

THE LEGENDS OF GENESIS.

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THE ARTISTIC FORM OF THE LEGENDS.

AN EARLY ISRAELITISH ROMANCE.

OUT of the type of legend which has been sketched in essentials in the preceding chapters there was evolved, as we may discover even in Genesis itself, another type relatively much nearer to modern fiction. While the story of Hagar's flight is a classic instance of the former sort, the most conspicuous example of the second is the story of Joseph. It is necessary only to compare the two narratives in order to see the great differences in the two kinds: there, everything characteristically brief and condensed, here, just as characteristically, everything long spun out.

The first striking difference is the extent of the stories. Since the vogue of the earlier form we see that men have learned to construct more considerable works of art and are fond of doing so. The second is that people are no longer satisfied to tell a single legend by itself, but have the gift of combining several legends into a whole. Thus it is in the story of Joseph, so also in the Jacob-Esau-Laban story and in the legends of Abraham and Lot.

Let us inquire how these combinations came about. In the first place, related legends attracted one another. For instance, it was to be expected that legends treating the same individual would constitute themselves into a small epic, as in the stories of Joseph and of Jacob; or the similar, and yet characteristically different, legends of Abraham at Hebron and Lot at Sodom have become united. Similarly in J a story of the creation and a story of Paradise are interwoven; both of them treat the beginnings of the race. In P the primitive legends of the creation and of the deluge originally constituted a connected whole. In many cases that we can observe the nature of the union is identical: the

more important legend is split in two and the less important one put into the gap. We call this device in composition, which is very common in the history of literature—instance *The Arabian Nights*, the *Decameron*, *Gil Blas*, and Hauff's *Tales*—"enframed stories." Thus, the story of Esau and Jacob is the frame for the story of Jacob and Laban; the experiences of Joseph in Egypt are fitted into the story of Joseph and his Brethren; similarly the story of Abraham at Hebron is united with that of Lot at Sodom.

DEVICES FOR UNITING SEVERAL STORIES.

In order to judge of the artistic quality of these compositions we must first of all examine the joints or edges of the elder stories. Usually the narrators make the transition by means of very simple devices from one of the stories to the other. The transition par excellence is the journey. When the first portion of the Jacob-Esau legend is finished Jacob sets out for Aram; there he has his experiences with Laban, and then returns to Esau. In the story of Joseph the carrying off of Joseph to Egypt, and later the journey of his brethren thither, are the connecting links of the separate stories. Similarly in the story of Abraham and Lot, we are first told that the three men visited Abraham and went afterwards to Sodom. Now we must examine how these various journeys are motivated. The sale of Joseph into Egypt is the goal at which everything that precedes has aimed. The journey of his brethren to Egypt is prompted by the same great famine which had already been the decisive factor in bringing Joseph to honor in Egypt. And the experiences of the brethren in Egypt are based upon Joseph's advancement. Thus we see that the story of Joseph is very cunningly blended into a whole. There is less of unity in the story of Jacob; but even here there is a plausible motive why Jacob goes to Laban: he is fleeing from Esau. In other respects we find here the original legends side by side unblended. On the contrary, in the story of Abraham and Lot no reason is alleged why the three men go directly from Abraham to Sodom; that is to say, there is here no attempt at an inner harmonising of the different legends, but the narrator has exerted himself all the more to devise artificial links of connexion: this is why he tells that Abraham accompanied the men to the gates of Sodom, and even returned to the same place on the following morning. In this we receive most clearly the impression of conscious art, which is trying to make from originally disconnected elements a more plausible unity. In the Joseph legend we have an instance of a much more intimate

blending of parts than the "frames" of these other stories, a whole series of different adventures harmonised and interwoven.

EPIC DISCURSIVENESS.

Another characteristic feature of the Joseph story is its discursiveness, which stands in notable contrast with the brevity of the older narratives. We find in it an abundance of long speeches, of soliloquies, of detailed descriptions of situations, of expositions of the thoughts of the personages. The narrator is fond of repeating in the form of a speech what he has already told. What are we to think of this "epic discursiveness"? Not as an especial characteristic of this particular narrative alone, for we find the same qualities, though less pronounced, in the stories of the wooing of Rebeccah, of Abraham at the court of Abimelech (Genesis xx.), in some features of the story of Jacob (notably the meeting of Jacob and Esau); and the stories of the sacrifice of Isaac and various features of the story of Abraham and Lot also furnish parallels. Very evidently we have to do here with a distinct art of story telling, the development of a new taste. This new art is not satisfied, like its predecessor, with telling the legend in the briefest possible way and with suppressing so far as possible all incidental details; but it aims to make the legend richer and to develop its beauties even when they are quite incidental. It endeavors to keep situations that are felt to be attractive and interesting before the eye of the hearers as long as possible. Thus, for instance, the distress of Joseph's brethren as they stand before their brother is portrayed at length; there is evident intent to delay the narrative, so that the hearer may have time to get the full flavor of the charm of the situation. Thus Joseph is not permitted to discover himself at the very first meeting, in order that this scene may be repeated; he is made to demand that Benjamin be brought before him, because the aged Jacob hesitates a long time to obey this demand, and thus the action is retarded. Similarly in the story of the sacrifice of Isaac, the narrative is spun out just before the appearance of God upon the scene, in order to postpone the catastrophe and intensify the interest.

The means that is applied over and over again to prolong the account is to report the same scene twice, though of course with variations. Joseph interprets dreams for Egyptian officials twice; Joseph's brethren must meet him in Egypt twice; twice he hides valuables in their grain sacks in order to embarrass them (xlii. 25ff., xliv. 2 ff.); twice they bargain over Joseph's cup, with the steward

and with Joseph himself (xliii. 13 ff., 25 ff.), and so on. Sometimes, though surely less frequently, it is possible that the narrators have invented new scenes on the basis of the earlier motives, as with the last scene between Joseph and his brethren, chapter l.

Quite unique is the intercalated episode, the negotiations of Abraham with God regarding Sodom, which may almost be called a didactic composition. It is written to treat a religious problem which agitated the time of the author, and which occurred to him in connexion with the story of Sodom. These narrators have a quite remarkable fondness for long speeches, so great as to lead them to subordinate the action to the speeches. The most marked instance is the meeting of Abraham with Abimelech, chapter xx. Here, quite in opposition to the regular rule of ancient style, the events are not told in the order in which they occurred, but a series of occurrences are suppressed at the beginning in order to bring them in later in the succeeding speeches. Thus the narrator has attempted to make the speeches more interesting even at the expense of the incidents to be narrated.

It is also a favorite device to put substance into the speeches by having what has already been reported repeated by one of the personages of the story (xliii. 13, 21, 30 ff.; xliii. 3, 7, 20 f.; xlv. 19 ff.). The rule of style in such repetition of speech is, contrary to the style of Homer, to vary them somewhat the second time. This preference for longer speeches is, as we clearly perceive, a secondary phenomenon in Hebrew style, the mark of a later period. We observe this in the fact that the very pieces which we recognise from other considerations as the latest developments of the legend or as intercalations (xiii. 14-17; xvi. 9 f.; xviii. 17-19, 23-33) are the ones which contain these speeches.

We may find this delight in discursiveness in other species of Hebrew literature also. The brief, condensed style of Amos is followed by the discursive style of a Jeremiah, and the same relation exists between the laconic sentences of the Book of the Covenant and the long-winded expositions of Deuteronomy, between the brief apothegms which constitute the heart of the Book of Proverbs and the extended speeches which were afterwards added by way of introduction, between the oldest folk-songs, which often contain but a single line each, and the long poems of art poetry.

INTEREST IN SOUL-LIFE.

We do not always agree with this taste of the later time; for instance, the story of Joseph approaches the danger-line of becom-

ing uninteresting from excessive detail. On the other hand, this discursiveness is at the same time the evidence of a newly acquired faculty. While the earlier time can express its inner life only in brief and broken words, the new generation has learned to observe itself more closely and to express itself more completely. With this there has come an increase of interest in the soul-life of the individual. Psychological problems are now treated with fondness and with skill. Thus in the story of the sacrifice of Isaac there was created the perfection of the character study. The narrator of the stories of Joseph shows himself a master of the art of painting the portrait of a man by means of many small touches. Especially successful is the description of Joseph's inner vacillation at the sight of Benjamin (xliii. 30), and the soul painting when Jacob hears that Joseph is still alive (xlv. 26), and elsewhere. But while in these later narratives the incidental features of the old legend are still developed with greater detail, on the other hand this very fact has naturally thrown the chief features somewhat into the background and made the original point of the whole less obvious. This result has been further favored by the circumstance that the original points had in many cases ceased to be altogether clear to those of the later time. Thus in the story of Joseph the historical and etiological elements have lost importance.

The difference between the two styles is so great that it seems advisable to distinguish them by different names, and to limit the use of "legend" to the first while we call the second "romance." Of course, the transition between the two is fluctuant; we may call such transition forms as the story of Laban and Jacob, or that of Rebecca, "legends touched with romance," or "romances based on legendary themes."

On the relative age of these styles, also, an opinion may be ventured, though with great caution. The art of narrative which was acquired in the writing of legends was applied later to the writing of history, where accordingly we may make parallel observations. Now we see that the oldest historical writing known to us has already adopted the "detailed" style. Accordingly we may assume that this "detailed" style was cultivated at least as early as the beginning of the time of the kings. And therefore the condensed style must have been cultivated for many centuries before that time. However, it should be observed, this fixes only the time of the styles of narrative, and not the age of the narratives preserved to us in these styles.

ACCOUNT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEGENDS OF
GENESIS IN ORAL TRADITION.

At the time when they were written down the legends were already very old and had already a long history behind them. This is in the very nature of legend: the origin of legends always eludes the eye of the investigator, going back into pre-historic times. And so it is in the present case. The great age of the legends is seen, for example, by the fact that they often speak of vanished tribes, such as Abel and Cain, Shem, Ham and Japhet, Jacob and Esau, none of which are known to historical times, and further, by the primitive vigor of many touches that reveal to us the religion and the morality of the earliest times, as for instance, the many mythological traces, such as the story of the marriages with angels, of Jacob's wrestling with God, and the many stories of deceit and fraud on the part of the patriarchs, and so on.

FOREIGN INFLUENCES.

A portion of these legends, perhaps very many, did not originate in Israel, but were carried into Israel from foreign countries. This too is part of the nature of these stories, this wandering from tribe to tribe, from land to land, and also from religion to religion. Thus for instance many of our German legends and *Märchen* came to us from foreign lands. And even to this day there is perhaps nothing which modern civilised peoples exchange so easily and so extensively as their stories, as may be seen, for instance, in the enormous circulation of foreign novels in Germany.

Now if we recall that Israel lived upon a soil enriched by the civilisation of thousands of years, that it lived by no means in a state of isolation but was surrounded on all sides by races with superior culture, and if we consider further the international trade and intercourse of the early ages, which went from Babylonia to Egypt and from Arabia to the Mediterranean by way of Palestine, we are warranted in assuming that this position of Israel among the nations will be reflected in its legends as well as in its language, which must be literally full of borrowed words.

Investigators hitherto, especially Wellhausen and his school, have erred frequently in assuming that the history of Israel could be interpreted almost exclusively from within, and in ignoring altogether too much the lines which connect Israel with the rest of

the world. Let us trust that the investigators of the future will be more disposed than has hitherto been the case to give the history of Israel its place in the history of the world! Of course, with our slender knowledge of the primitive Orient we are in large measure thrown back upon conjectures. Yet this cannot justify us in ignoring altogether the surroundings in which Israel lived, and there are after all certain things which we may declare with tolerable certainty.

BABYLONIAN INFLUENCE.

Babylonian influence is evident more than any other in the primitive legends. We can demonstrate this in the case of the legend of the Deluge, of which we possess the Babylonian version; and we have strong reasons for accepting it in the case of the story of creation, which agrees with the Babylonian story in the characteristic point of the division of the primeval sea into two portions; also in the legend of Nimrod, and in the traditions of the patriarchs, the ten patriarchs of the race as given by P being ultimately the same as the ten primitive kings of the Babylonians. The legend of the Tower of Babel, too, deals with Babylonia and must have its origin in that region. The Eranian parallels to the legend of Paradise show that this too came from further East, but whether from Babylonia specifically is an open question, since the Babylonians located Paradise not at the source of the streams, so far as we know, but rather at their mouth. We have besides a Buddhistic parallel to the story of Sodom. (Cp. T. Cassel, *Mischle Sindbad*.)

As to the time when these legends entered Israel the opinions of investigators are divided; to us it seems probable from interior evidence that these legends wandering from race to race reached Canaan as early as some time in the second millennium B. C. and were adopted by Israel just as it was assimilating the civilisation of Canaan. We know from the Tell-el-Amarna correspondence that Babylonian influence was working upon Canaan even in this early period; and on the other hand, a later time, when Israel's self-consciousness had awakened, would scarcely have accepted these foreign myths.

EGYPTIAN AND PHŒNICIAN INFLUENCES.

Egyptian influence is recognisable in the romance of Joseph, which has its scene partly in Egypt and very likely goes back to Egyptian legends. This is particularly evident in the legend of

Joseph's agrarian policy, xlvii. 13 ff. We may well wonder that we find so few Egyptian elements in Genesis, but so far as we can see the same observation is to be made for the civilisation of Israel in general: Egypt was already a decadent nation and had but slight influence upon Canaan. We shall find also Phœnician and Aramaic elements in the legends; the second is proven by the importance of the city of Haran to the patriarchs.

The probable home of the Ishmael legend is Ishmael, and that of Lot the mountains of Moab, where Lot's cave was shown, xix. 30. The Jacob-Esau stories and the Jacob-Laban stories were originally told in "Jacob"; the Shem-Japhet-Canaan legend in "Shem," as it would seem; the Abel-Cain legend neither in Abel, which perished according to the legend, nor in Cain, which was cursed and exiled; accordingly in some unnamed people.

RELIGIOUS LEGENDS NOT ISRAELITIC.

The legends of worship in Genesis we may assume with the greatest certainty to have originated in the places of which they treat. The same may be said of other legends which ascribe names to definite places. Accordingly it is probable that most of the legends of the patriarchs were known before Israel came into Canaan. This assumption is supported by the character of many of the legends of Genesis: the complaisance and peacefulness of the figures of the patriarchs are by no means Israelitish characteristics. The connexion of man and fruitland (Cp. the *Commentary*, p. 5) in the story of Paradise is conceivable only among a people of peasants. According to the Cain and Abel legend also, the field is God's property, iv. 14.

But especially the religion of Genesis hints of a non-Israelitish origin for most of the legends: two of our sources (E and P) avoid calling the God of the patriarchs "Jahveh," in which we may see a last relic of the feeling that these stories really have nothing to do with "Jahveh" the God of Israel, as furthermore the book of Job, which also treats a foreign theme, does not use the name "Jahveh." But even in the third source (J), which speaks of "Jahveh," the name "Jahveh Zebaoth" is not found. On a few occasions we are able to catch the name of the pre-Jahvistic God of the legend; we hear of "El Lahaj Ro'i" at Lahaj Ro'i, xvi. 30, of "El 'Olam" at Beersheba, xxi. 33 ff., of "El Bethel" at Bethel, xxxi. 13; El Shaddai and El 'Eljon are probably also such primitive names. In the legend of Abraham at Hebron there are assumed at the start three gods; polytheism is also to be traced in

the legend of the heavenly ladder at Bethel and in the fragment of the Mahanaim legend, xxxii. 2, where mention is made of many divine beings.

We recognise Israelitish origin with perfect certainty only in those legends that introduce expressly Israelitish names, that is particularly in the legends of Dinah (Simeon and Levi) xxxiv, Thamar (Judah) xxxviii, and Reuben xxxv. 22. But we do not mean to declare by this that other narratives may not be of Israelitish origin. In particular the considerable number of legends which have their scene in Negeb (southward of Judah) may be very likely of Israelitish origin. But Israelitish tradition flows unmixed, so far as we can see, only from the introduction of the story of Moses.

The general view of the legendary traditions of Israel gives us, then, so far as we are able to make it out, the following main features: The legends of the beginnings in the main are Babylonian, the legends of the patriarchs are essentially Canaanitish, and after these come the specifically Israelitish traditions. This picture corresponds to the history of the development of civilisation: in Canaan the native civilisation grows up on a foundation essentially Babylonian, and after this comes the Israelitish national life. It is a matter of course that the sequence of periods in the themes for story-telling and in the epochs of civilisation should correspond; thus among modern peoples the children make the acquaintance first of the Israelitish stories, next of the Græco-Roman, and finally the modern subjects, quite in accordance with the influences in the history of our civilisation.

GREEK PARALLELS.

A particularly interesting problem is offered by the correspondence of certain legends to Greek subjects; for instance the story of the three men who visit Abraham is told among the Greeks by Hyrieus at Tanagra (Ovid, *Fast.*, V., 495 ff.); the story of Potiphar's wife contains the same fictional motive as that of Hippolytus and Phædra and is found in other forms; there are also Greek parallels for the story of the curse upon Reuben (Homer, *Iliad*, IX., 447 ff.) and for the story of the quarrel of the brothers Esau and Jacob (Apollodor., *Biblioth.*, II., 2/1); the legend of Lot at Sodom suggests that of Philemon and Baucis. In the legends of the beginnings also there are related features: the declaration that man and woman were originally one body (Plato, *Symp.*, p. 189 ff.), and the myth of the Elysian happiness of the primeval time are

also familiar to the Greeks. The solution of this problem will surely be found in the assumption that both these currents of tradition are branches of one great Oriental stream.

Accordingly we infer that the legends of Genesis are of very varied origin, which is altogether confirmed by more careful examination. For the narratives themselves are far from consistent: some conceive of the patriarchs as peasants, others as shepherds, but never as city-dwellers; some have their scene in Babylonia, some in Egypt, some in Aram, and others in North and South Canaan; some assume an original polytheism, others speak of the guardian genius (El) of the place, some think of God as the severe lord of mankind, others praise the mercy of God, and so on.

THE ADAPTATION OF THE LEGENDS.

Naturally these foreign themes were vigorously adapted in Israel to the nationality and the religion of the people, a process to be recognised most clearly in the case of the Babylonian-Hebrew legend of the Deluge. Here the polytheism has disappeared: the many gods have been dropped in favor of the one (the myth of creation), or have been reduced to servants of the one (the legend of Hebron); the local divinities have been identified with Jahveh and their names regarded as epithets of Jahveh in the particular locality involved (xvi. 13; xxi. 33; xxxi. 13).

The amalgamation of these legends and their infilling with the spirit of a higher religion is one of the most brilliant achievements of the people of Israel. But quite apart from the religion, in this Israelitising of the legends it is quite certain that a quantity of changes took place of which we can survey only a small portion. Foreign personages were displaced by native ones: as for instance the Hebrew Enoch took the place of the Babylonian magician Enmeduranki, while the more familiar Noah took the place of the hero in the Babylonian account of the Deluge. Thus also the Egyptian stories found in the last of Genesis were transferred to the Israelite figure of Joseph. And thus in many cases the stories which are now connected with definite personages may not originally have belonged to them. Or again, native personages were associated with the foreign ones: thus Esau-Se'ir was identified with Edom, and Jacob with Israel, and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob made to be ancestors of the people of Israel. Or foreign legends were localised in the places of Canaan: thus the story of the three visitors of Abraham, which is known also to the Greeks, is localised at Hebron; the legend of the vanished cities, which even in the form pre-

served knows nothing of the salt lake, beside the Dead Sea. And in the process various specifically Israelitish features have been introduced into the legends, for instance, the prophecies that Esau (Edom) would sometime separate from Jacob (Israel), xxvii. 40; that Joseph would receive Shechem, xlviii. 22; that Manasseh would dwindle as compared with Ephraim. In the legend of Jacob and Laban the motive of the boundary treaty at Gilead is a later interpolation; a piece about the preservation of Zoar has been added to the legend of Sodom. The legends of worship which were originally intended to explain the sanctity of the place, were transferred to Jahveh and to the patriarch Jared and received the new point that they were to explain why Jared had the right to worship Jahveh at this place.

MODE OF AMALGAMATION.

Further alterations came about by exchange or combination of local traditions. We can imagine that such things happened very frequently in connexion with travel, especially perhaps on the occasion of the great pilgrimages to the tribal sanctuaries, and by means of the class of travelling story-tellers. Thus the legends travelled from place to place and are told in our present form of the tradition regarding various places. The story of Sodom and Gomorrah was localised, as it seems, by another tradition at Adma and Sebo'im (cp. my *Commentary*, p. 195). According to another tradition a similar legend was told in connexion with Gibeah in Benjamin (Judges xix.). The rescue of Ishmael was localised both in Lahaj Roi and in Beersheba (xxi. 14). The meeting of Jacob and Esau on the former's return was located at Mahanaim and at Penuel on the Jabbok (in Northeastern Canaan) where it seems originally not to belong, since Esau is supposed to be located in Edom, south of Canaan. The names of the patriarchs are given in connexion with the most various places, all claiming to have been founded by them; Abraham particularly in Hebron, but also in Beersheba and elsewhere; Isaac not only in Beersheba, but also in Mizpah (xxxi. 53); Jacob in Penuel, Bethel and Shechem. In which of the places the figures were originally located we are unable to say, nor whether Abraham or Isaac was the original personage in the legend of Gerar. These transformations are too old to be traced out in detail. Wellhausen's conjecture (*Prolegomena*, p. 323) that Abraham is probably the latest personage among the patriarchs, is untenable.

Then again, various legends have been combined (see *The*

Open Court, for July, pp. 390, 398), for instance, the stories of Paradise and of the creation as told by J, and the myth of the creation and of the Elysian period as told by P.

Or again, various different personages have grown together: thus the figure of Noah in Genesis consists of three originally different personages, the builder of the ark, the vintager, and the father of Shem, Ham and Japhet. In Cain we have combined the different personages: (1) Cain, the son of the first human couple, (2) Cain, the brother of Abel, (3) Cain, the founder of cities. Jacob, according to the legend of Penuel, is a giant who wrestles with God himself; according to the Jacob-Esau stories he is shrewd but cowardly, thus seeming to be an entirely different person; probably the Jacob to whom God reveals himself at Bethel is still a different person. Incidentally to the joining together of the legends the pedigrees of the patriarchs were established: thus Abraham became the father of Isaac, and he in turn of Jacob; thus Ishmael was made a son of Abraham and Lot made his nephew, and so on. And the reasons for this are not at all clear. How old this pedigree may be we cannot tell. The amalgamation of the legends is a process which certainly was under way long before Israel was in Canaan; we can imagine that it proceeded with especial rapidity and thoroughness at the time when Israel was again gathering itself together as a nation under the first kings.

FIDELITY OF TRANSMISSION.

And not only from place to place, but also from age to age, do our legends wander. In general they are simply repeated, and often with what is to us an incredible fidelity,—perhaps only half understood or grown entirely unintelligible, and yet transmitted further! How faithfully the legends have been told we can learn by comparing the different variants of the same story, which, in spite of more or less deviation, agree nevertheless in the general plan and often even in the very words. Compare, for instance, the two variants of the legend of Rebecca. And yet even these faithfully told legends are subject to the universal law of change. When a new generation has come, when the outward conditions have changed or the thoughts of men have altered, whether it be in religion or ethical ideals or æsthetic taste, the popular legend cannot permanently remain the same. Slowly and hesitatingly, always at a certain distance behind, the legends follow the general changes in conditions, some more, others less. And here, consequently, the legends furnish us a very important basis for judging of changes

in the people; a whole history of the religious, ethical and æsthetic ideas of ancient Israel can be derived from Genesis.

VALUE OF THE VARIANTS.

If any one proposes to study this history he will do well to begin with the variants. It is the characteristic of legend as well as of oral tradition that it exists in the form of variants. Each one, however faithful it may be, and especially every particular group and every new age tells the story transmitted to it somewhat differently. The most important variants in Genesis are the two stories of Ishmael (xvi.; xxi. 8 ff.), and next the legend of the danger to the patriarch's wife, which is handed down to us in three versions (xii. 13 ff.; xx. 26), and then the associated legend of the treaty at Beersheba, likewise in three versions. In the case of these stories the variants are told with almost entire independence of one another.

To these are to be added the many cases in which the stories are transmitted to us in the variants of J and E (or of the various hands in J) worked over by the hand of an editor; the chief illustrations of this method being the stories of Jacob and of Joseph. Sometimes, furthermore, variants of portions of Genesis are transmitted to us in other Biblical books: thus the idyllic account of the way in which Jacob became acquainted with Rachel at the fountain is told also of Moses and Zipporah; the renunciation of the old gods under the oak at Shechem is told of Jacob and also of Joshua (Joshua xxiv.); the interpretation of the dream of the foreign king is told of both Joseph and Daniel. Let the investigator make his first observations on these twice-told tales; when he has thus acquired the keen eye and found certain lines of development, then let him compare also the legends which are told but once. Then he will begin to see how extraordinarily varied these legends are; among them are the coarsest and the most delicate, the most offensive and the most noble, those showing a naïve, polytheistic religion, and others in which is expressed the most ideal form of faith.

JUDGMENT OF INDIVIDUAL NARRATIVES.

Moreover, the history of the legends is to be derived from the individual narratives themselves. If we look sharply we shall see revisions in the taste of a later time, slight or extensive additions bringing in a thought which was foreign to the old narrator; in certain rare cases we may even assume that a whole story has

been added to the tradition (chap. xv.); and such additions are recognised by the fact that they are out of place in an otherwise harmonious story, and usually also by the fact that they are relatively unconcrete: the art of story-telling, which in olden times was in such high perfection, degenerated in later times, and the latest, in particular, care more for the thought than for the narrative. Hence such additions usually contain speeches. Sometimes also short narrative notes are added to the legend cycles, as for instance, we are told briefly of Jacob that he bought a field in Shechem (xxxiii. 18-20), or that Deborah died and was buried at Bethel (xxxv. 8), and so on.

But with these faithful narrators more significant than the additions are certainly the omissions which are intended to remove features that have become objectionable; for we find gaps in the narratives at every step. Indeed, to those of a later time often so much had become objectionable or had lost its interest, that some legends have become mere torsos: such is the case with the marriages with angels, with the story of Reuben (xxxv. 21-22*a*), of Mahanaim (xxxiii. 2 ff.). In other cases only the names of the figures of the legend have come down to us without their legends: thus of the patriarchs Nahor, Iscah, Milcah (xi. 29), Phichol, Ahuzzath (xxvi. 26); from the legend of the giant Nimrod we have only the proverbial phrase, "like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord" (x. 9). By other instances we can see that the stories, or particular portions of them, have lost their connexion and were accordingly no longer rightly understood: the narrators do not know why Noah's dove brought precisely an olive leaf (viii. 11), why Judah was afraid to give to Tamar his youngest son also (xxxviii. 11), why Isaac had but one blessing to give (xxvii. 36), and why he had to partake of good things before the blessing (xxvii. 4), why it was originally told that Jacob limped at Penuel (xxxii. 32), and so forth.

Hence there is spread over many legends something like a blue haze which veils the colors of the landscape: we often have a feeling that we indeed are still able to recall the moods of the ancient legends, but that the last narrators had ceased to have a true appreciation of those moods. We must pursue all these observations, find the reasons that led to the transformations and thus describe the inner history of the legends. But here we give only a short sketch.