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THE JEWISH SCRIPTURES

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*THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT
IN THE LIGHT OF THEIR ORIGIN
AND HISTORY*

BY

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AUTHOR OF "MIDNIGHT TALKS AT THE CLUB"
AND "BEYOND THE BOURN"

NEW YORK

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1896

A.92152

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TROW DIRECTORY
PRINTING AND BOOKBINDING COMPANY
NEW YORK

TO

FRANCIS JAMES CHILD

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY

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PREFACE

THE purpose of this volume is to present the history and literature of the ancient Hebrews, as contained in the Old Testament, in a clear, concise, and candid way, accepting the benefit of the light revealed by modern research and learning, and applying the same calm judgment to which we are accustomed in dealing with the productions of other ancient peoples. The writer lays no claim to special erudition or to original research. With a keen interest in the subject and a studious searching of the Jewish Scriptures themselves in our English version, he has endeavored to absorb for his own enlightenment the results of the studies of the great scholars of Europe upon the subject during the last thirty years, and has tried to condense within the compass of one moderate volume the fruits of that endeavor.

With so large a subject and with such a vast and varied mass of material, in order to attain this result it has been necessary to sacrifice detail,

to forego discussion, to refrain from citations and references, and to be content to accept conclusions as established and to compress their statement as much as practicable, without loss of that clearness and color that are essential to interest. It is a subject upon which full knowledge is unattainable, and in accepting such conclusions as seemed to be well supported the writer has not felt bound to disregard innate probability or the analogies of human history and experience.

The plan of the work has been to extricate the story of the life of the people of Israel from the tangled web into which it was wrought by the writers of half a thousand years, and, with such aid as may be got from other sources, to make a plain delineation of it as a background upon which to exhibit the designs of those writers; and then to place the several books of the great composite volume in their proper setting, so as to reveal their origin, character, and purpose as clearly as this can now be done.

The author has not concerned himself with theological views of the subject. He considers all truth sacred and nothing worthy of credence that will not bear scrutiny, and his hope has been to enable the "ordinary reader" to share the privi-

lege of the scholar and the divine, in studying with greater interest and higher appreciation the remarkable productions of the ancient Hebrew genius. He cannot but think that this will contribute in the long run to a better understanding of their lessons and a sounder application of the teaching to be derived from them.

A. K. F.

NEW YORK, February, 1896.

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BACKGROUND OF THE JEWISH SCRIPTURES

I

THE BIRTH OF HEBREW LITERATURE

WHEN, some nine hundred years before the Christian Era and five centuries after the time of Moses, the Hebrew writers first attempted to make a record of the origin and early experience of their race, the "peculiar people" were already established in the land of Palestine, and formed the two independent kingdoms of Israel (or Ephraim) and Judah. The land had long been divided into several districts known by tribal names, the most prominent of which were Ephraim and Judah, from which the common designations of the two kingdoms were taken. Between these two powerful tribes was the small but aggressive community known as Benjamin. To the north were several sections, with no clearly defined boundaries, but with separate names, and these were loosely attached to the Northern Kingdom. There were traditions of a separate tribe, named Simeon, to the south of Judah, but it had disappeared, being absorbed in the country surrounding it. There were possessions along the east

side of the Jordan belonging to the two kingdoms. According to tradition, this was the first land permanently occupied by the Israelites, and had been left in possession of the two tribes of Reuben and Gad and part of the tribe of Manasseh, when the country of the Canaanites was invaded and wrested from them.

The tribal differences between Ephraim and Judah were strongly marked, and were doubtless due to separate lines of descent extending far back into immemorial time. Manasseh was closely related to Ephraim, and therefore clearly distinguished from Judah. The other designations were mostly territorial, rather than ethnical, and there were no distinct tribal peculiarities more than were to be accounted for by common surroundings and modes of life for a few generations. There were two so-called tribes, which were really only classes. Both the name and the characteristics of Benjamin indicated that the country about Gibeah had been occupied by a band of warriors and their descendants, having no distinct family origin, while the Levites were a class of wandering priests, or ministers at oracles and altars, who went from place to place and depended upon others for subsistence.

There had long been a number of "sacred places" within the limits of the two kingdoms,

marked by altars or stone pillars, or by mounds of loose stones, about which traditions had gathered for ages. The chief of these in the Northern Kingdom were Bethel and Shechem, and, as a sort of religious appurtenance of the latter, Shiloh. There was also an ancient rallying-place at Mizpah (the watch-tower)—near the border. In the Southern Kingdom the oldest traditions were associated with Hebron, where David first set up his throne, and with Beer-sheba, at the southern limit of the land. There was a Gilgal, or ancient mound, not far from the Jordan, connected with memories of the first great camping-place at the time of the invasion and conquest. The names of tribes and of places were not distinguishable from those of persons and families, and many of them had significations suggesting deeds and events, or characteristics, which had doubtless been associated with their origin in a manner long since forgotten.

On the west of the two kingdoms, and between them and the Mediterranean coast, were the Phœnicians and Philistines. The former were of Semitic origin like the Israelites, but were industrially and commercially more advanced, and with them friendly relations had generally been maintained. The Philistines, however, were wholly alien to the Semitic blood, and were probably of

Pelasgian origin, like the Greeks. They were always hostile to Israel. Syria, on the northeast, was a kindred nation, and there were traditions of ancient amity with that country. Moab and Edom, to the south and southeast, were also related to the Hebrew tribes, but there was an ever-recurring feeling of enmity toward them, which told of old feuds and hostile encounters when the relationship was closer and nearer to the common origin.

The material of the writers of the primitive annals of Israel, who wrought in the days of Jehu at Samaria and of Joash at Jerusalem, had come down to them through oral tradition, and had accumulated in the form of tales and legends, and such records as were embodied in names and in visible memorials. The most recent of these, and those most clearly related to facts, pertained to the long struggle for the possession of the land, the invasion from across the Jordan, the contests with the natives and with predatory bands on the borders, and the gradual coalition of the tribes, for purposes of defence, into a single kingdom, and then the division of that kingdom on the distinct line of cleavage between Ephraim and Judah, which ran far back toward their origin. Beyond that tumultuous period was a dimmer memory of the sojourn on the east of the Jordan and the conflicts that preceded it, and then the vague mists of far-off tradition. Through

these had come stories of the primitive days when the forefathers of Israel and Judah had wandered in tribes and clans, or sojourned in nomadic families about the confines of the old empires of the east and south. They told of famine that drove these ancestral groups over the boundaries of Egypt, of a period of bondage and oppression there, and of a great deliverance that brought the people back through perilous adventures and terrible hardships in the wilderness of Pharan. All this was shadowy and had come down in tales transmitted from father to son, taking new form and color and growing in impressiveness from generation to generation.

At the time when the tribes of Israel first established themselves in the land of Canaan, some thirteen or fourteen centuries before the Christian era, they had no written language. There is no trace of inscription or written record among them for at least three hundred years after the occupation of that country. The oldest fragments of the documents used by the first writers whose productions have survived, embedded like primitive or metamorphic rocks in strata of later origin, date not less than five hundred years after the escape from Egypt, and yet another century or more passed before the two compilations were made in which these fragments appear, and which were at

a still later time imperfectly fused into one. Even this one was subsequently modified and overlaid with new material.

In trying to discern through these writings, with the aid of such light as may be derived from other sources, an outline of the early history of the people the product of whose life for a thousand years is embalmed in the Old Testament, we must place ourselves at the point of view of the writers, as nearly as we can ; consider the quality of the material they had to use, and pay a proper regard to the mental characteristics of their race, and to the motives and purposes by which they were animated. We have also to make allowance for the language and modes of expression peculiar to a race radically different from that to which we owe our own descent.

II

THE INFANCY OF ISRAEL

GAZING through such vistas as are open to us into the mists of far-off antiquity, at "the dawn of history," we dimly discern the Semitic race emerging from prehistoric darkness, amid the shifting gleams and shadows of the ancient world of Egypt and Babylonia, the epitaphs of whose buried civilization have been made imperfectly legible. Deciphered hieroglyphs of pyramids and tombs tell of long dynasties and great exploits in the region of the Nile ages before Israel was born, and exhumed and broken gravestones of Babylon and Nineveh, with their wedge-shaped inscriptions, reveal glimpses of the grandeur of dead empires on the Tigris and Euphrates. Here were heroes and warriors, kings and priests, palaces and temples, walls and towers, science and learning, industrial, political, and religious institutions, long before the nomadic tribes of Arabia and the plains of the Jordan wander into the light. There may have been a still older antiquity in China and India, but that was far beyond their horizon.

The fertile valley of the Nile and the varied region between the rivers—Mesopotamia—were naturally fitted to stimulate an early development of human activities. The uplands of the two great streams of Western Asia became the empire of Assyria ; the richer lowlands and the plains about the confluence of the rivers were the seat of the earlier and later grandeur of Babylonia. Sometimes one of these kindred nations bore sway over the other, sometimes they were independent rivals, and again they were virtually blended into one. More than once they were brought into subjection to an alien power. The Chaldeans, migrating originally from the region of the Persian Gulf, held sway at more than one period about the great rivers. They had traditions of long antediluvian dynasties in Babylon, and far up on the eastern border of Assyria were the remains of an ancient capital known as Ur-Chasdim, or Ur of the Chaldees. The antique science and learning, and much of the political power, of the Mesopotamian empire were attributed to the Chaldeans.

The gloomy grandeur of Egypt was at its height, and the barbaric splendor of Babylon was already old, when we get our first view of the Semitic tribes wandering about their borders, and roving with flocks and herds over the intervening stretches of desert and oasis. There is reason to believe

that Arabia and the contiguous lands were then much less arid than they have been in modern times, and that the supply of water was subject to extremes of scarcity and abundance. The movements of the nomadic tribes were determined chiefly by the vicissitudes of dearth and plenty in pasturage, and these naturally brought them into frequent contact with each other and with the settled communities along the rivers and near the sea-coasts. In that pastoral life the ancient Hebrew clans, under their patriarchal chiefs, appear to have formed conceptions and developed sentiments that leavened their race for all time, and an irresistible tendency to revert to the ideals of those days explains much in their history. They conceived a keen and lasting aversion for the cruel and vicious practices that prevailed in the civilized societies into which they obtained occasional glimpses, and the evidences of material pride and power filled them with a horror from which they never fully recovered.

Many of the traditions gathered in those early days were never lost. During sojourns upon the borders of the plains overlooked by the towers and battlements of Babylon the huge temple of Bel at Borsippa produced an impression that could not be forgotten. In wanderings far up the eastern bank of the Tigris fables of Nimrod and the

ancient rulers of Nineveh were gathered up, and memories were cherished of the land of Ur of the Chaldees. More vivid were recollections of the western borders of Assyria, where a kindred people dwelt in the region of Paddan-aram, and there seems to have been a tradition of some ancient partition which established the boundary between Syria and the land of Israel in after times. There is reason to suppose also that the wandering clans came into unfriendly contact with the tribes of Canaan, were touched by the influences of Phœnicia, and felt the hostile spirit of the Philistines.

But their more lasting sojourns were in the south. In the Dead Sea region the weird scenes, where the sinking waters of that strange inland lake had left grotesque shapes of salt and asphalt, where beds of bitumen had at some immemorial time been aflame, and where slime-pits suggested the engulfing of armies, furnished a background for legends of warring kings and the destruction of cities in a time already old. In seasons of drought there was a lingering about the wells of Beer-sheba or a venturing into the fertile parts by "the river of Egypt," while actual famine may have driven a chief now and then into the very heart of the realm of the Pharaohs.

Traditions of these nomadic days were treasured in the memory and transmitted from gener-

ation to generation until they were finally woven with later material and colored with later conceptions, to form the wonderful texture of a record which has become sanctified in the eyes of the best part of the human race. It may have been during this long period of its wandering infancy that the Hebrew people stored in their tenacious memory the Chaldean legends of the origin of the world, the creation of man, the Garden of the Tigris and Euphrates, which was the cradle of mankind, the destruction of all living things by a flood of waters, and of the surviving family that reseeded the earth. Their reckoning of time, and even the consecration of one day in seven to rest, which long after became a matter of such scrupulous observance, they derived from the ancient empire which they had regarded with so much awe and so much aversion, and out of the tale of Ur-Chasdim they created their own ancestor.

III

LEGENDARY ANCESTORS

BACK of the august figure of Abraham there was a Chaldean legend of King Orham, under whose benignant sway animals were substituted for human beings in expiatory and placatory sacrifices to the dreaded deities. Some features of that legend appear in the Jewish traditions, but other branches of the Semitic family, as well as the Hebrews, claimed Abraham as their father. The oldest Jewish traditions regarding the origin of the Hebrew people were associated with the northern sojourn in Paddan-aram and a migration thither from the East. When these came to be embodied in the form of personal narratives, Abraham was represented as having traversed the land that was to become the heritage of his descendants, and as having consecrated, by building altars, the places still held sacred. The relationship of the various branches of the Semitic family was portrayed in a half-mythical way. Lot was an ancient name of the people and the region about the lower Jordan and the Dead Sea, and Lot was represented as

the son of Abraham's brother Haran, which was really the name of a place in what became the land of Syria. The ancestor of Israel divided the country with his nephew, who became the progenitor of Moab and Ammon. Abraham was allowed to be the ancestor of Arabia, or of the people known as Ishmaelites and Hagrites, but only through the offspring of an Egyptian bond-woman, while the Midianites came from a second marriage in his extreme old age. A closer relationship was permitted to Edom. The ethnic story even gave to Edom an original precedence, which was superseded by the superior craft of Israel. Apart from this incident of one branch of the family supplanting another, the higher claim of Israel to the fatherhood of Abraham came from being the offspring of the wife of his youth, who was barren until advanced in years.

All this is a legendary or mythical account of the origin of tribes and people ; but the legend of Abraham as the forefather of the Hebrew people seems to connect with an actual chieftain, of the time of ancient wars between "confederated" kings of the plains and those of the hill country. This head of what was apparently a powerful tribe took a victorious part in one of these wars and received the homage of the ancient Jebusite king of Salem, who is also designated as "Priest of God

Most High." In this picture we get a passing, but vivid glimpse of an antiquity far back of the record in which it is preserved.

The oldest of the actual tribal traditions attached to the name Isaac, or Isaak-el, the designation of an ancient clan, implying divine favor, or the "smile of God," but these were confined to the district of Beer-sheba and furnished its chief claim to sanctity. These Isaac traditions became mixed with the Abraham legend, as appears from the two versions of the story of Abimelech, king of Gerar, and of the naming of the wells of Beer-sheba. But as tradition became clearer the ancestors of the people of Palestine appeared under the names of Jacob and Joseph, shortened from tribal designations of Jacob-el and Joseph-el. These were the source of the broad difference that divided the nation irreconcilably into two, but the former came to be regarded as the older branch of Israel, and the latter as its ambitious offspring. The name Joseph, an "addition," seems to imply an alliance of tribes which did not have a known common origin. Out of the fables to which these names and traditions gave rise no historic facts can be elicited but only historic conjectures.

IV

SERVITUDE IN EGYPT

THE first faint light of actual history falls upon the children of Israel as they flee from a galling servitude within the borders of Egypt. It is a plausible conjecture that the Josephites were the first to migrate to the fertile regions toward the Nile valley—probably driven thither by famine, but possibly betrayed into captivity, as the later legend implies—and that the union with the other branch of the Hebrew family came afterward. It may also be true, as the legend implies, that they won high favor in Egypt and were intrusted with some share of power by the Pharaohs. They were not the first Semitic immigrants in that region, and it was from a section of the Hittites, settled there long before, that the famous Hyksos, or “Shepherd Kings,” sprang. At all events it seems to have been after the Josephites had risen to favor and power in Egypt that the clan of Jacob sought relief in that country from an unusually severe and prolonged famine.

They were permitted to establish themselves in

the land of Goshen, in the pastoral pursuits to which they were accustomed, and which were the scorn of the civilized Egyptians. For some time they were allowed to dwell there in peace and comparative plenty, but after the conquests and triumphs of Thothmes and Rhameses II., the power and pride of the old dynasties were restored. Rhameses set about the construction of great storehouses and fortified places near the border of his empire, in the direction of the Isthmus, and for these he had occasion for a vast quantity of bricks, or blocks of clay mingled with vegetable fibre and hardened in the sun, and for the forced labor by which the government was wont to execute its public works. He "knew not Joseph" and had no sympathy for Israel, and accordingly proceeded to utilize the alien population within his borders upon the great structures which he had undertaken. Out of this policy came the grinding "oppression" which the proud Israelites remembered so long and so vividly, and resented with such an undying hatred of Egypt. So long as the reign of the great Rhameses lasted there was no hope of escape, but after him came intestine strife and trouble in the land of the Pharaohs, and a weakening of their power. A natural result, in the course of time, was a revolt of the subject races against the brutal taskmasters placed over them.

Tradition unquestionably exaggerated greatly the number of the Hebrews in Egypt, the length of their stay, and the perils of their escape. It is characteristic, not only of the traditions but of the records of early ages, to exaggerate numbers, distances, and periods of time, and to magnify events and deeds. Asiatic races are peculiarly addicted to extravagant expression, and even in modern times they are not scrupulously exact in statement. It is not remarkable that after the lapse of centuries, during which the only means of transmitting knowledge of the past was by oral tradition, and the only record was the memory of successive generations, the popular mind became filled with marvels associated with the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and the escape through the Red Sea and the gloomy wilderness of Mount Sinai, or that the first literature of the people was largely made up of strange tales and legends connected with that critical experience.

V

THE GREAT DELIVERANCE

MANY times in the course of human history there has been a remarkable concurrence of favoring circumstances and events to produce results of great moment. One of the most striking of these seems to have attended the escape of the Israelites from the oppression under which they had fallen in Egypt. So far as can be determined by traces of historical evidence, their sojourn there did not exceed three generations, or about a hundred years, and there is no likelihood that their numbers had attained more than a few thousands. They had become mingled more or less with other alien bondmen and with low class Egyptians, who joined in their revolt. When the spirit of insurrection broke out the government had fallen into extreme weakness and perplexity. It was beset with foreign perils and domestic disorders, and just at that time came a series of troubles, or "plagues," to which the peculiar conditions of the land of the Nile made it subject from time to time. At this juncture also a leader

arose exactly fitted by character, training, and experience for the task of delivering the oppressed people.

Doubtless the name Moses stands for a real person, though it became the centre of a legend which was woven about it in a more and more complicated texture for ages. The name itself was Egyptian, and its possessor may have shared the blood and spirit of both the subject and the ruling race, with the Israelite mother strong in his nature, or he may have been adopted and trained in the royal family, as the primitive legend says, and received the name from them. He was probably versed in the learning and mysteries of Egypt, and he may have held a place in the governing class, with some official relation toward those held in bondage. Nor is there anything incredible in the story of his affinity with a priest of Midian, or in that of his murder of an Egyptian who had maltreated a Hebrew, a deed which became a determining cause in his subsequent career.

Amid the mists of tradition and the clouds of conjecture formed out of them, one clear fact stands out. A specially qualified leader, who was always known as Moses, arose to take advantage of an exceptional situation and to extricate the children of Israel from their galling servitude. He succeeded in conducting them to the other

side of the Red Sea, where they were safe from pursuit, and in afterward leading them through the wilderness that intervened between the Sea and the region below the valley of the Jordan, memories of which may still have lingered among the patriarchs of the ancient tribe.

The Red Sea at that time extended farther north than at present, in a series of shallows and lagoons, and in certain states of wind and tide this projecting arm could be safely crossed on the uncovered sands. A lulling or shifting of the wind and a turning of the tide would bring back the waters in a surging tumult. Advantage was taken of this situation in a manner that gave rise to one of the most thrilling episodes in the story of the exodus. One of those touches in the story which incidentally reveal the moral standard of the time, not discountenanced at the later day when the story was written, is the account of the plundering of the Egyptians, not boldly but by craft, on the eve of the flight. It was even attributed to divine command.

The course which brought the people into the forbidding region about Mount Sinai was doubtless followed on account of a fear of pursuit and a desire to avoid encountering hostile bands or striking the regular caravan routes. The strip of desert upon which they first entered on turning

southward must have been less barren than it is now, for it is known to have been occupied for a long time by a scattered or wandering population. But the exiles doubtless suffered there from hunger and thirst, notwithstanding the spoils and supplies that they were able to take with them. It is easy to conjecture incidents of fact which became the source of miraculous tales in the record made up in after ages, but it is impossible to ascertain anything as absolute fact in that record. The effort to mitigate the brackishness of water by casting into it branches of certain trees is not unknown in other episodes of human experience. An ancient fragment of popular song, preserved in the Book of Numbers, tells of the discovery of a spring which the princes of the people opened by digging in the sand with their staves, and this was doubtless the origin of the legend of smiting the rock. Coveys of quail were not uncommon in this wilderness, and there was an edible gum which exuded from certain trees, known to the Arabs as Mann-es-Sema, or "Gift of God." With such meagre resources the people were able to eke out their subsistence at this trying time.

In migrating in semi-tropical desert lands it has always been the custom to rest in camp in the daytime, and to linger for days together where

verdure and water are found, and to make marches from point to point by night. The column of smoke rising in the serene atmosphere from the central camp, and the torches carried on long poles at the head of the marching column, doubtless gave rise to the legend of the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. The continual altar fires during a period of halt became a cloud enveloping the ark.

Mount Sinai, standing in gloomy solitude in the depths of the wilderness, was the reputed abode of a terrible deity, and a sojourn in its neighborhood was calculated to produce a deep and lasting impression. It presented a fitting scene for a halt, out of the reach of present danger, where the fleeing remnant of the old Hebrew tribes, cut off from all the world, might consider its future destiny. The three months occupied in the flight from Egypt had been full of privation and hardship. Once a hostile band of Amalekites had been encountered, and blood had been shed in actual conflict. This "battle" at Rephidim was the first in the "wars" celebrated in the primitive literature of the Hebrews and was perhaps the origin of the national hatred of Amalek. It began a new chapter in the history of the race.

VI

EARLY CONCEPTIONS OF DEITY

THESE Semitic wanderers were no more free than other primitive peoples from the characteristics belonging to the infancy of mankind. They were credulous, superstitious, and susceptible to fears of the unseen, and were ready to attribute the visible and audible phenomena of nature to some awful power above or about them, upon whose favor life depended. Conceptions of divinity have always been determined by the character of humanity, and no moral standard for which divine sanction was claimed has ever been higher than the moral altitude of the best men of the time. A continuous line of tradition through forty centuries seems to indicate that those early nomads upon the outskirts of Mesopotamia had tended strongly toward a sublime monotheism. There are signs of a primitive belief in a mysterious set of beings called Elohs, or Elohim, representing the powers of Nature, after the manner of the divinities of polytheistic races, but these were gathered into a single personification, and Elohim

became the designation for one all-pervading Deity.

The idea of the separate Eloh persisted for a long time with some modification, and traces of it appear in stories of the messengers who visited Abram at Mamre and abode with Lot in Sodom, in the Beni-Elohim, or Sons of God, who in commerce with the daughters of men begat giants, and in the angels of Jacob's dream, ascending and descending on the heights of Luz. In the nomadic days there may have been something of the primitive forms of worship, by means of offerings and sacrifices, to placate the deity or to win his favor, but the artificial system into which it was developed did not belong to this age. The patriarchal chief was the only priest; the Nabi, or prophet, the Cohen, or priest, and the Levi, or minister of worship, were alike unknown. In the simple life in tents and under the open sky the germs of a lofty conception of family life and of social relations had started into being, and were destined to retain their vitality through all the subsequent trials and changes till the mission of the Hebrew race was fulfilled.

But that hundred years on the verge of Egyptian influence had produced radical and enduring effects. It had not wholly obliterated the traditions of Babylonia, of Ur-Chasdim, and Paddan-

aram, or the vague memories of the wanderings below the Jordan valley to Beer-sheba. A hazy conception of the mighty Elohim remained, but the land of Goshen was within the circle of the influence of Memphis and Heliopolis. Egypt was already old in religion and in the forms and appliances of worship, and the sojourners within her borders did not escape the influence of the cult of Isis and Osiris. They became familiar with material representations of Deity and the elaborate paraphernalia and ceremonial of worship in the land of the Pharaohs, and did not remain ignorant of the moral codes and spiritual speculations which were the product of a systematic priesthood.

The ancient Hebrews were never endowed with originality, ingenuity, or artistic sense regarding the externals of life. They borrowed their materials and their forms from others, and it was from Egypt that they derived most that related to the outward forms and modes of religion. There they got the idea of an ordered priesthood, of vestments, musical accompaniments and dances, as appurtenances of sacrifice and worship. The portable shrine, so long known as the Ark of the Covenant, was an Egyptian appliance in its origin, as was the table of shewbread; and the cherubim as a feature of sacred decoration were a modification of the sphinx. The long sojourn within the influence

of old Egypt begat the propensity to idolatrous worship, which proved so hard to resist, and to divination and the consulting of oracles. The Ephod and the mysterious device of the Urim and Thummim were borrowed from the sorcerers of the Nile.

But the traditions of the patriarchal age and the effects of Egyptian bondage were alike deeply sundered by some mighty and mysterious influence in that memorable passage through the wilderness. It wrought profoundly upon the race as it struggled from servitude to conquest. It may fairly be said that the most conspicuous result of that experience, that gestation of overwrought emotions, that ferment of hopes and fears, and the persistent working of an indomitable genius upon the plastic material of a homeless people, was the production of the national "God of Israel."

Generally among primitive people the inaccessible tops of lonely mountain peaks were imagined to be the abode of awful deities. When clouds and darkness gathered there, they sent forth the lightnings and uttered their voices in thunder. On invisible chariots they rolled through the skies, carrying terror to the puny dwellers of the earth. Mount Sinai in its rocky grandeur and desolate surroundings, subject to the violent caprices of a changeful climate, was peculiarly adapted to be the

abode of the awful majesty of the heavens. What happened there when the harassed exiles gathered in awe at the foot of the mountain, and their leader disappeared in its solitudes, no man can know. What in after ages was believed to have happened there has been recorded in the most enduring writing that has come from the hand of man. We do know that from that tremendous agony of Sinai and the wilderness, Israel came forth with Jehovah as its recognized God and the ruler of its destinies.

The first Hebrew writing made no use of vowels, and the four characters that have been erroneously rendered in English as "Jehovah" came to be regarded as unpronounceable, or as an "unspeakable" name. The proper form is Jahwe or Yahveh, and the name was of Assyrian origin, the feminine equivalent, Hawwa, being the original of Eve, the "mother of life." Jahwe seems to have denoted the mysterious source of natural phenomena, and its application must have made a deep impression upon the Semitic mind during the sojourns on the borders of Assyria, or it would not have been carried so long in memory, to be finally adopted as the appellation of the God of the returning Israelites.

VII

THE GOD OF ISRAEL

ONLY a germ of the conception which was developed into the great Jehovah of Israel could have been planted in the minds of the people during this brief but memorable halt in the vale by Mount Sinai. But there were opportunities for fostering it during the subsequent wandering through the wilderness, which occupied several months, though but a fraction of the period of forty years which later tradition assigned to it. No doubt there were long stops where forage and water were found, and privations and distress in the barren wastes that intervened. It was inevitable that in these trials discontent and turbulence should break out, and that the people should murmur against their leaders, and look back with longing to the comparative comfort of the bondage from which they had been taken. On such occasions their leaders, and especially the one great leader upon whom they mainly relied, must have been forced to every device that could work upon the hopes and fears of a superstitious multitude, to

maintain authority and prevent irretrievable disaster. Then could they invoke the terrible God who had revealed himself in the thunders of the mountain-top and whose commands they had sought and obtained in its dark recesses, to bring the murmurers into subjection. Doubtless every calamitous incident of a perilous journey was turned to account in enforcing discipline and became the source of some tale of miraculous interposition. It is almost certain that epidemics broke out in camps where long stays were made without sanitary safeguards ; there may have been an encounter with venomous serpents, a destructive fire in the camp, a stroke of lightning, or a shock of earthquake. The legends of divine wrath and terrible punishment for disobedience which appear in the record of after times, doubtless originated with such incidents, and it is probable that Moses and the "princes" and "nobles" of the people made use of them to the utmost in maintaining their authority.

But more than this was needed. The people must be inspired with hope as well as restrained by fear. Until they had passed through the first stretch of wilderness to the region of Kadesh, or Ezion-Geber, there was probably little thought of anything but escape from the terrors they were leaving behind. But here they must have come

upon traces of the migrations of their ancestors, which under the spur of famine had finally carried them over the borders of Egypt. We cannot tell from the record, written long after the event and in the light of subsequent knowledge and experience, what memories revived or what associations were recalled, connected with wanderings and sojourns in the land of the Jordan. The writers of that record were intent, not only upon accounting for the origin and relating the early experience of their race, but upon explaining and justifying the conquest of the land of which their race had become possessed, and the traditions which they made use of had accumulated in the ages between Moses and Jeroboam.

When the refugees from Egyptian bondage found themselves upon the borders of the land sanctified to them in some measure at least by memories of their forefathers, cherished through a long and bitter exile, a return to the nomadic state was no longer possible. They found no place in which they could remain in peace. One of the petty chiefs of the south had made a discomfiting attack upon them, and they were forced to move on. Edom and Moab were too powerful for them to displace, and received them in no friendly mood. These kindred tribes, through jealousy or fear, refused to let them pass through

their domain, thereby incurring the lasting enmity of Israel, who was forced to make the long detour in the wilderness in which so much was suffered.

It is evident that in their perplexing situation these homeless people were in some way strongly impressed with the idea that they had a right of possession in the lands over which their fathers had roamed, and upon which they had set up monuments marking the places of their longer sojourns or their more notable experiences. Memories of the Jordan valley, and the hills and vales of Canaan, transmitted from father to son in the bondsmen's tents of the land of Goshen and the cabins of the fellaheen of Rhameses, through the dark period of exile and servitude, doubtless pictured in their minds a delightful land "flowing with milk and honey," and they were easily persuaded that it was their own proper heritage. They were in a mood to be convinced that the terrible God who had been revealed to them and had dealt so severely with them in the wilderness had given that coveted land to their fathers and had made a solemn covenant that it should be possessed by their children. He it was that had delivered them from Egyptian bondage and he would lead them into the promised land. This conviction afforded a powerful motive to be wrought upon in establishing the authority of

Jehovah over the people, and in holding them in obedience to leaders who professed to receive commands direct from this mighty divinity.

Out of the exigencies of that time and the time that followed, down to the establishment of the kingdom, was wrought the greatest of ancient legends, that of the God of Israel, who had brought Abraham out of the land of the Chaldees and promised to his posterity the goodly heritage of Canaan; who met Jacob on the hill of Luz and repeated the promise; who brought his chosen people out of the house of bondage and led them through the Red Sea and the desert wilderness, to renew his covenant with the seed of Abraham. How much of this was developed during the brief sojourn near Mount Sinai and the trying months that followed we cannot tell, but enough to impress the people with their right to possess the land of whose delights they dreamed and to nerve them for its conquest. They were brought under discipline through dread of Jehovah's wrath, and inspired to effort by confidence in his promises, all of which is evidence of the genius of the great leader known as Moses.

The conception of Jehovah, formed at the time of the long struggle from bondage to conquest, and designed to carry that struggle to success, represents a tribal deity not greatly different in

characteristics from the Chemosh of Moab and the Baal of Ammon. To a rational mind, since the profound modification wrought in our ideas by Christianity and by modern philosophy, this conception seems monstrous, but it was adapted to the character of the people in whom it was awakened, to the stage of mental and moral growth which they had attained, and to the exigencies of their situation. In fact it was the product of these factors wrought out by the genius of their leaders. It was the conception of a being of terrible power, fiercely jealous of other gods, exacting complete submission and obedience as the price of his favor, liable to outbreaks of furious anger, needing to be placated by offerings and bloody sacrifices, and by shows of humility, but capable of loving-kindness and tender mercy to the submissive, and sure to reward the obedient. In conflicts with the subjects of other gods he sanctioned craft and cruelty, but in later days this conception was softened and expanded, so as to include the sublimer attributes of the Elohim, until Jehovah was transformed into the Lord God of the great prophets, and the loving Father of the still greater teacher of Galilee.

While commands of the great leader of the deliverance, long treasured by the people as coming direct from Jehovah, may have contained germs

of the "Torah," that system of "statutes and ordinances," and Moses himself in the character of law-giver, were the product of later times. In the primitive narratives covering the long period of national or tribal life, before the time of the two kingdoms, there is no trace of knowledge or observance of the "law." The real Moses, versed in the lore of Egypt, and possibly acquainted with the language of inscriptions in Midian or Moab, may have had command of some form of writing, though that of the Hebrews was long after derived from Phœnicia, but the account of the tables of stone was first given at least four hundred years after his time. The only other mention of them in all the history of Israel, save in the Deuteronomic expansion of the law, speaks of them as being found in the ancient ark of the covenant and placed in the first temple at Jerusalem, and that mention was made more than four other centuries after the alleged finding. Not the slightest reference is made to this sacred souvenir as being among the treasures of the temple when it was finally plundered and destroyed. The consecrated code known as the "Ten Words," or the Ten Commandments, was in fact first formulated about five centuries after the occupation of the land of Canaan.

VIII

INVADING THE PROMISED LAND

WHEN once the purpose of taking possession of the land along the Jordan and driving out or subjugating its inhabitants became fixed, a change seems to have come over the spirit of the people, which is clearly reflected in the earliest written material of their story. A confident and aggressive quality was developed, a definite plan of invasion and conquest took the place of the turbulent movements of fugitives, and something of the character of military leadership appeared. The most available territory lay in a narrow strip, a hundred miles long or more, on the eastern bank of the Jordan. It had been wrested from Moab by warlike bands from the other side of the river, and was divided into two petty realms under "Sihon, king of the Amorites," and "Og, king of Bashan."

These two marauding chiefs were alien to the pastoral people upon whom they had imposed their rule, and doubtless maintained their power with a handful of Amorite warriors. The Mo-

abites were willing enough to see that power displaced, and this first conquest of the resolute Israelites must have been an easy one. They first attacked the little realm of Sihon and took possession of Heshbon, his capital, and afterward extended their occupation northward over Bashan, meeting with feeble resistance. The "kings" of course were slain. This first victory gave the weary exiles a chance to settle down at last upon a land that would afford them subsistence and repose after their trials and hardships. Here they could recruit their strength for further conquests when the time should be ripe.

Naturally the exploits connected with the seizing of the land from the Arnon to the Jabbok became magnified and glorified in the oral traditions which were long after embodied in "The Book of Jasher" and "The Wars of Jehovah." These contained the material most nearly authentic used in the account that has come down to us, but they were filled with the exaggerations and marvels characteristic of early productions of the kind. While only fragments of this primitive material have been preserved without change, considerable passages of the narrative incorporated in the record were evidently derived from it. Though this record represents Moses as continuing to lead and command the "host" of Israel until it had

gained possession of the land on the east of the Jordan, the fragments of original material and of primitive narrative indicate his disappearance at the borders of Moab. In fact, as the light of actual history begins dimly to expand, that imposing figure fades mysteriously from our view. But that of Joshua, though less shadowy, is not less legendary.

This name is first mentioned in connection with the little skirmish with the Amalekites in the wilderness, known as the "battle" of Rephidim, and, in its original form of "Hoshea," means "the Conqueror." This indicates that it was a name applied, after the event, to a legendary hero to whose leadership the military achievements of the conquest of Canaan were attributed. No part of the ancient record has less of real historical character than that which purports to contain an account of those exploits. There was in reality no immediate invasion of the land to the west of the Jordan, with a systematic division and occupation of the territory. The picture of rapid and vigorous conquest, under the divinely directed leadership of Joshua, is produced by a close grouping of incidents scattered over a long interval of later time. In this picture there is a striking exaggeration of details, mingled with miraculous elements, drawn from the crude epic material of popular songs and

legends, the outlines of which have been effaced while the color and substance still appear here and there.

In reality the sojourn to the east of the Jordan extended over a series of years ; how long we cannot tell. Nor was it altogether peaceful. The jealousy of Moab revived, and it became an unfriendly neighbor. There is an account of one bloody conflict with hostile Midianites. The curious story of Balaam, interjected in the record, we shall have occasion to refer to hereafter. This territory, still occupied in part by the original inhabitants, was for the most part adapted only to a pastoral or rather meagre agricultural life, and as the number of the people increased the need of expansion was seriously felt. Beyond the river was a variegated country, stretching for a hundred miles and more along its western bank, and having a breadth of forty to fifty miles before the formidable barrier of the Philistines and Phœnicians was reached. It was in the possession of a number of related but not united tribes, none of which was either numerous or powerful. It was not, as a whole, a rich or a fertile land, but to those whose memory was of a wandering life in the desert, and who found a scanty subsistence on the narrow plains east of the Jordan, it seemed to flow with milk and honey and to promise abodes of peace and plenty.

Their situation, with hostile neighbors on their southern border, and with a constant liability of attack from plundering bands, had compelled the Israelites to keep up something of a warlike spirit and to maintain a military force. As they gained in strength the desire to enter upon their heritage over the river and possess it, grew more intense, and with that desire, no doubt, their confidence increased in their right by ancestral occupation and divine promise. Its possession was, in fact, not only justified to their minds, but made a duty by the absolute command of Jehovah. They had maintained a camp and general rallying-place, nearly opposite Jericho, on a plain known as the "Plain of Acacias" (Shittim). In that neighborhood the Jordan was a shallow stream, easily forded except in times of freshet.

The "nations" of Canaan, as we have said, were small tribes, mostly pastoral, scattered over the hills and valleys of a land not much more than a hundred miles by fifty in extent. Their "kings" were tribal chiefs, with bands of warriors wherewith to maintain their authority, and their "cities" were little more than camps or headquarters for these petty potentates. If the people had been united into one nation they would not have been very formidable, but they would probably have been invincible to the designs of the

invaders. They were, however, not accustomed to act in concert against foreign foes, and the tribes were not always on amicable terms even with each other. Their language differed little from that of the Israelites, and incursions for "spying out the land" were not attended with much difficulty or peril, and they constantly inflamed the desire of conquest.

The watch-tower of Canaan, and its outpost of defence on the east, was Jericho, standing on a commanding elevation not far from the river frontier. With its primitive defences and its small population it had no great power of resistance, but it was a formidable obstacle to invaders whose military resources were slender and whose appliances of warfare were of the simplest. The most elementary ideas of strategy suggested that this place must be utterly destroyed before a conquest of the country beyond could be safely undertaken, and it had to be accomplished by craft rather than force.

"The wars of Jehovah" were indeed attended with much craft and cruelty, but the early history of mankind is filled with struggles for the possession of coveted lands, in which every resource of deceit and strategy, and every advantage of merciless slaughter, were employed without compunction. The early Israelites, when brought into

conflict with their enemies, did not prove deficient in the violent qualities of primitive human nature, but they developed a degree of ingenuity and cunning, and a capacity for stratagem with which their feeble foemen were unable to cope. The conviction that the mighty Jehovah had given this land to their fathers and confirmed it to them as their rightful heritage, that he had commanded them to take possession of it and would direct and sustain their efforts, sanctified to their minds, or at least to the minds of those who told their story after the task was done, the exceedingly human methods by which it had to be accomplished.

Deceit, perfidy, treachery, and barbarous atrocities were attributed to divine command. Reverses were always due to the displeasure of Jehovah, whose will had been misunderstood or disregarded, and victories gained by ruthless slaughter were credited to his beneficent favor. The basest and most cruel acts were in some cases said to have been commanded by the Deity, who even intervened with miraculous aid to give them effect. Apparently the supernatural element was infused into this bloody story mainly by the devout compilers of a much later time, and it may be that those who took part in the scenes of carnage, and those who first celebrated them in song and legend, felt no occasion for the gloss of sanctity.

IX

THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN

THE plots and stratagems by which the walled town of Jericho was seized and destroyed, with a relentless slaughter of the inhabitants, is so completely veiled in the legendary record that we can form no definite idea of them, except that they were masked by an awe-inspiring demonstration of priests and soldiers and a distracting din. Whatever the means, that essential preliminary of the conquest was achieved, and the invading forces left no danger of attack from behind. Then a base of operations was established at an antique cromlech, or gilgal, not far from the fords of the river, and a raid was made upon the nearest populous town. It was mercilessly wiped out and its desolate site became known simply as "Ai," the "Ruins." This struck terror into the little communities about Gibeon, which was certain to be the next point of attack. The remnant of the Hivites who dwelt thereabouts were a feeble folk, and, according to the quaint story, they resorted to a trick that seems rather puerile, for making peace with the

invaders and saving themselves, at the risk of exciting the resentment of the more powerful Amorites and Jebusites beyond. A "king" who was doubtless a successor of the antique Melchisedek, of whom a passing glimpse is given in the legend of Abraham, managed a concerted effort to punish the "Gibeonites," and to resist the advancing "host" of Israel.

The combined armies of the five confederated "kings" could hardly have been a formidable power, their warlike equipment was of a primitive sort, and the effort at concerted military strategy proved ineffectual. The determined front and energetic action of the Israelites, inspired by confidence that an invincible Deity was directing their movements, resulted in a complete rout of the enemy, who were put to merciless slaughter. The presumptuous "kings" suffered the hideous fate reserved for those who ventured to fight against the terrible Jehovah. The victory of Gibeon and the battle in the vale of Ajalon, small as the scale of warfare must have been, appear in the ancient legends as such prodigies of valor and carnage that the very sun and moon stood aghast at the spectacle. The spirit in which these legends were afterward compiled is finely illustrated in the way this striking but not unfamiliar hyperbole was transformed into a matter-of-fact statement.

The details of the gradual conquest of Canaan are not sufficiently known, and the record, long after made up, is not sufficiently historical to justify any attempt to state more than general results. The process of subjugation occupied not less than two centuries, and was not accomplished by systematic or successive efforts under any one leader. Sometimes one tribe or band, and sometimes another, made a conquest of coveted territory, and often more than one joined in a victorious enterprise for a new possession for some branch of the family of Israel not yet adequately provided for. By degrees most of the country was brought into subjection, but it was long before complete ascendancy was established throughout the domain afterward known as Palestine. The final account of a division of the land and the allotment of defined areas to different tribes was quite artificial.

The pastoral clans of Reuben and Gad, and most of the Machirite branch of Manasseh, remained on the other side of the Jordan, though they appear to have aided their brethren in the original invasion. The powerful tribe of Judah and the warlike band known as Benjamin were the first to establish themselves in the heart of the "promised land." The former set up its capital at Hebron and left the old Jebusite stronghold of Mount Sion unsubdued, while Benjamin was

settled a little to the north about Gibeah. These assisted the people who became traditionally known as the tribe of Simeon in taking possession of territory in the south, in the region of Beersheba; but these never had any distinct boundaries or any marked tribal characteristics, and they gradually disappeared. What became known as the tribe of Dan was established on the borders of Philistia, where it was so harried that it ultimately migrated to the north.

Ephraim, the powerful and jealous rival of Judah, conquered for itself, through a long series of bloody conflicts, a large area just north of the domain of Judah and Benjamin, in some respects the most attractive and promising part of the whole country. With it was associated a portion of the related tribe of Manasseh. This section of Israel always laid claim to superiority of character and descent, and sustained the claim with the fascinating story of its great progenitor, Joseph, through whom the whole Hebrew race had been saved in Egypt, and whose sacred relics were said to have been buried at Shechem. The people who spread themselves over the extreme north had no distinct tribal peculiarities, and the names by which they came to be known were derived from characteristics of their situation or associations connected with the land.

Before the establishment of the first kingdom there was no union or effective federation of tribes, nor, excepting in the difference, amounting almost to antipathy, between Judah and Ephraim, were there any distinct lines of division or well-defined limits of possession and authority. Notwithstanding the menaces and commands of extermination, and the stories of limitless slaughter, transmitted by tradition to later times, the Canaanites were not driven out, nor was any large proportion of them destroyed. In places they retained independent communities of their own and maintained friendly relations with the victors. In others they were reduced to a servile condition, while in many parts they were practically absorbed with the new population. But in general, though the conquerors and conquered were of a common stock, and akin in language and in racial tendencies, there was no actual blending. The stronger strain became dominant and maintained its distinctive qualities, and it was the chief aim of the religious effort of Israel, through the teachings of priest and prophet, and through law and worship, to preserve the solidarity of "God's chosen people."

In the absence of anything that can be called statistics of those times it is not easy to form an approximate estimate of the number of the invading or the subjugated people, nor for many

centuries after can such an estimate be fairly made of the population of the country, or of any city, or of the size of armies or the forces engaged in recorded battles. The "host" that made its way through the deserts, cautiously avoiding encounters with Edom or Moab, could not have been numerous. The strip of territory long occupied on the east of the Jordan could only sustain a scattered pastoral population of no considerable number. The extent of the land lying between the Jordan and the coast countries, the character of its surface, and the conditions of life among the Canaanite tribes, make it impossible to suppose that the so-called "nations" had much power of resistance, either in numbers or resources.

The Israelites were a more vigorous and prolific people, and once rooted in the country they outgrew and overgrew the native population, though they did not displace it or wholly escape its modifying influence. The natural resources of the land and the known conditions of industry afford no ground for supposing that the country ever became populous or powerful, or that any of its cities ever had much wealth or defensive strength. The warlike spirit developed during the invasion and conquest speedily subsided, but was spasmodically aroused from time to time by some try-

ing exigency. The Hebrews were not a conciliatory people, and were apt to be on unfriendly terms with their neighbors, whom they either hated or regarded with contempt. Occasionally the subjugated natives showed a spirit of revolt, and elements of internal discord among the tribes were not lacking, while the jealousy between Judah and Ephraim was easily stirred. The old nomadic spirit asserted itself sufficiently to resist any kind of settled government, and the organization of society was slow and rudimentary. The heads of the clans retained a sort of leadership, but there was no systematic rule, save as it was forced upon the people as a means of self-defence. The state of things for a long time was tersely summed up in the saying, "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes," a condition of practical anarchy which obviously could not last, if Israel was to become a power even for its own protection.

X

THE DEGENERATION OF JEHOVISM

THE religion which the people of Israel carried into the land of Canaan did not differ so widely as we are apt to suppose from that which they found there. They had not yet learned to regard their own God, Jehovah, as an exclusive deity, except for themselves. They conceived of him as devoted to them, and of themselves as bound to him by a mutual covenant. He was to them a mightier God than the Baal and Milkom, or Moloch, of the Hittites and Amorites, or the Sydyk, or Sedek, of the Jebusites, whose priest Melchisedek must have been ; but he was simply their God, as these were the gods of the Canaanites, and as Chemosh was the god of Moab, whose rights they recognized within his own jurisdiction. Though to their minds Jehovah had conquered the land and established his dominion there, they could not divest themselves of a certain dread of the other gods, or resist wholly the seduction of their worship. The weakness of their nature was appealed to in the sensual rites of Baal-peor and Ashte-

roth in the groves of the "high places," and the desire of simple people for some visible symbol of the object of their worship caused them to lapse easily into idolatry. In establishing their own sacred places they took possession of those consecrated by their predecessors, connecting with them some tradition of their own race.

After they left the original camp at Gilgal, they set up the portable sanctuary, which was the palladium of their faith, first at Bethel, which became a general rallying-point for all Israel and was sanctified by the story of the covenant with Jacob. It was afterward placed at Shiloh, which long continued to be the centre of religious celebration for the new nation. The Ephraimites made Shechem their principal sacred place, and consecrated it with the legend of Abraham's visit and Joseph's burial, and built altars on Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. An interesting indication of how the gods were regarded is to be found in the conduct of the bands of Reubenites and Gadites, who on returning to their own allotted land beyond the Jordan, built an altar at the border, lest they should be cut off from all share in the protection of Jehovah. They afterward came, in fact, to be regarded as aliens in religion and blood, and finally fell out of the life of Israel and were absorbed by Moab and Ammon.

The tendency to lapse into idolatry and to worship other gods was accompanied by a degeneration of Jehovism itself. There were cases of imitation of the most hideous rite of Moloch, that of human sacrifice, and the moral restraints of devotion were almost lost sight of. But the most conspicuous aspect of religion during the long period from the settlement of the tribes in Canaan to the consolidation of the nation under the kings, came from an application of lessons learned in Egyptian servitude. The serpent was a general embodiment of divinity in Egypt, and for a long time the Nehustan, or brazen serpent, was preserved as a sacred talisman in Israel. According to one of the Mosaic legends it was made by the great leader as a protection against the "fiery serpents" in the wilderness, but it could have served that purpose in the popular mind only by being looked upon as in some sort a symbol of Jehovah. It was cherished as such until the strong reaction against the gross materialism into which worship had fallen, wrought by the influence of the first great prophets, caused it to be destroyed with other tokens of idolatry.

There were other representations of Jehovah, the form of which cannot be clearly ascertained, and the images called teraphim were a sort of household gods and part of the paraphernalia of worship. Sorcery and divination had as strong a

hold at one time upon the children of Israel as upon the children of other races, and was accompanied by the same tendency to impose the wisdom of sages upon the simple-minded as revelations of the divine will. In these practices, as may be clearly seen in the story of Gideon, and that of Micah, whose oracle was stolen by a band of migrating Danites, the symbols of Jehovah and his worship were used. The Ephod and the Urim and Thummim were originally mechanical devices used in divination; but when the temple hierarchy was established they were relegated to the mystic decoration of the vestments of the priests, and the manner of their employment was suppressed from common knowledge and finally forgotten. Attenuated rudiments of a half-idolatrous past were wrought into the externals of the temple worship, which, it must be remembered, was first established long before the detailed descriptions were made of its imaginary germs in the appurtenances of the Ark of the Covenant during the sojourn in the wilderness. Moses and Aaron and the Levites, as they appear there, were the progeny and not the progenitors of the temple priesthood.

XI

THE CHILDHOOD OF THE NATION

AFTER the clans of Israel were distributed and settled in the conquered land, without systematic government or formal union of any kind, the exigencies forced upon them by aggressive enemies or internal disorders were met for a long period by a series of leaders, evolved by circumstances and called *sofetim*, a term of which the sense is imperfectly conveyed in the familiar word "judges." Their rule was not general, but local and partial, according to the requirements of the situation, and the line of such rulers was not continuous. Their selection came about through their own assertion of their ability and force of character, and the popular recognition of their capacity for leadership in an emergency ; but perhaps at the time, and certainly afterward, their authority was generally attributed to the choice of Jehovah. They were in effect dictators, who were looked to for counsel in time of trouble and for guidance and command in war, and once accepted they held

a certain sway while they lived, but did not transmit authority to any successor.

In the fragments of epic material preserved in the Book of Judges a disconnected series of events and exploits can be traced which fully illustrate this stage in the life of Israel. There were periodical troubles on all the borders of the land. At one time an invading king from Mesopotamia oppressed the people and they were delivered by a leader named Othniel. Again the Moabites overran a part of the territory and brought it into subjection, and a daring Benjaminite, named Ehud, made his way to the head-quarters of their fat king and assassinated him, and then rallied the people to the fords of the Jordan and expelled the invaders with the customary slaughter. The next serious affair recorded is the coming of a formidable Canaanite "king" from the far north, Jabin of Hazor, with his great captain, Sisera, when the leader that rose in Israel was a woman.

Deborah is interesting not only as a heroic leader of the people in this emergency, but as the first that appears in the record as exercising the function of prophecy, which had such an important development in later times. She appears as dwelling under a palm-tree in the hill country, where she was resorted to as a gifted seer, and the keeper of the oracles of Jehovah. It was she

that called forth Barak as a military leader and aroused the people against the terrible array of Sisera and his chariots, and discomfited the hosts of Jabin. The victory was sealed by the shrewd and resolute treachery of Jael, with a tent-pin driven into the temple of the sleeping Sisera. Deborah's song of triumph, somewhat corrupted in oral transmission and subsequent copying, is perhaps the oldest specimen we have of the literature of Israel's heroic age.

The country suffered much from predatory raids of Midianites and Amalekites, until Gideon, of the family of Abiezer, in Manasseh, rose as a leader and deliverer of the people. His original name of Jerubbaal indicates that the family was addicted to the worship of Baal, while that of his son, Abimelech, is suggestive of the cult of Moloch; but with his assumption of leadership and a new name, Gideon accepted to the full the authority of Israel's God, Jehovah. The account of his skill and prowess in rallying the forces of the northern tribes and driving out the plundering bands that overran the country is full of quaint incidents and touches of poetic legend. The spoils of his pursuit and slaughter of the Midianites beyond the Jordan excited the cupidity and jealousy of Ephraim, who was not summoned to help him at the beginning of the campaign, and did not get a share of the

booty; but Ephraim was soothed by diplomatic flattery. There is in the story a confusion of the names of persons and places quite characteristic of those ancient annals. Gideon's great exploit seems to have excited the first impulse in Israel for setting up a king, but he preferred the security, reverence, and profit of setting up an oracle to the risks of premature sovereignty. But the ambition which Gideon was shrewd enough to resist or to avoid broke out in his illegitimate son, Abimelech, who hatched a plot for setting up royalty at Shechem, with disastrous consequences to himself.

The people to the east of the Jordan, the Machirite branch of Manasseh, and the Gadites and Reubenites, had little in common with the rest of Israel, and were already regarded almost as aliens, but when they were harried and overrun by the Ammonites they remembered their claim to the protection of Jehovah, and their share in the heritage of his people. Out of their struggles rose one of the most famous of the "judges," whose story, told with the color of a later time, is one of the epic passages in their history. There is the common confusion of the names of persons and places in the representation of the hero of Gilead as the son of Gilead, and it is in accordance with many a popular fancy that the hero of the time should be a bastard and an outlaw. Jephthah

must have been a vigorous and capable chieftain. After being driven from Gilead by his family, he became a brigand of such prowess that when a military leader was needed for deliverance from the Ammonites, the people were fain to call him to the rescue.

He proved a bold and successful warrior, and lashed the Ammonites through the land, driving them from its borders with "great slaughter," and when the men of Ephraim, whose jealousy was again aroused, undertook to chastise him for not giving them a share in the campaign and its victories, he turned upon them, and not only drove them back to their hills, but apparently brought them into subjection to his own authority, for he is said to have "judged Israel six years." It is impossible, however, to determine how far his sway extended. It was a part of the "system" of the compilers of the record in after times to represent Jephthah as the servant and instrument of Jehovah in rescuing his people after they had been punished by their enemies for their recreancy. But Jephthah's religious character is left dubious, notwithstanding the statement put in the mouths of his messengers to the king of Ammon regarding the basis of Israel's claim to the land from the Arnon to the Jab-bok; and his vow and the human sacrifice which it involved savor more of Baal and Moloch than

of Jehovah. No doubt he accepted the God of Israel as he understood him, and worshipped him according to his lights, but there was everywhere at that time a strong tendency to degrade him to the level of the other deities. There is an essential truth in the representation that this was a grievous offence of the people, and the chief source of their weakness in contending with their enemies.

A semblance of continuity in the line of "judges" is produced by a rather barren enumeration of those who rose here and there, and from time to time, and disappeared without leaving any enduring trace. The constant irritation and conflict on the Philistine border gave rise to many episodes and exploits, and out of some of their incidents was constructed one of the most curious legends of this primitive stage of the national life. Nothing is more attractive to children in their physical weakness than stories of giants, or of persons of tremendous strength, and every nation in its childhood has had its tales of heroes of great stature and enormous might. Whatever basis of fact there may have been for the legend of the crafty and daring, the morally equivocal, but physically powerful Danite hero, Samson, it was evidently wrought with many threads of myth and romance, for it is by no means congruous

with its setting. Sun-worship and its symbols were not unknown on the Phœnician border. In the old Babylonian mythology there was a prototype of Hercules, and it is not unlikely that traditions of the Hellenic demi-god himself existed among the Philistines, who were akin to the Greeks in origin.

Three distinct tendencies are noticeable in the annals of primitive society. Warlike heroes and bold adventurers are apt to be, or are represented as being, illegitimate sons of noble sires. Supernatural paternity is attributed to persons who become deified in the popular mind, and those who are held in highest esteem as great leaders or teachers are often said to have been the offspring by divine favor of mature mothers previously barren. When the popular tales of Samson's exploits in conflict with the Philistines, his crafty devices and feats of strength, the wiles which he practised and of which he became a victim, through his Her-culean weakness for women, came to be woven into the fabric of Israel's history, threads and colors from the sun myth were left clearly visible. The hero's character was dignified in the later record by a divine interposition in his maternity, by being devoted as a "Nazarite unto God" from infancy, and by being raised to the rank of a "Judge of Israel." While there is an almost grotesque incon-

gruity in the blending of the elements that form the consecrated legend, it is done with that Semitic simplicity and semblance of a plain narrative of fact which so long deterred critical analysis.

The episode of Micah and his oracle, to which we have already made a passing allusion, is mainly interesting and significant as illustrating the character of the worship of the time and the function of the Levite in its germ. The story is much older than the account of the origin of the priesthood in Aaron and his sons, and the creation of the tribe of Levi as one of the offspring of Jacob. The hireling of the oracle of Jehovah, deriving his name and office from memories of Egypt, was the real father of "the priest, the Levite." The appropriation of Micah's graven images, ephod, and priest, by a migrating band of Danites, and the setting up of the paraphernalia of divination at Laish, are made to overshadow in the record the other incidents of the migration. But there was the usual seizure of coveted places, and the ruthless slaughter and plunder of the previous occupants, which always characterized the conquests of the time.

As the episode of Micah and the Danites illustrates the state of religion, that of the Levite of Ephraim and his concubine of Bethlehem-Judah, illustrates the moral condition in the time of the "judges." The outrage at Gibeah reminds one

of the morals of Sodom in the time of Lot, but the two stories are of about the same age and based upon the manners prevailing at the time they were told. The fact that the other tribes were rallied against Benjamin to avenge the wrong upon the poor Levite shows that it was regarded with abhorrence elsewhere in Israel. The same thing was indicated in the vow at Mizpah that there should be no more intermarrying with the iniquitous Benjaminites. The war upon Benjamin stopped short of extermination, that a tribe of Israel might not be "cut off," and the perpetuation of the tribe was further guaranteed by barbarous devices for furnishing wives to its warriors without violating the rash vow against giving them daughters of other tribes. The people of Jabesh-Gilead, having no part in that inviolable vow, had to be slaughtered that the virgins of their city might be captured as wives for Benjamin, and, the supply being insufficient, advantage was taken of the feast of the Lord at Shiloh to seize the maidens who came out to dance. So was the inheritance of Benjamin restored and Israel was again at peace, in the days when "there was no king and every man did that which was right in his own eyes." They were days when Israel gave little promise of fulfilling the high destiny that awaited her.

XII

SETTING UP A KINGDOM

As the people of Israel multiplied and their ascendancy over the subjugated races increased, the tribes grew closer together, and the national spirit gradually developed. This was especially the case in that central region which included, at no great distance from each other, the places about which the traditions of the people clustered—Hebron, Bethel, Shiloh, and Shechem. The need of a closer union for purposes of defence was felt more and more. There were periodical attacks from the Ammonites on the eastern border, and constant raids from the plundering Amalekites of the south. The ever-hostile and aggressive Philistines on the west were a constant provocation to the consolidation of the tribes for defensive warfare. Though Philistia was a small, and not a populous country, its superior civil and military organization made it almost always victorious in its attacks.

For a long time no warlike leader rose in Israel, and the people began to plead for a “king” who should lead them to battle against their enemies.

Their only "judge" seems to have been the priest at Shiloh, where the "ark of the Lord" had found its resting-place, and whither the people made pilgrimages to offer sacrifices to Jehovah. The experiment of relying upon their God alone, and carrying the ark which he was supposed to inhabit at the head of their little army, to strike terror into the Philistines, proved disastrous. The ark was captured and carried away, to the consternation of the confiding people. A pious tradition grew up that, like the arrows of Apollo, it carried pestilence into the ranks of the enemy, who were driven by their calamities to send it back with placatory offerings symbolic of their sufferings. It proved to be as deadly to those who looked upon it at Beth-shean as it had been at Ashdod, but it lost its virulence in the keeping of a sanctified priest at Kiriath-jearim. But this experience showed more and more the need of some valiant warrior as a leader.

An interesting incident of this period is the first appearance of the "prophet," in the later sense of the term, with a distinct political function, though Deborah was a forerunner of this character. The story of Samuel, as we have it, is made up of two diverse accounts, imperfectly blended, which show him in two distinct aspects. The more attractive appears in the older material, which is

also more historical, though woven with the usual legendary elements, such as those relating to his birth and his dedication in infancy to the little sanctuary at Shiloh. The Jehovism of the time shows little improvement, as indicated in the scandals of the sons of Eli, the superstitious reliance upon a kind of sacred sorcery, and the lack of moral elevation. There seems to have been conventicles of "prophets," whose practice of working themselves into a convulsive state of enthusiasm by music and dances has had its counterpart ever since in Oriental lands.

Samuel appears to have been resorted to as a seer, and an oracle, and he differed from others of his class only in greater sagacity and higher character, which led to the prominent part taken by him in establishing the kingdom under Saul. Of this part traces of two inconsistent accounts are left in the record. That which represents him as averse to complying with the popular wish for a king, and Jehovah as acquiescing with reluctance, was imposed by the compiler after the theocratic idea of a later time had developed, when there was a strong reaction toward the ideals of the pastoral age and a complete reliance upon the God of Israel. The real political and religious activity of the time was limited to a small area, of which Gibeah may be regarded as the centre.

Benjamin was small, but was the chief repository of the warlike spirit, and it was the natural place in which to look for a military leader. Shiloh was not many miles from Gibeah, while Ramah, the residence of the great seer, was close by on the north, and the height of Mizpah, a popular rallying-place, was equally close on the south. There can be no doubt that, during the agitation for a king, Samuel saw a likely candidate in the stalwart son of Kish, who was familiar to the fraternity of prophets.

XIII

THE FIRST KING

No authentic details could be drawn from the conflicting statements of the record, even if its material had a historic quality, but it is known that Saul became the first king of Israel, and it was undoubtedly due to his physical stature and prowess, and his fitness for military leadership. Whether Samuel sought him out or took advantage of his coming to consult the oracle about the whereabouts of stray asses, and anointed him beforehand as the coming monarch; whether the prophet called the people together at Mizpah and there presented their king, who modestly tried to evade the honor; or whether Saul was invested with royalty at Gilgal, after having first displayed his prowess by slaughter of the Ammonite assailants of Jabesh-Gilead, and as the result of popular acclaim for a new hero, does not matter. Saul became the king, and the prophet was no doubt instrumental in making him the king.

It is difficult for us to adapt our ideas to the real proportions of these events, viewed across the

intervening tract of human history, and through the haze which religious faith has thrown over them in the varying course of thirty centuries. It was a primitive time in a primitive land, a land neither extensive nor populous, with a mixture of inhabitants of different origin, the dominant people being of various tribes loosely associated. There was no systematic government, and Saul's authority was little different in kind, and not much greater in extent, than that of Jephthah or Gideon. Royalty was nominally established, and the title of king was adopted, but Saul was essentially a military chieftain. His sway was acknowledged by the tribes, but was effective only so far as he might assert and maintain it.

From the two inconsistent documents irregularly pieced together to form the record we now have, with such other help as research has afforded, we gather that the reign of Saul was successful in its earlier years, while he was engaged in combating the enemies of Israel, but his sagacity was not equal to his heroism, and he was of a vacillating temperament. Prone to superstition and to consulting oracles, he still seems to have been apt to disregard what purported to be the word of Jehovah, and thus to incur the displeasure of the great prophet upon whom he mainly relied for counsel. In his continual warfare with the Philistines

he had the soldier's instinct for selecting capable warriors to lead in the fight, and when he "saw any mighty man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him." Among the most valiant and skilful of his lieutenants was his own son, Jonathan.

No doubt there were perilous adventures and strange incidents in the guerilla warfare of those days, and it is not remarkable if the accounts, put together long after, are filled with legendary elements. The later compiler diffused over them a theocratic gloss in accounting for any significant turn in events. Saul and Jonathan were in the main successful in their campaigns against the aggressive Philistines, and the king is also represented as administering chastisement to Ammon, Moab, and Amalek, beyond the borders of his dominion. Fragments of original material are so incoherently mixed in the record that no clear statement of the order of events can be extracted from them, and more authentic material is lacking, but the general significance of what happened is not difficult to discern.

Popular dissatisfaction with a reign like that of Saul was inevitable, on account of his lack of the arts of leadership, except in actual warfare, and his want of tact in dealing with men in civil life, and with the conditions about him. It is not a pleasing view of the character of Samuel, and it

is probably not an authentic one, which presents him as the head of a plot for raising David to the throne in the lifetime of Saul. It comes from the writers of the Davidic dynasty of Judah, intent upon sanctifying its origin. Samuel is represented as turning against Saul, and Jehovah as repenting of having made him king, because he was not sufficiently ruthless in slaughtering the Amalekites and destroying everything that came in his way in the expedition against them. The venerable prophet is even shown in the act of hewing in pieces the captured king, Agag, with his own hand; and in his mourning over the disobedient Saul, he sought out the Bethlehemite son of Jesse, and anointed him betimes as king over Israel.

The actual manner of David's first appearance on the scene is involved in obscurity. His first meeting with Saul is described in two different ways. The king was subject to fits of depression, bordering upon insanity, and could only be soothed by music. David, already answering to the description of a "mighty man of valor and a man of war," as well as prudent in speech, comely in person, and "cunning" in playing the harp, was sent for to solace the king with music, and became a favorite attendant. According to the other account the king first knew of David after the battle with the Philistines at which the giant Goliath was

slain. This curious legend seems to be an example of the Hebrew practice of personifying events and places and masses of men when reducing oral tradition to writing. There may have been a Philistine warrior of gigantic stature, known as Goliath, whose huge sword was kept as a trophy, but it is likely that the defeat of a large body of Philistines by a smaller body of Israelites, under this "mighty man of valor" from Bethlehem, was the source of the story of the mailed giant of Gath, slain by a stripling slinger of Judah with pebbles from the brook.

This view may be supported by the fragment of song, apparently from the "Jasher" and the oldest words in the record of Saul's reign, which represents the women as shouting :

"Saul hath slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousands,"

at the time of the victor's return from the battle. David was doubtless one of the mighty and valiant men whom Saul had taken unto himself in his wars, and from his part in that victory, and the credit he won by it, came the beginning of the King's jealousy, and perhaps also of the admiration and attachment of his son Jonathan. At all events, in the valiant and adventurous son of Jesse appeared a figure which was the very an-

tithesis of the robust Benjaminite of Gibeah. David was not merely valiant in war, but he was sagacious, versatile, handsome, and a consummate master of the art of popularity. As Saul lost prestige, David became the idol of the people and an object of strong attachment, not only to the king's favorite son, but to his daughter, Michal. With his disordered temperament and accumulating troubles, it is little wonder if Saul's jealousy of his youthful rival, whom he made his son-in-law as well as his armor-bearer, was sometimes raging.

XIV

DAVID AS AN OUTLAW

It does not appear in the account that David ever plotted directly against his sovereign, however much others may have plotted in his behalf, and however little he may have sought to avoid the popularity which his captivating personality excited. But doubtless the king in his fits of violence sought the life of the man who won favor so easily and so rapidly, while his own prestige was waning, and he seems to have deliberately contrived to put him in deadly peril. The "evil spirit" which incited Saul to make personal attempts upon David's life was doubtless the spirit of uncontrollable temper, severely wrought upon, though indications also appear of actual mental derangement. Michal and Jonathan more than once saved the object of their regard from their father's wrath, and when the danger became too great the prince aided in the escape of the friend who was afterward to seize the inheritance of his family.

David fled once to Samuel and his coterie of

young "prophets" at Ramah, and ventured to return, only to find the king more than ever incensed. He next took refuge with a priest at Nob, where the "sword of Goliath" seems to have been deposited as a trophy; but finding that his whereabouts was known to a treacherous Edomite servant of Saul, he betook himself boldly to the chief enemy of his country, the Philistine king, at Gath. But he was known there as a formidable warrior from whom the Philistines had suffered, and he had to feign madness in order to escape with his life. We may as well follow the recorded events from this point without inquiring too closely as to what is tradition and what authentic history, since there is no means of ascertaining, and it is not unlikely that the substance of the record was derived from David's own reminiscences in his later days.

Having escaped from Gath he placed his father's family in safety in Moab, the reputed home of his grandfather's maternal ancestors, and himself took refuge in a cave among the hills of Judah, whither the disaffected and lawless of the kingdom resorted to him, and became under his leadership a band of outlaws and bandits. The term seems harsh, but it is a mere fact that for some time David led the life of a brigand chief, and was regarded by Saul as a public enemy and a dangerous conspirator,

not altogether without reason. The king inflicted a merciless penalty upon the priests of Nob for having harbored the outlaw, and when David and his band made a bold foray to rescue Keilah from the Philistines they narrowly escaped the vengeance of Saul, who prepared to capture them at that place. Returning to the strongholds of the mountains and the fastnesses of the wilderness of Ziph, the chieftain kept up communication with Jonathan, from whom he received warning when in danger of pursuit. There are two stories of the king being in David's power and having his life spared. Certainly the outlaw was too shrewd a man to force his cause by any deed of violence against the "Lord's anointed," and he bided the time when he could bring the people to his support without the domestic broils and bloodshed that would have made his tenure of power uncertain. His magnanimity is represented as having disarmed the ill-will of Saul, but neither prudence nor policy dictated compliance with the king's advances for a return to favor.

David appears in anything but a pleasing light in the episode of the rich Carmelite, from whom he proposed to extort spoil on the plea that he had previously refrained from plundering him, and whose widow he took as a "wife" after she had exhibited the tact and complacency of which the

churlish Nabal was incapable, that person having conveniently died of chagrin.

To escape from the perils and uncertainties of brigandage within the dominion of Saul, and to avoid the constant danger of capture, David finally betook himself again to the king of Gath, having this time a formidable band of warriors at his command, and two alien women as "wives." He induced the Philistine monarch to turn over the town of Ziklag to him, and thence he made plundering raids in various directions. When he slaughtered and spoiled the friends of his benefactor he pretended to have been committing outrages upon his own country. He set out to accompany King Achish on one of his campaigns against Israel, but being distrusted he was sent back, only to find that the Amalekites had plundered Ziklag, made captives of the women and children, and set fire to the town.

The pursuit and slaughter and the capture of spoils from the predatory tribe are chiefly interesting from the use made of the plunder. David's sending presents about to towns in Judah shows that he was not neglectful of his opportunities for gaining favor, but had his eye upon the power to which Samuel was reputed to have consecrated him while he was yet keeping his father's flocks.

The expedition of the Philistines, from which

David had been induced to turn back, lest he prove a traitor, resulted disastrously to Saul, who was in desperate straits since he had lost the counsel of the prophet of Ramah. The king needed a wiser head than his own at any time, but his infirmities had now grown upon him. He consulted the oracle by the peculiar divination of the Ephod, he resorted to sorcery and witchcraft, and was at his wit's end. The story of the witch of Endor throws a lurid light upon the superstition of the time. The hard fact is that the Philistines were victorious, Saul and Jonathan were killed, and David found the throne of Israel within his reach at last.

XV.

A DYNASTY ESTABLISHED

WITH the establishment of the Davidic dynasty we can for the first time reach an approximate date in the history of Israel. The fixing of the seat of power at Jerusalem was not far from 1025 B.C., and the events which led up to it were nearly concurrent with the opening of the heroic age of Aryan history, when the material was supplied for the epic poetry of Greece.

David was still at Ziklag when he heard of the defeat of Saul at Mount Gilboa, and of the death of the king and three of his sons. The compiler of the annals does not scruple to represent him as barbarously slaying the messenger who brought the news, though the excuse given does not agree with the statement of the manner of Saul's death, which was by his own hand, and not that of the luckless bearer of evil tidings. David's mourning for Saul and Jonathan may have been sincere, but it did not prevent his taking prompt advantage of a situation which he had shrewdly helped to bring about. He went through the form of getting from

the Ephod a confirmation of his purpose to proceed to Hebron and set himself up as king over his own tribe of Judah, whose favor he had lost no opportunity of winning.

The line of division between Judah and Ephraim had always been clearly marked, and to these two the other tribes were subordinate. It required all the sagacity of which David was master to bring about the consolidation of the monarchy. Abner, Saul's chief military commander, made haste to set up the dead king's surviving son, Ishbosheth, or more properly Ish-baal, in his stead, taking him beyond Jordan to Mahanaim for the purpose. David's chief man of war was Joab, a member of his own family, and to him was chiefly left the conduct of the contest with the house of Saul. There are curious Homeric incidents in the account of the conflicts between the two military chieftains, into which a personal feud entered. Abner, getting into a quarrel with his king over a concubine, undertook to betray the realm into the hands of David. The latter entertained the proposition on condition of getting back his first wife, Michal, now married to another, but Joab, suspicious of Abner and bitterly hostile to him, found occasion to put him out of the way. David ostentatiously condemned the deed and mourned for Abner, but he did not fail to retain the services of

his bold and bloody warrior. Two of Ishbosheth's captains, thinking to profit with David by assassinating their master, received the reward of traitors, and the king professed great wrath at the death of Saul's son, but he promptly made a "covenant" with his adherents, and became king over all Israel.

As a part of his policy for uniting the nation, David abandoned Hebron as his capital, as being closely identified with his own tribe, and avoided choosing any place identified with the rival tribes. The Jebusites still occupied their ancient stronghold on Mount Sion, and deemed it impregnable, insomuch that there was a proverb that it could be defended by the blind and lame. But David seized this neutral spot, and availed himself of the skill of the Phœnicians to build his capital there, giving to the world its chief centre of religious influence and association for ages, though he had little conception of its destiny, and there he took unto himself more wives and concubines, after the manner of the monarchs of his time.

After repelling the first assault of the Philistines, who undertook to test their strength against the new kingdom, David bethought him of bringing the "Ark of God" from its place of repose in the house of Abinadab, in order that the dwelling-place of Jehovah might be at the new centre of national

power. To us there is something grotesque in the pageants and ceremonies with which this ancient shrine was transferred, with an untoward accident on the way, to the place where it was really to become the palladium of a nation's faith. But these were in keeping with the spirit of the age, and calculated to impress the people as no other form of celebration could. The scorn of Michal was that of one who had no appreciation of the value of the consecration of the nation to its chosen deity. The story of David's purpose to build a house for the Lord at this time, and of his diversion from this purpose by the prophet Nathan, is a later production, interpolated in the record as a part of the scheme of the later chroniclers, to give at all points a divine sanction to the dynasty of David, and to its perpetuation.

XVI

THE REIGN OF DAVID

THE reign of David is represented as one of blood and conquest in its earlier years, and of intestine plots and intrigues in its later part. He is said to have subdued the Philistines and to have inflicted chastisement upon the neighboring lands, smiting their kings and exacting spoils from them, which he "dedicated unto the Lord." His warfare was prosecuted with ruthless cruelty, from which Moab was not exempt, though it was afterward reputed to be the land of his grandfather's maternal ancestry, and had been the refuge of his family when he was an outlaw. But in none of these conquests was there any acquisition of territory, or final subjection of the alien people. An attempt to establish a friendly alliance with Ammon met with a rebuff and the usual vindictive consequences. Meantime the policy of placating the adherents of the house of Saul, and of guarding against plots in that quarter was continued by taking in direct charge its principal heir, Mephibosheth, or Meribaal, the crippled son of Jonathan.

The government of David was in effect that of an absolute monarch, whose will, tempered by discretion, was the only law, and whose rule was sustained by popular submission and by military force. The nucleus of his army was made up of the warriors of his days of brigandage, including a large proportion of Philistine soldiers, and his most capable captains, with the exception of Joab and his brothers, were of alien blood. The native spirit of Israel was not warlike. The inevitable result of the oriental practice of polygamy and concubinage was harem intrigues and division in the royal household. The latter part of David's reign was darkened by plots, headed by a son who possessed many of his own captivating qualities, and had a strong hold upon his affections.

The story of Absalom's insurrection and the incidents connected with it throw a strong light upon the manners and morals of the time. That of David's infamous conduct in gaining possession of the wife of Uriah, the Hittite captain in his army, is, we are glad to believe, of doubtful authenticity, but that it should have been retained in the record, accounting for the origin in the royal family of Solomon's mother, is evidence that there was no appreciation of the moral turpitude of the conduct attributed to the king, even in the later time when the record was finally made up. The

touches relating to the death of Bath-sheba's first child and the birth of Solomon seem highly characteristic of the time, even including the strange sense of justice imputed to Jehovah. The gross conceptions regarding sexual relations which prevailed appear strikingly in the incident of Ammon's treatment of his half-sister and Absalom's full sister, Tamar, in which the deception and force employed seem to have constituted the offence, which was so savagely avenged by Absalom. The bloody deed of slaying a brother to avenge a sister's shame led to Absalom's alienation from his father's house, and indirectly to the insurrection which he afterward raised to gain his father's throne.

After the young man had passed three years in exile with his kinsman, the king of Geshur, his safe return was managed by Joab; but it was long before he could be safely brought face to face with the king. As soon as a reconciliation seemed to have been effected, the handsome prince began to ply the arts of popularity to win the hearts of the fickle populace, and having enticed one of his father's chief counsellors into his plot and sent emissaries among the tribes whose loyalty was always uncertain, he withdrew to Hebron to head the insurrection under the pretence of fulfilling a vow to Jehovah, made in the days of his exile.

One of the most pathetic pictures in history is that of the broken-hearted king meekly abandoning his capital, and making his way with his faithful followers over the hills and across the Jordan to Mahanaim, while his heartless but beloved son usurped his place by treachery and violence. Among the most faithful of his adherents were the foreign mercenaries of his little national guard, who had shared in all his varying fortunes, and those most ready to insult him in his calamity were of the family of Saul. The old division was never healed.

The struggle for overcoming the rebellion, with the resources of subtlety and craft, and the skillful use of the little army still at the king's command, was left in the hands of the bold and resourceful Joab, and the counsellors who still remained faithful. The stern old warrior knew better than to heed the pathetic appeal to "deal gently for my sake with the young man," and he effectually broke the rebellion by taking advantage of the young man's entanglement by the hair, of which he was so proud, to put an end to him. Again Joab angered the king by doing him a bloody service, and boldly taxed him with weakness when he wept over his reprobate son. As the men of Judah flocked back to their allegiance and some of the other tribes hastened to make

their peace with the outraged sovereign, David sought to unite their forces by taking Absalom's chief captain to his confidence. This did not prevent a rebellious remnant of Israel from keeping up the contest, and Joab, smarting with resentment and jealousy, killed his newly found rival Amasa, and proceeded to crush the king's enemies with his usual energy, thus maintaining the ascendancy he had so often imperilled. In fact Joab's brutal qualities served David many a good turn, and relieved him of dangerous responsibilities, and while the king repudiated the rude warrior's bloody deeds, he never found it convenient or safe in his own lifetime to dispense with his services.

The duplicity with which David dealt with his domestic enemies and profited by the treachery and boldness of others, without accepting the responsibility of their acts with the benefit, is one of the darkest stains on his name; but it was a kind of policy exacted by expediency and common to rulers of his time. In the combination of strong qualities in David's character his faults were on the same scale as his merits. Without this combination of qualities he would probably not have founded the dynasty which produced such wonderful consequences in the world's history. As the house of Saul never lost its hatred of

the king who had seized its heritage, so David never lost his suspicion of the survivors of that house, and one of the most repellent incidents of his career is the subterfuge by which he compassed the death of the sons of Rizpah and Michal. Caring for the bones of Saul and Jonathan made no amends for such deeds, but how far it is David and how far it is the later historian that put this outrage upon the Gibeonites and credited it to "the Lord," it is hard to say.

If we penetrate the illusion cast over the antique record by the later writers, and by the gloss of centuries of veneration, we shall find that David's religious character was no higher than his moral standard, and that neither was above or beyond his race and time. His conception of Jehovah was not much different from that prevalent in the time of the Judges. He consulted the omens with the Ephod, and he made sacrifices on special occasions; he regarded that ancient relic of the Egyptian deliverance, the Ark of the Covenant, as the dwelling-place of God among his people, and he worshipped at times, after the manner of his age, with a confusion of noises and convulsive saltation. But in the oldest record there is little of the divine element, or of supernatural intervention, and nothing of the miraculous. The priestly compiler of the Chronicles,

who hundreds of years later took the life and color out of David's history, attributed to him the work of centuries in building up the temple service, as it existed after the Captivity, but the account is artificial and based upon a long process of development of which hardly the germ existed in David's day. There is no doubt that, with his strong emotional nature, David was subject to great elevation and depression of feeling, and he doubtless had a genius for expression. It is not improbable that the lament over Saul and Jonathan, much as we have it, was his production; it is certain that the song of deliverance from his enemies was not. A few of the older "psalms" may be David's, but that is not certain, while it is beyond doubt that nearly all of the collection is of later date.

Near the close of David's reign there seems to have been a period of famine and of consequent or attendant "pestilence," which was, as usual, attributed to the anger of Jehovah. This wrath was accounted for by the harmless and useful act of taking a census of the people, which may or may not really have been attempted, and the instigation of that act is ascribed in the earliest account to "the Lord," and in the later version to "Satan." In their earlier days the Israelites had not sufficient power of computation to number their limited population, and the attempt was considered

an offence. In later time this calculation of strength and resources was regarded as a sinful failure to rely upon Jehovah's arm rather than upon numbers. The account of this enumeration by Joab, under David's orders, and of its consequences, in which the innocent were the sufferers, and of the reparation made to the Lord, is interesting only for the light it casts upon those times.

It is a melancholy picture, that of the last days of the "man of blood" and the man of passion, cherished into warmth by the beautiful girl of Shunam, and surrounded by the intrigues of the palace and the harem over the succession to the throne. Not less sad, after the favorite queen, Bath-sheba, with the support of Nathan the prophet and Zadok the priest, had induced the aged king to discountenance the hasty action of Adonijah and to sanction the choice of Solomon, is the spectacle of his enjoining upon his son and heir the duty of inflicting upon Joab a barbarous penalty for the deeds of violence he had committed in the service of the king. It was a death-bed darkened with the spirit of resentment and of vengeance.

XVII

THE GLORY OF SOLOMON

THE reign of Solomon, from about 995 to 955 B.C., covered a period of comparative peace, stable government, and material development. The accounts of it which we have contain little or none of that fresh and original material, saturated with the color and spirit of the time, which makes up the substance of the story of the Judges and of Saul and David. The earliest of these accounts, contained in the Book of Kings, was written more than four hundred years after the time to which it relates, when the body of statutes and ordinances attributed to Jehovah "by the mouth of Moses" had been built up, the ceremonies of the temple had been organized and developed, the spirit of Jehovism had been broadly modified by the great prophets, and the theocratic idea had become dominant. There was a body of official records, and a varied mass of other material, written and oral, at the command of the compiler, which he did not wholly succeed in harmonizing, though he made it difficult to set historic facts in a clear

light. What may be called a Solomon legend had grown up, founded on the reputed wisdom and magnificence of the king who ruled at the height of the worldly power of Israel ; and on the other hand, there were unfavorable estimates of his character and achievements, which were not wholly effaced though they emanated from unfriendly sources. The Ephraimite writers infused into the literature of the later time a tinge of discredit to the Davidic dynasty, which was never entirely purged out, and the character and deeds of its first great rulers did not commend them to the sympathy of those stern puritans of the nation, the prophets.

The later account, that of the Book of Chronicles, was written long after the captivity and the restoration, after the levitical system and the priesthood of the second temple were fully established, and there is scarcely anything in it, that can be regarded as historical, which is not borrowed directly from the earlier one. Its evident purpose is to conform the events of the reigns of David and Solomon to the theory of the divine origin and destiny of the nation, after the calamities through which it had passed for its lapses from fidelity to Jehovah. The point to be kept in mind is that the Solomon of these books is a Solomon viewed by the writers, centuries after his day,

through the light of the intervening national experiences, and under the influence of their religious preoccupations.

Among the first acts of the new king was the putting to death of the elder brother who had attempted to forestall him, and the deed does not appear in any better light, because a pretext was made for it in the fact that the disappointed prince sought the Shunammite maiden, Abishag, as a consolation for his loss. Joab had supported the pretensions of Adonijah, and that, rather than the dying injunction of David, was the cause of his violent death. The priest Abiathar was also an offender on the same ground, and was banished, and it did not take long to find occasion for putting the last scion of the house of Saul out of the way, the same who had cursed David in his calamity and whose punishment the old king on his death-bed had committed to his successor. So was the kingdom "established greatly."

Out of the tradition of Solomon's great wisdom sprang the story of the revelation in a dream at Gibeon, which is interesting as an indication that the old form of divination had gone out of use; but it is to be noted that the word translated "wisdom" means rather skill in government in the oriental sense. This Solomon undoubtedly possessed in a high degree, and the time was favorable to its

exercise. The nation for the first time commanded the respect of the Philistines, and it had a friendly compact with Phœnicia. Solomon also strengthened his kingdom by an alliance with Egypt, and married a princess of its reigning family as one of his many wives. He never actually extended his own dominion beyond the limits of Palestine, the statements in that regard being unfounded. Edom maintained its freedom, Moab and Ammon were tributary, but not subject to his authority, and Syria was a formidable neighbor between him and "the river." It was not a reign of conquest but of security. The army lost prestige, and a rude civil organization was devised, mainly to collect revenues and carry on public works.

David may have bequeathed to his son the duty of building a "house for God," but it was an era of temple building, and a temple as well as a palace was a necessary appurtenance of a great capital. The Egyptian Queen may have had something to do with inspiring in the king grand ideas on this subject, while his alliance with Hiram of Tyre enabled him to draw upon Phœnician art and skill for the great works he had in view. Several years were spent in the construction of the first temple at Jerusalem, and of palaces and other buildings required by the growing sovereignty of Israel. The first thing to be attended to was a

sumptuous residence for the daughter of Pharaoh, who was accustomed to luxury, and the king's palace and the temple followed. There is no more authentic account of the building of the temple than that of the Bible, with its impossible details. The structure was neither large nor impressive, though massive in style, and apparently lavish in crude decoration. Owing to the Hebrew lack of originality and taste in art, the architecture was Egyptian, modified by Phœnician ideas. Aversion to the use of human or animal forms in decoration, on account of the incitement to idolatry, led to the employment mainly of vegetable and geometric designs in the embellishment of the temple, the only exception being the glorified sphinxes called cherubim.

Not only the art and skill, but much of the material for Solomon's constructions, was derived from the Tyrian realm, and the rough labor was forced largely from the remnant of the Canaanites, who were reduced to a condition of serfdom. The appliances of the new sanctuary, apart from the interior abode of Jehovah, were for the gross worship of the time by sacrifices, burnt-offerings, and incense, and material and workmanship for these also were supplied mainly from Tyre. Payment was made in the natural products of the country, and was a severe exaction upon the re-

sources of the people. The temple itself was an appurtenance of the government rather than of the nation, a sanctuary of the royal household and not of the people. The king conducted the occasional ceremonies there, while the worship in the "high places" continued, and it was long after this day that Jerusalem became the centre of religious aspiration, and the temple an object of popular pride and reverence. The account of the dedication is an artificial product of a far later time, into which much was introduced that belonged to the developed system of the temple ceremonial. The compiler of Chronicles even infuses into it something of the ritual of the second temple, of which there was no conception in Solomon's day. The prayer attributed to the king is utterly anachronistic, the language, sentiments, and spirit being those of the time of Jeremiah, whose history and writings were put into form by the author of the Book of Kings.

In all this work, in spite of forced labor and heavy exactions, Solomon became so indebted to Hiram as to be compelled to transfer to him a number of towns in the land of Galilee, of which the Tyrian king had no high opinion, though the later chronicler reverses the transaction and represents Hiram as the donor. But Solomon had other dealings with his enterprising ally, and to-

gether they engaged in foreign traffic by way of the Red Sea to Ophir and Tarshish, which appear to correspond respectively to India and Spain. Considering how little Palestine produced for exchange, the volume of wealth brought from these sources, though doubtless exaggerated in the account, raises the suspicion that the methods of these expeditions were somewhat piratical. The impression of the wealth and abundance at Jerusalem is rather delusive. While parts of the land of Palestine were generously productive, the conditions of life were simple, and there was little of what is now regarded as systematic industry, and practically nothing of what we mean by domestic trade. Solomon's dealings with Hiram were substantially those of barter; exchange in the modern sense was unknown, and money was little used, and only by tale. The apparent plenitude was mainly that of the royal household and the court, and the luxury of the capital did not imply prosperity, or even comfort, throughout the land.

The real Solomon could hardly have been a devout person, and his attachment to Jehovah as the national God was somewhat perfunctory and easy-going. He was tolerant of the religious preferences of those who were attracted or stimulated by the activity of his reign, and was easily seduced by the devotees of the more sensuous wor-

ship of Moab and Ammon, and of Phoenicia, especially by the "strange women," of whom he was such an easy victim. Doubtless some of the exaggerations of unfriendly writers regarding the sensual and idolatrous aspect of Solomon's life have been retained in the record, and his seraglio probably had no such extent as is there represented. On the other hand, the record accepts to the utmost the legend that attributed to him the accumulated wisdom of the centuries that followed. No doubt he attracted about him the active intellects of the time, the scholars and wits and poets, such as they were, and the collection of national proverbs, completed long after, was very likely begun in his day, if not by him. But in the study of science and the acquisition of knowledge there was not far to go. There is no ground for regarding the illustrative episode of the visit of the Queen of Sheba as having any authenticity, though the tradition may have been based upon some actual incident. It pertains to the legendary rather than the historical Solomon.

XVIII

INSURRECTION AND SECESSION

BEFORE the end of the reign which became so glorious in the imagination of the race in after times, there was a decided reaction against the luxurious and expensive dynasty that had been set up at Jerusalem. The life of the people away from the vicinity of the capital was still half-pastoral, and they shared in little, except the exactions, of Solomon's glory. A spirit of discontent had evidently grown up. Those who held to the pristine conceptions of Israel, and cherished the germs of the prophetic spirit of a later day, viewed with disfavor the growth of secular power. They liked not the alliance with Egypt and the gathering of horses and chariots, or the association with Tyre and Sidon, which brought the tokens of pride and grandeur, and banished the simplicity of the fathers. The pomp of the court, the sensual indulgence of the harem, the lapse into idolatry, which put Chemosh and Milkom on a level with Jehovah, set aglow the embers of a religious revolt.

The northern tribes, and especially the proud

and spirited Ephraimites, had always chafed under the ascendancy of Judah. While the energies of the nation were absorbed in the labor of construction at Jerusalem, there seems to have been an incipient insurrection among the men of Ephraim, in which a vigorous and ambitious youth, known as Jeroboam the son of Nebat, took the lead. Ahijah, a prophet at Shiloh, in sympathy with the northern spirit, encouraged him to seize the sovereignty of that section, but the time was not yet ripe. Solomon discovered the movement and Jeroboam fled to Egypt, the usual refuge of political offenders in those times. But when Solomon died and the kingdom fell to his weak and obstinate son, the half-Ammonite, Rehoboam, the division between north and south became complete and irreconcilable. Jeroboam made haste out of his exile to take the leadership of his people at Shechem, and to demand a redress of grievances at the hands of the new king. Under the advice of the younger heads of his court the short-sighted Rehoboam met the demand with defiance and threats of greater oppression. The result was that Jeroboam became king at Shechem, and the division of Israel and Judah was definitely and finally established.

It is interesting to note just here an illustration of the treatment of political changes by the annalists of a later day. It was natural to attribute the

falling away from Solomon and his house to the king's unfaithfulness to the God of Israel, and in a sense it was due to that; but the Lord was represented as telling Solomon that the kingdom would be rent from his son, all but one tribe, which should be retained for David's sake. Ahijah is also represented as declaring that the Lord had said that he would rend the kingdom from Solomon and give ten tribes to Jeroboam. Then, when Rehoboam was diverted from his rash purpose of trying to subject the northern tribes to his power by force, it was the Lord who, through the prophet Shemiah forbade the enterprise. These statements were part of the "system" of the chroniclers in explaining all events in the national history as the results of Jehovah's judgments.

In following the fortunes of the two kingdoms from this time until one, and then the other, disappeared from human history, we must remember that the writers who have told their story for us were of Judah only, and that they told it after the tribes of Israel had been dispersed, and after Judah had been through the experience of defeat and captivity by foreign invaders. They regarded past events from the point of view of their own time, and explained them according to the conception of theocratic rule which then prevailed.

XIX

THE TWO KINGDOMS

THE great work of Israel, in its broader sense, was achieved during the period of the kingdoms, or from about the middle of the tenth to the middle of the sixth century B.C. Intermediate dates in this period are only approximately ascertained. The division of the land into two realms, after the death of Solomon, occurred, as nearly as the date can be fixed, in 953 B.C. The time of the capture of Samaria and the destruction of the Northern Kingdom by the Assyrians is set down as 721 B.C., giving a period of 234 years for the concurrent existence of the two nations. The destruction of Jerusalem and the general deportation of the people by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar was in 588 B.C., giving a further period of 133 years to the monarchy of Judah, or 367 for the whole period of independent national life after the date first mentioned. According to the confused chronology of the Book of Kings, repeated, so far as Judah is concerned, in the Book of Chronicles, the reigns of the several kings were as follows : North-

ern Kingdom—Jeroboam, 22 years; Nadab, 2; Baasha, 24; Elah, 2; Zimri, 7 days; Omri, 12 years; Ahab, 22; Ahaziah, 2; Jehoram (or Joram), 12; Jehu, 28; Jehoahaz, 17; Joash (or Jehoash), 16; Jeroboam II., 41; Zechariah, 6 months; Shallum, one month; Menahem, 10 years; Pekaliah, 2 years; Pekah, 20, and Hoshea, 9—a total of 231 to 232 years. Kingdom of Judah—Rehoboam, 17 years; Abijam, 3; Asa, 41; Jehoshaphat, 25; Jehoram (or Joram), 8; Ahaziah, 1; Athaliah (Queen Mother), 7; Joash (or Jehoash), 40; Amaziah, 29; Azariah (or Uzziah), 52; Jotham, 16; Ahaz, 16; Hezekiah, 29; Manasseh, 55; Amon, 2; Josiah, 31; Jehoahaz, 3 months; Jehoiakim, 11 years; Jehoiachin, 3 months; Zedekiah, 11 years—total, 394 to 395. As the fall of Samaria was said to be in the sixth year of Hezekiah, this would put that event 261 years after the accession of Rehoboam and Jeroboam, a discrepancy of about thirty years in the chronology of the two royal lines, neither of which conforms to historical accuracy.

The biblical record, made up after this period of history was completed, by a Judean historiographer, and revised by a scribe of the second temple long after the return from exile, naturally shows a strong bias against the kings of Israel and in favor of the Davidic dynasty, which was then

regarded as sacred and destined to restoration and perpetuity.

Judah, as a separate kingdom, started with the great advantage of the possession of an established capital on Mount Sion and a costly temple, which was to become more and more a centre of worship, and of patriotic, as well as religious, aspiration. It also had the prestige of the reigns of David and Solomon, who were regarded as having received a divine consecration. These conservative influences restrained rebellious inclinations and held the succession in a direct line from father to son in the family of David, and also produced a continuous growth of tradition, which became sanctified through the teachings of priests and prophets. Jeroboam began as a rebel against the "Lord's anointed;" he ruled an independent and high-spirited people, who had no capital or strongholds, no single centre of worship, and no direct sanction for a royal family. The inevitable consequence was instability, and a succession of revolutions, and, finally dissolution, when crushing defeat overtook the kingdom at the hands of an irresistible foreign power.

While the later writers attributed all the calamities and reverses of the northern nation to the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and to the conduct of his successors in following his nefarious

example, he was a much stronger and loftier character than Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, or his immediate successor. It was a matter of policy on his part to establish places of worship at Bethel and Dan in order to keep the people from resorting to Jerusalem or the older fanes on the borders of Judah ; and, though his recent sojourn in Egypt and the spirit of the times led him to set up golden calves as symbols of divinity, the Jehovism of Judah was much on the same level, and there was in both kingdoms a wide toleration of other objects of worship than the national deity. Jeroboam was no more false to the religion of Israel than Rehoboam, and the latter was much weaker as a ruler. There was during his reign and that of his son a distinct retrogression, and early in the former an Egyptian invasion, which resulted in stripping the temple of its treasures, met with little resistance. There was a desultory warfare between the two kingdoms during these twenty years.

Under the rule of Asa at Jerusalem, there was a reaction toward greater vigor in secular affairs and a higher spirit in the religious tendency, which now began to take a definite direction. Little is known of the prophets and priests of the time, but they appear to have begun to assert the influence which afterward became so great. At all

events, Asa was induced to do much toward suppressing the idolatrous worship and the pagan practices that had grown up since Solomon's day. Early in his reign there was a revolution in the Northern Kingdom, headed by Baasha of the tribe of Issachar, who exterminated the family of Jeroboam and made himself king, and then entered upon an aggressive policy against Judah. Asa's only resource for meeting this was to purchase an alliance with the king of Syria with what was left of the treasures of the temple. Benhadad of Syria invaded the territory of Israel and turned the scale in favor of Judah, and the material that Baasha had collected for fortifications at Ramah was used by Asa for the same purpose at Geba and Mizpah. Baasha's reign was soon followed by a conspiracy against his son, and a counter-conspiracy, which brought in the rule of Omri. With no recognized law of succession, or sense of loyalty to a dynasty, revolution was sure to follow the death of a strong king who had no son that inherited his strong qualities, and it was a question of the success of the boldest and ablest conspirator. The Omrides were by far the ablest of the series of northern kings after the first Jeroboam.

Asa of Judah had repelled an invasion of the land from Africa, and then attacked some of his

neighbors, from whom he extorted the means of replenishing the temple treasures. He died of gout at an advanced age, and was succeeded by his son Jehoshaphat, who continued his work in even a broader spirit, for he made peace with the kindred realm of the north and joined with its rulers in a common defence against foreign enemies.

Omri saw the importance of having a capital and building up the strength of the nation, as a bulwark to an enduring dynasty. Jeroboam had finally fixed upon Tirzah as the king's head-quarters, and it had been retained as such, but it was a place of no defensive strength and of little importance. Omri obtained an elevated and commanding situation and established the city of Samaria, and his son Ahab was able to carry on his constructive work with success. These two sovereigns were, for the time, to the Northern Kingdom much what David and Solomon had been to Judah ; but circumstances were different with them, and the subsequent fate of their family and their nation consigned to unfriendly hands the writing of their story. Their glory was effaced and a cloud of obloquy cast upon their names. Ahab especially was held up as the embodiment of all vileness. Intent upon building up the national power and prosperity of his realm, he formed an alliance with Tyre and married a daughter of its

king, as Solomon had sought the alliance of Egypt and married a daughter of the Pharaoh. Jezebel encouraged the worship of Baal, which was that of her country, and Ahab showed it an easy tolerance, while retaining a formal allegiance to the God of Israel. This brought upon the king the reproach of the prophets of Jehovah, and upon the queen their detestation, and furnished the main reason why their lives were afterward portrayed in such dark colors. But except in the minds of the prophets there was at that time no wide difference in the prevailing religions, and the same tolerance had been displayed by Solomon at Jerusalem a century before. Ahab never fell into the sensualism and weakness of his Judean prototype, but was an energetic ruler and a brave soldier to the end. Doubtless the spirited and capable Jezebel inspired him with arbitrary notions of sovereignty, and spurred him to conduct most reprehensible in the eyes of the prophets.

The curious legend of Elijah and Elisha touches chiefly the reign of Ahab, and has little relation to the Southern Kingdom. It represents Jezebel as persecuting and slaying the prophets of Jehovah, and Elijah as slaughtering the prophets of Baal, after defeating them in a prayer test, and connects the "Tishbite," and the successor upon whom his mantle fell, with the conspiracy that

ended the dynasty of Omri. The historical element in this legend is slight and leaves it doubtful whether the two figures that appear in it are not a double reflex of one actual person.

Ahab showed vigor and courage in resisting the aggression of Benhadad of Syria, and it was in this that his alliance with Jehoshaphat was of the greatest service. The two kings agreed substantially in their religion, though the monarch of Judah was on more friendly terms with the prophets, and was under no such adverse influence as was exercised upon Ahab by the queen, and they acted together most amicably. In fact their alliance was strengthened by the marriage of Jehoshaphat's son Joram and Ahab's sister, Athaliah (unless the latter was Ahab's daughter, as sometimes stated).

After Ahab had twice repelled an invasion of his land by the king of Syria, Jehoshaphat joined him in an aggressive campaign for the recovery of Ramoth Gilead. There is a curious account of a controversy of the prophets over this undertaking. The attempt resulted in the death of Ahab and the retreat of the king of Judah to his own capital. Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, reigned in his stead, but, losing his life as the result of an accident, was succeeded in two years by a brother, Joram. It was at this time that Moab developed power

under King Mesha, who achieved complete independence of Israel, and interesting fragments of whose own account of his exploits have been unearthed. Israel and Judah united, with the aid of Edom, in a campaign to bring Moab into subjection and failed. According to the account, King Mesha, when pushed to extremity, terrorized his enemies by sacrificing his oldest son on the wall of Kir-hareseth. The explanation of the defeat by the statement, "there was great wrath against Israel," seems inadequate; but the prophet Elisha is represented as directing the campaign by divination and fomenting trouble between the two Hebrew kings, one of whom he despised for the sins of his father and mother. This is more nearly adequate, as an explanation.

Jehoshaphat was soon after succeeded by his son Joram, or Jehoram, and the alliance of the two kingdoms was strengthened by the connection of their rulers by marriage. It was a period of weakness for Judah; and Edom, which had long been its tributary, achieved independence. Ahaziah, who succeeded the short reign of Joram, joined with Joram of Israel in another effort to recover Ramoth Gilead from Syria, Hazael having become king at Damascus. The effort was as disastrous as the former one, and Joram retired to Samaria, wounded, whither Ahaziah followed. Both speed-

ily became victims of the conspiracy of Jehu, which put an end to the Omrid dynasty. The legend of Elijah and Elisha enters strangely into the story of Jehu, who was represented as the instrument of Jehovah in exterminating the offspring of Ahab. His assassination of both kings, his massacre of their families, and his treacherous and merciless slaughter of the priests of Baal, are set down to his credit and rewarded with the throne for four generations; but these merits were offset by his allowing the places and forms of worship to remain which had been established by the rebel Jeroboam.

At Jerusalem Athaliah, who had some of the qualities of Jezebel, and exercised a strong influence upon the last two kings, her husband and son, became queen-regent upon the death of the latter and of his brothers at the hand of Jehu. She ruled seven years, when a conspiracy, in which the priests were concerned, led to her overthrow, that the direct line of David might be restored. The account, which is manifestly unfriendly because of her connection with the family of Ahab, represents her as compassing the death of the children of Ahaziah, except Joash, who was concealed by the sister of Ahaziah until the conspiracy was brought to a head by Jehoiada, the priest. Athaliah was a capable and courageous

ruler, so far as appears, but the plot resulted in her assassination and the proclamation of Joash as king at the age of seven. This was a triumph of the priests at Jerusalem, as the accession of Jehu was a victory for the prophets at Samaria.

Joash devoted a part of his long reign to efforts to put the temple in repair and to replenish its treasures, but finding that the priests appropriated the funds, as had been their wont, he took measures to secure them by having the contributions deposited in locked chests with an opening in the top for the purpose. Though it is said in one account that he did right in the eyes of the Lord all his days, as instructed by the priests, in his mature years he took such measures of repression as to incur their hostility, as plainly appears in the later account, which was the product of the priesthood in the height of its development.

The power of Syria on the east of Israel and Judah, was growing constantly more formidable, while the terrible empire of Assyria, with its menaces of conquest, began to lower on the far horizon. During the reign of Jehoahaz, son of Jehu, the Syrian king, Hazael, overran the northern nation and was diverted from an attack upon Jerusalem only by being bought off by Joash with the treasures of the temple, which were again depleted for the purpose. Jehoahaz of Israel was suc-

ceeded by his son Joash, or Jehoash, who made head against the new king of Syria, Benhadad III., and recovered the captured towns. Joash of Judah fell a victim to a plot among his own servants, and was assassinated, being succeeded by his son Amaziah, who seems to have been ambitious of military conquest. He brought Edom into subjection again, and for some reason not made evident, sent a defiance to Joash of Israel. Receiving an evasive reply he marched against the northern king and was defeated. Joash treated him with relative magnanimity, but broke down a part of the wall of Jerusalem, and carried away such booty as he could get from the palace and temple.

The ruler at Samaria, from 825 to 775 B.C., was Jeroboam II., who undertook to restore and increase the importance of his realm. He made some conquests over neighboring people, including Moab, and there is a curious memorial of the campaign against that land in a tirade by the prophet Jonah, which has been preserved in the Book of Isaiah (chapters xv. and xvi.). The national prosperity of the time, and the consequent wealth and luxury, together with the tendency which these begot to neglect the national worship and yield to the fascinations of debasing foreign cults, are notable as bringing forth the first of those terrible de-

nunciations and warnings that have come down to us in the "prophecies." Amos, Joel, and Hosea were the first heralds of that mighty force that was to shape the destinies of Israel in the future.

During the reign of Jeroboam II., at Samaria, Amaziah of Judah had suffered a fate similar to that of his father. A conspiracy in his own army drove him from Jerusalem, and he was overtaken and slain at Lachish, but he was "buried with his fathers," and his son Ahaziah, or Uzziah, succeeded him. The long reign of the latter was a period of unusual prosperity for Judah, and some recovery of lost possessions upon her borders. The national religion remained much as it had been since the days of Asa, and there was no such agitation as had begun in the north. The king seems, like his grandfather, to have incurred the ill-will of the temple priests, and is represented in their version of his reign as having been smitten with leprosy in consequence of a conflict with them over the right to burn incense.

After the death of Jeroboam the strength of the Northern Kingdom began to decline, and the menace from the far east that hung over all the lands between the upper Euphrates and the sea, grew more terrible. Jeroboam's son, Zechariah, was assassinated at Samaria by Shallum, who speedily became the victim of another plot, headed by

Menahem, at Tirzah. The latter held the throne for several years, but showed more brutality than capacity for government.

It was about 765 B.C. that the great military despotism of Assyria began to make itself keenly felt near the borders of Israel. Nineveh at this time overshadowed Babylon, and Assyria was the rival power to Egypt in the aggressive spirit of conquest. Policy dictated a union of the Semitic nations for common defence; but, though lack of union meant almost certain destruction, the prophets, who became a powerful political factor, always inveighed against joining with the "heathen"—those having alien gods—whether of Syria or Phœnicia, and denounced every suggestion of alliance with Egypt, the only power able to cope with their enemies, as a crime against Jehovah. Their plea was always for submission to their God and reliance upon him, and through that policy they helped to destroy their nation, but in so doing they helped also to fulfil the real mission of their race.

The first invasion of Israel by an Assyrian force remains in obscurity, and no such king as Pul, to whom Menahem is said to have paid a ransom, exacted from the men of wealth, can be identified. The common assumption that the name was applied to Tiglath-pileser is certainly not well founded. It may have belonged to some com-

mander of an expedition, not a king ; but there is no doubt that the country was filled with dread of the invader. Menahem was succeeded by his son, but in two years there was one of the plots, so common in that kingdom, for overthrowing the ruler, and he was slain by Pekah, a military officer, who seized the throne. Not far from this time Jotham succeeded Uzziah in Judah and pursued the mild course of his predecessors in cherishing the temple, and at the same time tolerating the mixed worship of the "high places" throughout the land. Syria and Israel formed an alliance for defence against Assyria, but unwisely used it also for attack upon Judah. What mainly held the great eastern empire back was its contest with Egypt, but as the latter had friendly relations with the cities of Phœnicia, on or near the Mediterranean, it increased the peril of the feeble nations that were interposed between these aggressive powers. It was the pressure of this situation which, more and more, excited the alarm and inspired the menaces and warnings of the clear-eyed prophets, whose sole idea of escape, however, was submission to the will of Jehovah and reliance upon his power. The chief voice raised at this stage of the coming crisis was that of Hosea.

Under Ahaz, son and successor of Jotham, there was a distinct retrogression of the kingdom of

Judah, material and religious. The tolerance shown to the worship of Baal, Ashteroth (Astarté), and other foreign deities, was a menace to the ascendancy of the national God. This and the perils from external force were what first raised the wrathful and warning voice of Isaiah. Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Samaria joined hands against Ahaz of Jerusalem, with the evident intent of forcing Judah into a combination for resisting Assyria; but, against the advice of Isaiah and without his knowledge, Ahaz made a secret league with Tiglath-pileser, the king at Nineveh, and stripped the temple and the palace of their treasures once more to purchase his protection. Whether or not this incited the attack upon Damascus, and afterward upon Samaria, it relieved Judah from immediate danger. At Damascus Ahaz paid homage in person to the Assyrian monarch, and further excited the wrath of the prophets and of the priests of a later time by having an altar which he saw there copied at Jerusalem. Its ally defeated, its provinces beyond the Jordan overrun, terror and confusion at its capital, the Northern Kingdom entered upon the period of its agony and final dissolution, without the sympathy of its brother Judah. Pekah was assassinated, to give the throne to the last king of Israel, Hoshea, who had a reign of nine years, of

which the last three were passed in the horrors of a siege at Samaria.

Hezekiah had come to the throne at Jerusalem, and Shalmaneser had succeeded Tiglath-pileser as king of Assyria, and as emperor over all its tributaries. Hoshea made a formal submission to him, but secretly sought an alliance with Egypt to get rid of the humiliating yoke. This, with an uprising on the Phœnician side, brought the wrath of the Assyrian monarch upon Ephraim, and siege was laid to Samaria on its commanding height. It took three years to reduce it, but when it fell the kingdom of Joseph was no more. As usual in Asiatic conquests of the time, there was a transportation of inhabitants to other territory belonging to the invader, and a migration of colonists to the vacated lands. The tribes of Israel were dispersed forever, and Judah was shut up in its little realm about the "holy city" to await the destruction of its own secular power, and the crushing out of its life as a nation, while it wrought, all unconsciously, a higher mission than that consigned to great empires. What to humanity to-day is Nineveh or Babylon, or the palaces of the Pharaohs, compared to that little capital which displaced the Jebusites' stronghold on Mount Sion, where Melchisedek had been king of Salem and priest of the Most High God!

XX

FIRST WRITTEN LITERATURE

THIS hasty sketch of the two kingdoms has been made in order to furnish the historical background in outline of the remarkable literary efflorescence of this period of nearly two centuries and a half. Up to the time of the division of the kingdom after the death of Solomon, there was substantially no literature in written form. The Hebrew alphabet had come into use from Phoenicia during the era of the later Judges. When Samuel invested Saul with royalty at Mizpah, he is said to have "told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book." This is a later statement, but, if it is authentic, it may indicate the beginning of a bald register of names and events, which developed into the genealogies and records of the kings, that became the chief material of the later annals. It is possible that some of the songs and hymns included in the psalms, and some of the wise sayings of the Book of Proverbs were put in writing in the time of David and Solomon. Of this there is no evidence, but it is not improbable.

The extent to which writing was then used must have been extremely limited, but there was a great body of tradition, of oral literature, transmitted from generation to generation in an increasing and varying volume; in dim memories of the early migrations, legends of the ancestors, leaders, and heroes of the race; stories of perils, adventures, and triumphs, and of the miraculous doings of Jehovah in behalf of his chosen people. It was analogous to the material, which not far from the same time filled the storehouse of the first literature of the Aryan race, the epics of Homer, the homilies of Hesiod, the history of Herodotus. The stirring experiences which primitive people carried in memory and related by word of mouth were heightened and colored in the telling, and rhythmic form and measured tones aided in their transmission. As the steady march or the dactylic measure, the frequent recurrence of epithets and identical verses, helped to preserve the Homeric poems before they were written down, so the parallelism of the Hebrew chants was at first a device to aid the memory.

The Ephraimites were always characterized by a certain superiority of mental activity and energy, and it was in the Northern Kingdom that the earliest systematic literary development began. Its first product was a collection of legends of the

patriarchs. The author's name is lost, and the work itself was discarded when subsequent writers had used such parts of it as suited their purposes, but much of the substance, mingled with other material, survives in the Book of Genesis, and forms the most alluring portions of its narrative. It cannot be absolutely detached, and it is not possible to ascertain clearly the later touches, but of its general character and aim there is no doubt.

Jeroboam had been recalled from exile in Egypt, where he had been in high favor with the ruling family. He may have brought back traditions of the sojourn of his race upon the borders of that land, and he doubtless gathered much of the material for the fascinating legend of Joseph, who was regarded as the ancestor of his tribe, and perhaps his own prototype. Jeroboam set up his first capital at Shechem, which the legend sanctified as the burial-place of Joseph, and which was near the oldest sanctuary of Israel at Shiloh. His chief place of worship he established at Bethel, where the ancient fane of Luz had been time out of mind, and that became glorified with the legend of Jacob. There remained in the popular mind, or at least in the mind of the first writer of Israel's legends, the most striking features of the old Babylonian and Assyrian myths and fables, and its story of the migration of Abraham from Ur of

the Chaldees ; but most of the Abraham legend was a later development, and it was expanded and adapted when the traditions of the two branches of the Hebrew family were blended by later hands. In its earliest form Abraham appears especially as the ancestor of the southern people and closely associated with Hebron, their first capital and the seat of their chief shrine before the building of the temple. The Isaac legend is perhaps the oldest of all, and was confined to the vicinity of Beer-sheba, and when Abraham was made the putative ancestor of the whole nation, as well as of Arabia and Edom, and made to wander over the future possessions of his progeny even to the borders of Egypt, the story of his sojourn at Beer-sheba and his relations with the king of Gerar was made out of the material of the older tale. The original legends of the patriarchs also derive color here and there from the mythology of Phœnicia, a close neighbor of Ephraim.

At this time the characteristics of the tribes were settled, and something was known, and more imagined, of their separate and their common history. The names of some of them were derived from heathen deities, those of others from peculiarities of the territory which they occupied, and still others from the qualities of the people. Benjamin was never an ethnic division, but a group of

bold warriors, skilled in the use of the bow and sling. It was formed at the time of the invasion of Canaan, and it became a separate community by having a place allotted to it in the partition of the conquered lands. Its name, which means left-handed, or son of the left hand, was derived from their manner of using the sling. Levi was merely the aggregation of the ministers of the worship of Jehovah, the name and function being derived from Egypt, and it was counted as a tribe to be supported by the others. Out of these names and characteristics were created the personifications called the sons of Jacob, or Israel. The original collection of patriarchal legends was strongly marked by the spirit of hostility then existing between the two kingdoms. Joseph was greatly exalted and glorified, while Judah was degraded, and in the account of the latter's domestic relations there was apparently a bitter satire on the family of David. In spite of the "harmonizing" of later writers, this characteristic is still conspicuous.

At about the same time, and also in the Northern Kingdom, appeared another collection of popular traditions and legends of a wholly different character, reduced to writing for the first time. Whether the "Wars of Jehovah" and the "Book of Jasher" were different titles for the same

collection, designations of different parts of that collection, or entirely separate works, is not certain; but the material, mingled of prose and rude verse, related to the same series of events. It covered the period from the time the conquest of the "promised land" was determined upon to the death of Saul, and it contained stories of the exploits and adventures of that long and eventful episode in the life of Israel. The narrative parts were interspersed with songs of triumph and popular chants, celebrating occurrences that stirred the blood beyond the expression of prosaic language, and these had been carried in the popular memory for generations.

Like all primitive literature that has strength enough to live, such of the material of this collection as has survived the ravages of compilers and "harmonizers" contains more of the fragrance of the soil, the color of the time, and the blood and spirit of the people to which it relates, than any genius can infuse into the periods of formal history. It is doubtful if Moses appeared even as a leader in these heroic recitals, and it is almost certain that nothing was known of him as a law-giver when they were written down. His legend in that character was a later production, and grew out of the development of the law in after-time. There is some question even whether the name of

Joshua figured at all in the "Wars of Jehovah," or the "Book of Jasher." In the narrative subsequently made up it was associated with events and deeds scattered over a long period of time, but grouped as if consecutive, and it was used as a single personification of the leaders of the invasion and conquest.

XXI

THE FIRST SACRED HISTORY

NEITHER in the collection of legends of the patriarchs, nor in that of the legends relating to the wars of the conquest, was there any definite moral or religious purpose. The one accounted for the origin of the tribes by tracing them to ancestors bearing their names, and the other told of the exploits of the conquerors and of the heroes of the infant nation. Jehovah was the God of Israel, as Chemosh was the god of Moab, and Baal the god of Ammon and other Semitic peoples, and there was no wide difference in the prevalent conception of their attributes, or the manner of their worship, down to the time of Jeroboam and Rehoboam. But in the century following that time there was a remarkable advance. In the schools or conventicles of Nebiim, or prophets, of which intimations appear in the story of Samuel, closely associated with the primitive sanctuary at Shiloh, and still stronger intimations in the story of Elijah and Elisha, when the persecutions of Jezebel, under the easy tolerance of Ahab, drove them

into obscure retreats, a wonderful ferment was going on, especially in the Northern Kingdom. The prophets, brooding over the traditions of the past, and reverting to the simpler and purer life of the pastoral days, conceived loftier ideas of their Deity and of his relation to the people of Israel. They nourished a pride in their race and a faith in its destiny which led them vaguely to invest him with the attributes of a God of the universe.

To bind the people in subjection to Jehovah, and to resist the tendency to wander off under the allurements of gods less exacting, they saw the need of some definite prescription of rules of conduct and of obedience, emanating from the authority of the Deity himself, and having the most solemn and sacred sanction. The grand traditions of the race, still in a large measure plastic and floating, furnished the chief material for their reflections upon the past, while they brooded over the needs of the present and the hopes of the future. There was Abraham, hitherto represented as the father of their race, wandering from Mesopotamia and taking possession of the land which was to be the inheritance of his progeny! Was it not Jehovah that brought him hither, and did he not promise both the multitudinous progeny and the goodly inheritance? Did he not repeat the covenant with Jacob on the sacred height of Bethel?

When, in the time of the great famine, the children of Israel took refuge in Egypt, where one of them had become an exalted personage, and there under a change of dynasty fell into a galling bondage, was it not Jehovah that delivered them with a mighty hand? The shadowy traditions of their great leader, Moses, suggested him as the "Man of God," the instrument of deliverance in the hands of a higher power. It was indeed Jehovah that had wrought that great deliverance, and brought his people through trials and perils to the promised land, and did he not renew his covenant with the people in the wilderness, and bind them to obedience in return for what he had done for them?

Here was the material out of which to work the first theology with a spiritual vitality that the world ever knew. It was the beginning of the theology that lives in the Jewish and Christian faiths of to-day. It was after the triumph of the prophetic influence in the North under Jehu that, from a source now unknown, sprang the first of the sacred books of the Hebrews. It formed an important part of the material out of which the "Books of Moses" were wrought, and is known to critics as the "Jehovist document" of the compilers of those books, on account of the name applied throughout to the Deity by the writer. It em-

bodied the first Torah, or statement of laws, and doubtless its main purpose was to formulate the rules of conduct therein contained, accompanying them with a relation of events and with explanations that would most strongly impress their sacredness and binding character upon the minds of the people. But it also contained the first attempt to account for the origin of the world and of the human race, as well as of the Hebrew people, and its dominant purpose was to magnify and exalt the Hebrew God above all other gods.

The account of the creation, of the Garden of Eden, and of the deluge that swept away the first perverse product of the Almighty's hand, was made up from fragments of Babylonian myths, carried in popular tradition for ages. But the ancient material was transmuted by the Semitic genius. This forgotten writer of the ninth century before the Christian era had a certain profound philosophy. He took a sombre view of the early world. To him we owe the germ of the stern doctrine of original sin and the tendency of all mankind to evil, and it was he that drew with the heaviest strokes the awful lineaments of Jehovah as a God of wrath and of vengeance. The first offspring of the original human couple fiercely murdered his gentle brother, and peopled the earth with a race of which only one family deserved to survive the

flood—for the Jehovist knew nothing of Seth. In his broad sketch of the antediluvian generations he drew from both Babylonian and Phœnician fable, and names appear that belong to the mythical Chaldean dynasties. Memory of the colossal temple of Bel at Borsippa, unfinished for ages, suggested the story of the tower, illustrating at once the punishment of human pride and the confusion of tongues.

The legends of the patriarchs were in the writer's hands, and he made free use of them, but his efforts to combine different traditions sometimes had an incongruous result. Two versions of the same incident are often left without a reconciliation of differences, or an obliteration of contradictions. A distinctly religious character is given to Abraham, with whom the first covenant or agreement is made, which is to bind his offspring in devotion to Jehovah. His migration from the land of the Chaldees has a divine purpose. It was he who first consecrated the holy places of the nation by erecting altars. The process of preferring the ancestral tribes to the other progeny of Abraham, as the turning of Ishmael into the wilderness, and the supplanting of Edom by Israel, is told with a mythological significance unusual with Semitic writers.

But the greatest product of the pen of the Jehov-

ist was Moses as the law-giver. He brought the vague outlines of the legendary leader of the deliverance into the light, and told of the signs and wonders which attended the escape from bondage, making impotent the power of Pharaoh in comparison with that of Israel's God. And he was the first to represent the solemn revelation of the commands of Jehovah, the statutes and laws of the Almighty, delivered by the mouth of Moses in the awful solitude about Mount Sinai, when the fugitives first found relief from the dread of pursuit but were still compassed about with perils.

It was more than five hundred years since the deliverance and that nightmare of Israel's passage through the wilderness, and for more than half that period there had been no written language and no memorials save the heap of stones, or Gilgal, the pillar set up in the earth or the rude altar, to mark events or experiences of unusual import. What tradition there may have been of storm and darkness upon the mountain, of thunders and of lightnings, which were in old days regarded as the terrific evidences of divine presence, we know not. But we do know with what power this writer made use of the possibilities of the situation in framing the scene for the promulgation of his code of laws, the substance of which is found in the Book of Exodus, but which did not include what is known as the

decatalogue. The later part of his narrative is drawn largely from the "Wars of Jehovah," helped out with old traditions and colored with the larger conception of Jehovah's relation to his people, which was beginning to prevail.

XXII

THE ELOHIST VERSION

WHILE the Southern Kingdom was somewhat more tardy in developing literary activity it was, owing to its possession of the temple and a growing priesthood, and to the relatively orthodox spirit of its successive rulers, rather more advanced and settled in its religious ideas. It possessed substantially the same traditions as the northern realm, and the practice had been adopted, amid the established officialism of the palace and temple, of keeping some sort of records. In these had been collected genealogies and historical and geographical details relating to the past, extracted from the fluctuating stream of tradition. There, too, the germs of a theology had started, which were destined to unite with those of the North in a prodigious growth.

It was twenty or thirty years after the appearance of the production referred to in the preceding chapter, somewhere about 825 B.C., that a writer of the temple coterie at Jerusalem, whose name is likewise unknown, put forth a parallel account of

the origin of the world and its people, and of the compact which bound the Hebrews to submission to their God. It is known to critics as the "Elohistic document" in the material of the Pentateuch, because of its use of Elohim for the Deity until the announcement of the name of Jahwe, or Jehovah, by Moses as that of the national God.

The account of the creation, though drawn from the same Chaldaic source, has significant points of difference from that of the northern writer. It introduced the six days period, as the sanction for the Sabbath. It knows nothing of the Garden of Eden and the fall of man, or of Cain and Abel. Seth is the only son of Adam, and for his descendants much the same genealogy is given as is given by the Jehovist for the family of Cain, and the names in both are drawn from Chaldean and Phœnician mythology. The account of the deluge and of Noah was derived from a common source by the two writers, but differently used, the Elohist representing a compact with the survivor of the flood against another destruction of the race, of which the rainbow was the visible pledge. The rite of circumcision was attributed to Abraham as the seal of the covenant with him. The practice was older and of uncertain origin, and had no religious significance, except among the Hebrews, who laid great stress upon it in later times as the distinc-

tive badge of their race and their faith. There were other characteristics of this document derived from the Judean point of view, among which was the entire absence of the story of Jacob's sons.

The writer had neither the lurid imagination nor the sombre philosophy of the Jehovist. There was an infantile sort of science in his cosmogony; he was fond of using his supply of names in genealogies and references to places, and his view of the Deity was less perturbed. But his main purpose was the same, to represent the covenants by which Israel was bound to the deepest obligation of submission and obedience to its God, and to set forth the rules of conduct that emanated from his command. The common tradition of the Egyptian deliverance, the leadership of Moses, the trials of the wilderness, and the conquest of Canaan, were used in less detail than by the northern writer, but for a like purpose. The great distinction of the statement of the divine commands in the Elohist document was the embodiment therein of what was afterwards designated as the "Ten Words," or sayings, which have been regarded by a large part of the world for ages as containing the essence of all the law regarding moral and religious conduct.

Whether tradition had brought down any part of them through six centuries as utterances of

Moses is doubtful. Every indication favors a belief that, though their substance may be found in part in the old Egyptian "Book of the Dead," they had their origin in the purlieus of the temple at Jerusalem, near the end of the ninth century B.C. The sublime conception of the Deity as the God of all mankind and of the universe, which was to be wrought out by the great teachers of later ages, was fermenting in the minds of the prophets of Samaria under Jehu, and of the priests of Jerusalem under Joash, when they conjured up the terrors of Mount Sinai and made the legendary leader of the exodus the spokesman of the Almighty in proclaiming his decrees to the world.

XXIII

THE ANCIENT PROPHETS

It was during this period of the two kingdoms that the Nabi, or prophet, began to play a new and most important part in the life of Israel. The Nabi first appeared as a kind of sorcerer, and later as a seer, to whom great personal wisdom or clairvoyant powers were attributed. The personage known as Deborah—not a real name—who roused the northern tribes to resisting Jabin, the Canaanite king of Hazor, and was said to have “judged Israel,” is also spoken of as a prophetess, sitting under a palm-tree delivering oracles to the people. Samuel is represented in a varied character, one being that of a seer, who was to be consulted as to the whereabouts of lost cattle, as well as matters of graver import. He appears in a political rôle as the chief agent in setting up the first king, and is said not only to have invested Saul with royalty, but afterward to have withdrawn his counsel and support, and to have anointed his successor long in advance of the change of dynasty. These representations were

probably due to the later development of the prophetic function. The real Samuel is only vaguely outlined in the mist of tradition, and the clearest strokes in the portrayal are those of late writers who were creating a character rather than describing one.

David had rather timorous advisers who were called prophets, but when one of them had occasion to convey a severe rebuke he felt constrained to go about it with a parable, and lead the king to condemn himself. These counsellors had little influence with the first Judean king, and apparently none with the second, who was much absorbed in mundane affairs and in worldly ways of advancing them. A prophet of the old sanctuary of Shiloh, in Ephraim, appears as the chief instigator of the rebellion against Solomon and the rupture of the nation, which followed the death of the latter, and plays the part of a Samuel to Jeroboam when he returns from exile in Egypt to take the throne of the Northern Kingdom. The lives of the prophets in the adverse days of Omri and Ahab were shrouded in mystery and they became legendary characters. The stories told of them in after time were mingled with fable and miraculous doings that almost exclude them from the field of reality. Nothing of the kind is associated with those who come out into the light of

history. The most conspicuous instance of the legendary prophet is Elijah, and Elisha is only partly detached from the mist that surrounds the two imposing figures. The traditions which connected the latter with the destruction of the house of Ahab and the seizure of the throne at Samaria by Jehu, and with the expedition of the allied kings of Judah, Israel, and Syria against Mesha of Moab, were probably historical.

It was about the time of Jeroboam II., when the omens of danger from the great empires of the Tigris and Euphrates began to appear, that the prophets first raised those voices of warning and admonition that have resounded ever since. They began then to exercise an influence that was destructive of secular power and of national life, but creative of a power and of a life that were to shape in no small measure the destinies of nations and empires in after time. For the first time a strong ethical element appeared in the function of the prophet, and gave to utterances applied to the situation of an ancient people an enduring value that has preserved them to all generations. For the first time the doctrine of righteousness was taught in clear and uncompromising tones, and the germs of moral conviction were stirred to a growth that was to interlace human society with indestructible and ever-lengthening and strengthening fibres.

The chief function of the prophet for two centuries was political, in the sense that it affected the life and destiny of the nation; but the political reasoning of the greatest of them was pervaded by a fallacy that was fatal to the national life. In their denunciation of the iniquities of the time, and in their appeals to the sense of right, in their warnings and promises as to the consequences of conduct upon one fundamental line or another, they were everlastingly sound, and promulgated principles on which alone any national life can permanently endure. But they preached not only an absolute moral submission to what they conceived to be the will and assumed to be the commands of Jehovah, but an absolute dependence upon the power of Jehovah to deliver or defend the people from their enemies, and to build up their strength as a nation. They denounced reliance upon numbers and material resources, and condemned any alliance with other earthly powers.

Israel was doomed as a nation to be swept away and dispersed by the successive waves of overwhelming power from Assyria, from Babylonia, from Persia, from Greece, from Rome, but if it had obeyed the voice of the prophets, and put away all its sins, and relied upon Jehovah for salvation, would the floods set in motion by the forces then working in the human race have been stayed?

Is it not more rational to put the divine impulse back of all these forces than to confine it to the two petty kingdoms of Palestine and direct it from the mouths of Israel's theocratic champions? At any rate, human events took their course through human agencies then, as ever since, whatever we may believe of the power behind them.

XXIV

THE EARLIEST "PROPHECIES"

PROBABLY the first of the utterances of the prophets to be preserved in writing is the tirade against Moab contained in chapters xv. and xvi. of the Book of Isaiah. The vaticinations put in the mouth of Balaam, though connected in the narrative with earlier events, were a later production, as the language and poetical structure clearly show. They represent one form of prophetic utterance, approaching the rhythmical construction of such compositions as the so-called blessings of Jacob and of Moses, which belong to the same literary period. In general the prophets whose productions have come down to us were declaimers rather than writers, and their style was usually calculated to excite and to inflame. It had a thrilling cadence, which often rose into a rhythmical swing and came down in ringing blows like a hammer. They sometimes resorted to devices for attracting attention which were more effective than dignified, and used language that was more forcible than elegant. No writers or speakers

ever aimed more at effect, and doubtless effect is what writing and speaking are for.

The first of these clarion voices was raised in the Northern Kingdom about 800 B.C. by Amos, the rude herdsman of Tekoa. The material prosperity under Jeroboam II. had produced pride and luxury, with the oppression of the poor by the rich and lack of integrity in the councils of the rulers. Depredations were common on the borders, the slave-trade flourished, and idolatrous worship prevailed, with little distinction of gods. Though himself of the kingdom of Judah, this fervid champion of Jehovah found the field for his fierce denunciations and his impressive warnings in the northern realm, where a priest at Bethel charged him with seeking to incite insurrection. What is specially to be noted here is the clearness with which the higher conception of Jehovah as a universal God of justice appears, the scorn of sacrifices and ceremonies that is expressed, and the first menaces of destruction of the nation for its sins, accompanied by faith in its ultimate restoration and glory. The vision of Amos did not extend beyond the neighboring nations and those long associated with the history of his people. He apparently did not discern the impending shadow of Assyria, but his prescience told him that the course Israel was pursuing meant de-

struction, because Jehovah was the God of righteousness. Of about the same time and in much the same tone is the "prophecy" which bears the name of "Joel," a name that is probably symbolical, like that of "Obadiah," "servant of Jehovah." What is called the vision of Obadiah, and another fragment embedded in the Book of Zechariah as chapter ix., are generally credited to this same period.

A generation later, when Israel was giving way before the irresistible pressure of Assyria, Hosea took up the strain of the herdsman of Tekoa, but in still more threatening tones. He painted the iniquities and dangers of the time in the darkest colors and portrayed the relations of the people to Jehovah in bold figures of speech. He was the herald of the downfall of Ephraim and of the disasters of Judah, but he had faith in the ultimate triumph of united Israel.

XXV

THE GREAT ISAIAH

WHILE the condition of affairs in the Northern Kingdom and the events which were hastening toward its destruction called forth these alarming and warning voices, there was a more quiescent spirit in Judah. So far as there was what may be called an ecclesiastical influence in the government, it had been exercised by the priests, and the kings were mildly favorable to the national religion centred at Jerusalem, though still tolerant of other worship in the "high places." But there seems to have been a growing school of the prophetic spirit in the purlieus of the temple, which was destined to give the fullest and highest utterance to the new theology. In this was nourished the greatest genius of Hebrew literature and of the Hebrew faith, the prophet Isaiah. He, more than any other, was the creator of Judaism, and in its bosom he planted the seeds of Christianity.

Clear-sighted and ardent, master of the knowledge of his time and of the resources of his language, he displayed a power of expression un-

excelled in any literature. The unplastic and inflexible Hebrew tongue he wrought to a tension and a power of vibration that has made it ring through the ages. He exalted still higher the conception of Jehovah, as not only the God of Israel, but as the power that controlled the destinies of all nations, and he mingled in the character for the first time the tender qualities of the father of humanity, which were to become predominant in the teachings of Jesus.

Though the introductory note of a compiler makes the activity of Isaiah begin under Uzziah, it seems to have been awakened during the reign of Ahaz, who had relapsed from the comparative fidelity of his fathers, and under whose reign idolatry flourished and corruption pervaded society and enfeebled the government. There was nothing exceptional in Isaiah's claiming to speak by direct inspiration of Jehovah, and using devices to enforce the divine sanction of his utterances. Most of the prophets did that, even those who were denounced as false and overborne by the dominant element. The one that prevailed was accepted as true, and the discomfited was by his discomfiture proved to be false.

The earliest of Isaiah's productions that have come down to us are fervid denunciations of the iniquities of the time of Ahaz, of wealth, pride,

luxury, and the vainglory of material prosperity, which always excited the ire of these stern Puritans of Israel. He dwelt with a certain pathos upon what Jehovah had done for his people, upon their manifold perversities toward him, and upon the terrible consequences of their conduct, but always he saw with unswerving faith the saving of a purified remnant, the restoration of power and glory at Jerusalem, under the rule of the offspring of David.

When, a few years before the fall of Samaria, Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Syria were threatening Judah, and the menace of Assyria was impending over them, Isaiah began to assume a rôle that was more and more political, and constantly directed by the theocratic spirit. He threatened Ephraim and Damascus with ruin, and attempted to dissuade Ahaz from any parleying with the king of Assyria. He promised deliverance at the hand of Jehovah, and the triumph of Sion in the days to come. The prophet seemed almost to gloat over the fate of Samaria, and predicted the destruction of Tyre and the subjection of Assyria and Egypt. His visions in that regard were never fulfilled, and those which related to his own land were equally far from the realization of which he and the other prophets dreamed. Contemporary with this part of Isaiah's career, and associated

with it, was that of Micah, who displayed the same ardent spirit.

A few years before the fall of Samaria Hezekiah had come to the throne of Judah, but at the beginning of his reign there was no material change from the policy of his father. But the tremendous crisis of the Northern Kingdom had a far-reaching effect. During the long siege there was a feverish apprehension that the next sweep of the Assyrian host would be over the hills and plains of Judah. The effort of the two tireless prophets was rather to fan than to allay this fear. Assyria was the scourge of the Almighty, employed to punish Israel for its sins, and the only way to avert from Jerusalem the fate of Samaria was to bow to the will of Jehovah and rely upon him for safety. There was a practical side to this policy, which meant submission to the nominal sovereignty of the conquering empire of the East.

Hezekiah continued to pay tribute to the king of Assyria, and the conquests which Sargon, who had become the successor of Shalmanesar, made upon the borders of his realm accrued to the advantage of the King of Judah. Some of the cities that had belonged to the Northern nation were added to his domain, and gains were made on the west from the Philistines. There was a party at Jerusalem that favored resistance to the

Assyrian domination and alliance with Egypt, at the head of which was Shebna, one of the king's officers. Against this policy Isaiah inveighed with all his force, and with such effect that Shebna was superseded by the candidate of the party of submission, which was another political triumph for the prophets, who thereby gained an almost complete ascendancy over the king.

XXVI

RELIGIOUS AND LITERARY ACTIVITY

For some years the Assyrian domination was little felt, except as a protection, and there was a period of prosperity and progress. The government was more effectively organized, the military system was strengthened, and great improvements were made at Jerusalem. The temple and its service were rehabilitated to some extent, but it was still little more than a royal chapel. The priesthood was a subordinate factor, while the influence of the prophets was predominant. Under that influence and the impress of recent events a great advance was made in the religious conceptions of the time. Jehovah absorbed the attributes of Elohim more and more, and expanded into the God of the Universe, who used the nations of the earth to work out his own purposes. But Israel was the peculiar object of his affection and care, and it was through Israel that his purposes were to be effected. By his chastisements it was to be purged; a purified remnant would constitute the nation under a king of the house of David, who

would reign in justice and peace, and the nations of the earth would be brought into subjection to that glorified kingdom with its seat of power on Mount Sion.

Meantime, while these prophetic dreams were in abeyance, Hezekiah did much to purify the worship of the day, expelling idolatrous practices not only from the temple but from the shrines in other parts of his kingdom. In the reaction against images and symbols, he caused the Nehustan, or brazen serpent, which had so long been considered a visible token of divinity, to be destroyed. Jerusalem increased in importance and was regarded more as the centre of national worship as well as of national power.

The prophets were ever jealous of the growth of secular power and of wealth, as productive of that pride and self-sufficiency that were so obnoxious to Jehovah, and of those sins and iniquities that seduced men from obedience to him. There was a constant decrying of riches and luxury, and secular power was regarded as almost synonymous with oppression. The poor and lowly, the humble and meek, if not regarded as necessarily righteous, were represented as virtually the only class capable of righteousness, or of a proper submission to the divine will. This became almost an essential doctrine of early Judaism, and was still more clear-

ly developed in primitive Christianity. It has always been in some sort the leaven in that perpetual ferment known as socialism.

The reign of Hezekiah was no less remarkable for the literary activity which characterized it. In fact the power of the Hebrew language and the vitality of the ancient Hebrew literature reached its climax at about this time, say seven centuries before the beginning of the Christian era. After the capture of Samaria many of the lettered men of the Northern Kingdom took refuge at Jerusalem, and brought with them such treasures as had been saved from the wreck. The period of peace and prosperity saw much of what we now have of the Jewish scriptures put in substantially the form, though not in the arrangement, in which we have it. The two versions of the early history of the people, known to critics as the Jehovist and the Elohist, were imperfectly welded into one. The shorter and later one, first produced at Jerusalem, appears to have been used as the basis, but was pieced out with large extracts from the other, and sometimes new material was plainly used in the process of soldering together the parts. The old antipathies had been softened by the calamities of Ephraim, the full pride of Judah was not yet developed, and before the later "harmonizers" got to work upon this material it had assumed an intractable, if

not a sacred, quality that prevented obliteration of the incongruities that betray its varied origin. Parts of both accounts of the creation and the deluge were used, and there are many repetitions and inconsistencies, and some contradictions, which show that little pains and less skill was displayed in the process, which may be better described as patching than as welding or blending. The fuller account of the Exodus seems to have been pieced out with incidents from the shorter one, and both the book of the covenant of the Northern version and the decalogue of the Southern were incorporated. The account was carried down to the conquest and partition of the land under Joshua, but the development of the law, contained mainly in Deuteronomy and Leviticus, was much later, when the narratives were expanded to fit it.

It was doubtless at this time also that a continuation of the popular history was undertaken, out of the material supplied chiefly by the "Book of Jasher" and the "Wars of Jehovah," and by the genealogies collected at Jerusalem. From this came the substances of the account of the Judges, perhaps the story of Ruth, and the narratives connected with the first setting up of the kingdom contained in the Books of Samuel. No doubt also some of the annals were put in form that were afterward drawn upon for the more strictly histori-

cal books. The literary coterie that surrounded the king unquestionably made a collection of the popular proverbs and wise sayings that had accumulated since the days of Solomon, many of which were attributed to that monarch, and made considerable additions to them. A collection seems likewise to have been made of the poems, mainly with a religious turn, but some rather historical than devotional, which constituted what became known as "the Psalms." This form of composition may have begun in the time of David, and his name was doubtless associated with the first collection of them, as it was with subsequent extensions of the collection, but it is impossible to prove his actual authorship of any one piece, and very few can be plausibly attributed to him. A considerable number were probably written in the time of Hezekiah, especially of those with a more hopeful and exultant tone, for that enlightened monarch seems to have given every encouragement to letters, and the Hebrew language then reached its height of fruitful and varied expression. Competent critics ascribe the Book of Job to the same period, largely on internal evidence derived from the language and the ideas, though the latter appear quite as characteristic of a somewhat later time.

XXVII

A CRISIS FOR JUDAH

DURING the period of tranquillity that followed the terror of the Assyrian conquests and the submission of Judah to the overpowering empire, there was a constant weakening of the authority of Sargon, which encouraged revolt among the tributaries. In this spirit of revolt and resistance Hezekiah shared, under the encouragement of the secular party, still headed by Shebna. He ceased paying tribute, and continued negotiations for alliance with Egypt and Ethiopia. Against this policy Isaiah protested with all his energy, and threatened destruction as its consequence. He advocated non-resistance to Assyria, which was for the time being the agent of Jehovah, but which would in its time be destroyed, when the purified remnant of God's people would triumph. When Sargon was succeeded by his more vigorous and aggressive son, Sennacherib, a vacillating policy became perilous. Sennacherib set out to reduce to submission his father's rebellious tributaries in Syria, Judah, Philistia, and Phœnicia. There

was a sharp conflict between the secular and religious parties at Jerusalem, and the fierce declamations of Isaiah carried the day for the latter.

The prophet denounced all military preparations for resistance, and was especially fierce against alliance with Egypt. His imperative mandate for complete reliance on Jehovah seemed like treachery to his country, but it was really far-sighted prudence, for resistance to the Assyrian power was hopeless, and would probably have brought upon Jerusalem the fate of Samaria. But submission was humiliating and costly. It was forced at the very gates of the capital by the Assyrian army, and Sennacherib exacted such indemnity that the temple and the palace were not only despoiled once more of their treasures, but stripped of their most precious adornments.

These events, which implied a deep humiliation for the nation and a triumph for the prophets that could hardly have been more than half-gratifying, were followed by one of those extraordinary incidents which in a few recorded instances have appeared to turn the whole course of history as upon a pivot, and it made the triumph of Isaiah seem complete. It is not unnatural that a superstitious delusion became associated with it, which the prophet probably did not discourage, and may have shared, and which produced a curious legend

cutting sharply into a record purporting to be historical.

For some reason not made clear, perhaps distrust of Hezekiah's loyalty, Sennacherib, who was becoming hard pressed by his powerful enemies of the South, decided, after all, to reduce Jerusalem into complete subjection before withdrawing his armies for the more serious conflict with Egypt and Ethiopia. While the movements for this purpose were going on, Isaiah, doubtless knowing of the critical pressure upon Sennacherib's forces elsewhere, rose to a sublime height of confidence and prophecy, promising deliverance for Sion and discomfiture for Assyria. Sure enough, in the night that part of the Assyrian host which was encamped against Jerusalem was suddenly withdrawn to join with the other forces and meet the army of Ethiopia, which was advancing under Tirhakah to cut off Sennacherib from his own domain. The army of the Assyrian monarch was defeated and cut to pieces on the confines of Egypt, and he retired from his overwhelming defeat in that quarter to Nineveh, and gave up his career of conquest. Though he was finally assassinated, it was only after a prosperous reign of many years.

The disorder of the suddenly abandoned camp near Jerusalem, and rumors which speedily came

of the slaughter of Sennacherib's army, led to the belief that Jehovah had interposed to save his people, and the avenging angel of the Lord had slain the Assyrian host in the night. It was a marvellous triumph for the prophet, and the writers of later times accepted the legend as history, and even connected with it the assassination of Sennacherib at Nineveh, though that happened years afterward, and had no relation to the deliverance of Judah.

This critical turn in the history of Judah occurred probably in the very last year of the eighth century before the Christian era (701 B.C.), and the reign of Hezekiah continued four or five years longer. It was a period of restored prosperity and power for the kingdom, and the influence of the prophets continued in the ascendant. In the great double empire of the Mesopotamian region the power of Nineveh was sinking and that of Babylon was rising. The Southern focus was drawing force from the Northern and threatening it with eclipse. Merodach-Baladan of Babylon sought alliance with the nations of which Assyria had made enemies, and sent to the King of Judah envoys who were received with a friendliness and trust that excited the disapproval of Isaiah. The clear-sighted prophet saw danger in confiding in this great foreign power, which was liable at any time to enter

upon a career of conquest on its own account, and his prudence was mingled with that abiding faith in a reliance upon Jehovah which admitted of no compromise. The king was submissive to the rebuke of his great counsellor, and his sudden illness and temporary recovery were used to impress upon him once more his dependence upon the real ruler of Israel's destiny. He was made content with the assurance of peace and safety for the remnant of his own days. There is in the account of these final incidents of his reign plain evidence of the color given to them by the pious writers who made up the record.

XXVIII

A RELAPSE

BEFORE the death of Hezekiah (about 696 B.C.) there were signs of reaction against the stern puritanism established under the teachings and influence of the prophets at Jerusalem, which had become somewhat intolerant and irksome, and that reaction ran through the long reign of Manasseh, the short one of his son Amon, and the first years of Josiah, a period of perhaps seventy-five years in all. Manasseh came to the throne at the age of twelve, and was doubtless under the control of his mother Hephzibah. There are many evidences that the women of the royal family and of the aristocratic class generally had a proclivity for the pagan worship of the time, and an aversion to the stern doctrines of the prophets, who were wont to charge them with frivolity and profligacy. At all events there was a frightful relapse into idolatrous practices and into the vices and abuses that accompanied them. The long reign of Manasseh was looked back upon by the scribes of a later time as filled with abominations. In their brief but exag-

gerated references to it they painted it in the blackest colors, and could only compare it with the awful days of Ahab at Samaria. The priestly writer of the Chronicles, intent upon redeeming the house of David from the reproach, represents the king as being carried away captive for his sins and brought to repentance and restored, but there is no historical basis for the statement. It is in virtual contradiction of the account in Kings, against all probability, and inconsistent with all other records. That an Assyrian king should carry his captive to Babylon at that time is in itself a manifest absurdity.

Mauasseh fell under control of the secular party and reverted to the tolerant and easy-going policy of Ahaz. As a result the worship of Baal and Ash-teroth revived, heathen altars were rehabilitated in the high places, and even invaded the precincts of the temple at Jerusalem. The grossest of the old Canaanite rites appear to have been restored, and if the Judean writers are to be believed the smoke of human sacrifice rose again in the valley of the sons of Hinnom. The oppression of Assyrian power was no longer felt, and there was an era of peace and material prosperity, with the usual result of enervating luxury and a benumbing of the sense of justice. The anavim and hasidim, or the meek and lowly, who had acquired a kind

of sacred character and special consideration under Hezekiah, were without influence and suffered at the hands of the arrogant. Their wails have come through the centuries in some of the pathetic psalms. Divination and sorcery and all the old evils sprang up anew, and it almost seemed as though Jehovah had forgotten his people.

The single prophetic voice then raised was that of Nahum, and it lacked the tone that had become familiar in the time of national trouble. Nahum had nothing to say of the backsliding of the people or the penalties they were in danger of incurring, but he railed fiercely against his country's powerful enemy, and threatened destruction to Nineveh. Assyria was losing power, and was not only yielding before the ascendancy of Babylon, but was beset by new enemies from the North, and overshadowed by the menace of a Scythian invasion and the rising combination of Medes and Persians. Nineveh was indeed doomed, as Nahum boldly assumed. In the mouth of this prophet Jehovah became again a Deity of wrath, hatred, and vengeance. There are none of the diviner touches of Isaiah's God, and no visions of the future kingdom of righteousness and peace for a purified remnant of Israel.

The death of Manasseh, after fifty-five years of what seemed like prosperous wickedness, brought

no change. His son Amon, after a reign of two years, was assassinated as a result of a court conspiracy, which produced a popular uprising and the slaughter of the conspirators. This brought Josiah to the throne, but as he was only eight years old and under the direction of his mother, Jedidah, the same influences continued to rule for some years.

But another great crisis in the fortunes of Israel was at hand. The genuine spirit of prophecy awoke again at last. The first to give it voice was Zephaniah, who once more with stern wrath assailed the iniquities of the time in the name of Jehovah. His accents were harsh, as he threatened with destruction not only the enemies of Israel, but the "rebellious and polluted" city, whose sanctuary was profaned. But the voice of hope and promise was raised again also. The nations were to be brought together only to be scourged, and the purified remnant would yet be restored and the Lord would be their king. But Zephaniah was the forerunner of a greater than he. The portentous figure of Jeremiah was about to come upon the scene.

XXIX

JEREMIAH AND A REFORMATION

THE circumstances attending the conversion which the young king underwent are a matter of conjecture, but in the light of the influences surrounding him conjecture becomes almost certainty. Before Josiah had become of age, not only was the startling voice of Zephaniah raised to give warning that the gross iniquities of the time would bring a terrible penalty, but out of a little circle of priests at Anathoth, just north of Jerusalem, came a champion of reformation possessed with the spirit that makes revolutions. When Jeremiah began his denunciations and warnings it was among his own kin, but they excited such hostility that he turned his back upon Anathoth with curses and betook himself to the centre of agitation at Jerusalem. There he began his inexorable crusade against the existing order of things.

He had not the intellectual power, the mighty rhetoric, the literary force of Isaiah, and the language of Judah had lost something of its gleam and temper. But the soul of Jeremiah had a

consuming ardor, a fervid devotion to the great Jehovah, and intense hatred, not only of wrong, but of wrong-doers, as they appeared to his eyes, and a courage and obstinacy that never flinched or wavered. His faith in the power and the justice of Israel's God was absolute and unquestioning, and he probably never doubted that his own deep and burning convictions were stirred within him by the overpowering Deity, or that their utterance was inspired by him. That was the prophet's unvarying claim, and he met with scorn and derision any counsel that differed from his own. God, interpreted through his temperament, lacked some of the gracious aspects of the God of Isaiah. Jeremiah was a fanatic—fierce, uncompromising, intolerant—with a veritable genius for fanaticism and a mission to fulfil that required it.

When this austere figure appeared in the streets of Jerusalem and raised that piercing voice against the abuses of the time, it came like a "herald of dismay." There were disquieting movements in the great powers to the East, at whose mercy little Judah always lay in the pathway to the sea, and there were rumors of terrible hordes away at the North threatening to sweep down upon declining Assyria. As Jeremiah depicted in cutting accents the sins of Israel, the idolatry and corruption

that prevailed, the wrong and injustice that were practised upon the poor and helpless, and all the multitudinous evils of a degenerate age, he drew a terrible indictment against the people for disobedience, ingratitude, and outrage toward their God, whose wrath had been accumulating and was about to break forth. He pictured the terror and desolation that would befall them when the impending scourge should fall.

Nothing could silence that terrific voice, and the prophet omitted no device that would give his words a startling effect. Nor was he alone. He was seconded by Habakkuk, only a few of whose ardent utterances have come down to us, and there are glimpses of a prophetess, Huldah, in sympathy with the reforming element, while there are indications that a similar spirit prevailed in the priesthood of the temple. It is evident that before the influences of this growing agitation the old secular party was forced to give way, and the youthful sovereign threw himself, perhaps in alarm, into the new movement. It was about the middle of his reign, sometime between 625 and 620 B.C., that the sweeping "reforms of Josiah" were undertaken. Not only were all the appurtenances of heathen worship cleared out of the temple and its precincts, and that sanctuary purged and purified, but the altars and images of the "high places"

were ruthlessly destroyed. These places, originally devoted to the worship of pagan divinities, had been appropriated to the uses of the national religion, and there was a constant tendency to a mingling of rites and the corruption of the cult of Jehovah.

Previous reforms had aimed at suppressing the altars and idols of the alien gods, but Josiah went to the root of the matter and set out to destroy the "high places" altogether as places of worship, and to concentrate the devotions and offerings of the people upon the temple at Jerusalem. Sorcery, witchcraft, and all forms of divination were included in his sweeping abolition, and to bring the valley of Hinnom into special detestation, it was made a place for dumping and burning the offal of the city, and became popularly known as Tophet. That the uprooting of the ancient forms of worship was carried into the provinces of Samaria would seem to indicate at once that the remnant of the Israelite population had regained ascendancy there, and that the Assyrian sovereignty was so relaxed, or the counteracting force of Babylon so advanced, as to permit the king of Judah to exercise a subordinate sway in those parts.

The suppression of the old provincial shrines was accompanied by measures for building up

the temple at Jerusalem as the centre of national worship and of the religious interests of the people, which was made practicable by the fact that the dominion of the king extended in no direction more than forty or fifty miles from the capital at this time. The temple was repaired, its appliances and treasures were replenished, and the priests were drawn in from the old places of worship to minister in its service. The Levites, who had hitherto been scattered over the country, were gathered into a distinct class of servants and attendants of the temple, and a beginning was made of the organization so highly developed in later times. Feasts and fasts were established, or re-established, and the passover was celebrated in a manner to impress the people deeply with its significance.

Another important factor in the great reform was the public promulgation of the law. The book that had been formed by combining the two versions of the primitive history of the people and the dealings of Jehovah with their ancestors contained both the "covenant" of the Northern version and the ten commandments of that of Jerusalem, which constituted the beginning of a systematic Torah. This volume was probably known to but few persons, and may have existed in only a single copy in the keeping of the priests

of the temple. The people at large knew nothing of the "laws of Moses" or the "statutes" of Jehovah. No doubt the need was felt of elaborating this little code into a fuller system and bringing its requirements to bear upon the people and upon the rulers of the people.

There can be little question that this task was performed within that coterie of priests and prophets which was at the centre of the religious ferment of the time, and there is reason to believe that it was done under the influence, if not under the direction, of Jeremiah. The work has the tone and spirit, and in some respects the language, of his teachings. In due time it was announced to the king by Shaphan the scribe, that Hilkiah, the high-priest, had "found the book of the law in the house of the Lord," and Huldah, the prophetess, gave it her sanction, with an impressive warning to the king of the consequences of disregarding its mandates. Josiah was then scarcely more than twenty-five years of age, and was in the height of the reforming zeal of a royal convert with autocratic power. So the priests and prophets, the elders of Judah and Jerusalem, and "all the people, both great and small," were gathered together, and the king in person proclaimed the new law, and bound himself and his subjects to its observance. It constitutes the bulk

of the book known as Deuteronomy. It is a fact of curious interest that Jeremiah is not mentioned in the Book of Kings, nor, in connection with Josiah's reign, by the author of Chronicles, save in a passing reference to his lamenting that king's death, and that the prophet's recorded declamations precede and follow the period of the reforms. Was he inactive and silent during that period?

XXX

THE SHADOW OF DOOM

THERE is little evidence of literary activity at this time outside of the religious movement, which absorbed the energies of those capable of literary production. No doubt some of the psalms were written in the days of Josiah, but it is difficult to distinguish them. The material used in later compilations of scripture was accumulating, but some of it was afterward so woven and patched into existing books that it cannot be traced to its source with certainty. In this kind of material were some of the "agadas" relating to the prophets, and probably beginning with Moses in that character, and these were used in developing and embellishing passages of history, or enforcing lessons of experience, in a manner to deepen the obscurity in which facts were already enveloped.

Toward the close of the seventh century B.C. the clouds of doom began to overshadow the little kingdom of Judah and to threaten Jerusalem with the fate that had befallen Samaria something over

a hundred years before. After reaching the height of its splendor under Assurbanipal—the Sardanapalus of the Greek historians—the Assyrian empire began to decline before the rising power of Babylon. The Chaldean race, which had traditions of long dominion there in the ages of a dim antiquity, had recovered its ascendancy, and when, under the irresistible pressure of the Scythians and the Medes, Nineveh was at last crushed into the melancholy ruin that was buried in after centuries, Nabopolassar extended the Chaldean sway over the whole Mesopotamian region, and his son, Nebuchadnezzar, raised Babylon to the height of grandeur which made it a wonder and a terror to the Eastern world.

Egypt, the rival and enemy of the Assyrian power, had taken advantage of its waning strength, and under the energetic rule of Psammeticus and his son Necho, had entered upon a new career of conquest in the North. In the year 609 B.C. Necho landed a force upon the coast of Phœnicia and set out to cross the old provinces of Israel in the North to take possession of Syria. He had no quarrel with the king of Jerusalem, but Josiah considered himself as having authority over the northern provinces, as the vassal of the king of Babylon, who now asserted his sway over Assyria, against which Necho was advancing. Accordingly

he interposed his puny force to resist the Egyptian army, and was easily defeated at Megiddo, and sent home dead in his chariot, while Necho went on his way.

It would seem like a hard blow to those who relied on their faith in Jehovah that the pious king who had done so much for his cause was cut off before reaching his fortieth year, while his sinful grandfather had a fairly peaceful and prosperous reign of fifty-five years. But that and the calamities which followed were attributed to the "provocations" wherewith Manasseh had provoked the Lord in the days of his wicked rule, and to the evil doings of the kings who followed Josiah—three of them his sons and one his grandson—covering the score of years before the capture and destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. In reality the untimely fate of Josiah was fortunate for the estimation in which he was to be held in after times; for his successors were forced to take the responsibility for defending, or failing to defend, their realm against foreign aggression, and in their manner of meeting it consisted mainly the "evil" which they did "in the sight of the Lord." They refused to follow the counsel of Jeremiah and to submit supinely, accepting meekly the chastisement of Jehovah, and relying implicitly upon him to save them from

their enemies. Jeremiah was undoubtedly right as to the hopelessness of the struggle and the certainty of defeat and destruction. His direful predictions were but slightly illumined with the hope of restoration and future glory, though they were somewhat lightened up by the revision which they afterward underwent.

On the death of Josiah one of his younger sons, Shallum, was proclaimed king, under the name of Jehoahaz; but, returning from the Assyrian expedition three months later, Necho took occasion to depose him and set his older brother, Eliakim, on the throne, with the name of Jehoiakim, and to exact a heavy tribute from the kingdom for presuming to interfere with his operations. Jehoahaz was carried off to Egypt, and Jehoiakim accepted submission to that country. A short period of ease followed, and a disposition was shown to indulge in Egyptian luxuries. There was a relapse from the religious tension, a reaction toward a toleration of pagan practices, and a slipping into the iniquities of a quiet time. The poor were oppressed, the hands of justice failed, and, above all, the influence of the prophets over the government gave way to the more practical counsels of the "wicked."

This roused the spirit of Jeremiah to a veritable rage. He not only poured out his wrath upon

the sins of the time and upon the evil-doers, but violently denounced the king and his advisers, and predicted ruin and destruction to Jerusalem and slaughter and desolation to the land of Judah. He was seconded in his furious onslaught by others, notably Habakkuk, and a certain Uriah, who paid for his zeal with his life. Jeremiah himself narrowly escaped the wrath of the prevalent party. After the battle of Karkemis, or "Carchemish," at which Nebuchadnezzar routed the army of Necho and destroyed the pretensions of Egypt in the Euphrates region, the great prophet awoke to the fact that the king of Babylon was the "scourge of the Lord," with which He was to chastise Israel, and he never wavered in his prediction of impending disaster and his denunciation of resistance as not only useless but sinful. He was regarded as a traitor whose uncurbed violence of speech disheartened the people and paralyzed the government, but nothing could silence him, or subdue his terrible tones of menace, and there was a feeling that the prophets had a certain relation to Jehovah, which gave them power to bring to pass what they predicted.

Jeremiah launched into a panegyric of Nebuchadnezzar upon the defeat of Egypt and revelled in the disasters of that hated land. He gloated over the coming slaughter and desolation of other

countries that had been enemies of Israel, and were liable to become victims of the new conqueror. As the Babylonian warrior directed his march toward Judah, the year after the battle of "Carchemish," the prophet took occasion to utter his most direful predictions of disaster, and to have his previous denunciations and warnings written out and read to the people in the purlieus of the temple and the palace by Baruch the scribe. This excited the wrath of the court, and the terrible document was read before the king, who, in his anger, cut it into strips and threw it in the fire. The prophet had it rewritten, and added to it still more bitter railing against the sovereign, who should have no successor, and whose dead body should be "cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost."

XXXI

THE CARRYING AWAY TO BABYLON

NEBUCHADNEZZAR came to Jerusalem, but did not inflict the predicted chastisement. Having forced Jehoiakim to recognize his sovereignty, he returned to Babylon to receive the title of king, his father having just died. Judah was left for three or four years a constant prey to hostile neighbors, when its king committed the incredible folly of rebelling against Babylon, whose power was obviously not to be resisted with any hope of success. During this short period the wrathful mood of the prophets continued against those who relied upon military force and secular power to escape the judgment of Jehovah.

The fate of the king is unknown, but in 598 B.C. he was succeeded by his son Jeconiah, whose name was thereupon changed to Jehoiachin. As he was only eighteen years of age, and his reign lasted only three months, the "evil in the sight of the Lord" which he is said to have committed, could hardly have consisted in anything more than re-

fusing to listen to the prophets and presuming to resist the Chaldean army, which was already approaching Jerusalem to punish the revolt of Jehoiakim. Jeremiah fairly raged against the young king and his mother, Nehusta, who probably exercised a sort of regency. He even threatened the utter destruction of the royal race, but accompanied the menace with a mysterious promise of a restoration of both Judah and Israel under a righteous king, a new scion to be raised unto David.

The approach of the hostile army produced a general terror and a flocking to the capital for safety; but before Nebuchadnezzar could begin the terrible siege for which he was preparing, the king and his family and court went out of the city to meet him, and to surrender unconditionally. Jehoiachin was deposed and carried captive to Babylon, with his officers and chief men. In fact what was regarded as the influential class was bodily transported, and though the priests and prophets, who had been virtually on the side of the invader, were mostly left behind, there was one notable exception in Ezekiel, from whom much was to be heard out of the land of captivity. The temple and palace were once more despoiled of everything worth carrying away, but the kingdom was not yet to be blotted out. Mat-taniah, an uncle of the deposed king, was placed

upon the throne under the royal name of Zedekiah, but the fulfilment of Jeremiah's direful prophecy of destruction and desolation was only deferred.

The condition of things that excited the ire of the prophets continued under Zedekiah, and when the king showed a disposition to join with the other subject nations about him in an effort to throw off the yoke of Babylon, he was violently assailed for his presumption. There were, however, prophets professing to speak in the name of Jehovah who encouraged this policy and promised success ; but these, and especially the chief of them, Hananiah, were virulently denounced as false and lying prophets by Jeremiah, who went declaiming about the streets with a yoke upon his neck, symbolic of subjection to Nebuchadnezzar, who was characterized as "the servant of God." Resistance to him was to be punished with the sword and with famine and pestilence. Predictions of success for the alliance of the subject nations to recover their independence filled Jeremiah with fury, and his prescience was certainly clearer than that of the king's advisers, for such a policy meant sure destruction, however humiliating submission might be.

While these puny kings of the Jordan region were plotting and planning resistance to the overpowering empire of the Tigris and Euphrates—

during the long lull before the final sweep of the scourge fell upon Judah—there were strange communications between the faithful at Jerusalem and the exiles in Mesopotamia. Jeremiah, reserving his regard at home for the austere brotherhood of the Rechabites and other submissive souls, recognized the true seed of the future Israel in the captives of Babylon, and Ezekiel sent his weird visions from the river Chebar, not to cheer or encourage his compatriots, but to reprove them and prepare them for their doom. By his mystic use of symbolism and imagery he became a sort of prototype of the apocalyptic writers, but his immediate object was rather practical. His policy was as much for submission to Nebuchadnezzar as was that of Jeremiah.

The latter sent messages to the exiles advising them to settle down, build houses, and plant gardens, as for a permanent stay. One of the exiled “prophets” who presumed to question the wisdom of this advice was fiercely doomed to be an outcast, with all his race. The most hopeful strain of the long period of gloom that followed the death of Josiah came from the unknown author of the last three chapters of the Book of Zechariah, who looked forward to the time when Jerusalem should be delivered from her enemies, and the ideal kingdom of the Lord should be established. It was a

vision that had been cherished before, and that would return in the centuries to come, to allure the untiring hope of Israel, finally to be transformed into a new vision of the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah.

But there was to be a long period of tribulation and of changes, of which the prophets never dreamed. The coming scourge of Babylon they did foresee, and Jeremiah rejoiced in it as the only hope of purging Judah of its iniquities. Ezekiel announced the sharpening of the sword of the Lord, as Nebuchadnezzar prepared to crush the spirit of revolt among his tributaries of the West. That warrior directed his forces against Jerusalem in the year 590 B.C., and it seems strange that it required a siege of two years to reduce it. But Tyre was besieged at the same time, the country round about was devastated, and there was an interruption of operations to repel an attack from Egypt. Amidst famine, untold suffering, and heroic resistance, Jeremiah did not remit his gloomy forebodings or his demand for a surrender to the enemy. It is little wonder that he was regarded as a traitor and thrown into a foul dungeon, but he commanded a degree of dread, if not of reverence, sufficient to induce the king to effect his rescue and protect his life. When the doomed city was finally taken and sacked, and the king

was sent to a Babylonian prison with his eyes put out, the prophet's known sympathy for the conqueror saved him from all hurt.

Jerusalem was left in utter ruin, and the land made desolate, but it was not depopulated, though many were carried into captivity; and no alien colonists were planted among the people of Judah. After the work of destruction and subjection had been completed by Nebuchadnezzar's chief officer, a native of the country (Gedaliah) was made governor; but in the disordered condition of things he soon fell a victim to a plot and was assassinated. The incident that chiefly interests us in the turbulent scenes that followed was the escape of a band of refugees to Egypt, carrying Jeremiah and Baruch with them, in spite of the protestations of the former that it was against the command of Jehovah. Even from the land of the Nile that irrepressible voice was heard denouncing the idolatry of the country and threatening it with the fate of Judah at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. The last audible cry of the prophet, as his fellow-exiles lapsed into the worship of "the Queen of Heaven," was a positive and impressive prediction, which conspicuously failed of fulfilment; but Jeremiah's mission was ended when his own land had "become a desolation, and an astonishment, and a curse."

XXXII

THE CAPTIVITY AND DELIVERANCE

THE period of Babylonian captivity lasted from 588 to 535 B.C., fifty-three years, though the first partial deportation took place ten years before the fall of Jerusalem. Those who were carried away included the official and military class, the priests of the temple, the people of substance, and all who were supposed to make the power of the nation, leaving the mass of the common people attached to the soil. The head and heart of Israel were transferred to the banks of the Euphrates, where in the obscurity of exile they kept up a feverish activity that hastened the development of Judaism. The first "Jewish quarter" was established within the precincts of Babylon, and some of the traits that have characterized the "peculiar people" ever since received their strongest impress there. While kept within certain limits of residence, and subject to official restraint, they were treated neither as slaves nor as prisoners. Submissive to authority and awed by the power and grandeur of the great capital, they still cherished a pride of race that

held in scorn the luxury and display about them. But some took advantage of their opportunities, pushed into the service of the ruling class, engaged in industry and trade; and, in achieving worldly prosperity, lost interest in their own land. In this way, no doubt, most of those who had been out of sympathy with the religious spirit of their nation were drawn off from that saving remnant that was destined to return and continue its great mission. It was another step in the process of depuration.

In the "Jewish quarter" of Babylon the first synagogue was planted. The devout hearts that yearned for Sion were wont to gather together to recall the memories of Jerusalem and unite in their vows of fidelity to Jehovah and his law. Ezekiel appears to have become the dominating spirit among the exiles. He set himself the task of consoling and encouraging them, and of cheering them with hopes of restoration and future glory. In a series of visions filled with mystic symbolism, the prophet embodied the promises of Jehovah. The sufferings of the people were to atone for their past sins and for those of their rulers; their old enemies were to be destroyed; they were to return to their own land, which would become an earthly paradise. The tribes would be reunited and David would be their prince forever. The Lord would make with them an everlasting cove-

nant and set his sanctuary in the midst of them forevermore.

These glowing and visionary promises of Ezekiel were followed by definite plans of restoration. He dreamed of taking possession of the land from the Jordan to the sea and dividing it again among the tribes, and establishing therein the ideal theocratic realm. The temple was to be reconstructed on a new and grander scale, and its worship was to be developed upon lines laid down by the prophet. While these predictions were vague and even more visionary than vague, and as far as possible from any subsequent reality in their details, Ezekiel outlined the hierarchy of the priesthood and the liturgy of the temple much as they came to be adopted, and he extended materially the scope of the accepted "law."

The most precious treasure which the captives of Jerusalem had carried with them into exile was the literature that had gathered within the precincts of the temple from the time of Solomon. It must have been saved in great confusion, from which it was never completely extricated, and the piecing and patching, arranging and copying which it afterward underwent, were done with neither care nor skill, and greatly helped to obscure its significance in many parts. Modern research and critical acumen are still unable to

clear it wholly from the obscurity which incapacity was engaged for ages in deepening.

It was during this period of leisure and of freedom from the necessity of making practical application of the rules prescribed for a future state of things that a new development of the law was made, substantially upon lines laid down by Ezekiel, and possibly under his direction. What is called the Levitical law was not then completed, but the substance of it was made up as it constituted the main part of the book called Leviticus and contributed passages to Exodus, Numbers, and Joshua in their final form. Not only was Moses continued as the law-giver, but for the first time Aaron was made the head of the priesthood, and the tribe of Levi was practically created. The first description of the paraphernalia of worship in the wilderness was made at this time, together with the detailed account of devising the appurtenances of the ark and the vestments of priests. Nearly all of what may be designated as the Levitical system was the product of the exile, and was apparently inspired by Ezekiel, who was a priest before he became known as a prophet. In connection with this work was a further development of the Mosaic legend.

The annals of the kings of Israel and Judah were completed during the early years of the exile,

and efforts were made to put in form the writings of the prophets. The same hand that edited and completed the Book of Kings evidently put together, with connecting narratives, the "prophecies" of Jeremiah, but in a sadly disordered shape. Baruch, who was said at one time to have written out the prophet's denunciations and warnings, and who was carried with him to Egypt, is supposed, after Jeremiah's death, to have made his way to Babylon and joined the colony there. Otherwise it is hard to explain how the account of the great prophet's latest utterances got into the collection. Of his death there was no account, but some find obscure references to his fate in the "man of sorrows" of the later Isaiah. Other literary productions of these years may include the Book of Lamentations—certainly not by Jeremiah—and a number of the psalms.

A few years after the death of Nebuchadnezzar (561 B.C.) there was a change of dynasty, and under the usurper, Nabonahid, the Chaldean power rapidly declined. The aggressive spirit of conquest, which for ages had hovered from Egypt to Babylon and Nineveh, with alternate rises and falls, had taken possession of a new empire to the east. The Medes and Persians became the arbiters of destiny in the region of the Tigris and Euphrates, and the first Cyrus assumed the rôle

of conqueror. As usual, the man who for the time being seemed to wield an irresistible power appeared to the devout of Israel as the servant of their God. When the army of Cyrus was on the way to crush the pride of Babylon with a force that could not be withstood, the exultant voice of the Hebrew prophet rose once more in those clarion tones that have rolled down the ages, producing awe in successive generations of men.

Ezekiel had died shortly after the death of Nebuchadnezzar, and from that time men who were moved to speak in the name of Jehovah seemed to be reluctant to do so in their own person. They sought to clothe their utterances with the prestige of some prophet already held in reverence, or to veil them under a symbolic character. At all events, the great prophet of the deliverance from captivity and the return to Sion spoke in the name of Isaiah, and his inspiring words were bound up with those of the revered counsellor of Hezekiah's reign, in the book bearing that name as a title. The assumption of character and the association of writings were appropriate. The later prophet seems not only to have absorbed the spirit of the earlier one, but to have acquired his mastery of language, at least for the purpose for which he used it. It has a less portentous force and a more joyous tone, but it has the same vi-

brant ring. The new Isaiah represented an advance of more than a century and a half in the religious conceptions of his people, and was inspired by a situation quite different from that of his great prototype.

In the section of the Book of Isaiah beginning with chapter xl. are found the utterances of the unknown prophet of the time of the Persian conquest, and scattered among the other chapters are some fragments of the same time, and probably of the same author, while a few passages relating to the same events were interpolated in the Book of Jeremiah. No sooner was the army of Cyrus on foot against the decrepit empire than the prophetic voice was raised from the Jewish quarter of Babylon joyfully announcing the day of deliverance. The power which at the height of its vigor was regarded as the instrument of Jehovah was treated with hatred and contempt in its decadence. The Hebrew captives had seen the pride and arrogance and the idolatry and corruption of the great city, and its decaying grandeur excited their aversion and not their sympathy. They hailed the rising splendor of Persia with joy, and Cyrus succeeded Nebuchadnezzar as the "servant of the Lord." Although the name of the national God was retained, he had by this time absorbed the lofty attributes of the Elohim,

and in the sublime conception of the second Isaiah he became the universal Deity in a fuller sense than ever before. Israel was still the special object of his care, and he used other nations only to advance his chosen people, but his sway was over all the earth.

Before and during the siege which resulted in the fall, but not in the predicted destruction, of Babylon, the unknown prophet indulged in dreams not only of deliverance but of future greatness and glory for restored and purified Israel. He pictured Jehovah as leading back his people, and the messengers upon the mountains as announcing the glad tidings. He heard voices in the wilderness crying out for a preparation of the way. He personified, sometimes in obscure and mystic symbolism, the past sufferings and future rewards of the people. Beyond and above the crumbling Babylon and the victorious Cyrus his vision revelled in the coming glory of Jerusalem, where justice was to reign in a golden age of righteousness and peace, and all nations would accept the sway of Israel's God.

XXXIII

THE RETURN AND RESTORATION

THE plain facts of the return from exile and the restoration of Jerusalem and the temple, and of the subsequent experience of the people of Israel, showed little regard for the exalted visions of the prophet, but these were long after turned to a spiritual account for the benefit of humanity, with an application of which the writers of Israel had no conception. It was no part of the policy of the Medes and Persians in their conquests to transplant populations or to retain colonies of captives. While Cyrus was represented by the Jewish writers as acknowledging his allegiance to "the Lord, the God of heaven," in their sense of the term, and as being charged with the mission of building him "an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah," it is probable that the Persian ruler gave little thought to the band of Hebrew exiles which he found in the purlieus of the conquered city. He was a liberal monarch and they were a helpless and harmless people, and no doubt they were quite at liberty to go. Of their worship and

the ardor of their longing for the land which they had come to deem so sacred, he could have had no comprehension.

There were points of sympathy between the Persians and Israelites, and the contact produced notable effects. The Persians of that early day had a strong monotheistic tendency and an aversion to the use of images and to the rites of idolatry. There were in their theology the germs of an exalted spirituality, and their moral standard was a high one for the time. Moreover, they were tolerant and generous. The authenticity of the alleged proclamation of Cyrus regarding the return of the Jewish captives is more than doubtful, and the actual facts are sufficiently prosaic. It was, however, in a strict sense, the return of a purified remnant, for the worldly and indifferent were mostly left behind, and the concentrated ardor, devotion, and fidelity of Israel, the persistent leaven of the religious world, was restored, to begin a new ferment at the "holy city."

There were two organized bands of returning exiles, one under Sheshbazzar, son of the old captive king, Jehoiachin, who after long years of imprisonment at Babylon had been allowed to pass his last days in comfort under the successor of Nebuchadnezzar; and the other under the old

king's grandson, Zerubbabel, accompanied by the priest Joshua, grandson of the Seraiah who was put to death after the capture of Jerusalem. The genealogies in the Book of Ezra are of no historical value, and the figures are grossly exaggerated, like most statistics of that and earlier times. The two caravans, which occupied from three to four months in traversing the Syrian desert from the Euphrates to the Jordan, made no great addition in numbers to the population in Judah, but they contributed a potent factor to its future activity. It must have been a journey of much hardship, even for a comparatively small number of people, and it was only second in its consequences to the memorable passage of the wilderness from Egyptian bondage.

Zerubbabel held authority from the Persian government as a sort of satrap in the country where his ancestors had been kings, but he was subject to the military power of the sovereign. He made it his first business to restore the altar and revive the worship of Jehovah on Mount Sion, and his next duty to rebuild the temple on its old foundations. He found the people not only impoverished, but apathetic. They had relapsed into the old ways and felt little of the inspiration that had been nourished among the fervent souls by the streams of Babylon. There was even

jealousy and hostility to be encountered, and it was many years before the task of rebuilding the temple was completed. During this period of difficulty and discouragement two men ventured again to assume the character of prophet. Haggai endeavored to rouse the people from their apathy and to inflame their zeal, and Zechariah, the author of the first eight chapters only of the book bearing his name, set forth in visions the appeals and promises that were to excite the hopes and stimulate the efforts of Israel in a time of new trial.

It was after the completion of the second temple that the complicated service was established, with the various functions and vestments of priests and Levites, the formal feasts and sacrifices, the liturgical and musical accompaniments, and all forms and ceremonies, which later writers were fond of tracing back to David and Solomon, and in some measure even to Moses. The law was also still further developed on the lines laid down by the priests in their exile, and in this work Ezra appears to have taken a prominent part. These facts need to be kept in mind when we read the writings of a later time which relate to events of days still earlier. Everything relating to laws and ordinances, and to the forms and appurtenances of worship, even from the sojourn in the wilderness of Sinai, received its color and much of its

substance from writers saturated with the influence of the priesthood of the second temple and looking upon the past through the haze of that influence.

It was now that the authority of the high-priest was first established and traced back to Aaron, who, as the source of the priesthood, was as mythical as Moses in the character of the law-giver. Zerubbabel had been recognized as the "Prince" of his people, and there was a disposition in some quarters to regard him as that scion of the house of David which was to usher in the reign of peace and righteousness; but the reality was far different from the dreams of the prophets. There are faint indications, chiefly in the visions of Zechariah, of a schism between the secular power, represented by the "Prince," and the ecclesiastical power, embodied in the high-priest, and the latter was destined to prevail. The fate of Zerubbabel is shrouded in mystery. He disappears in silence and darkness, and with him the line of David fell into obscurity if not into extinction. The attempt in later times to trace it through a chaos of broken genealogies was hardly successful. But with the disappearance of Zerubbabel from the scene, Joshua, the son of Jozadak, appears as absorbing such secular power as was left to the Jews by the Persian government, and from that time

the lineal descent of the authority of the high-priest was recognized. But the native rule at Jerusalem was a hierarchy, with little secular power. As a nation Israel was dead. Its vitality was absorbed in Judaism as a religious system.

XXXIV

MAKING AN ECCLESIASTICAL CAPITAL

THE Persian authorities appear to have given little attention to what was going on in Judea so long as their power was not resisted or questioned. Many of the Jews who remained in the East kept up friendly communication with their old home and furnished substantial aid to those who were striving to repair its broken fortunes. They showed the genius for profiting by their opportunities that has characterized their descendants, and kept in favor with the ruling class better than some of those descendants have done. Some of them held offices of more or less trust and confidence, though implying a certain menial relation.

Among the devout who had remained in exile was one Nehemiah, who in the memoirs which have been preserved represents himself as the cupbearer of Artaxerxes (Longamanus) at Shushan (Susa). He obtained from that monarch a commission to go to Jerusalem and rebuild its ancient walls, which still lay in ruins, though eighty or ninety years had passed since the re-

turn from captivity. With this he received a certain degree of administrative authority as the representative of the Persian government.

Nehemiah met with even more obstruction in his enterprise of reconstructing the walls than had been encountered in restoring the temple. The jealousy of those who had remained in the country during the captivity, and especially of the influential class in the old Samaritan province, who had formed a close alliance with some of the priesthood at Jerusalem, proved a serious hindrance. There were intrigues to seduce Nehemiah from his undertaking, threats of violent interference against which he had to guard, and even representations to the court at Susa, that he was designing to set himself up as a king in Judea. The people were subject to severe exactions for the Persian tribute, and the cost of the constructions about Jerusalem added to their discontent. But Nehemiah thwarted all the efforts of his opponents and overcame all difficulties, and the completion of the walls was celebrated with great ceremony about 440 B.C. The genealogies and statistics of families given in the memoirs of this officer, and repeated with variations in the Book of Chronicles, are far from accurate, and the figures are, as usual, much exaggerated.

But the real importance of Nehemiah's adminis-

tration lay in its effect upon the religious tendency of the time. Jerusalem became an ecclesiastical capital. Those connected with the hierarchy were a privileged class, and absorbed such secular power as was left to local authority. Policy was directed to establishing the exclusiveness of the Jewish people and maintaining their distinctive solidarity. For this the practice of circumcision was insisted upon as a rite of great importance, and stress was laid upon a strict observance of the Sabbath, which had not previously been much regarded, though formally prescribed in the "law." But more than all, marriage with those not of the Hebrew blood and religion was interdicted, as the chief cause of lapses into idolatry, or of laxness in the national faith. Observances, ceremonies, and rigid requirements were multiplied, and the whole tendency was opposed to the broad spirit of the great prophets and threatened to stifle it.

This did not proceed from deliberate purpose on the part of Nehemiah, so much as it was a consequence of the policy instituted by him, in what he believed to be the interest of his people, worked out later and by narrower minds. He was an organizer, and an administrative officer under Persian authority, and as such did not retain the sympathy of the priestly class. Tobiah, the Sa-

maritan leader of the opposition which had given him so much trouble, was allied by marriage with the high-priest Eliashib, at Jerusalem, and during an absence of Nehemiah at the Persian capital he was installed in the precincts of the temple, and was in danger of acquiring ascendancy at Jerusalem. This would have meant a relaxing of the law and a toleration of mixed marriages and of alien forms of worship, but the prompt return of the "governor" checked this movement, and he set about enforcing restrictions and requirements more vigorously than before. He virtually fixed the direction of the Judaic tendency, but he excited the antipathy of the priestly class.

One effect of this antipathy, or, to put it less strongly, of this lack of sympathy, was an effort to transfer some of the credit of Nehemiah's work to another. While he had a fanatical regard for the Torah as it then was, he was a layman, and nominally a secular officer. He left an account of his work, undoubtedly authentic, but in the next century the Book of Ezra was compiled on the model of the memoir of Nehemiah, attributing to the priest and scribe a generous part of the work performed by the prefect of Persian authority. He, too, was represented as deriving large official powers from Artaxerxes, and as taking a leading part in establishing the observances of the law

and enforcing severe measures against mixed marriages. The book bearing the name of Ezra was made up of inconsistent material, which the author failed to make harmonious, and is entitled to little credence as a historical document; but there is no reason to doubt that a priest or scribe of that name conducted one of the bands which at intervals followed the main body of returning exiles to Jerusalem. If the part of the book relating to that event is authentic, he antedated Nehemiah by several years, but the only thing that is either certain or important is that this Ezra took an active part in the literary work of developing the Torah. He probably took little or no part in administration, and is not entitled to much of the dubious credit of a stringent application of the law.

At all events it was during this period—near the middle of the fifth century B.C.—that the code thereafter deemed sacred and embodied in the so-called books of Moses was completed and promulgated, substantially as we have it now. The old Book of the Covenant of the Jehovist writer, and the consecrated “ten words” of the Elohist, the second version of the law “found in the temple” in the days of Josiah, and the Levitical compilation of the captivity, were retained and amplified with added prescriptions on various subjects,

some of which may have been new, but many of which were old, and the whole was woven, or patched, into the narrative already existing of the Exodus and the passage through the wilderness. Like all compilations of that and earlier time, it was done without skill and with little effort to avoid repetitions, or even to efface inconsistencies, and the attempts to adjust the old narrative to new requirements were rather clumsy. The Moses legend had been growing and continued to grow, but so far as it is contained in the Pentateuch, it was finally fixed at this time. According to the record concerning Ezra the scribe, there was a formal promulgation of the law by a reading of the book in the presence of the people. The reading was attended and followed by much ceremony, the establishment of a feast, and the binding of the people by a new covenant.

LAST OF THE PROPHETS

Not only were the last additions made to the "law of Moses" at this time, but the book of the prophets of Jehovah was closed. The last of their sacredly preserved utterances appeared under the name of no living man. Malachi is a corruption of Maleaki, "my messenger," which served to shroud in mystery this final warning. It appeared in the time of Nehemiah, and is peculiarly characteristic of the spirit of that day, laying stress upon the observances that were to separate the Jews from the rest of the world. No longer were the iniquities of the time characterized as the sins of a nation, to be punished by national calamity. There was no nation. The glorious dream of Isaiah, of the restoration of Israel as a power of the earth, which should draw other nations to its benign sway, of the exaltation of Jehovah's worship to a universal religion of humanity, had faded away as a narrow ecclesiasticism asserted itself. There were minute prescriptions of law to be sedulously observed, sacrifices and feasts must not be

neglected, faithful provision must be made from the people's substance for the support of priests and Levites and all the throng of the temple devotees, and the rites peculiar to Judaism must be insisted upon as essential to righteousness.

All this was exclusive and narrowing. It tended to bring Jehovah again into the compass of the Deity of a tribe or of a sect, and it led to bigotry and intolerance. Phariseeism was born of the spirit of Ezra and of Malachi. All hope of the union of the two branches of the house of Israel was stifled, and the Samaritan turned his back upon Sion and worshipped God on Mount Gerizim, according to what he considered as the true traditions of the fathers. The advantage of Jerusalem was in its temple and its organized system, which, after centuries of new vicissitudes, were yet again to become the focus for relighting the flame of a religion of humanity. But in that interval Judaism was to become incrustated with formalism, smothered in ceremonies and observances, and swathed more and more in its own exclusiveness. In all the centuries of its existence it has never drawn to itself, but has been continually excluding and repelling, and yet it has maintained in its core a steady and fervid vitality which has made it the marvel of longevity in human history.

One notable contribution was made by the

Maleaki to the leaven which was to work with varying intensity through the subsequent religious ferment. He dealt with the sins of the people as personal offences, and a new theory of retribution was necessary, for there was no nation to reward or to punish. Hence the "great and terrible day of the Lord" assumed a new aspect, when the wicked should be burned as stubble and trodden as ashes under foot, but the righteous who feared the name of the Lord and kept his law should go forth and gambol as calves of the stall. Elijah was to appear as the forerunner of that day. The conception was vague, but it was a germ that was to develop through the apocalyptic and eschatological writings, and blossom in the earliest doctrines of Christianity.

Another germ that was to contribute to the same nursery of the most potent religion of later times was derived from Persia through the contact of the exiled Hebrews with the system of Iran. That was the germ of the demonology and angelology which was destined to a wonderful efflorescence. The Jews were barren in mythological ideas. Their conception of the Deity was variable. At times it presents him as a terrible monster, and at times almost as an overpowering and pervading spirit, but rarely does he seem to be accompanied or attended by other beings. Occa-

sionally in their tales and traditions there were references to God going about in human form, or to his messengers, or angels, sent abroad upon some errand, and even to the "sons of God," as a company of attendants. In a few instances there is reference to one of these as a carping critic, or "adversary," under the name of Satan. But these notions were incongruous with the general theology of the Hebrews, and were picked up from contact with other nations. Persia had a system of doctrine in which the powers of good and evil, more or less clearly personified, were arrayed against each other, and contended for the mastery of the earth and the possession of its inhabitants. It was from this source through the contact of Judaism, rather than from Judaism itself, that the early and later Christians derived much of the imagery and symbolism of their faith.

XXXVI

LITERARY DEPRESSION

DURING the Persian domination what came to be regarded as the sacred scriptures of the Hebrews were substantially completed. Additions were still made to the collection of Psalms, especially of the hymns and songs of praise used in the temple service, and the practice continued of attributing the chief part of that collection to David, as the Proverbs were attributed to Solomon, and as Moses came to be credited with the authorship of the books of the law. The Book of Esther, which is devoid of either religious or historical value, and gives a purely fictitious account of the origin of the Purim, belongs to the earlier part of this period. Two later productions, Daniel and Ecclesiastes, were, after much doubt and hesitation, included in the "canonical" scriptures.

Literary activity in any fruitful sense of the word was stifled when the political life had gone out of the nation and the priest had gained ascendancy in place of the prophet. The language itself became ossified, and its use was confined

mainly to the priests and scribes, the Aramaic taking its place in the common speech of the people. It was in this barren time that a Levite scribe undertook to revamp the history of the deceased nationality of Israel in the Book of Chronicles, making free use of genealogies and previous annals, and carving the events of six centuries to fit the narrow standard of his time and his class. The vapid and sterile character of his narrative has not prevented it from having sufficient credence to make it very misleading for those who have taken it as history. The same writer compiled the books of Ezra and Nehemiah from the genuine memoirs of the latter and the supposititious ones of the former, and thereby continued his task of distorting and confusing events.

Another form of pernicious activity with the pen consisted in arranging, or deranging, previous writings, making glosses and comments upon them, and copying them with various degrees of misconception and inaccuracy. The works of the greatest prophets were by this process made incoherent and disordered, and were doctored by suppressions and interpolations. Faults of copying were innumerable, and often marginal notes were included in the text, while a mistaken meaning was given to many passages by a change of words, or even of letters. Perhaps all this has contrib-

uted to the close study, as it certainly has to the wide range of exegesis, which these writings have undergone during the subsequent ages. While the real substance and truth of the scriptures have thereby been obscured, they have not been made inaccessible.

From this time the literary spirit of the Jews was chiefly absorbed in expositions of the law and the production of the tangled wilderness of the Targums, the Midrashim, and the Talmud. The long period of rabbinical lore set in. While the liberal spirit of Greece was expanding in poetry, philosophy, and art, in all that civilizes society and embellishes life, the genius of Israel was undergoing an artificial atrophy. It was bandaged and swathed and plastered with gums, but it was never completely mummified. Its persistent vitality could not be extinguished, and after various spasmodic eruptions it was destined to break forth with an energy, with a direction, and with consequences never dreamed of by the prophets in their most exalted moments, though proceeding from the fires that glowed in their ardent souls.

XXXVII

THE ALEXANDRIAN VERSION

THE later history of the Jews as a people has little relation to the purpose of this volume. After the conquest of Asia Minor and Lower Egypt by Alexander, and the destruction of the Persian empire, Palestine was harried by contests between the rulers of the Egyptian and the Syrian provinces of the Macedonian power. Many Jews were carried captive to the new Grecian capital of Alexandria, where a liberal measure of freedom was accorded to them, and where they soon formed a flourishing colony. A somewhat similar colony grew up at Antioch, the new Grecian capital of Syria. At both these points there was not only more political freedom than at Jerusalem, where the high-priests were permitted to hold local sway under the Greek governors, but more religious and intellectual freedom. In fact under this freedom Alexandria became the chief centre of mental and moral activity for the Jews.

By force of circumstances it had to be admitted that worship could be conducted elsewhere than at

Jerusalem, and otherwise than under the direction of the temple priests, and there was of necessity a relaxing of some of the observances of the law. Out of this situation grew the synagogue, the germ of which had been started by Ezekiel in the Jewish quarter of Babylon during the captivity, and the synagogue not only came to supersede the temple but to found the church. In the course of a generation Greek became the language of common use among the dispersed, especially at Alexandria, where they were cut off from Aramaic, as well as from the language of their fathers, which had virtually become a dead and consecrated tongue. Then came the need of a translation of the law, and of the other books deemed sacred, which were essential to the maintenance of their religion. It was probably the first direct translation from one language to another, and it had all the imperfections of a new experiment.

First, about the middle of the third century B.C. the Torah was rendered into Greek at Alexandria, and divided into five books, with the names which they have borne ever since, and the collection as a whole was called the Pentateuch or five volumes. The obscurities of the original were made more obscure by misunderstanding and by a propensity to use words of one language which corresponded to those of the other in a general way, with little

regard for shades of meaning. It was rather a transcription from one tongue to another than a translation of the meaning of one into the other, and yet strange liberties were sometimes taken with the original to suit ideas of the transcriber. Additions of other books were made from time to time in much the same style, until what is known as the Septuagint version of the Bible was produced, with the three divisions of the Torah, or law, contained in the Pentateuch; the Nibiim, or prophets, which included books of a legendary and historical character; and the Chetubim, or "writings," called in the Greek version "*hagiographa*," or holy writings.

The name Septuagint sprang from a characteristic legend, spread abroad two or three centuries after the first translations were made, to the effect that Ptolemy Philadelphus, being impressed with the sacredness and value of the Hebrew law and prophets, and the importance of having them translated for the great library at Alexandria, sent to Eleazer, the high-priest at Jerusalem, for learned scribes to perform this task. Seventy-two of these, six for each tribe—no longer existent—were sent to the enlightened monarch and treated by him with great consideration. Each one in a separate cell made the entire translation in seventy-two days, and the work of all corresponded to a dot,

affording indubitable evidence that the whole was inspired and had all the sanctity of the original.

It is wonderful how long this "pious" fiction was treated seriously, but it was only a development of the same characteristic which attributed the law in all stages of its growth to Moses, and finally credited to him the actual authorship of the Pentateuch, and which gave the poetry and music of the nation to David and its wisdom to Solomon. It was the same characteristic which in later efforts to exalt the scriptures of the Jews, and to impress upon the Greeks and Egyptians the sanctity of the race from which they sprang, invented new stories of Abraham, Joseph, and Moses, and of various prophets, and boldly forged and falsified citations from Greek literature paying homage to them. Common honesty is a product of the exigencies and the scrutiny of modern civilization, and a scrupulous regard for truth is a late achievement of mankind not yet perfected. Disingenuousness and craft are not less characteristic of the oriental than of the occidental mind, whether in ancient or modern times. In this respect the Semitic race did not differ widely from those with which it was related, unless in a superior keenness and persistency.

What is called the Septuagint version of the Jewish scriptures contained many variations from

the original text, many imperfect and misleading translations, and it was the product of different hands at different times. Additions were made to it after the beginning of the Christian era, and it contained several books which were ultimately rejected. But it was the Bible of the Jews, not only in Egypt but in Asia Minor, and it became the Bible of the first Christians. Doubtless its acceptance by the latter stimulated a reaction against it among devout Jews, who then discovered its faults and imperfections, and reverted to their ancient texts. These had become various and more or less corrupt, but in process of time an accepted text was established, and a Hebrew version of the Old Testament displaced the Septuagint as the basis of later translations.

XXXVIII

A NEW AGONY AND ITS RESULT

WHILE the Jews of Alexandria were translating the scriptures and magnifying them with fabulous stories about their origin, and even subjecting them to fanciful exegesis to win converts to their faith, the priests at Jerusalem continued to nurse the exclusive spirit of Judaism. Palestine was torn by the contest for its possession between Egypt and Syria; but after Antiochus the Great brought it under the sway of the latter it had the benefit of a liberal policy for a time. The only notable literary production of the period, "the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach," though held in high esteem, was not in the end admitted to the category of sacred books. It was only when the tyranny and persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, toward the middle of the second century B.C., brought on a slow torture which caused a fierce revulsion and aroused some of the ancient warlike spirit of the race, that a late addition to those books was made.

The old tendency of the Hebrew race to divide

appeared under the terrible pressure. Some were repelled by the stern Puritanism and rigid requirements of the hierarchy of the "holy city." They were also attracted by the liberal spirit and easy-going practices of the Greeks, and readily fell away from the ancient faith. Antioch was becoming a city of splendor and luxury, fascinating to the worldly minded, and the Syrian monarch had favors and rewards for those who attached themselves to his service. When it came to a choice between the worldly advantages of submissive loyalty to the sovereign and the suffering of persecution for fidelity to religious faith, the usual result followed. The indifferent, the time-serving, the self-indulgent, accepted the comfortable course of acquiescence, while in the earnest and devoted the spirit of resistance was aroused even unto martyrdom. The blood of the martyrs was first made fruitful by Antiochus Epiphanes, and those martyrs were the faithful Jews of more than a century and a half before the Christian era.

The Hellenizing party got control of the high-priesthood, and the last representative of the line of Zadok was assassinated. Antiochus was possessed with the mad purpose of exterminating the ancient religion of Israel. Some of its most cherished rites were made capital offences, and its ordinary practices were suppressed with cruel pen-

alties. Faithful Jews were driven out or deported from Jerusalem and its environs, and every outrage was committed upon the city and the temple. An image of the Olympian Zeus was set up behind the great altar, and the observances of the Greek worship were ruthlessly forced upon those who detested it. It seemed as though the God of the Hebrews had forsaken them in their dire distress. The promise of national glory as a reward for righteousness had failed, perhaps on account of the perverse persistency of so many in unrighteousness. The doctrine that the wicked were doomed to suffer and perish, while those who obeyed the commands of Jehovah would find recompense in comfort and long life, seemed to be belied by experience. But ever in a remnant of the race faith in the God of Jacob was indomitable.

At last the desperate revolt against intolerable persecution found leadership in the old priest Mattathiah and his five sons, and from these sprang that redoubtable warrior, Judas Maccabæus, who rallied the fighting spirit of his race in the mountains and fastnesses of Judea, drawing to himself the ardent and devoted patriots, not of a nation but of a religion, as David had drawn the disaffected and the outlaws of his day. It was to stimulate and inspire this heroic band that the

Book of Daniel appeared, from a source now unknown and probably shrouded in mystery at the time. It was not historical and it was not prophetic in the old sense. It was partly fictitious, largely allegorical, and in its conclusion it was what came to be called apocalyptic; but in relation to the events of the time its main purpose is plain. It was intended to show what Jehovah could do and would do against all odds, for those who were faithful to him, and, if it departed from facts in relating what he had done, it was true to the faith that inspired it. The fiction was illustrative. In the allegorical representation of the nations and rulers of the past there was much historical inaccuracy, but it served the purpose of leading up effectively to the monstrous deeds of Antiochus Epiphanes, and depicting their consequences.

But the greatest need in the struggle was some new hope, some new promise of restoration. Never in the long history of the race and the varied development of its religion had the Hebrew mind opened to a belief in the immortality of the human soul. No teacher or priest or prophet had ventured to promise recompense or threaten punishment beyond this life. No psalmist in his most depressed or most exalted moments dreamed of happiness beyond the grave. In this religion

there was little that was soft or sentimental, nothing visionary that reached beyond the horizon of the earth. It was a masculine religion and a religion of this world. In the terrible crisis, when Judas, "the hammer of God," raised his arm against the Grecian tyrant of Syria, faith demanded an outlet from this iron doom. Though the easy belief of the imaginative Greeks and speculative Persians in a life beyond the tomb was still resisted, as repugnant to the Semitic mode of thought, in the mystic visions of Daniel the doctrine of resurrection was born, and there was promise that "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

The present purpose has been only to indicate the events attending the production of the book that conquered a place in the sacred literature of the Hebrews long after it was virtually closed to new accessions. The fact that it was admitted shows how powerful its effect must have been, and what an enduring hold it took upon the minds of the devout Jews. To this, no doubt, its mysterious origin, its mystic character, and its new doctrine powerfully contributed.

One later book indeed there was, which the variable canon of the custodians of scripture finally allowed to stand in the Hebrew Bible, but it

has no clearly ascertainable relation to historical events. Judas triumphed over the oppressor, took possession of the beloved capital of his people, and restored the worship of the Most High in the temple. He became in effect ruler of the Judean principality, and, after a further struggle in which his brother Jonathan played a conspicuous part as a warrior, its autonomy was established. Its first acknowledged head was the high-priest Simon, another of the five sons of Mattathiah, whose sovereignty began in 143 B.C. This period of virtual independence lasted until the Roman conquest of Asia Minor by Pompey, B.C. 63, and was characterized by the appearance of Apocalyptic and Messianic writings of much significance, and the development of the sects of Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenians, and other products of the irrepressible tendency to schism.

All these have no direct relation to the Old Testament literature, but one of the gems of the collection, from a secular point of view, was produced later, perhaps, than any of these. It is the philosophical prose poem to which the first Greek translator in the second century A.D., gave the name *Ecclesiastes*, as the equivalent of the four Hebrew consonants, usually rendered *Koheleth*, of uncertain meaning, which stand in the original as the designation of the speaker. The date of its

production cannot be fixed by internal or external evidence, but it was probably after the struggles of the Asmonean family were over, and during the period of comparative calm that followed. It was one of the last books to be admitted to the canonical scriptures, on account of its heretical and worldly tone, and it may owe its place therein to the solemn admonitions of its closing chapter, whose cadences are so exquisitely rendered in our English version.

BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

I

THE COLLECTION AS A WHOLE

THE thirty-nine books which constitute the Old Testament were not finally accepted as the canon of Jewish scriptures until two or three centuries after the beginning of the Christian era. The title of the collection comes from an incorrect Latin rendering of the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew for the "ancient covenant," the theocratic system being based upon an assumed agreement between Jehovah and his people Israel. The first books to be held sacred were those which contained the law, and these were collected in substantially their final form in the time of Ezra the scribe, and probably by him. Later, under Nehemiah, the prophets were added, including the legendary and historical books from Joshua to Kings, as well as what have since been designated as the greater, and the Minor Prophets. The other writings were added from time to time, with many variations, and there were diverse opinions as to what were to be deemed sacred and what not.

The Greek version of Alexandria began with the law, which seems already to have had the fivefold division, and the present names were given to the several parts, while the whole was called the Pentateuch. But when the collection known as the Septuagint was completed, it contained a number of books which were ultimately rejected from the canon. These were the two Books of Esdras, which followed Chronicles; Tobit and Judith, placed after Nehemiah; The Wisdom of Solomon and The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach, also called Ecclesiasticus, after The Song of Songs; Barnuch, after Jeremiah; Susanna, after Daniel; and the three Books of the Maccabees, at the end of the collection. After the canon was established these were often put together at the end of the volume, and designated as Apocrypha (or "Rejected"), and for a long time they were quoted as in a measure authoritative.

The different Hebrew versions of the scriptures contained material variations, and it was several centuries after the canon was agreed upon before there was a fixed text universally accepted by the Jews, and finally adopted by the Christians. This differed widely in many points from the Greek version, and no man can tell how far both may have wandered from the original material, through errors of transcription, exegetical variations, and delib-

erate suppressions, interpolations, and perversions. The canon itself was a matter of gradual consensus rather than formal adoption. Josephus, in the first century A.D., speaks of the sacred books of the Jews as twenty-two in number; but Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles were then rated as single books, Ruth was attached to Judges, and Lamentations to Jeremiah. Several books now in the Old Testament were excluded for a long time on various grounds. Ezekiel was objected to as not in harmony with the law, as finally determined; The Song of Songs, on account of its worldly and possibly sensual quality; Proverbs, on account of inconsistencies; Esther, for its lack of religious character, and Ecclesiastes, as heretical in its tone. These objections were gradually reasoned or explained away. The arrangement of the books, beyond those having a chronological relation, was variable until after the final fixing of the contents of the collection.

No attempt will be made here at a close analysis or a critical examination of these books. Anything like accuracy would be impossible, all sorts of disputed matters would be broached, and the process would be confusing and tiresome. The purpose is only to give a general idea of when and how they were made up, and to state, as clearly and briefly as possible, their character and signifi-

cance, so far as it seems necessary to a clear understanding. The object is not to impress opinions upon the reader, but to enable him to form his own, and to add, if possible, to his interest in the process.

II

GENESIS

THERE is no reason to suppose that the Book of Genesis underwent any material change after it took its place, as a kind of historical introduction to the Torah, in the time of Ezra. We probably have it substantially as it came from the hands of the compiler, who in the reign of Hezekiah, at Jerusalem, a few years after the fall of Samaria and the destruction of the Northern Kingdom, undertook to unite into one narrative the two accounts of the origin and early history of the race, which are known to students of the subject as the Jehovist and Elohist "documents," respectively. The former, as we have already seen, was produced in the Northern Kingdom in the time of Jehu, not far from 850 B.C., and the latter, quite independently, at Jerusalem, perhaps twenty or thirty years later. The Jehovist made liberal use of the collection of legends of the patriarchs, which had been in existence since the days of Jeroboam I., and the compiler of the duplex version seems also to have had this in his hands, as well as other

material of which there is no trace except in his use of it.

The process of combination was so inartistic that the varied materials are quite distinguishable. Inconsistencies are not wholly effaced, incoherencies are frequent, and two or three versions of the same tradition are sometimes interwoven with incongruous effect. The opening account of the creation, occupying the first chapter and the first three verses of the second chapter, is that of the Elohist. It is based upon the Chaldaic cosmogony, and contains the system of six days for labor and the seventh for rest, which was derived from the Babylonians, and was the earliest basis of the Jewish observance of the Sabbath.

The Jehovist account of the creation is taken up at chapter ii., verse 4, and is in some respects essentially different from the other, though based upon common Chaldaic tradition. It contains the story of the Garden of Eden, the tempter and the fall, and that of Cain and Abel, and it consequently holds the germ of the doctrine of original sin. The Elohist knew nothing of the first couple and the baleful experience that doomed their progeny, but represents man as having been created "male and female," like the other animals, without restriction of number. When his account is resumed at chapter v., it proceeds to give the

“generations of Adam,” which in Chaldaic was a generic term for man, as Eve, in the other account, was the “mother of life.” Seth was the only son of Adam spoken of by the Elohist, but the genealogy of the descendants of Seth is only a variant of that of the descendants of Cain given in the other account, and both are based upon the mythical antediluvian dynasties of the Chaldeans.

The two accounts of the deluge, based upon the same Babylonian fable, differed little except in regard to Noah and his family after the flood, though in combining the two some confusion was produced in regard to numbers and periods of time. Noah figured in the old patriarchal legends, but only as a vine-dresser and the father of husbandry. There was nothing in these of the flood. It was the Jehovist who first turned that to account as a means of destroying the first breed of mankind for their wickedness, one righteous person with his family being saved to replenish the earth. He represents Noah as building an altar and making sacrifices to placate the Deity after the flood, while we owe to the Elohist the story of the covenant and the bow of promise.

The latter writer was much addicted to genealogies, of which there was greater store at Jerusalem than among the northern tribes, and from

this source is the passage beginning with chapter x., which purports to give the origin of the various peoples known to the writer as descendants of Noah. The names are mainly those of places and of tribes, and cover most of the geography within the range of the writer's knowledge. His record is broken by a fragment of older material containing the curious tale of the Tower of Babel, and then a special genealogy of Shem is made to lead up to the Abraham legend. Older than either of these writers is the matter containing the grosser passages, like the fragment concerning the race of giants, the commerce of the sons of God with the daughters of men, the drunkenness of Noah, and the story accounting for the Moabites and Ammonites as descendants of Lot, and consequently as in affinity with the descendants of Abraham. Chapter xiv. is also regarded as very ancient, and based upon a real historical tradition, in which Abraham appears as the chief of a powerful nomadic clan.

The following chapter, relating the vision of Abraham and the promise of a numerous progeny to possess the land of Canaan, is apparently older than the story of the migration from Ur of the Chaldees in chapter xii., which is from the pen of the Jehovist. The latter writer was the first to give a religious turn to the call of Abraham, and he laid

special stress upon the consecration of Bethel. The Elohist, to whom the seventeenth chapter mainly belongs, was concerned to carry the rite of circumcision back to Abraham and give it a religious significance, as the seal and token of the covenant with God, just as he connected the distinctively Jewish observance of the Sabbath with the Chaldaic account of the creation. The failure of the compiler to efface the inconsistencies in his chief material appears in two or three imperfectly blended accounts of Ishmael, the progenitor of the people of the desert, and two varying accounts of the birth of Isaac. In the story of Sodom and the destruction of the cities of the plain the oldest material comes to the surface without much change.

A curious example of the way an old tradition was divided and recombined may be noted, by way of illustrating the ancient process of making books which might come to be considered sacred. The old patriarchal legends had a story of Abraham passing his wife off as his sister with the Philistine king of Gerar. The Jehovist made two applications of this antique incident, one to Abraham and Sarah in Egypt, and the other to Isaac and Rebekah at Gerar, and the compiler retained all three of the versions. The duplication of the same tradition in connection with Abraham and Isaac also appears in the contest over the wells and the naming

of Beersheba, though the compiler made a slight effort to gloss it over with the assumption that the Philistines had filled up the wells of Abraham. The traditions of the ancient clan of the Isaakel were faint at best and had become mingled with those of Abraham and Jacob.

The compiler of Genesis blended the two versions of Abraham's migrations and the birth of his children in a rather perplexing manner, but the idyllic tale of the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah, the birth of Esau and Jacob, and the supplanting of the elder of the twins by the younger can be distinguished as the production of the Jehovist, while the genealogist of Jerusalem furnished the account of Abraham's second marriage with Keturah, and in general the "generations" of his offspring, including the long list of descendants of Esau in chapter xxxvi., which separates the mixed material leading up to the birth of the tribes from the continuous and fairly harmonious account of the "children of Israel" which follows.

In the combining of the narratives of Jacob's migrations, so much stress is laid upon the consecration of Bethel that it was described three times, although it had already been once attributed to Abraham. The journey to Haran and the marriage with the daughter of Laban, symbolic of the relations of Syria with Palestine, were described

at length by the Jehovist from material furnished by his predecessor, the author of the patriarchal legends, but there are apparent traces of the other document in the repetitions. It is noticeable that the writer of Jerusalem, who was connected with the temple, speaks of building an altar, where the other describes the setting up of a pillar.

The Elohist had no hand in the systematic account of Jacob's sons, beginning with chapter xxxvii., and it was drawn by the Jehovist with little variation from the patriarchal legends of the time of Jeroboam I. These were written after the characteristics of the several tribes were fully developed; and their ethnological significance has been considered in the earlier part of this volume. The compiler, writing after the Northern Kingdom had passed away, and when there was hope of reuniting the scattered tribes into one nation, took little pains to subdue the strong Northern tone and spirit of the narrative. The exaltation of Joseph, the preference of Ephraim to Manasseh, the almost scurrilous depreciation of Judah, and the currying of favor with little Benjamin, which was originally intended to detach it from the Southern Kingdom after the division, are all left as evidence that the old animosities had died with the disasters of Samaria.

The story of Joseph in Egypt was doubtless

wrought mainly out of material furnished by Jero-boam, who had enjoyed high favor in that country ; and in its main lines it corresponds with the old Egyptian tale of the "Two Brothers." The experience with Potiphar's wife is an incident common to several oriental tales, while dreams and interpretations thereof were stock material for this kind of folk-lore. Vivid and realistic as these descriptions were made by the genius who first put in form the old traditions of Israel and mingled in them so much poetic radiance and ethnic value, their only historic basis was the broad fact of the refuge of the ancient tribe or tribes in Egypt, in a time of protracted famine, and their continued sojourn there until they fell under oppression.

The so-called blessing of Jacob, in chapter xlix., probably did not belong to the original material, but was interpolated at some stage of the process of developing the record, though it is undoubtedly an early production of the Northern Kingdom, portraying the characteristics of the tribes from the point of view of the Ephraimites. Some of its obscurities give evidence of alteration to harmonize with Judean views. It contains distinct allusions, not only to the situation of the tribes, but to events in their experience, and there is about as much cursing as blessing in its tone. After the old bitterness of tribal division had passed away,

the picture was developed, softened, and made more harmonious in the farewell blessing attributed to Moses at the end of the Book of Deuteronomy.

The compiler of the Book of Genesis left internal evidence that his material was produced long after the events to which it was supposed to relate, in such phrases as "unto this day," "the Canaanite was then in the land," "before there reigned any king over the children of Israel," etc. The theological and moral conceptions are naturally those of the writers whose language was adopted, and fortunately they were not essentially modified in the processes of compiling and copying to which these books were so long subjected. A polytheistic tendency is observable in the oldest fragments, as in the references to the "sons of God" who begot demi-gods or "men of renown," to the "men" who visited Abraham under the oaks of Mamre and Lot in the city of Sodom, and the "angels" who descended on the heights of Luz.

The harsh and gloomy conception of the Deity which was developed in the accounts of Moses appears in the Jehovist's episodes of the Garden of Eden, Cain and Abel, the destruction of mankind by the flood, and the dispersion of the tower-builders; but, in the main, the Deity is embodied in human form and endowed with human attributes only mildly exaggerated. He walks in the

garden in the cool of the day, he shuts Noah in the ark, he goes down to "see the city and tower which the children of men builded," and he goes down to see whether the people of Sodom are as bad as they are reported to be. In short, the conception is like that of children, and characteristic of the childhood of the race.

The moral conceptions of the time of the writers were equally crude. Acts which would now be regarded as odious and repulsive are related with a naive indifference to their moral quality ; fraudulent and deceitful practices are spoken of with implied approbation, and the wickedness which excited the resentment of the Almighty seems to have consisted chiefly in the pride, presumption, and violence of men, when they set out to display power and activity on their own account. This was jealously treated as an attempt to rival divinity. In the thrice-told incident of the patriarch and his wife in a strange land there is question only of the man's safety, not of the woman's chastity. Abimelech's offence consisted in encroaching upon the husband's exclusive right, in the oriental sense. The ethical quality in Genesis is hardly greater or higher than in the "Odyssey" of Homer, but the book is a treasury in which the oldest traditions of the Hebrew race were stored, without art or skill, but with wonderful compactness.

III

THE BOOKS CONTAINING THE LAW

THE chief purpose in making the first collection of books which came to be regarded as sacred by the Jews, and by their two lines of religious heirs, was to embody the "laws" which had accumulated in an irregular mass during many generations. While these were spoken of as "laws" and "ordinances," and as "statutes," as well as "commands," they were never regarded as enactments to be enforced by secular authority, but as rules of conduct having a divine sanction. They were finally included, in a broken and scattered way, in the Books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, but additions or repetitions are found in the Book of Joshua, which properly belongs to the same series. They were connected with narrative passages, in part of older material and in part specially designed to introduce or to give stress to the various commands. Genesis is associated with the leading purpose of these books only through the "covenants" of Jehovah, or Elohim, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the

promises by which the people were bound by self-interest to the observance of the commands made in his name.

There is little trace in these books of the patriarchal legends, but the oldest of the narrative parts are derived mainly from the equally ancient collection, the Wars of Jehovah, or the Book of Jasher. It is not certain that Moses figured in either of those repositories of antique tradition, even as the leader of the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, but he appeared in that character in both the Jehovist and Elohist documents, from which the first twenty-four chapters of Exodus were mostly compiled. As a law-giver he was a later development. The narrative which leads up to the great scene at Mount Sinai is mostly that of the Jehovist, but there are variations and repetitions, and fragments of genealogy, which betray the hand of the Elohist, and there are also some traces of the still older material. The triumphal song after the passage of the Red Sea, which is contained in chapter xv., has been attributed to the Elohist writer, on account of the magnifying of the sanctuary at Jerusalem, but that can only be taken as evidence that it was not the work of the Jehovist. Its language indicates that it was later than either, and it was probably introduced by one of the subsequent compilers.

In style and subject it is similar to Psalms cv. and cvi., and like them may have been part of the floating material relating to the Exodus, wrought out of the old oral traditions.

There is nothing strange in the familiarity with Egypt and its customs and traditions shown by a writer of the Northern Kingdom in the ninth century B.C. There was constant communication between that country and Syria and Phœnicia, and the great caravan route passed over the territory of Israel. The horses and chariots of kings and the luxurious appointments of princes came mostly from Egypt. Solomon trafficked with the land of the Nile and allied himself with its reigning family. Jeroboam was not the only political exile who took refuge there, and of all foreign lands it contributed most to the knowledge possessed by the earlier Hebrew writers. There was plenty of material out of which to construct the story of the escape from bondage, and some of it can be traced to its origin in Egyptian fable.

The first chapters of Exodus are devoted largely to magnifying the power of Jehovah, as a prelude to the promulgation of his law. He is represented as bringing disaster after disaster upon Egypt, punishing the innocent multitude for the wrong-doing of their rulers, avowedly as a display of terrible power. The conception of the Deity contained in these chap-

ters is not attractive, but it was that of the authors of the first Jewish law, and was calculated to impress the people for whom they wrote. It underwent some modification in the process of developing the Torah.

The Book of the Covenant, originally embodied in the Jehovist narrative, is contained in chapter xx., verse 24, to chapter xxiii. 19 of the Book of Exodus, while the Decalogue in the earlier part of chapter xx. appeared in the Elohist document. The writer who combined the two primitive accounts included both these versions of Jehovah's first commands to his people, and connected them with the story of the awful demonstration on Mount Sinai. Chapter xxiv. of Exodus is a later *résumé* of divine commands, and the narrative of events is not taken up again with anything like continuity, until we reach the twentieth chapter of the Book of Numbers.

Thus the beginning of the Jewish Torah, contained in the four central chapters of the Book of Exodus, emanated almost simultaneously from the sanctuary of the Northern prophets, of what is sometimes called "the school of Elijah," in the time of Jehu, and from the purlicus of the first temple at Jerusalem in the days of Joash. It was the subject of progressive development from that time to the completion of the Pentateuch. New prescriptions were no doubt put in writing from

time to time, but the first great promulgation of the law was made in the time of Josiah and under the influence of Jeremiah. It was then presented in a formal and systematic way, indicative of studied preparation, and in a style quite different from that of the early narratives. It was in effect a codification of what was henceforth to be regarded as "the law," and was put in the form of statements by Moses of what Jehovah had commanded. This code extends from chapter iv., verse 44, to the end of chapter xxviii. of the Book of Deuteronomy, and was probably not much changed in later redactions.

The introductory chapters of Deuteronomy, in which Moses is portrayed as rehearsing to the people in the land of Moab the story of their previous wanderings, and announcing his commission to declare the statutes and judgments of God for their future guidance, and the three chapters following the statement of the law, in which he is represented as impressing upon the people the importance of its observance, and as writing it out as a parting legacy to Israel, and also as devolving the leadership thereafter upon Joshua, were supplied subsequently as a framework of the system.

At the same or possibly a different time two poems were appended to the book which are older in composition than the main body of it. These

are known as the Song of Moses and the Blessing of Moses. The former, in chapter xxxii., is considered by some as belonging to the material of the old narratives, but it has the characteristics of the earlier psalms, and appears to belong to the period of prophetic appeals and remonstrances, when the people were subject to the allurements of alien deities. The Blessing in chapter xxxiii. is equally foreign to the context, but wholly different in character and style from the Song. It seems to have been a development and rectification of the so-called "blessing" of Jacob, near the end of Genesis, more symmetrical and finished in form and in a different tone. It was probably written after the fall of Samaria, when the bitterness of the old division of the tribes had been allayed by the misfortunes of Ephraim, and the hope of reunion was still cherished. At all events, it is in a much softer spirit than the ancient benediction put in the mouth of the dying patriarch.

Between the two poems and following the second one we find broken passages of narrative, winding up the career of Moses and leaving the leadership to Joshua. These are among the finishing touches of the Pentateuch, applied after the various parts of the Torah had been collected and woven together in the time of Ezra.

Meantime the Levitical law had been taking form, beginning in the captivity, when Ezekiel indulged in visions of the restoration of Israel, the reconstruction of the great sanctuary, the establishment of a regular and permanent priesthood, and a highly developed system of the worship of Jehovah, as a safeguard for the future of the nation. In the last nine chapters of the book bearing his name the prophet set forth his ideal plan for the division and distribution of the people, the rebuilding of the temple, the provision for the priests and Levites, and the forms and observances of worship in the time to come. He was particularly concerned for the establishment of a regular hierarchy, the support of which should be a sacred duty, and he laid down rules regarding offerings and sacrifices. A provisional code, conforming to the outline and general ideas of his vision of the future temple and its service, was drawn up, if not by him, surely under his influence. This constituted the basis upon which the Levitical system was developed, but its development was the work of the priests, when the practical task of restoring the temple had been accomplished and its service was organized.

The first Levitical code, included in chapters xviii. to xxvi. of the Book of Leviticus, was liberally expanded, and into it were gathered many

prescriptions regarding personal cleanliness and health, public sanitary matters, social conduct and general morality, according to the crude conceptions of the times in which they originated. Numerous variations and repetitions indicate an accumulation from the past rather than fresh production. In the final compilation of the books of the law we find these scattered, with little regularity of form or coherency of statement, between Exodus xxiv. and Numbers xx., and in the last chapters of the latter book.

From the time of Josiah the effort to centralize worship at Jerusalem and to exalt the temple as an object of reverence was persistent, and that idea was the main inspiration of Ezekiel's visions when he dreamed of the restoration. It was strongly impressed upon those who led the returning exiles from Babylon, and who organized the service of the new temple. The aim, never lost sight of under Ezra and Nehemiah, was the religious unification of the restored people, and their exclusion from the seductive influences that had led their fathers astray.

With this view the hierarchy was assiduously built up, and its origin was associated with the oldest traditions of the Hebrews. In fact, it was attributed directly to the Deity, acting through his first great prophet, Moses. Aaron, who was

known by tradition to the earlier writers only as a brother and counsellor of Moses, was made the father of the priesthood and the first high-priest, and he and his descendants were consecrated by the Almighty to His own special service. The Levites, who had become a considerable class, received a special sanction for their duties, and their support was made a religious obligation by divine injunction, derived from the mysterious antiquity of the sojourn in the wilderness. The temple itself, its inner sanctuary, its altar and sacrificial appliances, were associated with the same remote origin by creating a prototype for it in the Ark of the Covenant and the Tent of Meeting.

Hence it was that elaborate descriptions of the construction of the ark in the wilderness and of its various appurtenances, and of the making of rich vestments for the priests, together with prescriptions for rites, ceremonies, and observances, proper to an organized priesthood, were woven into the narrative of the sojourn in the desert of Pharan. The combination of Egyptian, Phœnician, and Assyrian material and art was quite as conspicuous as in the earlier descriptions of the temple of Solomon. The writers were so much more concerned for their purpose of getting the solemn sanction of Jehovah through Moses for their new ecclesiastical system, that they gave no

heed to the demands of probability. They disregarded the absurdity of supposing that in the desert solitudes about Mount Sinai, the harassed people could make offerings of acacia wood, rich fabrics, costly metals, and precious stones, and could work with Tyrian art the gorgeous paraphernalia of a portable sanctuary and the appliances of a systematic and complicated worship.

The descriptions which begin in the twenty-fifth chapter of Exodus unquestionably date from the establishment of the priesthood and service of the second temple, and were intended to connect these with a sacred origin in the wilderness. Between the description given in the instructions to Moses and its repetition in the account of their execution there are some fragments of older narrative, interspersed with repetition of commands and injunctions. The episode of the golden calf may have been intended as a warning against such offences as that of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who set up a golden calf at each of the chief sanctuaries of the Northern tribes, when he returned from Egypt to become the ruler of the new kingdom. The continual stress laid upon commands against idolatry and the worship of the gods of Canaan evidently came from the bitter experiences through which the people had already passed,

when this tissue of law and legend was finally wrought.

The description of the Tent of Meeting at the end of the Book of Exodus served to furnish an introduction to the proclamation of the Levitical prescriptions as to offerings and sacrifices, and in the course of their statement incidents are interspersed illustrative of their application. The danger of any departure from their strict requirements was impressed by the fate of the sons of Aaron, when they offered "strange fire." The rules regarding food, cleanliness, leprosy, etc., were a heterogeneous collection of the crude ideas of the priests, in matters of health and personal habits, and their interest is historical and not moral or scientific, much less religious. The same may be said of the curious trace of heathenism preserved in the account of Azazel, or the Scapegoat.

The methods of worship by sacrifices, burnt offerings, etc., were those prevalent at the time among all nations, and were based upon the conception of the Deity as a dangerous being who must be constantly placated. The formal code, first devised with reference to the restoration of the temple and the establishment of the priesthood, is introduced with an impressive exordium in the eighteenth chapter of Leviticus. An anecdote illustrating the penalty for blasphemy is brought in

abruptly in chapter xxiv., and the last chapter of the book is an addition of older substance. The obvious diversity of material and the imperfect way in which it was wrought together form a striking corroboration of what can be otherwise learned of the origin of the completed Torah of the Jews.

IV

EPISODES AND FRAGMENTS. JOSHUA

THE enumeration and classification which is contained in the first chapters of the Book of Numbers, and which gave that book its title, constitute an artificial scheme in which the figures are greatly exaggerated. It was devised in or after the time of the captivity, as an introduction to the plan of setting apart the Levites and organizing their service as distinct from that of the priests. The continual repetitions from the collection of "laws" in the hands of the compilers indicate an anxiety on their part to discard nothing upon which the stamp, "the Lord spake unto Moses," had been put. Here and there a fragment of narrative apparently ancient is interjected, sometimes with the evident purpose of enforcing some lesson and sometimes with no evident purpose, except to preserve the fragments that nothing be lost. In these we get occasional glimpses of trouble in the camps in the wilderness, in which Jehovah interposed to punish those who rebelled and to vindicate the authority of Moses.

Whether there was any basis in ancient tradition for the story of the revolt of Korah or not, it seems to have been used to enforce the claims of the descendants of Aaron to the exclusive functions of the priesthood, and to emphasize the newly established distinction between those functions and the duties of the Levites.

The episode of Balaam, the prophet of Pethor "by the River," forms a quaint and interesting passage in the Book of Numbers, beginning in the twenty-second chapter. It follows shortly after the resumption of the narrative of the journey out of the wilderness, which is here made up in part by a fusion of the first accounts with the still older material of the Wars of Jehovah, and which contains one or two misplaced repetitions of the ancient traditions, notably that of the Waters of Meribah. The Israelites had two entirely different traditions of Balaam. The one employed in this episode represented him as a seer of high renown, through whom the oracles of the Almighty were uttered, though he belonged to a foreign and heathen people, and there is an allusion to him in the same character by the prophet Micah (chapter vi. 5), which was evidently based upon the story in Numbers xxii.-xxiv.; but chapter xxxi. of Numbers speaks of Balaam's counsel as having caused the children of Israel to trespass, and as

having brought the plague upon them, and he is there said to have been slain with the kings of Midian.

The two stories were certainly of different origin, and the killing of the heathen sorcerer is stated again in Joshua xiii. The grotesque touch about the angel and the ass, which mars the otherwise dignified and poetical story of the appearance of Balaam on the banks of the Arnon, is an interpolation, and was probably a perversion of something in the later and unfavorable tradition, for that gave rise to all manner of ludicrous representations of the Mesopotamian seer. The interest and significance of the effort of the King of Moab to get the greatest prophet of the time to curse Israel lies in the picture it affords of the prevalent conception of the powers and functions of the seer, and in the specimens that are preserved in the story of the vaticination current at the time it was written. It is needless to add that the predictions regarding the future of Israel, like those in the Benediction of Jacob and the Blessing of Moses, were of Israelite origin, and were made after the establishment of the kingdom. The narrative in which they are incased is a patchwork from the Jehovist and Elohist documents and the Book of the Wars of Jehovah.

The ancient narrative is again interrupted with

an account of a second enumeration of the tribal forces, no more authentic than the first and having a similar purpose, and repetitions from the "laws" continue to be scattered along in an incoherent fashion. Moses is represented as directing the attacks upon the Midianites and the Amorites on the east of the Jordan, and assigning the acquisitions there to the Reubenites and Gadites and the Machirite branch of Manasseh, though that region was in reality long occupied by all Israel, and the conquest of territory to the west of the Jordan was made much later. He is also described as giving full instructions regarding the allotment of possessions in the "promised land," laying special stress upon provision for the Levites and for "cities of refuge," all of which belonged to the ideal scheme of the restoration after the captivity; and it affords internal evidence of the late production of this part of the book. It comes in fact from a portion of the Mosaic legend, which was not developed until about the time of Ezekiel.

In the final redaction of the series known as the Pentateuch the Book of Numbers was made to end with a statement that these were the commandments and judgments delivered by the hand of Moses in the plains of Moab, thus furnishing a connecting link with the introductory passages of

Deuteronomy, while a chapter was added to the latter book winding up the career of Moses on Mount Nebo. In all the long period and the varied experience of Israel since those days of dim antiquity there had not arisen a prophet "like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face," for it had taken all that interval of tribal and national life and growth to develop the system which was attributed to the first great leader and law-giver, but of which he was really the product.

Although the Book of Joshua was not included in the Torah, but was made the first in the collection of the *Nebiim*, it has a close historical connection with the Book of Numbers, and is almost as curiously composite as that production, though less fragmentary and incoherent in construction. It is generally associated by recent critics with the books that precede it in the present arrangement, and the six have been designated as the *Hexateuch*. Joshua contains parts of the primitive record of the Hebrew people, made up from the earliest documents in the time of Hezekiah, and grounded upon the old legends of the Wars of Jehovah; but these were transmuted in the several processes of adapting the record to the development of the Jewish law. Out of these ancient tales came such incidents as those connected with the crossing of the Jordan, the taking

of Jericho, the destruction of "Ai," and the victories at Gibeon. It is to be noted that the oldest of the material used by the compiler of the book was later than the rebuilding of Jericho in the time of Ahab. A curious instance of the use made of the antique material is seen in the description of the battle of Gibeon, where a hyperbolical apostrophe to the sun and moon from the Book of Jasher is followed by a matter-of-fact statement that those luminaries really stood still at the command of Joshua.

This entire book is quite unhistorical in its character. It crowds together the exploits of a prolonged and irregular process of conquest and subjugation, and ascribes them to a commander who was altogether legendary, if not quite mythical. One instance may be cited to illustrate this characteristic. Joshua is described as slaying Jabin, the King of Hazor, and burning his capital, but the Book of Judges, a much earlier production and ostensibly covering a wider range of events, has a very different story of the struggle of Israel with this King of Hazor, against whom they prevailed more and more until they had destroyed him. There was in fact no such systematic and rapid conquest of the country, no such extermination and slaughter, no such butcheries as are here attributed to divine command. The nar-

rative is artificial and mostly of a date long subsequent to the establishment of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

The allotment of lands and the distribution of tribes accord only vaguely with a situation at any time actually existing, and seem to have been made by the writer with reference to the ideal system contemplated for a possible future. Among the latest and most studied interpolations are those which support the Levitical scheme, and these could not have been written prior to the captivity, as this scheme did not then exist. Nothing was known before that time of the "cities of refuge" and the cities and towns assigned to the Levites, some of which were not in the possession of the Israelites until long after the supposed conquests of Joshua. There are other evidences that portions of the book were modified to sustain the later prescriptions of the law, some of which, indeed, it repeats, and Joshua is represented in his old age as recalling to the people what their God had done for them and against their enemies, and as impressing upon them the duty of obeying his commands and cleaving to his worship. The aged leader is even said to have written his injunctions in the "book of the law of God," and to have set up a "great stone" at the sanctuary of Shechem as the witness of a new covenant with the people.

Surely the first six books of the Old Testament are more intelligible and far more interesting and instructive, considered as the product of the life and experience during several centuries of the most remarkable people of antiquity, the only people of antiquity that still survives, though dispersed among the nations of the earth. From the beginning to the end of the process of producing these books was a period of at least four centuries, and the beginning was not less than five hundred years after the escape out of Egypt and the wandering in search of the ancestral home of the race.

As has been stated in the historic outline which forms the first part of this volume, during most of the long period from the deliverance to the establishment of the two kingdoms the people had no written records. Their only memorials were the rude altar, the stone pillar set up in the ground, and the heap of loose stones, or *gilgal*, which helped to keep in the mind of one generation after another some notable event or experience. But a rich store of oral tradition had grown up; the popular memory was filled with tales of past trials and triumphs, reaching back to the fables of Babylon and Nineveh and the migrations of the fathers of the tribes from the "great river" to the "river of Egypt," over the

plains of Syria, the hills of Canaan, and the weird valley of the Dead-Sea region, and passing through the bondage in Egypt, the escape through the deserts and the recovery of the land claimed as their own by ancient inheritance and divine promise.

A long line of teachers had developed conceptions of deity and of duty which grew with advancing intelligence and rising moral sense. There is nothing in human literature elsewhere analogous to this imbedding in one conglomerate mass, as by the fusing and blending of geologic processes, of the results of the experience of a race for centuries of its early life. The bulk of the prescriptions and prohibitions of the ancient Jewish law have no application to modern life, and are only of historic interest. So far as a moral standard can be derived from the general mass, it is not a high one. The idea of justice at its best did not attain a broad or exalted level, and of the gentler virtues there was hardly a dim notion. The God of the Torah was created in the image of man, not kindly, benignant, or magnanimous, but harsh, jealous, and vengeful — addicted to fierce outbursts of wrath, but placated by shows of repentance and humility, and ready to reward submissive service. Regarded as an embodiment of the conception of divinity which prevailed among the

Hebrews, the highest conception of that early time, and one which furnished a powerful factor in the conceptions of the purer religion which sprang from their ancient faith, it is an impressive subject of study.

V

JUDGES. RUTH

THE Book of Judges contains a more continuous mass of the original material of ancient Hebrew literature than any other book in the entire collection. There is little doubt that it was put in substantially its present form in the time of Hezekiah, as a sequel to the early story of the life of Israel formed by combining the two parallel accounts, as already described; but, unlike that story, it underwent comparatively little retouching to make it conform to ideas wrought out in the process of developing the Mosaic law. It is a book of legends drawn mainly from the popular treasury of the Wars of Jehovah, and the primitive formation, which appears in broken and mingled strata in Genesis and comes occasionally to the surface in other parts of the Hexateuch, is here almost free from the effects of fusion and the overlaying of later material. There are breaks and crevices, occasional signs of the blending of contiguous veins of tradition and slight indications of expansion, but on the whole we have a pristine

product of the first literary activity of the Semitic genius.

In the opening chapters there are evidences of the efforts of the "harmonizers" to bring this series of episodes of the days of the "judges" into accord with the artificial account of the conquest in the Book of Joshua, but they failed to obliterate the glaring inconsistencies and direct contradictions, and fortunately the process of sophistication was not carried far. It left unmarred a number of vivid pictures of the rude life of the Hebrew clans, striving to establish themselves and to maintain possession of the land which they had invaded. These show that the inhabitants had neither been slaughtered nor driven out, and no such result was ever attained by the petty and irregular conflicts that were kept up until long after the establishment of the kingdom.

These scenes present our earliest view of the people of Israel in the light and atmosphere of reality. As we contemplate them it is evident that there we see the beginning of the life and character that are to develop under kings and prophets, law-givers and priests, through all the vicissitudes of this peculiar people, for the production of Judaism—the common prologue to Christianity and Mohammedanism; and that those lurid sketches of the infant world, those idyllic

glimpses of patriarchal life, and the sombre revelations of Jehovah in the solitudes of Sinai have been projected across this open field of reality and portrayed upon the mist.

But there is the color and the throb of flesh and blood, the crude vigor of primitive humanity in Ehud, the left-handed Benjaminite, and the fat King of Moab; in Sisera and the daring wife of Heber, the Kenite, with Deborah shouting her anthem of triumph, more ancient than the story with which it is connected; in the exploits of Gideon in punishing the marauders of Midian and Amalek, and in the overweening and bloody ambition of his son, Abimelech; in the deeds of the bold brigand of Gilead, summoned from his stronghold at Tob to become the champion of the Lord at Mizpah; in the prowess of Samson, a very picture-book giant in his light-hearted valor and his dismal fate, as void of moral purpose as the hero of a fairy tale, Nazarite though he was; in the easy virtue of the wandering Levite and the daring of the Danites who stole the oracle of Jehovah in the hill country of Ephraim and violently dispossessed the quiet and secure people of Laish; in the experiences of that other Levite whose concubine played the harlot and met a horrible fate at Gibeah, where the prevailing morals were not distinguishable from those of Sodom in the time of

Lot; and in the fratricidal war that grew out of this outrage, and the barbarous amends to Benjamin for the loss of his wives and children.

Here is humanity as gross and genuine as in the first rude annals of any race, and as devoid of moral sense and religious spirit. Those people knew nothing of even the germs of the law which centuries later was thrown back of their history; and all those forms, modes, and shows of worship, built up in after time, were unheard of by them. Their notions of Jehovah differed little from Moab's notions of Chemosh, and Ammon's notions of Baal, and they were apt to mix their gods. The oracles set up by Gideon and by Micah illustrate the conception of those days in matters of divinity; Jephthah's vow shows that human sacrifice lingered even in Israel, and no legend in history exhibits ranker barbarism than the account of the war of the other tribes upon Benjamin.

These episodes are of supreme interest for the light they cast upon the condition of the tribes before they were consolidated into a kingdom, when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes," and irresponsible leaders arose in time of trouble to rescue the people and to repel their enemies. The record is mutilated and fragmentary, but the picture is fairly complete. That the original legends were of the Northern Kingdom is

evident from the little attention given to Judah, which virtually constituted the Southern realm. The scenes are almost wholly among the tribes of the North and in that section of Manasseh east of the Jordan.

In the Book of Judges are many indications of late touches in the process of redaction, out of harmony with the context, especially in the first three and the last three chapters. The song put in the mouth of Deborah and Barak is independent of the prose narrative of the defeat of Jabin, and an older composition. It is doubtless one of the oldest of the popular chants in which events were commemorated long before their words were written down, and it formed part of the material out of which the prose narrative was made ; but there are signs of alteration in the text as finally preserved.

The miraculous appears in this as in most ancient collections of historical tradition, and in the same crude way ; and, as in all the Hebrew annals, failures and calamities are attributed to the displeasure of Jehovah at some wrong-doing of the people, and successes are credited to his direction, however questionable or barbarous the means by which they are gained. It was out of this persistent recognition of the authority and power of the national deity, especially by the writers of

these annals, that the theocratic system was finally developed and the doctrine of an overruling providence was bequeathed to later times.

The charming idyl of Ruth used to be regarded as a pendant to the Book of Judges, and there is reason to believe that in the first collection of the Hebrew scriptures it formed a part of it; but it is entirely different in style and tone and of much later composition than the original material of that book. Its date cannot be determined, as there is no sign of its existence before its appearance in the scriptural collection, long after the return from exile. It is believed by some to have been written after the captivity, but of this there is no evidence, and while it is later than the classical period of Hezekiah, it is superior in literary quality to anything that has come down from the post-exilic period.

But the time of its production is of little consequence. It seems to have no special moral or religious purpose, but it presents a beautiful picture of the softer and gentler side of life and manners "in the days when the judges judged," as they were imagined in later days. It affords a pleasing contrast with the brutal and bloody scenes of the Book of Judges, and breathes kindness even for Moab, the traditional enemy of Israel. Its purpose is generally assumed to be to account for the

origin of the family of David, but that comes in only casually at the very end, and in a way to suggest after-thought. The statement as to Obed, that "he is the father of Jesse, the father of David," may be a later addition to the story, as the bit of genealogy which follows surely was, being taken from the Book of Chronicles. In the serious account of David in the Book of Samuel, unquestionably an earlier production, there is no attempt to trace his pedigree, and it was probably unknown. The Book of Ruth is as far as possible from being historical, and it needs no special purpose to commend it to our admiration. It is an antique gem in a rude setting.

VI

THE BOOK OF SAMUEL

WHAT have long been called the two Books of Samuel were originally one, and form a continuous, though irregular, narrative. It is made up largely of the same kind of material that appears in the Book of Judges, but received much greater additions and interpolations at the hands of compilers and copyists. Like that and the Book of Kings, now also divided into two, it received substantially its final form in the interval between the promulgation of the law in its Deuteronomic version and the establishment of the Levitical system, probably in the early years of the Babylonian exile. The patchwork in its composition is almost as evident, though not so incongruous, as that of the Book of Numbers, which was compiled later and of more varied material.

The original legend of the prophet Samuel was pieced out with passages of later origin, so that he is brought to the close of his career two or three times, and appears in at least two quite different aspects. The story of his life as a priest at Shiloh

practically ends at the beginning of the eighth chapter, and the passage that follows is of different material. The poetical prayer of Hannah is a late insertion, and in the prophet's reply to the demand for a king there is an evident and not very friendly reference to the reign of Solomon. Two different accounts of bringing Saul to the throne are blended without effacing their inconsistencies, and this use of two traditions relating to the same event without reconciling them with each other is characteristic of the greater part of the book. There are distinct indications of the hand of the Deuteronomic compiler in chapter xii. The whole narrative to chapter xv. is made up of anecdotes, after the manner of Judges, but less homogeneous in character. That chapter itself is an interpolation from a different source, and what follows to chapter ix. of the Second Book is devoted mainly to developing the career of David.

In this there is the same mingling of discordant material as in what relates to Samuel and Saul, but Saul is soon given up as a failure by the Lord and Samuel disappears from the scene, while David makes his way to the throne in the most picturesque fashion. His first introduction to Saul is described in two widely different ways, and in several places in the story of his adventures there are signs of mixing two or more tra-

ditions regarding the same event. This is quite evident in the famous tale of the giant of Gath. The couplet several times repeated, referring to David's prowess as a warrior, was doubtless from poetical material relating to his exploits, the rest of which was transmuted into prose. The barbarism of the time is hardly more veiled in this part of Samuel than in Judges. The material drawn from the old Book of the Wars of Jehovah continues to be visible down to David's establishment of his power over all Israel at Jerusalem, and the lament over the death of Saul and Jonathan is distinctly credited to the Book of Jasher. The section of the Book of Samuel relating to the rise of David and the planting of his dynasty ends with chapter viii. of what is called the Second Book.

Chapters ix. to xx. of Second Samuel form a distinct work from that which precedes, and the first two chapters of Kings, relating to the close of David's career, seem to belong to it. It is a continuous account of the doings of David and of the intrigues of his court, and it is traced either by an unfriendly hand or by that of a friend of peculiar candor. The most scandalous episode, that of the king and the wife of Uriah the Hittite, is considered by acute critics as an interpolation and as intended to throw discredit upon the mother of

Solomon. But for the most part the account seems to have the color and flavor of the time, and the original material must have taken form soon after the events. It evidently underwent little modification at the hands of the compilers, and was rather intractable to the process of priestly revision. The author of the Chronicles found himself constrained to cast it aside altogether as inconsistent with his purpose.

The last four chapters of Samuel form a late interpolation, made up of miscellaneous fragments which some scribe was reluctant to throw away. It includes the story of Rizpah and her sons, another version of the Goliath legend, a variant of the eighteenth psalm, which has no relation to the context, the alleged last words of David, a collection of odds and ends of tradition relating to him and his warriors, and an account of famine and pestilence due to the heinous offence of taking a census. Thus far we find little elevation of moral or religious sentiment above the level of the days when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes," and the King of Israel is far from the saintly pedestal to which he was elevated by later writers.

VII

THE BOOK OF KINGS

THE Book of Kings, arbitrarily divided in the modern Bible into two books, is perhaps the best example in the Old Testament of the ancient Hebrew manner of dealing with literary material, especially that of a legendary and historical character. It was never digested and wrought into a new and symmetrical work, but mechanically pieced together, and successive revisers made additions, interpolations, and variations to suit the purpose uppermost in the mind of each. The final product was a patchwork with many incongruities which there is no means of fully explaining or clearing up, because the material that was not used in any of the processes was at last cast away and lost beyond recovery. On the fall of Samaria the writers of the Northern Kingdom took refuge at Jerusalem with such of the store of legends and records belonging to them as they were able to save, and when the Judean capital was taken and the priests and scribes of the temple were carried away to Babylon, they gathered up the accu-

mulated treasures as best they could, and it was in the early years of the exile that the annals of the two kingdoms were put in something like the shape in which they have been preserved.

The first two chapters of the Book of Kings form an integral part of the story of David and connect with the twentieth chapter of Second Samuel, and the work of the chief compiler of this book itself begins with the reign of Solomon. How complete a compilation may have existed before the captivity, and how far it may have been the work of the same hand that finished the record, it is hard to say, but everything points to the supposition that someone belonging to the company of Jeremiah became the custodian of the disordered material and completed the work. It is almost certain that this writer also arranged, we might almost say disarranged, the declamations of the prophet and wrote the connecting narrative, which may account for the otherwise remarkable fact that Jeremiah is not mentioned in Kings in connection with the events of the reign of Josiah and his successors, in which he played such a prominent part.

It is certain that the dominant idea of the principal compiler of the Book of Kings, as we have it, was to give a color to the history of the two kingdoms in keeping with the Deuteronomic version of the law, and that most of his interpolations and

changes were made with that view. It is equally certain that where the distinction between priests and Levites is made and the separate functions of the latter are emphasized, it is due to modifications made in later revisions, for this distinction was not established until after the exile, while the Deuteronomic code was equally unknown to the authors of the older parts of this book. In the last form into which the variegated material was wrought there are cases of repetition, of the use of two different traditions of the same event without effacing inconsistencies, of breaks and transpositions, and even of the introduction into the text of what were originally marginal notes and glosses. There were evidently many variations produced in copying, and the Greek version of the Septuagint differed in many details from the Hebrew text which became the basis of modern translations.

As to what may be called the original material, there was evidently much from the same mass of legends and traditions that formed the bulk of the Book of Judges and furnished the groundwork of the Book of Samuel, mostly from the Northern Kingdom ; there were dry records kept by official scribes at Jerusalem, and there were apparently separate collections of the "acts" or doings of certain kings and prophets. The point of view of

the compiler was that of Judah, and he could never forgive the revolt of Jeroboam, or look upon anything but the unfavorable side of the conduct of his successors, save in the rare instances in which they were in sympathy with the King of Judah. The tendency to idolatry and alien worship in the Northern realm is exaggerated, and the conduct of its rulers is painted in dark colors. The predilection of the compiler for the policy of centralizing worship at the temple in Jerusalem and discountenancing the rural sanctuaries, which was a late development, distorted his estimate even of the earlier kings of Judah, to whom that policy was quite unknown.

The record, considered as historical, was further vitiated by the adoption of an artificial system of chronology, assuming twelve periods of forty years from the exodus to the building of the temple, and a like interval from that time to the return from captivity, and by an attempt to force events into compliance with the system. This chronology is erroneous in its general outline and full of inaccuracies of detail.

The story of Solomon's reign is almost apart in style and material from the rest of the book, but it gives evidence of more than one source. The account of the dedication of the temple is almost wholly a late composition, and is saturated with

the Deuteronomic spirit, which is especially evident in the prayer put in the mouth of the king. In style and ideas it is centuries later than the building of the temple and wholly out of keeping with the character of Solomon, as presented in the older material. The stories of the king's wonderful wisdom belong to the Solomon legend, which developed long after the events of his reign, but it is older than the representations of his character which would make him the founder of the exclusive national worship at Jerusalem. The oldest material relating to him produces the most vivid impression, as in his dealings with Hiram, his alliance with Egypt, his oriental luxury and easy tolerance of foreign worship.

It is not necessary, and it would be tiresome, to point out in detail the peculiarities of the series of narratives of the kings of Judah and Israel, which indicate variety of source and inartistic use of material. The most striking and significant parts of the whole book are those in which Elijah and Elisha figure, and in none are its chief characteristics more conspicuous. These descriptions were undoubtedly of Northern origin, and they relate almost wholly to events in the Samaritan kingdom, but they were expanded by at least one of the compilers or revisers with material drawn from the later legends of the prophets. The ex-

istence of more than one source is evident upon the face of the broken narratives, which are pieced irregularly into the fabric. The similarity of the names and the parallelism of incidents suggest the probability that there was but one actual personage behind the two imposing figures of Elijah and Elisha. The account nearest to the events and having the greatest appearance of actuality is that which connected Elisha with incidents of the reign of Ahab and the accession of Jehu, and it looks as though the more weird and imposing personality of his forerunner was evolved from two separate lines of traditions blended together, and from the strong impression produced by the startling interventions of a prophet of Jehovah against the influence of Baal.

The parallelisms are noticeable in the stories of the widow's unfailing cruise of oil, and the bringing of her dead son back to life at Zarephath, and the pot of oil from which many vessels were filled, and the resuscitation of the child of the Shunamite, and in the references to the anointing of Jehu and Hazael, which in the story is assigned to Elijah to be done, and is actually done by Elisha, after an interval occupied with various events covering a long period. The account of Ahab's acquisition of Naboth's field or vineyard is also associated with both prophets in a manner

indicating two different sources, and raising the surmise that there was really but one prophet.

As the form in which we have these episodes was produced two or three centuries after the time to which they relate, out of materials of different origin and different ages, and as the miraculous incidents mingled with historical fact necessarily stamp them as legendary, it is a reasonable surmise that the mysterious prophet of Horeb and Carmel, whose appearances produced such a startling effect and left such a lasting impression, was elevated into an ideal personality, and was portrayed by the prosaic writers who made up the record under two different aspects, the one individuality disappearing in a whirlwind and leaving his mantle to the other, who was to emerge into the light of history and take part in the notable change of dynasty at Samaria. Among the minor indications that may be noted is the fact that while Elijah was called the Tishbite, there was no place from which that designation could be derived, and that the exclamation, "the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof," put in the mouth of Elisha when Elijah disappeared, is also put in the mouth of King Joash when Elisha was about to die.

The fragmentary character of the material of the Book of Kings, the unskilful way in which it

was used by a succession of compilers and revisers, and the disappearance of the rest of the mass from which it was drawn, leave a wide field for conjecture and erudition, but the present purpose is only to state what is known and to point out such internal indications as are interesting and significant of the general character of the book. It is, of course, not historical in the strict sense, but it presents pictures of the two kingdoms, with strong lights and shades, and with distorted reflections thrown back from a time when both had passed away, and it affords the means of studying the life and character of the Hebrew people when Judaism was going through an important stage of its development.

VIII

THE BOOK OF CHRONICLES

A CENTURY and a half or more after the restoration of Jerusalem and the temple, and the establishment of the Levitical system of law and of worship, toward the end of the peaceful domination of the Persian power in the fourth century B.C., a scribe attached to the temple service undertook to rewrite the history of Israel and present it from the point of view of his class, "the priests and the Levites." He had under his hand the Book of Kings, from which he made liberal extracts when it suited his purpose, and he seems also to have had a variety of other material, more or less historical, including a confused mass of tribal genealogies. He practically ignored the Northern Kingdom, and confined himself to the line of David, and he gave very little attention to the part played by the prophets in the experience of the nation.

There is only a passing reference to Elijah, in which he is said to have sent a warning to King Jehoram of Judah, in writing, at a time when, ac-

according to the account in Kings, the prophet must already have disappeared from the face of the earth. There is a scant allusion to Isaiah in the reign of Hezekiah, and a mere reference to Jeremiah, as lamenting the death of Josiah, and as speaking "from the mouth of the Lord" words that were fulfilled by the desolation of the land after the conquest of Nebuchadnezzar. The priests and Levites, on the other hand, are made to figure prominently, and the chief purpose of the writer was to attribute the establishment of the whole Levitical system of worship to David and Solomon, although it had no existence before the captivity. He carries back to the first temple at every opportunity the liturgical and musical service of the second, and represents the priests and Levites as having the functions then which they exercised in the writer's own time.

Chronicles, like the books of Samuel and Kings, is properly only one book, the division having been arbitrarily made long after it was first included in the scriptures of the Hebrews. The first chapters are taken up with disconnected genealogies, starting with Adam, interspersed with scraps of historical tradition. The names are largely those of places, and of tribes, clans, and families, rather than of persons, and where numbers are given they are generally manifestly exaggerated.

Statistics were in fact unknown in ancient oriental history. Reckoning in numbers was not carried far, and anything beyond a very moderate computation was boldly stated in large round numbers, having really no more definite meaning than the phrase "like the sand which is upon the seashore." Even in the genealogical portion of the book the purpose is not overlooked of giving an ancient origin to the Levites and to their peculiar place and function in the post-exilic time.

The chief exploit of the author of the Chronicles is taking the life and color out of the history of David and Solomon, and completely transforming the character of those two interesting potentates. As he was only concerned with the Judean dynasty he makes but slight reference to Saul; and instead of the outlaw of Adullam and the robust brigand of Ziklag, with his picturesque adventures, we have a chosen and obedient servant of Jehovah to whom victories came as a matter of course, and to whose support the people flock at every opportunity. We are permitted to know nothing of the crafty and bloody deeds of Joab, who is merely an exemplary officer of the military. When David becomes king we lose sight of the heroic warrior of the old accounts, and are edified with a monarch devoting his time to organizing the service of the sanctuary, in the form in which

it was described in the Levitical narrative, and preparing for a permanent temple, to be built by his successor. There is nothing of those sinful doings that gave David and his family a human interest; no falling a victim to the charms of Bathsheba, no scandals among the royal princes, no revolt of Absalom, no picture of the poor old king hounded by the handsome reprobate, or of the intrigues of court and harem over the succession. David finally dies in the most peaceful manner, full of days and honors, and passes his authority quietly over to Solomon with pious injunctions.

There is nothing of the beautiful Abishag or the plotting Adonijah. The only iniquity of the king appears to have been that terrible offence of census-taking, which must needs account for a period of famine and pestilence. But in the meantime he has busied himself with priests and Levites, and with choirs and instruments of music, and he is described as consecrating the ark with psalmody that originated after the exile, as the psalms of praise from which that in 1 Chronicles xvii. is made up unquestionably did. A few of the old incidents, especially of wars, are repeated in a cold and colorless way, except where they are copied from Samuel, while much space is given to an account of establishing the service of the priests and Levites, which is anachronistic as well as fictitious,

and to descriptions of propositions for building the temple, which clearly contradict those in the Book of Kings.

The Solomon of this author is as exemplary and edifying as his revered father, and as strikingly in contrast with himself as he was depicted a few centuries nearer to his own day. He receives the throne as of divine and paternal right, without question from any side, and with it plans and materials for the house of God, which he proceeds to construct, with the kindly aid of "Hiram" of Tyre, who, for a Phœnician, was strangely possessed with a devout regard for the God of Israel. The account of the dedication is largely copied from the Book of Kings, but there is some Levitical expansion of the ceremonies. We have the stories of the wisdom and power and riches of Solomon, but nothing of the luxurious and seductive harem, or of the falling away to false gods. The David and Solomon of the Chronicles are beings of quite a different mould from the David and Solomon of the old legends embodied in Samuel and Kings, though the latter book underwent much pious editing. They are the idealized founders, not of the kingdom, which in the days of the Levite scribe had passed away beyond hope, but of the temple and its worship. To make them the founders of Judaism as it then existed seems to

have been the chief object of this literary product of a decadent age.

After the division into two kingdoms the writer makes merely incidental references to that of the North, and only when the rulers of the two come in contact, either as allies or enemies, and these references are not only slight in extent but slighting in tone. He sometimes appropriates passages from the Book of Kings, and at other times varies materially from its narratives and makes additions to them. The latter consist largely of interjections of the Levitical system into a record of events that preceded its existence, as in Abijah's defiance of Jeroboam, the restoration of the line of David in the person of the boy Joash by the action of the priests and Levites, and the renovations of the temple under Jehoshaphat, Joash, and Hezekiah. There is an inconsistency with the earlier record in representing Asa as having suppressed the "high places" and centralized worship in the temple, a reform which was not seriously attempted before the time of Josiah. But the most glaring inconsistency is to be found in the statements as to the defeat and captivity of the sinful Manasseh, and his repentance and amendment. This is in effect a contradiction of the previous account and has no support in historical evidence.

The freest developments of the narrative, from

the Levitical point of view of the second temple, are to be found in the treatment of the reigns of Jehoshaphat, Uzziah, Hezekiah, and Josiah, the kings whose conduct was most in accord with the religious tendency directed by the prophets, and the evident purpose was to claim a liberal share of the credit for the priests, whose influence was actually rather feeble in those earlier times, and for the Levites, who had no influence at all and did not exist as an organized body. The important occurrences which followed the death of Josiah and ended in Babylonian exile are scantily referred to as of no consequence for the main purpose of the writer. The Book of Chronicles has little historical value, so far as the details of events are concerned, and is chiefly of interest as illustrating the view of the past which was held in the purlieus of the temple in the fourth century B.C.

IX

EZRA, NEHEMIAH

THE books of Ezra and Nehemiah form a sequel to that of Chronicles, covering the events of the return from captivity, the restoration of the temple and its worship, and the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. They were first known as the first and second books of Esdras, or Ezra, and were compiled from several documents by the author of the Chronicles, with connecting interpolations of his own. Nehemiah left a personal memoir of his administration as the representative of Persian authority, and his historical character is clear and distinct. Ezra's activity was earlier in its connection with events, and later in being recorded, and as a historical figure he is vague and uncertain. The probability seems to be that he died prior to Nehemiah's mission to Jerusalem, and that in the final account the dates were forced to bring them together.

The memoir left by Nehemiah, which is undoubtedly authentic and underwent little change except from the errors of copyists, comprises the

first seven chapters of the book which now bears his name, chapter xi., which connects directly with chapter vii., verses 27 to 45 of chapter xii., and chapter xiii., beginning with verse 4. While Nehemiah was only a representative of secular authority, he had been zealous in establishing observance of the law and maintaining the religious separatism of the Jews. With this view he was especially strenuous for a strict regard for the Sabbath and for enforcing the Deuteronomic prohibition of mixed marriages. His prominence in matters of worship and religious observance appears to have excited the emulation, not to say the jealousy, of the priests and Levites of the temple, and sometime after his death and the appearance of his memoir a similar production was brought to light relating to Ezra, magnifying his share in the restoration, and purporting to be a personal memoir.

This supposititious memoir constitutes the last four chapters of the Book of Ezra, beginning with the seventh, and chapters viii. to x., inclusive, of the Book of Nehemiah. At the time the compilation of the two books was made there were two other documents relating to the period of the restoration which were turned to account. The more authentic of these appears in the passage of the Book of Ezra beginning with chapter ii. and extend-

ing to chapter iv., verse 5, and includes also the latter part of chapter vi. from verse 13. The list of returning exiles in chapter ii. is repeated in chapter vii. of Nehemiah, the author of the latter saying that he found it in the book of the genealogy of them that came up at the first. The other document, including chapter i. of Ezra and the passage from iv. 6 to vi. 12, and purporting to contain decrees of Cyrus, Artaxerxes, and Darius, and correspondence with malcontents in Judea, has no historical basis.

The compiler of what now constitutes the two books made up the first six chapters from the documents last named, and then introduced the portion of the memoir attributed to Ezra the scribe, which related to his bringing up a contingent of the exiles from Babylon, and his astonishment and horror at the state of things which he found at Jerusalem, especially the intermarriages with "the peoples of the land." Then follows Nehemiah's account of his commission from Artaxerxes, to rebuild the city of his father's sepulchres and the tribulations which attended its accomplishment, ending with the repetition of the list of those "which came up at the first." Then the compiler reverts to the Esdras memoir and brings in the account of the promulgation of the law and the renewing of the ancient covenant.

Special stress was laid in this upon the prohibition of mixed marriages, the observance of the Sabbath, and the contributions for the temple service.

Chapter xi. of Nehemiah, which was drawn from the memoir of the Tirshatha, relates to the distribution of the people, and especially of the Levites, but the compiler followed it with a passage of his own relating to the Levites with a repetition of names from the previous lists, interrupted with Nehemiah's account of the dedication of the wall. The book ends with his description of what he found on returning from an official visit to the "King of Babylon," meaning the King of Persia, to whom Babylon was then subject, and his stern dealing with those who desecrated the sanctuary, violated the Sabbath, and married "strange woman." One noticeable thing in the writing of Nehemiah is, that he did not use the name of Jahwe or Jehovah at all, and instead of the familiar formula of divine commands, we find the phrase "My God put it into my heart." The figure of Nehemiah appears with a vivid reality, while that of Ezra is somewhat indistinct, and this is doubtless due to the manner in which the record was made, and to the character of the sources from which it was drawn, a century or so after the events. A curious evidence of the close connection of these

two books with that of Chronicles is seen in the breaking off of the closing statement of the latter in the middle of a sentence, and the resumption and completion of the statement at the beginning of Ezra.

X

THE EARLIER PROPHETS

THE writings of the prophets, or their utterances as they were preserved, whether put in writing by themselves or by others, will be read with better understanding, if taken up in their chronological order and with reference to the events with which they were associated. It should be constantly borne in mind that the collection was made some time after the return from exile, and was not at first held sacred from the process of editing. There were selections and extracts rather than a systematic compilation, and there are many indications of suppression and even of interpolation. The various productions became greatly disordered in the vicissitudes of the national life, from the time when there were two kingdoms until the time when there remained only the vague hope of one; and, finally, when the collection was closed to revision, the utterances of the same prophet remained in disorder, while those of unknown authors were occasionally mixed with those of the most famous.

The earliest fragment of the writings of the prophets which has come down to us is the passage contained in chapters xv. and xvi. of the Book of Isaiah, designated as the Burden of Moab and as the word of God spoken "in time past." It is simply an exultation over the disasters of Moab in one of the conflicts with Israel. Some have assigned it to the time of the defeat of Mesha by the allied kings of Israel and Judah (Joram and Jehoshaphat), but the better opinion is that it came out when Jeroboam II. brought Moab into subjection anew, and that its author was that Jonah who, unfortunately for the dignity of his name, became the hero of a grotesque tale illustrating the discomfiture of the prophet who set his own judgment against the will of Jehovah.

But the earliest of the prophets about whose identity there is no doubt and whose words have come down to us substantially as they were uttered, is Amos, the herdsman of Tekoa, who felt himself called upon to give voice to the terrible warnings of Jehovah. He was of the very southern part of Judah, but it was in the Northern Kingdom that these warnings were then chiefly needed. His first utterances were said to have been made two years before the earthquake, but the later ones came after that appalling event and contain allusions to it.

It was about the beginning of the eighth century B.C. Jeroboam II. had conquered his most troublesome enemies, and his kingdom had grown rich and his court luxurious in a period of prosperity. There was the usual result of a marked difference in the conditions of the people, the hardship and oppression of the poor, the arrogance and corruption of the favored class. There was a careless lapsing into the sensuous worship of the alien deities and a neglect of the national God, or a mere formal regard for his altars. Among the evils of the time was an extensive slave trade, from which the hapless in Israel suffered. The rich were growing richer, and the poor poorer, and the spirit of discontent was abroad. Still a general gayety and confidence prevailed at Samaria, though, after the lull of a long peace, there were rumbling portents of future trouble, as the vast shadow of the Assyrian power loomed over the eastern horizon. The prophet felt premonitions of the gathering wrath of Jehovah, and from the pasture lands of Beersheba he ventured boldly to the sanctuary at Bethel, and even to the palace gate at Samaria, to fulminate his direful forebodings.

He begins by distributing his denunciations to the surrounding lands, and then devotes himself especially to the iniquities of Israel, sometimes

in a tone of plaintive lamentation, but more often in one of stern reproach. There is sharp sarcasm in his references to the fair women of Samaria as "kine of Bashan," and to the sacrificing at Bethel and Gilgal, while those who make offerings continue to transgress. There are stern threats of Jehovah's punishment and the desolation of the kingdom which the complaint of the priest of Bethel to the king at Samaria does not suffice to silence. There are to be earthquake and famine and war and a sifting of the people among the nations of the earth.

The idea of the salvation of a remnant and the building up of a new nation was not clearly developed so early, though the germ may have been in the mind of this forerunner of the great prophets. The tone and style of the close of the Book of Amos is so different from the rest, that it is believed to be a later addition. But the significance of the whole book is unmistakable, and in it the voice of prophecy took a note which was never lost. There is an exalted conception of the Deity, and the demand is for justice and for right, and not for sacrifice and burnt offerings. The ethical quality of the book is lofty and in marked contrast with that of the legendary and historical writings, and even with most of the writings embodying the Jewish law. Its theology, and in some measure

its style, reminds one of the Book of Job, which was a much later production.

The writer shows knowledge of the traditions of the race, as already reduced to writing, in his references to the escape from Egypt and the wandering in the wilderness, but of the statutes and commands of which so much is made by later writers he had never heard, for the reason that they did not yet exist, save in the scanty form of the old "covenants." But the doctrine was fully launched that the fate of the nation depended upon obedience to Jehovah's will, to be shown in deeds of righteousness, and that persistence in idolatry and wickedness would bring wrath and destruction, from which the faithful would be saved to create a new nation that would be blessed with Jehovah's favor. This may be regarded as the doctrine of all the prophets, on which their warnings, their threats, their promises, and their predictions were based.

The style of this book is distinctly rhythmical, though it lacks the regular parallelism of Hebrew verse, and it was no doubt carefully wrought. The historical allusions are not clear enough to indicate the period over which the warnings extended, but it was probably several years, and before they ended the menace of the Assyrian power was clear to the prophet's eye.

The little book which bears the name of Joel seems to be a sequel to that of Amos, and is at all events nearly contemporaneous with the later passages of that production. As nothing is known of its date or its authorship, except what appears upon its face, there is a suspicion that the names Joel and Pethuel are symbolical; but as most names of the time were compounded with some designation of Deity, it cannot be regarded as certain. The book is made up chiefly of a graphic representation of drought and a plague of grasshoppers, vividly compared to a devastating army, in which some critics find an allegorical reference to an apprehended horde of Assyrian invaders, which is to be Jehovah's scourge of the people for their sins. This is followed by an impressive summons of the people to penitence and amendment, and a promise of reward in a plentiful prosperity. There is a vision of the gathering of the nations to the valley of Jehovah's judgment, and their discomfiture for the wrongs done to the children of Judah and Jerusalem. In this is pre-figured that great day of the triumph of Sion which became the dream of Israel's prophets for generations.

Another fragment generally assigned to this period is the single chapter bearing the name of Obadiah ("servant of Jehovah"), though some

find, in the reference to the desecration of Jerusalem and in the use of the vague term translated "captivity," an indication of later origin. The reference is more probably to one of the incidents of early warfare, as this leaflet is chiefly a tirade against Edom for the violence done to his brother Jacob. It was evidently written while the Northern Kingdom still existed, and the promise of the unification of the people in one common triumph over their enemies is in harmony with the spirit of the prophets of the time of Jeroboam II.

In the same spirit and of the same time is the fragment included by the collector of the prophecies in the Book of Zechariah, as chapter ix., which has no relation to what precedes and follows it. This is directed against the hostile neighbors of Israel and Judah in Syria, Phœnicia, and Philistia, and repeats the promise of Sion's future triumph under a just king, whose dominion shall extend from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth, that is, from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, and from the Euphrates to the indefinite boundaries of the north and east.

Chapters x. and xi. of Zechariah constitute another independent fragment, full of veiled references to the disturbed condition that followed the death of Jeroboam, whose son was assassinated by Shallum, while the latter speedily fell a victim

to Menahem, "three shepherds in one month." Ephraim was overrun by Assyria, and Menahem was forced to pay tribute, which he exacted from the people. There had also been troublous times at Jerusalem. Joash was driven from the throne by conspiracy, and his son Amaziah had been slain by his own army. There was ill feeling between the two kingdoms, and a general menace to both in the overshadowing power of the East. The unknown author of these two chapters, if they are from a single source, seems at first to promise rescue for Ephraim and defence for Judah against Egypt and Assyria, which were contending over their heads, and finally to express disgust with their kings, or "Shepherds," and to break their brotherhood asunder. In the tumult of the time he seemed to see nothing but disaster. The allusions are obscure and not very significant, and all that is certain is the period to which this fragment belongs.

But the great prophet of that special period was Hosea, about whose productions there is no doubt. The introductory words, ascribing his utterances to the time of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah, and Jeroboam of Israel, must have been prefixed by the collector, to indicate a general historical period, for nearly the same words are used in introducing the writings of Isaiah, and there is

no exact correspondence between the reign of Jeroboam and that of the four Judean kings named. Amos was a Judean, and habitually speaks of the Northern Kingdom as Joseph, or more broadly, Jacob; while Hosea, a native, or at least a resident, of the land, always calls it Ephraim or Israel, and refers to the Southern Kingdom as Judah or Jacob. The latter, like his forerunner, shows familiarity with the traditions of the race, and seems to have been acquainted with the written record now nearly a century old. He does not refer to Moses by name, but says that by a prophet the Lord brought Israel up out of Egypt. There is no reference to Abraham or Isaac, and the use of Adam for "man" in the authorized version is an error, though some regard the original as signifying the place where Israel first entered Canaan, and where the sin of Achan was committed.

The prophecies of Amos appear like oral improvisations afterward carefully written out. Those of Hosea were evidently never spoken, but after the opening chapters consist of a series of sad reflections, reproaches, and appeals, regarding the sins of the time, put in the mouth of Jehovah. In the first three chapters, doubtless early productions of the writer in the time of luxury and decaying morals toward the end of Jeroboam's reign, the prophet's personality appears, partly in the

third and partly in the first person, in a somewhat gross symbolical representation of the fatal lust of the people for the sensuous worship of the false gods of the land. The figure of a faithless sexual relation is kept up in later references to the same form of iniquity, and was justified by the gross practices attending the worship of Baal-Phegor (Peor) and Astarté (Ashteroth). There is a rather touching plea to the wayward nation as a faithless wife and mother, who shall yet be reclaimed, and an aspiration, never to be realized, for the final union of Ephraim and Judah under one king.

But from the fourth chapter on it is the voice of Jehovah upbraiding the wickedness and perversity of a people for which he has done so much, which he loves so tenderly, and which he is so anxious to reclaim to himself. There are bitter reproaches, severe condemnation, and warnings of terrible retribution, but ever returns the note of pity and sorrow, and the eager promise of blessing if evil ways are abandoned. These utterances no doubt extended over a series of years, when Samaria was tending, through the tumult and disaster of changing dynasties and Assyrian oppression, to her inevitable doom.

There are many obscure references to passing events, but the record we have is so imperfect that the effort to make them clear is hopeless. There

are hints of the vacillating policy of alliance with Egypt or submission to Assyria, which is condemned as the sinful alternative for a submissive allegiance to Israel's great ruler and a sole reliance upon His power. There are predictions of carrying away to Egypt and to Assyria. The former was never fulfilled, and the fulfilment of the latter was deferred; but one or both of them seemed sure. Among the chief sinners of the time were the priests of Bethel, which the prophet for its degradation calls Beth Aven (House of Iniquity, instead of House of God), Gilgal, and Shechem, and in the allusions to their deeds there is a reminiscence of the sons of Eli at Shiloh. They were priests of Jehovah, but had degraded the sanctuaries, at which he was symbolized in the golden calf of Egypt.

The pleadings and reproaches, and the menace of desolation for the helpless and distracted kingdom, upon which an irresistible enemy is closing, while it is torn with internal dissension and is heedless of the only power that can save it, are followed by the cheerful hope that Israel will yet return unto the Lord and "blossom as the lily and cast forth his roots as Lebanon." It was not a prediction, hardly a promise, and the hope was not destined to fruition. The prophet was silent before the fate of his beloved Ephraim was sealed

or perhaps made certain. It may be that the hopelessness of the situation finally disheartened him, and he could no longer endure to dwell upon the vision of Samaria bearing her guilt. The commonplace epilogue that closes the book was doubtless added by the collector of the prophecies.

XI

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH

WHILE Samaria was trembling on the verge of destruction, the voice of prophecy was hushed in the Northern Kingdom, never to be heard again. But it soon arose at Jerusalem in still clearer and stronger accents. In fact, it reached its highest pitch in the tones of Isaiah, loftiest of the prophets. Of the part he played in the affairs of his time and of the general character of his writings we have already spoken in the former part of this volume. It only remains to place, so far as we may, the different utterances in their proper order and in their proper relation to events, that they may be the better understood.

The book bearing the name of Isaiah is a compilation of post-exilic time. The material had fallen into disorder, the utterances of the great prophet were disarranged, and not only were interpolations and additions freely made, but no passage was regarded as sacred from such editing as the turn of events might seem to require. The note prefixed to the collection indicates too extended

a period of time. None of the writings pertain to the time of Uzziah, and it is doubtful if any relate to the reign of Jotham. The vision in chapter vi. appears to have been preliminary to the collection in one of its intermediate stages, and was probably introduced by the editor. It is not in the manner of Isaiah, but reminds one of Ezekiel. The first five chapters are doubtless the prophet's earliest productions, and refer to the evil days of Ahaz in much the same tone as that of Amos and Hosea. The first four verses of chapter ii. seem to be interpolated and are substantially the same as the first four of chapter iv. of Micah, and both are an echo of Joel's "day of the Lord." The burden of these chapters is an upbraiding of the nation for its sins and a promise of future glory when it shall have been purged of its iniquities. The song of the vineyard in chapter v. is a fine example of the prophet's early manner.

In considering the writings or spoken utterances of the historical Isaiah, who figured so prominently in the reign of Hezekiah, we must omit, as of different authorship and a different time, chapters xiii. to xvi., inclusive, xxi., xxiv. to xxvii., xxxiv., xxxv., and all that follows chapter xxxix. The remaining chapters, beginning with the seventh, are badly disarranged. Chapter vii. to chapter x., verse 4, relates to the period before the death of

Ahaz (about 730 B.C.), when the kings of Syria and Israel were confederated to resist Assyria and were making hostile demonstrations against Judah. While this passage contains menaces of destruction to the enemies of Judah by invasion from both Assyria and Egypt, it also threatens chastisement to the Southern Kingdom for its evil-doing, and promises a final reunion under an ideal sovereign on the throne of David. There is a break in this passage at ix. 8, and it ends abruptly with x. 4, as if incomplete. The first eleven verses of chapter xvii. belong with this passage, seeming to fall in best at the end of chapter vii.

At this time Syria and Israel were threatened with the invasion of their territory by Shalmaneser of Assyria, and there are allusions to this danger in these chapters. Chapter xxviii. is of the same time, and the "overflowing scourge" is the coming Assyrian army. Phœnicia was included in the menace of destruction, and to this "the burden of 'Tyre,'" chapter xxiii., may be referred. It was in the midst of these exciting events that Sargon succeeded Shalmaneser, and it was while Hoshea of Israel was casting about for help from Egypt that the prophet fulminated the bitter tirade in chapter xix., so far as verse 17. The rest of the chapter is an incongruous interpolation of a later time, an unrealized vision of Judah's future great-

ness. The crushing defeat of the Northern Kingdom by Sargon gave rise to the passage beginning with chapter x., verse 5, and ending with chapter xii. While it seems to exult in the disaster of Ephraim, and to include Judah in the same chastisement, it threatens Assyria with retribution and promises a glorious restoration in the time to come.

Chapters xxix. to xxxii. 8 appear to belong to the same period, when there was dread at Jerusalem of the fate that had overtaken Samaria, as Sargon seemed likely to pursue his conquest to the south, though some assign these chapters to the time when Sennacherib was proceeding against Jerusalem. The prophet was at all times opposed to military preparations for resistance, and was especially fierce in denouncing those who sought the alliance of Egypt. The almost invariable sequel to his urging submission to what he regarded as the purging infliction of the Lord, was a promise of future greatness when the nation had been cleansed of its sins.

Sargon was diverted from the purpose of subjugating Judah, if he had such a purpose at the time, and while he was detained in his own realm and was planning a campaign against Egypt, there were some futile efforts to form a league against him between Judah, Philistia, and neighboring countries, and a constant prompting to an alliance

with Egypt. To this interval may be assigned the curious bit of narrative, chapter xx., and the last eleven verses of xxii.

The real peril of Judah came with the invasion of Sennacherib, and the alarm at Jerusalem was intense. This is referred to in the passage xvii. 12-xviii. Chapters xxxii. 9-xxxiii. belong to the same exciting time, and possibly also what precedes them from the beginning of chapter xxix., though this seems to apply better to the threatened coming of Sargon after the fall of Samaria. Chapters xxxvi. and xxxvii., which are mainly narrative, were made up by the editor of the collection from the mass of material in his hands, and contain some passages of Isaiah's characteristic declamation. Chapter xxxviii. seems to have been added to preserve Hezekiah's song of gratitude, and xxxix. is a supplementary narrative in which the prophet is credited with a prediction of the Babylonian conquest.

Of the omitted chapters, xiii. to xiv. 23, xxi. 1-10, xxxiv., and xxxv. belong to the time of the siege of Babylon by Cyrus, and are sometimes credited to the author of the series of chapters beginning with xl., known as the "second Isaiah." The editor's introductory line to xiii. is of course erroneous. Verses 24-27 of chapter xiv. is a misplaced fragment of the time of Sennacherib's in-

vasion, and the rest of that chapter relates to the expedition of Sargon against those who had resisted him, verse 28 being another error of the editor. Chapters xv. and xvi. have already been accounted for, and were evidently used by Isaiah to reinforce his own menace against Moab. The first ten verses of chapter xxi. are assigned by some critics to the time of Sargon's conquest of Babylonia, after the fall of Samaria, which removed a protecting barrier from Judah. The other verses are inserted fragments to which there is no clew.

It is a matter of dispute whether the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah belong entirely to the period of the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus and the deliverance and return of the exiles of Israel, and are wholly the production of the great anonymous prophet who so exultingly announced the good tidings to Sion. This writer may have purposely shrouded himself in mystery and assumed the name and manner of his prototype, with whose works he was evidently familiar. The first nine of these chapters flow on continuously from the first word of comfort to the people of Jerusalem to the summons to go forth from Babylon. Then there is a change, and from xlix. to lii. 13 there is a note of anxiety and exhortation, and no reference to Babylon or to Cyrus. The writer

seems to take the deliverance as an accomplished fact, and to be looking with solicitude to the future.

There is no doubt about a single authorship and one central event thus far ; but there is an abrupt transition and a change of style at lii. 14, and from that point to the end of the book there appear to be a number of inserted passages and additions which are differently accounted for. One theory is that lii. 13–liii. belongs to a period of persecution, and depicts an ideal representative of martyrdom, perhaps in the reign of Manasseh, and that lvi. 9–lvii. is of a similar character and by the same hand ; that lvi. 1–8, lviii., and lix. are isolated exhortations and of post-exilic origin ; that lxiii. 7–lxiv. was a lament in the early part of the exile by one who was left behind in Palestine ; that lxv. was the work of a Jew returned from the exile, and that lxvi. consists of two parts, verses 1–4, and 5–24, the latter being written after the restoration of the temple.

These are matters of inference from data that are insufficient to support positive conclusions, but these closing chapters are evidently a composite of various material, and the whole book was pieced together, long after the return from exile, by a compiler who did not regard the task as one requiring particular care or special reverence for the documents in his hands. He had no

idea of the trouble he was making by his manner of preserving this precious material for future generations, or of the different spirit in which it would be regarded from age to age, until daring minds should try at last to trace it to its origin. Its highest significance cannot be changed by any searching of its sources.

XII

MICAH, NAHUM, ZEPHANIAH

WE have seven short chapters of prophetic writing under the name of Micah of Morasheth, who was a contemporary of Isaiah, but whether these all emanated from the same source is a question upon which critics differ. There seems to be no doubt about the first five chapters. The introductory note of the collector is, as usual, inexact, for these utterances appear to belong mostly, if not wholly, to the early years of Hezekiah's reign. Micah's general views were in accord with those of Isaiah, but he was a provincial on the Philistine border, remote from the activity of the capital, and shows an intense sympathy for the poor and lowly, who are victims of the exaction and oppression of the rich and powerful. In the first three chapters he includes the sins of Ephraim and Judah in one sweeping denunciation with threats of divine retribution, directed mainly against the rulers, the corrupt priests, and the false prophets. The menace of destruction was no doubt inspired by the Assyrian invasion, but Micah seems to include

in it only the capital cities, which were the centres of evil-doing.

A fragment of the promise of restoration appears in verses 12, 13 of chapter ii., and chapters iv. and v. are mainly devoted to the future triumph of Sion over her enemies under a new ruler of the house of David. This was a dominant idea of the prophets of that age, and the opening verses of chapter iv. were part of a common stock of prediction as to the "latter days," when all nations were to be subject to Jerusalem under the sovereignty of Jehovah.

The last two chapters of the book, whether by the same author as what precedes or not, evidently relate to a different situation, and there is a distinct division into two parts after verse 6 of chapter vii. These two parts are probably by different hands, and neither that of Micah the Morashite. The former is plausibly assigned to the evil days of king Manasseh, and the latter appears to belong to the period of the exile, when the walls of Jerusalem were broken down and the faithful were waiting for the Lord to turn again and have compassion on his people. There are many corruptions of text and errors of transcription in the Book of Micah, and the reference to Babylon in iv. 10 is regarded by some as a marginal gloss, though it might have been meant for Assyria, which then ruled at Babylon as well as at Nineveh.

There is no doubt that "the book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite" belongs to the time of Manasseh, but it is not concerned with the sins of Judah or the iniquities of its ruling class. The country had been for some time in peaceful subjection to Assyria, but that power began to show symptoms of dissolution and was threatened on the north and east by hordes of Scythians and by the aggressive combination of the Medes and Persians. Quick to scent disaster impending over its enemies the prophetic genius of Israel started up with a fierce tirade against the great capital of the Assyrian empire. Nineveh was doomed and Nahum was prompt to attribute its coming destruction to the wrath of the God of Israel, whose people had suffered so much at the hands of the arrogant tyrant of "the bloody city." He draws a terrible picture of Jehovah's might and fury and the havoc he made of his enemies when aroused, and of the consequences to Nineveh when his wrath should be poured upon her devoted walls and towers.

The tone of the prophecy is one of patriotic indignation and a thirst for vengeance upon the enemies of Israel, and there is nothing in it of that softer spirit which looked to subjugation as a means of conversion, and to a final reign of peace and righteousness at Jerusalem. That spirit

slumbered in the days of Manasseh. Nineveh did not fall for some time after Nahum's fierce predictions, and her fate was finally the consequence of the irresistible course of human events.

In the early years of Josiah, while the young king was still under the direction of his mother's regency, about 630 B.C., the spirit of prophecy awoke again with all the old intensity. It found voice first in Zephaniah (Sophonias in the Greek version), whose three ringing chapters have come down to us. The accumulated evils of a long period of degeneracy, especially of relapse into idolatry and corrupt practices, so excited his wrath that he set out with a prediction of universal destruction. The vials of his hot indignation were poured out upon Judah and Canaan, upon all their hostile neighbors, and upon their remoter enemies of Egypt and Assyria. Those of Egypt are spoken of as Ethiopians, as that country was then under an Ethiopian dynasty. The fact that Nineveh was destined to become a "desolation," through the conquest of the Medes, was now plainer than ever, and gave confidence to the prophet's menaces of universal disaster.

But the characteristic passage of Zephaniah, presaging the Messianic idea of a later time, is that which pictures the survival of a "remnant," of an "afflicted and poor people," out of which

shall be built up a new nation. The germ of this faith appeared in the earliest prophets and developed through the whole line. In Zephaniah, the forerunner of Jeremiah, it appeared free from any reference to a new scion of the house of David. The Lord was to be King of Israel in the midst of Jerusalem.

XIII

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET JEREMIAH

To read the Book of Jeremiah with understanding and appreciation, one must remember that it is a compilation made in the time of the Babylonian exile, and subjected to much revision afterward. The prophet himself was carried away, after the capture of Jerusalem, with the party of insurgents which took refuge in Egypt, and the collection contains some of his utterances after that event. As Baruch, who is mentioned as having written out his warnings in the time of Jehoiakim, was his companion, it is a natural inference that this scribe made his way to join the captives in Babylonia, perhaps after the prophet's death, with the remnants of the latter's writings. Whether these productions and the narratives connected with them were carried in part from Jerusalem, and in part from Egypt, or however they may have been got together, they were evidently in great disorder, and were collated and arranged by the author who completed the Book of Kings. It is in a great measure a supplement

to that book, covering the last thirty or forty years of the history of Judah. In the Book of Kings there is no mention of Jeremiah, who played so prominent a part in the reign of Josiah and his successors, and the events of that important period are scantily treated. The deficiency is supplied by the narratives in the Book of Jeremiah.

It is composed in considerable part of those narratives, introducing passages of what it is usual to call "prophecy," or explaining their occasion and consequences. Sometimes the narratives appear to be by the hand of the prophet himself speaking in the first person, and sometimes the narration is in the third person, as if written by another using material left by him. In some cases there are evident paraphrases, made long after the events referred to, and even direct interpolations, and the whole is interspersed here and there with ejaculations of prayer or imprecation and expressions of the prophet's feelings at critical times in his career. Whether these are in his own language or made by an editor from notes left by him, can, of course, not be determined, but it is certain that the whole mass of material was freely dealt with at the time the compilation was made, and afterward in the processes of copying and revising. There was more than one version of the book long extant, and the one used by the

Greek translators at Alexandria differed materially from that which became the basis of modern translations in the Old Testament. The former contained few additions, but many omissions and variations, and one or two important differences of arrangement. The book as we have it is a composite production, completed sometime after the restoration of Jerusalem.

The introductory note is that of an editor, and the rest of the first chapter, giving an account of the prophet's "inspiration," and corresponding to chapter vi. in Isaiah, if the work of the prophet himself, which is subject to doubt, was written after, and not before, the utterances to which it is preliminary. The prophecies began in the thirteenth year of Josiah, who was still a youth, when the evil state of things inherited from Manasseh continued. The narrative passage in regard to the prophet's treatment in his native village, at the end of chapter xi., seems to be a reminiscence.

The chapters from the second to the ninth, inclusive, contain the reproaches and warnings uttered by Jeremiah in the early years of his mission, before the reforms of Josiah, and they have the spirit and tone of the earlier prophets, with whose works he was familiar. He also shows, here and elsewhere, acquaintance with the existing annals of his country and with the Book of Job,

the thought of which is frequently reflected in his writings. It is an interesting fact that from the promulgation of the Deuteronomic code, and the institution of reforms by Josiah, to the death of that monarch, a period of thirteen years, no utterances of the prophet appear which have come down to us, except the first seventeen verses of chapter xi., which seem to be a sort of proclamation of the new law, and xvii. 19-27, which is a special proclamation of the rule of Sabbath observance. The inference is almost irresistible that during these years of apparent silence Jeremiah was active in the work of formulating and applying to a new order of things the Deuteronomic legislation.

After the invasion of the Egyptian monarch Necho, the death of Josiah, the dethronement of Jehoahaz, and the elevation of Jehoiakim, the prophet speedily found his voice, for things were relapsing into the old evil way of the detested Manasseh. Chapters xxii. 1-19, xxvi., and xiv. 1-xv. 9 belong to the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign, the passage which comes earlier in the book being later in time. In all the earlier warnings there was a note of alarm about a threatened invasion from the North, due to disquieting rumors of the movements of hordes of Scythians, and the prophet drew a terrible picture of the consequence

of the coming of a cruel and merciless people from the uttermost parts of the earth. But now there was a more tangible ground for working upon the fears of the people, for Nebuchadnezzar was about to turn from Egyptian conquest to give attention to his rebellious tributaries.

A misplaced chapter, now numbered xlv., contains the prophet's exultation in Nebuchadnezzar's victory over Egypt, which is followed by visions of terror for all the people around Palestine, extending to chapter xlix. 33. Chapter xxv., which appears to relate to the same time, is an interpolation made during the captivity. Evidence of this, if needed, is found in the reference to Jeremiah's prophecies "written in this book," and to the desolation of the cities of Judah, "as it is this day." But the whole chapter was evidently written after the event. Chapters xvi.-xvii. 18, xviii., and other passages dwelling on the sins of the people and their impending punishment, may belong to the time of the first rumors of Nebuchadnezzar's coming. There are several prophecies virtually dated as of the fourth year of Jehoiakim. Chapter xxxvi. contains the account of the reading of Jeremiah's warnings to the king. Chapter xlv., relating to the same incident, is one of the interpolated bits of narrative.

The period of terror, when Nebuchadnezzar's

army was approaching to chastise the foolish revolt of Jehoiakim, is vividly portrayed in the utterances of the prophet, who seemed to exult in the crushing power of the king of Babylon, who was characterized as the servant of Jehovah in punishing his recreant people. Before he reached Jerusalem Jehoiakim died and was succeeded by his son under the name of Jehoiachin, but though the latter promptly made his submission to Nebuchadnezzar, he was deposed and carried away captive, while his father's brother was placed on the throne, with the new name Zedekiah, last of the Judean kings. This first transportation occurred 598 B.C.

Jeremiah's contemptuous opinion of the immediate successors of Josiah found expression in what is chapter xxii. to verse 19 of the book bearing his name, and his special aversion to Jehoiachin, whom he calls Coniah, and to the queen-mother, Nehusta, appears in the passage xxii. 20-xxiii. 8. Verses 17-25 of chapter x. and chapter xiii. belong to the period of intense terror between the time of Jehoiakim's death and the arrival of the Babylonian army. The story of the Rechabites who took refuge at Jerusalem on the approach of this army, and whose character and habits commended them so warmly to Jeremiah, is contained in chapter xxxv. The new king's

submission was complete, and Nebuchadnezzar returned to Babylon, but the prophet was not placated, as appears by the ill omen which he announced in chapter xxiv.

There were prophets who counselled resistance to the Chaldean power and throwing off the yoke of Babylon. These provoked the wrath of Jeremiah. There is a general denunciation of the false prophets in chapter xxiii., beginning with verse 9. Chapters xxvii. and xxviii. belong to the first part of Zedekiah's reign, when the contentions were going on about the policy of resistance and Jeremiah was vehemently opposing the king's evil counsellors and threatening the return of Nebuchadnezzar, which this policy would surely bring about. At about the same time he sent his message to those already in exile, chapter xxix. virtually advising them to make up their minds to stay where they were.

The prophet's constant denunciations and predictions of evil at this time got him into trouble, and some of his speeches, together with accounts of the effect, are found in chapters xix. and xx. Efforts to silence him, when his predictions seemed to be in the way of fulfilment by Nebuchadnezzar's return, were unavailing, as appears in chapter xxi. At chapter xxxii. begins a series of narratives and prophecies belonging to the time of the second

siege and the eve of the final carrying away to Babylon. But these three chapters were evidently put in form during the captivity, doubtless from material, in part at least, left by the prophet. The two preceding chapters, xxx. and xxxi., are also of the time of the captivity, and not in Jeremiah's manner. They are attributed by some to the anonymous writer known as the second Isaiah. Verses 14-26 of xxxiii. are an interpolation of the latter days of the exile. Chapters xxxvii.-xliv. are almost wholly narrative matter from the hand of the compiler of the book, giving an account of the closing events of the kingdom of Judah. Probably the prophet had no part in it, but the fulminations attributed to him in Egypt are too characteristic not to be genuine.

There has been much controversy about the prophecies in chapters l. and li., but they are plainly much later than Jeremiah, of about the same time as chapters xl. to xlviii. of Isaiah, and possibly by the same author. There is nothing in the manner in which these books were made up and published to the world to justify anyone in attaching the least weight to the introductory words, "by Jeremiah the prophet," or the final words, "thus far are the words of Jeremiah." The one certain thing is that they were first uttered long after his death.

The last chapter of Jeremiah merely repeats from the Book of Kings the prosaic close of the sad story of the Jewish struggle for an independent national life, which the religious spirit of the race made impossible. Theocracy and the state were irreconcilable ideas, and the latter had to die that the former might live.

XIV

HABAKKUK, ANONYMOUS CHAPTERS; LAMENTATIONS

THREE chapters have come down to us from a prophet who was a contemporary of Jeremiah, but they seem to relate wholly to the critical time when the first invasion of Nebuchadnezzar was impending, after his victory over the Egyptians at Carchemish in the days of Jehoiakim. Two of these chapters constitute the sort of declamation known as prophecy and the other is designated as a prayer, but is more properly a hymn or psalm. Habakkuk possessed a calmer and more exalted spirit than Jeremiah, and that may be why so little has survived from his pen. This prophecy, which is in part in the form of a dialogue with Jehovah, and reminds one of Job, has a higher literary quality than the fierce tirades of his more energetic contemporary. It shows also more sympathy for his own country and dwells upon the punishment its enemies are to receive. The hymn of praise and confidence in Jehovah of chapter iii. is modelled on the older psalms and has no obvious

relation to impending or current events. The notes at the beginning and end are no doubt editorial additions, as the organized musical service pertained only to the second temple.

Three chapters of an anonymous prophet appear also to belong to the time following the death of Josiah and prior to the first siege of Jerusalem, though their obscure and somewhat mystical character has led to a good deal of controversy as to their proper place, and some have assigned them to a date after the return from exile. They stand as the last three chapters of Zechariah, with the introductory note, "the burden of the word of the Lord concerning Israel," and show signs of interpolation and variation at a time later than the original composition. There is a slight tone of contrast with Jeremiah in this oracle, and it disparages the function of the professional prophet. The references to events are too vague or too allegorical to be identified, but the burden of the utterance appears to be a promise of the ultimate triumph of Judah and Jerusalem over all their enemies. This reflects the tone of the earlier prophets, and its spirit is not that of the post-exilic dreams of the future. It is one of the early gleams of the prophet's vision of the time when "the Lord shall be king over the whole earth."

The book which bears the title *Lamentations*

was in early times attached as a sort of pendant to Jeremiah, and its composition was attributed to the prophet, but the association cannot be traced within two or three centuries of his time, and is in plain contradiction of known facts and inconsistent with the character of the book. It had its origin long after the prophet's death, and in a land far distant from the scene of his last days. Moreover, it has none of the resolute tone and masculine spirit of that stern censor and invincible believer in the ultimate triumph of Jehovah's people.

The first four chapters are a series of wailing elegies over the desolation of Jerusalem, the sins and sufferings of her people and the just anger of God. They are full of sorrow and humiliation, with only subdued gleams of hope. They were unquestionably written among the exiles of Babylon, but just when and by what person or persons it is impossible to determine. They are artificial compositions, the twenty-two verses of chapters i., ii., and iv., and the twenty-two sets of three verses in chapter iii., beginning with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and they were long used in the liturgical service on the occasion of the annual weeping over the fall of Jerusalem. There is a deep strain of pathos in these dirges, but it hardly has the spontaneity of personal grief.

The fifth chapter does not belong to the original series, and the form of composition is different. It is rather a supplication for a return of divine favor than a mourning over its loss, and it has almost the tone of despair. It appears to have been written during the period of the exile, but by one who was left in the midst of the desolation of Judah. This is wholly a matter of surmise from the nature of its contents, for nothing is actually known of any part of the book, except that it appeared as a whole in the Jewish scriptures long after the time to which it relates. Connecting writings of similar character and different origin and associating them with some well-known or venerated name was no uncommon practice in the long process of making up that collection of literature. It was in accordance with this practice that this series of elegies was designated as the Lamentations of Jeremiah.

XV

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET EZEKIEL

HARDLY any book of the Old Testament has come down to us so free from mutilation or change as that which contains the writings of the great prophet of the Babylonian exile. Its oracles and descriptions were arranged by himself in their chronological order, and if they underwent revision it was probably by his own hand. There are variations and corruptions of text, but these are mainly due to copyists. Ezekiel had been brought up as a young priest at Jerusalem under the influence of Jeremiah, was carried away with Jehoiachin at the time of the first transportation, and was one of a colony of captives on the "river Chebar," an unidentified stream, which may have been simply the great canal at Babylon. He was in constant communication with his native country and familiar with events passing there, and in the course of four or five years he felt called upon to utter warnings against the doings of the people and the perils they were bringing upon them-

selves. He was in a position to appreciate the utter futility of resisting the power of Babylon and plotting to throw off its yoke, and foresaw the consequences of any such policy. Moreover, he shared the conviction of the other prophets that the national calamities were due to the sins of the people and were a just infliction from the God to whom they had proved faithless.

The first twenty-four chapters of the book embody a series of twenty-nine oracles, covering the three or four years preceding the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 590 B.C., and relating to events there and among the exiles in Babylon. The imagery with which the prophet introduced and impressed his mission to speak for Jehovah marked a new departure in the method of claiming inspiration and prefigured the apocalyptic devices of a later time. The imagery and symbolism were derived from the Egyptian and Assyrian elements which, with those of Phœnician origin, always constituted the materials for pictorial effect among the Hebrews, who lacked the faculty of creative ideality.

The preliminary descriptions of revelation are rather grotesque than poetical or impressive to the modern mind, and the devices representing the siege and its effects seem rather puerile. But there is something of the old prophetic fire

in the denunciation of continued idolatry and iniquity among a people who had evidently not been sufficiently scourged, and in the descriptions of the calamities still awaiting them. But these were mingled with symbolical details which seem now to detract from their effect. Ezekiel was in full sympathy with Jeremiah in advocating submission to Babylon, and in denouncing those who counselled resistance and an Egyptian alliance, and he could predict with certainty that the result would be a new invasion, the destruction of Jerusalem and desolation of Judah, and another transportation of the inhabitants. The actual investment of the capital by a hostile army was announced with a fierce cry of woe in chapter xxiv.

The old figure of harlotry, as representing the infidelity of Israel to Jehovah, is carried to rather a coarse extreme by this priestly prophet, though there is no denying its expressiveness, and he represents the idolatry to which it refers as beginning in Egypt and continuing to his own time, even infecting the circle of exiles about him.

The oracles put forth by Ezekiel during the two years' siege of Jerusalem, contained in chapters xxv.-xxxii. of the book, are directed against the enemies of his country, and rise to a fierce intensity in the threats of retribution upon Tyre and Egypt. The predictions of dire disaster and utter

destruction were never fulfilled. The last five verses of chapter xxix. are a curious addition, to explain the non-fulfilment of the prophecy against Tyre in chapter xxvi., but the promised recompense in Egypt failed also. When the fall of Jerusalem was announced, as appears in chapter xxxiii., the prophet set himself up as a "watchman" for his people, striving still to impress upon them the heinousness of the offences which had brought desolation upon their land. It should be kept in mind that the utterances which follow, undoubtedly written out with care by Ezekiel himself, extend over a period of fifteen or sixteen years.

They dwell first upon the delinquencies of the shepherds of Israel, meaning the rulers, and a consequent dispersion of the flock, but hold forth the promise of restoration under one faithful shepherd, even David, who will be prince among them. Their enemies are again denounced and threatened with destruction. From among all the hostile nations the Lord is to gather his people, cleansed and purified, those of Ephraim as well as those of Judah, and they are to be established with one king, of the house of David, under an everlasting covenant of peace, for the vindication of the name of Jehovah. Included among those that are to be vanquished, as a guarantee of per-

petual peace, is Gog of the land of Magog, whereby is figured that mysterious power of the North which had long been an object of vague terror, doubtless including the Scythians, of whose overwhelming numbers and irresistible movement there had been rumors ever since the days of Hezekiah. In short, all sources of danger and of fear were to be extinguished, and the remnant of God's people was to take possession of the ancient heritage.

The latest work of Ezekiel, beginning according to his own statement about 575 B.C., and included in the last nine chapters of his book, consisted of definite plans for the restoration of the temple, of the "holy city" of his people, and full possession of the land, with extended borders, and for the re-establishment of the worship of Jehovah on a newly organized system. He describes his plans in the form of visions and of direct instructions from the Lord, and goes so far as to make an allotment of the tribes and special provision for the Levites, who are to be devoted to the service of the temple. This was nearly half a century before the actual return of the exiles and there was then no prospect of deliverance. We know nothing of the prophet's death, but he disappears silently from the scene, leaving his visions and promises to nourish the hopes of the forlorn captives.

The course of human events departed widely

from the dreams and plans of Ezekiel, but these had a far-reaching effect nevertheless. No doubt they sustained the courage and stimulated the hopes of the exiled people, and held them to the never-failing purpose of keeping themselves apart and regaining the land of a promise that could never fail, and of exalting Sion as "the centre of a world's desire." While irresistible forces prevented these plans from being realized, for the dispersed tribes were never to be gathered again, and no prince of the house of David was ever again to sit upon a throne in Jerusalem, they were not forgotten, and were not without effect when the power of Persia broke the bonds of Babylon and let the people go, what time the clarion voice of the second Isaiah inflamed to fever heat the new hopes of the scattered nation.

It was not upon the lines laid down in the visions of Ezekiel that the temple was restored, Jerusalem was rebuilt, and the land partitioned, and there was no such conquest over the enemies of Israel or extension of the power of the kingdom of Sion over the earth. But it was upon those lines that the service of the second temple was built up and the Levitical law developed. They were carried beyond Ezekiel's outlines in many directions, but he furnished the general design, and the effect appears not only in the system which grew up, but in a

conforming of the oldest records to a sanction of the new order of things. Not only laws and acts attributed to Moses, but the partition and allotment of lands, and the provision for Levites, credited to Joshua, had their origin in the fervid brain of the prophet of the captivity, though the high-priesthood, with Aaron as the mythical head of the line, and the inner sanctuary, based upon the elaborate ark in the tent of meeting, were later than his conception. The priests and scribes of the second temple were long busy in adapting the story of the past to the support of the system then established, as a means of consecrating and strengthening it; but the most conspicuous luminary of that dark interval between the history of Israel as a nation and the history of Judaism as an institution was the prophet who saw visions and dreamed dreams by the "river Chebar."

XVI

HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH, MALACHI

THE second year of Darius was the year 520 B.C., sixteen years after the return from captivity, and, notwithstanding the account in the Book of Ezra, which represents the work of rebuilding the temple as having been taken up with promptness and zeal, it would seem from the reproaches of Haggai that it had languished, while the people devoted themselves to repairing their own fortunes, until overtaken by famine and "hard times." Haggai was apparently an old man, perhaps one of those who had seen "this house in its former glory." The comparative feeblenesses of his utterances is consistent with that supposition. The four brief oracles which, with slight narratives, constitute the two chapters of his "prophecy," cover only a short space of three or four months, and nothing more is heard of him.

He begins by mildly reproaching the people for their apathy and for neglecting the house of the Lord while preparing "ceiled houses" for themselves, and attributes the drought from which

the land suffered to this indifference. Having "stirred up" the work of the house of the Lord, he endeavors to comfort the people for the humbleness of the beginning, and to encourage them with the promise that the Lord of hosts would come to their rescue with the riches of the nations, and make the latter glory of the temple greater than its former glory. Blessing and plenty were to begin from the laying of the foundation of the Lord's temple. The final word of the aged prophet was a repetition of the ancient promise of future greatness for the nation, and he evidently fixed his hopes upon Zerubbabel to restore the royal line of David.

Zechariah, who began to speak even before Haggai ceased, refers to himself as a "young man." He sets out with an anxious reminder of what the people had suffered in the past through a disregard of the messages of the prophets, and with an appeal to avoid the evil ways of the fathers. Then he proceeds with a series of visions of the night, representing the Lord as having "waked up out of his holy habitation," with the design of wreaking vengeance upon the nations which he had used in afflicting Israel, and of restoring Sion as the centre of his power and his beneficence, whither should gather not only the dispersed people but many nations which were to join them-

selves to the Lord. The symbolism which figures the restoration of power at Jerusalem was doubtless intentionally obscure, on account of the Persian authority, which might be offended by any distinct claims.

There is evidence in the vision of chapters iii. and iv. of the conflict between the secular authority of Zerubbabel and the priestly authority of Joshua, and the prophet appears as a partisan of the latter, and finally, in the latter part of chapter vi., has him crowned as the ruler, while the prince of the house of David seems to disappear. The promised "Branch," or shoot from the root of Jesse, appears thus to take form in the high-priest. The visions of chapter v. are symbolical of purging the land of crimes and transferring its guilt to Chaldea, while the first part of chapter vi. represents the chariots of the Lord as going over the earth to the four winds to quiet the spirit of hostility.

There is an interval between these visions and the oracles of chapters vii. and viii., which contain another reminder of the evil doings of the past and their consequences, and an appeal to heed the words of the Lord, followed by another glowing promise of greatness and prosperity in the future, when "many peoples and strong nations" should come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem.

These eight chapters constitute all the genuine writings of Zechariah, the rest of the book consisting of additions of older material which have already been accounted for.

There was one more prophet in Israel, at the time when Nehemiah was striving to build up the service in the restored temple, to enforce observance of the law, and to keep the people from intermarrying with those who were not of their faith, and thereby falling into idolatrous ways. It is not impossible that Maleaki, "my messenger," was a proper name, but it is not likely. Men now ceased to come forward in their own person as spokesmen of Jehovah, and the time had gone by for producing effect by attaching anonymous oracles to an ancient and venerated name. Hence the "burden of the Lord" appeared in this case as having come simply by "Maleaki," the messenger. But it is a melancholy burden, indicating the enormous lapse from the spirit of ancient prophecy and the deep depression of the nation's hopes. The intensely practical way in which human forces proceeded in spite of the promises of what Jehovah was going to do had a discouraging effect.

The burden of the complaint now was against the priests for polluting the altars with imperfect sacrifices, and against the people for slighting

their offerings and oblations, and profaning the holiness of the Lord by marrying with the heathen. The Levitical system was producing its effect, and Pharisaism was already growing. The old threats of chastising and purifying the nation and restoring a remnant to greatness and future glory were no longer available. The nation was dead, and its hopes of power and grandeur were buried. The last voice of prophecy was not clear or strong. It came to deal not with the fate of a nation among the nations, but with the fate of the righteous and the wicked among the people. The Jewish mind was still closed to the idea of reward and punishment after this life, but it was driven to a day of retribution of some kind, as a justification of its invincible faith. There was no belief in a survival or revival after death, but, according to the accepted legend, Elijah had never died, but had been taken up bodily to be among the "sons of God," and therefore he might be sent as the forerunner of "the great and terrible day." With this vague conception of a day of retribution out of which so much was to be wrought in later times the volume of Hebrew prophecy closed.

XVII

ESTHER

THE Book of Esther is not historical. Neither is it religious or moral. There is no historical evidence and no probability that Xerxes (Ahasuerus), the king of the Persians, ever made a Jewess his queen, or exalted a Jew to the highest official station in place of a fallen favorite, fallen under the resentment of the Jew and his compatriots on account of an atrocious design against them. The Jews had derived from the Persians a secular festival, which was introduced into Palestine, and which gradually took on a religious character and came to be known as the Purim. It was not religious in its origin or its early observance, but it was common among the Jews to attach their feast-days to some sort of legend associating them with significant incidents of their history, real or imaginary. This story is an obvious fiction to account for the Purim and invest it with the pride of the Jewish race, which in one form or another was always conspicuous and irrepressible.

Apart from the innate improbability that appears in every line, its unknown author could not have written within a hundred years of the events he professes to relate, and there is no evidence of the existence of the production for a century or two later still. It seems to belong to the period of literary decadence in which the Book of Chronicles was produced and that of Ezra was compiled. There is a certain affinity between it and the intercalated passage in Ezra from iv. 6 to vi. 13, in which the dates of Persian kings are hopelessly confused. What chance is there that a narrative written then, with such minute detail, could be based upon facts, of which no other evidence survived, and which were in themselves wildly improbable? It was very likely never meant by the Jewish mind to be taken as fact, and it is chiefly interesting as a late example of that peculiar art of the ancient Hebrew for giving a matter-of-fact appearance to a narration of imaginary and essentially improbable events, in pursuance of some definite purpose, generally religious or ethical.

The Deity is not mentioned or indirectly alluded to in the book, nor is anything referred to which has any relation to the faith of Israel. Neither does the book contain any sound moral sentiment or meaning, but it is saturated with

pride of race in its most offensive guise. Esther is represented as being exalted to the place of favorite queen to the luxurious king by a sort of craft on the part of herself and her uncle, not creditable to either or to their race. There is nothing admirable in Mordecai's refusal to show the customary deference to the chief dignitary of the empire, but it flattered the Jewish egotism; and it is likely that in an actual case the dignitary would have made short work of the offender, instead of undertaking to exterminate his compatriots in one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, supposing even a Persian king to have been capable of acceding to such an extraordinary design for a money bribe. Even if Xerxes had been willing to exterminate all the Jews in his dominion to please Haman, and for the purpose of reaching Mordecai, who was all the while within easy reach, he would hardly have consented, after the evil design was exposed, to let these Jews massacre seventy-five thousand of his native subjects. If he had done so, it would have been a monstrous act, and it is no less monstrous to suppose that Esther and Mordecai really compassed that wholesale slaughter. Even admitting that Haman, in the case supposed, deserved hanging on his own unnecessarily exalted gibbet, where was the justice in slaying his ten sons and his fellow-citizens to

the number of five hundred, besides other of his countrymen by thousands, and elevating the author of the whole bloody business to the highest office in the state?

No, the Book of Esther is not a religious book, it inculcates no moral lesson, and happily it is not historical. It does not even account for the Purim, and it exhibits the Hebrew in exile in an odious light. There is surely nothing in it of the spirit of Christianity, or even of the better spirit of Judaism. It is not referred to in the New Testament, and it was admitted to the Hebrew canon, after much hesitation and dispute, even among strictly Jewish authorities, probably after the beginning of the Christian era, and then only because of its relation to the feast of the Purim.

XVIII

THE BOOK OF JOB

TAKING up now the Book of Job, we are carried back to the loftiest height of the ancient Hebrew literature, in the golden age of Hezekiah, when the ringing voice of Isaiah was still heard among the living. There has been much disputation about the time and authorship of this grand production. There is nowhere in it a reference to place or event that will help to fix its date or throw light upon the circumstances of its composition. It is essentially dramatic in character, the scene is thrown back to a patriarchal age, the personages are foreign to the soil of Israel, and the atmosphere is that of the wide universe.

Formerly there was an opinion that it was not in its origin a Hebrew production, but was adopted and translated from the work of some Idumean or Arabian sage. Not only was that opinion without warrant, but of all the books of the Old Testament this contains the most perfect embodiment of the Hebrew spirit. Its substance is the very philosophy at the bottom of the faith of Israel,

and it deals with the insoluble problem of that faith.

Its exalted tone, the mighty sweep of its expression, and the firm vibration of its language seem to exclude it from any place much earlier or much later than the first great prophet of Jerusalem. One would say that the author was familiar with the patriarchal legends and the grandiose conceptions of the account of the early days of the world, and that he knew nothing of the laws and statutes and sacrificial requirements with which the Hebrew genius was gradually put in bonds. Like so many other great productions of that genius, this one magnificent poem comes down to us without name or date, but it bears the ineffaceable impress of the faith that carried Israel through so many trials, only to mould and hammer its qualities into a temper which contact with other races for ages could not relax.

The foundation of the Hebrew faith at its highest was belief in an all-powerful God, who in his dealings with men was righteous altogether, doing full justice in this world, "here on this bank and shoal of time." It refused to look beyond for recompense or retribution. In spite of calamities, in the face of experience, this faith was persisted in, with many risings and fallings, for wellnigh a thousand years. Wrong-doing was punished,

right-doing had its reward. If there was disaster or suffering it was on account of sin, and every seeming contradiction of this principle had its explanation in some inscrutable design of a Deity that could not err. This is the theme of Job.

It is introduced by a prose prologue describing the righteousness and prosperity of the man of Uz, and the calamities that befell him, as a test of his uprightness. Then came his series of complaints and appeals, each, except the last, followed by a reply from one of his three friends. The burden of Job's protest is against the validity, in his own case, of the doctrine of which he is to be made the great exemplar. He is conscious of his rectitude and rejects with scorn every imputation that he is punished for wrong-doing, while the replies of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar are constant variations on the theme that God is incapable of injustice ; that where evident punishment is going on there must have been sin, and it is sheer presumption to pretend otherwise.

The debate goes on upon a rising scale, and Job not only withers his accusers with indignant scorn, but boldly challenges God himself to justify his treatment of a faithful servitor. Finally the Almighty answers the challenge out of the whirlwind, but the answer consists of an overpowering portrayal of the might and wisdom of God, the in-

significance of man, and the presumption of questioning the justice of his treatment. Job is silenced and humbled, but, after all, his indictment is untried, and the insoluble problem is left unsolved, and it has never since been solved. Taking into account only this life, no one has succeeded in justifying the ways of God to man, and human experience keeps up an everlasting denial of the fundamental doctrine of the old faith of Israel, that the righteous is rewarded with prosperity and long life, while the wicked encounters adversity and is cut off in the midst of his days.

There can be no doubt that the long discourse of Elihu, interposed between the end of "the words of Job," and the answer to them out of the whirlwind, is a later production and by a different hand. Dignified and noble though this passage may seem, compared to what precedes and follows it is a flat and arid plain between two sublime heights. It was evidently written by one who was not satisfied with the arguments of Job's three friends, and was especially discontented to have them abandon the field after his last prolonged plea. But this new advocate of the Almighty's cause hardly strengthens the case. He goes over the same ground in a more pretentious but less eloquent and forcible style, and leaves it much as he found it.

It has been questioned whether the part of Job's last discourse from chapter xxvii. 7 to the end of chapter xxviii., is a genuine portion of the original, because in it he seems to abandon his ground and practically to accept the argument of his friends as to the immutable justice and inscrutable wisdom of God. Some have been disposed to regard it as the final reply of Zophar, since in the text as it stands he is not given a third turn like the others. But it may have been part of the design of the author to represent Job in his calmer moments as accepting the theory of God's justice to the fullest extent, while still insisting upon his own rectitude and defying anybody to sustain charges against his life. Some have also maintained that the final description of the behemoth and leviathan are additions, but if so, they must have been added by the author of the rest of the poem.

The genuineness of the prose prologue and epilogue has been questioned, but they form a necessary frame to the dramatic scene. The use of the name Jehovah in these, while in the discourses the Deity is designated as El, Eloah, or Shaddai, is in keeping with the dramatic purpose and form of the composition. The epilogue opens the door of escape for the doctrine which really had the worst of the argument, for Job is represented as receiving in the end the proper recom-

pense of his righteousness in redoubled prosperity and prolonged life. There seems to be a curious inconsistency in the representation that Job was commended as saying of the Lord "the thing that was right," though he had been rebuked for darkening counsel by words without knowledge, while the officious advocates of the Almighty's cause had to make humble reparation for their folly. But this is quite in keeping with the lack of attention to details of literary art in some of the greatest productions of the Semitic mind, so long as the general purpose was served.

There are two points regarding which it may be well to note a common misconception. There is nothing more certain than that the idea of life after death, or of resurrection in any form, was utterly foreign to the theology of the Hebrews before they came into subjection to foreign powers. In the verses near the end of chapter xix. Job makes an appeal for pity at the terrible condition to which he is reduced by disease, expresses the wish that an indelible record might be made of his words, and then declares his unconquerable confidence that, though his body should be utterly wasted away, his vindicator would yet stand upon the earth, and that he would see him, in restored flesh and health. This is consistent with his faith, with the doctrine of the author of the poem, and with

the theology of the greatest teachers and prophets of Israel.

The other point to be noted is that the Satan of the prologue has no analogy with the spirit of evil of the Persian mythology or the Christian theology. He is simply one of the messengers or agents which Jehovah was sometimes represented as having at his command to serve his own purposes. In the character of the "adversary" he is used as the instrument for bringing affliction upon Job to test his fidelity, and so far as we can assign him a general function from this slight allusion, it seems to have been that of a detective, with the cynical view of human nature which is apt to belong to that character.

XIX

THE PSALMS

It would be interesting, if it were possible, to trace to their sources and assign to their several periods of production, the poems, hymns, and songs of praise that constitute the collection known as The Psalms, but the effort to do so, with the surviving data, would be tedious, and it would be futile. The periods of production extend over something like eight centuries, and in the collection are confused reflections of the vicissitudes of the people, and the state of feeling produced by them, from the establishment of the first kingdom to the struggle of the Maccabees for emancipation from the tyranny of the Seleucides.

No considerable part of the collection was made until the restoration of the temple service after the return from captivity, and then it was intended primarily for the uses of that service, and not as examples of poetical production or illustrations of history. Additions were made from time to time, with little care for classification and no regard for chronological order. New pieces might at any

time be inserted in the older collections, and old pieces still floating unattached might be included in the new additions. Moreover, new hymns were sometimes made from old material, parts of which had already appeared in the mass, and changes and adaptations were freely made. Naturally these pieces were much copied and became subject to a multitude of textual errors. So the mass went on growing and varying in detail until it was finally fixed by the Hebrew Canon and by the Greek version of the Septuagint.

There it appears, like the law, divided into five books; and as the whole mass of the law, the work of centuries, was attributed to Moses, from whom its germs may have been derived, so the whole varied liturgy and hymnology of the temple were ascribed to David, who was regarded as the first great poetical and musical genius of the race. Probably the name of David was attached to the earliest collection, in accordance with the practice of associating anonymous productions with revered names, as a means of preserving them and without any purpose of attributing the authorship to him. In fact, among the ancient Hebrews little attention was paid to the identity of authors, and their productions were not thought of as literature in our modern sense.

One of the purposes of the writer of the Book

of Chronicles was to represent the Levitical system of the second temple as having belonged to the first, which it certainly did not, and to trace its establishment back to David prior to the existence even of the first temple. There were certain choirs, or guilds of singers, known as Asaphites and Korahites, and according to the system applied to the priests and Levites, to give them an antique origin in the history of Israel, these were traced to putative ancestors of David's day and earlier. Certain minor collections of psalms were made by or for these temple choirs from time to time, and they came to be known as psalms of Asaph, or of the sons of Korah, regardless of actual authorship or origin. Other traditional names were sometimes used to designate separate pieces, but the later additions, which became more and more liturgical in their character, were mostly left anonymous. With the coming of a literary era and acquaintance with the practice of other nations, the custom of connecting ancient names with writings newly produced or of unknown production was dropped.

In the five parts into which the one hundred and fifty psalms have been divided it is possible to trace in some measure the growth of the collection. The first part contains forty-one psalms, mostly ascribed to David, and the bulk of this was

probably the oldest collection, made not long after the restoration of the temple. The second part includes chapters xlii. to lxxii. of the present Book of Psalms, and the third, chapters lxxiii. to lxxxix. These two really constitute one composite collection. First there is a Korahite collection of eight psalms, then a second Davidic collection of twenty, separated from the preceding by the psalm of Asaph, and then an Asaphite collection extending to chapter lxxxiii. There are occasional exceptions to the ascriptions in these three sets of psalms to Korah, David, and Asaph ; but a curious feature of the series from xlii. to lxxxii., constituting the second and the greater portion of the third part, is that it was made up by an editor who eliminated the name Jehovah and substituted Elohim throughout. Those which follow, to the end of part third of the whole book, were not subjected to that process, but they constitute a sort of miscellaneous appendix to the same collection.

There is no way of fixing the time when the several sets, or the collection into which they were combined, or the additions appended to that collection, were made, but it was doubtless late in the Persian or early in the Greek period. It was certainly long after the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. What are called books four and five of the Psalms, xc.-cvi. and cvii.-cl., respectively, are not

clearly distinguishable from each other, and for the most part comprise a mass of later additions, many of which are hymns of praise, or prayers, having an evident liturgical purpose. No part of the collection can be regarded as homogeneous, as pieces old or new, not previously included, were liable to be incorporated at any time or in any place, and any piece was liable to undergo change, until the final touch of the canon fixed the mass and made it sacred from further manipulation.

The rubrics placed at the head of many psalms, whether so placed when they were first included in the collections or later, are no actual indication of authorship or of the occasions that produced them, being based rather upon surmise or assumption than upon tradition, and they are often contradicted by internal evidence. There is no certainty that any of the psalms were written by David, but it is not unlikely. The eighteenth is directly ascribed to him in Second Samuel xxii., but even that is not conclusive evidence. There are a few pieces of the nature of historical poetry, like psalm lxxviii., which evidently followed the promulgation of the law and recalled the past experience of the people down to and including the destruction of the Northern Kingdom, and like cv. and cvi., which have a similar character, but are turned into songs of praise by the opening and closing

lines. There are few indications of origin in the Northern Kingdom, but xlv. appears to be a nuptial song of Ahab and Jezebel.

Many pieces in which the first person singular is used have a national rather than a personal significance. There is a note of depression and appeal when Israel is compassed about by enemies, and of triumph and rejoicing when she is victorious. Imprecations upon enemies are generally directed against the enemies of the people rather than of the individual. Some historical allusions are uncertain. Psalm lxxix., for instance, has been referred to an Egyptian profanation as early as Necho's invasion, and to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, four centuries and a half later, but it more probably refers to the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. Many plaintive songs were doubtless written during the captivity, but few bear such a stamp of certainty as cxxxvii. Complainings in behalf of the meek and faithful who are oppressed by the wicked or insulted by the scornful, with expressions of abiding faith, as in xxxvii., lxxiii., and xciv., may have arisen in dark times, like those of Manasseh's long reign, when evil influences were dominant. "New" songs of rejoicing, like xcv. and those which follow it, may be assigned to the return from captivity, and some of them have the exulting tone of the "second

Isaiah," to whom they have sometimes been attributed.

There are representations of Jehovah's terrible might which remind one of the Song of Deborah and the loud timbrel of the Book of Jasher, and others which recall the imagery of Job, while again there are appeals to the lovingkindness and tender mercies of a God of gentler attributes. Occasionally we find recognition of the laws and statutes, and references to sacrifices and burnt-offerings, but more often the doctrine that right conduct has its sure reward and wrong-doing its certain penalty, which pervades the teachings of the prophets.

It does not greatly matter that we cannot refer the parts of this wonderful collection to their sources, assign dates and authors to the several pieces, or associate them closely with incidents and events. Notwithstanding the lack of order, arrangement, or classification, we can see that it reflects the experience, the moods, the hopes and fears, the calamities and triumphs, and the modes of worship of that ancient people who attained the highest conception of Deity, and were the first to put their trust in an unseen power that pervaded the universe with the rule of righteousness. The marvel is that out of their experience of nearly a thousand years, ended two thousand years ago,

should come a mass of devotional poetry so far fitted to the needs of the human heart in all times and places, that the world cannot outgrow it or improve upon it. It is not the product of a single genius, like many another indestructible heritage from the past, but of the genius of a race passing through an ordeal such as no other race has undergone. Through that ordeal results were wrought for mankind that could not perish, and one of their abiding evidences is the Book of Psalms.

XX

THE PROVERBS

THE author of the Book of Kings says of Solomon, "and he spake three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a thousand and five." What became of these productions doth not appear, but this Oriental statement, together with Solomon's general reputation for wisdom, caused his name to be attached to the accumulation of aphorisms and wise sayings of the ancient Hebrews which was preserved in their scriptures. No doubt this collection, like most others in that great volume, was made in the years after the return from captivity, when the national life was extinct; but of this there is no external or internal evidence beyond the fact that no sign can be found of the existence of the the Proverbs as a collection until it became a question of including them in the canon.

The thirty-one chapters contain several collections, varying somewhat in characteristics, united together in the customary manner of the compilers of scripture books. At the beginning are six or

seven verses of introduction, probably prefixed by the latest editor, and including the designation "the proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel," which was doubtless adopted on the familiar principle of associating cherished productions with some great name. What follows, to the end of chapter ix., does not consist of proverbs, but of a series of connected discourses upon wisdom, of exhortations to observe her teachings, and of warnings against folly and imprudence. These are addressed to a young man, designated as "my son," by some imaginary sage, and the youth is especially warned against the wiles of the "strange woman."

From chapter x. to xxii. 16 is a veritable collection of maxims and wise sayings, with the heading "the proverbs of Solomon." They consist of a long series of distichs, quite disconnected and susceptible of any other arrangement, balanced after the manner of the parallelism of Hebrew verse. In some cases they are a strict parallel of the same or similar meaning differently expressed, but more frequently antitheses. They are a heterogeneous collection, and the division into chapters is quite arbitrary. From xxii. 17 to xxiv. 22 there is another series of continuous injunctions upon wisdom and the conduct of life. The rest of chapter xxiv. is a separate collection of "say-

ings of the wise," but not in the form of detached proverbs.

The next five chapters form a collection which is designated as "also" proverbs of Solomon, "which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out." These are a mixture of genuine maxims and aphorisms, with bits of advice and wise counsel, the whole having a decidedly antique flavor. This is undoubtedly the oldest part of the whole book. Whence the men of Hezekiah copied it out does not appear, but they may very likely have transcribed it as a collection from various sources. They did so about two centuries and a half after Solomon's day, and while some of his wise sayings may have been preserved until that time, it would probably have been difficult to prove their authenticity even then. There can be no doubt that the collection was a gathering up of floating material in the distinctly literary period of Hezekiah's reign.

The collection that begins with chapter x. is unquestionably much later, and was probably completed, at a very late day, of material that had drifted together in the course of centuries. Whether the preliminary and interpolated discourses are earlier or later than the main collection is uncertain and not important. They have the appearance of being incorporated from separate productions,

on account of their general character, when the whole book was finally made up. The last two chapters, the "words of Agur" and the "words of king Lemuel," were probably added at the same time. The names are enigmatical, and there is no reason to suppose that they represent real persons.

There is a quaint shrewdness in the words of Agur and a picturesqueness of expression that suggest a primitive time. The gem of chapter xxxi. is the exquisite alphabetical poem on the virtuous woman, which is too much a work of literary art to be very early or very late in the history of Israel. The original epithet signifies rather "sensible" or "capable" than "virtuous" in the usual modern acceptance.

A noticeable characteristic of the whole Book of Proverbs is the absence of the distinctively Hebrew or Israelite stamp. There is no intrinsic quality denoting the time or place of production. There is in it a universality of tone that seems inconsistent with the persistent particularism of the Jewish race. There are none of the familiar allusions to Israel or to Sion, to the patriarchs or prophets, to the priests or law-givers, to the temple or the altar fires. There is simply a mass of worldly wisdom and prudent counsel, of aphorisms, maxims, proverbs, and sayings of the wise,

marked in general by a wide and lofty ethical spirit, but devoid of special religious significance. In its way it is a production of Semitic genius as unique as the Psalms, and still unrivalled of its kind.

XXI

THE SONG OF SONGS

THE mere fact that the editor or scribe who put upon this beautiful composition the title Song of Songs added "which is Solomon's," would seem to indicate that such a label was not meant to imply authorship, so plainly do the contents contradict such an implication. Not only could it never have been written by Solomon, but it exhibits that monarch in the unpleasant light of being discomfited by a simple country maiden, whose charms he attempted to add to the attractions of his harem, but who persisted in her ardent fidelity to the rustic lover left in her native village, in spite of the allurements of the seraglio at Jerusalem. It is a gem of pastoral poetry from the north country of Israel, rescued from oblivion by the baseless allegorical interpretation put upon it at an early day and persisted in for centuries. It is a pity that more such treasures, if such there were, had not been saved by similar misconceptions.

And this gem is a veritable antique, for it antedates the ivory palaces of Samaria and the reign

of Omri, and was written when Tirzah could be named with Jerusalem as a beautiful capital, in the days that followed the reign of Jeroboam, founder of the Northern Kingdom. It was also a time when Solomon's quest of fair maidens for his harem was fresh in memory, and in a memory with which no reverence mingled. Perhaps in the writer's mind there was a keen recollection of that other fair Shulamite, Abishag, whose loveliness was made a sacrifice to the extinguished fires of the royal blood before Solomon was king, and became the cause of fatal jealousy between him and his aspiring brother. At all events, this is a production of the Northern realm, nine centuries older than the Christian era. It breathes of the pastoral atmosphere of Issachar and the vineyards of Zebulun. It wafts into the luxurious court of Jerusalem the fragrance and bloom of the vales of Galilee.

Much tissue of brain and material of writing was squandered for ages upon the allegorical interpretations of this little chaplet of exquisite song; and in the past century learning, ingenuity, and critical acumen have been lavishly expended in extracting from it the real meaning and purpose, and nobody feels quite sure of the result. It is an abuse of terms to call it erotic in any passage. It is amatory, but it depicts the triumph

of a pure and innocent love and the baffling of a sensual passion in which appears no craft or malice, only the easy-going oriental indulgence. In substance, if not in form, it is dramatic, weaving together a number of episodes in an artless fashion. It has been conjectured that it was used for histrionic representation, perhaps at nuptial celebrations, continuously or in separate episodes. It has also been guessed that it was intended as a monologue in which one skilful singer would sufficiently imply by tone or gesture and action the changes of character and scene. But whether a dramatic performance, with accessories of scenery and costume, a choral representation, with part songs and solos, or a musical monologue, much was left to the imagination in the transitions of scene and character, and after the lapse of three thousand years it is no easy matter, without note or explanation or tradition as a clew, to feel certain that any "revival" of the production conforms to the real original.

Instead of discussing any of the analyses or explanations upon which so much learning and ingenuity has been bestowed, we may as well accept that which seems most reasonable, as well as most pleasing, as at least making the composition intelligible. We are to imagine, then, that a fatherless girl of Shulam, with unkind brothers

and a devoted lover, has been secured in her native village by Solomon and brought to his seraglio in Jerusalem. The scene opens in the harem, and the first four verses are chanted by odalisques in praise of the king, when the sun-burnt beauty of the North appears and speaks the next two in explanation of the contrast of her complexion with that of the fair daughters of Jerusalem. Then she falls into a musing apostrophe to her absent lover in verse 7, and the chorus of odalisques responds in scornful advice to return to the flocks of her shepherd lover. Then Solomon speaks in praise of the dark maiden's beauty in verses 9-11. She continues her musing, as if alone, in the next three verses, the king utters more words of admiration in 15, which she in her revery turns upon the lover of whom she is thinking, and after the king's reference to the richness of her surroundings, she sings a snatch of song calling herself the Rose of Sharon, which serves as a signal for the lover's appearance on the scene, and the lines of chapter ii., verse 2, are put in his mouth. They are followed by the rapturous words of the maiden, who faints in his arms, and he adjures the daughters of Jerusalem not to awake his love "until it please."

There, at ii. 8, is a break. The maiden speaks, as alone and in a trance or revery, recalling her

lover on their native hills and the scenes and incidents of former joy. This continues to the end of chapter ii., and is followed in the first four verses of chapter iii. with the relation of a dream, or a fancy, of hunting for the lover, from whom she had been separated, to bring him to her mother's house again. He appears to be present, and again adjures the daughters of Jerusalem not to arouse his love from the trance in which such sweet words are uttered.

At chapter iii. 6 a new episode begins, carrying the mind back to the time when Solomon brought his new acquisition to the city. The description of his coming and of his palanquin, and the call to the daughters of Sion to behold him, are supposed to proceed from a male chorus in a street of Jerusalem ; but the beginning of chapter iv. takes us into the harem again, and in the first six verses the king appears sounding the praises of the maiden's beauty. Upon the resumption of this unavailing panegyric, on the same or another occasion, the voice of the rustic lover breaks in with a call to his bride to look upon him from her gorgeous height ; and being ravished with a look, he utters his own ardent praises of her, until she throws herself into his arms with the words of the last half of verse 16, to which he responds joyfully in verse 1 of chapter v.

At verse 2 begins another episode. The maid of Shulam is again separated from her lover, and in musing mood relates a distracted dream or fancy of his seeking her in her apartment at night and disappearing when the door was opened, and of her going forth to find him. To her appeal to the daughters of Jerusalem in verse 8 the chorus responds with verse 9, and she replies with the praises that complete the chapter. After the question of the chorus, vi. 1, the lovers are supposed to come together again, and the maid expresses satisfaction in 2 and 3.

At chapter vi. 4 another episode opens, and Solomon once more tries his blandishments upon the unyielding beauty, whose resistance makes her "terrible as an army with banners." At verse 8 the voice of the lover is supposed to break in again upon the king's seductive praises, and then the chorus, verse 10, asks scornfully who this superior beauty is, that she should be so proud. The maid turns her back and musingly recalls the incident of her being captured in her country home, and the chorus calls upon her to turn back that they may look upon her. This is the first two lines of verse 13, of which the last two are supposed to be uttered in scornful jealousy by a dancing girl, who proceeds to execute a dance, perhaps that of Mahanaim. This, done in the oriental manner,

and in the diaphanous costume proper to the character, excites the admiration of the king and calls forth the eulogium of vii. 1-9, which is applied to the dancing girl, and not to the modest maid of Shulam.

The latter turns from the scene more than ever enamoured of her own lover, and appeals to him to take her back through the fields and villages to their rural home, where they will enjoy the delights of their mutual passion. This ardent outburst ends with a faint in the lover's arms, and once more he adjures the daughters of Jerusalem not to awaken his love. After viii. 4 there is a transition of the scene to the native haunts of the youthful pair, and their return is greeted with a chorus of villagers in the first two lines of verse 5, the rest of that verse forming an ejaculation of the lover over the maiden awakening under an apple tree in her mother's garden, where he has laid her to repose. She responds with her wonted ardor in verse 6, and the following verse seems to be the reflection of a sage bystander upon the strength of true love, which cannot be bought.

The rest of the chapter, verses 8-14, appears to form an epilogue, the significance of which has not been made entirely clear. Some would throw it back into a retrospect, before the abduction of the maiden, and others make it a sequel to her ex-

perience. The only difficulty with the latter interpretation is a seeming inconsistency between the description of verse 8 and that of verse 10, and the assumption that the girl's brothers are ignorant of her eventful absence from home. However, it is in harmony with the plan set forth above, and as satisfactory as any that has been suggested. Verse 8 is supposed to be spoken by one of the brothers of the maid, and to be replied to by the other brother in verse 9, the question and answer implying a treatment according to the character of the girl for virtue. In the next three verses she proudly protests for herself that she has already proved to be a wall, with impregnable towers, and that Solomon, with all his purchased and guarded vineyards, could not invade her domain. Then comes the call of the lover for the wedding, for which the companions are waiting, and the happy reply of the willing bride.

All this may seem like mere ingenious conjecture, but it is the result of the closest study, with all the light that research into customs and language can throw upon it, and it has the merit of a real solution of the most charming of puzzles. It had to create a point of view, in a time and place most remote from that of the modern literary critic, and about which little definite knowledge is attainable. It had to deal with obscurities in a

language deficient in grammatical distinctions, especially in the tenses of verbs, and with peculiarities of dialect of which few examples have been preserved. Moreover, the original texts had suffered the usual mutilations from copying and from misconceptions of meaning, while the allegorical interpretations so long insisted upon have imposed upon the translators of most modern versions. But in spite of all drawbacks we get a vivid and exquisite picture of life and character in Israel and Judah, in the far-off time, before trouble accumulated upon the two kingdoms, and a picture in delightful contrast with the dark shades in the old annals of the kings.

XXII

JONAH

DOUBTLESS the Book of Jonah had a serious purpose, but, were it not for the tremendous seriousness with which it has been taken these many centuries, because the ancient authorities of the Jewish faith included it among their sacred writings, one would be almost inclined to treat it as a burlesque upon the prophet of Israel. In a certain serious sense it is so. It was written, probably in Babylon, late in the period of captivity, when a kind of scepticism prevailed on account of the non-fulfilment of predictions, and the prophet was in danger of being held in light esteem and of cherishing a grudge against Jehovah for the failure of his menaces. Jonah, son of Amittai, was one of the old prophets, and a type of those whose mission it was to utter direful threats, and Nineveh was the greatest of ancient cities and a type of obstinate pride and power.

For the purpose of striking illustration this stern old prophet is represented as being sent to prophesy destruction to that mighty metropolis;

and the futility of his trying to escape so daring a task, when commanded by the Lord, is shown in his experience at sea. The device of swallowing by a dragon or sea-monster, as a means of saving the life of one destined to accomplish a certain mission, was familiar in Babylonian fable. Jonah, being finally brought to face his task in spite of himself, boldly proclaims in the streets of Nineveh that it will be overthrown in forty days. Still for the purpose of illustration, and in spite of an improbability bordering upon the grotesque, the proud capital is portrayed as suddenly repenting and going into a general mourning for its sins, at the clamor of an incomprehensible foreign vagrant in the streets, and its fate is thereupon averted, to the discomfiture of the reluctant prophet. Thus is enforced, in an extreme case, the doctrine that repentance may follow the divine menace of punishment, and the punishment may thereby be averted; and that the prophet who has been the instrument of the conversion has no right to complain.

The latter lesson was impressed upon Jonah in an unpleasant experience, and his complaint at the destruction of the ephemeral gourd was made the occasion of a rebuke for his disgruntlement at the salvation of the great city of Nineveh. The extreme way in which the incidents of the tale are

put gives it an appearance of broad caricature ; but in spite of the solemn exegesis of many centuries its meaning and purpose are plain enough. The only absolutely inscrutable thing about it is the intellectual effort and moral earnestness that have been expended upon the theory that it is, or was ever intended to be, a solemn narration of facts, any more than the story of Giant Grim, or the encounter of Greatheart with Apollyon. The real Jonah has just cause of complaint against the liberty taken by the author with his name and reputation. It needs only to be added that the prayer "out of the fish's belly," which is interposed between the account of Jonah's first experience and the sequel, is quite irrelevant to either, though apparently employed to "turn" the place of his confinement, and is wholly made up of scraps and shreds from the psalms, strung together without coherency.

XXIII

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

As we departed from the biblical arrangement and adopted the chronological order in dealing with the prophetic books, on account of their relation to historical events, so we can get a clearer understanding by placing at the end of our series the two books which were the latest to appear, and one at least of which has an important bearing upon events at a critical time. The voice of prophecy had been silent for three centuries and a half, and for the greater portion of that period no scribe had ventured to add to the sacred writings of Judaism, save perhaps in the process of copying, when the terrible pressure of the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, the abominable profanation of the holy city with a pagan image in the very temple of the Lord, and the desperate revolt headed by Judas Maccabæus, forced into existence the remarkable production known as the Book of Daniel. Discarding prepossessions and prejudices, and seeking merely to see things as they are, we shall have no great difficulty in understanding this book.

Following a practice by no means novel, the author shrouded his own identity in mystery, and made use for his purposes of one of the most venerated names of his race. The real Daniel is referred to by Ezekiel as one of the sages, already ancient, revered in his day, and he probably lived and wrote his lost productions in the time of Manasseh. At all events tradition held him among the wisest of men and the most faithful in time of trial and adversity in his devotion to the God of Israel. He was in the popular mind the ideal character for the purposes of the anonymous writer, who strove in the days of sorest distress to revive and strengthen the ancient faith, rekindle hope, and nerve the people to the struggle for recovering possession of Sion, now sunk in the abomination that maketh desolate.

This writer began by placing himself back in the time of Judah's first great humiliation, the Babylonian captivity, and using the subsequent events in a kind of prophetic forecast to lead up to his climax. In so doing he showed a remarkable ignorance of actual history, but the means of information among the Jews of his time was scanty, and all that was familiar was a few conspicuous names and leading events. Besides, his purpose was not historical, and he was as careless of facts as he was ignorant of details.

The first half of the book consists of a series of narratives, for the main features of which material may or may not have existed outside of the writer's imagination, in the shape of popular tales or tradition. There is in them an appearance of differences of source. There is a difference of language in the earliest known texts, but those were produced by copying, after the Aramaic Targums came into existence, and signify little, as there is an obvious unity of purpose running through the whole book. By way of illustrating the divine care for the faithful among the chosen people, and the exhibition of divine power to the dismay of the mightiest potentates, we are told the series of stories of the faithful Daniel and his devoted companions in the days of Nebuchadnezzar.

The first indication of the author's definite purpose appears in the great image of that monarch's dream, interpreted by Daniel. Here we have the gradual degeneration of imperial power from the Babylonian, through the Persian, the Grecian of Alexander, to the Seleucidæ, and to Antiochus as their basest and most degraded representative. This degenerate sovereignty is to be crushed with the little stone of the Jewish revolt, which will grow into the great mountain of the Lord's dominion in the earth. Here is still an echo of the bold promise of ancient prophecy.

The divine care for the faithful, and the discomfort of their oppressors, is especially enforced in the story of Nebuchadnezzar's golden image, and the penalty of burning alive for violation of the imperial decree to fall down and worship it. The next illustrative episode is put in the form of a record by Nebuchadnezzar himself, giving an account of his own humiliation to the form and condition of a beast of the field, and his subsequent recognition of the "King of Heaven." The reader of this volume will not need to be told that this was pure invention, and to discuss its "historical basis" is to talk nonsense.

If there was a name in the royal family of Babylon corresponding to Belshazzar, its possessor certainly was not the son or the successor of Nebuchadnezzar, nor did he die suddenly, that the kingdom might be "received" by Darius the Mede. But that does not detract from the interest or significance of the story of his feast, which contains a pointed reference to the desecration of the precious vessels of the temple by Antiochus, and vindicates once more the wisdom and triumph of the faithful Israelite and the righteous vengeance of his God. Once more that moral is enforced in the story of Daniel and the lions, and the conversion of Darius to a belief in the living God, albeit the writer was ignorant of the fact that

Darius was no more a Mede than Cyrus, and Cyrus no more a Persian than Darius, and mixed up the order of his potentates.

Beginning with chapter vii. the book grows impressive with the visions of Daniel and the intensity of the writer's purpose, for here we have the first great example of that apocalyptic writing which largely wrought the transition from Judaism to Christianity. Daniel, who has before always been spoken of in the third person, is now represented as having written his dream and told "the sum of the matters." In the first vision, in the reign of the mythical "Belshazzar king of Babylon," we have again the succession of empires—Assyrian (or Babylonian), Persian, Grecian, and the Seleucidæ—in a series of beasts. Among the principalities into which the Greek power was divided appears the "little horn," which figures Antiochus Epiphanes, the presumptuous and despised oppressor of the Jews, and for him the judgment was prepared which was to result in the dominion of the faithful, personified as the "Son of Man," deriving authority from the "Ancient of Days." This much-discussed symbolism is made obscure only by the discussion.

Again, in a vision in which the Persian palace at Susa is given to Belshazzar king of Babylon, the Medo-Persian empire appears in the ram, and

Alexander in the he-goat, and we have a new development of the "little horn," which had presumed to trample upon the stars and to extinguish the altar-fires of the temple. But it is speedily to be broken and the sanctuary cleansed. The historical dislocation which makes Darius the son of Xerxes, instead of his father, is of little consequence, and the enigmatical calculation of the time of deliverance is remarkable chiefly for the various extraordinary uses to which it has been put by those who did not understand it. No doubt it was made purposely vague and obscure, as dealing with what was still in the future, but the writer intended to convey the impression of a speedy triumph, and to sustain it by mystical figures out of past prophecy, which had no real relevancy.

Most pregnant vision of all is that of the last three chapters, with its "man clothed in linen," above the great river, revealing in words like the voice of a multitude the coming deliverance of the people. Beginning with the Persian kings, of whom the author knew but four, he sketches, as if in a vision of the future and in vague and wavering outlines, without distinct detail, the course of history to Antiochus Epiphanes, the "contemptible person," who is pictured in his desperate conflicts with his enemies, in his profanation of the sanctuary and his favors to those

who forsake the covenant, his persecution of the righteous and setting up of the abomination that maketh desolate, and his honoring of the strange God of the Romans. But his fate draweth nigh; "he shall come to his end and none shall help him." "The people that know their God shall be strong and do exploits," and their great prince shall stand up at that time of trouble, "such as never was."

Here is foreshadowed the yet unachieved victory of Judas Maccabæus and his resolute followers. But what of those victims of persecution who have died martyrs to their unyielding faith, in despite of the doctrine that the righteous have their reward? That persistent refusal of the ancient Hebrew, in his most exalted mood, to look beyond this life must give way at this terrible crisis, in order to find the encouragement of hope when it was most needed. That the departed faithful might share the triumph and the recreant might suffer the penalty of traitors, "many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some of them to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

In a brief but impressive epilogue after this climax there is a venturesome prediction, in ambiguous terms, of the time of "the end of these wonders," and within the set time of 1290 days Judas and his devout warriors had rescued the

temple, driven the Syrian minions out of Jerusalem, restored the worship of Israel's God, and prepared the way for the autonomy of "the glorious land." But the dream of power for a restored nation was not fulfilled in the end; neither did the martyrs rise to share in the victory of the living, but the seeds of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body were planted, the germs of a transformed Messianism were started, and the soil was prepared as never before for the teachings that were to come, after yet another heathen power had spread itself over the land of so many disappointed hopes, and of the unextinguishable potency of new hopes.

XXIV

ECCLESIASTES

ALONG in the latter half of the first century of the Christian era the rabbis of the Jewish faith were applying their scriptural canon to a philosophical production among the writings in their possession, the worldly and sceptical tone of which caused much doubt and hesitation in their minds. But its recognition of righteousness as the highest wisdom, and its acknowledgment of the ways of God as beyond question, as well as past finding out, finally prevailed, and it was added to their collection of sacred books. In the next century (130 A.D.) it was included in the Greek translation of Aquila, and was thereafter accepted by Christians and Jews alike. No reference or indirect allusion to this work before the Christian era has been discovered, and its age has always been a matter of speculation. Its original language and general character afford the only evidence, and these indicate a late origin. It was almost certainly written after the troublous time of the Maccabees, and probably late in the As-

monean period, perhaps not long before the Roman conquest of Asia Minor.

It was in the form of a discourse in the mouth of a personage designated by the four Hebrew consonants corresponding to K-H-L-TH. Vowels were supplied to make of this "Koheleth." There was no such word in use, but as the first three consonants corresponded with those of a verb meaning to assemble, or to gather a company of listeners, it was assumed, though feminine in form, to signify one who addresses such a company. Hence the title *Ecclesiastes*, given to it in the Greek version and adopted in the English, with the alternative equivalent, "or, *The Preacher*."

The burden of the discourse is the vanity and emptiness of all things human, and as it begins with those things most highly esteemed by man, knowledge and wisdom, power and riches, luxury and unlimited means of enjoyment, it represents Koheleth at the outset as being the son of David, king in Jerusalem. The writer did not choose to assume for himself an experience to justify the conclusion of "vanity and striving after wind" as the result of the highest advantages of earth, and there was no better example of that sort of experience than Solomon; and taking such liberties with great names was the commonest thing in Hebrew literature, as we have already seen. After this

part of the discourse the writer seems to lose sight of his assumed character, and to speak in his own person, as a man of wide observation, keen insight, and a philosophic temper.

Such a writer must have been the product of his time, and it was evidently a time when the long struggle of his race was over. The hope of a great nationality was gone, the strivings of the petty principality had subsided. The fever that produced the first apocalyptic writings and fostered the hopes of the mysterious "anointed one," who had been so long receding in the vague visions of the seers, had apparently burned out. The awakening faith in a hereafter had relapsed into slumber. Koheleth cherished no hopes and saw no prospects. The thing that had been was the thing that was and that would be, and trying to reform it was striving after wind. There is no memory of Israel's past in his mind; he has lost thought of the law and the prophets, and if he has ever heard of that new doctrine of the resurrection of the sanctified and a coming kingdom, he holds it as a vanity too light even to recognize.

Koheleth is a fatalist, a pessimist, and yet he is cheerful and resigned, and his advice is to make the best of things as they are, avoiding all extremes, cherishing prudence, and scorning folly. There is no assurance of good fortune in righteousness, and

yet righteousness is to be preferred. There is no sure penalty for wickedness, yet wickedness is folly. Though there is one event to the righteous and the wicked, and the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward, yet is there no question that the righteous and the wise, with their works, are "in the hand of God," and that is the safest place. The problem of Job troubled not the mind of Koheleth. Sadly and cheerfully by turns, he simply gave it up, and saw nothing better for man under the sun than to eat, drink, and enjoy the labor of his hands, ceasing all effort at the solution of insoluble problems and all striving after wind.

In his discourse he sprinkles wise sayings and prudent counsels, in a manner to suggest quotation from a common stock, and sometimes a broken and obscure style indicates the same thing. There are inconsistencies that may come from quoted expressions, or may be the result of variable moods. The writer used an inflexible language little adapted to philosophic meditations, and in the hands of those who did not understand him his writing became corrupted by transcription and translation. But in spite of obscurities its general meaning, and its tone and spirit, are clear as daylight, and all the murkiness with which they have been overspread has emanated from the spirit

of superstition, which evermore invades any repository of thought or sentiment that has been declared sacred.

In all his musings upon life, his recognition of the evil and incurable state of things under the sun, and of the wisdom of a calm and rational enjoyment of the good things of the only world vouchsafed to man, the thoughts of Koheleth revert ever and anon to the one event that comes to all. While he bids the young man to rejoice in his youth, he admonishes him that that also is the time to remember his Creator, and sets before him a sad picture of old age, unsurpassed in poetic expression in the whole range of literature. And yet upon that last scene of all he can only pronounce again the cheerless refrain, "vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

With that ends the discourse of Koheleth, and the long and varied range of the scriptures of that ancient race whose genius gave the world the foundation of its enduring religions. There are added words, perhaps by the author, reverting to the character with which he set out, but the last four verses of the book were undoubtedly appended by others, when it was added to the canonical collection. Perhaps the rubric beginning "this is the end of the matter; all has been heard," was intended to close and seal forever the volume of the Jewish scriptures.

