

hundreds were dying daily. The king resolved to visit and render what help he might to the plague-stricken people. Deaf to all appeals dissuading him from his purpose, Humbert went, entered the homes where the disease was rampant, ministered to the patients in the hospital wards, cheering the dying with his kindly speech, putting his cool hands upon their aching brows, and commending them, as their eyes glazed in death, to the mercy of Heaven. Naples responded with a devotion that has never cooled. It was their king who came, who braved sickness and death to aid his suffering subjects. Just that is the secret of God's redeeming power. He is Himself the Burden-bearer, the Sin-bearer; and comes in the darkest hour, in the deepest shadow, that He may keep watch above His own. He is with His people always, and nothing can separate them from His unchanging love. Go where they may, suffer what they may, His love glows upon their pathway like a burning sun, and cheers their hearts like the coming of a friend.

I REMEMBER, when a boy, hearing a preacher tell of a brother preacher in Scotland, who wanted to illustrate the difference between kindness and lovingkindness. He had chosen a text in which "lovingkindness" was the principal word. The suitable illustration would not come, and almost in despair, he rose from his desk, and started to stroll in the direction of a granite quarry by the sea. He came upon a number of men who were engaged in blasting operations. The fuse had been laid and lighted, and the men had withdrawn to a place of safety. Presently, to their horror, they

saw a child, from one of the cottages near by, running towards the place of peril. The quarrymen shouted and wildly waved her back, but the child neither saw nor heard. By and by, the mother, attracted by the shouting, emerged from the cottage door, and taking in the situation at a glance, ran and hastily drew her child away from the scene of danger. 'Ah!' thought the preacher, 'here is my illustration. The quarrymen were kind. They knew the danger, and commanded and directed the child to retrace her steps with all possible speed. But it was lovingkindness that led that mother to risk her own life, that the life of her child might be saved.' Even so, God's dealings with Israel and with us are but expressions of the mother-love (the loving-kindness) that dwells in the heart of the Eternal.

*Edgbaston.*

J. NAPIER MILNE.

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## The Masai and their Primitive Traditions.

BY PROFESSOR THE REV. GEORGE G. CAMERON, D.D., ABERDEEN.

CAPTAIN MERKER'S book on the Masai has caused some stir in the archæological world.<sup>1</sup> The author is an officer in German East Africa. While discharging his official duties he has been able to collect a good deal of interesting information regarding the Masai,—a pastoral race whose habitat is the steppes of German and British East Africa. The volume in which this information is given to the public exhibits the industry and critical acumen which we expect to find in German works of this kind. And, as in other German books on kindred subjects, speculation is prominent,—assumptions are made for which reasonable proof is required,—and conclusions are stated which can scarcely be accepted without further investigation and corroborative evidence.

The chief interest of the book is connected with the primitive traditions of the Masai. These

<sup>1</sup> *Die Masai, Ethnographische Monographie eines Ostafrikanischen Semitenvolkes.* Von M. Merker. Berlin, 1904.

so closely resemble the early narratives in the Book of Genesis that some explanation of the likeness must be given.

In order to appreciate Captain Merker's view of the Masai traditions, it is necessary to keep before the mind his conjectural (it can scarcely be called anything else) reading of the primitive history of the people. He holds that the Masai are Semites, and that their original home was North Arabia. (At present Arabia is a favourite *terra a qua* for many things.) There seems no reason to doubt that under the pressure of famine or otherwise, Semitic emigrants from Arabia made their way into Africa, especially from South Arabia to the opposite coasts of East Africa. The Himyarites (Redmen) from Yemen appear to have entered Africa at an early period,—probably crossing near the southern extremity of the Red Sea, and it is possible—indeed, probable—that some of these pushed their way into the hinterlands,—

as the Mohammedan Arabs appear to have done at a later period. Accordingly, if the Masai are really Semitic emigrants, and not aboriginal Hamites (who appear to have been found as far south as the Equator), they may very well have come from Arabia. In accordance with Masai tradition, it is supposed that three different hosts of emigrants—considerably separated in point of time—forced their way from North Arabia to the steppes about the Equator in East Africa. Here they settled; the district suited them as a nomadic people. First came El dorobbo (in the Bantu dialect Wandorobbo). After a time, the length of which is unknown, El kuafi (Bantu, Wakuafi), from the same home, forced a settlement in the district occupied by the Wandorobbo. These, in turn, had to yield to the Masai proper, who led a third invasion from the same quarter, and established themselves in the equatorial region already occupied by their countrymen.

According to Captain Merker, the Masai entered Africa from the north, and forced their way up the Nile to the region in which they are now found. He thinks that the direct passage across the Red Sea was impossible on account of the size of the herds of cattle with which the emigrants would be accompanied. This is one of the assumptions of the book. That a host of Nomadic Arabs with their flocks and herds,—sufficiently powerful to overthrow any force with which the rulers of Egypt might attempt to arrest their progress,—marched successfully from Suez to the Equator, seems to require some proof. But no proof is to be given. In the Egyptian records, so far as these are known, no reference occurs to such an invasion. To a German critic this creates no difficulty. The passage of the Masai is assigned to prehistoric times,—in other words, to a date prior to, say, 4000 B.C. In this connexion, the prehistoric period corresponds to the post-exilic period in critical discussions regarding the books of the Old Testament. Any event that cannot be satisfactorily placed within historical times may be assigned, with comparative safety, to prehistoric days. If a mistake is made, it is impossible to prove it. In the present case, it occurs to one to ask whether the rich lands of the Nile delta offered no inducement to these victorious nomads from Arabia to stay where kindred Semites afterwards—in the days of Jacob and Joseph—found a congenial home. That will

probably be regarded as an irrelevant question. In any case no answer is available.

Upon the whole, while Captain Merker is entitled to every credit for the patience with which he has collected the traditions of the Masai, and the ability with which he supports the views he founds on them, his account of the migration of this Arabian tribe, from their home in Arabia to the Equator, can scarcely be said to be convincing. The question still remains, whether these Masai do not belong to the aboriginal Hamites.

For O.T. critical investigation the importance of Captain Merker's views is obvious. The Masai are supposed to arrive in the neighbourhood of the Equator not later than 4000 B.C. According to our present information, that is a millennium and a half before Babylonian influence began to act on the ancestors of Israel, to whom we owe the early narratives of the O.T. Accordingly, if these narratives, and the primitive traditions of the Masai are in substantial agreement, the view (popular at present) that the traditions recorded in the early chapters of Genesis are of Babylonian origin must be reconsidered. For this reason—though there were no other—the early history of the Masai should rest on something more satisfactory than an assumption.

The purpose of this paper excludes any detailed reference to the social, economic, and family life of the Masai, as described by Captain Merker. But the place assigned to the great family of *Smiths* must be noticed. Among the Masai, smiths were pariahs. They were tolerated simply because they were needed. The Masai were a pastoral people; and the steppes about the Equator in East Africa supplied good pasture for their flocks. But rinderpest has been for ages a scourge in that district. When the herds of the Masai were decimated by disease, they invaded a neighbouring negro territory, and repaired their losses through the spoils of war. But a warlike people, called on to make frequent invasions of this kind, required implements of war. These were made by the blacksmiths. Hence, for the sake of their craft, the latter were tolerated, though as a class their place in the social scale was the lowest. The trade of the smith was handed down from father to son. A member of the Smith caste could not raise himself to a higher class by giving up his trade. One born in a Smith family remained for ever a member of the Smith caste.

The hospitality of a smith was scarcely claimed even in a case of necessity; and the rites of hospitality were proportionally limited towards a smith. In a case of war, smiths might not tent among the other warriors. They must march to the battle by themselves, and as they formed a comparatively small portion of the army, their share of the booty was proportionally small, and was often appropriated by the other warriors. It is scarcely necessary to add that intermarriages between Smiths and members of the other classes of the community — if not absolutely forbidden — were practically under the ban; if such a marriage took place, the belief was that calamity would certainly follow it. Other points of interest are mentioned by Captain Merker, but enough has been stated to show the position of the smith among the Masai. But how came such an estimate to be formed of a tradesman so important as the smith? The answer is supplied by Gn 9<sup>6</sup>: 'Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.' This prohibition of murder is common to the O.T. and to the Masai traditions. The taking of human life was counted by God so grave a crime that nothing less than the life of the criminal was regarded as an adequate punishment. The weapons through which human blood was shed, and members of the race were done to death, were manufactured by the smiths. The violation of one of the most sacred ordinances directly imposed on the race by God was effected through the instrumentality of the smiths. Accordingly, the latter fell under the divine anger, were regarded as a class to be avoided, and formed an unclean caste. Anything got from them was unclean, and was smeared with fat, in order to remove the uncleanness. For the same reason the hands that touched anything not yet rendered clean were smeared with fat.

The first smith mentioned in the Bible is Tubal-Cain (Gn 4<sup>22</sup>). The meaning of Tubal is doubtful. Most probably it refers to metals, or metal-working. Captain Merker finds among the Somalis, Abyssinians, and Gallas three different words, more or less similar in sound to Tubal, each of which means smith. The second part of the compound name, Cain (notwithstanding the derivation suggested in Gn 4<sup>1</sup>, from קַיִן, which does not suit) comes directly from a root קָיַן, which, in Arabic, means to act as a smith (كَيِّن = smith). In this

sense the verb is not found in the O.T. But the noun קָיַן, a spear (2 S 21<sup>16</sup>), may be taken as showing that such a signification was attached to the root. The point is that Cain may be explained in the sense of smith. (Cf. the Masai expression for Smith, OI kononi (= קָיַן, Gn 5<sup>9</sup>)).

With one important exception, the Cain of the O.T. corresponds fairly well to the first smith among the Masai. The O.T. Cain was the first murderer. But according to our author a nature-people would not dream of assigning murder to the eldest son of the first human pair. That would interfere too seriously with the growth of the race. The legend in which this crime is assigned to the first-born of mankind must be of comparatively late origin. In the Masai tradition the first murder was committed in the days of Tumbainot (= O.T. Noah), and was the immediate occasion of the Flood. And Captain Merker thinks that this view is in accordance with the teaching of P (the latest pentateuchal document). It is in P that death is prescribed as the punishment of murder (Gn 9<sup>6</sup> as above). The prescription appears as one of the ordinances for the new life of the race after the destruction by the Flood. The inference is that the crime denounced, if not the main cause of the Flood, at least entered prominently into the circumstances which brought that judgment on the race. In support of this view it is argued that according to J (the earliest document) the motive of the Flood is the general wickedness into which the race had fallen (cf. Gn 6<sup>5-7</sup>). It might fairly be argued that a general charge of this kind would be more likely to appear in the late than in the early document. But so far as murder is concerned, that crime had already been assigned by J to the first-born of the race (Gn 4), and could not be presented, many generations later, as the main cause of the Flood. (It may be noted, in regard to this line of argument, that, with the exception of the reference to violence in v.<sup>11</sup>, the language in which P prepares for the Flood, differs little in substance from the corresponding language in J (cf. Gn 6<sup>11-13</sup> and 6<sup>5-7</sup>)).

Apart from this the O.T. Cain resembles the first smith among the Masai. Both were agriculturists and lived apart from their people under divine condemnation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In this connexion, it may be noted that a reed-splinter, and not a metal knife, is used among the Masai to cut the

Here we encounter a historical question of some interest to the biblical student. If the word Cain means smith, the Kenites (קניי: the English scrip- tion is apt to mislead) mean smiths. And Captain Merker regards the Kenites of the Bible as the descendants of those who were smiths in Israel when the Israelites were still nomads. The esti- mation in which smiths are believed to have been held by all primitive Semitic nomads is supposed to be reflected in such passages as Gn 15<sup>19</sup>, Nu 24<sup>22</sup>. In the former, the Kenites are the first of the tribes whose territories are assigned in promise to the seed of Abraham. In the latter, the Kenites are associated with the Amalekites in the ruin predicted by Balaam.

But in the early history of Israel the Kenites have an honourable place. If the narrative may be trusted, the father-in-law of Moses, the priest of Midian, was a Kenite (cf. Ex 3<sup>1</sup> 4<sup>18</sup> 18<sup>1</sup>, Nu 10<sup>29</sup> with Jg 1<sup>16</sup> 4<sup>11</sup>). It is impossible to determine the exact connexion between the Kenites and the Midianites when Moses appears on the scene. If the Kenites were the descend- ants of the smiths of the Nomad Israelites, it may be that a Kenite had risen to a place in Midian corresponding to that filled by Joseph in Egypt. Nothing can be settled with our present information. What seems clear (assuming the trustworthiness of the record) is that, at the time of the Exodus, Kenites were located in the north- west of the Arabian Peninsula—a district to which has been assigned a prominent place in recent discussions on the Old Testament. Whether there were other reasons or not, the marriage of Moses to a Kenite sufficed to secure a measure of influence to the Kenites in the history of Israel at the Exodus and in the period immediately following. Kenites joined the tribe of Judah, and obtained a settlement in the territories assigned to that tribe (Jg 1<sup>16</sup>). They appear to have spread out among the tribes in the neighbourhood of Judah. Saul found them in some number among the Amalekites when he went to destroy that tribe, and, remembering the old friendly relationship, warned them of what was about to happen, and

umbilical cord at birth. And with this may be compared the use of sharp stones (flints?) for circumcision among the Israelites (Ex 4<sup>25</sup> צר, Jos 5<sup>3-4</sup> חריבות צרים)—and of unhewn stones—stones on which no metal tool was used—for the construction of an altar for Jehovah's sacrifices (Ex 20<sup>26</sup>, Dt 27<sup>5</sup>, Jos 8<sup>31</sup>).

furnished them with the opportunity of escaping the impending judgment (1 S 15<sup>6</sup>). When David was living in exile among the Philistines he mentions the Kenites among the tribes whose territories he invaded and plundered (1 S 27<sup>10</sup>, cf. 30<sup>29</sup>). In the days of the Judges, Heber, one of the tribe, migrated northwards, and settled in the neighbourhood of Kedesh of Naphtali, where the friendship for Israel was shown by the murder of Sisera (Jg 4<sup>11ff.</sup>). The friendly relations sub- sisting between the two peoples are indisputable. But if the Kenites were the descendants of the smiths, and really formed a Smith caste—in other words, a caste of pariahs—this relationship requires explanation. The marriage of Moses cannot quite account for it. If the ancient Semitic feeling regarding the smiths subsisted in Israel till the time of the Exodus, the marriage of Moses to a member of the Smith caste would rather have involved the loss of any influence he might other- wise have exercised over the affairs of his people. It is obvious that a sentiment of a very different kind was cherished towards the Kenites by the Israelites who left Egypt under Moses. This Captain Merker admits, and he accounts for it as follows:—

A nomadic people had to move from place to place according to the condition of the pasture. But the Smiths had few cattle; and when a district was suitable to their trade, supplying them with necessary materials (charcoal, etc.), the lack of pasture which compelled their fellow-tribesmen to move would not seriously affect them; and while some of them would probably accompany the tribe, others would remain. These would have to enter into relations with some neighbouring agricultural tribe, or would themselves become agriculturists, till the soil so far as that was necessary, and settle in the district. This would involve at least a partial separation from the tribe. War or famine or rinderpest would drive the main tribe farther afield, and make the separation more complete—in some cases permanent. In this way smiths would fall away from their own people, and form colonies by themselves, or mix with the tribes in whose neighbourhood they settled. If their character was strong enough, or their influence powerful enough, they might gain the ascendancy over the tribes among whom they settled. It may be that something like this happened when, through the pressure of famine, the Israelites went down to

Egypt. When they returned to Canaan they found in the north of the Arabian Peninsula and in the south of Palestine the descendants of the smiths of their old nomadic days, organized and occupying a prominent place in the districts in which they were settled. A residence of several centuries in Egypt modified many things. The primitive view of the smith disappeared. Even if the Kenites of the Exodus period were the descendants of the smiths of nomadic times, they were regarded as not unworthy of Israel's friendship, or of marriage into Israel's families.

With reference to the wide distribution of the Kenites, as in the O.T. narratives, Captain Merker's view, if it appears well founded otherwise, is not improbable. In the fierce fighting times of these early records, weapons of war were in continual demand. And no class would be more likely to be carried captive by a successful invader, and no captives would be more highly prized, than the smiths, the makers of so many of the weapons required in war. (Cf. 1 S 13<sup>19</sup>, where the Philistines are represented as having carried off all the smiths of the Israelites; and 2 K 24<sup>14</sup>, where, along with the king, and the princes, and the mighty men of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar is reported to have carried away all the smiths. It may be noted, however, that the word translated smith in these passages is not קיני.)

The relations of the Kenites to the Israelites of the Exodus period are matters of history. For the connexion between the Israelites and the Kenites on the one side, and the Masai on the other, prehistoric tradition must be consulted. According to this tradition, as reported by Captain Merker, the Masai and the Israelites sprung from the same people—the Amai. In the course of time this people was divided, and the history of the division closely resembles that of the Smiths as given above. Hence the interest and value of the discussion regarding the Smiths. Through the ravages of cattle-plague a number of the people were reduced to comparative poverty. Hence arose two classes—the rich and the poor. The former, with their flocks, left the home where the plague had done such damage to their fellow-tribesmen. Fresh outbreaks of the plague extended the distress,—added to the number of the poor,—and effected a more complete separation from the more fortunate members of the tribe. The distance to which the latter removed was

often too great for tribal communications, or the maintenance of the old tribal relations.

Those thus reduced to comparative poverty bore the name 'L Amerak, or Ameroi. It fell to them to follow a course similar to that pursued by the Smiths as already reported. They were obliged to procure supplies for the maintenance of their families from the agricultural tribes settled in their neighbourhood. After a time many of them abandoned their nomadic life, and settled in the original home as agriculturists. And as the Smiths had followed a similar course, the name 'L Amerak appears, in course of time, to have been applied to them.

On the point thus raised the conclusion is that of the Amai, a portion remained and settled in the old home in North Arabia, under the name of Ameroi; another portion, whose wealth had not been seriously impaired, left the plague-stricken district, and, under the name Masai, migrated to Egypt, and made their way to the equatorial regions, where their descendants are still found.

Among the Ameroi there arose a man of great influence, named Ol Eberet, whose forefathers had been reduced to so poor a condition that they had to support themselves from the produce of the chase. Ol Eberet was the founder of the tribe El Eberet, of whom one part migrated with the Masai, while the other remained in the original home. This Ol Eberet Captain Merker identifies with Eber of the Old Testament narratives, the forefather of the Hebrews (cf. Gn 10<sup>21ff.</sup>). In connexion with this matter there is an interesting point of contact between the Old Testament narrative and the Masai tradition—if the latter has been correctly reported by Captain Merker. The separation of the Masai (according to their tradition) from the Ameroi and El Eberet who remained in the old home, took place in the days of Gereua, the son of Ol Eberet. According to Gn 10<sup>25</sup> the earth was divided, and the separation of the races occurred in the days of Peleg, the son of Eber. The inference suggested is that the migration of the Masai into Egypt is synchronous with the dispersion of the human race reported in Gn 11<sup>1ff.</sup>, and that the tradition of the Masai and the narrative in Genesis have a common origin. Accordingly, the Amai are the ancestral people from whom sprung the Masai, Ameroi, and El Eberet. In the opinion of Captain Merker, the Ameroi

that remained in the fatherland are the Amorites—and the El Eberet the Hebrews—of the Old Testament. If this view is well founded the alliance between Abraham and the Amorites (Gen 14<sup>18</sup>) is easily understood. Both were Semites from the same stock. So also were the Masai. But the course of time and the events of history have brought considerable changes. The true descendants of the original nomadic Semites are found in the Masai. When the Hebrews gave up their nomadic life, and settled as agriculturists, a process of intermixture with neighbouring races set in, which gradually modified their Semitic characteristics. The true Semite is no longer to be found among the Jews.

Captain Merker tells us that the Masai are reticent regarding their early traditions, and that he had to wait patiently and walk warily for years before he gained their confidence, and received the information which he has given to the world. Is it possible that there is a mistake somewhere,

that the traditions published in this volume were not brought from North Arabia to Central Africa by a host of nomadic Semites in prehistoric times? It may be counted heresy to suggest that a German critic may be mistaken in his reasonings and conclusions. The case presented by Captain Merker is so exceptional that it would be unworthy of scientific criticism to accept his conclusions without further investigation. Are these Masai the lineal descendants of nomadic Semites who, sometime before 4000 B.C., left North Arabia and pushed their way up the Nile to the equatorial regions of East Africa? That is a fundamental question, and a good deal will depend on the answer to it. If Captain Merker's volume draws the attention of biblical students to that question, and makes them forget for a time the connexion between Arabia and ancient Babylonia, it will serve a useful purpose.

A concluding paper will describe the Masai traditions.

## At the Literary Table.

### GREGORY THE GREAT.

GREGORY THE GREAT: HIS PLACE IN HISTORY AND THOUGHT. By F. Homes Dudden, B.D., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. (*Longmans*, 2 vols. 30s. net.)

FASHION rules in the writing of history as in other human interests. Yesterday history was the biography of great men; the infinitely little have their opportunity to-day; to-morrow they will be once more ignored and history will move down the ages leaping and bounding from one outstanding figure to another. Mr. Homes Dudden is a writer for to-morrow. He has written the history of Gregory the Great. He has written it fully, exhaustively. He has written it for our time once for all. He believes that it is our business to study the great men and movements of the past. He believes that their study gives us all that we could get from the study of insignificant men and things, and much more. It is better, he believes, to know the personalities of the past and to leave the crowd to oblivion.

His book is a critical study of Gregory. Not that it is unpopular. If popularity means pleasure

in the reading, it is popular enough. But you do not think of that. You notice that Mr. Dudden has read the original sources, and has made himself acquainted with the circumstances and surroundings of the life of Gregory the Great, so that he has been able to form his own judgments, departing occasionally from the judgments of other historians, without the suspicion of presumption, well-nigh without the fear of error.

He believes in his subject. Gregory is a true man, almost a hero for his historian, who feels that his life is worth writing even at so great a length as this. But he is no hero of the immaculate order. When Mr. Dudden comes to the final estimate of Gregory's worth, he remarks that 'the ideal of saintliness ever eludes even those who most fervently aspire to realize it,' and he faithfully records those failings which remain as blots on Gregory's character. He mentions his treatment of Desiderius, the learned and virtuous Bishop of Vienne. 'Desiderius applied to the Pope for the pallium, pleading the ancient privileges of his Church. Gregory, however, who had made no difficulty about conferring the distinction on the