

DAVID AND HIS DANCING

A READABLE SYMPOSIUM UPON A TOPIC OF INTEREST.

Geoffrey Cuthbert Strange Replies in Plain Terms to a Recent Critic—He is Aided and Abetted by Allies who Handle the Psalmist without Gloves.

I see by last week's PROGRESS that a defender of King David has arisen in our midst, and has had the courage of his convictions, inasmuch as he has put them in print. I read his letter very carefully, and thought it over dispassionately, with the result that I couldn't understand why "A Lover of David" had not written that letter long ago, and not having done so, why he had written it at all. Because, when I looked over my file of PROGRESS and laboriously hunted up "Cecil's" remarks on King David, I found that the offensive paragraph had been published on the 29th of March, nearly five weeks ago; and I wondered whether our friend had only just found out about it, or whether he—but perhaps he has been out of town.

Now I have the utmost confidence in the ability of the redoubtable "Cecil" to defend himself, or herself, as "A Lover of David" says it should be, and I suppose he knows all about it, though he does call her his "unknown friend." But perhaps we have all been mistaken about "Cecil," and he is a lady, though she certainly writes very much like a man.

However, that need not debar me from having a little friendly chat with my unknown friend, "A Lover of David." I am glad you defended the ancient king, my dear friend, for he certainly stood in need of a defender. He was a grand old man in many ways! He was chosen of the Lord a prophet and a king, but what sort of an example did he set his people in some ways? I suppose it would sound irreverent to say that he betrayed to a terrible extent the trust placed in him. But no one can deny that he broke at least three of the commandments—not to mention another—in the most flagrant manner. He broke them backwards, as it were, the last one first. To begin with, he coveted his neighbor's wife, then he proceeded to make use of his power as king, and he stole that man's wife in his absence!

The next step in the king's downward career was a murder. Not a bold open murder in hot blood, like Cain's, but a pre-meditated, cold blooded murder, which should keep his hands outwardly clean, while in reality they were red with blood. To my mind, history contains few such stories of heartless treachery as that same murder of the brave, loyal and unsuspecting Uriah.

The king sends for him, and is gracious to him. He was a captain in David's army, I fancy, so David asks him how the war prospers, and how Joab and all the people are. Then he sends him down to his dishonored home, and sends messengers after him with a present, a mess of choice meat, "from the king." He even invites Uriah to dine with him, and "he made him drunk."

The next day King David wrote a letter to Joab, the general in command of his forces, and ordered him to set Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and to retire from him, finishing the letter with the plain statement, "That he may be smitten and die."

I really don't think David's sin would have looked half so hideous to us, if he had not always made so many professions of righteousness, and if he had not been a trusted servant of God. The higher the elevation the lower the fall. And the worst of the whole thing is that the king never seems to have the slightest idea that he has done anything out of the way.

Along the cool sequestered vale of life
He kept the cool of his way,

Just as it nothing at all had happened. He had carefully observed the eleventh commandment, "Thou shalt not get found out." At last he thought he had, and when his offended Lord sent Nathan to accuse him, it was a long time before he could understand what Nathan meant, so sure was he that his crime was hidden.

When Nathan speaks those crushing words of accusation, "Thou art the man," David is absolutely dumbfounded. He listens in silence to his sentence: "For thou didst it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun."

Now we all know that King David was punished for his sin, and suffered bitterly, before the Lord restored him to favor, but that his sin was finally "put away" and forgiven, so that I should be sorry indeed to rake up his offences at this late day when he has been so long dead and buried, were it not that I think it a little hard for "Cecil" to be pounced upon for comparing David's dancing with the modern form of that exercise. I know we are not told anywhere in the bible that David did anything so awfully naughty as dancing "with a woman in his arms." No! Perish the base thought! He would not have been caught doing such a thing for worlds. Indeed he had a rooted objection to being caught doing anything. Although history tells us how he peeped at a lady from the roof of a house, when she had no idea that he was looking, it does not say whether anyone saw him doing it or not.

"A Lover of David" says the king danced as an act of worship, and he asks Cecil Gwynne if "she" dances that way.

Now I don't dance at all, myself, and I

don't wear "the usual style of evening dress" which he seems to disapprove of, for the excellent reason that a man's neck and throat are built more for strength than beauty. I think even Amelie Rives admitted that. So when we want to look lovely we have our vests cut low, and our shirt collars cut correspondingly high. But I love to see a lady in a charming evening dress, and I also love to see everybody dance who has a leg to stand upon. But I do not like to hear a christian man or woman stigmatize any amusement as wrong because they have never indulged in it themselves, and therefore know nothing about it. Neither do I consider it christianlike to brand any social gathering as "an assembly of ungodly people," merely because they chance to be indulging in a harmless amusement. From the christianity that despises all others who do not conform to its own rules, I say in all piety, "Good Lord deliver us."

GEOFFREY CUTHBERT STRANGE.

SOME OF DAVID'S DEEDS.

A Critic who is Not Disposed to Handle Them Gently.

"A Lover of David" is not at all pleased that your Moncton correspondent, "Cecil Gwynne," should compare, with a view of justifying, the ball room of our day to the dances of David or those of his time. I quite agree with him. An unbiassed mind, an unprejudiced reason, and an unclouded and impartial spirit should, I think, be able to set this matter at rest without a review of the character, habits, or doings of one who lived in the world's morning, and ruled a semi-savage people.

This "Lover of David" has scanned history's page, and found there, as he says, that "David was a highly honored prophet of the Lord as well as a king." Highly honored? How do we know this? Prophet was he? What did he know prophesy? Think you the man who would calmly concoct a scheme to murder another man that he might take unto himself that man's wife, and take her even before the tears of grief had vanished from her cheeks, while her eyes were yet inflamed with weeping, is such a man as would be honored among any people—savage or civilized—cultured or barbaric? Think you the author of Psalm xxxviii, merits respect? Is the six. music in the ear of a true and noble man or woman who possesses a heart strong atone with sympathy or touched by love? Are the literary works of David, which are simply an account of his own acts and desires, such as would elicit the praise or applause of a real man or woman? Do these indices of character impel any admiration, respect or honor, by ladies or gentlemen of this age and country? If in these matters we should, as a people desirous of attaining as high a standard of morality as possible, refuse to be governed by the examples of David, why should we select him as an ideal for the ball room or for any other place, unless our reason and our consciences tell us that his example is worthy of being followed?

This "Lover of David" states, upon what authority I am unaware, that "David did not dance with a woman in his arms, nor in an assembly of ungodly people," but he says, "he praised God in the dance as an act of worship," and for the mode in which he did so worship, and the kind of dress he donned, I refer you to an example in II Samuel, Chap. vi., Verses 14, 16, 20, 21, and 22. "Lover of David" what think you now of "the usual evening dress" as compared with that linen ephod of your highly honored prophet? For my part I should prefer our modern lancers to David's dance as an act of worship. I should like a waltz much better than a Hebrew jig for the purpose of adoration. And I should favor the usual evening dress rather than the linen ephod. But those who dance to-day worship in the dance. They who enter the ball-room with thoughts as pure as the light of stars, as they should be, and as I believe they are, worship in the dance as much as David ever did. Endowed by nature with symmetry of form, with muscle and sinew, with grace of movement and an ear responsive to the symphonies of divine melody, with a body clothed as directed by chaste taste, he and she who in each others arms keep time to the throb and thrill of music, worship the great cause, mother nature, that made them as they are. And I believe a God would vouchsafe to more sweetly smile upon such persons than upon those who go piously moping along the dusty pathway of life enjoying none of its sunshine and plucking none of its flowers—the hearse of happiness,—the grave of joy.

Is not the la. ful use of the talents worship? Don't you think that the invention which leaps from the brain given by the creator—the invention that lightens the work and prevents the weariness of many hands—that gives better clothing, better food and more happiness to men, women and children—don't you think that such a triumph of genius would be accepted by the giver of that genius as worship? Were the knees made only to bend in prayer? Were the hands made only to lift the weary burden of toil? Was the voice in-

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tended only for the production of deep bass melancholy tones? Is laughter a crime? Is solemnity a cardinal virtue? Why the innate desire for festivity and song, for mirth and joy? Surely the gratification of these desires, noble and pure, tender and strong, are neither curses nor crimes, and surely the time will come when men and women will become great enough, honest enough, grand enough and sensible enough, to follow where nature and reason lead the way, holding high in their devoted hands the torches of truth and experience.

It may be that David did not dance with a woman in his arms, but it he did not, the probabilities are that either he did not know how, or the women would not let him dance with them, and of these two reasons I think the latter is the more probable. If the modesty and delicacy of Michal were common attributes of the women of David's time, they certainly would decline dancing with this highly honored prophet.

When "A Lover of David" states that "he did not dance in an assembly of ungodly people," he of course implies that our modern assemblies are ungodly. In other words, that they are immoral and disreputable. I am sure that society people everywhere will feel much flattered by this compliment, this strange amalgamation of self-glorification and reproach for others, and will be charmed with the modesty and reticence of David's lover—a modesty born of a belief in the dogma that by nature he is totally depraved, tainted and polluted with sin, and deserving of torments eternal.

Yet, perhaps, from the pure river of truth, flowing under the words of Christ, uttered when the poor woman taken in sin was brought to him by the Scribes and Pharisees—"Let him who is without sin cast the first stone"—this "Lover of David" might catch yet a few pearls of truth, righteousness and justice to deck his shining brow. If he should do so, I am sure that when he next looks in upon a ball-room it will not be with feelings of sadness or disgust, but turning from the scene of gaiety, will truthfully say, "I thank God that he has made the human mind and heart and frame capable of enjoyment, and that in an atmosphere of purity young men and maidens can thus associate, and reap a harvest of joy sown by the Creator's hand."

A LOVER OF LIBERTY.

More of David's Record.

"And now we have turned back to become better acquainted with the fine old man: what do we find?" We find that although David was not in every sense a type of the modern society young man, yet that he was more or less connected with the fair sex through his whole career. His first love seems to have been Michal, but he soon fell a victim to the fascinations of a charming young widow named Abigail. Among his subsequent engagements appear the following: Ahinoam, Maacha, Haggith, Abital, Eglah, Abishag, and others too numerous to mention. Later we read that David while walking on the roof of his palace "in an evening-tide," became mashed on a woman "very beautiful to look upon." She was not, strictly speaking, "in the usual style of evening dress," (as "Cecil Gwynne's" critic will be glad to learn) and although bathing, bathing-suits were not *au fait* in those days. It is contended that Cecil Gwynne cites David as a typical dancer, while "her" critic holds his dancing was only commendable because it was "before the Lord." Both are wrong. For though on the occasion referred to, Michal exclaimed to her high-spirited husband "How glorious was the king of Israel to-day," yet the context shows plainly that this remark was ironical. I quite concur that it was in "an assembly of ungodly people" that David danced, and it is equally true that he did not then have "a woman in his arms." But he got there just the same. I should have felt safe in saying with "Peter" that by this time all David's lovers were "both dead and buried." Can there possibly be one left? If so, is it Abis-hag? A HITITE.

[FOR PROGRESS.]

YOUNG CANADA TO NEWFOUNDLAND

Dear fish-flake Isle, still on the mart!
Once on a time you flirted,
Then threw me over, hand and heart—
Alas! Yourself deserted—
But unlike petty lovers, I
Would smile at your reverses—
More chivalrous by far, I ply
To win again your graces!

Now richer grown, with house, and home;
And numberless, broad acres,
Loans, stocks, annuities—and some
Hard cash to pay the *fakirs*—
My credit, too, is passing good,
Deemed, far and near, a nation—
All, all is yours, and more, dear, should
You hint *Confederation!*

No longer need of worry, when—
Our hearts together wedded—
Your care-worn *Mother* scolds, for then
The trouble will have ended—
Modus vivendi would assume
Quick *modus operandi!*
The sprightly *Frank* might fret or fume,
A *l'Anglaise* fait accompli!

Dear Isle, your love is all I pray;
And beg that you accept me—
If not—adieu! Go your own way,
Prove *fishiest of the fishy!*

H. H. P.

A TRIOLET.

'Tis the blithe month of May—
And where's my umbrella?
A type of Spring day,
'Tis the blithe month of May,
With no sign of Sol's ray
To cheer up a fellow!
'Tis the blithe month of May—
And where's my umbrella?
—CASEY TAP.

THE THYCKE FOGGE PAPERS.

Who Should Respond When the Health of the Ladies is Proposed.

NO. IX.

Our symposium of last Wednesday was not largely attended, as there were other attractions that kept some of Us from appearing at the hospitable home of Our honorable friend. Second of Us was in high dudgeon at the remarks the Senator had made with reference to him and the young lady to whom he was attached, and had refused to come on this particular evening. Our host enquired after him and smiled when he heard the reason for his absence, simply remarking that "Our companion would come to his senses shortly."

The conversation for a time drifted hither and yon, now on one subject now on another. We ran through the ordinary topics of the weather, the prospects of cheap excursions to New York when all the competing lines should be in full running order, the chances of the new club being fully furnished "ere the corn is waving," and the despotism course pursued by the government in putting an extra duty on liquor. We wondered whether any one could see any humor in the articles contributed to a morning paper by an alleged humorist, and so on.

The Senator had not taken much part in the talk that ebbed and flowed around him, but sat quietly smoking his pipe and quaffing his choice five year old, until some casual remark from One of Us roused him and he started off.

"I have been thinking a good deal about the fair sex since the last time we met," said he, "and have come to the conclusion that, as a general rule, man knows very little of or about his sister, woman, and will never exercise his slender stock of knowledge by what he can find out from her. Of course the older man gets the more he becomes versed in the wily ways of the dearer portion of humanity, which leads me often to wonder why some youngster, some innocent untrained bantling, probably in the first flush of his first dress coat and white tie, is often chosen to respond to the health of the ladies, at banquets, dinners or assemblies where toasts and speechmaking are in order. Now what in the name of goodness can such a man as that know about them? He may have met in the course of his short society career a hundred charming girls with whom he has danced a few times, to whom he has addressed a few words, and of or about whom he knows absolutely nothing. And yet, forsooth, he is dragged to his feet in a perspiring state, with a wild hope that something may happen to save him, to respond to this toast, and his response usually has as much to do with the subject as we have with the new Superintendent of the Asylum Annex. No, my friends, the man who should answer to the toast is a married man, one who has become, so to speak, hardened to all the tricks and manners of Our superior officers; one who knows what it is to come home late from the office and be met with scowling brows and words of reproach; one who has been through all the miseries of house-cleaning, and moving, and who has also travelled through a long valley of illness, and knows what it is to find a patient, watchful, sleepless, affectionate, tender woman, ever ready to smooth over the rough places, never taking to heart the impatient querulousness of a sick man, (than whom no living creature is a greater nuisance), bearing more fatigue uncomplainingly, and doing everything possible for one's comfort that mortal can do. The man who has gone through such an experience as this is fully competent to speak to the sentiment I have mentioned, and do it justice, too. No words more appropriate to my remarks were ever penned than those of the Wizard of the North:

Oh, woman, in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy and hard to please,
but—When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou.

Some of the younger members of Our coterie thought that the Senator was a shade hard on the fair sex, but there were One or Two who filed out into the damp, dank, dark fog with a feeling that the Hon. Thyckke Fogge must have "been there," to speak so feelingly.

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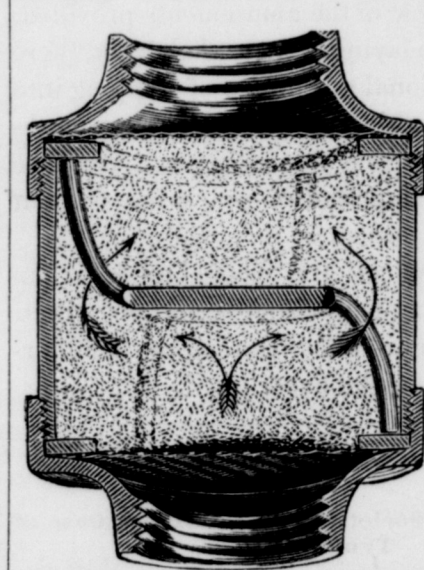
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