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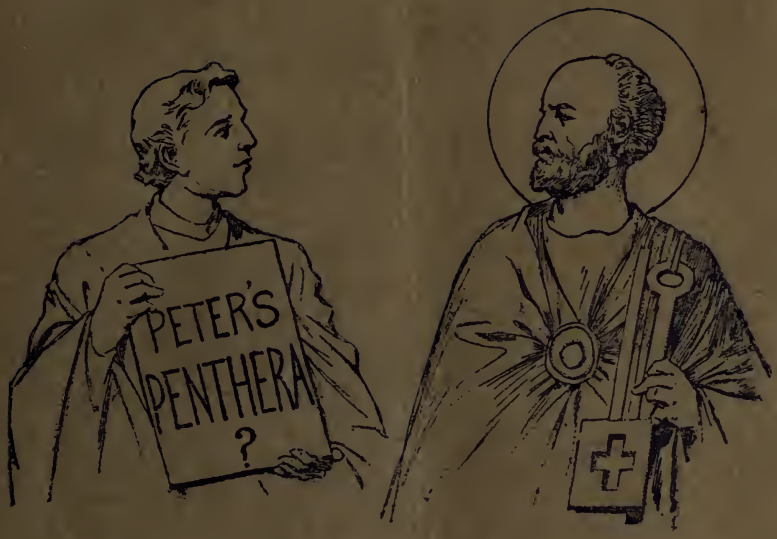

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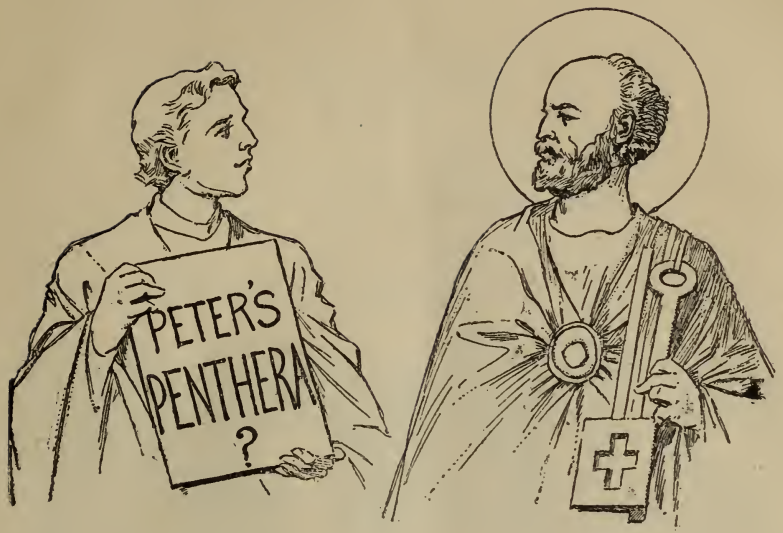

WAS ST. PETER MARRIED?

By Rev. JOSEPH F. SHEAHAN.

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ABBREVIATIONS.

Gen.=Genesis.
Ex.=Exodus.
Lev.=Leviticus.
Dt. or Deut.=Deuteronomy.
Judg.=Judges.
Sam.=Samuel.
K.=Kings.
Tob.=Tobias (Tobit)
Mich.=Micheas (Micah)

Mt.=Matthew, Gospel of
Mk.=Mark, Gospel of
Lk.=Luke, Gospel of
Jn.=John, Gospel of

Ac.=Acts of the Apostles
Cor.=Corinthians, Epistle to
Tim.=Timothy, Epistle to
Phil.=Philippians, Epistle to
Apoc.=Apocalypse (Revelations)

L. & S.=Liddell & Scott's Greek Lex.
C. I.=Corpus Inscriptionum Græcarum (Böckhii)

The large figures in the Scripture references are the chapters, the small figures are the verses; *e. g.*, Mk. 1^{30} means: St. Mark's Gospel, 1st. chapter, 30th. verse.

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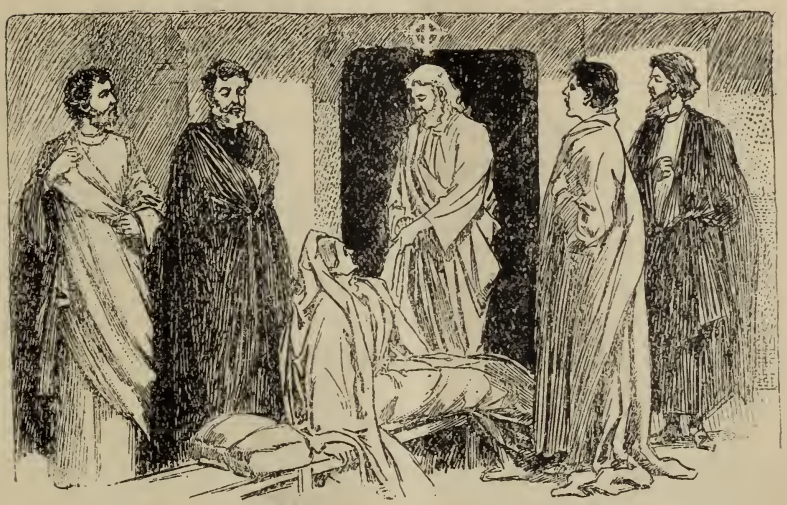
St. Peter's Penthera.

(We shall use the Greek word *penthera* until we discover its meaning.)



"And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, He saw his *penthera* lying and sick of a fever; and He touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she arose and ministered unto them."—Mt. 8 14-15

"And Jesus rising up out of the synagogue went into Simon's house. And Simon's *penthera* was taken with a great fever, and they besought Him for her. And standing over her He commanded the fever and it left her. And immediately rising she ministered to them."—Lk. 4 33-39

Because the house in which this sick woman lay is called Simon Peter's it does not follow that he was its sole owner. Business houses *e. g.* are frequently called after one when there are several partners. From St. Mark 1^{29}, we know that the house belonged to both Simon and Andrew.

> "They came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John, and Simon's *penthera* lay in a fit of fever."—Mk. 1^{29}

Jesus walking one day along the Sea of Galilee saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea. He called them, and immediately leaving "the nets" they followed Him. Mt. 4^{20}; Mk. 1^{18}. Translators had no doubt that the nets belonged to both brothers, and so usually called them "their" nets. (Their is not in the Gk. text.)

Probably both brothers had an equal interest in the ship, and in all the fishing apparatus, nevertheless the ship is called Simon's ship. Lk. 5^{3}

The mere fact that the sick woman was called Simon's *penthera* does not settle the question as to whether she was the *penthera* of both Simon and Andrew, or of Simon alone.* Absolute certainty as to her relationship to Simon cannot be

*We say, *e. g.*, John White is Mr. Jones' son-in-law. We do not say, John White is Mr. and Mrs. Jones' son-in-law.

We say, Mrs. Brown is Peter Smith's aunt. It is not customary to say, Mrs. Brown is Peter's, and Andrew's, and Susan's aunt. The mention of one member of the family is enough. The relationship of the other members is implied and sufficiently understood.

Economy of expression is not peculiar to the Scriptures, nor to English speaking people; it is universal. One devoid of economy of expression, who gives all the details of every event, is an intolerable bore.

Sometimes, however, when the meaning of a sentence is not clear to us, we would have wished that the writer had not been so sparing of his words.

"Peter's aunt" gives us as much information as "Peter's and Andrew's aunt," but Peter's relative, Peter's kinsman, Peter's kinswoman, or Peter's house, does not. Peter alone might have owned a house. Only that St. Mark told us, we would be still in doubt whether the house belonged to one or to both brothers.

had, but whatever can be known of it, we learn from a careful study of the word *penthera*. It has been assumed that *penthera* means mother-in-law; if Peter had a mother-in-law he must have been married, for a woman would not be called his mother-in-law unless he had married her daughter. If it is certain that *penthera* has no other meaning than mother-in-law, then it is certain that Peter had a wife; but if *penthera* has a wider meaning, and includes others besides mothers-in-law, then it will be doubtful whether Peter ever had a wife. The word *penthera* is the sole Scriptural foundation on which rests the presumption that Peter was married. Before examining the Greek word, I shall ask the reader to look for a moment at our English term mother-in-law.

MOTHER-IN-LAW

ITS WIDE AND NARROW MEANING.

Who is a man's mother-in-law? His wife's mother. True, but has this word any other meaning? If we look in Webster's and in Worcester's unabridged Dictionaries, we will find no other. But no dictionary is perfect; they all have some errors and omissions.

A mother-in-law is not a mother in blood; she is not a real mother; she did not give us birth; but in the Canon law she holds the place of a real mother in regard to marriage impediments. A man should have some of the reverence for her that is due to a mother, and marriage with her is absolutely forbidden.

If my mother dies and my father marries again, his second wife is not my real mother, but *-in-law* she has some of the

rights, privileges and duties of a mother; and not only in the Canon but in the Mosaic law, marriage with her is forbidden. Step-mother is now the name given to this legal mother. Mother-in-law was the name given to her formerly.

When a man marries, he and his wife become one, her relatives become his, and his relatives become hers. Her mother becomes his mother, not his real mother, but his mother-*in-law*. So both the new mother that a father may impose on his orphan children, and the new mother that a man gets when he marries, are both *mothers-in* (the eyes of the) *-law*, and this name formerly included both.

> In-law. Formerly, in-law was also used to designate those relationships which are now expressed by step, *e. g.*, son-in-law =step-son; father-in-law=step-father; this, though still locally or vulgarly current, is now generally considered a misuse.—(Murray—New Eng. Dict.)

In the following sentences mother-in-law means step-mother:

> "To violate so gentle a request of her predecessor was an ill foregoing of a mother-in-law's harsh nature."—(Middleton—Anything for a Quiet Life. Century Dict.)

> "The name of a mother-in-law sounded dreadful in my ears." (Fielding—Amelia, B. 7, Ch. 2. Encyclopedic Dict.)

> "In her conversation with her 'mother-in-law' (or as we now say her step-mother). . . . Lady Werner was first led to entertain doubts," "the night before she was to set out for London, Lady Hanmer, her mother-in-law, came thither."— (From Hearth to Cloister, pp. 2, 17, by Frances Jackson. Burns & Oates, 1902.)

A man's wife's mother, and his step-mother, are so much alike in relation to him, and in the general estimation in which they are held, that a common name for them seems most natural and appropriate. The common name which included

both was mother-in-law, but at the present time it is used almost exclusively of a wife's or husband's mother.*

AN UNAVOIDABLE ERROR?

THIS IS A PLANT.

An oriental youth was learning English. His teacher often taught him words by pictures. He showed him pictures with the words, *e. g.*, plant, animal, etc., written under the illustrations. One of the pictures read: "This is an animal." It was the first time that he had seen the word animal, but as soon as he looked at the picture, he recognized the quadruped, and that picture and the word animal were impressed upon and linked together in his mind. Whenever he saw the word animal, he thought of this horse. He did not know that the word animal was applied to sheep, cows, lions, elephants and other beasts. How could he know? He saw the word animal applied to a horse; he often heard drivers say: "That's a spirited animal;" "That's a fine animal." What reason had

*In Wiclif's translation, A. D. 1380, father-, mother- and daughter-in-law are not found. If these words were in use then, he preferred not to use them.

All the versions since Wiclif's time translate *pentheros* in the one place in the N. T. in which it is found, Jno. 18[13], father-in-law.

Tyndale A. D. 1534, Cranmer 1539, and the Geneva 1557 always render *penthera* mother-in-law.

The Rheims 1582 and the Authorized Prot. vers. 1611, make a distinction: They translate *penthera* in Mt. 10[35] and Lk. 12[53] "mother-in-law"; but in Mt. 8[14], Mk. 1[30], and Lk. 4[38], where there is mention of Peter's *penthera* they translate it, as did Wiclif, "wife's mother." (Cf. Eng. Hexapla.)

Why they made this distinction is not clear. Was it because at that time mother-in-law had its wide meaning, and its use here might leave it doubtful whether Peter's mother-in-law was a step-mother or a wife's mother?

The Revised Prot. vers. of 1880 retains this twofold translation.

he for thinking that the word animal might extend to anything else? He had none. He met the word in several sentences in his reading book:

"Animals can see."

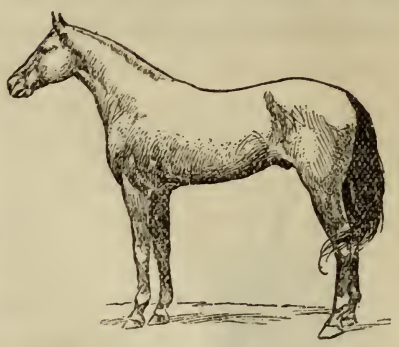
"Animals can hear."

"Animals can feel."

"God made the animals."

"Children should be kind to animals."

"James is an animal."



THIS IS AN ANIMAL.

To his mind this sentence meant: James is a horse. This statement did not astonish him, for the names of beasts are given to certain men in all languages, on account of some resemblance between the men and the beasts. A brave man is called a lion, a gentle man a lamb, a stupid man a donkey, stock speculators are bulls and bears, a political candidate is a dark horse, etc.

When our student later on met the word horse and learnt its meaning, he thought that horse and animal were two words which meant the same thing, like donkey and ass, seaman and sailor, and a multitude of other synonymous words.

Whether his teacher ever found out that his pupil made animal synonymous with horse, I do not know, but if this young man studied English thoroughly he must have discovered his mistake. In English and in every living language the exact meaning of words can be known, for they are found thousands of times in the numerous books written. But in Greek a word may be found only a dozen times or less, in all of the Greek literature now in existence, so there are many Greek words whose extension and comprehension it will never be possible for any scholar, or for all Greek scholars put together, to ever accurately determine.

PENTHERA.

If you see a picture of Noemi and under it the words: This is Ruth's *penthera*, will you immediately conclude that *penthera* means mother-in-law and has no wider meaning? If you do so, you will act like the youth who made: This is an animal, mean: This is a horse; because he had never seen the word applied to any other thing.

RUTH AND NOEMI HER PENTHERA.

How can I tell whether *penthera* in the sentence just given should be translated:

This is Ruth's *kinswoman?*

or

This is Ruth's *mother-in-law?*

The only individual in the Old Testament called a *penthera* is Noemi, the *penthera* of Ruth. Ruth 1^{14}; $2^{11,18,19}$; $3^{1,6,16,17}$. But we have *pentheros*, the masculine form of the word:

Juda is called the *pentheros* of Thamar. Gen. $38^{13,25}$.

Heli is called the *pentheros* of Phinees' wife. I K. (Sam.) $4^{19,21}$.

The parents of Tobias are called his wife's *pentheroi.* Tob. 10^{12}; and her parents his *pentheroi.* Tob. 14^{14}.

So far we are little better off than the oriental youth who read under his picture, "This is an animal," and who concluded that animal and horse meant the same thing. What have we to make us suspect that *penthera* ever meant anything else than mother-in-law; or its masculine form anything else than father-in-law?

We have further information about these words. The Greek Dictionaries tell us that *pentheros* means any connection by marriage.

> "Generally, *a connection by marriage*, *e. g.*, *brother-in-law*, Eur. El. 1286, Valck. Phoen. 431: also = *gambros*, a *son-in-law*, Soph. Fr. 293 (*pentheros-ra* are compared by Pott and Curt. to Skt. *bandh-u connexio*, *cognatio*, *cognatus*), from Root *bandh*, *badhn-âmi* (to bind)." (L. & S. Gk. Lex.)

Penther-ideus means a son of a *pentheros* (*ideus* means the son or offspring of; *e. g.*, *hierak-ideus*, from *hieraks* hawk, means a young hawk; *aet-ideus*, from *aetos* eagle, means a young eagle; so also *penther-ideus* means a son of a *pentheros*).

A Greek inscription on a tombstone at Angora in Asia Minor asks the kindness of remembrance for a certain *penther-ideus* (C. I. 4070 Böckhii). Here it means not the son of a father-in-law, but the son of a step-father (L. & S.), which indicates the use of *pentheros* for step-father, and its feminine form *penthera* for step-mother.

Neither in the etymology nor in the use of *pentheros* can we find any reason for thinking that the word included some marriage relations but excluded others; on the contrary, *pentheros* seems to have been coextensive with the Latin word *affinis*, and to have included in its periphery all those relationships indicated in English by the prefix *step-* and the suffix *-in-law*.

We have no words in English that exactly coincide with *pentheros* and *penthera;* the nearest are kinsman,* kinswoman, and relative.

In English we sometimes speak of a person as a relation of ours, but it is more common to use a specific word and say just what the relationship is. So when we know, for instance, that the person called a *pentheros* is a brother-in-law, instead of translating the word by relative or kinsman, it is preferable to translate it brother-in-law; in that case the translation is more definite than the original, but that is sometimes a good fault.

We know that Noemi's son married Ruth.—Ruth 1[4]. So instead of:

> "All hath been told me, that thou hast done to thy *kinswoman* after the death of thy husband. She returned into the city and showed it to her *kinswoman*. And her *kinswoman* said to her," etc. Ruth 2[11, 18, 19].

we can put *mother-in-law*.

We know that Thamar married Juda's son, Gen. 38[6], and that Phinees was Heli's son, I K. 4[19], so we can translate *pentheros father-in-law* in both of these chapters. This, of course, is not a perfect translation, it is representing a large circle by a small one; but a perfect translation is often impossible, and very literal translations are not literature.

There is one text in the Old Testament, Mich. 7[6], quoted by Our Saviour, Mt. 10[35]; Lk. 12[53], in which *penthera* refers to a class rather than to an individual.

> "For the son dishonoreth the father, and the daughter riseth up against the mother, the *nymphe* against her *pentheran:* and a man's enemies are they of his own household."

* Our kin, or kinsmen, are blood relations; our affin, those related by marriage; however, kinsman has been made to do duty for these also, since our writers have not anglicised *affinis*.

In quoting this text Christ prefaces it with these words:

> "For there shall be from henceforth five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three." Lk. 12[52].

Six names are mentioned, father and son; mother and daughter; *nymphe* and *penthera;* but there are only five persons. By supposing that the mother* is also a mother-in-law we will have father and mother on one side, and son, daughter and daughter-in-law on the other. *Nymphe,* although never so used in the classics, is in the Scriptures applied to a daughter-in-law.

In all these texts we have a means of determining the relationship of the *pentheros* or *penthera,* but there are two texts remaining in which we have nothing to help us. Annas was the *pentheros* of Caiaphas, Jn. 18[13], and Christ cured Peter's *penthera.* Since we know nothing of the respective ages of Annas and Caiaphas, or anything else concerning their relationship, we have no means of knowing whether Annas was the brother-in-law or the father-in-law of Caiaphas. Of the relationship of Peter's *penthera*† to him we know nothing. Was she his step-mother, his mother-in-law, his step-sister? What was

CAIAPHAS AND ANNAS HIS PENTHEROS.

*If the woman were the man's second wife she would be the mother of her own children and the step-mother of her husband's older children; and in that case also we shall have two against three and three against two. If we suppose that *penthera* here has as wide an application as mother-in-law formerly had in English, both of these meanings will be here included in *penthera.*

Wycliffe's rendering is peculiar: "*And the son's wife against the wife's or husband's mother*" (?)—(Marvin Vincent, Word Studies. Mt. 10[35].)

†*Pentheros,-ra* are compared by Pott and Curt. to Skt. *bandh-u* (connexio, cognatio, cognatus) L. & S.

However, we find nothing to suggest their extension to any connections by blood, so their meaning must be restricted to connections by marriage.

she? We have no means of knowing with certainty; but it seems most probable that she was either his step-mother or his mother-in-law.

STEP-MOTHER, IN THE SCRIPTURES.

The phrase "father's wife" is found in Lev. 18^{8}; 20^{11}; Deut. 22^{30}; 27^{20}; I Cor. 5^{1}. In these places the context shows that it is not the father's first wife (our mother) but his second wife (our step-mother) that is meant. *Gyne-patros* is the phrase in Greek. This is an indirect mention of a step-mother, just as "father's brother" is an indirect way of saying "uncle."

If Peter's *penthera* was not his step-mother, then a step-mother is nowhere directly mentioned in the Scriptures.

PROFESSOR PLUMMER'S ARGUMENT.

Prof. Plummer briefly, vigorously and learnedly gives the reasons for thinking that Peter's *penthera* was his mother-in-law (in its narrow sense) in the following words:

PAPA'S BOY.

"It is quite beyond doubt that the relationship expressed by *penthera* is either 'wife's mother' or 'husband's mother' (12^{53}; Mt. 8^{14}; 10^{35}; Mk. 1^{30}; Ruth 1^{14}; $2^{11, 18, 19, 23}$; Mic. 7^{6}; Dem. Plut. Lucian). So also *pentheros* is either 'wife's father' or 'husband's father.' (Jn. 18^{13}; Gen. $38^{25, 38}$; Judg. 1^{16}; I Sam. $4^{19, 21}$). But for wife's father the more indefinite *gambros* ('a relation by marriage') is freq. in LXX (Exod. 3^{1}; 4^{18}; Num. 10^{29}; Judg. 4^{11}; $19^{4, 7, 9}$). In Greek there is a distinct term for 'step-mother,' viz.: the very common word *mētruia* (Hom. Hes. Hdt. Æsch. Plat. Plut.); and if Luke had intended to designate the second wife of Peter's father he would have used this term. That he should have ignored a word in common use which would express his meaning, and employ another word

which has quite a different meaning is incredible. That Peter was married is clear from 1 Cor. 9^5. Clement of Alexandria says that Peter's wife helped him in ministering to women,—an apostolic anticipation of Zenana missions (Strom. iii. 6, p. 536, ed. Potter). He also states that Peter and Philip had children, and that Philip gave his daughters in marriage (Ibid. p. 535, ed. Potter, quoted Eus. H. E. iii. 30, I); but he gives no names. It is remarkable that nothing is known of any children of any one Apostle. This is the first mention of Peter by Luke, who treats him as a person too well known to need introduction." (Inter. Crit. Com. St. Luke by Plummer, p. 136.)

PAPA'S GIRL.

We shall examine this argument, taking a few words at a time:

Plummer:—"It is quite beyond doubt that the relationship expressed by *penthera* is either 'wife's mother' or 'husband's mother.'"

Where are the proofs?

Plummer:—"So also *pentheros* is either 'wife's father' or husband's father.'"

Yes, but it also means: brother-in-law, son-in-law, and in general any connection by marriage. A pari, therefore, *penthera* means: sister-in-law, daughter-in-law, and any connection by marriage.

Plummer:—"In Greek there is a distinct term for step-mother, viz., the very common word *mētruia*."

St. Paul speaks of a step-mother in I Cor. 5^1 but does not use the word *mētruia*. Why should the Evangelists, even if they were familiar with it? but they may have never heard of it.

There is a distinct term for wife in Greek, but the sacred writers never use it, they use the word *gyne* (woman) instead.

We have the distinct terms son and daughter in English, yet a man often speaks of his children as his boys and girls.

Mētruia is a distinct term, and the odious term for step-mother. Its derivative *to mētrui-odes* (a step-mother's treatment) is a Greek word for unkindness. A dangerous coast is called the *mētruia* (step-mother) of the ships. A lucky day is called a mother's day and an unlucky day a *mētruia* day. A bad step-mother would be called a *mētruia*, but a good step-mother a *penthera* or some other name. *Mētruia* was probably used indifferently at first of good and bad step-mothers, but afterwards it came to be used in a restricted and odious sense.

MĒTRUIA OF THE SHIPS.

> Plummer:—"If Luke had intended to designate the second wife of Peter's father he would have used this term."

It by no means follows, unless he had a grudge against her and wanted to give her a harsh name.

> Plummer:—"That he would have ignored a word in common use, which would express his meaning, and would have employed a word which has quite a different meaning is incredible."

Let us apply this style of reasoning to another word:

That a father would have ignored a word in common use (the word son) which would express his meaning, and would have employed a word which has quite a different meaning (the word boy) is incredible! Is it?

It is not at all incredible. Every day we find fathers ignoring the common word son, and saying "my boy"; and ignoring the common word daughter and saying "my girl,"

even though these words have different meanings. Son and daughter express relationship, boy and girl youth, prescinding from all relationships.

If the use of boy and girl for son and daughter be not incredible, neither is Luke's use of *penthera* if he wishes to speak of the second wife of Peter's father. It would be more incredible that he should put aside *penthera* and use the harsh word *mētruia*, since she was a good woman as appears from Christ's readiness to cure her.

In Greek there is also a distinct term for mother-in-law (a wife's or husband's mother) the word *hekura*.

Mētruios and *mētruia* are the distinct terms for step-father and step-mother.

Hekuros and *hekura* are the distinct terms for father-in-law and mother-in-law.

The dictionaries mention *pentheros* and *hekuros* as though they were synonyms, but incorrectly, for *hekuros-a* is a specific term meaning father- and mother-in-law and nothing else. *Pentheros-a* is a wide generic term.

Homer uses *pentheros* (Il. 6, 170; Od. 8, 582) and *hekuros* (Il. 3, 172; 24, 770) for father-in-law with the same freedom as an English speaking parent uses boy and son, sometimes saying 'my boy,' at other times 'my son.' For mother-in-law, however, Homer never uses *penthera*, but always *hekura* (Il. 22, 451; 24, 770).

Hekura may have been a poetic word in Homer's time, but it became a prose word in Apostolic times. It is found in Plutarch 2, 143 A. He lived about A. D. 46-120.

If Peter's *penthera* was not his step-mother because she was not called his *mētruia*, neither was she his mother-in-law because she was not called his *hekura*.

(Neither *hekura* nor *mētruia* are found in the Scriptures).

Plummer:—"That Peter was married is clear from I Cor, 9^5."

From the Protestant translations of this text, yes. From the Catholic translations, no. So this is an argument for Protestants, but not for Catholics.

In the Protestant versions we find the word "wife." Catholics call it a mistranslation. In Greek the word is "sister woman."

When a Protestant finds a wife for Peter in his translation of I Cor. 9^5, what must he conclude about the *penthera* who is mentioned in the Gospels? Does the wife he finds in his version of I Cor. 9^5 settle her relationship? No. It creates a presumption, but does not give certainty.

If a man is married that fact throws no light on his step-mother at all; it does not tell us whether he had one or not.

If we see a sick old woman in a man's house, and know that she is not his mother, and if we are in doubt as to whether she is his step-mother or his mother-in-law, if we were asked to guess which, what would be the most reasonable conjecture?

I would say, she is his step-mother. For if this man had a wife and this were her mother, she would be here to take care of her sick mother. Where there is no trace of a wife, it would be a wild guess to suppose a wife's mother.

In the Gospels there is no trace of any wife of Peter's. His *penthera* appears alone, in his and Andrew's house. She is alone while she has the fever. She is alone when she waits on Christ and His apostles after her cure.

Since there is no trace of a wife for Peter in the Gospels,* especially on that occasion when she should have been present (if the sick *penthera* was her mother), the wife given to him by Clement of Alexandria, and by Protestant translations, in Paul's Epistle, written a quarter of a century later, is a reason why Protestants should think

*We might account for the presence of a mother-in-law, and the absence of a wife, by supposing that the man was a widower. How old were the apostles when Christ called them? We do not know. One of those whom Christ called to leave all things and follow Him was a youth, Mt. $19^{20, 22}$, *neaniskos*, a youth just emerged from boyhood, Cf. L. & S. This is the only information concerning the ages of the followers of Christ that we have in the Scriptures. If Peter was of the same age as our Saviour, the likelihood of his being a widower would be greater than if he were younger.

that he was married after the cure of his *penthera*, and that this expressed Gospel *penthera* was his step-mother; the other Corinthian *penthera* implied in the word wife, of course would be his mother-in-law.

So the Protestant translations furnish Peter with two possible *pentheras*. If the one mentioned in the Gospels is his step-mother, the other implied in I Cor. 9^5 is his wife's mother.

The examination of Clement of Alexandria's statements and of I Cor. 9^5 will receive attention at another time.

> Plummer:—"It is remarkable that nothing is known of the children of any one apostle."

It is, if they had any.

WIDE SCRIPTURAL MEANING OF WIFE.

In the Scriptures a woman does not have to wait until she is married to be called and considered a wife; as soon as she is engaged she is called a wife; so wife included both the fiancée and the bride.

"If a man has betrothed a damsel that is a virgin, and some one find her in the city and lie with her, thou shalt bring them both out to the gate of the city, and they shall be stoned: the damsel, because she cried not out, being in the city: the man because he hath humbled his neighbor's wife." Deut. 22^{23}.

"The girl, after betrothal, being regarded as pledged to her future husband, as fully as if she were formally married to him; she is described accordingly (5^{24}) as his 'wife,' and the penalty

(except in the case, 5^{25}, where the girl can be reasonably acquitted of blame) is the same as for adultery, viz., death for both parties." Driver.—Deut. 22^{23}.

"The interval between betrothal and marriage was commonly a year, during which the bride lived with her friends. But her property was vested in her future husband, and unfaithfulness on her part was punished, like adultery, with death (Deut. 22^{23}). The case of the woman taken in adultery was probably of this kind." Plummer.—Lk. 1^{27}.

"From the moment of betrothal both parties were regarded and treated in law (as to inheritance, adultery, need of formal divorce), as if they had been actually married, except as regarded their living together." Edersheim, I, p. 354.

If it were certain that Peter's *penthera* was his mother-in-law, in the narrow sense of the word, it would follow that he had a wife; but even in that case, since wife in the Scriptures included both the betrothed virgin and the bride, it would be impossible to say whether Peter was ever married in our modern sense of the word, for a Jew could have a wife and a mother-in-law, even if his wife died several months before their actual marriage. If that were so, and Peter's father and mother were both dead, it would be a kindness on his part to take his mother-in-law, if she were homeless, as housekeeper for himself and Andrew. From the most careful scrutiny of the meaning of *penthera* it will never be possible to know whether or not Peter is one of those who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, and who sing a song that none else can sing, because they are virgins. Apoc. $14^{3,4}$.

ORIGIN OF PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW.

If in reading an old English book there is mention made of a man's mother-in-law, without any hesitation we picture her as

his wife's mother, because that is the meaning the word has now. When the first translations of the New Testament were made into Latin and other languages, if *penthera* was more commonly used in the sense of wife's mother, it would be natural to translate it by that word. If a translator or writer gives definite information on any subject of which nothing is known, he is likely to be followed, and the older the origin of the conjecture, the longer it will last. Even information known to be false sometimes takes a long time to die. The man Synzygus * Clement of Alexandria mistook for a woman, and took him for Paul's wife (Strom. iii. 6). He confounded the apostle Philip and the deacon Philip, Acts $21^{8,9}$, and gave the apostle the deacon's daughters; this wife of Paul's lived in controversial literature until quite recently, and the daughters that Clement transferred to the apostle receive honorable mention as apostolic daughters in some learned works up to this day.†

* From the time of Clement of Alexandria and even before it, until the close of the nineteenth century, Synzygus was robbed of his name. He was reduced to a common noun, his name was printed with a small-s- in every Greek Testament, and was translated in all the versions. In the English versions, he appears as: "german *felowe*-faythful *yolkfelowe*-sincere *companion*- true *yolkfelowe*," instead of: "faithful *Synzygus*." Westcott & Hort restored his name. and he is called by scholars to-day, as he was in St. Paul's day, Synzygus. (Westcott & Hort, N. T. in Greek, Phil. 4^3 margin.—Internat. Crit. Com. Phillippians . c,)

† Peter's family has received a larger literary development than either Paul's or Philip's. Clement of Alexandria gives Peter's missionary journeys with his wife as Scripture (?) quoting I Cor. 9^5. He gives a farewell speech of Peter to his wife as hearsay (Strom. vii. 11). Some one not up on etymology even found a daughter for him named Petronilla.

"She is first called Peter's daughter in the Apochryphal *Acts of SS. Nereus and Achilles*, which give a legendary account of her life and death. In the Christian cemetery of Flavia Domitilla was buried an *Aurelia Petronilla filia dulcissima*, and Petronilla being taken as a diminutive of Petrus, she was assumed to have been a daughter of Peter. It is probable that this was the origin of the popular tradition. Petronilla is not, however, a diminutive of Petrus, and it is probable that this woman was one of the Aurelian gens and a relative of Flavia Domitilla." (Eusebius, Am. trans. p. 163, note 3.)

Later on, Peter's wife was furnished with a name, some gave her the Latin name Perpetua, others the Latin name Concordia, others still called her Mary. (Cf. a Lapide Mt. 8^{14}).

A definite translation started in more modern times will sometimes have a long life. The angel told Mary that her *syggenis* (relative) Elizabeth had conceived a son in her old age. Lk. 1[36]. How Mary and Elizabeth were related we do not know. Eliza-

MARY AND HER SYGGENIS ELIZABETH.

beth may have been her aunt. Wiclif in A. D. 1380 started the word cousin, and Elizabeth has been called Mary's cousin in every translation made during five centuries. The Rev. Prot. version of 1880 put kinswoman instead. Cousin is a specific term representing one class of blood relations, *syggenis* is a generic term including them all. *Syggenis* is any one related

to us by blood, a parallel to *pentheros*, one related to us by marriage.*

There was a special reason why the Catholics of the first centuries should have wished that Peter or some of the Apostles had been married; such a fact would be a strong argument against the fanatical Encratites who made celibacy necessary for all Christians, and called marriage sinful, filthy, and degrading.

Some texts of both the Old Testament and the New certainly afforded them a plausible foundation for their aversion to marriage.

In the Old Testament marriage rendered people unclean, Lev. 15[18]; every woman after childbirth was unclean for forty or eighty days, Lev. 12. Moses ordered the Israelites to keep from their wives for three days as a preparation for God's coming on Mt. Sinai, Ex. 19[15]; that was necessary also for those who ate the holy bread. I Sam. (I K.) 21[4,5].

A special glory is reserved in heaven for virgins, which those who marry will not have, Apoc. 14[3,4]. St. Paul exhorts all to be virgins, I Cor. 7[1,7,26]. He speaks of marriage as a concession to fleshly lust: "for fear of fornication let every man have his own wife," 1 Cor. 7[2]. Marriage, he says, is not sinful; he could hardly say less. He is answering questions that the Corinthians had sent to him, I Cor. 7[1]; so his statements in this chapter are replies. He says:

*In both Catholic and Protestant commentaries attention is called to the fact that the relationship existing between Mary and Elizabeth is indefinitely stated.

"Qualis fuerit cognatio non constat." Knabenbauer. Lk. I. c.

"The exact relationship between our Lady and St. Elizabeth is not known." Mgr. Ward's Com. on Luke (C. T. S.)

"Elizabeth thy kinswoman." A new trans. of Four Gospels by Father Spencer.

But since Mary and Elizabeth may have been cousins and probably were; and since the Protestant Book of Common Prayer and our Catholic Prayer Books continue to call them cousins, and since it makes no difference to anyone whether they were cousins, or niece and aunt, it is likely that the name will continue to be used.

Mary's *syggenis*, and Peter's *penthera* are parallel cases.

"If thou marry, thou hast not sinned."

"If a virgin marry she hath not sinned." I Cor. 7^{28}.*

If these are answers their questions must have been: Is it a sin for a Christian man or maiden to marry?

That such a question should be asked, shows that it must have been a disputed question, or one about which the Corinthians had some doubts. Whether the Corinthians had put such questions to him, or whether of his own accord he thought it necessary to instruct them on this point,—in either case,—the information given is an evidence of the existence in the Church at that early date of persons who doubted or denied that it was lawful for Christians to marry. St. Paul's statement that later on heretics will arise who will forbid marriage, I Tim. $4^{1,3}$, must not be construed to mean that none existed then.

During the first three centuries there were a multitude of heretics who opposed marriage; one extreme rejecting the restrictions of marriage and claiming the same liberty as the brutes; the other extreme wanted all Christians to lead a virginal life, for they looked on marriage as an abomination. Under such circumstances it was natural that the Christians should have wished that Christ had chosen at least one married man to be an apostle, for if He did when He might have chosen only those who were single, it would be a proof that He did not hold marriage in such horror as the heretics contended. The fact that *penthera* included mother-in-law in its meaning, and that both the masculine and feminine form are used most frequently of fathers- and mothers-in-law, makes one inclined to believe that Peter's *penthera* was his mother-in-law and that consequently he had a wife. Such a probability would soon pass into a certainty.

*Another debated question, which St. Paul settled in the negative was: Is it sinful for a father to give his daughter in marriage, if she is too old to bear children. Cf. I Cor. 7^{36}.

Clement of Alexandria (A. D. 153-217) is the first of the Fathers to say that any of the Apostles were married.

It is surprising if no one, for more than a century after St. Peter was dead, ever said that he had been married, when the word *penthera* could so easily furnish him with a probable mother-in-law and a bride, and when the need of every available argument to repel the opponents of marriage was felt so keenly.

Eusebius, the father of church history (A. D. 260-340), a man of immense erudition, who was in possession of sources of information, now non-existent, however, ascribes the statement concerning apostolic wives to Clement (A. D. 153–217) alone:

> "Clement indeed, whose words we have just quoted, after the above mentioned facts, gives a statement, on account of those who rejected marriage, of the apostles that had wives." (Eus. Hist. 3, ch. 30.)

Eusebius had an odd way of prefacing Clement of Alexandria's statement:

> "Clement . . . after the . . . facts, gives a statement, on account of those who rejected marriage. . ."

Did Eusebius consider Clement's statement a statement of fact, or merely a lawyer's plea?

Clement's statements and his mistaken exegesis are not quite relevant here; for, as far as I know, he does not attempt to prove that Peter had a wife from the word *penthera;* nor does any early Greek writer.

When we find Clement using such poor arguments to prove that the Apostles were married, it is astonishing that he should overlook the word *penthera,* if it was used exclusively of mothers-in-law in his day; for it would settle Peter's marriage at once. We find those using translations, accepting his mother-

in-law as a Gospel fact; and those using the original Greek, strangely silent about it. Tertullian (A. D. 145–220) says:

> "Peter * alone I find married, through the mention of his mother-in-law. I presume he was married but once, since the church built upon him was destined to appoint every grade of her order from those but once married. The rest, since I do not find them married, I must of necessity believe that they were eunuchs or else were continent."—(On Monogamy, ch. 8.)

Tertullian quotes from a Latin version of the Gospels in which he read: "Socrus Petri." *Socrus* is a specific term which means mother-in-law and nothing else. Whoever made this version thought that Peter's *penthera* was probably, if not certainly, his mother-in-law, and so translated it by the word "socrus." This Latin word is Tertullian's reason for believing that Peter had a wife.

Was *socrus* a bad translation of *penthera?* No; on the contrary we cannot think of any other word that would occur to a translator. Noemi, who is called a *penthera*, was a mother-in-law, and the *pentheroi* mentioned in the Old Testament were fathers-in-law; it was most likely then that the *penthera* of Peter was a mother-in-law. This translation having been once made, all using Latin translations would accept this relationship of Peter's *penthera* as certain.

Even though a translator be a very learned man, it is impossible for him to make a translation in which every word of his translation will perfectly represent the original. Such a translation never has been and never will be made. If a man were to make an exhaustive study of every word, his translation would never be done.†

* Petrum solum invenio maritum, per socrum.

† Hobab the Cinite (Kenite) was the *gambros* of Moses. Judg. 4^{11}. In the Authorized Prot. vers. 1611, he is called the "*father-in-law*" of Moses; in the Rev. Prot. vers.

If the large and learned body of eminent scholars who have given us Webster's and Worcester's dictionaries, with all the helps of modern scholarship at their disposal, have forgotten, never thought of, or have never known, that in English classical literature mother-in-law includes step-mothers, we must not expect too much of a Greek-Latin translator of eighteen centuries ago.

All we know of the sick woman cured in Peter's house is that she is called his *penthera:* this is the ultimate and only foundation, and source, of all our knowledge concerning her; but since *penthera* had a wider meaning than our English word mother-in-law ever had, even when it included step-mothers, it must remain forever doubtful whether this sick woman was Peter's step-mother, or mother-in-law, or step-sister, or some other relative.

It does not matter to us what her relationship was, and as God has not been pleased to gratify our curiosity, all that we can do in this world is to be patient, and wait until we meet Peter in the next world and ask him.

1885, the "*brother-in-law*" of Moses; in our Douay translation the "*kinsman*" of Moses.

Annas is now called the father-in-law of Caiaphas, in future English versions he may be called the kinsman of Caiaphas, and Peter's *penthera* may be called his kinswoman.

Ochozias (Ahaziah) in all our versions is called "*the son-in-law*" of the house of Achab (Ahab). 4 (2) K. 8^{27}.

Both the Hebrew and the Greek word may be translated "*a relative*" of the house of Achab.

His mother was the daughter of Achab, Achab's sons were his uncles, Achab himself was his grandfather. He was related by blood to every member of the house of Achab, the blood of Achab was in his veins; he was not related by marriage to the house of Achab at all.

The Greek tells us that he was "a *gambros*" of the house of Achab, a word which, like *pentheros*, has a very wide meaning.

If all the translations and all the other works of the ancients were absolutely perfect, there would be hardly anything left for the moderns to do.

The writers of the New Testament, and the translators and writers of the Old, were not Greeks but Semites, and even when they wrote or spoke in Greek they naturally thought in Hebrew or Aramaic.

After finishing this booklet, I wrote to the Rev. Gabriel Oussani and asked him what were the Semitic words for father-, mother- and daughter-in-law; and whether these words had a narrow specific meaning as in English, or a wide generic meaning. He was kind enough to send me the following reply:

"THE various Semitic forms of the word for 'father-in-law' are:—Heb. *ḥâm*, which generally means either husband's or wife's father. Aramaic is *ḥ*ᵉ*mâ*, which is coextensive with the Hebrew word. Arabic is *ḥămŭn*, which generally means the husband's male relations (*i. e.*, father, brother, or paternal uncle), and also the wife's father. The Ethiopic form is *ḥăm*, and the Assyrian form is *êmû*, in which lately discovered language, with the present available material, we cannot exactly determine its precise extent and application.

"What has been said of the masculine form is equally true of the feminine form mother-in-law, which in Heb. is *ḥâmôt*, in Aram. *ḥ*ᵉ*mâtâ*, in Arab. *ḥămâtŭn*, Eth. *ḥămât*, and Assyr. *êmêtu*.

"The word for daughter-in-law is *kallâ* in Heb., *kaltâ* in Aram., *kănnătun** in Arabic, and *kallâtu** in Assyr., the meaning of which, according to Prof. Delitzsch, is "closed bridal chamber," thence bride (cfr. harem, *i. e.*, enclosure).

"These three words have a much wider meaning than our English words or any translation of them into any modern

* The exchange of *n* with *l* is very common.

language. The same thing is to be said of all the other Semitic words for marriage relationships and kinships, as the words for father, mother, brother, sister, cousin, uncle, etc.

"As to the word daughter-in-law, it must be remarked that it usually means the wife of a son or brother; but by many ancient Arabic poets is used to designate a wife. So too in Heb. in the Old Testament it means both daughter-in-law and wife, and in Aram. the same word usually means a bride; but also apparently a sister-in-law. (Cf. Thesaurus Syriacus of P. Smyth sub voce.) How the same word can have three different meanings may be accounted for by supposing that it is a relic of a time when a man's wife was also the wife of his brother and of his son; sometimes simultaneously, but generally in succession, *i. e.* after the death of her first husband, her brother-in-law or her step-son had a right to take her for his wife.

"The etymological sense is that of covering, so that the word belongs to the same sphere of metaphor as the symbolic action of the heir in casting his garment over the widow whom he desires to inherit, or the common expression that a *be'ûlah* wife is *under* her husband (a euphemistic expression for sexual relation).

"The correlative of *kanna* or *kalla*, daughter-in-law, is *ḥâm*, father-in-law; *i. e.* one whose duty it is to protect the *kanna* from those outside (for the meaning of the root *ḥâmâh* is to protect). But the kind of protection meant is protection from encroachment; the husband's brother, father or other kinsman is called her *ḥâm* because they together make up the group who reserve the woman to themselves. (Of course all these customs were those in use by the Semites in ancient times; and, besides these grammatical or rather philological arguments, we have

the express testimony of Strabo and other Greek writers). And so the word *ḥâm* and *ḥamat* originally were applied equally to all those who were kinsmen of a wife and who had the right to protect her both from a tyrannical husband and from encroachment; but afterward they became limited to fathers- and mothers-in-law.

"The same thing is to be said about other words denoting kinship and marriage relations, *e. g.*, the word for father is *âb*, which not only has a wide range of meaning, but in all Semitic languages it is used in senses even that are quite inconsistent with the idea of procreator. It means owner, lord, husband with marital dominion; even a husband is called the father of his wife, *i. e.*, the lord of his wife (Cf. Jerem. 3^4 and Prov. 2^{17}).

"The various senses of *âb*, father, cannot then have come from that of progenitor, but they might very well have come from that of nurturer or provider, which is common enough in the actual usage of the Semitic languages. So also the word *khâl*, which is usually translated maternal uncle, really means any member of the mother's group.

"The words, *ʿamm*, paternal uncle, and *ibn ʿamm*, son of a paternal uncle, are used in an equally wide way. In fact the word *ʿamm*, paternal uncle, is identical, etymologically, with the Heb. word for *people*, which evidently meant originally nothing else than aggregate or community; the *ibn ʿamm* therefore is literally a man of the same stock-group, and all the other meanings of these words, *i. e.*, the meaning of paternal uncle, etc., are evidently a comparatively late development. The same argument is to be applied to the *bint ʿamm*, *i. e.*, cousin on the father's side, which originally meant a tribesman or a woman of the same tribe.

"As to the modern use of these words in the modern East, it is to be noted that among the city inhabitants they have

their technical and specific meanings as in English (and this is due to modern civilization), but among the Bedouin Arabs they have still their wide meanings, *e. g.*, a husband of the desert will always call his wife either his sister or his cousin, etc., and so Abraham did not lie when he told Pharaoh that his wife Sarah was his sister.

"In all Semitic languages, especially if we go back to ancient times, all the terms for family ties, all the words, both for blood and marriage relationships, had a very wide meaning, but when human society became better organized, then a specific sense was given to these generic terms, the traces of which transition we find in many passages of the Old Testament and especially in the old Arabic literature and poetry."