SAMSON (Hebrew, *Shimshōn),* the great enemy of the Philistines, is reckoned as one of the judges of Israel in two editorial notes which belong to the chronological scheme of the book of Judges (xv. 20, xvi. 31); but his story itself, which is a self-contained narrative by a single hand (Jud. xiii. 2-16, 31a), represents him not as a judge but as a popular hero of vast strength and sarcastic humour, who has indeed been consecrated from his birth as the deliverer of Israel, and is not unaware of his voca­tion, but who yet is inspired by no serious religious or patriotic purpose, and becomes the enemy of the Philistines only from personal motives of revenge, the one passion which is stronger in him than the love of women. In his life, and still more in his death, he inflicts great injury on the oppressors of Israel, but he is never the head of a national uprising against them, nor do the Israelites receive any real deliverance at his hands. The story of his exploits is plainly taken from the mouths of the people, and one is tempted to conjecture that originally his Nazarite vow was conceived simply as a vow of revenge, which is the meaning it would have in an Arab story. Our narrator, however, conceives his life as a sort of prelude to the work of Saul (xiii. 5), and brings out its religious and national significance in this respect in the opening scene (ch. xiii.), which is closely parallel to the story of Gideon, and in the tragic close (ch. xvi.); while yet the character of Samson, who generally is quite for­getful of his mission, remains much as it had been shaped in rude popular tale in a circle which, like Samson him­self, was but dimly conscious of the national and religious vocation of Israel.

The name of Samson *(Shamshōn,* of which the Massoretic *Shimshōn* is a more modern pronunciation, and later than the LXX., who write Σαμψών) means “solar,” but neither the name nor the story lends any solid support to Steinthal’s fantastic idea that the hero is a solar myth (compare Wellhausen-Bleek, p. 196). He is a member of an undoubtedly historical family of those Danites who had their standing camp near Zorah, not far from the Philistine border, before they moved north and seized Laish (compare xiii. 25 with xviii. 8, 11, 12). The family of Manoah had an hereditary sepulchre at Zorah, where Samson was said to lie (xvi. 31), and their name continued to be associated with Zorah even after the exile, when it appears that the Manahethites of Zorah were reckoned as Calibbites. The name had remained though the race changed (1 Chron. ii. 52, 54). One of Samson’s chief exploits is associated with a rock called from its shape “the Ass’s Jawbone,” from which sprung a fountain called En-hakkore, “ the spring of the partridge,” and these names have influenced the form in which the exploit is told. The narrative of Samson’s marriage and riddle is of peculiar interest as a record of manners; specially noteworthy is the custom of the wife remaining with her parents after marriage *(cf.* Gen. ii. 24).

SAMUEL Shĕmūēl), @@1 a seer and “judge” of

Israel in the time of the Philistine oppression. His history, as told in the first book of Samuel (compare Psalm xcix. 5; Ecclus. xlvi. 13 *sq.),* is too familiar to call for repetition here, and a critical estimate of his place in Hebrew history has been given in Israel, vol. xiii. p. 403. There remain, however, one or two points of detail which may be noticed here. His birthplace was Ramah, or, as it is called in the Hebrew text of 1 Sam. i. 1, Ha-Ramathaim (Ramathem, 1 Macc. xi. 34; Arimathæa, Mat. xxvii. 57); the identity

of the two names is supported by the Septuagint, which has Arimathaim for Ramah in several passages. Ramah, which appears in 1 Kings xv. 17 as a stronghold on the frontier of the kingdoms of Ephraim and Judah, is probably identical with the modern El-Râm, about 5 miles north of Jerusalem, on a hill on the east side of the main road to Shechem and the north. Ramah was also the place where Samuel usually resided in his later days, and from which he made a yearly circuit through a very limited district in the immediate neighbourhood, “judging Israel” (1 Sam. vii. 16). None of the cities which he visited is more than a few miles from Ramah. Ramah, according to 1 Sam. i. 1 (where the text is to be corrected by the Septuagint), was a town in the district of Zuph, belonging to the tribe of Ephraim (comp. 1 Sam. ix. 5 and 1 Sam. x. 2, where the grave of Rachel lies on the frontier between Ephraim and Benjamin; a different localization is given in Gen. xxxv. 19, 20, unless the identification of Bethlehem and Ephrath there is a later gloss). The original text of 1 Sam. i. 1 does not seem to say explicitly that Samuel’s father was an Ephrathite *(i.e.,* of the tribe of Ephraim), though his city was Ephrathite; and 1 Chron. vi. 28, 33 [vi. 13, 18] makes him a Levite, apparently because a post-exile family of singers traced their stock from him. The old accounts certainly repre­sent Samuel even as a child as doing priestly service at Shiloh, girt with the ephod and wearing the priestly robe *(mĕ'îl,* E. V. “coat,” 1 Sam. ii. 18 *sq.),* but at that early date priesthood was by no means confined to Levites, and the story certainly implies that it was not by birth but only by his mother’s vow that he was dedicated to the service of the sanctuary. On Samuel’s relation to the prophets, see vol. xix. p. 815. Compare also Samuel, Books of.

SAMUEL, Books of. The Hebrew Book of Samuel, like the Hebrew Book of Kings, is in modern Bibles divided into two books, after the Septuagint and Vulgate, whose four books of “ kingdoms ” answer to the Hebrew books of Samuel and Kings. The connexion between the books of Samuel and Kings has been spoken of in the article Kings (*q.v*.). These two books, together with Judges, are made up of a series of extracts and abstracts from various sources worked over from time to time by successive editors, and freely handled by copyists down to a comparatively late date, as the variations between the Hebrew text and the Septuagint show. The main redac­tion of Judges and Kings has plainly been made under the influence of the ideas of the book of Deuteronomy, and it was in connexion with this redaction that the history from the accession of Solomon onwards was marked off as a separate book (see Kings). In Samuel the Deuteronomistic hand is much less prominent, but in 1 Sam. vii. 2-4, and in the speech of Samuel, ch. xii., its characteristic pragmatism is clearly recognizable; the nature of the old narrative did not invite frequent inser­tions of this kind throughout the story. So, too, the chronological system which runs through Judges and Kings is not completely carried out in Samuel, though its influence can be traced (1 Sam. iv. 18, vii. 2, xiii. 1 *sq*., xxvii. 7, 2 Sam. ii 10 *sq.,* v. 4 *sq.).* In 1 Sam. xiii. 1,

in the note “ Saul was——years old when he became

king and reigned [two] years over Israel ” (lacking in LXX.), one of the numbers has been left blank and the other has been falsely filled up by a mere error of the text; the similar note in 2 Sam. ii. 10 seems also to have been filled up at random; it contradicts and disturbs the context. But, though the book of Samuel has been much less systematically edited than Kings, unsystematic addi­tions to and modifications of the oldest narratives were made from time to time on a very considerable scale, and

@@@1 This is one of an obscure class of proper names &c.), the analogy of which seems to exclude the idea that it is softened from “heard of God.” It seems rather to mean “name of

El,” *i.e.,* “manifestation of God’s power or will.” Compare the title Shem Baal, “name of Baal,” given to Astarte on the epitaph of Eshmunazar.