professor Cornill's word *Scenenwechsel*, along with his affirmation that the love of human lovers is the burden of the "unrivalled" book, there are some sequences and contrasts which do give some impression of dissolving views, and occasionally reveal a connexion between separate tableaux. For example the same words (which I conjecture to be those of a chorus) are used to introduce Solomon in pompous palanquin with grand escort, that are presently used to greet the united lovers.

"Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness like pillars of smoke"? (iii.6.)

"Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness

Leaning upon her beloved"? (viii. 5.)

These are five chapters apart, yet surely they may be supposed connected without *Hincininterpretation*. Any single contrast of this kind might be supposed a mere coincidence, but there are two others drawn between the swarthy maiden and the monarch. The tableau of Solomon in his splendor dissolves into another of his Queen Mother crowning him on the day of his espousal: that of Shulamith leaning on her beloved dissolves into another of *her* mother pledging her to her lover in espousals under an apple tree. And then we find (viii. 11, 12) Solomon's distant vineyards tended by many hirelings contrasted with Shulamith's own little vineyard tended by herself.

The theory that the book is a collection of bridal songs, and that the mention of Solomon is due to an eastern custom of designating the bridegroom and bride as Solomon and Queen Shulamith, during their honeymoon, does not seem consistent with the fact that in several allusions to Solomon his royal state is slighted, whereas only compliments would be paid to a bridegroom. Moreover the two—Shulamith and Solomon—are not named together in any one place idyll. It will, I think, appear as we proceed that the Shelomoh (Solomon) of Canticles represents a distinct conventionalisation of the monarch, with some traits not found in any other book in the Bible. Nevertheless there is one verse near the close, to be presently considered, which suggests that the bride and bridegroom are at that one point represented, though not exactly named, as Solomon and Solomona.

Renan assigned Canticles the date B. C. 992-952, mainly because in it Tirza is coupled with Jerusalem. Tirza was a capital only during those years, and at any later period was too insignificant a town to be spoken of as in the Song vi. 4 :

" Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah,  
Comely as Jerusalem,  
Dazzling as bannered ranks."

But Mr. Russell Martineau, a thorough and unbiassed scholar, points out in the work phrases from Greek authors of the third century B. C., and assigns a date not earlier than B. C. 247-222.<sup>1</sup> But may it not be that the Alexandrian of the third century built on some earlier foundation, as Shakespeare adapted the "Pound of Flesh" and the "Three Caskets" (Merchant of Venice) from tales traceable as far back as early Buddhist literature? or as Marlowe and Goethe used the mediæval legend of Faustus?

The several songs can hardly be assigned to one and the same century. The coupling of Tirza and Jerusalem points to a remote past for that particular lyric, and is it credible that any Jew after Josiah's time could have written the figleafless songs so minutely descriptive of Shelumith's physical charms? Could any Jewish writer of the third century before our era have written iv. 1-7 or vii. 1-9, regarding no name or place as too sacred to be pressed into his hyperboles of raptures at every detail of the maiden's form, and have done this in perfect innocence, without a blush? Or if such a poet could have existed in the later Jahvist times, would his songs have found their place in the Jewish canon? As it was the book was admitted only with a provision that no Jew under thirty years of age should read it. That it was included at all was due to the occult pious meanings read into it by rabbins, while it is tolerably certain that the realistic flesh-painting would have been expunged but for sanctions of antiquity similar to those which now protect so many old classics from expurgation by our Vice Societies. These songs, sensuous without sensuality, with their Oriental accent, seem ancient enough to have been brought by Solomon from Ophir.

On the other hand one cannot now, with Herder, ascribe the whole book to the Solomonic period. The exquisite exaltation of Love, as a human passion (viii. 6, 7), brings us into the refined atmosphere amid which Eros was developed, and and it is immediately followed by a song that hardly rises above doggerel (viii. 8,

<sup>1</sup> *American Journal of Philology*. Vol. III.



9). This is an interruption of the poem that looks as if suggested by the line that follows it (first line of verse 10) and meant to be comic. It impresses me as a very late interpolation, and by a hand inferior to the Alexandrian artist who in style has so well matched the more ancient pieces in his literary mosaic. Herder finds the collection as a whole Solomonic, and makes the striking suggestion that its author at a more mature age would take the tone of Ecclesiasticus.

Considered simply as a literary production, the composition makes on my own mind the impression of a romance conveyed in idylls, each presenting a picturesque situation or a scene, the general theme and *motif* being that of the great Solomonic Psalm.

This psalm (xlv.), quoted and discussed in a former article brings before us a beautiful maiden brought from a distant region to the court, but not quite happy: she is entreated to forget her people and enjoy the dignities and luxuries offered by her lord, the King. This psalm is remarkable in its intimations of a freedom of sentiment accorded to the ladies wooed by Solomon, and the same spirit pervades Canticles. Its chief refrain is that love must not be coerced or awakened until it please. This magnanimity might naturally connect the name of Solomon with old songs of love and courtship such as those utilised and multiplied in this book, whose composition might be naturally entitled A Song (made) of Songs Which Are Solomon's.

The heroine, whose name is Shulamith,—feminine of Shelomoh Solomon)<sup>1</sup>—is an only daughter, cherished by her apparently wid-

<sup>1</sup>In 1 Chron. iii. 19 Shelomith is a descendant of Solomon. In my article "Abishag the Shulamith," 1 Kings, i. 2, will be conjecturally connected with Psalm xlv., and the identity of her name with Shulamith has also been mentioned. This identity of the names was suggested by Gesenius and accepted by Fürst, Renan, and others. Abishag is therefore also called "Solomona." In 1 Kings i. there is some indication of a *lacuna* between verses 4 and 5. "And the damsel (Abishag) was very fair; and she cherished the King and ministered to him; but the King knew her not. Then"—what? Why, all about Adonijah's effort to become king. David did not marry Abishag; she remained a maiden after his death and free to wed either of the brothers. The care with which this is certified was probably followed by some story either of her cleverness or of her relations with Solomon which gave her the name Shulamith—Shulamith—Solomona. Of the Shulamith it is said they found her far away and "brought her to the King": and in the beginning of the Song Shulamith says "The King hath brought me into his chambers." This suggests a probability of legends having arisen concerning Abishag, and concerning the lady entreated in Psalm lxxv., which, had they been preserved, might perhaps account for the coincidence of names, as well as the parallelism of the situations at court of the lady of the psalm, of Abishag the Shulamith, and of Shulamith.

The "great woman" called Shulamith in 2 Kings 4 was probably so called because of her "wisdom" in discerning the prophet Elisha, and the reference to the town of Shunem (verse 8) inserted by a writer who misunderstood the meaning of Shulamith. This story is unknown to Josephus, though he tells the story of the widow's pot of oil immediately preceding, in the same chapter, and asserts that he has gone over the acts of Elisha "particularly," "as we have them set down in the sacred books." (*Antig.* Book ix. ch. 4.) The chapter (2 Kings iv.) is mainly a mere travesty of the stories told in 1 Kings xvii., transparently meant to certify that the miraculous

owed mother but maltreated by her brothers. Incensed against her, they compel Shulamith to keep their vineyards to the neglect of her own. She becomes sunburnt, "swarthy," but is very "attractive," and is brought by Solomon to his palace, where she delights the ladies by her beauty and dances. In what I suppose to be one of the ancient Solomonic Songs embodied in the work it is said :

" There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines,  
And maidens without number :  
Beyond compare is my dove, my unsoiled ;  
She is the only one of her mother,  
The cherished one of her that bare her :  
The daughters saw her and called her blessed,  
Yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her."<sup>1</sup>

Thus far the *motif* seems to be that of a Cinderella oppressed by brothers but exalted by the most magnificent of princes. But here the plot changes. The magnificence of Solomon cannot allure from her shepherd lover this "lily of the valley." Her lover visits her in the palace, where her now relenting brothers (vi. 12) seem to appear (though this is doubtful) and witness her triumphs ; and all are in raptures at her dancing and her amply displayed charms—all unless one (perhaps the lover) who, according to a doubtful interpretation, complains that they should gaze at her as at dancers in the camps (vi. 13).<sup>2</sup>

Although Mr. Russell Martineau believes, against most other commentators, that Solomon is only a part of the scene, and not among the *dramatis personæ*, the King certainly seems to be occasionally present, as in the following dialogue, where I give the probable, though of course conjectural, names. The dancer has approached the King while at table.

*Solomon—*

" I have compared thee, O my love,  
To my steed in Pharaoh's chariots.  
Thy cheeks are comely with plaits of hair,  
Thy neck with strings of jewels.  
We will make thee plaits of gold  
With studs of silver."

power of Elijah had passed with his mantle to Elisha. There is no mention of Shanem in the original legend.

<sup>1</sup> Compare Psalm xlv. 12-15.

<sup>2</sup> 1. "Why will ye look upon Shulamith as upon the dance of Mahanaim?" The sense is obscure. Cf. Gen. xxxii. 2, where Jacob names a place Manhanaim, literally two armies or camps; but it was in honor of the angels that met him there, and it is possible that Shulamith is here compared to an angel. If the verse means any plish at the dancer's display of her person it is the trace of the fig-leaf in the book, and betrays the Alexandrian.

*Shulamith, who on leaving the King meets her jealous lover—*

“ While the King sat at his table  
My spikenard sent forth its odor.  
My beloved is unto me as a bag of myrrh  
That lieth between my breasts,  
My beloved is unto me as a cluster of henna-flowers  
In the vineyards of En-gedi.”

*Shepherd Lover—*

“ Behold thou art fair, my love, behold thou art fair ;  
Thine eyes are as doves,  
Behold thou art fair, my beloved, yea pleasant :  
Also our couch is green.  
The beams of our house are of cedar,  
And our rafters are of fir.”

*Shulamith—*

“ I am a (mere) crocus of the plain.”

*Chorus—*

“ A lily of the valleys.”

*Shepherd Lover—*

“ As a lily among thorns  
So is my love among the daughters.”

*Shulamith—*

“ As the apple-tree among forest trees  
So is my beloved among the sons.  
I sat down under his shadow with great delight,  
And his fruit was sweet to my taste.”

Here we find the damsel anointing the king with her spikenard, but for her the precious fragrance is her shepherd. Against the plaits of gold and studs of silver offered in the palace (i. 2) her lover can only point to his cottage of cedar and fir, and a couch of grass. She is content to be only a flower of the plain and valley, not for the seraglio. Nevertheless she remains to dance in the palace; a sufficient time there is needed by the poet to illustrate the impregnability of true love against all other splendors and attractions, even those of the Flower of Kings, who however puts no constraint on her, one song, thrice repeated, saying to the ladies of the harem—

“ I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,  
By the (free) gazelles, by the hinds in the field,  
That ye stir not up, nor awaken love,  
Until it please.”

This refrain is repeated the second time just before a picture of Solomon's glory, shaded by a suggestion that all is not bright-

ness even around this Prince of Peace. The ladies of the seraglio are summoned to look out and see the passing of the King in state, seated on his palanquin of purple and gold, but escorted by armed men "because of fear in the night." In immediate contrast with that scene, we see Shulamith going off with her humble lover, now his bride, to his field and to her vineyard, and singing a beautiful song of love, strong as death, flame-tipped arrow of a god, unquenchable, unpurchasable.

" If a man offer all the wealth of his house for love  
He would only be despised."

Though according to the revised version of (vi. 12) her relatives are princely, and it may be they who invite her to return (vi. 13), she says, "I am my beloved's." With him she will go into the field and lodge in the village (vii. 10, 11). She finds her own little garden and does not envy Solomon.

" Solomon hath a vineyard at Baalhamon ;  
He hath let out the vineyard to keepers ;  
Each for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver :  
My vineyard, which is mine, is before me :  
Thou, O Solomon, shalt have the thousand,  
And those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred."

There was, as we see in Koheleth, a prevailing tradition that Solomon felt the hollowness of his palatial life. "See life with a woman thou lovest." The wife is the fountain :

" Bethink thee of thy fountain  
In the days of thy youth."

This perhaps gave rise to a theory that the shepherd lover was Solomon himself in disguise, like the god Krishna among the cow-maidens. It does not appear probable that any thought of that kind was in the writer of this Song. Certainly there appears not to be any purpose of lowering Solomon personally in enthroning Love above him. There is no hint of any religious or moral objection to him, and indeed throughout the work Solomon appears in a favorable light personally,—he is beloved by the daughters of Jerusalem (v. 10)—while his royal estate is, as we have seen, shown in a light not altogether enviable. Threescore mighty men guard him : "every man hath his sword upon his thigh" (cf. Psalms xlv. 3) "because of fear in the night," and "the day of the gladness of his heart" was the day of his espousals (iii. 8, 11. His "gladness," by the way, is mentioned also in Psalms xlv. 7).

It is not improbable that there is an allusion to Solomon's magic seal in the first lines of the hymn to Love (viii. 6). The legend of the Ring must have been long in growing to the form in which it is found in the Talmud, where it is said that Solomon's "fear in the night" arose from his apprehension that the Devil might again get hold of his Ring, with which he (Aschmedai) had wrought so much mischief. (*Gittin.* Vol. 68, col. 1, 2). The hymn strikes me as late Alexandrian :

" Wear me as a seal on thy breast  
As a seal-ring on thine arm :  
For love is strong as death,  
Its passion unappeasable as the grave ;  
Its shafts are arrows of fire,  
The lightnings of a god. [Jah.]  
Many waters cannot quench love,  
Deluges cannot overwhelm it.  
Should a noble offer all the wealth of his house for love  
It would be utterly spurned."

Excluding the interrupting verses 8 and 9, the hymn is followed by a song about Solomon's vineyard, preceded by two lines which appear to me to possess a significance overlooked by commentators. Shulamith (evidently) speaks :

" I was a wall, my breasts like its towers :  
Thus have I been in his eyes as one finding peace.  
Solomon hath a vineyard," etc. [as above.]

The word "peace" is *Shalôm*; it is immediately followed by *Shelomoh* (Solomon, "peaceful"); and *Shulamith* (also meaning "peaceful"), thus brings together the fortress of her lover's peace, her own breast, and the fortifications built by the peaceful King (who never attacked but was always prepared for defence). Here surely, at the close of Canticles, is a sort of tableau : *Shalôm*, *Shulamith*, *Shelomoh* : Peace, the prince of Peace, the queen of Peace. If this were the only lyric one would surely infer that these were the bride and bridegroom, under the benediction of Peace. It is not improbable that at this climax of the poem *Shulamith* means that in her lover she has found her Solomon, and he found in her his *Solomona*,—their reciprocal strongholds of *Shalôm* or peace.

Of course my interpretations of the Song of Songs are largely conjectural, as all other interpretations necessarily are. The songs are there to be somehow explained, and it is of importance that every unbiassed student of the book should state his conjectures, these being based on the contents of the book, and not on the dog-

matic theories which have been projected into it. I have been compelled, under the necessary limitations of an essay like the present, to omit interesting details in the work, but have endeavored to convey the impression left on my own mind by a totally unprejudiced study. The conviction has grown upon me with every step that, even at the lowest date ever assigned it, the work represents the earliest full expression of romantic love known in any language. It is so entirely free from fabulous, supernatural, or even pious incidents and accents, so human and realistic, that its having escaped the modern playwright can only be attributed to the superstitious encrustations by which its beauty has been concealed for many centuries.

This process of perversion was begun by Jewish Jahvists, but they have been far surpassed by our A. S. version, whose solemn nonsense at most of the chapter heads in the Bible here reached its climax. It is a remarkable illustration of the depths of fatuity to which clerical minds may be brought by prepossession, that the closing chapter of Canticles, with its beautiful exaltation of romantic love, could be headed: "*The love of the Church to Christ. The vehemency of Love. The calling of the Gentiles. The Church Prayeth for Christ's coming.*" The "Higher Criticism" is now turning the headings into comedy, but they have done—nay, are continuing—their very serious work of misdirection.

It has already been noted that the Jewish doctors exalted Bathsheba, adulteress as she was, into a blessed woman, probably because of the allusion to her in the Song (iii. 2) as having crowned her royal Son, who had become mystical; and it can only be ascribed to Protestantism that, instead of the Queen-Mother Mary, the Church becomes Bathsheba's successor in our version: "*The Church glorieth in Christ.*" And of course the shepherd lover's feeding (his flock) among the lilies becomes "*Christ's care of the Church.*"

But for such fantasies the beautiful Song of Songs might indeed never have been preserved at all, yet is it a scandal that Bibles containing chapter-headings known by all educated Christians to be falsifications, should be circulated in every part of the world, and chiefly among ignorant and easily misled minds. These simple people, reading the anathemas pronounced in their Bibles on those who add anything to the book given them as the "Word of God" (Deuteronomy iv. 2, xii. 32, Proverbs xxx. 6, Revelation xxii. 18), cannot imagine that these chapter-headings are not in the original books, but forged. And what can be more brazenly fraud-

ulent than the chapter-heading to one of these very passages (Revelation xxii. 18, 19), where nothing is said of the "Word of God," but over which is printed: "18. Nothing may be added to the word of God, nor taken therefrom." But even the learned cannot quite escape the effect of these perversions. How far they reach is illustrated in the fate of Mary Magdalen, a perfectly innocent woman according to the New Testament, yet by a single chapter-heading in Luke branded for all time as the "sinner" who anointed Jesus,—“Magdalen” being now in our dictionaries as a repentant prostitute. Yet there are hundreds of additions to the Bible more harmful than this,—additions which, whether honestly made or not originally, are now notoriously fraudulent. It is especially necessary in the interest of the Solomonic and secular literature in the Bible that Truth shall be liberated from the malarious well—Jahvist and ecclesiastical—in which she has long been sunk by mistranslation, interpolation, and chapter-headings. The Christian churches are to be credited with having produced critics brave enough to expose most of these impositions, and it is now the manifest duty of all public teachers and literary leaders to uphold those scholars, to protest against the continuance of the propaganda of pious frauds, and to insist upon the supremacy of truth.