

The form in which the word 'idle' is presented is far more used in Arabic than in classic Aramaic.

22<sup>5</sup>. *But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his merchandise.* The second letter of the Syriac word expressing 'merchandise' is moved by a pthâha, as in Arabic, and not with a Rewaha, as in Aramaic.

The influence of a strong Cananeo-Arabic current may, therefore, safely be admitted in the Lewisian Version, as the fact has been clearly noticed, for the Old Testament, in the Book of Job. In the sentences quoted above, and in

many others, the Curetonian text is in accordance with the classic Syriac, and its morphologic and lexicologic wording is generally similar to the Osrhoénian Pshitta.

Would it be too rash to suppose that the Lewisian text has been written in Syria, in a place not very far from Antioch, where, in later generations, when the Hellenization of the country was warmly undertaken by Byzantium, the Syro-Palestinian dialect saw the light?

A. MINGANA.

*Woodbrooke, Birmingham.*

## Entre Nous.

Prayers for Children, for Boys or Girls, for Young Men or Women.

Three books are offered for the three best prayers for children, three books for the three best prayers for boys or girls, and three books for the three best prayers for young men or women. The prayers may be original or quoted. Any volume may be chosen out of the *Great Texts of the Bible* series, or out of the series entitled *The Greater Men and Women of the Bible*, or any of the following volumes—Clark Murray's *Christian Ethics*; Farnell's *Greece and Babylon*; Oswald Dykes's *Divine Worker*; Emmet's *Eschatological Question*; Forrest's *The Christ of History*. The prayers must be received by the Editor of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES before the end of August.

## Recent Poetry.

A. Boyd Scott.

A dramatic poem of extraordinary pathos, entitled *The Lord's Mother: Saint Luke's Quest* (Constable; 5s. net), has been written by Mr. A. Boyd Scott. His theme is the search of St. Luke for the materials of his Gospel. All is imagination, as it has to be, yet all is in touch with those things which have been most surely believed among us; not once is the student of the Gospels thrown up against some mistake in fact or some misreading of character. Still, as we say, all is of the imagination. The facts are lifted into new creations,

making not only a great poem, as it seems to us, but also an ever-memorable addition to our knowledge of the early days of the Faith. In vindication of these words let us offer the description of the Virgin Mary's death.

The man who speaks is a seller of fruit, no Christian yet, but seeing things that compel him both to think and speak. He speaks to St. Luke, whom accident has thrown in his way.

I mind me how the farrier's child was sick,—  
A little maid, an imp of Edom, she!—  
Counted me chief among her slaves. She lay  
Bedewed in pain, her little body thrilled  
And pulsing, her poor head beating from side  
To side. The women stood defeated: all  
Was done: the very air throbbed death: no  
sound

Was uttered, save the moaning of the maid,  
And the like cooing of the doves outside:—  
When lo, *she* filled the doorway! Noiselessly  
She reached the bed and stooped. The little  
maid

Paused in her pain, wet her poor lips and  
looked

And whispered, 'O God's angel!' closed her  
eyes,

And slept and smiled. And lo, her favourite  
dove

Fluttered within the room, and lighted down  
Beside the pillow nigh the Lady's hands.

Thus turned the fever, and, with dawn, she woke  
And soared to health, as soars a bird set free.

Thus was another added to the band  
Of children, who in escort clustered round  
Her feet when she fared forth, or round her  
knees

Indoors. A queen she looked in love's domain,  
Bevied by little maids: the phrase was hers,—  
For, once I heard her say, '*He* named it so;  
*He* said, Of such God's kingdom is composed:  
And have not I the state of queen therein?'  
So spake she, smiling on the little ones.

And then the Lady died. We did not think  
That she would die. Her body was so white,  
Her veins so blue, her hair so bleach'd of earth,  
Her feet so noiseless, that she seemed to have  
Nothing to yield to death. . . . The night was  
dark,

With clouds that swathed the moon, when  
whispers went  
Round the mute doors, that she drew near to  
death.

I stood with them that drooped about the bed  
Men with the mien of exiled kings—so seemed;  
Those shaggy leaders of their sect that night—  
And women, with wet eyes and voices sunk  
To that dark depth of grief, where sorrow croons  
And laughter moans as one. Above the bed,  
Against the pillow green a lamp illumed  
Her face, as though a lustrous lily lay  
On the green ground. Her eyelids closed and  
oped;

And with each wakening they seemed to search  
A still remoter height with upward gaze.  
Low sighs of speech escaped her lips. But, few  
Could hear aright. She cried 'to guard the  
child,

Lest the beam fall on him': methought therein  
She strayed to Nazareth and her husband's  
bench

(He was a carpenter in Nazareth).  
And she cried 'to hold the ankle firm,  
And she would pluck the thorn.' Again she  
cried

'To feed the fire and haste the supper-cakes.'  
And other memories of motherhood  
Besides, she sighed with ever-weakening breath.  
And then she ceased to breathe. We peered  
to see

Whether indeed she slept, when, at the door,  
The vasty moon appeared and filled the room  
With perfect radiance. She was dead indeed.

Next morn right early I was tugged awake  
By one that clamoured at my bed. It was  
The farrier's child. She cried it was not so!  
She bade me up and curse the lying street!  
She sobbed and wept. 'Nay, sweeting, we will go  
And see the truth of it ourselves,' said I.  
She carried in her arms two silver spires  
Of lilies, for the Lady loved such flowers.  
We entered in. We heard a step die off  
Through the wet garden. We were all alone  
With the white dead. One step the maiden took  
And halted. Then the silence wrapt her round  
With the strange truth. She took her spires of  
flowers  
And laid them where the withered breasts might  
be.

And then I took her forth to comfort her  
With the soft lies we use for comfort then.  
She heard and heard me not. And when I  
paused,  
She said, 'The Lady is not dead. She told  
Me once she would not die. She told me once  
That the Son Jesus promised she would fly  
Away on wings to mansions in the skies,  
Which He had gone to build.'—O blessed babe!

Her grave is by the way to Jericho.  
Thither they bore her with the lilies laid  
Upon the bier. . . . Ben Izra wrote of that,  
A set of verses in the Arabian mode,  
How her white breast sent virtue through the  
shroud,  
And filled the tomb with white and fadeless  
flowers,  
So that the lilies died not! So sang he.

#### Gervais Gage.

Gervais Gage is the pen-name of Mr. J. L. Rentoul, an Ulsterman, long since gone to Australia, where most of the poems in *From Far Lands* (Macmillan; 5s.) have been written. He was taught to appreciate poetry by Craik and Dowden; he was taught to write it by God. And he has not forgotten the God who taught him. Of one of his heroes he says—

When the dull fools mocked Religion, an' the  
clever fools made light  
O' the meanin's writ on all the worlds that roll,  
He would only smile, an' question:—'Hev' ye  
seen the stars at night,  
Or the clearer stars a shinin' in Man's soul?'

He loves heroes, and writes best when he has one before him. Nowhere is the story of Arthur Wilkinson, 'Australia's Hero,' told more truthfully or more touchingly. There was no shouting over his heroic deed, for he perished in the doing; but

I don't grudge them all their 'glory'; but the prize o' Kingdom-come

It creates no noise o' shoutin' at the goal;  
There's no cheerin' when God gives His cup  
and bids His 'Welcome-home!'

To the men who play the hero wi' their soul.

Yis, the men—*ofttimes the women*—their memorials, dazzlin' white,

Stand beckonin' in our hearts down all the years!

An' we keep their names from dust-stain, an' their faces clean an' bright,

Wi' the breath o' prayer an' secret rain o' tears.

W. H. Abbott.

*Vision: A Book of Lyrics*, by W. H. Abbott (Elkin Mathews; 2s. 6d. net), is also a book of memories. The motto is—

But when night falls and the great voices  
Roll in from sea—

By starlight, and by candlelight and dreamlight  
They come to me.

The sense of loss runs through the volume, and in that pain is born the poetry, for it is true even when most poignant. The cry in one earnest prayer is for strength. Here is the

PRAYER.

I ask not wealth, dear Christ, nor power  
With men, nor holy ease  
In cloistered gardens, nor the surpassing dower  
Of love. Not these,  
O Father, nor a weary length  
Of years: not happiness,  
Nor any mortal good, but only strength.  
Such pains do press  
About me, and such weakness lies  
In this frail body. Give  
That strength by which a man may compass ere  
he dies,  
And, dying, live.

For with new strength

I may do what I love the best:

Then length be depth, breadth, height, and with  
*this* length

I'll take the rest.

Anna Bunston.

A Book of Twentieth-Century Poetry has been issued under the title of *A Cluster of Grapes* (Erskine Macdonald; 3s. 6d. net). The selection, made by Galloway Kyle, represents most of the true poets of the last ten years or thereby, as A. E., Anna Bunston, John Galsworthy, Lawrence Housman, Alice Meynell, Stephen Phillips, Dora Sigerson Shorter, Margaret L. Woods; and all the clever ones, as Arthur Christopher Benson, G. K. Chesterton, Thomas Hardy, Arthur Symons. For good example—example of a true poem—let us go to Anna Bunston and take

UNDER A WILTSHIRE APPLE TREE.

Some folks as can afford,  
So I've heard say,  
Sets up a sort of cross  
Right in the garden way  
To mind 'em of the Lord.

But I, when I do see  
Thic apple tree  
An' stoopin' limb  
All spread wi' moss,  
I think of Him  
And how He talks wi' me.

I think of God  
And how He trod  
That garden long ago:  
He walked, I reckon, to and fro  
And then sat down  
Upon the groun'  
Or some low limb  
What suited Him  
Same as you see  
On many a tree,  
And on this very one  
Where I at set o' sun  
Do sit and talk wi' He.

An' mornings, too, I rise an' come  
An' sit down where the branch be low;  
A bird do sing, a bee do hum,  
The flowers in the border blow,

An' all my heart's so glad an' clear  
 As pools be when the sun do peer:  
 As pools a-laughin' in the light  
 When mornin' air is swep' an' bright,  
 As pools what got all Heaven in sight  
 So's my heart's cheer  
 When He be near.

He never pushed the garden door,  
 He left no footmark on the floor;  
 I never heard 'Un stir nor tread  
 An' yet His Hand do bless my head,  
 And when 'tis time for work to start  
 I takes Him with me in my heart.

And when I die, pray God I see  
 At very last thic apple tree  
 An' stoopin' limb,  
 An' think o' Him  
 And all He been to me.

That is as good theology as it is good poetry.  
 But what of this? It is John Galsworthy's—

#### THE PRAYER.

If on a Spring night I went by  
 And God were standing there,  
 What is the prayer that I would cry  
 To Him? This is the prayer:  
 O Lord of Courage grave,  
 O Master of this night of Spring!  
 Make firm in me a heart too brave  
 To ask Thee anything!

#### The Great Text Commentary.

The best illustration this month has been found  
 by the Rev. F. Cowles, Hinckley.

Illustrations of the Great Text for August must  
 be received by the 20th of July. The text is  
 Ro 15<sup>13</sup>.

The Great Text for September is Gn 13<sup>11</sup>—  
 'So Lot chose him all the Plain of Jordan;  
 and Lot journeyed east: and they separated them-  
 selves the one from the other. Abraham dwelled  
 in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the

cities of the Plain, and moved his tent as far as  
 Sodom.' A copy of any volume of the *Great  
 Texts of the Bible*, or of the *Greater Men and  
 Women of the Bible*, or any volume of the 'Short  
 Course' series, will be given for the best illustra-  
 tion sent.

The Great Text for October is Lk 17<sup>32</sup>—'Re-  
 member Lot's wife.' A copy of Walker's *Christ  
 the Creative Ideal*, or of Sayce's *Religion of Ancient  
 Egypt*, or of Allen and Grensted's *Introduction to  
 the Books of the New Testament*, will be given for  
 the best illustration sent.

The Great Text for November is Ro 5<sup>20</sup>—'And  
 the law came in beside, that the trespass might  
 abound; but where sin abounded, grace did  
 abound more exceedingly.' A copy of Cohu's  
*Vital Problems of Religion*, or of Walker's *Gospel  
 of Reconciliation*, or of any two volumes of the  
 'Short Course' series, will be given for the best  
 illustration sent.

The Great Text for December is Ps 51<sup>4</sup>—

'Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,  
 And done that which is evil in thy sight:  
 That thou mayest be justified when thou  
 speakest,  
 And be clear when thou judgest.'

A copy of Dobschütz's *Influence of the Bible  
 on Civilisation*, or Cohu's *Vital Problems of  
 Religion*, will be given for the best illustration  
 sent.

Those who send illustrations should at the same  
 time name the books they wish sent them if  
 successful. More than one illustration may be  
 sent by one person for the same text. Illustra-  
 tions to be sent to the Editor, Kings Gate,  
 Aberdeen, Scotland.

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