THE BOOK OF NUMBERS.

CHAPTER I.

Numbers i.
And the Lord spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying,
2 Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of their names, every male by their polls:

32 ¶ These are those which were numbered of the children of Israel by the house of their fathers: all those that were numbered of the camps throughout their hosts were six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty.

IN this chapter Moses is commanded to number the people and the princes of the tribe, males only, and by the houses of their fathers. As the object was to see how many effective men there were able to go to war, the priests, the women, the feeble old men and children were not counted. Women have frequently been classified with priests in some privileges and disabilities. At one time in the United States the clergy were not allowed to vote nor hold office. Like women, they were considered too good to mingle in political circles. For them to have individual opinions on the vital questions of the hour might introduce dissensions alike into the church and the home.

This census of able bodied men still runs on through chapter ii, and all these potential soldiers are called children of their fathers. Although at this period woman’s chief duty and happiness was bearing children, no mention is made of the mothers of this mighty host, though some woman had gone to the gates of death to give each soldier life; provided him with rations long before he could forage for himself, and first taught his little feet to march to tune and time. But, perhaps, if we could refer to the old Jewish census tables we might
find that the able bodied males of these tribes, favorites of
Heaven, had all sprung, Minerva-like, from the brains of their
fathers, and that only the priests, the feeble old men and the
children had mothers to care for them, in the absence of the
princes and soldiers.

However, in some valuable calculations of Schencher we learn
that there was some thought of the mothers of the tribes by
German commentators. We find in his census such references
as the following: The children of Jacob by Leah. The children
of Jacob by Zilpah. The children of Jacob by Rachel. The
children of Jacob by Bilhah. But even this generous mention
of the mothers of the tribe of Jacob does not satisfy the exacting
members of the Revising Committee. We feel that the facts
should have been stated thus: The children of Leah, Zilpah,
Rachel and Bilhah by Jacob, making Jacob the incident instead
of the four women. Men may consider this a small matter on
which to make a point, but in restoring woman's equality every-
where we must insist on her recognition in all these minor
particulars, and especially in the Bible, to which people go for
their authority on the civil and social status of all womankind.

E. C. S.
Chapter II.

Numbers v.

1 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,
2 Command the children of Israel, that they put out of the camp every leper, and every one that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead:
3 Both male and female that they defile not their camps.
4 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,
5 If any man's wife go aside, and commit a trespass against him,
6 And the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and she be defiled; or if she be not defiled:
7 Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it is an offering of jealousy.
8 And the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel; and of the dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle the priest shall take, and put it into the water:
9 And the priest shall set the woman before the Lord and uncover the woman's head, and put the offering of memorial in her hands, which is the jealousy offering, and the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causeth the curse:
10 And the priest shall charge her by an oath, and say unto the woman, if thou hast not gone aside be thou free from this bitter water that causeth the curse:
11 But if thou hast gone aside, and if thou be defiled,
12 Then the priest shall charge the woman with an oath of cursing, and the priest shall say unto the woman, The Lord make thee a curse and an oath among thy people.
13 And he shall cause the woman to drink the bitter water that causeth the curse:
14 Then the priest shall take the jealousy offering out of the woman's hand, and shall wave the offering before the Lord, and offer it upon the altar:
15 And when he hath made her to drink the water, then it shall come to pass, that if she be defiled, and have done trespass against her husband, that the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, and become bitter.
16 And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean: then she shall be free.

At the first blush it seems very cruel for the Jewish God to order the diseased and unfortunate to be thrown out of the camp and left in the wilderness. But commentators suggest that they must have had a sanatorium near by where the helpless could be protected. Though improbable, still the suggestion will be a relief to sensitive souls. This ordinance of Moses probably suggested the first idea of a hospital. The above account of the unfortunate wife was called "trial by ordeal," of which Clarke gives a minute description in his commentaries. It was common at one time among many nations, the women in all cases being the chief sufferers as in the modern trials for witchcraft. If the witch was guilty when thrown into the water she went to the bottom, if innocent she floated on the surface
and was left to sink, so in either case her fate was the same. As men make and execute the laws, prescribe and administer the punishment, "trials by a jury or ordeal" for women though seemingly fair, are never based on principles of equity. The one remarkable fact in all these social transgressions in the early periods as well as in our modern civilization is that the penalties whether moral or material all fall on woman. Verily the darkest page in human history is the slavery of women!

The offering by the priest to secure her freedom was of the cheapest character. Oil and frankincense signifying grace and acceptableness were not permitted to be used in her case. The woman's head is uncovered as a token of her shame, the dust from the floor signifies contempt and condemnation, compelling the woman to drink water mixed with dirt and gall is in the same malicious spirit. There is no instance recorded of one of these "trials by ordeal" ever actually taking place, as divorce was so easy that a man could put away his wife at pleasure, so he need not go to the expense of even "a tenth part of an ephah of barley," on a wife of doubtful faithfulness. Moreover the woman upon whom it was proposed to try all these pranks might be innocent, and the jealous husband make himself ridiculous in the eyes of the people. But the publication of these ordinances no doubt had a restraining influence on the young and heedless daughters of Israel, and they serve as landmarks in man's system of jurisprudence, to show us how far back he has been consistent in his unjust legislation for woman.

E. C. S.
HERE we have the first mention of Moses's second marriage, but the name of the woman is not given, though she is the assigned cause of the sedition. Both Aaron and Miriam had received a portion of the prophetic genius that distinguished Moses, and they naturally thought that they should have some share in the government, at least to make a few suggestions, when they thought Moses made a blunder. Miriam was older than Moses, and had at this time the experience of 120 years. When Moses was an infant on the River Nile, Miriam was intrusted by his parents to watch the fate of the infant in the bulrushes and the daughter of Pharaoh in her daily walks by the river side. It was her diplomacy that secured the child's own mother for his nurse in the household of the King of Egypt.

It is rather remarkable, if Moses was as meek as he is represented in the third verse, that he should have penned that strong assertion of his own innate modesty. There are evidences at this and several other points that Moses was not the sole editor
of the Pentateuch, if it can be shown that he wrote any part of it.

Speaking of the punishment of Miriam, Clarke in his commentaries says it is probable that Miriam was chief in this mutiny; hence she was punished while Aaron was spared. A mere excuse for man's injustice; had he been a woman he would have shared the same fate. The real reason was that Aaron was a priest. Had he been smitten with leprosy, his sacred office would have suffered and the priesthood fallen into disrepute.

As women are supposed to have no character or sacred office, it is always safe to punish them to the full extent of the law. So Miriam was not only afflicted with leprosy, but also shut out of the camp for seven days. One would think that potential motherhood should make women as a class as sacred as the priesthood. In common parlance we have much fine-spun theorizing on the exalted office of the mother, her immense influence in moulding the character of her sons; "the hand that rocks the cradle moves the world," etc., but in creeds and codes, in constitutions and Scriptures, in prose and verse, we do not see these lofty pæans recorded or verified in living facts. As a class, women were treated among the Jews as an inferior order of beings, just as they are to-day in all civilized nations. And now, as then, men claim to be guided by the will of God.

In this narrative we see thus early woman's desire to take some part in government, though denied all share in its honor and dignity. Miriam, no doubt, saw the humiliating distinctions of sex in the Mosaic code and customs, and longed for the power to make the needed amendments. In criticising the discrepancies in Moses's character and government, Miriam showed a keen insight into the common principles of equity and individual conduct, and great self-respect and self-assertion in expressing her opinions—qualities most lacking in ordinary women.

Evidently the same blood that made Moses and Aaron what they were, as leaders of men, flowed also in the veins of Miriam. As daughters are said to be more like their fathers and sons like their mothers, Moses probably inherited his meekness and
distrust of himself from his mother, and Miriam her self-reliance and heroism from her father. Knowing these laws of heredity, Moses should have averted the punishment of Miriam instead of allowing the full force of God’s wrath to fall upon her alone. If Miriam had helped to plan the journey to Canaan, it would no doubt have been accomplished in forty days instead of forty years. With her counsel in the cabinet, the people might have enjoyed peace and prosperity, cultivating the arts and sciences, instead of making war on other tribes, and burning offerings to their gods. Miriam was called a prophetess, as the Lord had, on some occasions, it is said, spoken through her, giving messages to the women. After their triumphal escape from Egypt, Miriam led the women in their songs of victory. With timbrels and dances, they chanted that grand chorus that has been echoed and re-echoed for centuries in all our cathedrals round the globe. Catholic writers represent Miriam “as a type of the Virgin Mary, being legislatrix over the Israelitish women, especially endowed with the spirit of prophecy.”

Numbers xx.
Then came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin in the first month; and the people abode in Kadesh: and Miriam died there, and was buried there.

Eusebius says her tomb was to be seen at Kadesh, near the city of Petra, in his time, and that she and her brothers all died in the same year, it is hoped to reappear as equals in the resurrection.

E. C. S.
CHAPTER IV.

Numbers vi.

1. And the Lord said unto Moses,
2. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say, When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, unto the Lord.

5. All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head; until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth himself unto the Lord, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow.

The Nazarites, both men and women, allowed their hair to grow long, as the hair of the Nazarite was a token of subjection, the man to God, the woman to man. St. Paul no doubt alluded to this custom when he said the woman ought to have power upon her head, that is, wear her hair and veil and bonnet in church as a proof of her subjection to man, as he is to the Lord. The discipline of the church to-day requires a woman to cover her head before entering a cathedral for worship.

The fashion for men to sit with their heads bare in our churches, while women must wear bonnets, is based on this ancient custom of the Nazarine. But as fashion is gradually reducing the bonnet to an infinitesimal fraction it will probably in the near future be dispensed with altogether. A lady in England made the experiment of going to the established church without her bonnet, but it created such an agitation in the congregation that the Bishop wrote her a letter on the impropriety and requested her to come with her head covered. She refused. He then called and labored with her as to the sinfulness of the proceedings, and at parting commanded her either to cover her head or stay away from church altogether. She choose the latter. I saw and heard that letter read at a luncheon in London, where several ladies were present. It was received with peals of laughter. The lady is the wife of a colonel in the British army.
6 ¶ And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses and all the congregation of the children of Israel.

7 And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose and took a javelin in his hand;

8 And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman.

14 Now the name of the Israelite that was slain, even that was slain with the Midianitish woman, was Zimri, the son of Salu, a prince of a chief house among the Simeonites.

15 And the name of the Midianitish woman that was slain was Cozbi, the daughter of Zur; he was head over a people, and of a chief house in Midian.

Some commentators say the tie between Zimri and Cozbi was a matrimonial alliance, understood in good faith by the Midianitish woman. He was a prince and she was a princess. But the Jewish law forbade a man going outside of his tribe for a wife. It was deemed idolatry. But why kill the woman. She had not violated the laws of her tribe and was no doubt ignorant of Jewish law. Other commentators say that Zimri was notorious at the licentious feasts of Baal-poer and that the Midianitish women tempted the sons of Israel to idolatry. Hence the justice of killing both Zimri and Cozbi in one blow. It is remarkable that the influence of woman is so readily and universally recognized in leading the strongest men into sin, but so uniformly ignored as a stimulus to purity and perfection. Unless the good predominates over the evil in the mothers of the race, there is no hope of our ultimate perfection.

E. C. S.

The origin of the command that women should cover their heads is found in an old Jewish or Hebrew legend which appears in literature for the first time in Genesis vi. There we are told the Sons of God, that is, the angels, took to wives the daughters of men, and begat the giants and heroes, who were instrumental in bringing about the flood. The Rabbins held that the way in which the angels got possession of women was by laying hold of their hair; they accordingly warned women to cover their heads in public, so that the angels might not get possession of them. It was believed that the strength of people lay in their
hair, as the story of Samson illustrates. Paul merely repeats this warning which he must often have heard at the feet of Gamaliel, who was at that time Prince or President of the Sanhedrin, telling women to have a "power (that is, protection) on their heads because of the angels:" I Corinthians, chapter xi, verse 10. "For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels." Thus the command has its origin in an absurd old myth. This legend will be found fully treated in a German pamphlet—Die paulinische Angelologie und Daemonologie. Otto Everling, Göttingen, 1888.

If the command to keep silence in the churches has no higher origin than that to keep covered in public, should so much weight be given it, or should it be so often quoted as having Divine sanction?

The injunctions of St. Paul have had such a decided influence in fixing the legal status of women that it is worth our while to consider their source. In dealing with this question we must never forget that the majority of the writings of the New Testament were not really written or published by those whose names they bear. Ancient writers considered it quite permissible for a man to put out letters under the name of another, and thus to bring his own ideas before the world under the protection of an honored sponsor. It is not usually claimed that St. Paul was the originator of the great religious movement called Christianity, but there is a strong belief that he was divinely inspired. His inward persuasions, and especially his visions appeared as a gift or endowment which had the force of inspiration; therefore, his mandates concerning women have a strong hold upon the popular mind, and when opponents to the equality of the sexes are put to bay they glibly quote his injunctions.

We congratulate ourselves that we may shift some of these biblical arguments that have such a sinister effect from their firm foundation. He who claims to give a message must satisfy us that he has himself received such message.

L. S.
CHAPTER V.

Numbers xxxvii.

1 Then came the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh, the son of Joseph; and these are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah.

2 And they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes and all the congregation, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying,

3 Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together against the Lord in the company of Korah.

4 Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? Give us therefore a possession among the brethren of our father.

5 And Moses brought their cause before the Lord.

6 ¶ And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,

7 The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father’s brethren; and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them.

8 And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter.

9 And if he have no daughter, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his brethren.

10 And if he have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his father’s brethren.

11 And if his father have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his kinsman that is next to him of his family, and he shall possess it; and it shall be unto the children of Israel a statute of judgment, as the Lord commanded Moses.

THE respect paid to the daughters of Zelophehad at that early day is worthy the imitation of the rulers in our own times. These daughters were no doubt fine-looking, well-developed women, gifted with the power of eloquence, able to impress their personality and arguments on that immense assemblage of the people. They were allowed to plead their own case in person before the lawgivers, the priests, and the princes, the rulers in State and Church, and all the congregation, at the very door of the tabernacle. They presented their case with such force and clearness that all saw the justice of their claims. Moses was so deeply impressed that he at once retired to his closet to listen to the still small voice of conscience and commune with his Maker. In response, the Lord said to him: “The daughters of Zelophehad speak right, if a man die and leave no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughters.” It would have been commendable if
the members of the late Constitutional Convention in New York had, like Moses, asked the guidance of the Lord in deciding the rights of the daughters of the Van Rensselaers, the Stuyvesants, the Livingstons, and the Knickerbockers. Their final action revealed the painful fact that they never thought to take the case to the highest court in the moral universe. The daughters of Zelophehad were fortunate in being all of one mind; none there to plead the fatigue, the publicity, the responsibility of paying taxes and investing property, of keeping a bank account, and having some knowledge of mathematics. The daughters of Zelophehad were happy to accept all the necessary burdens, imposed by the laws of inheritance, while the daughters of the Knickerbockers trembled at the thought of assuming the duties involved in self-government.

As soon as Moses laid the case before the Lord, He not only allowed the justice of the claim, but gave "a statute of judgment," by which the Jewish magistrates should determine all such cases in the division of property in the land of Canaan in all after ages.

When the rights of property were secured to married women in the State of New York in 1848, a certain class were opposed to the measure, and would cross the street to avoid speaking to the sisters who had prayed and petitioned for its success. They did not object, however, in due time to use the property thus secured, and the same type of women will as readily avail themselves of all the advantages of political equality when the right of suffrage is secured.

E. C. S.

The account given in this chapter of the directions as to the division or inheritance of property in the case of Zelophehad, and his daughters shows them to be just, because the daughters are to be treated as well as the sons would be; but the law thereafter given, apparently suggested by this querying of Zelophehad's daughters in reference to their father's possessions is obviously unjust, in that it gives no freedom to the owner of
property as to the disposition of the same after his death, i.e. leaves him without power to will it to any one, and leaves unmentioned the female relatives as heirs at law. Only "brethren" and "kinsman" are the words used, and it is very plain that only males were heirs, except where a man had no son, but had one or more daughters. "The exception proves the rule."

P. A. H.
THE WOMAN'S BIBLE.

CHAPTER VI.

Numbers xviii
12 And this is thine; the heave offering of their gift, with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel: I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons and to thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: every one that is clean in thy house shall eat of it.

19 All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto the Lord, have I given thee, and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: it is a covenant of salt for ever before the Lord unto thee and to thy seed with thee.

THE house of Aaron was now thoroughly confirmed in the priesthood, and the Lord gives minute directions as to the provisions to be made for the priests. The people then, as now, were made to feel that whatever was given to them was given to the Lord, and that "the Lord loveth a cheerful giver." That their minds might be at peace and always in a devout frame, in communion with God, they must not be perplexed with worldly cares and anxieties about bread and raiment for themselves and families. Whatever privations they suffered themselves, they must see that their priests were kept above all human wants and temptations. The Mosaic code is responsible for the religious customs of our own day and generation. Church property all over this broad land is exempt from taxation, while the smallest house and lot of every poor widow is taxed at its full value. Our Levites have their homes free, and good salaries from funds principally contributed by women, for preaching denunciatory sermons on women and their sphere. They travel for half fare, the lawyer pleads their cases for nothing, the physician medicates their families for nothing, and generally in the world of work they are served at half price. While the common people must be careful not to traduce their neighbors lest they be sued for libel, the Levite in surplice and gown from his pulpit (aptly called the coward's castle) may smirch the fairest characters and defame the noblest lives with impunity.
This whole chapter is interesting reading as the source of priestly power, that has done more to block woman's way to freedom than all other earthly influences combined. But the chief point in this chapter centers in the above verses, as the daughters of the Levites are here to enjoy an equal privilege with the sons. Scott tells us "that covenants were generally ratified at an amiable feast, in which salt was always freely used, hence it became an emblem of friendship." Perhaps it was the purifying, refining influence of this element that secured these friendly relations between the sons and daughters of the priesthood on one occasion at least. From the present bitter, turbulent tone of our Levites, I fear the salt we both manufacture and import must all have lost its savor. 

E. C. S.
THE WOMAN'S BIBLE.

CHAPTER VII.

Numbers xxii.

21 And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab.

22 ¶ And God's anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him.

23 And the ass saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way.

24 But the angel of the LORD stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side.

25 And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall: and he smote her again.

26 And the angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place, where was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left.

27 And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff.

28 And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?

29 And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me; I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee.

30 And the ass said unto Balaam, Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay.

31 Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face.

32 And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? Behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me:

33 And the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times: unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive.

34 And Balaam said unto the angel of the LORD, I have sinned: for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again.

THE chief point of interest in this parable of Balaam and his ass, is that the latter belonged to the female sex. This animal has been one of the most remarkable characters in literature. Her virtues have been quoted in the stately cathedral, in the courts of justice, in the editorial sanctum, in both tragedy and comedy on the stage, to point a moral and adorn a tale. Some of the fairest of Eve's daughters bear her baptismal name, and she has been immortalized in poetry and prose. Wordsworth sends her with his Peter Bell to enjoy the first flowers of early spring. To express her love of the beautiful "upon the pivot of her skull she turned round her long left ear" while stolid Peter makes no sign—
"A primrose by a river's brim
    A yellow primrose was to him,
    And it was nothing more."

The courage and persistence of the ass has made her as famous in war as in literature. She is a marked feature everywhere in military stations, alike in the camp and the field, and her bray always in the minor key, gives a touch of pathos to the music of the band! The ass accompanied Deborah and Barak when they went to fight their great battle, she has gone with pioneers in all their weary wanderings, and has taken an active part in the commerce of the world, bearing the heaviest burdens though poorly fed and sheltered. At one time this animal voted at three successive elections in the state of New York. The property qualification being $250, just the price of a jackass, Ben Franklin facetiously asked "if a man must own a jackass in order to vote,—who does the voting, the man or the jackass?" It so happened once that the same animal passed into the hands of three different owners, constituting all the earthly possessions of each at that time and thus by proxy she was represented at the polls. Yet with this world-wide fame, this is the first time the sacred historian has so richly endowed and highly complimented any living thing of the supposed inferior sex. Far wiser than the master who rode her, with a far keener spiritual insight than he possessed, and so intensely earnest and impressive, that to meet the necessities of the occasion, she suddenly exercised the gift of speech. While Balaam was angry, violent, stubborn and unreasonable, the ass calmly manifested all the cardinal virtues. Obedient to the light that was in her, she was patient under abuse, and tried in her mute way to save the life of her tormentor from the sword of the angel. But when all ordinary warnings of danger proved unavailable, she burst into speech and opened the eyes of her stolid master. Scott, who considers this parable a literal fact, says in his commentaries, "The faculty of speech in man is the gift of God and we cannot comprehend how we ourselves articulate. We need not therefore be surprised that the Lord made use of the mouth
of the ass to rebuke the madness of His prophet, and to shame him by the reproof and example of a brute. Satan spoke to Eve by a subtle male serpent, but the Lord chose to speak to Balaam by a she ass, for He does not use enticing words of man's wisdom, but works by instruments and means that men despise."

Seeing that the Lord has endowed "the daughters of men" also with the gift of speech, and they may have messages from Him to deliver to "the sons of God," it would be wise for the prophets of our day to admit them into their Conferences, Synods and General Assemblies, and give them opportunities for speech.

The appeal of the meek, long suffering ass, to her master, to remember her faithfulness and companionship from his youth up, is quite pathetic and reminds one of woman's appeals and petitions to her law-givers for the last half century. In the same language she might say to her oppressors, to fathers, husbands, brothers and sons, have we not served you with faithfulness; companions from your youth up; watched you through all your infant years; and carried you triumphantly through every danger? When at the midnight hour or the cock crowing, your first born lifted up his voice and wept, lo! we were there, with water for his parched lips; a cool place for his aching head; or patiently for hours to pace with him the chamber floor. In youth and manhood what have we not done to add to your comfort and happiness; ever rejoicing in your triumphs and sympathizing in your defeats?

This waiting and watching for half a century to recover our civil and political rights and yet no redress, makes the struggle seem like a painful dream in which one strives to fly from some impending danger and yet stands still. Balaam, unlike our masters, confessed that he had sinned, but it is evident from his conduct that he felt no special contrition for disobedience to the commands of his Creator, nor for his cruelty to the creature. So merely to save his life he sulkily retraced his steps with a determination still to consider Barak's proposi-
tions. Whether he took the same ass on the next journey does not appear.

It must have been peculiarly humiliating to that proud man, who boasted of his eyes being open and seeing the vision of the Almighty, to be reproved and silenced by the mouth of a brute. As the Lord appeared first to the ass and spake by her, he had but little reason to boast that his eyes were opened by the Lord. The keen spiritual insight and the ready power of speech with which the female sex has been specially endowed, are often referred to with ridicule and reproach by stolid, envious observers of the less impressionable sex. E. C. S.
CHAPTER VIII.

Numbers xx.

1 And Moses spake unto the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded.

2 If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond: he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.

3 If a woman also vow a vow unto the Lord, and bind herself by a bond, being in her father’s house in her youth;

4 And her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her; then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand.

5 But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth, not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she had bound her soul, shall stand; and the Lord shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her.

6 And if she had at all a husband, when she vowed, or uttered ought out of her lips, wherewith she bound her soul;

7 And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her in the day that he heard it; then her vows shall stand, and her bonds wherewith she bound her soul shall stand.

8 But if her husband disallow her on the day that he heard it, then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that which she uttered with her lips, wherewith she bound her soul, of none effect; and the Lord shall forgive her.

9 But every vow of a widow, and of her that is divorced, wherewith they have bound their souls, shall stand against her.

13 Every vow, and every binding oath to afflict the soul, her husband may establish it, or her husband may make it void.

14 But if her husband altogether hold his peace at her from day to day; then he establisheth all her vows, or all her bonds, which are upon her: he confirmeth them, because he held his peace at her in the day that he heard them.

15 But if he shall any ways make them void after that he hath heard them; then he shall bear her iniquity.

16 These are the statutes, which the Lord commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, between the father and his daughter, being yet in her youth in her father’s house.

A VOW is a religious promise made to God, and yet in the face of such a definition is placed the authority of husband and father between the woman and her God. God seems thus far to have dealt directly with women when they sinned, but in making a religious vow, or dedication of themselves to some high purpose, their fathers and husbands must be consulted. A man’s vow stands; a woman’s is always conditional. Neither wisdom nor age can make her secure in any privileges, though always personally responsible for crime. If she have sufficient intelligence to decide between good and evil, and pay the penalty for violated law, why not make her responsible for her words and deeds when obedient to moral law. To hold woman
in such an attitude is to rob her words and actions of all moral
ccharacter. We see from this chapter that Jewish women, as well
as those of other nations, were held in a condition of perpetual
tutelage or minority under the authority of the father until
married and then under the husband, hence vows if in their
presence if disallowed were as nothing. That Jewish men
appreciate the degradation of woman’s position is seen in a part
of their service in which each man says on every Sabbath day,
“I thank Thee, oh Lord, that I was not born a woman!” and
the woman meekly responds, “I thank Thee, oh Lord, that I
am what I am, according to Thy holy will.”

The injunction in the above texts in regard to the inter-
ference of fathers is given only once, while the husband’s
authority is mentioned three times. If the woman was
betrothed, even the future husband had the right to disallow
her vows. It is supposed by some expositors that by a parity
of reason minor sons should have been under the same restric-
tions as daughters, but if it were intended, it is extraordinary
that daughters alone should have been mentioned. Scott, in
extenuating the custom, says: “Males were certainly allowed
more liberty than females; the vows of the latter might be
adjudged more prejudicial to families; or the sons being more
immediately under the father’s tuition might be thought less
liable to be inveigled into rash engagements of any kind.”

E. C. S.

Woman is here taught that she is irresponsible. The father or
the husband is all. They are wisdom, power, responsibility.
But woman is a nonentity if still in her father’s house, or if she
has a husband. I object to this teaching. It is unjust to man
that he should have the added responsibility of his daughter’s
or wife’s word, and it is cruel to woman because the irresponsi-
bility is enslaving in its influence. It is contrary to true Gospel
teaching, for only in freedom to do right can a soul dwell in
that love which is the fulfilling of the law.
The whole import of this chapter is that a woman's word is worthless, unless she is a widow or divorced. While an unmarried daughter, her father is her surety; when married, the husband allows or disallows what she promises, and the promise is kept or broken according to his will. The whole Mosaic law in this respect seems based upon the idea that a woman is an irresponsible being; and that it is supposed each daughter will marry at some time, and thus be continually under the control of some male—the father or the husband. Unjust, arbitrary and debasing are such ideas, and the laws based upon them. Could the Infinite Father and Mother have give them to Moses? I think not. P. A. H.
Chapter IX.

Numbers xxxi.

9 And the children of Israel took all the women of Midian captives, and their little ones, and took the spoil of all their cattle, and all their flocks, and all their goods.

10 And they burnt all their cities wherein they dwelt, and all their goodly castles with fire.

12 And they brought the captives, and the prey, and the spoil, unto Moses and Eleazar the priest, and unto the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the camp at the plains of Moab, which are by Jordan near Jericho.

14 And Moses was wroth with the officers of the host, with the captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, which came from the battle.

15 And Moses said unto them, have ye saved all the women alive?

16 Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord.

17 Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man.

18 But all the women children, that have not known a man keep alive for yourselves.

20 ¶ And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,

26 Take the sum of the prey that was taken, both of man and of beast, thou, and Eleazar the priest, and the chief fathers of the congregation:

31 And Moses and Eleazar the priest did as the Lord commanded Moses.

32 And the booty, bring the rest of the prey which the men of war had caught, was six hundred thousand and seventy thousand and five thousand sheep,

33 And threescore and twelve thousand beaxes,

34 And threescore and one thousand axes.

35 And thirty and two thousand persons in all of women that had not known man.

It appears from the enumeration here of the booty, that the Israelites took in this war against the Midianites seventy-two thousand beaxes, six hundred and seventy-five thousand sheep, sixty-one thousand asses and thirty-two thousand women virgins, beside the women and children killed, (as they said) by God's order. The thirty-two thousand women and women children were given to the soldiers and the priests. Why should the social purity societies in England and America who believe in the divine origin of all Scripture object to the use of women children by their statesmen and soldiers when the custom was permitted to the chosen people of Israel? True, the welfare of the priests, lawgivers and soldiers was carefully guarded in selecting for them the purest of the daughters of the Midianites.

Surely such records are enough to make the most obstinate believer doubt the divine origin of Jewish history and the claim of that people to have been under the special guidance of Jeho-
vah. Their claim to have had conversations with God daily and to have acted under His commands in all their tergiversations of word and action is simply blasphemous. We must discredit their pretensions, or else the wisdom of Jehovah himself. "Talking with God," at that period was a mere form of speech, as "tempted of the devil" was once in the records of our courts. Criminals said "tempted of the devil, I did commit the crime." This chapter places Moses and Eleazar the priest, in a most unenviable light according to the moral standard of any period of human history. Verily the revelations in the *Pall Mall Gazette* a few years ago, pale before this wholesale desecration of women and children. Bishop Colenso in his exhaustive work on the Pentateuch shows that most of the records therein claiming to be historical facts are merely parables and figments of the imagination of different writers, composed at different periods, full of contradictions, interpolations and discrepancies.

He shows geologically and geographically that a flood over the whole face of the earth was a myth. He asks how was it possible to save two of every animal, bird and creeping thing on both continents and get them safely into the ark and back again to their respective localities. How could they make their way from South America up north through the frigid zone and cross over the polar ices to the eastern continent and carry with them the necessary food to which they had been accustomed, they would all have perished with the cold before reaching the Arctic circle. While the animals from the northern latitudes would all perish with heat before reaching the equator. What a long weary journey the animals, birds and fowls would have taken from Japan and China to Mount Ararat. The parable as an historical fact is hedged with impossibilities and so is the whole journey of forty years from Egypt to Canaan; but if we make up our minds to believe in miracles then it is plain sailing from Genesis to the end of Deuteronomy. Both Ezra and Jeremiah are said to have written the last book of the Pentateuch, and some, question whether Moses was the author of either. Bishop Colenso also questions the arithmetical calculations of
the historians in regard to the conquest of the Midianites, as described in the book of Numbers.

E. C. S.

But how thankful we must be that we are no longer obliged to believe, as a matter of fact, of vital consequence to our eternal hope, each separate statement contained in the Pentateuch, such for instance, as the story related in Numbers xxxi!—where we are told that a force of twelve thousand Israelites slew all the males of the Midianites, took captive all the females and children, seized all their cattle and flocks, (seventy-two thousand oxen, sixty-one thousand asses, six hundred and seventy-five thousand sheep,) and all their goods, and burnt all their cities, and all their goodly castles, without the loss of a single man,—and then, by command of Moses, butchered in cold blood all the women, except “the women-children and virgins, to be given to the priests and soldiers.”

They amounted to thirty-two thousand, mostly, we suppose, under the age of sixteen. We may fairly reckon that there were as many more under the age of forty, and half as many more above forty, making altogether eighty thousand females, of whom, according to the story, Moses ordered forty-eight thousand to be killed, besides (say) twenty thousand young boys. The tragedy of Cawnpore, where three hundred were butchered, would sink into nothing, compared with such a massacre, if, indeed, we were required to believe it.

The obvious intention of Moses, as shown in these directions, was to keep the Jewish race from amalgamation. But the great lawgiver seems to have ignored the fact, or been ignorant of it, that transmission of race qualities is even greater through the female line than through the male, and if they kept the women children for themselves they were making sure the fact that in days to come there would be Jewish descendants who might be Jews in name, but, through the law of heredity, aliens in spirit. The freedom of the natural law will make itself evident, for so-called natural law is divine.

P. A. H.
Zipporah the wife of Moses was a Midianite, Jethro her father was a priest of some sagacity and consideration. When he met Moses in the desert he gave him valuable advice about the government of his people, which the great lawgiver obeyed.

The sons of Zipporah and Moses, Gershon and Eliezer, were therefore of Midianite blood, yet Moses sent an army of twelve thousand armed for war; a thousand of each tribe, with orders to slay every man. If the venerable Jethro was still alive he must have been murdered by his grandsons and their comrades. This is a most extraordinary story. If after the men, women and male children were all killed, thirty thousand maidens and young girls still remained, the Midianites must have been too large a tribe to have been wholly destroyed by twelve thousand Israelites, unless the Jewish God fought the battle.

L. D. B.
COMMENT ON NUMBERS.

CHAPTER X.

Numbers xxxiv.

1 And the chief fathers of the families of the children of Gilead drew near, and spake before Moses, and before the princes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel:

2 And they said, The Lord commanded my lord to give the land for an inheritance by lot to the children of Israel: and my lord was commanded by the Lord to give the inheritance of Zelophehad our brother unto his daughters.

3 And if they be married to any of the sons of the other tribes of the children of Israel, then shall their inheritance be taken from the inheritance of our fathers, and shall be put to the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received; so shall it be taken from the lot of our inheritance.

4 And when the jubilee of the children of Israel shall be, then shall their inheritance be put unto the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received:

5 And Moses commanded the children of Israel according to the word of the Lord, saying, The tribe of the sons of Joseph hath said well.

6 ...the Lord doth command concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, Let them marry to whom they think best; only to the family of the tribe of their father shall they marry.

7 So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe: for every one of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers.

8 And every daughter, that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Israel may enjoy every man the inheritance of his fathers.

9 Even as the Lord commanded Moses, so did the daughters of Zelophehad:

10 ...and were married unto their father's brothers' sons.

In a former chapter there was a sense of justice shown towards the daughters of Zelophehad, but here a new complication arises. The uncles of these girls had their eyes on the property and perhaps feared that their sons had not found favor in the eyes of their cousins, as they might have seen and admired some fine looking young men from other tribes. So the crafty old uncles moved in time to get a statute passed that would compel daughters to marry in the tribe of their fathers and got a direct command from the Lord to that effect, then the young women, compelled to limit their predilections, married their cousins, setting the laws of heredity quite aside; property in all ages being considered of more importance than persons. Thus, after making some show of justice in giving the daughters of Zelophehad the inheritance of their fathers, the Israelites began to consider the loss to their tribe, if peradventure the five sisters should marry into other tribes and all this property be transferred to their enemies.
They seemed to consider these noble women destitute of the virtue of patriotism, of family pride, of all the tender sentiments of friendship, kindred and home, and so with their usual masculine arrogance they passed laws to compel the daughters of Zelophehad to do what they probably would have done had there been no law to that effect. These daughters were known by the euphonious names of Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah and Noah, and they all married their father's brothers' sons. Cousins on the mother's side would probably have been forbidden.

If Moses, as the mouthpiece of God, aimed to do exact justice, why did he not pass an ordinance giving property in all cases equally to sons and daughters. E. C. S.

Moses gave what appears to be, in the light of this Christian era, a just judgment when he decided that the daughters of Zelophehad should inherit their father's property, but he gave as the law of inheritance the direction that "if a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter;" thus, as I think, unjustly discriminating between women who have brothers and women who have none, and he goes on further to deal unjustly with women when he directs that the daughters of Zelophehad marry so that the inheritance justly awarded them should not go out of the family of the tribe of their fathers.

"Let them marry to whom they think best," and those words seemingly recognize their righteous freedom. But immediately he limits that phrase and informs the five women they must only marry in their father's tribe, and were limited also to their father's family. The result was that each married her own cousin. If this was contrary to physiological law, as some distinguished physiologists affirm, then they were compelled by the arbitrary law of Moses to break the law of God. P. A. H.