BOO K S OF ISAIAH AND DANIEL,
MICAH AND MALACHI.

ISAIAH.

The closing books of the Old Testament make but little mention of women as illustrating individual characteristics. The ideal woman is used more as a standard of comparison for good and for evil, the good woman representing the elements of success in building up the family, the tribe, the nation, as a devout worshiper of the God of Israel; the wicked woman, the elements of destruction in the downfall of great cities and nations. As woman is chosen to represent the extremes of human conditions she has no special reason to complain.

The Prophets sum up the graces of the "daughters of men" in the following texts:

Isaiah iii.

16 Moreover the Lord saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet:
18 In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon,
19 The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers,

20 The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings,
21 The rings, and nose jewels,
22 The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins,
23 The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the vails.

Before the sacred canon of the Old Testament was written there were Prophets who took the place of Bibles to the Church. It is said that God himself spake to the children of Israel from the top of Mount Sinai, but that it was so terrible they entreated the Lord ever after to speak to them through men. So ever after he did com-
municate with them through Prophets and Angels. Isaiah was of the royal family; he was nephew to King Uzziah. The Prophet in the above texts reproves and warns the daughters of Zion and tells them of their faults. He does not like their style of walking, which from the description must have been much like the mincing gait of some women to-day.

The Prophet expressly vouches God's authority for what he said concerning their manners and elaborate ornamentation, lest they should be offended with his criticisms. If the Prophets could visit our stores and see all the fashions there are to tempt the daughters of to-day, they would declaim against our frivolities on the very doorsteps, and in view of the Easter bonnets, at the entrance to our churches. The badges which our young women wear as members of societies, pinned in rows on broad ribbons, the earrings, the bangles, the big sleeves, the bonnets trimmed with osprey feathers, answer to the crisping pins, the wimples, the nose jewels, the tablets, the chains, the bracelets, the mufflers, the veils, the glasses and the girdles of the daughters of Zion. If the Prophets, instead of the French milliners and dressmakers, could supervise the toilets of our women, they would dress in far better taste.

Daniel.

The name of this Prophet in Hebrew was "Darnil," which signifies "the judgment of God." His Chaldean name was Bethshazzar. He was of the tribe of Judah of the royal family. Josephus calls him one of the greatest of the Prophets.

Daniel vi.

Belshazzar the king made a great feast and commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines, might drink therein.

5 In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

6 Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that his knees smote one against another.

7 The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spoke, and said to
the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.

8 Then came in all the king’s wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known the interpretation thereof.

10 Now the queen came into the banquet house, and said, O king, live forever: let not thy thoughts trouble thee.

11 There is a man in thy kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom Nebuchadnezzar thy father made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans and soothsayers;... now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation.

13 Then was Daniel brought in; and he said, I will read the writing unto the king.

25 And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.

26 This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.

27 TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balance, and art found wanting.

28 PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.

29 Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

30 In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain.

Historians say that Cyrus was at this time besieging the city and knew of this feast, and took this opportunity to make his attack and to slay the king.

In the midst of the consternation at the feast the queen entered to advise Belshazzar. It is supposed that this queen was the widow of the evil Merodach, and was that famous Nitocris whom Herodotus mentions as a woman of extraordinary prudence and wisdom. She was not present at the feast, as were the king’s wives and concubines. It was not agreeable to her age and gravity to dissipate at night; but tidings of the consternation in the banquet hall were brought to her, so that she came and entreated him not to be discouraged by the incapacity of the wise men to solve the riddle; for there was a man in his kingdom who had more than once helped his father in emergencies and would no doubt advise him. She could not read the writing herself; but she said, let the Prophet Daniel be called. The account she gives of the respect Nebuchadnezzar had for him, for his insight into the deepest mysteries, and of his goodness and wisdom, moved the king to summon Daniel into his presence.

Daniel was now near ninety years of age, and for a long time had not been in court circles; but the queen dowager remembered him in the court of the king’s father. She reminded her son of the high
esteem in which he was held by his father. The interpretation which Daniel gave of these mystic characters was far from easing the king of his fears. Daniel being in years, and Belshazzar still young, he took greater liberty in dealing plainly with him than he had with his father. He read the warning as written on the wall:

"Thou hast been weighed in the balance and found wanting, and thy kingdom is divided and rent from thee."

Although the exposition of the handwriting was most discouraging, yet the king kept his promise, and put on Daniel the scarlet gown and the gold chain.

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**Micah.**

*Micah ii.*

2 The women of my people have ye cast out from their pleasant houses; from their children have ye taken away my glory for ever.

*Micah vii.*

6 For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law.

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Here the Israelites are rebuked for their cruel treatment of their own people, robbing widows and selling children into slavery. Family life as well as public affairs seems to have become unsettled. The contempt and the violation of the laws of domestic duties are a sad symptom of universal corruption.

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**Malachi.**

*Malachi ii.*

11 Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god.

14 Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.

15 That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

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These Israelites were always violating the national law which forbade them to marry strange women. The corruption of the na-
tion began, say the historians, with the intermarriage of the "sons of God" with the "daughters of men," meaning, I suppose, those of the tribes who had a different religion. "He that marries a heathen woman is as if he made himself son-in-law to an idol." They put away the wives of their own nation, and, as was the fashion at one time, married those of other nations. This spoiled the lives of the daughters of Israel. They were uncertain as to their social relations, family, right to their children, and support in their old age, as a paper of divorce could be given to them at any time. The denunciations of the Prophets had no great weight in matters where strong feeling and sound judgment conflicted.

Charming women, of the Hittites and of the Midianites, with their novel dress, manners and conversation, attracted the men of Israel. They could not resist the temptation. When the strongest man and the wisest one are alike led captive, there is no significance in calling woman—"the weaker sex."

Though few women appear in the closing tragedies of the Old Testament, yet the idiosyncrasies of the sex are constantly used to point a moral or to condemn a sin. E. C. S.