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The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the
Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

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Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and
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SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT.

Beginning with the July number, there will appear in *The Open Court* a series of articles on "**The History of the People of Israel**," especially written for *The Open Court* by DR. C. HEINRICH CORNILL, Professor of Old Testament History in the University of Königsberg.

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HISTORY OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL.¹

FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

BY PROF. C. H. CORNILL.

Introductory Observations.—Land and People.—Race Migrations of the Orient in Ancient Times.

THE HISTORY of the people of Israel is the subject to which I desire to call the reader's attention. But am I justified in calling attention to the subject at all? What do we care for the people of Israel? Where is there interest or profit for us in knowing what took place in Palestine in the long period of time from 1500 before Christ to 70 after? Such questions and objections must be anticipated by one who undertakes to present the history of Israel to a general public; and those who make such objections probably regard themselves as upon the very pinnacle of modern impartiality and freedom from bias. But this boasted impartiality is a strange thing: it is too often only a product of ignorance, of entire absence of insight into the situation.

A certain familiarity with the history of Greece and Rome will always be required as a necessary element of general culture. And why? Because our whole civilisation has its roots in Hellas and Latium. Our science and our art would simply be incomprehensible without Plato and Aristotle, without Homer, Sophocles, and Phidias. It is true, the Hellenes themselves were heirs of the primitive civilisation of the Orient, and their intellectual achievements would have been utterly impossible but for Egypt, Babylo-

¹ Translated from the manuscript of Prof. C. H. Cornill, by W. H. Carruth of the University of Kansas.

nia, India, and Phœnicia. The Phœnicians in their colonising and commercial activity, which embraced the whole known world, brought to the nations of Europe not only gold and cotton (the Greek word for gold is Phœnician, and our current "cotton" is also a Phœnician word), but also the intellectual possessions of the Orient, and, most important of all, transmitted to the European world perhaps the greatest and most important invention of the Orient, the alphabet, which rendered genuine civilisation and real intellectual life possible for the first time.

But the Hellenes acquired this inheritance of the ancient Orient in order to possess it; from the divinely endowed genius of their race they gave it a re-birth as something specifically new and specifically Greek. We, too, know the civilisation of the ancient Orient directly only in the form which it received among the Greeks and at their hands. We must know the history of a race to which we owe our whole intellectual life on the profane side. And inasmuch as the inheritance of the Greek mind has reached us through the Romans, whose whole function in the development of civilisation consisted in transmitting Greek culture to the nations conquered by them, we must know the history of this race also, the intellectual connecting link between us and Hellas, because only he who knows this can understand his own people and his own present.

Beside Hellas and Rome, third in the group of races to which the arbiter of history assigned an exceptional mission in the world, stands Israel. True, Israel played no important part in universal history in the accepted sense of the word, nor did it ever lead in the march of civilisation. In learning and the plastic arts it achieved nothing; it produced no Plato or Aristotle, no Phidias or Praxiteles, no Homer or Sophocles,—but it gave the world Moses and the prophets, and from it alone could be born after the manner of the flesh Jesus of Nazareth. Just as on the profane side our whole intellectual life is rooted in Hellas and Latium, so on the religious side it is rooted in Israel: Israel gave the world the true God and the true religion.

For all times the truth is established that was uttered by the founder of Christianity himself to the woman of Samaria in the talk by Jacob's Well at Sychar, "Salvation is of the Jews," and which his greatest apostle wrote in an epistle to the Christian community of Rome, that Abraham is the father of us all in the faith. And this applies also to the many millions of Mohammedans, for the prophet of Islam himself wished only to restore in its

primitive purity the "faith of Abraham," which Jews and Christians alike had corrupted, as he thought, and disguised under all sorts of strange additions. And can we be indifferent to the history of a race to which we owe our best and noblest possessions? Can we be without interest in such a race?

But, you might reply, we do know it, we have all learned it in school under the title of "Bible History." Very well and good, and that brings me directly to a point which is in urgent need of explanation at the very start. I must simply beg you to forget here all recollections of "Bible History." Not on the ground that everything is untrue that is told in the Bible of the history of Israel. But in the Biblical accounts the material has all gone through the medium of popular tradition, and then again this popular tradition has been treated and presented from special points of view by later compilers. The Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament do not claim to be history, but books of devotion. It is very characteristic that the Jewish canon itself does not know the designation "historical books," but includes the writings which we are accustomed to call the historical books of the Old Testament among the prophetic, with a correct perception that we have not in this case historiography but prophecy. That the historian, who is concerned with these books only as historical materials, looks at them with different eyes from the Bible reader, who is seeking in them only edification, is a matter of course and cannot be otherwise, and accordingly the historian will often be obliged to draw a different picture of the matters reported in them from that made for devotional purposes by the Biblical writers themselves.

There is one misfortune in the limitations of this work: I can only portray and not demonstrate; if I were to undertake to support my delineation by reference to the sources, I should need at least sixfold the space at my disposal, and I could scarcely hope to awaken interest for such details and investigations, and might not after all convince any one. I must therefore incur the appearance of putting forth in the following work only undemonstrated propositions, and of deviating without evident reason from the current views derived from Bible history. But I earnestly beg my reader to believe that every deviation from the traditional picture is based on careful reflexion, and on reasons which my scientific conscience regards as imperative. And I trust it will be felt that everything essential is left, even if certain details disappear.

For I hold the firm and well-grounded conviction that the traditions of the people of Israel itself regarding its earliest history

are thoroughly historical in all essential points, and can sustain the keenest and most searching criticism. Poetic legends have, indeed, woven about those ancient traditions a misty magic veil which charms the eye and captivates the heart, and in which lies the spell that those traditions cast over every unbiased mind. Not with rude Vandal hand should we tear away this veil, but with loving care resolve it into its single threads and remove it with considerate hand, so that the original image may stand forth in its unadorned simplicity and naked chastity, and then we shall see that it is really a noble human figure, and not a mere creature of the imagination, that was concealed beneath the protecting cover of this veil. For science there is no veiled image of Sais, and the road to scientific truth does not go through guilt, not even where scientific truth in sacred things is concerned.

If the question is raised: what sources are at our command for the investigation of the scientific truth in connexion with the history of Israel, we have first to confirm a fact which for the historian, indeed, is extremely grievous and discouraging, but all the more valuable and significant for the student of race-psychology. Israel is the poorest in history and monuments of all the races that we know. I will not refer to the Egyptians and Mesopotamians, who covered every spot of free space with inscriptions and pictorial representations which recall to us vividly to-day a life that was lived five thousand years ago. Even among the nearest relatives and neighbors of the Israelites the conditions are entirely different. The thousands and thousands of inscriptions which the Phœnicians set up wherever they went are a familiar fact; from the next kinsmen of the Israelites, the Moabites, we have at least the triumphal column of their king Mesha, and from the nature of this monument we may conclude that it was not the only one. Even the wandering Bedouins of the Arabian and Syrian deserts transmitted their memory to future generations by numerous inscriptions. From Israel we have nothing of the sort, no monument, no inscription, no tomb. It might be thought that this was to be explained from outward circumstances. Since the second millennium before Christ Palestine has been the battlefield of the Orient, and all that has visited this land would make the destruction of its ancient monuments quite comprehensible. But not even the earth has brought anything of the sort to light, despite most careful and painstaking search; and in view of all that has actually been preserved from ancient times, we have a right to expect that somewhere at least a letter or a written fragment would appear. One

sole exception but confirms the rule. In the year 1880 the first and thus far the last ancient Hebrew inscription was found,—but where? In the tunnel of the conduit of the Siloah canal, where a human eye could see it only by accident, as indeed it was discovered by pure chance on the occasion of the cleaning of the canal.

No, the reason lies deeper, and we shall scarcely find anything of importance, even if the search is continued. This is shown by the very character of the literature of Israel that has been preserved. The composer of the Book of Kings had before him the official annals of the ancient kings of Israel and Judah, or at least extracts from them. This work, which if preserved would be for us a historical source of incomparable value, and which we would gladly make great sacrifices to regain, was allowed to perish; it has vanished and left no trace, because it was not appreciated. And yet this work contained everything in the whole matter that would interest us as historians.

We meet an entirely analogous case in the history of David. David was the greatest king and warrior that Israel ever had, and we are more exactly informed about the time of his life and reign than about any other period of ancient Israelitish history; but these very detailed reports speak so incidentally and superficially of David's wars and victories that it is quite impossible for us to obtain a picture of his warlike achievements that shall be clear in all respects. What interested Israel in this its greatest hero, and endeared him to it, was not the warrior and the victor, but the man and the king. It seems as though ancient Israel had no eye for those things, as though it felt itself clearly enough that its function in history and its mission to mankind were not of this world and did not consist in earthly achievements. This undeniable fact has always been to me the strongest proof of a really transcendent spiritual endowment of Israel.

Accordingly we have no monuments of any sort at hand for the history of the people of Israel, but our only sources are the written traditions of this absolutely unhistorical people itself, which are and profess to be not histories but books of devotion, and after these the direct and indirect reports of alien nations—in fact a scanty and unreliable body of material in dealing with which the greatest caution and self-control are urgently demanded. To present what can be learned from these unpromising materials is the object of these pages.

And first we must endeavor to get a tolerably clear idea of the scene of our history. It will appear that as the people that lived

there in historical times was unique in its kind, so is also the land the features of which could not but exercise a great influence upon the nature and character of its inhabitants.

The land in which the chief part of the history of Israel was played, and which this people regarded as its own, is called by us with a Græco-Roman designation, Palestine, that is, the Land of the Philistines. The Greeks entered the country by way of the coast, and gave to it the name of the tribe that dwelt there, a phenomenon that we shall observe frequently. The inhabitants themselves called it Kenáan. As this name means etymologically "lowland," it must originally have been applied only to the Philisto-Phœnician coast strip. The land occupied by the Israelites, on the contrary, is altogether mountainous and has a considerable lowland only in the plain of Jezreel. This fact is in accord with the report of the Phœnicians that they descended from a tribal progenitor, Chnâ, in which name we recognise immediately the stem of Kenáan. In Israelitish times, however, only the portion of the land situated west of the Jordan is known as Kenáan; the land east of the Jordan has the separate name Gilead. What we now call Palestine, the land on both sides of the Jordan, is a comparatively small bit of earth, only about eight thousand five hundred square miles in extent, that is, a little more than the area of Massachusetts, or of Wales and Herefordshire.

Hydrographically the land is very scantily endowed. Of rivers it has the Jordan alone, with its tributaries, the most important of which, however, are all on the east side: the Yarmuk, the Jabbok, and the Arnon, which latter empties not into the Jordan proper, but into the Dead Sea. The land west of the Jordan can boast really of no rivers save the Kishon in the plain of Jezreel; but in the hottest part of the season this is a slight rivulet and begins to be a considerable river only a few miles above its entrance into the Mediterranean Sea at Haifa.

The fertility of Palestine is dependent exclusively on the rain, which falls in winter, and on the dew of summer, wherefore it is more clearly and more perceptibly than in other lands a blessing from above, a gift of heaven, so that the eye of man was here directed upward, toward heaven, by nature herself. The Jordan, the sole river of Palestine, called to-day "esch Scherîat el Kebîre," the Great River, has not its like on earth; instead of uniting the adjacent lands and shores, like other rivers, the Jordan separates them as an almost impassable barrier, since its extraordinary fall and its winding and twisting course make navigation on it impossi-

ble. Of moderately convenient and always available fords it has only three between the Lake of Gennesaret and the Dead Sea. Thus it comes about that we are obliged to consider the land east of the Jordan and that west of the Jordan as two really distinct lands without connexion with each other.

The Jordan plain, called to-day "el Ghôr," is almost entirely uninhabitable, in summer on account of the tropical heat, in winter on account of the floods: it was and is still a notorious resort and hiding-place for all possible beasts. The southern part of the country, too, the region about the Dead Sea and the so-called mountains or wilderness of Judah are sparsely populated and capable of sustaining only a scant population. In ancient times, as well, it must have been much as it is to-day, since natural conditions have not changed. The country east of the Jordan is but a narrow strip of tillable land wedged in between the valley of the Jordan and the vast Syro-Arabian desert. Only in its middle and northern portions is the land really fertile and adequate for a considerable population, and this especially on the slope toward the Mediterranean coast, the lowlands of Sharon and Sephela, which Israel never succeeded in occupying.

But upon this narrow and limited soil our astonished eyes meet an infinite variety and diversity of details. Palestine deserves the name of the land of contrasts; here is found gathered together everything between a sub-tropical climate and the region of eternal snow. The mighty mountain peak of Hermon, which forms the northern boundary of the country, is covered with perpetual snow and rises to an altitude of over nine thousand feet, some three thousand feet more than Mt. Washington, or more than twice the height of Ben Nevis. There we have Alpine landscape and Alpine flora. The mountain region of Galilee, the most healthy portion of Palestine, has the most moderate climate, the southern portions, especially the plain of Jezreel and the seacoast have a warm climate, and in the valley of the Jordan and about the Dead Sea it is actually sub-tropical. In Ghôr a temperature of 109 F. has been observed in the shade in the month of May, and along the Dead Sea, even after sunset, when in other southern lands a sudden coolness usually sets in, the thermometer has recorded 95 F.

And accordingly the vegetation here is sub-tropical: the balsam used to thrive here and the palm still does, wherefore Jericho was formerly called the City of Palms. On account of these great climatic extremes the flora of Palestine in general is exceedingly rich: some two thousand species of flowers have been noted. It is

easy to understand how this natural wealth of nature about him must arouse and inspire the mind and soul of man.

But as a whole, also, Palestine is a land of contrasts, and this in a manner that must be regarded as providential. In the first place, the land is almost entirely shut off from the world outside. On the east and south it is bordered by the desert, like a perfect insulating medium, and on the west by the surging Mediterranean, offering no good harbor on the whole coast of Palestine (to this day a calamity for travellers to the Holy Land), besides being almost unnavigable by the ships of the ancients because of the strong blasts of the trade-winds. Only on the north is the land accessible, though one cannot say open, for here the two great parallel Alpine chains of Lebanon and Anti-Libanus reach across like a natural bar. This same reserve which the land shows outwardly, is manifest within as well. Almost everywhere are mountains with deep, abrupt gorges, which constitute a great obstacle to intercourse and make travel extremely wearisome and slow.

This is providential. For this isolation guaranteed to the inhabitants the undisturbed development of their individuality; they were exempt from the influences of the great leveller, commerce.

Mountaineers are everywhere men of strongly developed individuality. But there is another side to the matter. It is true that the genuine mountaineer is vigorous and upright, but he is also clumsy and stubborn, revolving complacently about his own axis and distrustful and inhospitable toward all influences from without. From this danger Israel was preserved. For while the land is insulated, at the same time it is a bridge and highway of world-commerce without a parallel. All the ancient highways of commerce went through Palestine. For instance, that primitive one from the Nile to the Euphrates, which runs through Palestine in its entire length, and after crossing the Jordan touches first at Damascus; and likewise the no less important one from Tyre to the Arabian Gulf, which brought to the Phœnicians the products of Arabia, East Africa, Persia, and India. And so, if I may venture to use the figure, Israel was constantly fanned and refreshed by the wings of world-wide commerce and thus kept from growing hard and sour, while its individuality ran no risk of being dissolved in a characterless, nebulous cosmopolitanism.

And in still another way this providential tendency to extremes is seen. The land was favored in many ways, but on the other hand it was full of pests. In early times wild beasts, such as the lion and the bear, the wolf and the panther, the jackal and the

hyena must have lived there in great numbers, and even to this day serpents are a great pest, Palestine having more than twenty species, among them five very dangerous and poisonous ones.

Furthermore, the land is fertile : wheat of all varieties, grapes, figs, olives, and pomegranates thrive abundantly, but not without labor and care. Of Palestine especially the old Bible sentence is true : "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." These contrasts also are very important. There was no chance for the relaxing and enervating effect that comes when man receives from nature without exertion all that he needs ; he was spurred and forced to the full exertion of his powers. But this application was not discouraged by the prospective fruitlessness of his exertions, a condition which makes man as stupid and indifferent as when everything falls into his lap of itself ; but prosperity was the reward of toil. He knew that it paid to exert his powers. A land, therefore, which seemed as if made to produce a physically and mentally sound race, that brought thither the capacity to fulfil the mission assigned it by God. The Roman historian, Tacitus, also, in his famous description of the Jewish people, dwells especially on the exceptional health, strength, and endurance of this race. And accordingly the Israelite has always clung to his country with sincere gratitude and loving loyalty ; it was to him the paragon of countries, and he recognised the gracious dispensation of his God especially in the fact that this precious land had been assigned and promised to him without any merit and desert of his own.

The limitations of our subject are self-evident. Properly speaking, there is no history of the people of Israel until the exodus from Egypt ; not until this event did Israel become a people, only then does its history begin. It ends with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. Since that time there have been plenty of Jews ; but there has been no Jewish nation since the year 70 after Christ. To be exact, therefore, we must begin with the exodus from Egypt. But, as is well known, the recollections of the Israelitish people reach much further back, and we must extend our examination into their history as far back as we can possibly go. This will constitute the primitive or archaic history. A subject of vast importance ! For, as with the individual the child is father of the man, so in the life of a nation the primeval history has a decisive influence on the whole following development. But at this point we must get a clear idea of the character of those earliest recollections of the people of Israel.

We find no history or historical literature in Israel until the

period of the kings. Of literary monuments reaching further back than this we have some songs and fragments of poetry, most notably the splendid Song of Deborah. But until the beginning of the monarchy all the historical recollections of Israel were handed down by word of mouth alone. Now there are centuries between the oldest authentic reports and the things reported. Therefore the criticism of the sources is especially needed here, and at the same time especially difficult. We must regard this whole body of oldest traditions as popular legends. Popular legend does not invent its subjects, it makes nothing out of nothing, but it handles its subjects very freely and treats them with all the sovereign authority of a divinely inspired poet to whom the subject is only the raw material which he endows with soul, form, content, and life. Accordingly we must endeavor everywhere to get at the historical germ, the substratum of reality in these legends; it is this that is historically valuable, and may be regarded as an authentic source.

To penetrate into times that antedate history we have a still more reliable guide: this is language and philology. Let us try to make Israel's language speak, and put it on the stand as a witness regarding the earliest fortunes of the people. Israel itself calls the language which we know as Hebrew "the language of Canaan"; there is no recollection that the Israelites themselves or their fathers ever spoke any other. Now this designation "the language of Canaan" is true in a literal sense: it can be proven on philological grounds that this language can have developed in no other country than Canaan.

The Hebrew language calls the west *jam*, "ocean" or "sea-coast": in fact, the Mediterranean Sea constitutes the west boundary, and Canaan is the only race speaking a Semitic tongue which has directly and solely the sea on the west. The south is in Hebrew *negeb*, literally "the dry-land," "the drought-land"; *negeb* is the proper name of the desert into which the mountains of Juda abruptly descend to the south, which is called in the oldest Egyptian records *pa-nagbu* (the very same word, with the Egyptian article). Here again, this peculiar etymology could have grown up in no other Semitic-speaking land save Canaan. And the creators of the Hebrew language were already tillers of the soil, and no longer nomads. While the Arab, a thorough nomad, uses for all figurative applications of "dwelling" the word *ahl*, "tent" (calling, for instance, a man's family his tent), the Hebrew uses regularly the word *bajith*, "house"; only to a people that had long ceased to be

nomadic could it occur to say *scháar*, "gate," for "city" or "dwelling." Most decisive, perhaps, is the word *lechem*, which appears as second element in the name Bethlehem. This word means in Hebrew "bread," while in Arabic the corresponding form of the same stem, *lachim*, means "meat." How is this to be explained? Originally, of course, the word has neither of these meanings, but only the general sense of "nourishment," "food." To the nomad, meat is the absolute equivalent of food; if the Hebrew language understands by it "bread," then those who formed this language as a vehicle for their thoughts and ideas must of necessity have been tillers of the soil.

On these grounds, then, we should conclude that the people of Israel had always dwelt in Canaan and that they had always been agricultural people. But against both assumptions Hebrew tradition raises loud and vigorous protest. No element of this tradition is more permanent than that the ancestors of the people were not born in the land of Canaan, but immigrated thither, and that they were nomads, wandering shepherds, who adopted agriculture and settled abodes only in historical times and in this very land of Canaan. These two points cannot be invention, for the first is very inconvenient for Hebrew tradition, which is thus compelled to make extraordinary efforts to prove or at least to found its claim to the possession of Canaan. Therefore, unless it had had a very distinct recollection of this fact, it would never in the world have invented it. Moreover, traditions have preserved a recollection of the original home; with one accord they report that the patriarchs were Aramæans, and came to Canaan as emigrant Aramæans. In historical times Aram was the hereditary enemy of Israel, which waged a life and death struggle against its assaults. Here, too, it is a psychological impossibility that this Aramæan origin should be an invention of legend, particularly when we consider that the Aramæans speak a language wholly different from the Hebrew. The Germans might as easily get the idea that they were descended from the French, or *vice versa*.

For ancient Israel, Aram is a term of wide extent; but recollection located the primitive home more definitely, though not always in precisely the same place. A tradition, in other respects very good and bearing the marks of antiquity, makes "Laban the Aramæan," the father-in-law of Jacob, dwell not far from Damascus, which the Israelites regarded as a part of Aram. Another and indeed older tradition finds the initial point of the migration of the patriarchs to Canaan in Haran, a place in northwestern Mesopo-

tamia, well known under the Græco-Roman form of the name as Carrhæ, and tells also of a connexion with the ancient marvellous city of Ur in the extreme southeast of Babylonia, the modern Mukajjar (Mugheir), whose ruins inform us of a primitive civilisation in that region, which we can trace back into the third millennium before Christ, and which is surely much older than that. How should Israelitish tradition have happened upon these names and localities, which it is not probable that any Israelite ever set eyes on in historical times?

These are no airy creations of the imagination, but even the keenest criticism must recognise here a foundation of reliable tradition. All accounts agree that the ancestors of the people of Israel were conducted from Haran to Canaan by Abraham. The recollection of an occurrence of such importance could not fail to be preserved, and even the name of the person who was the motive power and manager of the whole could not be lost to posterity. I consider Abraham a historical personage in just as strict a sense as Opheltas and Peripoltas who, according to the tradition of the Bœotians, led this people from Arne in the valley of the Peneus in Thessaly to Chæronea in the land afterwards occupied by them. Such particulars and such names are not invented by tradition out of nothing. Let us see whether it is possible to fit these facts into the course of the history of the Orient as known to us from other sources.

In Mesopotamia, where the oldest tradition places the primitive home of Israel, our historical knowledge reaches back almost to the year 4000 before Christ. According to the reports of the Babylonians themselves, the two earliest kings of whom they have any recollection, Sargon of Agade and his son Naram-Sin, ruled about the year 3800 before Christ; of Sargon it is already reported that he made expeditions as far as the Mediterranean Sea. These two rulers are absolutely historical personages, since we possess to-day authentic monuments of them with full identification of their names.

And even then the land already had a long and eventful history behind it. Sargon of Agade already bears a genuinely Semitic name. But there can be no doubt that the primitive Babylonian civilisation, which has given even to the present day the names of the seven planets, and of the corresponding days of the week, the division of the circle into 360 degrees, the division of the year into 12 months, the week into 7 days, the day into 24 hours, and the hour into 60 minutes, is older than the year 4000, and derived from

a non-Semitic people. This people called themselves Sumerians, and by their language belonged to the Finnish-Turkish-Tartar race, the so-called Turanians.

This highly civilised but unwarlike people was overwhelmed by a great Semitic migration, and with the Semitising of the Sumerians our knowledge of the history of Mesopotamia begins. We can follow this process step by step. The more energetic and powerful Semitic race succeeded in the course of centuries in completely absorbing the Sumerians, and adopted, without adding anything of their own, their primitive civilisation, especially the cuneiform writing invented by the Sumerians and long in use among them. They organised city principalities and district kingdoms whose rulers we can name and identify in great numbers from their own inscriptions and the accounts of the Babylonians. Especially interesting for us among these is Gudea of Zergulla, about 2800 before Christ, from whom we have a considerable number of sculptures and inscriptions. These sculptures show already a high degree of skill; in the inscriptions he mentions expressly cedars from the Amanus mountains and from Lebanon, so that the connexion with the Mediterranean was still maintained. Furthermore, it is as good as certain that there existed already a lively and uninterrupted intercourse with Egypt; in these very sculptures of Gudea Egyptian influences are said to be manifest. We must assume about the year 3000 a high degree of civilisation and some international commerce in southwestern Asia. We see, therefore, at the beginning how the course which Israelitish tradition assigns to the patriarchs had been travelled for a thousand years or more.

About the year 2300 B. C. these Mesopotamian Semites are assailed by a new enemy who seems about to deal out to them the same fate which they had before dealt to the Sumerians. The Elamites, the non-Semitic inhabitants of the mountain region east of the lower course of the Tigris, invade Babylonia and conquer the land. Their king, Kudur-Mabuk, must have ruled over a mighty realm reaching even to the Mediterranean, and of this Elamite kingdom we have left a trace in the king Chedorlaomer of Elam, who according to the account in Genesis, Chapter 14, ruled over Palestine and waged wars there. But their dominion was to be of short duration. About 2250 the great city-king, Hammurabi of Babel, led a victorious attack of the Semites against the Elamites, destroyed their power and became the founder of a greater Babylonian empire, combining under his sceptre all that was later known as Babylon.

This greater Babylonian Empire founded by Hammurabi seems to have continued over five hundred years peaceful and unassailed. In the eighteenth century before Christ, it is true, the Assyrian power began to develop to the north of it, but for some time this did not threaten Babylonia. It was a more serious matter when in 1550 a new conquest came upon the country. The Cossæans, or Kassites, a mountain people related to the Elamites and dwelling northeast of Mesopotamia, invaded the country under the lead of their king, Agu kak-rimi, whose very name shows that he was no Semite. They succeeded in completely subduing the north part of it and in establishing a Cossæic dynasty which ruled for several hundred years, the members of which called themselves, after the name of Middle and North Babylonia, "Kings of Kardunjash." The Semitic part of the people and their rulers were forced southward, where they continued to live an inactive life, and suffered severely from the attacks of the Bedouins of the Arabian Desert.

By this time another enemy had appeared on the scene. About the year 2000 Egypt had been invaded by foreign conquerors—Hyksos, the Egyptian historian Manetho calls them—who settled permanently in Lower Egypt which they subdued to their sway. The origin of these Hyksos is disputed; according to the report of the Egyptians themselves we can see in them only hordes of Asiatic Bedouins, who, however, soon became acclimated and adopted Egyptian civilisation to a certain degree. After the reign of the Hyksos had lasted a considerable time, Pharaoh Ahmes, the vigorous founder of the Eighteenth Dynasty, succeeded in breaking their power and taking from them their last support in Egypt, the border fortress of Abaris.

The Hyksos went back to Asia, but the Egyptians followed their track, and now themselves advanced into Asia as conquerors. Thotmes II., the great-grandson of Ahmes, overran all southwest Asia even to the further side of the Euphrates, which he descended with his army in ships, and hunted lions and the still numerous elephants in Mesopotamia. Even the king of the rising Assyrian Empire sought the favor of the powerful Egyptian and several times sent him valuable presents. Even though this Egyptian rule was only nominal in the lands along the Euphrates, it established itself firmly in Palestine and on the Mediterranean coast. At this period Palestine was a regular Egyptian province, ruled by subject kings and Egyptian governors. And so the Cossæic kings of Kardunjash sought the friendship of the Egyptian Pharaohs, and maintained with them the relations of friend and neighbor.

Here again I must mention one of the most remarkable and valuable discoveries given to the world in recent years. The last Pharaoh of the powerful and mighty Eighteenth Dynasty was King Amenhotep IV., the so-called Heretic King. This remarkable man wished to reform the Egyptian religion and put in place of the old and confused polytheism a solar monotheism in which the sun was to be worshipped as the sole god, under the name of Aten. The king especially disapproved of the ancient imperial god, Amon, whose name he ordered erased everywhere, and changed his own name from Amenhotep to Chu-en-aten, "Glory of the Sun." And so too, the old metropolis of Thebes, the very city of Amon, had become distasteful to him, and he moved his capital to Middle Egypt, to the modern Tel-el-Amarna. It is no wonder that the reformation was a failure, and that the King, who was besides so unfortunate as to leave no son but only daughters, died amidst the curses of his subjects, and pursued by the fanatical hatred of later generations. Hence the place where he had dwelt was regarded as plague-ridden and haunted by evil demons.

And as a result of this belief it happened that the complete royal archives, his own and his father's diplomatic correspondence, were preserved at Tel-el-Amarna; they were found in the fall of 1887. This highly interesting correspondence covers the whole of Palestine and the Phœnician coast, Mesopotamia and Babylonia, and even the Cossæic kings are represented. And this correspondence is in the Assyrio-Babylonian language and written in Babylonian cuneiform characters. If even the proud Egyptians, who so thoroughly despised everything foreign, condescended to this and had their subjects and vassals write to the king in a foreign language which the Egyptians themselves had first to learn with much pains, this is the clearest evidence of the great power and dominant influence exercised by Babylonian culture on southwest Asia; it explains also very naturally how precisely the oldest Hebrew tradition shows the most remarkable kinship with the Babylonian.

This, then, is the historical picture shown us by southwest Asia at the time of the migration of the ancestors of the people of Israel. Babylonia shaken to its foundations by the Cossæic conquest, Egypt in uncontested possession of southwest Asia and recognised even by the rulers of Mesopotamia as chief power of the age. Let us try to fix the time a little more closely. The Exodus of Israel from Egypt must have occurred, according to Egyptian chronology, about 1300 before Christ; the residence of Israel in

Egypt lasted, according to the oldest tradition, three generations, or in round numbers a hundred years. This would make the migration to Egypt about 1400 B. C. If we estimate the events between the immigration of Abraham to Canaan and the further migration to Egypt at about one hundred years also, or perhaps somewhat more, we would arrive at the time for the immigration of Abraham to Canaan as between 1550 and 1500.

Now if the unquestionably Semitic inhabitants of Mesopotamia whom Abraham led leave Mesopotamia at exactly the same time when the Cossæic conquest was suppressing and expelling the Semitic element from Mesopotamia; if these Semitic emigrants follow a long familiar highway of international commerce into a land where they will be under the potent protection of Egypt; if later they go from the recognised Egyptian province to Egypt itself,—not a migration from one country to another, but only a migration from one part of a land to another—well, am I saying too much when I declare that the substance and the historical pith of the oldest traditions of Israel fit most perfectly into the picture of the general history of the time and are completely confirmed by it? What in fact the primitive history of Israel was, we shall examine in the next article.