GRAETZ HEINRICH

HISTORY OF THE JEWS, VOL. 1 (OF 6)

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Содержание

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PREFACE

It is a matter of especial satisfaction to me that my work, "The History of the Jews, from the Earliest Times to the Present Day," should be rendered accessible to the English-reading public in a compact form and by means of an adequate translation; for in countries where English is spoken, books are not only bought, bound, and placed in libraries, but are also read, taken to heart, and acted upon. It is therefore to be expected that the English-speaking people, which has never disregarded but has at all times recognised and appreciated the peculiar character of the Jewish race, will feel an increased sympathy for it, on reading the alternations of its sublime and tragical history.

English readers, to whom the forefathers of the Jews of to-day – the patriarchs, heroes, and men of God – are familiar characters, will the better understand the miracle which is exhibited in the history of the Jews during three thousand years. The continuance of the Jewish race until the present day is a marvel not to be overlooked even by those who deny the

existence of miracles, and who only see in the most astounding events, both natural and preternatural, the logical results of cause and effect. Here we observe a phenomenon, which has developed and asserted itself in spite of all laws of nature, and we behold a culture which, notwithstanding unspeakable hostility against its exponents, has nevertheless profoundly modified the organism of nations.

It is the heartfelt aspiration of the author that this historical work, in its English garb, may attain its object by putting an end to the hostile bearing against the Jewish race, so that it may no longer be begrudged the peculiar sphere whereto it has been predestined through the events and sorrows of thousands of years, and that it may be permitted to fulfil its appointed mission without molestation.

This translation, in five volumes, is not a mere excerpt of my "[German: Geschichte der Juden]" (like my "[German: Volksthümliche Geschichte der Juden]"), but a condensed reproduction of the entire eleven volumes. But the foot-notes have been omitted, so as to render the present work less voluminous for the general reader. Historical students are usually acquainted with the German language, and can read the notes in the original.

In this English edition the "History of the Present Day" is brought down to 1870, whilst the original only goes as far as the memorable events of 1848. The last volume will contain a survey of the entire history of the Jewish nation, together with a

comprehensive index of names and events.

In conclusion, I cannot refrain from expressing my gratitude to one whose life-task it is to further with rare generosity all humane and intellectual interests, and who has caused this translation to be made and published. At the risk of wounding his modesty, I must mention, as the Mæcenas of this work, Mr. Frederick D. Mocatta, whose name is a household word in every Jewish circle.

H. GRAETZ.

Breslau, *January, 1891*.

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To the foregoing words of the author I merely wish to add, that while the first volume, as far as the period of the Hasmonæans, has been translated by me, the other volumes have for the greater part "been done into English by various hands," and have afterwards been revised and edited by me.

My cordial thanks are due to Mr. Israel Abrahams, whose scholarly co-operation has enabled me to cope with the difficulties presented by Hebrew and Jewish names and technicalities.

BELLA LÖWY.

London, January, 1891.

PREFACE TO THE SOCIETY'S EDITION

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Owing to necessary revision by the American editors, there has been a delay in the publication of this work beyond the time announced for its appearance.

It is hoped that in the future such delay may be avoided.

The Publication Committee.

June, 1891.

CHAPTER I.
THE EARLIEST PERIOD

The Original Inhabitants of Canaan – Gigantic Anakim and Rephaim – The Phœnicians – Israel's Claim to Canaan – The Patriarchs – Hereditary Law – Emigration to Egypt – Tribal Union – Bright and Dark Sides of the Egyptians – Moses, Aaron and Miriam – The Prophetic Sage – Call of Moses as Deliverer – Opposition – Exodus from Egypt – Passage of the Red Sea – Wanderings in the Desert – Revelation on Mount Sinai – The Decalogue – Relapse – Concessions – Crisis – Circuitous Wanderings – Victories over Populations of Canaan, on Trans-Jordanic Side – Commencements of Hebrew Poetry – Death of Moses.

It was on a spring day that some pastoral tribes passed across the Jordan into a strip of land which can only be regarded as an extended coast-line of the Mediterranean. This was the land of *Canaan*, subsequently called *Palestine*. The crossing of the Jordan and the entry into this territory were destined to become of the utmost importance to mankind. The land of which the shepherd tribes possessed themselves became the arena of great events, so enduring and important in their results, that the country in which they took place became known as the *Holy Land*. Distant nations had no conception that the entry of the *Hebrew* or *Israelite* tribes into the land of Canaan would have

such momentous consequences. Even the inhabitants of Palestine were far from recognising in this invasion an occurrence fraught with vital significance to themselves.

At the time when the Hebrews occupied this territory it was inhabited by tribes and peoples dissimilar in descent and pursuits. The primary place was held by the aborigines, the *Anakim* and *Rephaim*, a powerful race of giants. Tradition represents them as the descendants of that unruly and overbearing race which, in primæval times, attempted to storm the heavens. For this rebellious attempt they had been doomed to ignominious destruction.

Their reputed descendants, the powerful natives of the country – who by some of the ancient nations were called *Emim*, "terrible men" – were unable to maintain themselves; notwithstanding their imposing figures, they were destroyed by races of inferior stature. The rest were obliged to migrate to the East-Jordanic lands, to the south, and also to the south-west of the West-Jordanic region. This remnant of the *Anakim* filled the Israelite spies with such abject terror that they made the entire nation despair of ever obtaining possession of the country. This gave rise to the proverb, "Who can stand before the children of Anak?" "We were," said the spies, "in our own eyes as grasshoppers, and so we appeared unto them." These giants were eventually overcome by the Israelite dwarfs.

Another group of inhabitants which had settled in the land between the Mediterranean and the Jordan was that of

the *Canaanites*, whom the Greeks called Phœnicians. These Phœnicians appear to have pursued the same employment in their new country as they had followed on the banks of the Red Sea or the Persian Gulf. Their chief pursuits were navigation and commerce. The position which they had selected was eminently favourable to their daring expeditions. The great ocean, forming a strait at the Pillars of Hercules, and separating Europe from Africa, as the Mediterranean Sea, has here its extreme limit. At the foot of the snow-topped Lebanon and its spurs, commodious inlets formed natural harbours that required but little improvement at the hand of man. On this seaboard the Canaanites built the town of Sidon, situated on a prominent crag which overhangs the sea. They afterwards built, on a small rocky island, the port of Tyre (Tor, which subsequently became celebrated); they also built Aradus to the north of Sidon, and Akko (Acre) to the south of Tyre. The neighbouring forests of the Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon supplied them with lofty cedars and strong cypresses for ships. The Canaanites, who became the first mercantile nation in the world, owed much of their success to the advantage of finding on their coast various species of the murex (*Tolaat shani*), from the fluid of which was obtained a most brilliant and widely celebrated purple dye. The beautiful white sand of the river Belus, near Acre, supplied fine glass, an article which was likewise in much request in the Old World. The wealth of the country lay in the sands of the sea-shore. The Canaanites, on account of their extensive trade,

required and introduced at an early period a convenient form of writing, and their alphabet, the Phœnician, became the model for the alphabets of ancient and modern nations. In a word, the narrow belt of land between the Mediterranean and Mount Lebanon, with its spurs, became one of the most important points on the face of the globe. Through the peaceful pursuits of commerce the Canaanites were brought into contact with remote nations, who were gradually aroused from a state of inactivity. They became subdivided into the small nationalities of Amorites, Hittites, Hivites, and Perizzites. The Jebusites, who inhabited this district, were of minor importance; they dwelt on the tract of land which afterwards became the site for the city of Jerusalem. Of still less account were the Girgashites, who had no fixed residence. All these names would have remained unknown had not the Israelites entered the land.

But this people had not taken a footing in the country with the mere object of finding pasture land for their flocks; their pretensions were far greater. Chief of all, they claimed as their patrimony the land where the graves of their forefathers were situated. The first patriarch, Abraham, who had emigrated from Aram, on the borders of the Euphrates, had, after many wanderings through the country, acquired in Hebron, as an hereditary burial-place, the Cave of Machpelah, or the "Double Cave," together with the adjoining field and trees. There his wife Sarah had been interred, then he himself, and after him his son, the patriarch Isaac.

The third patriarch, Jacob, after many vicissitudes and wanderings, had purchased a plot of land near Shechem, and had taken that important city "with his sword and with his bow." The city was in the very heart of the territory of the Hivites, and its capture had taken place in consequence of a breach of peace, through the abduction and dishonour of Jacob's daughter. The land was henceforth regarded as the property of the patriarch, and he only reluctantly quitted it at the outbreak of a famine, in order to proceed to Egypt, where corn was plentiful. On his death-bed, Jacob impressed upon his sons that they should deposit his remains in the family tomb of the "Double Cave." Not alone did Canaan contain the graves of the three patriarchs, but also the altars which they had erected and named in various places, in honour of the Deity whom they worshipped. The Israelites were therefore firmly convinced that they had a right to the exclusive possession of the land.

These claims derived further strength from the tradition left by the patriarchs to their descendants as a sacred bequest, that the Deity, whom they had been the first to recognise, had repeatedly and indubitably, though only in visions, promised them this land as their possession, not merely for the sake of showing them favour, but as the means of attaining to a higher degree of culture. This culture would pre-eminently consist in Abraham's doctrine of a purer belief in the *One God*, whose nature differed essentially from that of the gods whom the various nations represented in the shape of idols and by means of other senseless

conceptions. The higher recognition of the Deity was designed to lead Abraham's posterity to the practice of justice towards all men, in contradistinction to the injustice universally prevailing in those days. It was affirmed that this higher culture was ordained by the Almighty as "the way of God," and that as such it should be transmitted by the patriarchs to their families as a bequest and as a subject of hereditary instruction. They also received the promise that through their posterity, as the faithful guardians of this teaching, all nations of the earth should be blessed, and should participate in this intellectual advancement of Israel; and that with this same object the land of Canaan had been allotted to Israel, as especially adapted for the purposes of the hereditary law. Hence it was that the Israelites, while in a foreign country, felt an irrepressible yearning for their ancestral land. Their forefathers had impressed them with the hope that, though some of their generations would sojourn in a land which was not their own, a time would surely come when Israel should return to that land which was the resting-place of their patriarchs, and where the patriarchal altars had been erected and consecrated. This promise became identified with all their positive expectations, and with their conviction that the acquisition of Canaan was secured to them on condition that they performed the duties of worshipping the God of their fathers, and observed the ways of justice and righteousness. The nature of this worship and "the way of justice" was not clearly defined, nor did they require such a definition. The lives of the patriarchs, as commemorated by

posterity, served as a sufficient illustration of the family law. Abraham was especially held up as a model of human excellence. Differing from other nations who *worshipped* their primæval ancestors, his descendants did not revere him as a performer of marvellous deeds, nor as one exalted to the eminent degree of a god or a demi-god. Not as a warrior and a conqueror did he live in the memory of his descendants, but as a self-denying, God-fearing man, who joined true simplicity and faith to nobleness in thought and in action. According to their conception, Abraham the Hebrew, although born of idolatrous parents in Aram, on the other side of the Euphrates, and although brought up amidst idolatrous associations, had obeyed the voice which revealed to him a higher God, and had separated himself from those around him. When disputes arose, he did not obstinately insist upon his claims, but renounced his rights for the sake of living at peace with his fellow-men. So hospitable was he, that he would go forth to invite the passing wayfarers, and delighted in entertaining them. He interceded for the sinners of Sodom and the neighbouring cities, when their cruel and inhuman acts had brought on them the punishment of Heaven; and he prayed that they might be spared for the sake of any few righteous men amongst them.

These and other remembrances of his peace-loving and generous disposition, of his self-abnegation, and of his submission to God, were cherished by his descendants, together with the conviction that such a line of conduct was agreeable to

the God of their fathers; that for the sake of these virtues God had protected Abraham, as well as his son and his grandson, because the two latter had followed the example of their predecessor. This belief that God especially protects the virtuous, the just, and the good, was fully confirmed in the life of the patriarch Jacob, to whom the additional name Israel was given. His life had been short and toilsome, but the God of his fathers had delivered him from all his sorrows. Such remembrances of ancestral piety were retained by the sons of Israel, and such family traditions served to supplement and illustrate their hereditary law.

The growth of Israel as a distinct race commenced amidst extraordinary circumstances. The beginning of this people bore but very slight resemblance to the origin of other nations. Israel as a people arose amidst peculiar surroundings in the land of Goshen, a territory situated in the extreme north of Egypt, near the borders of Palestine. The Israelites were not at once moulded into a nation, but consisted of twelve loosely connected shepherd tribes.

These tribes led a simple life in the land of Goshen. The elders (*Zekenim*) of the families, who acted as their chiefs, were consulted on all important occasions. They had no supreme chieftain, nor did they owe allegiance to the Egyptian kings; and thus they habitually enjoyed the freedom of a republic, in which each tribal section was enabled to preserve its independence without falling into subjection or serfdom. Although they did not become intermixed with the ancient Egyptians, who in

fact had an aversion to shepherds – perhaps on account of the oppression they had in former ages endured from such shepherds (the Hyksos) – yet opportunities for contact and mutual communication could not be wanting. Some families of Israel had abandoned their pastoral pursuits, and devoted themselves to agriculture or industrial occupations, and were therefore brought into connection with the inhabitants of towns. It seems that the members of the tribe of Ephraim stood in closer social contact with the original inhabitants. This intercourse had a favourable influence upon the Israelites.

The Egyptians had already gone through a history of a thousand years, and attained to a high degree of culture. Their kings, or Pharaohs, had already built populous cities, and erected colossal edifices, temples, pyramids and mausoleums. Their priests had acquired a certain degree of perfection in such arts and technical accomplishments as were suited to the requirements of the country, as for example, architecture and hydraulic constructions, the kindred science of geometry, the art of medicine, and the mystery of embalming for the perpetual preservation of the remains of the departed; also the artistic working of objects in gold, silver and precious stones, in order to satisfy the luxurious demands of the kings. They also knew the art of sculpture and the use of pigments. They studied chronology, together with astronomy, which was suggested by the periodical overflow of the Nile. The all-important art of writing had been invented and perfected by the Egyptian priests.

They first used stones and metals to commemorate the renown of their monarchs; and they afterwards employed the fibre of the papyrus shrub, which was originally marked with clumsy figures and subsequently with ingeniously drawn symbols. Of these several attainments the Israelites seem to have acquired some notion. The members of the destitute tribe of Levi in particular, being unencumbered by pastoral service or by landed possessions, appear to have learnt from the Egyptian priests the art of writing. Owing to their superior knowledge, they were treated by the other tribes as the sacerdotal class, and hence they held, even in Egypt, the privileged distinction of their priestly position.

The residence of the Israelites in Egypt was of great advantage to them. It raised them, or at least a portion of them, from a rude state of nature to a higher grade of culture. But what they gained on the one hand, they lost on the other; and in spite of their arts and accomplishments, they would in time have fallen into a more abject condition. Amongst no people which had advanced beyond the first stage of Fetish worship, had idolatry assumed such a hideous development, or so mischievously tainted the habits, as was the case with the Egyptians. By combining and intermingling the gods of the various districts, they had established a complete system of polytheism. As a matter of course they worshipped goddesses as well as gods. What made the mythology of the Egyptians especially repulsive, was the fact that they placed the deified beings of their adoration, from whom

they expected help, far below the level of human beings.

They endowed their gods with the shape of animals, and worshipped the inferior creatures as divine powers. Ammon, their chief god, was represented with ram's horns, the goddess Pecht (Pacht) with a cat's head, and Hathor (Athyr), the goddess of licentiousness, with a cow's head. Osiris, who was worshipped throughout Egypt, was represented in a most loathsome and revolting image, and the universally honoured Isis was often pictured with a cow's head. Animals being scarce in the Nile region, great value was attached to their preservation, and they received divine homage. Such honours were paid to the black bull *Apis* (*Abir*) in Memphis, to the white bull *Mnevis* in Heliopolis, to the lustful goats, to dogs, and especially to cats; also to birds, snakes, and even mice. The killing of a sacred bull or cat was more severely punished than the murder of a human being.

This abominable idolatry was daily witnessed by the Israelites. The consequences of such perversions were sufficiently deplorable. Men who invested their gods with the shape of animals sank down to the level of beasts, and were treated as such by the kings and by persons of the higher castes – the priests and soldiers. Humanity was contemned; no regard was paid to the freedom of the subjects, and still less to that of strangers. The Pharaohs claimed to be descended from the gods, and were worshipped as such even during their lifetime. The entire land with its population was owned by them. It was a mere act of grace on their part that they granted a portion of the territory to

cultivators of the soil.

Egypt, in fact, was not peopled by an independent nation, but by bondmen. Hundreds of thousands were forced to take part in compulsory labour for the erection of the colossal temples and pyramids. The Egyptian priests were worthy of such kings and gods. Cruelly as the Pharaohs harassed their subjects with hard labour, the priests continued to declare that the kings were demi-gods. Under the weight of this oppression the people became devoid of all human dignity, and submitted to the vilest bondage without ever attempting to relieve themselves from the galling yoke. The repulsive idolatry then prevailing in Egypt had yet further pernicious consequences. The people lost the idea of chastity, after they had placed the brute creation on an equality with their deities. Unspeakable offences in the use of animals had become of daily occurrence, and entailed neither punishment nor disgrace. The gods being depicted in unchaste positions, there appeared to be no need for human beings to be better than the gods. No example is more contagious and seductive than folly and sin. The Israelites, especially those who were brought into closer contact with the Egyptians, gradually adopted idolatrous perversions, and abandoned themselves to unbridled license. This state of things was aggravated by a new system of persecution. During a long period, the Israelites residing in the Land of Goshen had been left unmolested, they having been looked upon as roving shepherds who would not permanently settle in Egypt. But when decades and even a century had passed

by, and they still remained in the land and continued to increase in numbers, the council of the king begrudged them the state of freedom which was denied to the Egyptians themselves. The court now feared that these shepherd tribes, which had become so numerous in Goshen, might assume a warlike attitude towards Egypt. To avoid this danger, the Israelites were declared to be bondmen, and were compelled to perform forced labour. To effect a rapid decrease in their numbers, the king commanded that the male infants of the Israelites should be drowned in the Nile or in some of the canals, and that only the female infants should be spared. The Israelites, formerly free in the land of Goshen, were now kept "in a house of bondage," "in an iron furnace"; here it was to be proved whether they would conform to their hereditary law, or follow strange gods.

The greater part of the tribes could not stand this trial. They had a dim knowledge that the God of their fathers was a being very different from the Egyptian idols; but even this knowledge seemed to decrease from day to day. Love of imitation, sore oppression, and daily misery made them obtuse, and obscured the faint light of their hereditary law. The enslaved labourers did not know what to think of an unseen God who only lived in their memories. Like their masters, the Egyptians, they now lifted their eyes to the visible gods who showed themselves so merciful and propitious to Israel's tormentors. They directed their prayers to the bovine god Apis, whom they called *Abir*,[1] and they also

[1] In Hebrew the word *Abir* means *bull*, *mighty*, and hence *God*. It is connected with

offered to the he-goats.[2] The daughter of Israel, growing up to womanhood, sacrificed her virtue, and abandoned herself to the Egyptians.[3] It was probably thought that, in the images of the grass-eating animal, honour was paid to the god of the patriarchs. When the intellect is on a wrong track, where are the limits for its imaginings? The Israelites would have succumbed to coarse sensual idolatry and to Egyptian vice, like many other nations who had come under the influence of the people of the land of Ham, had not two brothers and their sister – the instruments of a higher Spirit – aroused them and drawn them out of their lethargy. These were Moses, Aaron and Miriam.[4] In what did the greatness of this triad consist? What intellectual powers led them to undertake their work of redemption, the elevating and liberating effect of which was intended to extend far beyond their own times? Past ages have left but few characteristic traits of Moses, and barely any of his brother and sister, which could enable us to comprehend, from a human point of view, how their vision rose step by step from the faint dawn of primitive ideas to the bright sunlight of prophetic foresight, and by what means they rendered themselves worthy of their exalted mission. The prophetic trio belonged to that tribe which, through its superior

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the Egyptian *abr* (a bull), from which *Apis* is derived. Conf. Jeremiah xlvi. 15.

[2] Levit. xvii. 7. The sending of the scape-goat to Azazel marked the abomination in which this lascivious cult was held.

[3] Conf. Ezekiel xxiii. 7, 8.

[4] Micah vi. 4, mentions also Miriam, with her brothers, as a deliverer.

knowledge, was regarded as the sacerdotal tribe, namely, the tribe of Levi. This tribe, or at least this one family, had doubtless preserved the memory of the patriarchs and the belief in the God of their fathers, and had accordingly kept itself aloof from Egyptian idolatry and its abominations.

Thus it was that Aaron, the elder brother, as also Moses and Miriam, had grown up in an atmosphere of greater moral and religious purity. Of Moses the historical records relate that after his birth his mother kept him concealed during three months, to evade the royal command, and protect him from death in the waters of the Nile. There is no doubt that the youthful Moses was well acquainted with Pharaoh's court at Memphis or Tanis (Zoan). Gifted with an active intellect, he had an opportunity of acquiring the knowledge that was to be learnt in Egypt, and by his personal and intellectual qualities he won the affections of all hearts. But even more than by these qualities, he was distinguished by his gentleness and modesty. "Moses was the meekest of men," is the only praise which the historical records have bestowed upon him. He is not praised for heroism or warlike deeds, but for unselfishness and self-abnegation.

Influenced by the ancient teaching, that the God of Abraham loved righteousness, he must have been repelled by the baseless idolatry of animal worship and by the social and moral wrongs which then were rife. Shameless vice, the bondage of a whole people under kings and priests, the inequality of castes, the treatment of human beings as though they were beasts or inferior

to beasts, the spirit of slavery, – all these evils he recognised in their full destructive force, and he perceived that the prevailing debasement had defiled his brethren. Moses was the open antagonist of injustice. It grieved him sorely that Israel's sons were subjected to slavery, and were daily exposed to ill-treatment by the lowest of the Egyptians. One day when he saw an Egyptian unjustly beating a Hebrew, his passion overcame his self-control, and he punished the offender. Fearing discovery, he fled from Egypt into the desert, and halted at an oasis in the neighbourhood of Mount Sinai, where the Kenites, an offshoot of the tribe of Midianites, were dwelling. Here, as in Egypt, he witnessed oppression and wrong-doing, and here also he opposed it with zeal. He gave his aid to feeble shepherdesses. By such action he came into contact with their grateful father, the priest or elder of the tribe of the Midianites, and he married Zipporah, the daughter of that priest.

His employment in Midian was that of a shepherd. He selected fertile grazing plots for the herds of Reuel, his father-in-law, between the Red Sea and the mountain lands. In this solitude the prophetic spirit came upon him.

What is the meaning of this prophetic spirit? Even those who have searched the secrets of the world, or the secrets of the soul in its grasp of the universe, can give only a faint notion and no distinct account of its nature. The inner life of man has depths which have remained inscrutable to the keenest investigator. It is, however, undeniable that the human mind can, without

help from the senses, cast a far-seeing glance into the enigmatic concatenation of events and the complex play of forces. By means of an undisclosed faculty of the soul, man has discovered truths which are not within the reach of the senses. The organs of the senses can only confirm or rectify the truths already elicited. They cannot discover them. By means of the truths brought to light by that inexplicable power of the soul, man has learned to know nature and to make its forces subservient to his will. These facts attest that the power of the soul owns properties which go beyond the ken of the senses, and transcend the skilled faculties of human reason. Such properties lift the veil of the dim future, and lead to the discovery of higher truths concerning the moral conduct of man; they are even capable of beholding a something of that mysterious Being who has formed and who maintains the universe and the combined action of all its forces. A soul devoted to mundane matters and to selfishness can never attain to this degree of perfection. But should not a soul which is untouched by selfishness, undisturbed by low desires and passions, unsoiled by profanity and the stains of every-day life, – a soul which is completely merged in the Deity and in a longing for moral superiority, – should not such a soul be capable of beholding a revelation of religious and moral truths?

During successive centuries of Israel's history there arose pure-minded men, who unquestionably could look far into the future, and who received and imparted revelations concerning God and the holiness of life. This is an historical fact which

will stand any test. A succession of prophets predicted the future destiny of the Israelites and of other nations, and these predictions have been verified by fulfilment. These prophets placed the son of Amram as first on the list of men to whom a revelation was vouchsafed, and high above themselves, because his predictions were clearer and more positive. They recognised in Moses not only the first, but also the greatest of prophets; and they considered their own prophetic spirit as a mere reflection of his mind. If ever the soul of a mortal was endowed with luminous prophetic foresight, this was the case with the pure, unselfish, and sublime soul of Moses. In the desert of Sinai, says the ancient record, at the foot of Horeb, where the flock of his father-in-law was grazing, he received the first divine revelation, which agitated his whole being. Moved and elated – humble, yet confident, Moses returned after this vision to his flock and his home. He had been changed into another being; he felt himself impelled by the spirit of God to redeem his tribal brethren from bondage, and to educate them for a higher moral life.

Aaron, who had remained in Egypt, likewise had a revelation to meet his brother on Mount Horeb, and to prepare himself jointly with him for the work of redemption. The task of imbuing the servile spirit of the people with a desire for liberty seemed to them far more difficult than that of inducing Pharaoh to relax his rigor. Both brothers therefore expected to encounter obstacles and stubborn opposition. Although both men were already advanced in years, they did not shrink from the magnitude of the

undertaking, but armed themselves with prophetic courage, and relied on the support of the God of their fathers. First they turned to the representatives of families and tribes, to the elders of the people, and announced their message that God would take pity on Israel's misery, that He had promised them freedom, and that He would lead them back to the land of their fathers. The elders lent a willing ear to the joyful news; but the masses, who were accustomed to slavery, heard the words with cold indifference. Heavy labour had made them cowardly and distrustful. They did not even desire to abstain from worshipping the Egyptian idols. Every argument fell unheeded on their obtuse minds. "It is better for us to remain enthralled as bondmen to the Egyptians than to die in the desert." Such was the apparently rational answer of the people.

The brothers appeared courageously before the Egyptian king, and demanded, in the name of the God who had sent them, that their people should be released from slavery, for they had come into the country of their own free will, and had preserved their inalienable right to liberty. If the Israelites were at first unwilling to leave the country, and to struggle with the uncertainties of the future, Pharaoh was still less inclined to let them depart. The mere demand that he should liberate hundreds of thousands of slaves who worked in his fields and buildings, and that he should do so in the name of a God whom he knew not, or for the sake of a cause which he did not respect, induced him to double the labours of the Hebrew slaves, in order to deprive

them of leisure for thoughts of freedom. Instead of meeting with a joyful reception, Moses and Aaron found themselves overwhelmed with reproaches that through their fault the misery of the unfortunate sufferers had been increased. The King only determined to give way after he and his country had witnessed many terrifying and extraordinary phenomena and plagues, and when he could no longer free himself from the thought that the unknown God was punishing him for his obstinacy. In consequence of successive calamities, the Egyptian king urged the Israelites to hasten and depart, fearing lest any delay might bring destruction upon him and his country. The Israelites had barely time to supply themselves with the provisions necessary for their long and wearisome journey. Memorable was the daybreak of the fifteenth of Nisan (March), on which the enslaved people regained their liberty without shedding a drop of blood. They were the first to whom the great value of liberty was made known, and since then this priceless treasure, the foundation of human dignity, has been guarded by them as the apple of the eye.

Thousands of Israelites, their loins girded, their staves in their hands, their little ones riding on asses, and their herds following them, left their villages and tents, and assembled near the town of Rameses. Strange tribes who had lived by their side, shepherd tribes akin to them in race and language, joined them in their migration. They all rallied round the prophet Moses, obeying his words. He was their king, although he was free from ambition,

and he may well be called the first promulgator of the doctrine of equality amongst men. The duty devolving on him during this exodus was more difficult to discharge than his message to the king and to the people of Israel. Only few amongst these thousands of newly liberated slaves could comprehend the great mission assigned to them. But the masses followed him stolidly. Out of this horde of savages he had to form a nation; for them he had to conquer a home, and establish a code of laws, which rendered them capable of leading a life of rectitude. In this difficult task, he could reckon with certainty only on the tribe of Levi, who shared his sentiments, and assisted him in his arduous duties as a teacher.

Whilst the Egyptians were burying the dead which the plague had suddenly stricken down, the Israelites, the fourth generation of the first immigrants, left Egypt, after a sojourn of several centuries. They journeyed towards the desert which divides Egypt from Canaan, on the same way by which the last patriarch had entered the Nile country. But Moses would not permit them to go by this short route, because he feared that the inhabitants of Canaan, on the coast of the Mediterranean, would oppose their entry with an armed force; he also apprehended that the tribes, whom their long bondage had made timorous, would take to flight on the first approach of danger.

Their first destination was Mount Sinai, where they were to receive those laws and precepts for the practice of which they had been set free. Pharaoh had, however, determined to recapture

the slaves who had been snatched from his grasp, when, in a moment of weakness, he had allowed them to depart. When the Israelites saw the Egyptians approaching from afar, they gave way to despair, for they found themselves cut off from every means of escape. Before them was the sea, and behind them the enemy, who would soon overtake them, and undoubtedly reduce them again to bondage. Crying and lamenting, some of them asked Moses, "Are there no graves in Egypt that thou hast brought us out to die in the desert?" However, a means of escape unexpectedly presented itself, and could only be regarded by them as a miracle. A hurricane from the north-east had driven the water of the sea southwards during the night, so that the bed had for the greater part become dry. Their leader quickly seized on this means of escape, and urged the frightened people to hurry towards the opposite shore. His prophetic spirit showed him that they would never again see the Egyptians. They rapidly traversed the short distance across the dry bed of the sea, the deeper parts of the water, agitated by a storm, forming two walls on the right and the left. During this time, the Egyptians were in hot pursuit after the Israelites, in the hope of leading them back to slavery. At daybreak, they reached the west coast of the sea, and, perceiving the Israelites on the other side, they were hastening after them along the dry pathway, when the tempest suddenly ceased. The mountain-like waves, which had risen like walls on both sides, now poured down upon the dry land, and buried men, horses, and chariots in the watery deep. The sea washed some corpses

to the coast where the Israelites were resting in safety. They here beheld a marvellous deliverance. The most callous became deeply impressed with this sight, and looked with confidence to the future. On that day they put their firm trust in God and in Moses, His messenger. With a loud voice they sang praises for their wonderful deliverance. In chorus they sang —

> "I will praise the Lord,
> For He is ever glorious.
> The horse and his rider He cast into the sea."

The deliverance from Egypt, the passage through the sea, and the sudden destruction of their resentful enemy were three occurrences which the Israelites had witnessed, and which never passed from their memories. In times of the greatest danger and distress, the recollection of this scene inspired them with courage, and with the assurance that the God who had redeemed them from Egypt, who had turned the water into dry land, and had destroyed their cruel enemy, would never desert them, but would "ever reign over them." Although the multitude did not long retain this trustful and pious disposition, but fell into despondency at every new difficulty, the intelligent portion of the Israelites were, in subsequent trials, sustained by their experiences at the Red Sea.

The tribes, delivered from the bonds of slavery, and from the terrors of long oppression, could peaceably now pursue their way. They had yet many days' journey to Sinai, the temporary goal

of their wanderings. Although the country through which they travelled was a sandy desert, it was not wanting in water, and in pasture land for the shepherds. This territory was not unknown to Moses, their leader, who had formerly pastured the flocks of his father-in-law here. In the high mountains of Sinai and its spurs, the water in the spring-time gushes forth copiously from the rocks, forms into rills, and rushes down the slopes towards the Red Sea. Nor did the Israelites suffer through want of bread, for in its stead they partook of manna. Finding this substance in large quantities, and living on it during a long time, they came to consider its presence as a miracle. It is only on this peninsula that drops sweet as honey exude from the high tamarisk trees, which abound in that region. These drops issue in the early morning, and take the globular size of peas or of coriander seeds; but in the heat of the sun they melt away. Elated by their wonderful experiences, the tribes now seemed prepared to receive their holiest treasure, for the sake of which they had made the long circuitous journey through the desert of Sinai. From Rephidim, which lies on a considerable altitude, they were led upwards to the highest range of the mountain, the summit of which appears to touch the clouds.[5] To this spot Moses led the Israelites in the third month after the exodus from Egypt, and appointed their camping ground. He then prepared them for an astounding

[5] The situation of Sinai is not to be sought in the so-called Sinaitic peninsula, but near the land of Edom, on the confines of which was the desert of Paran. Neither Jebel Musa, with the adjacent peaks of Jebel Catherine and Ras-es-Sufsafeh, nor Mount Jerbal, was the true Sinai. See "Monatsschrift," by Fränkel-Graetz, 1878, p. 337.

phenomenon, which appealed both to the eye and the ear. By prayer and abstinence they were bidden to render themselves fit for lofty impressions, and worthy of their exalted mission. With eager expectation and anxious hearts they awaited the third day. A wall round the nearest mountain summit prevented the people from approaching too close. On the morning of the third day a heavy cloud covered the mountain top; lightning flashed, and enveloped the mountain in a blaze of fire. Peals of thunder shook the surrounding mountains, and awakened the echoes. All nature was in uproar, and the world's end seemed to be at hand. With trembling and shaking, the old and the young beheld this terrifying spectacle. But its terror did not surpass the awfulness of the words heard by the affrighted people. The clouds of smoke, the lightning, the flames and the peals of thunder had only served as a prelude to these portentous words.

Mightily impressed by the sight of the flaming mountain, the people clearly heard the commandments which, simple in their import, and intelligible to every human being, form the elements of all culture. Ten words rang forth from the mountain top. The people became firmly convinced that the words were revealed by God. Theft and bearing false witness were stigmatised as crimes. The voice of Sinai condemned evil thoughts no less than evil acts; hence the prohibition, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife … nor any possession of thy neighbour." The Indians, the Egyptians, and other nations famous for their colossal structures, had, during more than two thousand years, gone through many

historical experiences, which shrink into utter insignificance, when compared with this one momentous event.

The work accomplished at Sinai by an instantaneous act remained applicable to all times by asserting the supremacy of ethical life and the dignity of man. This promulgation of the Law marked the natal hour of the "distinct people," like unto which none had ever existed. The sublime and eternal laws of Sinai – coming from a Deity whom the senses cannot perceive, from a Redeemer who releases the enthralled and the oppressed – were revealed truths treating of filial duty, of spotless chastity, of the inviolable safety of human life and property, of social integrity, and of the purity of sentiment.

The Israelites had been led to Mount Sinai as trembling bondmen; now they came back to their tents as God's people of priests, as a righteous nation (*Jeshurun*). By practically showing that the Ten Commandments are applicable to all the concerns of life, the Israelites were constituted the teachers of the human race, and through them all the families of the earth were to be blessed. None of the others could then have surmised that even for its own well-being an isolated and insignificantly small nation had been charged with the arduous task of the preceptive office.

The Sinaitic teachings were not of an ephemeral nature, even in regard to their form. Being engraven on tables of stone, they could be easily remembered by successive generations. During a long period these inscribed slabs remained in the custody of the Israelites, and were called "the Tables of the Testimony," or

"the Tables of the Law." Being placed in an ark, which became a rallying centre, round which Moses used to assemble the elders of the families, these tables served as a sign of the Sinaitic Covenant. They formed a link between God and the people who had formerly been trodden under foot, and who were now bidden to own no other Lord save the One from whom the Law had gone forth. It was for this reason that the ark, as the repository of the tables, was designated "the Ark of the Covenant." The ethical truths of Sinai became henceforth the basis for a new system of morality, and for the national constitution of the Israelites. These truths were further developed in special laws which had a practical bearing upon the public and private affairs of the people. Slave-holders and slaves were no longer to be found amongst the Israelites. The selling of Israelites as slaves, and perpetual servitude of an Israelite became unlawful. A man who forfeited his liberty was liable to be held in service during six years, but in the seventh year he regained his freedom. Wilful murder and disrespect to parents were punishable with death. The sanctuary could give no protection to criminals condemned to die. The murder of a non-Israelitish slave involved condign punishment. A gentile slave ill-treated by his master recovered his liberty. A man committing an offence on the virtue of a maiden was bound to make her his wife, and to pay a fine to the father of the injured woman. Equitable and humane treatment of the widow and the orphan was enforced; a similar provision was ordained for the benefit of strangers who had joined one of

the tribes. The Israelites, in fact, were bidden remember their former sojourn in a foreign land, and to refrain from inflicting upon strangers the inhuman treatment which they themselves had formerly endured.

This spirit of equity and brotherly love, pervading the ancient code of laws, could not at once change the habits of the people. The duties involved in these laws were too spiritual and too elevated to have such an effect. Moses having temporarily absented himself to make preparations for the reception of the Sinaitic law, the dull-witted portion of the people imagined that their God was abandoning them in the desert, and they clamoured for the rule of a visible Godhead. Aaron, who had taken the lead in the absence of Moses, timorously yielded to this impetuous demand, and countenanced the production of a golden idol. This image of Apis or Mnevis received divine homage from the senseless multitude who danced around it. Moses, on descending from Mount Sinai, ordered the Levites to put to death some thousands of the people. Nothing but the exercise of extreme rigour could have repressed this worship of idols.

With the object of protecting the people from a relapse into idolatry, and of supporting them during their state of transition from barbarism, they were allowed to form a conception of the Deity – though not by means of an image – through some material aid which would appeal to the senses. On Sinai they had beheld flashes of lightning with flames of fire, and from the midst of a burning cloud they had heard the Ten

Commandments. An emblem of this phenomenon was now introduced to remind the people of the presence of the Deity as revealed at Sinai. It was ordained that a perpetual fire should be kept alight on a portable altar, and be carried before the tribes during their migrations. Not the Deity Himself, but the revelation of the Deity at Sinai, should thereby be made perceptible to the sense of vision. The performance of sacrificial rites was a further concession to the crude perceptions of the people.

The spiritual religion promulgated at Sinai did not intend sacrifices as the expression of divine adoration, but was meant to inculcate a moral and holy life; the people, however, had not yet risen to this conception, and could only be advanced by means of education and culture. The other ancient nations having found in sacrifices the means of propitiating their deities, the Israelites were permitted to retain the same mode of divine service; but its form was simplified. The altar became an integral part of the sanctuary, in which no image was tolerated. The only objects contained therein were a candelabrum, a table with twelve loaves, symbolising the twelve tribes; and there was also a recess for the Ark of the Covenant. Altar, sanctuary and sacrificial rites required a priesthood. This primæval institution, too, was retained. The Levites, as the most devoted and best informed tribe, were charged with sacerdotal functions, as during the sojourn in Egypt. The priests of Israel, unlike those of the Egyptians, were precluded from holding landed property, as such possessions might have tempted them to misuse their

prerogatives and neglect their sacred duties. For this reason it was prescribed that their subsistence should be derived from the offerings made by the people. Collaterally there existed a custom, dating from remote patriarchal ages, which demanded that the first-born son of every family should attend to the performance of sacrificial rites. This prerogative could not be abruptly abolished, and continued for some time alongside of the Levitical priesthood, though both of them stood in the way of the pure Sinaitic teachings. The materialism of the age demanded indulgent concessions, combined with provisions tending to the refinement of popular habits. Only through the aid of the spiritually gifted could the understanding of the subordinate nature of sacrifices be preserved in the consciousness of the people.

During the forty years of their wandering in the desert, the Israelites sought pastures for their flocks within the mountain region and its neighborhood.

During these migrations Moses instructed the people. The older generation gradually passed away. Their descendants, obedient to the teachings of the lawgiver and his disciples, formed a docile, pious, and valiant community, and became proficient in the knowledge of their laws.

Moses now surrounded himself with councillors, who were the chiefs of seventy families. This system became a model for later forms of administration. The Council of Elders participated in important deliberations, and assisted in the management of

public business. On the advice of Jethro, his father-in-law, Moses appointed inferior and higher judges, who respectively had under their jurisdiction ten, a hundred, and a thousand families. The people had the right of electing their own judges, whose appointment they then recommended to Moses. These judges were charged to maintain strict impartiality in cases of litigation between members of the tribes of Israel, or between Israelites and strangers. Nor was it within the discretion of the judges to make distinctions between persons of high and low degree. They were also commanded to keep their hands clean from bribes, and to give their verdicts according to the principles of equity, "for justice belongs unto God," and has its source in God himself. Brotherly love, community of interests, equality before the law, equity and mercy were the high ideals which he held before the generations which he had trained. The inculcation of these laws and teachings marked an eventful era in the nation's history. As such it was characterised by the prophets, who called it "the bridal time of the daughter of Israel," and the season of "her espousals, when she went after her God in the land which was not sown." Israel's wanderings had nearly come to a conclusion and the younger generation was well fitted for the attainment of the object of its settlement. A further sojourn in the desert would have inured the people to habits of restlessness, and might have reduced them for ever to the nomadic condition of the Midianites and the Amalekites. They appear to have made an unsuccessful raid in a northern direction, along the old caravan roads. In a

second defeat some of them were captured by their enemies. But this discomfiture was apparently avenged by combatants belonging to the tribe of Judah, who were aided by men of the tribe of Simeon, and by Kenites, with whose assistance they seized several cities.

The other tribes were prepared to effect an entrance into the country by following a circuitous route on the eastern side. This expedition might have been shortened if the Idumeans, who dwelt on the mountain ranges of Seir, had permitted the Israelites to pass through their territory. Apparently the Idumeans were afraid that the invading Israelites would dispossess them of the land, and they therefore sallied forth to obstruct the direct road. Their opposition forced the tribes of Israel to make a long detour round the country of Idumea, and to turn to the east of the mountain ranges of Seir in order to approach Canaan from the opposite side. Not being permitted to attack the Idumeans and the kindred tribes of the Ammonites, the Israelites had to traverse the border of the eastern desert in order to reach the inhabited regions at the source of the Arnon, which flows into the Dead Sea.

Moses now sent conciliatory messages to Sihon, to request that the people might pass through his territory on their way to the Jordan. Sihon refused his consent, and marched an army to the borders of the desert to oppose the advance of the invaders. The Israelites of the new generation, animated with youthful prowess, put themselves in battle array, and routed the hostile

troops, whose king they slew at Jahaz.

This victory was of incalculable importance to the Israelites; it strengthened their position and inspired them with self-reliance. They at once took possession of the conquered district, and henceforth abandoned their nomadic life. Whilst the Israelites felt confident of success in conquering the Land of Promise, the Canaanites, on the other hand, were terror-stricken at the defeat of the mighty Sihon. The Israelites could now move about freely, being no longer incommoded by the narrow belt of the desert, nor by the suspicions of unfriendly tribes. Dangers having given way to a state of security, this sudden change of circumstances aroused in their bosoms virtuous emotions, together with ignoble passions.

The people of Moab now perceived that their feeble existence was threatened by their new neighbours. Balak, their king, felt that he could not cope with the Israelites in the open field of battle, and he preferred to employ the arts of Balaam, the Idumean or Midianite magician, whose maledictions were supposed to have the power of calling down distress and destruction on an entire people or on a single individual. Balaam having been struck with amazement at the sight of Israel's encampment, the intended maledictions were changed on his lips into blessings. He averred that no "enchantment avails against Jacob, and no divination against Israel," a glorious future having been assured to that people. But he advised the king to have recourse to a different charm, which might have a pernicious

effect upon the Israelites, namely, to beguile them to the vice of profligacy by means of depraved temple maidens.

Balak accepted this advice. The Israelites, during their migrations, had lived on friendly terms with the wandering Midianites, and entertained no suspicions when admitting the latter into their encampments and tents. Counselled by Balaam and instigated by Balak, many Midianites brought their wives and daughters into the tents of the Israelites, who were then invited to join the idolatrous festivities at the shrine of Baal-Peor. On such occasions it was the custom for women to sacrifice their virtue in the tents, and the guerdon of dishonour was then presented as an oblation to the idols. Many an Israelite was led into profligacy by these allurements, and partook of the sacrificial feasts, two sins which tended to sap the foundation of the doctrine revealed on Sinai. Unhappily no one in Israel seemed willing to obey the command of Moses by checking this outbreak of vice. Phineas, Aaron's grandson, was the only man whose heart revolted against these excesses. Seeing that a Midianite woman entered a tent with a chief of the tribe of Simeon, he stabbed both of them to death; and thus was the raging plague turned away from the people.

On the other hand, there was now witnessed a significant change in Israel. The unexpected and eventful victories had aroused amongst them the melodious power of song, the first indication of that talent, without which no nation can attain to a superior degree of culture. The first songs of the Hebrew muse

were those of war and victory. The authors (*mosheĕlim*) of warlike hymns rose at once in public estimation, and their productions were preserved in special collections, as for example, in the Book of the Wars of God.

Hebrew poetry, in its early stages, was deficient in depth and elegance, but it had two characteristics which in the course of time were developed to the highest stage of refinement. With regard to form, it exhibited a symmetry in the component parts of each verse (*parallelismus membrorum*). The same train of thought was repeated with appropriate variations in two or even three divisions of the verse. In the treatment of a theme, the muse of early Hebrew poetry displayed a tendency to irony, this being the result of a twofold conception, namely, that of the ideal aspect by the side of antithetic reality.

The Israelites, seeking to arrive at the goal of their wishes and to gain possession of the Land of Promise, could not tarry in the fertile region between the Arnon and the Jabbok. They had to prepare for crossing the Jordan. But now the evil consequences of having triumphed over Sihon and Og became manifest. The tribes of Reuben and Gad announced that they wished to remain in the conquered land, because its verdant pastures were well adapted for their numerous flocks and their herds of cattle and camels. In making such a demand it appeared that these tribes desired to sever their lot from that of their brethren, and to live as independent nomads. Oppressed with this cause of anxiety, Moses reproached them bitterly for their

defection, but felt constrained to grant them the conquered land under the condition that a contingent of their combatants should assist the warriors of the brother-tribes, and follow them across the Jordan. This allotment of land to the two tribes caused an unexpected territorial division. The land possessed by these tribes became known as the Trans-Jordanic territory (*Eber ha-Jarden* or *Peraea*). In the process of time this concession proved more injurious than beneficial.

The rest of the tribes were on the eve of crossing the Jordan, when their great leader Moses was removed by death. The thirty days which the Israelites spent in mourning were not an excessive sacrifice. His loss was irreparable, and they felt themselves utterly bereft. Amongst all lawgivers, founders of states, and teachers of mankind, none has equalled Moses. Not only did he, under the most inauspicious circumstances, transform a horde of slaves into a nation, but he imprinted on it the seal of everlasting existence: he breathed into the national body an immortal soul. He held before his people ideals, the acceptance of which was indispensable, since all their weal and woe depended upon the realisation or non-realisation of those ideals. Moses could well declare that he had carried the people as a father carries his child. His patience and his courage had rarely deserted him; his unselfishness, and his meekness of disposition were two prominent qualities, which, together with his clear prophetic vision, eminently fitted him to be the instrument of the Deity. Free from jealousy, he wished that all Israelites might

be prophets like himself, and that God would endue them with His spirit. Moses became at a subsequent epoch the unattainable ideal of a prophet. Succeeding generations were elated by the thought that this brilliant example of humanity had watched the infant state of the people of Israel. Even the death of Moses served as an enduring lesson. In the land of Moab, in the valley facing Mount Peor – which was held sacred by the population of that district – he was quietly entombed, and to this day no one has known the spot where he was buried. It was designed that the Israelites should not deify him, but should be kept from following the idolatrous practice of other nations, who deified their kings, and their men of real or presumed greatness, as also the founders of their religions.

Sad at heart on account of the death of their beloved leader, who was not permitted to conduct them into the Land of Promise, but comforted by the lofty recollections of the redemption from Egyptian bondage, the passage through the sea, and the revelation on Sinai, encouraged also by the victories over Sihon, Og, and the Midianites – the tribes of Israel crossed the Jordan, on a day in the bright spring-time, and were conducted on their journey by Joshua, the faithful disciple of Moses.

CHAPTER II.
OCCUPATION OF THE LAND OF CANAAN

Joshua's Succession – Passage of the Jordan – Conquest of Jericho – The Gibeonites – Coalition of Canaanite Cities against the Israelites – Settlement in the Land – Isolation of the Tribes – Allotments – The Tribe of Levi – The Ark of the Covenant at Shiloh – Condition of Canaan at the time of the Conquest – Climate and Fertility – Intellectual Activity – Poetry of Nature – Remnants of Canaanite Populations – Death of Joshua.

On crossing the Jordan and entering Canaan, the Israelites met with no resistance. Terror had paralysed the tribes and populations who then held the land. Nor were they united by any tie which might have enabled them to oppose the invaders. Although mention is made of thirty-one kings, besides those who ruled near the coast-line of the Mediterranean, these rulers were petty chiefs, who were independent of each other, and each of them governed only a single township with the adjoining district. They remained passive, whilst the Israelites were encamping near Gilgal, between the Jordan and Jericho. The fortress of Jericho, exposed to the first brunt of an attack from the Israelites, could expect no help from elsewhere, and was left entirely to its own

resources. The tribes of Israel, on the other hand, were headed by a well-tried leader; they were united, skilled in warfare, and eager for conquest.

Joshua, the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim, was accepted as the rightful successor of the great Prophet. Moses, having laid his hands upon the disciple, had endowed him with his spirit. Yet Joshua was far from being a prophet. Practical in his aspirations, he was more concerned in affairs of immediate necessity and utility, than in ideals of the future. In his early years, when overthrowing the Amalekites near Rephidim, he had given proof of courage and good generalship. His connection with the tribe of Ephraim, the most distinguished amongst the tribes, was likewise of advantage to his position as a commander. The Ephraimites, with their pride and obstinacy, might otherwise have withheld their allegiance. This tribe having yielded obedience to him, the other tribes readily followed the example.

The first place to be attacked was Jericho. This city was situated in an exceedingly fertile mountain district. Here throve the lofty palm tree and the precious balsam shrub. Owing to the proximity of the Dead Sea, the climate of Jericho has, during the greater part of the year, a high temperature, and the fruits of the field ripen earlier there than in the interior of the country. The conquest of Jericho was, therefore, of primary importance; this city was strongly fortified, and its inhabitants, timid under open attack, felt secure only within the precincts of their defences. The walls of Jericho, according to the scriptural narrative,

crumbled to pieces at the mighty and far-sounding shouts of Israel's warriors. They entered the city, and, meeting with little resistance, they slew the population, which was enfeebled by depraved habits. After this easy victory the warriors of Israel became impetuous, and they imagined that a small portion of their force was sufficient to reduce Ai, a scantily populated fortress, which lay at a distance of two or three hours' journey to the north. Joshua therefore sent a small detachment of his men against Ai, but at the first onslaught they were repulsed, and many of them were slain on the field of battle. This defeat spread terror among the Israelites, who feared that they were forsaken by God, whilst it gave new courage to the Canaanites. It was only by the entire army's drawing up and employing a stratagem that Joshua succeeded in taking Ai. Bethel, situated in the vicinity, likewise fell by a ruse into the hands of the Ephraimites. These two mountain fastnesses having been captured, the inhabitants of the adjoining towns and villages became even more faint-hearted. Without awaiting an attack, they abandoned their homes, and fled to the north, the west and the south. The country, being more or less denuded of its inhabitants, was now occupied by the conquerors. The Gibeonites, or Hivites, in the tract of land called Gibeon, freely submitted to Joshua and his people. They agreed that the Israelites should share with them the possession of their territory on the condition that their lives should be spared. Joshua and the elders having agreed to these terms, the compact, according to the practice of that age, was ratified by

an oath. In this way the Israelites acquired possession of the whole mountain district from the borders of the great plain to the vicinity of Jerusalem, the subsequent metropolis of Palestine. The borderland of the plain separated the original inhabitants of the north from those of the south, and neither of these populations was willing to render help to the other. The southern Canaanites now became more closely allied. The apprehension that their land might fall an easy prey to the invaders overcame their mutual jealousies and their love of feud; being thus brought into closer union with each other, they ventured to engage in aggressive warfare. Five kings, or rather chiefs of townships, those of Jebus (Jerusalem), Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon, joined together to punish the Gibeonites for submitting to the invaders, for whom they had opened the road, and whom they had helped to new conquests. The Gibeonites, in face of this danger, implored the protection of Joshua, who forthwith led his victorious warriors against the allied troops of the five towns, and inflicted on them a crushing defeat near Gibeon. The beaten army fled many miles towards the west and the south, and in their flight they were struck down by a hailstorm. This day of battle appears to have been regarded as one of signal triumph, its achievements were remembered even five hundred years later, and were commemorated in a martial song: —

"Joshua spake:
'O Sun, stand thou still near Gibeon,

And thou, O Moon, near the valley of Ajalon!'
And the sun stood still,
And the moon remained at rest,
Until the people had chastised the foes."[6]

The passage of the Jordan, auspicious beyond expectation, and the rapid succession of victories were new wonders which could fitly be associated with those of former days. They afforded rich themes for praise, which was not dedicated to the great deeds of the people, but to the marvellous working of the Deity.

The victory at Gibeon opened access to the south, and the Israelites could now freely move their forces in that direction; but there were still some strongholds in the south which they were unable either to capture or to keep in subjection.

The principal work – the subjection of the central portion of Canaan – being now accomplished, the tribes of Israel ceased to form one combined army, and in this severance they were probably influenced by the example of the children of Joseph. The latter, who were divided into the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, claimed to have precedence in the ranks of Israel. This claim may be traced back, as has already been shown, to their sojourn in Egypt, and also to the fact that Joshua, the leader of the Israelites, was descended from Ephraim. Hence it was that the children of Joseph sought to obtain possession of the central mountain range, which abounded in springs and

[6] Joshua x. 12, 13.

had a very rich soil. Shechem, the ancient town of the Hivites, being situated between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, had a good supply of water on every side, and became the principal city of the land. But the two divisions, Ephraim and Manasseh, were unwilling to content themselves with this desirable district (which was named "Mount Ephraim"). As Joshua was one of their own tribe, they expected from him the favours of a partisan, and that he would yield to all their demands. They alleged, therefore, that the territory allotted to them was insufficient for their numerous families. They desired to possess not only the fine and fertile plain which extended many miles to the north, but also the land, lying beyond, round Mount Tabor; but they did not find Joshua so yielding as they had anticipated. With a touch of irony he told them that, since they were so numerous, they ought to be able to conquer Mount Tabor, in the land of the Perizzites and the Rephaites, and clear away the forest. Disappointed by this reply, they withdrew from the expeditions of the combined tribes, and contented themselves with the extent of territory which had originally been allotted to them. Owing to this withdrawal from the common cause, the other tribes were induced to follow a similar course, and to acquire, independently of each other, the land necessary for their respective settlements. Four tribes fixed their attention upon the north, and four upon the south and the west. The expedition, from which the sons of Joseph had retired, was hazarded by the four tribes of Issachar, Zebulon, Asher, and Naphtali. They descended into the plain

of Jezreel, where they left a portion of their settlers. Another portion pushed on to the northern hill regions, which touched the base of the lofty mountain range. These tribes were even less prepared than the children of Joseph for engaging in warfare with the inhabitants of the plain, to whose rapidly moving war-chariots they could have offered no resistance. The children of Issachar were satisfied with the pasture land in the great plain, and they had no desire to throw themselves into fortified cities. The men of this tribe appear to have placed themselves under the supremacy of the Canaanites, for they loved a peaceful life, and, as they found the land fertile, they readily bore the imposition of tribute. Zebulon, the twin tribe of Issachar, was more active, and appears to have conquered for itself a safe settlement in the north of Mount Tabor. The remaining two tribes, Asher and Naphtali, seem to have met with greater difficulties in gaining a firm footing among the neighbouring Canaanite population, who were more combative and also more closely united. These warriors concentrated themselves at Hazor, where Jabin, the local king, ruled over several districts. This king summoned the inhabitants of the allied cities to take up arms and destroy the invading Israelites. The tribes of Asher and Naphtali, unable to cope with the enemy, hastened to invoke Joshua's assistance. At that time mutual sympathy was still keen among the tribes, and Joshua found them ready to bring speedy relief to their brethren in the north. With these auxiliaries, and with the men of Asher and Naphtali, Joshua surprised the Canaanites, who were allied

under King Jabin, near Lake Merom, defeated them, and put the remainder to flight. This was the second great victory he gained over the allied enemies. Through the battle of Merom, the two tribes succeeded in firmly establishing themselves in the region situated on the west side of the upper course of the Jordan and the east side of the Mediterranean Sea. Asher and Naphtali, being settled at the extreme north, occupied the position of outposts, the former being placed at the west, and the other at the east, of the plateau.

At the same time four other tribes acquired their settlements in the south; and they relied upon their own efforts unaided by the entire army of the people. The small tribe of Benjamin, more closely connected with the children of Joseph, was probably assisted by the latter in obtaining a narrow and not very fertile strip of land near the southern frontier line. This was the district of the Gibeonites, with some additions on the east and the west.

The Canaanites, who dwelt in the western plain towards the seaboard, also had iron chariots, on which account the Israelites did not venture to attack them soon after their invasion. Still there was no alternative for the rest of the tribes, but to seek their homes in the western region. Judah was the most numerous and the mightiest of these tribes, and was joined by the children of Simeon, who subordinated themselves like vassals to a ruling tribe.

At the southern extremity, near the desert, the Kenites, kinsmen and allies of the Israelites, had been domiciled since

the days of Israel's wandering through the wilderness. By the friendly aid of this people the Judæans hoped to succeed more easily in gaining new dwelling-places. They avoided a war with the Jebusites, with whom possibly they had made a compact of peace, and spared the territory in which Jerusalem, the subsequent capital, was situated.

The first place they captured was the ancient town of Hebron, where Caleb distinguished himself by his bravery. Hebron became the chief city of the tribe of Judah. Kirjath-Sepher, or Debir, was taken by Othniel, Caleb's half-brother. Other leaders of this tribe continued the conquest of various other cities. In the earlier days, the tribe of Judah seems to have lived on friendly terms with the original inhabitants of the land and to have dwelt peaceably by their side. The extensive settlement of Judah was better suited for pasture than for agriculture. The new settlers and the old inhabitants had therefore no inducements for displacing each other, or for indulging in a deadly strife. The large tract of land was parcelled out into small plots, and the Canaanites and the Amalekites retained their homesteads.

The tribe of Simeon had no independent possessions, not even a single town which it could claim as its own, and was altogether merged in the tribe of Judah. The Simeonites dwelt in towns of Judah, without, however, having a voice in the deliberations of the tribe. The scantiest provision seems to have been made for the tribe of Dan, the number of families belonging to this tribe being apparently very small. Nor does it appear to have received

such aid from a brother tribe as was given to Issachar and to Simeon. The Danites seem to have been followers of the tribe of Ephraim. This tribe selfishly allowed the Danites to acquire an insecure portion in the south-west of its own territory, or, rather, a small portion in the land of the Benjamites. It now devolved upon the Danites to conquer for themselves the land on the plain of Saron, which extends towards the sea, and to establish themselves there. The Amorites, however, prevented them from accomplishing this design, and forced them to retreat into the mountains; but here the sons of Ephraim and the Benjamites refused them the possession of permanent dwelling-places. The Danites were therefore during a long time compelled to lead a camp-life, and at last one section of this tribe had to go in search of a settlement far away to the north.

The conquest of Canaan had proceeded with such rapidity as to impress the contemporaries and the posterity of the people with the opinion that this success was the work of a miracle. Not quite half a century before the Israelites had been scared away from the borders of Palestine, after the spies had spread the report that the inhabitants of the land were too strong to be vanquished. The same inhabitants were now in such dread of the Israelites as to abandon their possessions without attempting to make any resistance, or if they did take up a defensive position they were easily routed. On this account the conviction gained ground amongst the Israelites that the Deity Himself had led the warriors, and had scattered their opponents in utter confusion.

This great conquest became, therefore, the natural theme of spirited poetry.

Although insufficient portions had been allotted to a few of the tribes, such as the Simeonites and the Danites, they still owned some lands which might afford a partial subsistence, and become the nucleus for a further extension of property. The Levites alone had been left altogether unprovided with landed possessions. This was done in strict conformity with the injunctions of Moses, lest the tribe of priests, by misusing its rights of birth, should become affluent agriculturists, and be drawn away from their holy avocations by the desire of enriching themselves – like the Egyptian priests, who, under the pretext of defending the interest of religion, despoiled the people of its property, and formed a plutocratic caste.

The Levites were to remain poor and content themselves with the grants made to them by the owners of lands and herds, they being required to devote all their attention to the sanctuary and the divine law.

During Joshua's rule the camp of Gilgal, between the Jordan and Jericho, was the centre of divine worship and of the Levitical encampment; here also the tabernacle of the covenant had been erected, and sacrifices were offered up. But Gilgal could not permanently serve as the place for assembling the people, for it lay in an unproductive and unfrequented district. As soon as the affairs of the people were more consolidated, and after the Trans-Jordanic warriors had returned to their homes, another locality

had to be selected for the sanctuary. As a matter of course, it was expedient that the sacred place should be situated within the confines of Ephraim. Joshua likewise had his seat amongst the Ephraimites, namely at Timnath-Serah, a town which that tribe had gratefully allotted to him.

Shiloh (Salem) was chosen as the spot for the establishment of the sanctuary. When the ark of the covenant arrived there, an altar was, as a matter of course, erected by its side. Here the public assemblies were held, if not by all the tribes, certainly by those of Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin. Phineas, the high priest of the house of Aaron, and the priests who succeeded him in office, took up their abode in Shiloh. It is highly probable that many of the Levites resided in that town whilst others were dispersed throughout the towns of the several tribes; but on the whole they led a wandering life.

Through the immigration of the Israelites, the land of Canaan not only received a new name, but assumed a different character. It became a "Holy Land," "the Heritage of God," and was regarded as favourable to the people's destination of leading a holy life.

Foreign countries, contrasted with Palestine, appeared to them to be profane, and utterly unadapted for perpetuating the devout worship of the One Spiritual God, or for enforcing the observance of His law. The Holy Land was imagined to be sensible of the pious or of the wicked conduct of its inhabitants. There were three iniquities which the land was supposed to spurn

as the most heinous. These were murder, licentiousness, and idolatry. The conviction was general that on account of such misdeeds the land had cast out its former inhabitants, and that it would not retain the Israelites if they indulged in similar crimes. These ideas took deep root amongst the people of Israel, and they regarded Palestine as surpassing, in its precious qualities, every other country. It was, indeed, an undeniable fact that the Land of Israel (so it was named from the time when this people took possession of it) had striking distinctions, which were unequalled in any other portion of the globe. Within the small expanse of territory, one hundred and fifty miles by sixty, if the Trans-Jordanic region be included, contrasting peculiarities are crowded together, which give a marvellous character to that country. The perpetual snow-tops of Lebanon and Hermon in the north overlook the ranges of mountains and valleys far away to the sandy desert in the south, where scorching heat, like that of tropical Africa, burns up all vegetation. In close proximity to each other, trees of various kinds are found to thrive, which elsewhere are separated by great distances. Here is the slender palm tree, which shoots up only under a high temperature, and there grows the oak tree, which cannot endure such heat. If the heat of the south fires the blood, and fills man with violent passions, the wind sweeping over northern snow-fields, on the other hand, renders him calm, thoughtful, and deliberate.

On two sides Palestine is bordered by water. The Mediterranean Sea, extending along the western margin of the

land, forms inlets for ships. Along the eastern boundary flows the Jordan, which takes its rise in the slopes of Mount Hermon, and runs in nearly a straight line from north to south. In the north the Jordan flows through the "Lake of the Harp" (*Kinnereth*, *Genesareth*, or Lake of Tiberias), and in the south this river is lost in the wonderful "Salt Sea." These two basins form likewise a strange contrast. The "Lake of the Harp" (also "Lake of Galilee") contains sweet water. In its depths fishes of various kinds disport themselves. On its fertile banks, the vine, the palm, the fig-tree, and other fruit-bearing trees are found to thrive. In the high temperature of this region, fruits arrive at their maturity a month earlier than on the mountain land. The Salt Sea or "The Sea of the Deep Basin" (*arabah*) produces a contrary effect, and has rightly been called the Dead Sea. In its waters no vertebrate animals can exist. The excessive quantities of salt, together with magnesia, and masses of asphalt contained in that sea, kill every living object. The atmosphere of this region is likewise impregnated with salt, and, as the adjacent land is covered with lime-pits, it forms a dreary desert. The oval-shaped border of the Dead Sea rises, in some parts, to a height of more than 1,300 feet above the water level, and being totally bare and barren, the entire district presents a most dismal aspect.

Between the water-line and the mountain walls there are, however, some oases in which the balsam shrub thrives, and which, in regard to fertility, are not inferior to any spot on earth. Being situated near the centre of the western seaboard, this strip

of land is exceedingly fruitful. But luxuriant as the vegetation of this place is, it is even surpassed by that of the oasis on the south-east corner of the Dead Sea. Here stood at one time the town of Zoar, which was noted as the city of palm-trees (Tamarah). This locality likewise favoured in former ages the growth of the balsam shrub. At a distance of five miles to the north-east, near the town of Beth-Haran, the famous balm of Gilead was found; but by the side of the Dead Sea miasmatic salt-marshes extend for a length of several miles. The shores of this sea and also of the sea of Galilee send forth thermal springs impregnated with sulphur, and these serve to cure various maladies.

The essentially mountainous configuration of Palestine was of great benefit to the Israelites. Two long and imposing mountain ranges, separated by a deep valley, raise their heads in the north, like two snow-capped giants. One of them is Mount Lebanon, the tallest peak of which has a height of more than 10,000 feet, and is named *Dhor el-Khedib*. The other mountain is Hermon (the Anti-Lebanon), the highest point of which, *the Sheikh*, has an elevation of 9,300 feet. The Lebanon was never included in the land of Israel; it remained in the possession of the Phœnicians, the Aramæans, and the people who succeeded the latter. This mountain range was of practical utility to the Israelites, who derived from its celebrated cedar forests the material for their edifices. Besides this, its lofty and odoriferous crests formed a favourite theme in the imagery of the Hebrew poets. Mount Hermon, with its snow-covered head, touches the north side of

the ancient territory of Israel. This mountain, if not hidden by intervening hills, forms a charming object of admiration even at a distance of a hundred miles.

The spurs of these two ranges were continued in the northern mountains of Israel (Mount Naphtali, subsequently named the mountains of Galilee), the highest peak of which rises to 4,000 feet. These heights have a gradual slope towards the great and fertile plain of Jezreel, which is only 500 feet above the level of the sea. Several mountain ranges intersect this plain and divide it into smaller plains. Mount Tabor (1,865 feet high) is not so much distinguished for its height as for its cupola shape. Mount Moreh (1,830 feet), now called *Ed-Duhy*, seems to lean against Mount Tabor. Not far from there, somewhat towards the east, run the hill-tops of Gilboa (2,000 feet). On the west side of the great plain lies the extensive tree-crested range of Carmel, which forms a wall close to the sea. The great plain of Jezreel has the shape of an irregular triangle, with a length of twenty miles from north to south, and a breadth of from six to fifteen miles from east to west, having the mountain border of Carmel on the one side and that of Gilboa on the other. This plain divides the land into two unequal parts. The northern half, which is the smaller, received at a later time the name of Galilee. On the south of this plain, the ground gradually rises, and, at one point, attains an elevation of 2,000 feet. This district was called Mount Ephraim. From Jerusalem, southwards to Hebron, the land again ascends to a height of 3,000 feet, forming the land of Judah. Here there is

a gradual descent, and at the old frontier town of Beersheba the level does not rise above 700 feet. At this point begins the table-land of Mount Paran. This district was not included in the actual territory of Israel. Both Mount Ephraim and Mount Judah have a slope from east to west. Between the mountain-side and the Mediterranean Sea, from north to south, that is, from Carmel to the southern steppe, extends a plain of increasing breadth, which is called "the Plain of Sharon," or the "low country" (*shefelah*). In the east the mountain declines towards the Jordan. Some peaks of this mountain acquired a special significance. Such were the two hills by the side of Shechem, *Gerizim*, "the mountain of the blessing" (2,650 feet), and *Ebal*, "the mountain of the curse" (2,700 feet); *Bethel*, in the east (2,400 feet); *Mizpeh*, some hours' journey from the subsequent capital; *Mount Zion* (2,610 feet); and the *Mount of Olives* (2,700 feet). This peculiar and greatly varied configuration of the land had its effect not only upon the productions of the soil, but also upon the character of the people. From north to south, Palestine is divided into three belts. The broad mountainous tract occupies the centre; the low land (*shefelah*) extends from the west to the sea, and the meadows (*kikkar*, *araboth*) from the east to the Jordan. In the lowland the climate is mild; in the mountains, it is severe during the rainy season, but temperate in the summer. In the district of the Jordan the heat continues during the greater part of the year.

With the exception of the Jordan, the land has no rivers which retain their waters throughout the year; but even this river, owing

to its precipitous course, is not navigable. The Jordan rises from three sources in the slopes of Hermon. At first it runs sluggishly, and before entering the Lake of Merom it divides into small streams. On emerging from the lake, its waters are united in a narrow basalt bed, and flow into the Lake of Galilee. On issuing thence, the Jordan widens, rushes over rocks, and, after forming many rapids in its swift course, empties itself and disappears in the Dead Sea. During spring-time, when the melting snow of Hermon swells the waters, this river fertilises the adjoining low-lying plains, especially those on its eastern bank.

The other streams, including the Jarmuk and Jabbok, become dry in the hot summer season. Such winter streams (*nechalim*), nevertheless, enhance the productiveness of the district through which they flow, and the cultivated lands are situated on the banks of these intermittent streams. The fertility of the soil is also favoured by the small springs which flow down the hills without being collected into rivulets. The districts devoid of springs are supplied with drinking-water by the rain, which is gathered in cisterns excavated in the rocks.

The greater portion of Palestine is blessed with an abundant yield of produce. This is due to the nature of the soil, and to the copious drainage from the highlands of Lebanon, Hermon (Anti-Lebanon), with their spurs, as well as to the rain which falls twice a year. The land flowed "with milk and honey," and has retained this characteristic even to the present day, wherever the industry of man is active. It is decidedly a beautiful land

"of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of the oil-olive, and of honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not want anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass."[7] The plains are especially fruitful, and yield to the laborious cultivator two crops a year. But also the land lying to the north of the plain of Jezreel is by no means sterile. In olden times it had such an abundance of olive trees as to give rise to the saying that the husbandman "dips his foot in oil."

The central district to the south of the great plain, which belonged to Ephraim and Manasseh, rewarded its toilers with rich harvests. On all sides springs gush forth from the rocky fissures; and as their waters gather together, they attain sufficient force to drive the mills, besides supplying the soil with ample moisture. The land of the sons of Joseph was blessed,

> "With the fruit of the heavens above,
> And of the deep that coucheth beneath;
> And with precious fruit brought forth by the sun,
> And with the precious things put forth by the moon."[8]

The hill-sides were adorned with blooming gardens, and

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[7] Deut. viii. 7–9.

[8] Deut. xxxiii. 13, 14.

with vineyards exuberantly laden with grapes. The mountains, overshadowed by forests of terebinths, oaks and yew trees, favoured the fertility of the valleys.

In favourable situations the palm-tree produced a superabundance of sweet fruit, the juicy contents of which sometimes even trickled to the ground. There was less fruitfulness in the southern tracts, owing to the numerous chalk hills and the small number of valleys. But even here good pastures were found for the herds. Below Hebron the extreme south, with its barren rocks and strips of sand, presents a dreary aspect. The burning wind, in its passage over the desert, dries the atmosphere, and impoverishes the soil. This district was therefore rightly termed *Negeb*, "the arid land." A few oases, which are found here and there, owed their verdure to the presence of water, which counteracted the effect of the scorching heat. In such humid places the vegetation became exceedingly luxuriant under the care of diligent cultivators. To the idler this land yielded no produce.

The climate was made salubrious by the sea breezes and the free currents of mountain air, the inhabitants being, therefore, of a sturdy frame. Here were no miasmatic swamps to poison the atmosphere. Diseases and the ravages of plagues are to this day of rare occurrence, and only caused by infections imported from elsewhere. Compared with the vast dominions of the ancient world, Palestine is extremely small. From some lofty central points one can, at the same time, survey the eastern and the

western frontiers, the waves of the Mediterranean and the surface of the Dead Sea, together with the Jordan, and the opposite mountains of Gilead. A view from Mount Hermon is still more commanding, and presents beautiful and extremely diversified landscapes. Throughout the greater part of the year the air is so exceedingly pure and transparent as to afford a delusive conception of the distance between the eye and the surrounding scenery. Even remote objects appear to be placed within close proximity.

Sensitive hearts and reflecting minds may well be said to perceive "the finger of God" in this region, where "Tabor and Hermon praise His name." Lofty peaks and undulating crests of mountains are seen in alternation with verdant plains, and their images are reflected upon the glittering surface of many waters. These towering heights, far from overburdening and depressing the mind, draw it away from the din of the noisy world, and call forth cheering and elevating emotions.

If the beholder be endowed with the slightest spark of poetic sentiment, it is brought into life and action by the attractive sight of this panorama. From the varied charms of scenic beauty the most gifted men of this land drew their inspiration for their pensive poetry. Neither the Greeks nor the Romans had a conception of this species of poesy, which has its root in a deep consciousness of the greatness of the Creator. Nations of a later epoch became adepts in this poetry only by being the disciples of Israel. Whilst the eye surveyed, from a prominent

standpoint, the objects encircled by an extensive horizon, the soul was impressed with the sublime idea of infinitude – an idea which, without such aid, could only be indirectly and artificially conveyed to the intellectual faculties. Single-hearted and single-minded men, in the midst of such surroundings, became imbued with a perception of the grandeur and infinity of the Godhead, whose guiding power the people of Israel acknowledged in the early stages of their history. They recognised the existence of the same power in the ceaseless agitation of the apparently boundless ocean; in the periodical return and withdrawal of fertilising showers; in the dew which descended from the heights into the valleys; in the daily wonders of nature hidden from human sight where the horizon is narrow, but inviting admiration and devotion where the range of view is wide and open.

> "He that formeth the mountains and createth the winds,
> He who turneth the morning into darkness,
> Who treadeth upon the high places of the earth,
> The Lord, the God of hosts is his name."[9]

At a later period the religious conviction gained ground that God's omnipotence is equally manifested in ordaining the events of history as in regulating the succession of physical phenomena; that the same God who ordained the unchanging laws of nature, reveals himself in the rise and fall of nations. This conviction is

[9] Amos iv. 13.

a specific product of the Israelitish mind. Historical vicissitudes and natural surroundings conspired to sharpen its faculties for everything extraordinary and marvellous within the sphere of existing things.

The land of Gilead had the same characteristics that appertained to the region on the other side of the Jordan. This district, originally owned by the Amorites, and by the kings of Sihon and Og, was now held by the sons of Reuben and Gad. From the summits of this territory also immense tracts of land were visible at a single view; but nothing beyond a mere blue streak could be seen of the distant ocean. This side of the Jordan was, therefore, less than the opposite side, endowed with poetic suggestiveness. The land of Gilead gave birth to no poet, it was the home of only one prophet, and his disposition was marked by a fierceness which accorded well with the rude and rough character of the territory in which he was born. The Jordan formed both a geographical and an intellectual landmark.

At the time of Israel's conquests, Canaan was dotted with cities and fortified places, in which the invaders found some rudiments of civic culture. Gilead, on the other hand, contained but few towns, and these lay far apart from each other.

The territories to the west of the Jordan had only partially been subjected and allotted. Large and important tracts of land were still in possession of the original inhabitants, but it can no longer be determined whether it was through the remissness of Joshua that the land of Canaan was not completely conquered. In his

advanced years, Joshua did not display such vigour of action as was shown by his teacher, Moses. Gradually he appears to have lost the energy that is necessary in a commander. His followers of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh had already obtained the most productive part of the land; they were now resting on their laurels, and damped the warlike impetus of their brethren. The excitements of the early warfare having subsided, each of the tribes, or groups of tribes was concerned only with its individual affairs. This isolation prevented the several tribes from rounding off their territories by conquests from the original inhabitants of Canaan.

The Canaanites had, even before the invasion by the Israelites, been in possession of sacrificial altars and places for pilgrimage, with which myths calculated to satisfy the uncultured mind were connected. The high mountains, bordered by pleasant valleys, had been invested with sacred attributes. Mount Carmel had long been looked upon as a holy spot, whence the heathen priests announced their oracles. Mount Tabor was likewise regarded as holy. At the foot of Hermon, in a fine fertile valley, there stood a sanctuary dedicated to Baal Gad or Baal Hermon. After the conquest, these shrines were probably, in the first instance, visited only by the strangers who had cast their lot with the Israelites; but their example was soon followed by the ignorant portion of their Hebrew companions. In the interior of the country, where the people could not discriminate between paganism and the divine law of Israel, and still remembered the

Egyptian superstitions, they were prone to join in the sacrificial rites of the pagan idolaters. The north, beyond Mount Tabor, likewise contained groups of the Canaanite population. The Danites, whose neglected treatment has already been noticed, were stationed in the centre of the Amorites. Their tenure of land was insignificant in extent. The tribes of Judah and Simeon were completely cut off from the other tribes. They were placed among pagans, whose occupations were divided between those of the shepherd and the freebooter. The Jebusites formed a barrier between the two southern tribes and their northern brethren. This division between the tribes was only removed after the conquest of Jebus (the city subsequently named Jerusalem). If Joshua in his declining years beheld with satisfaction the realisation of the Patriarchal promises, this satisfaction was not without its alloy. As in the lives of individuals, so in the lives of nations, the practical turn of events is liable to disappoint all anticipations. It is true the land of Canaan now belonged to the Israelites; but their conquests were of a precarious nature, and might again be wrested from them by a combined attack on the part of the dispossessed natives. The closing days of Joshua's life were therefore troubled by the consideration of this dangerous contingency, and by the fact that he had no successor whom the several tribes, especially the tribe of Ephraim, might be willing to follow. His death left the people in a state of utter bereavement, but, it seems, it failed even to understand the gravity of the national loss. No such grief took hold of

them as was evinced at the death of their first leader. Yet there remained one ideal which Joshua bequeathed to the people, the prospect and the expectation that at some future time the entire land would become their undivided property. Hopes, to which a people clings persistently, carry within themselves the chances of fulfilment. Severe trials continued, however, to await them before the ideal of an undivided possession of Canaan could be fully realised.

CHAPTER III.
NEIGHBOURING NATIONS

The Phœnicians, Aramæans, Philistines, Idumæans – Their Customs and Mythology – The Moabites and Ammonites – Intercourse of the Israelites with their Neighbours and Adoption of their Manners – Disintegration of the Tribes – Consequent Weakness – Temporary Deliverers.

The sons of Israel, who had been severely tried in Egypt, seemed destined to undergo trials still more severe. Their new scene of activity was surrounded by various nations, and they could have escaped the influences of their surroundings only by either destroying the homes of the bordering populations, or by being proof against the strongest temptations. The neighbouring Phœnicians, Canaanites, Aramæans, Philistines, Idumæans, Moabites, Ammonites, Amalekites, Arabs and half-castes of Arabs, had their own peculiar customs, manners, and religious observances. The tribes came into more or less close contact with their neighbours, and were soon dominated by the same law of attraction and assimilation that is felt even in more cultured spheres. Hence arose the strange phenomenon, during a prolonged period of Israel's history, of a nation's forfeiting every species of self-dependence, regaining it, again relapsing, and thus

passing from change to change.

But these changes eventually gave shape and tenacity to the character of the people. In the interim, however, Israel became intimately united with the Phœnicians; the northern tribes of Asher, Zebulon and Issachar stood in especially close connection with them. This people had already, particularly in Sidon, attained a high degree of culture, when the Israelites entered Canaan. But, from an ethical and a religious point of view, they were as backward as the most uncultured races of men, with the exception, perhaps, of the Egyptians, than whom they were on a higher level.

The Canaanites worshipped the male and female divinities, Baal and Astarte, who, in some cities, were designated by the names of Adonis and Baaltis. Baal was intended to be a personification of the sun, and Astarte of the moon; they did not, however, figure as luminous beings within the celestial space, but as the procreative powers of nature. The Canaanites also worshipped the then known seven planets termed *Cabiri*, *i. e.* the Mighty; as an eighth god they adored Ashmun, the restorer of health, who was depicted as a serpent. The rites, by which men and women dedicated themselves to the male and female deities, were of a loathsome description. The degraded priestesses of the temple were termed "consecrated women" (*Kedeshoth*).

In honour of Astarte, half-frantic youths and men mutilated themselves, and wore female attire. They then wandered about as beggars, collecting aid for their sanctuary, or rather for

their priests, and were called "holy men" (*Kedeshim*). Such proceedings formed a main part of the religious discipline among the Phœnicians, and their abominations were constantly displayed before the Israelites.

The southern tribes, on the other hand, maintained friendly relations with the Philistines. This people had emigrated from Caphtor (Cydonia), a town on the island of Crete, and their territory had three ports – Gaza in the south, Ashdod (Azotus) in the north, and Ascalon, midway between these two towns. In the interior, the Philistines occupied the cities of Gath and Ekron. This group of five cities (Pentapolis) formed a small district, extending as far as the Egyptian frontier, and its population acquired much power and influence. On this account, the Greeks and the Egyptians designated the entire country by the name of Palestine (*i. e.*, land of the Philistines). Most probably the Philistines were seafarers and merchants like the Phœnicians. With these occupations, however, they combined the lust of conquest, whilst the Phœnicians, on the contrary, confined themselves to peaceful pursuits.

The Philistines, having a narrow seaboard, were induced to seek territorial extension on the eastern side. The religious system of this people was essentially similar to that of the other Canaanites, and agreed, in fact, with that of the different nations of antiquity. They reverenced the procreative power of nature under the name of Dagon. This deity was depicted in a form half human, half piscine.

The Philistines had numerous soothsayers, wizards, and cloud-seers (*Meonenim*), who predicted future events from various auguries.

With the Idumæans, the Israelites had less intercourse. The territory of the former extended from Mount Seir to the Gulf of the Red Sea. It is thought that at a remote time they navigated this sea, and traded with Arabia. Their mountains contained metals, including gold. The Idumæans had the reputation of being sagacious and practical. In early ages they were governed by kings, who apparently were elective. On the north side of the Idumæans, to the east of the Dead Sea, the Moabites and the Ammonites were neighbours of the tribes of Reuben and Gad. Their lascivious idolatry was also dedicated to a Baal on Mount Peor. Among the Ammonites, Baal was called Milcom or Malcom. Besides this deity, the god Chemosh was worshipped by these two nations. Amidst such surroundings, the Israelites could not well preserve their own political independence, and much less their spiritual peculiarity; nor could they keep midway between isolation and social intercourse among populations akin to them in language and descent.

From the first, the Israelites had as many antagonists as neighbours. These, it is true, had no conception that Israel's doctrines tended to effect the destruction of their gods, altars, and sacred groves – the abolition, in fact, of senseless idolatry. Nor were they able to discriminate between their own gross materialism and the lofty, hidden aims of the invading Israelites.

The old inhabitants simply abhorred the new-comers, who had entered with drawn swords to deprive them of their territories. In dealing with overt or secret enemies, the Israelites had only the choice between resorting to exterminating warfare or making amicable concessions. Warfare on a large scale was not even practicable; since Joshua's death, they had no accredited leader, and no plan for concerted action. They certainly did not seem to desire more than to live on neighbourly terms with the adjoining populations. This temporary truce might easily satisfy the Canaanites and Phœnicians, who were mainly concerned in keeping the high-roads open for commercial dealings. The Idumæans, the Philistines, and the Moabites were the only nations who sought to do injury to the Israelites. Every recollection of the troubles endured in the desert made the Israelites more desirous of living in undisturbed tranquillity. For this reason they took but a slight interest in the affairs of their fellow-tribesmen, and they allowed their sons and daughters to intermarry with non-Israelites. These alliances were most frequent among the border tribes, who found a strong element of security in this intimate union with their neighbours, the more so as in the early days of their history such intermarriages were not yet placed under the ban of interdiction. The tribes in the interior – for instance, those of Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin – were less in favour of intermarriages; least of all did the exclusive Levites approve of a union with non-Israelites. From an intermarriage with the heathen to a participation in their

idolatrous rites there was but one step.

In rural districts the Israelites could easily be led to join the pagan rites, as their memories were still attached to Egyptian superstitions, and they were unable to discriminate between pagan discipline and the divine doctrine of Sinai. By degrees this idolatrous worship gained ground among the majority of the Israelites, who were fascinated by the arts and accomplishments of the Phœnicians.

The Sanctuary at Shiloh, where the sons of Aaron, together with the Levites, conducted the sacerdotal rites, was not situated in a sufficiently central position for tribes settled at great distances, nor was it in high favour among those living within easier reach. The neighbouring tribes were displeased with the arrogance and the egotism of the sons of Ephraim. In the early stages of Israel's history, the performance of sacrifices was held to be an essential part of divine worship, and of communion with the Deity. Persons clinging to the observance of sacrificial rites either erected domestic altars, or connected themselves with a temple in their vicinity. This tendency remained unchecked, as there was no chief or leader to inculcate a proper adoration of the Godhead. The Levites, who were intended to be the teachers of the people, had been widely dispersed among the different tribes, and dwelt chiefly in the smaller towns. As they owned no lands, and were generally destitute, they exerted no great influence upon the people.

One poor Levite, a grandson of the great Law-giver, took

priestly service at the shrine of a newly manufactured idol, in order to obtain food and raiment. The further spread of such worship was favoured among the Israelites by the force of sensuality, by habit, and by the love of imitation.

At this time the marvellous occurrences in Egypt and in the desert were still vividly remembered by the several tribes, and formed a link of fellowship among them, notwithstanding the disintegrating effect of idolatry. The ancestral history continued to be handed down from father to son, and nursed the sentiment of a common nationality. An individual or an entire family immersed in affliction would then ask, "Where are all his miracles of which our fathers told us, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?"[10]

The events witnessed on Mount Sinai remained engraven upon the hearts of thoughtful men; nor were warning voices wanting to recall the olden days of divine mercy, and to rebuke the people on account of their idolatry. It appears that the utterances of reproof came from the Levites. They, as custodians of the tables of the covenant, and as servants in the Sanctuary of Shiloh, stood up in days of national misfortune, and on other occasions, to expose the corruption of their people. Sometimes they may have succeeded in making a deep impression, when they described past glories or present sorrows; but the effect of such addresses was only evanescent. The people were always predisposed to fraternise with strangers and to imitate their practices. One

[10] Judges vi. 13.

adverse condition produced another. The selfishness of the men of Ephraim induced their brother tribes to care only for self-preservation. The chances of uniting the Israelites under one commander were neglected. This again drove the divided tribes to confederacies with the pagans, and they became more closely united with them through the ties of family and of superstitious worship; hence came internal disunion and national degeneracy. The indigenous population of Palestine no sooner discovered the influence they were able to exercise, than they began to treat the Israelites as intruders, who should be humbled, if not crushed altogether.

Sorrowful days befell the Israelites after Joshua had closed his eyes. One tribe after another was reduced to servitude. At length, when the sufferings of the people became unendurable, public-spirited men came to the rescue, and performed deeds of remarkable valour. These heroic deliverers were commonly known as "judges" (*Shofetim*). In an emergency they would lead one tribe, or several tribes to battle; but they were incapable of uniting the entire people of Israel, or of keeping the collected tribes under permanent control. It was altogether beyond the ability of these deliverers to bring order into this national disorganisation, or to abolish the abuse of idolatry, and enforce a strict observance of religion. They, in fact, shared the failings of their age, and had only a faint comprehension of the Sinaitic doctrines.

CHAPTER IV.
THE JUDGES

Animosity of the Idumæans – Othniel, a Deliverer – Eglon, King of Moab – The Canaanite King, Jabin – Sisera, his General – The Prophetess and Poetess Deborah – Barak – Victory near Tabor – Early Hebrew Poetry – Sufferings through Nomads – The Hero Gideon (Jerubbaal) – Victory in the Plain of Jezreel – Commencement of Prosperity – Abimelech – Feud with the Shechemites – Jair the Gileadite – Hostilities of the Amalekites and the Philistines – Jephthah – Samson – Zebulunite Judges.

Othniel, the son of Kenaz, a brother, and at the same time the son-in-law of Caleb, was the first warrior-judge. Having collected a brave band of combatants, he advanced against an Idumæan[11] king, and delivered the southern tribes of Judah and Simeon. But his enterprise did not bring the least advantage to the rest of the tribes, and remained almost unknown on the other side of Mount Ephraim. The daring act of the Benjamite, Ehud, the son of Gera, was of greater significance. The Israelites being oppressed by the Moabites, Ehud did not immediately invite his injured companions to make an open attack upon the foe. He first sought to put the hostile king, Eglon, out of the way. One day he

[11] Judges iii. 8 and 10 must be read "king of *Edom*" (אדום) instead of *Aram* (ארם).

presented himself before the king under the pretext that he was the bearer of a gift from his people in token of their submission. Being alone with Eglon, he thrust a double-edged sword into the body of his victim, and fled after having locked the door of the audience chamber. He then summoned the men of Ephraim and Benjamin, and occupied the fords of the Jordan so as to cut off the retreat of the Moabites, who had established themselves on the west side of that river. The Moabites were then totally routed. After this victory, the western tribes of Israel remained for a long time unmolested by the people of Moab.

From another quarter, the Israelites were harassed by the Philistines. Shamgar, the son of Anath, probably of the tribe of Benjamin, chastised the assailants with a weapon extemporised out of an ox-goad. Such sporadic acts of bravery, inadequate to improve the situation of the Israelites, tended only to aggravate their troubles. Jabin, a Canaanite king, joined by some of the neighbouring rulers, seemed bent upon exterminating the Israelites. The high-roads became insecure, and wayfarers had to seek devious byways. At that juncture, Israel was without a leader, or a man of tried courage. A woman, a poetess and prophetess, Deborah, the wife of Lapidoth, then came forward as "a mother in Israel." With her inspiriting speech she animated the timorous people, and changed them from cowards into heroes. Urged by Deborah, Barak, the son of Abinoam, reluctantly undertook to lead the Israelites against the enemy; and, at her bidding, the most valiant men in Israel joined the

national army. Meeting near Mount Tabor, they discomfited the Canaanites, who were commanded by Jabin's general, the hitherto unvanquished Sisera. The power of Jabin was henceforth broken. The commander himself now had to flee for his life, and was slain by Jael, the wife of Heber, a member of the Kenite tribe, which maintained an amicable alliance with the Israelites. In a hymn known as "The Song of Deborah," the praises were sung of this unexpected victory, and of the mercy which God had bestowed upon His people. But these hostilities had not yet reached their end. The restless nations of the neighbourhood continued to inflict heavy blows upon the Israelites, who either were too weak or too disunited to resist such attacks. The roving Midianites periodically ravaged Palestine. At harvest time, they would cross the Jordan with their irresistible hordes, bringing with them their tents, their camels, and their herds. They came "like a flight of locusts," emptied the barns, led off the flocks, the herds and the asses, and then quitted the impoverished and despoiled land. The rich and fertile plain of Jezreel, with the adjacent northern and southern territory, was especially exposed to these incursions. To save their scanty means of subsistence, the owners of the land concealed their provisions in caverns and other hiding places. The insignificant gleanings of wheat had to be threshed in caves intended for wine-presses. In their severe trials the tribes prayed unto the God of their fathers, and assembled at Shiloh, where they were reproved for their sinfulness by "a man of God" – probably a Levite – who

reminded them that their misfortunes were the consequence of their iniquities. Exhortations of this kind seem to have made a deep impression upon at least one man of note. This man was Jerubbaal, also named Gideon, of the tribe of Manasseh. In Ophrah, his native place, in a grove consecrated to Baal or to Astarte, there was an altar, which Jerubbaal destroyed, and he then raised another in honour of the God of Israel. The men of Ophrah, enraged at this sacrilege, were about to stone Jerubbaal, but he gathered round him tribesmen of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, and encamped at Endor to the north of Mount Moreh; there he dismissed the timid and faint-hearted, retaining only a picked force of 300 warriors. In the dead of night he fell upon the sleeping enemy, whom he terrified with the shrill blast of horns, the brandishing of burning torches, and the war-cry, "For God and for Gideon." The unprepared Midianites were utterly routed, and were forced to retreat across the Jordan. During many ages "the day of Midian" was remembered as a triumph which a handful of brave Israelites had accomplished.

Gideon then pursued the two fugitive Midianite kings, Zebah and Zalmunna, on the other side of the Jordan, chastised those Israelites who refused him and his famishing warriors the needful provisions, and inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Midianites, from which they never recovered. The people thus delivered offered to make him their king, an honour which he declined, both for himself and his descendants. It appears that he made Ophrah a centre for pilgrims, to the detriment of the less

conveniently situated sanctuary of Shiloh. This aroused the jealousy of the men of Ephraim, who, after the death of the hero, were involved in violent conflicts with the men of the tribe of Manasseh. Gideon had, after his great victories, carried the rich treasures of the vanquished enemies into the land. The towns of Israel became seats of wealth and luxury. Phœnician caravans could henceforth safely journey through the land. Covenants were concluded with the trafficking strangers, who were placed under the protection of the tutelar Baal-Berith (Baal of the Covenant). The jealous men of Ephraim, who sought to foment dissension among the seventy sons and grandsons of Gideon, found in Abimelech, one of his sons, an unscrupulous ally. This Abimelech, being the son of a woman of Shechem, was elected by the Shechemites to be their leader. His first act was to put his brothers to death. Only Jotham, the youngest of them, escaped. On Mount Gerizim, Jotham pronounced his trenchant parable of the trees, who, in their search of a ruler, met with refusals from the fruitful olive, fig, and vine trees. The prickly bramble (Atad) was the only one who would accept the government; but he warned the trees that if they refused to acknowledge him as ruler, he would send forth a fire to consume all the trees of the Lebanon. The parable found its application in the subsequent hostilities between the men of Shechem and Abimelech, whose cruelty ended in his death at the hand of his own armour-bearer.

After the fall of Abimelech the cis-Jordanic tribes seem to have retrograded, while the men of Manasseh or Gilead, on

the other side of the Jordan, invaded the high land of the Hauran, and took possession of sixty rock-built cities. This district then received the name Havvoth Jair. At that time the Israelites suffered a shock from two sides, which caused further disintegration among them. On the one hand they were attacked by the Ammonites, and on the other, by the Philistines. These attacks distracted them, and rendered them incapable of resistance. The Ammonites appear to have driven the Israelites from their open places, after which they attacked the strongholds. These incursions were successful against the tribes of Ephraim and Judah.

On the opposite side, the Philistines assailed the neighbouring tribes of Israel, and sought to subdue them. They first attacked the tribe of Dan; nor did they spare the tribes of Benjamin and Judah. Even these disasters did not arouse the tribes to make a combined resistance. The trans-Jordanic tribes had turned to the Ephraimites for help; but the latter took no part in the contest, either from selfishness or because the inhabitants of Shechem and other Ephraimite towns had been enfeebled by Abimelech.

In those troubled times there arose two deliverers, who drove off the enemy, and procured temporary relief. Jephthah and Samson, two adventurers, disregarding order and discipline, brought their powers to bear, as much for evil as for good. They both displayed extraordinary activity; but while Jephthah was a warrior who conquered his enemies by warlike measures, Samson, though endowed with great strength and daring, appears

to have overcome his enemies by stratagems and unexpected attacks.

Jephthah, the Gileadite, of the tribe of Manasseh having been banished by his tribesmen, began to lead the life of a highwayman. Daring associates, who thought little of law and order, joined him and appointed him their leader. When attacked by the Ammonites, the men of Gilead remembered their outlawed kinsman, whose bold deeds had come to their knowledge. Some of the elders of his tribe went to him, and urged him to aid them with his troops, and help them to expel the enemy from their territories. Full of proud indignation, Jephthah rebuked them with the words, "You hated me, and drove me from my father's house; wherefore do you come to me now when it goes ill with you?"[12] The Gileadite elders, however, entreated him more urgently, and promised, if he should vanquish the enemy, that they would recognise him as chief in Gilead. Upon this Jephthah determined to return with them. He then sent a formal message to the Ammonites, demanding that they should desist from their incursions into the territory of the Israelites; and when they refused on the pretext of ancient rights, he traversed the districts of Gilead and Manasseh in order to enlist warriors. Jephthah knew well how to gather many brave youths round him, and with these he proceeded against the Ammonites, defeated them, and wrested twenty cities out of their hands. After Jephthah had gained these decisive victories, the Ephraimites

[12] Judges xi. 7.

began a quarrel with him; and as previously, in the case of the heroic Gideon, they were displeased that he had obtained victories without their aid.

This led to a civil war, for Jephthah was not so submissive to the proud Ephraimites as the judge of Ophrah had been. The men of Ephraim crossed the Jordan, near the town of Zaphon, and assumed a warlike attitude; but Jephthah punished them for their presumption, defeated them, and blocked their road of retreat on the banks of the Jordan. Jephthah might have strengthened the tribes beyond the Jordan, but his rule lasted only six years, and he left no son to succeed him. He had only one daughter, and about her a deeply touching story has been preserved, which describes how she became the victim of her father's rash vow.

Whilst the hero of Gilead was subduing the Ammonites by force of arms, Samson was fighting the Philistines, who claimed from the tribe to which Samson belonged the coast-line of Joppa, formerly a part of their possessions. The tribe of Dan smarted under their yoke, but had not the power to effect a change. Samson was not supported in his enterprises by the various tribes, as Jephthah had been. They greatly feared the Philistines; thus Samson was compelled to have recourse to stratagems, and could harm the enemy only by unexpected onslaughts. This mode of warfare was censured in the words, "Dan shall judge his people like one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be as a serpent by the way, and as an adder in the path, that biteth the horse's heels, so

that his rider shall fall backwards."[13]

Samson is supposed to have fought during twenty years for Israel, without, however, improving the state of affairs. Long after his death, the Philistines kept the upper hand over the tribes of Dan and Benjamin, and also over Judah and Ephraim. The rule of the Philistines pressed with increasing weight upon Israel. After Samson there arose successively three other deliverers, two in the tribe of Zebulun, and one in the tribe of Ephraim; but their deeds were of so insignificant a character that they have not been deemed worthy of mention. Of the two hero-judges in Zebulun, only the names and the territory or town in which they were buried have been preserved: Ibzan, of Bethlehem in Zebulun, and Elon, of the town of Ajalon. Also of the Ephraimite judge, Abdon, son of Hillel, the Pirathonite, little is known. It is not even stated against what enemies they waged war; but the fact that the men of Zebulun, who at first lived far away from the sea, afterwards extended their dwelling-places to the shore, leads us to suppose that they supplanted the Canaanite inhabitants.

[13] Genesis xlix. 16, 17.

CHAPTER V.
ELI AND SAMUEL

Importance of the Judges – Public Feeling – Sanctuary in Shiloh – Eli and his Sons – Defeat by the Philistines – Capture of the Ark – Destruction of Shiloh and the Sanctuary – Flight of the Aaronites and Levites – Death of Eli – The Ark in Philistia and in Kirjath Jearim – Prophecy re-awakened – Samuel in Ramah – The Order of Prophets or Singers – Popular revulsion – The tribe of Judah – Repeated attacks of the Philistines – Meeting at Mizpah – Samuel's activity – Nob as a place of worship – Increase in the power of the Philistines and Ammonites – The tribes desire to have a King – Samuel's course of action.

1100?–1067 B. C. E

The twelve or thirteen warrior-judges had been incapable of keeping off the hostile neighbours of Israel for any length of time, much less had they ensured the permanent safety of the country. Even the celebrated Barak, with all his enthusiasm, and Gideon and Jephthah with their warlike courage could succeed only in uniting a few of the tribes, but were unable to secure or restore the union of the entire people. The warrior-judges

were, in fact, of importance only so long as they repulsed the enemy, averted danger, and ensured safety in daily life. They wielded no real power, not even over the tribes to which their prowess brought help and freedom; nor did they possess any rights by which they could enforce obedience. The isolation of each tribe, and the division amongst the several tribes continued, in spite of temporary victories; the actual weakness of the country increased rather than diminished. Samson's "serpent-like attacks and adder's bites" did not deter the Philistines from considering the tribes within reach as their subjects, or more correctly speaking as their slaves, nor did it prevent them from ill-treating the Israelites. Jephthah's victories over the Ammonites did not cause the enemy to relinquish his claims over the eastern tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half of Manasseh.

After the deaths of Jephthah and Samson, the state of affairs became still more dismal. It was, however, precisely this sense of extreme weakness which led to a gradual recovery of strength. Several tribal leaders must have come to the conclusion that this connection with neighbouring populations, and the adoption of idolatrous customs had brought the people to the verge of ruin. The remembrance of the God of their fathers no doubt once more revived in their hearts, and awakened their sleeping consciences to a sense of duty. The men who had been thus aroused called to mind the Sanctuary dedicated to their God at Shiloh, and they repaired thither.

Towards the close of the judges' period, Shiloh once more

became a general rallying point. Here the Levites, the guardians of the Law, still resided, and they used their opportunities to urge, at the meetings held in times of distress, that a denial of Israel's God and the worship of Baal had brought all this misery upon the people. There also lived in Shiloh a priest who was worthy of his ancestors Aaron and Phineas. He was the first Aaronite, after a considerable time, whose name has been recorded for posterity. He was simply called Eli, without the addition of his father's name, and the only title of honour he bore was that of the priest at Shiloh. Eli is described as a venerable old man, on whose lips were words of gentleness, and who was incapable of giving utterance to severe censure, even of his unworthy sons.

This aged man could not fail to exercise a beneficial influence, and win warm adherents to the Law which he represented, if only by the example of his moral worth, and by the holy life he led. When Shiloh was visited, in ever-increasing numbers, by desponding worshippers from the tribes of Ephraim and Benjamin, as also from the tribes on the trans-Jordanic side, some were murmuring at the sufferings imposed upon them, and others complaining of the hard treatment they endured at the hands of the Ammonites; but Eli would exhort them to rely on the ever ready help of the God of Israel, and to give up the worship of strange gods.

By such exhortations he might have brought about a better state of mind among his hearers, if the respect felt for him had been likewise enjoyed by his two sons, Hophni and Phineas.

They, however, did not walk in the ways of their father; and when the people and Eli were overtaken by severe misfortunes, these were supposed to be a punishment of heaven for the sins of Eli's sons, and for the weak indulgence displayed by the High Priest.

The Philistines still held sway over the tribes in their vicinity, and made repeated attacks and raids on Israel's lands. The tribes attacked became so far skilled in warfare that they no longer sought to oppose the enemy in irregular skirmishes, but met them in open battle. The Israelites encamped on the hill Eben-ha-Ezer, and the Philistines in the plain near Aphek. As the latter possessed iron war-chariots they proved superior to the Israelites, of whom four thousand are supposed to have fallen in battle. The Israelite warriors, however, did not take to flight, but kept to their posts.

In accordance with the counsel of the elders, the Ark of the Covenant was brought from Shiloh, it being believed that its presence would ensure victory. Eli's sons were appointed to escort it. Nevertheless, the second battle was even more disastrous than the first. The Israelite troops fled in utter confusion; the Ark of the Covenant was captured by the Philistines, and Hophni and Phineas, who attended it, were killed. The Philistines pursued the fleeing troops, and spread terror in every direction. Breathless with fear, a messenger of evil tidings arrived in Shiloh, and brought the sad news to the anxious people, and to the high priest Eli, who was sitting at the gate.

The news that the Ark of the Covenant had been captured

affected the aged priest even more than that of the death of his sons; he dropped down dead from his seat. It now seemed that all glory had departed from the house of Israel. The victorious Philistines, no longer content to make foraging expeditions through the country, forced their way from west to east until they reached the district of Shiloh. They destroyed that town, together with the Tabernacle, which had been a witness to the blissful days of Moses. A later poet describes this time of trial with a heavy heart.[14]

The strength and courage of the people were entirely overcome by this defeat. Those tribes which until now had been foremost in every encounter were crushed. The tribe of Ephraim suffered – though not undeservedly – most severely by the overthrow of the Sanctuary, which, in Eli's time, had been recognised as a place for popular meetings. Every chance of union, especially amongst the northern tribes, who, however, had not been concerned in the disastrous strife, seemed to be cut off.

The Philistines were impressed with the idea that by capturing the Ark of the Covenant – which they supposed to be the safeguard of the Israelites – and by destroying the Sanctuary, they had vanquished the Israelite people. But they were painfully undeceived. As soon as they had carried off the Ark of the Covenant to the neighbouring town of Ashdod, the country was visited by various plagues. In their terror, the Philistine princes determined to follow the advice of their priests and magicians,

[14] See Psalm lxxviii. 60–64; Jeremiah vii. 12.

and send back the Ark, accompanied by expiatory offerings, after it had been in their possession for seven months. It was accordingly sent over the boundaries, and taken to the town of "Kirjath Jearim" (Forest Town), situated on a hill, where it was guarded by the Levites of the district; but it was so little missed by the people that decades passed before they even remembered their loss. In the eyes of the untutored Israelites, neither the contents nor the great age of the tablets of the Law preserved in the Ark were of great importance. Meanwhile these misfortunes – the destruction and loss of the Sanctuary at Shiloh – had aroused a desire for a better state of things. Those who were not utterly indifferent could perceive that the true cause of the evil lay in the religious and political dissensions. The Levites, who had escaped during the destruction of Shiloh, and had settled in other towns, probably prepared the public mind for a return to the belief in God. Perhaps also the return of the Ark of the Covenant from the land of the Philistines exercised an animating influence, and raised hopes of better days. The longing for the God of Israel became daily more widely diffused, and the want of a steadfast and energetic leader was keenly felt – a leader who would bring the misguided people into the right path, and raise up those who were bowed down with sorrow. And just at the right moment a man appeared who brought about a crisis in Israel's history.

Samuel, the son of Elkanah, was the man who reunited the long-sundered bonds of communal life amongst the Israelites, and thereby averted the threatening decay and internal

corruption. His greatness is illustrated by the circumstance that he is placed second to Moses not only in chronological sequence, but also in prophetic importance.[15]

Samuel was an elevated character. He displayed the same unbending conscientiousness towards himself as towards others. Living amidst the people, coming into daily contact with them, he surpassed the men of his time in love of God, purity of heart, and unselfishness. In addition to these qualities he was distinguished by the gift of prophecy. His spiritual eye pierced the clouds which hid the future. He proclaimed his prophetic visions, and they came to pass. Samuel was descended from one of the most distinguished Levitical families, from the same Korah who had incited the rebellion against Moses in days of old. Samuel inherited intensity of feeling from his mother Hannah, whose fervent though inaudible prayer has formed a model for all ages. At a tender age his mother secured a place for him as one of the attendant Levites in the Sanctuary at Shiloh. He had daily to open its gates; he took part in the sacrificial service, and he passed his nights within the precincts of the tabernacle.

At an early age the gift of prophecy, unknown to himself, was awakened within him. Whilst wrapped in deep sleep he heard himself called from the inner recess of the Sanctuary where the Ark of the Covenant reposed. This was Samuel's first vision, and happened previous to the defeat of the Israelites by the Philistines, the capture of the Ark of the Covenant, the death

[15] Jeremiah xv. 1; Psalms xcix. 6.

of Eli and his two sons, and the destruction of the Sanctuary. Samuel's services ceased with the last-named event, and he returned to his father's house at Ramah in deep affliction.

The misfortunes which had befallen his people, and especially the ruin of Shiloh made an overpowering impression on Samuel, whose youthful mind was filled with the highest aspirations. In the Levitical circle, in which he had grown up, it was a fixed belief that the trials undergone by the people resulted from their denial of the God of Israel. To have no Sanctuary was considered equivalent to being without God.

The sacred writings enshrined in the Ark enjoined righteousness, justice, mercy, and the equality of all Israelites without distinction of class, as commanded by God; but little or nothing was said of sacrifices. Samuel, who was nearer by many centuries to the origin of the Israelitish nation than were the later prophets, was, like them, convinced of the fact that God had not ordained the deliverance of His people solely in order that they might sacrifice to Him only, but that they might carry His laws into effect. The contents of these records of the Law represented the will of God which the Israelites were to follow with implicit obedience. This Law was a living force in Samuel's heart, and he grew to be the medium by which it became indelibly impressed on the people; to give effect to its teaching was the task of his life.

The fact of having no Sanctuary was, as has been shown, deemed equivalent to being abandoned by God. Gradually, however, Samuel seems to have taken up a different train

of thought —*No Sanctuary, no burnt-offerings*. "Is sacrifice absolutely necessary for a pure worship of God, and for a holy life in His ways?" This thought became matured within him; and later, on a fitting occasion, he preached on this theme thus: The sacrifices are of little importance; the fat of rams cannot win God's approbation; in what, then, should the service of God consist? "In strict obedience to all that He has commanded." During his sojourn in Shiloh, Samuel had not only made himself acquainted with the contents of the stone tablets which were kept in the Ark of the Sanctuary, but he became versed also in the book of the Law emanating from Moses, and he was entirely filled with their spirit. The living word was the means which he employed to attain his end, for he was endowed with impressive eloquence. From time to time he had prophetic dreams and visions. These revealed to him that his convictions were not the mere suggestions of his own mind or heart, but were sanctioned or inspired by a higher Being. The prophetic inspirations consisted of teachings or commands; they were combined with an unveiling of the near future, and bore the character of revelations. Animated by his prophetic visions, Samuel communicated them to his hearers, probably at his native place, Ramah, where his reputation had preceded him. These communications, which foreshadowed extraordinary events beyond the limits of common foresight, he seems to have expressed in orations and in rhythmic utterances, abounding in poetic metaphors and similes.

Whilst in Shiloh, he had been repeatedly vouchsafed prophetic visions, and these had been confirmed. It soon went forth in the environs of Ramah, and in ever widening circles that a prophet had arisen in Israel, and that the spirit of God, which had rested on Moses and had led him to deliver the children of Israel from Egypt, had now descended on the son of Elkanah. In the interval, during a long succession of centuries, no prophet, in the full sense of the word, had arisen. The fact that God had raised up a second Moses encouraged the hope that better times were at hand. Samuel's first endeavour was to reclaim the nation from the idolatrous worship of Baal and Astarte, and from a superstitious belief in the oracular powers of the Teraphim.

The desire of a portion of the people to abandon their evil ways materially assisted Samuel in his efforts. His irresistible eloquence was concentrated in the one theme that the gods of the heathen were nonentities who could neither help nor save. He declared that it was folly and sinful to consult the lying oracles and the jugglery of the soothsayers, and that God would never desert the nation whom He had chosen. These words found a powerful response in the hearts of those who heard them. Samuel did not wait for the people to come to him in order that he might address them, but he went forth to them. He travelled through the whole land, appointed public meetings, and announced to the multitudes the lessons revealed to him by the spirit of God; and the people, stirred by his prophetic utterances, and roused from the lethargy into which they had been plunged ever since their

misfortunes had commenced, now began to revive. The right man had come, whose words could be followed in days of care and trouble. The eyes of the nation naturally turned towards him.

Had Samuel stood alone, he would scarcely have been enabled to effect so desirable a transformation. But he had a number of assistants on whom he could rely. The Levites, whose home was in Shiloh, had fled when the town and the Sanctuary were destroyed. They had been accustomed to surround the altar and to serve in the Sanctuary. They knew no other occupation. What were they to do now in their dispersion? Another place of worship had not yet been founded to which they might have turned. Several Levites therefore joined Samuel. His greatness had impressed them when he lived in Shiloh, and he now employed them to execute his plans. Gradually their numbers increased until they formed a band of associates (*Chebel*), or Levitical guild (*Kehillah*). These disciples of prophecy, headed by Samuel, contributed materially to the change of views and manners among the people.

Another circumstance served at that time to rouse the nation from its apathy. During the entire period of the Judges' rule, the men of Judah had not taken the slightest share in public events. Dwelling far away in their pasture-fields and deserts, they seemed to have no part in the life of the other tribes. They called themselves by the name of Jacob. Utterly secluded, they led a separate existence, untouched by the sorrows and joys, the battles and conquests, of the tribes living on both sides of the Jordan.

The Jebusites, who possessed the district between the mountains of Ephraim and Judah, formed a barrier between these tribes and the Israelites dwelling in the north.

It was only the repeated incursions of the Philistines on Israel's territory which seem to have aroused the tribe of Judah, and forced it out of its retirement. It was probably to strengthen themselves against the attacks of their enemy, who sought to lay the yoke of serfdom on their necks, that the men of Judah stretched out a helping hand to the neighbouring tribes. Whatever circumstance may have influenced them, it is certain that in Samuel's days, the tribe of Judah with its dependency, the tribe of Simeon, took part in the common cause. Jacob and Israel, divided during all the centuries since they first entered Canaan, were now at length united. It was, without doubt, Samuel who brought about this union.

Judah's or Jacob's entry into history marks the accession of a new, vigorous and rejuvenating element. The tribe of Judah had found but few towns, and by no means a developed town life in the territories it had acquired. The only city worthy of note was Hebron; the other places were villages for cattle-breeders. Both the refinement and the depravity resulting from the influence of the Philistines had remained unknown to the tribes of Judah and Simeon. The worship of Baal and Astarte, with its coarse and sensual rites, had not established itself among them. They remained, for the most part, what they had been on their entry into the land – simple shepherds, loving peace and

upholding their liberty, without any desire for warlike fame or for making new conquests. The simple customs of patriarchal life seem to have endured longer in Judah than elsewhere. This accession of strength and religious activity could certainly not have been rendered possible without Samuel's commanding and energetic intervention. The son of Elkanah, though no warrior, was looked upon as a firm supporter on whom both houses could lean. For many years Samuel, assisted by the prophetic order of Levites, pursued his active course with zeal and energy; the people regarded him as a leader, and he, in fact, by his inspired zeal, led them on to conquest. A victory gained near Eben-ha-Ezer, where, many years before, the Philistines had overcome the Israelite troops and had carried off much booty, now produced a mighty effect: it revived the courage of the Israelites and humbled the Philistines.

During the next decade the people once more enjoyed the comforts of peace, and Samuel took measures that prosperity should not efface the good results of previous misfortunes. It was his earnest endeavour to consolidate the union between the tribes, which was the true foundation of their strength. Year after year he called together the elders of the people, explained to them their duties, and reminded them of the evil days which had befallen the Israelites through their godlessness, their intermarriage with strange nations, and their idolatrous excesses; he also warned them against a return to these errors. Such assemblies Samuel held by turns in the three towns which

came into notice after the destruction of Shiloh – namely, in Bethel, in Gilgal, and in Mizpah where prayers for victory over the Philistines had been offered up in the former campaign. At Ramah, the place of his residence, frequent meetings of the various tribes took place; and here the elders sought his advice in all important matters. At divine services Samuel not only caused sacrifices to be offered up, but with the aid of the Levites he introduced the use of stringed instruments in order to arouse the devout feelings of the people.

Through him a new element was introduced into the divine service of the Israelites – viz., songs of praise. Samuel, the ancestor of the celebrated psalmists, the sons of Korah, was the first who composed songs of praise for divine service. His grandson, Heman, was considered the chief psalmist and musician, and he ranked in fame with Asaph and Jeduthun, who flourished in the subsequent generation. The charms of poetry and music were by Samuel brought to bear upon the religious service, and they left a lasting and ennobling impression on the minds of the people. The employment of choirs of Levites and singers rendered the sacrificial rite of minor importance.

The priests, the sons of Aaron, took up a less respected position, and were, to a certain extent, neglected by Samuel. Achitub, a grandson of Eli, had saved himself after the destruction of Shiloh by taking refuge in the small town of Nob, near Jerusalem. He had carried away with him the high priest's garments; and various members of the house of Aaron

having assembled there, Nob became a sacerdotal town. Here, it seems, Achitub had erected an altar, and also a tabernacle on the model of the one which had been destroyed in Shiloh. He even appears to have made an Ark of the Covenant in Nob, instead of the one carried off by the Philistines. The Israelites apparently disregarded the fact that the new ark was wanting in the essential contents, – the stone tablets of the Covenant.

Notwithstanding the eventful changes effected by Samuel through his great gifts and untiring energy, the condition of the people was anything but satisfactory. He had given special attention to the central and southern districts, and had appointed his two sons, Joel and Abijah, to act as judges – the one in Beersheba, the other in Bethel – but the north was left unrepresented.

With increasing years Samuel could not display the same activity as in his youth and riper manhood. His sons were disliked, being accused of misusing their power and of accepting bribes. There were no men of energy amongst Samuel's followers, and thus the ties which held the people together gradually slackened. In addition it must be noted that just at this period the country of Israel's greatest enemies was transformed into a kingdom. The Philistines had either of their own free will chosen a king, or had been forced to do so by one of the rulers of their five cities. The town of Gath became the capital. The ambition of the Philistine king now turned in the direction of fresh conquests; he seems to have made successful attacks

on the Phœnicians, and to have laid waste the town of Sidon. In consequence of their defeat the Sidonians took refuge in their ships, and on a rock which projected far out into the sea they built a town which they called Zor (Tyre), the city of the rock. Meanwhile the Philistines became possessors of the entire territory between Gaza and Sidon, and it seemed easy to them, with their increased power, to subjugate Israel; hence a fierce warfare ensued between them and the Israelites. The Ammonites also, who had been humiliated by Jephthah, now rose again under their warlike king Nahash, and began to invade the possessions of the tribe of Gad and the half of Manasseh. Powerless to defend themselves, these tribes sent messengers to Samuel, entreating him to supply efficient aid. They at the same time expressed a wish which, though entertained by the entire people, was deeply painful to the prophet. They demanded that a king should be placed at the head of the Israelite community, who could compel the various tribes to unite in joint action, and might lead them to battle and to victory. There was now to be a king in Israel. Samuel was amazed when he heard these demands. A whole people was to be dependent on the whims or the will of a single individual! Equality of all members of the nation before God and the law, the entire independence of each family group under its patriarchal head, had become so identified with their mode of life, that any change in their condition seemed incomprehensible and fraught with the heaviest misfortunes.

It was now necessary to give a new direction to the destinies

of the people. Samuel's clear intellect disapproved of the radical change; yet his inherent prophetic gift compelled him to accede. The kingdom of Israel was brought forth in pain: it was not the offspring of affection. Therefore it never could find a natural place in the system of Israel's organisation, but was at all times considered by more discerning minds as a foreign element.

CHAPTER VI.
THE APOGEE

Establishment of a Kingdom – Saul – His Position and Character – His secret Election at Mizpah – Humiliating Condition of the Nation under the Philistines – Declaration of War – Assemblage in Gilgal – Battle of Michmash – Defeat of the Philistines – Severity of Saul – Victory over the Ammonites – Saul's Election as King confirmed – His Court and Attendants – His Officers and Standing Army – Victory over the Amalekites – Disputes between Saul and Samuel – Saul's Attacks on the neighbouring People – War with the Gibeonites – Place of Worship in Gibeon – War against the Philistines in the Valley of Tamarinths – Goliath and David – Meeting of Saul and David – Saul's Jealousy turns into Madness – The Persecution of David – Saul's last Battle against the Philistines – Defeat and Death.

1067–1055 B. C. E

The king who was placed at the head of the people through their own eager insistence, and with the unwilling consent of the prophet proved, more effectually than any objections could do, how little a monarchical constitution was fitted to realise the expectations founded on it; for the king, until his accession

a simple and excellent man, with no thoughts of ambition or arbitrary power, did not shrink from cruelty and inhumanity in order to assert his dignity.

By the aid of prophetic guidance, care was taken that he should not resemble the repulsive prototype drawn by Samuel, or become so independent as to place himself above all laws and rules, but that he should ever remain mindful of his lowly origin. Samuel did not select a king from the haughty tribe of Ephraim, lest he should act like Abimelech, who, in his presumption and ambition, had killed his own brothers, and laid waste whole districts; but the king was chosen from the smallest of the tribes, the tribe of Benjamin. His family, that of Matri, was one of the lowliest in Benjamin. His father, Kish, was not in any way distinguished; he was a simple countryman; and nothing could be said in his praise, except that he was an upright man. Saul was chosen because he was content to work at his plough, and watch the increase of his father's flocks. He had no thought beyond the village in which he was born, and barely an idea that there were human beings to whom the possession of power was an attraction. In his shyness he displayed the ways of a true peasant; these circumstances, and the personal qualities of Saul seemed to be a security against any presumption or pride on the part of the first king of Israel.

The circumstances attending the choice of a king left a deep and pleasing impression. "See," said Samuel, "this is the man whom God has chosen as king; his like is not to be found in

all Israel." Most of the bystanders, carried away by the solemn proceeding and by Saul's appearance, shouted, "Long live the king!" Samuel then anointed the newly elected king with holy oil, by which he was believed to be rendered inviolable. The elders rejoiced that their heartfelt wish of having a king to rule over them was at length realised. They looked forward to happy days. This choice of a king was an important epoch in the history of the Jewish people; it determined their entire future. Yet during the joyful and solemn proceedings, discord had already arisen. Some discontented people, probably Ephraimites, who had hoped to have a king chosen from their own ranks, loudly expressed their disappointment. "How can this man help us!" Whilst all the other elders, according to universal custom, brought the king gifts of homage, and a few of the most courageous followed him to Gibeah to assist him against the enemies of Israel, the malcontents kept apart and refused their allegiance.

Saul's courage, after his elevation to the throne, must have increased greatly, or he must have felt himself guided by God after his unexpected elevation. He now boldly confronted the task of opposing his mighty enemies, and of settling the disorganised affairs of the commonwealth. The position of the people at his accession was very sad and humiliating, almost worse than in the days of the Judges. Their arms, such as bows and arrows, swords, etc., had been carried off by the victorious Philistines, who left no smith in the land to make new weapons. The newly elected king lacked a sword, – that symbol of royalty among all

nations and at all times. His election was probably conducted so secretly that the Philistines knew nothing of it. The Philistine tax-gatherers exhausted the strength of the country, and at the same time repressed every attempt at revolt. So greatly were the Israelites humbled that some of them had to accompany the Philistines on expeditions against their own brethren. Nought but a miraculous event could have saved them, and such an event was brought about by Saul with his son and kinsmen.

Saul's eldest son, Jonathan, was perhaps worthier of the kingly dignity than his father. Modest and unselfish perhaps to a greater extent even than his father, courageous in the very face of death, he combined with these qualities an almost excessive kindliness and gentleness, – a feature which endeared him to all, but which would have been a serious failing in a ruler who had to display a certain amount of firmness and severity. Jonathan was, besides, endowed with an enthusiastic nature which appealed to every heart. He was truthful, and an enemy to all deceit; he uttered his opinions freely, at the risk of displeasing, or of losing his position and even his life, all of which qualities made him a favourite with the people. Abner, the cousin of Saul, was of an entirely different disposition; he was a warrior of unbending firmness, and possessed a considerable degree of artfulness. To the inexperienced king and the people he, too, rendered important service in their distress. Surrounded by these and other faithful adherents of his family, and by the tribe of Benjamin in general, who were proud to gain importance through

him, Saul set forth on the unequal contest with the Philistines. Jonathan commenced hostilities. In the town of Geba, or Gibeah of Benjamin, lived the Philistine tax-gatherers, surrounded by a host of warriors. Jonathan attacked this post and killed the garrison. This was the first declaration of war; it was made at Saul's command and with his full approval. The king now ordered that the trumpet-blast, announcing that the war with the Philistines had commenced, should sound throughout the land of Benjamin. Many heard the news with joy, others with sadness and dismay.

All who had courage assembled in order to stand by their king, determined to aid him in casting off the disgrace of Israel, or to perish in the attempt. Those who were cowards escaped to the opposite side of the Jordan, or hid in caverns, in clefts of the rocks, or in subterranean passages. A feeling of intense anxiety filled all minds as to the result of the contest. The meeting-place of the Israelites was then in Gilgal, the town most remote from the land of the Philistines. This place of meeting had been appointed by the prophet Samuel. He had directed Saul to repair thither, and stay there seven days to await his arrival and further instructions. Gilgal probably contained the choir of musicians and prophets, whose psalms and songs were to inspire the Israelite warriors with martial courage and with trust in the deliverance of their fatherland. Meanwhile the Philistines prepared themselves for a war of extermination against the Israelites. The news of Jonathan's attack on their

outposts had exasperated them; they were, however, more surprised than terrified. How could the cowardly, weaponless, unarmed Israelites dare to attack the Philistines, their masters? A numerous band of warriors, supported by cavalry, passed through the valleys of the southern mountain-range of Ephraim, and through the entire breadth of the land as far as Michmash; from this camping-place they spread their marauding bands in three directions, the most humiliating circumstance being that many Israelites were compelled to assist the Philistines in subduing their own tribesmen.

This was a critical time for the people of Israel. Whilst the Philistines were gradually pushing forward to Michmash, Saul, surrounded by the brave men of his tribe, awaited in Gilgal the prophet who was to give the warriors his inspired directions, and thus endow them with courage. But day after day passed and Samuel did not appear. Every hour spent in idleness seemed to destroy the chance of a successful issue. Saul feared that the enemy would descend from the mountains into the valley, attack Gilgal, and destroy or put to flight the small body of Israelites. Not a few of his soldiers had already deserted, looking on Samuel's absence as an inauspicious omen. Saul, becoming impatient, determined on the seventh day to attack the enemy on his own responsibility. According to ancient practice, he made a sacrifice in order to propitiate the Deity, and to ensure his success in the battle. Just as he was preparing the burnt-offering, Samuel suddenly appeared, and upbraided the king severely for being

carried away by impatience. He resented this error with great austerity, departed from Gilgal, and left Saul to his own resources – a hard blow for him, as he had reckoned confidently on the prophet's assistance at this dangerous juncture. After Samuel had departed from Gilgal, Saul found it useless to remain there. He therefore repaired with the remnant of his troops to Gibeah. On reviewing his soldiers here, he found them to amount to not more than six hundred. It is not surprising that Saul and Jonathan became dispirited at the sight of this slight force, which was unarmed and had to fight the well-appointed armies of the enemy. Saul and Jonathan alone possessed swords. It was indeed a sad honey-moon for the young kingdom. The most painful blow for Saul was that, through Samuel's absence, he was deprived of the means by which the people might ascertain the will of God.

Jonathan, however, made a good beginning at Gibeah, where Saul and his troops lay encamped, at scarce an hour's distance from Michmash, the site of the Philistine camp. Between the two armies lay a valley, but the road which led from one place to the other was impracticable, the valley being bordered by steep, almost perpendicular walls of rocks and precipices, which closed it up on the east till it became a mere gorge of about ten feet in width. On the west side, where the valley formed a wide pass, the Philistines had stationed their outposts. Thus the Philistines and Israelites could only come to an encounter in the narrow path. At last Jonathan determined to ascend the steepest part of the pass, and, accompanied by his sword-bearer,

he climbed, on hands and feet, up the steep sharp points of the rock on the side of Michmash. One false step would have precipitated him into the depth, but happily he and his man arrived safely at the highest point. When the Philistines beheld them, they were not a little surprised that, on this rocky road, a path had been found to their camp. Deceived by this ruse, and fearing that other Israelites would follow, they called out scornfully, "Look at the Hebrews, they are crawling out of their hiding-places; come higher up, we wish to become better acquainted with you."[16] It had been previously agreed between Jonathan and his sword-bearer that, should they receive such a challenge, they would press on and bravely commence the attack. The Philistines who first beheld the daring climbers, soon left off scoffing, for twenty men were killed at the first attack with pieces of rock and sling-stones. The Benjamites were very skilful in the use of the sling, and Jonathan and his sword-bearer advanced further, and continued hurling masses of rock at the Philistines. Terror-stricken by this sudden attack from a side where approach had seemed impossible, they could only imagine themselves attacked by supernatural beings, and, seized with fear, they fought each other, or broke the ranks in the wildest confusion. Saul, who was watching from a high eminence, no sooner perceived the enemy beginning to flee than he hurried to the scene of action, followed by his six hundred warriors, and completed the defeat of the Philistines. Those Israelites who

[16] I Samuel xiv. 12.

had until then been compelled by the Philistines to fight against their own brethren turned their arms against their oppressors. Others who had hidden themselves in the clefts and grottoes of the mountains of Ephraim took courage, when they witnessed the flight of the Philistines, and swelled the ranks of the aggressors. Saul's troops, thus increased, numbered ten thousand. In every town of Mount Ephraim through which the Philistines passed in their flight, they were attacked by the inhabitants, and cut down one by one. Though tired and exhausted, Saul's troops pursued the retreating foe for eight hours.

An occurrence of apparently slight consequence, but which proved to be of great importance, put a stop to further pursuit. Saul had impressed on his soldiers that the destruction of their enemy was not to be interrupted even for food or refreshment, and he pronounced a curse on him who should take the slightest nourishment. Jonathan, who was always foremost, had heard nothing of this curse. Exhausted by the long fight and pursuit he could not restrain himself, and tasted wild honey into which he had dipped his staff. When his attention was drawn to his father's peremptory command, he openly avowed his act. Saul, however, made a serious matter of it, and determined to condemn Jonathan to death. But the people protested vehemently. "What!" cried the warriors, "shall Jonathan, to whom the people owes its great victory, be killed? No, not a hair of his head shall be touched."[17] The people offered a sin-offering for Jonathan,

[17] I Samuel xiv. 45.

and thus released him from death. Through this episode, the pursuit of the Philistines to the west of Ajalon was suspended. Great was the joy of the Israelites at the victory they had so unexpectedly obtained. The battle of Michmash fully restored their reputation. They also had regained their weapons, and felt strong enough to fight under a king whose firmness of resolve they had experienced. But Saul returned humbly and modestly to his dwelling place in Gibeah, and ploughed, as heretofore, his father's fields. He was not yet blinded by his new dignity. Meanwhile the hostilities of the Ammonites against the tribes on the other side of the Jordan had increased. Nahash, king of the Ammonites, besieged the fortress of Jabesh-Gilead. The inhabitants were unable to hold out for long, and negotiated with Nahash about a capitulation. He offered a hard, inhuman condition to the Gileadites of Jabesh. As a disgrace to Israel, all men should consent to lose their right eye. What were the Gileadites to do? They treated for a delay of seven days in order to send messages to their fellow-tribesmen. When Saul was one day returning home with his yoke of bullocks from the field, he met the inhabitants of Gibeah in great excitement and bathed in tears. Astonished at this, he asked the cause of their grief, and the messengers from Jabesh-Gilead related what would befall their town if speedy assistance were not at hand. Incensed at the disgraceful condition imposed by the king of the Ammonites, Saul immediately determined to bring aid to the Gileadites of Jabesh. For the first time he exercised his royal prerogative by

summoning all Israel to take part in the campaign against the Ammonites.

Samuel supported this summons by declaring that he too would join in the expedition. By Saul's command all the warriors assembled at the meeting-place. The anarchy of the era of the Judges was now at an end, and a stern will ruled. A large body of Israelites crossed the Jordan; the Ammonites, attacked on the south, north, and west, fled in all directions, and no two of them remained together. The people of Jabesh were saved, and ever after displayed the deepest gratitude to Saul and his house for the help so quickly and energetically rendered to them. On his recrossing the Jordan, after his second victory over the enemy, Saul was greeted with tumultuous joy. Samuel, who was a witness to these expressions of delight, thought it wise to remind the king and his people that their triumph should not turn into pride, and that they should not consider the kingly dignity as an end, but only as a means. He therefore summoned a large gathering of the Israelites, and determined to call the king's and the people's attention to their duties. Samuel again anointed Saul as king; the people renewed their homage, and made joyful offerings.

In the midst of these rejoicings Samuel delivered an address, which bears testimony to the powers of his mind and to his greatness as a prophet.

Saul's two important victories, and the assemblage at Gilgal, where homage had been rendered to him by nearly all the tribes, confirmed his power, and the royal dominion was placed on a

permanent basis. Although Samuel praised and extolled the days of the Judges, yet the people felt that it could better appreciate a king than a hero-judge. The nation willingly exchanged its republican liberty for the prize of unity and the power obtained thereby. The kingly estate led to various changes. Saul had to employ responsible men for the execution of his commands; he required a number of officers and servants. Officers of war were appointed to rule over hundreds and thousands respectively, and councillors, who were admitted to the king's table. A special band of men served as runners (*razim*), an armed force who became the obedient instruments of the king's will. These and their chief formed the king's court. Saul's leader of the guard was named Doag, an Idumæan by birth. Owing to the presence of the standing army and attendants, Gibeah, till then only a small town, now became the capital. Towards Samuel, Saul at first showed submission. When the prophet, in the name of God, commanded him to declare war to the death with the Amalekites, Saul immediately made preparations, and summoned his warriors. The Amalekites were the implacable and hereditary enemies of the Israelites, and had displayed the greatest cruelty towards them during their wanderings in the desert, and on their entry into the Holy Land. These enemies often joined other nations in order to crush the Israelites. The Amalekite king Agag appears to have caused great trouble to the tribe of Judah in the days of Saul.

It was, however, no light task to undertake hostilities against the Amalekites. Agag was considered a great hero, and inspired

all around him with fear; but although the Amalekites were renowned for their courage and power, Saul did not hesitate to prepare for this hazardous campaign. He appears to have carried on the strife with skill and courage, and to have drawn the enemy into an ambush, by which he was enabled to obtain a complete victory. He took the capital (possibly Kadesh), killed the men, women and children, and captured the dreaded king Agag. Only a few of the people who escaped with their lives took refuge in the great neighbouring desert which leads to Egypt. The Israelite warriors carried off rich booty, including flocks of sheep, herds of cattle, and camels. According to Samuel's command, this spoil was to be destroyed, so that every trace of the memory of Amalek might be lost. The soldiers, however, did not wish this rich spoil to be given up to destruction. Saul, ordinarily so rigid in his discipline, permitted the preservation of the booty, and thus transgressed the prophet's directions. Saul was very proud of his victory over the dreaded Amalekites, and he caused the king Agag to be led in chains as a living sign of triumph. His success in battle intoxicated him, and caused him to forget his former humility. On his return he erected a monument of his victory in the oasis of Carmel. Meanwhile, Samuel, in a prophetic vision, had learned that the king had not fulfilled the instructions given him, and was therefore to be punished.

Samuel had to announce this to the victorious king; but the task was difficult, and he struggled and prayed a whole night. At last he determined to proceed to meet Saul. But hearing on the

way that Saul was so dominated by pride as to cause a monument to be raised, he turned back and repaired to Gilgal. When Saul heard of this journey, he followed him thither. The elders of Benjamin and the neighbouring tribes also proceeded to Gilgal to salute the victorious king. Here they were witnesses to a strife which foreboded evil times.

As though nothing had occurred, the king met the prophet with these words, "I have fulfilled God's commands." On which Samuel sternly replied to him, "What is the meaning of the bleating of the sheep which I hear?" "It was the people," answered Saul, "who spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, in order to sacrifice them on the altar at Gilgal." At these words the prophet Samuel could no longer repress his anger, and he replied in winged words: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying His voice? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken, than the fat of rams. For the sin of witchcraft comes from rebellion, and the iniquity of Teraphim from stubbornness. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king."

Saul was so deeply humiliated by these words and by the stern and austere attitude which the prophet adopted that he confessed his fault and, in the effort to prevent him from going away, he seized Samuel's robe so firmly that it was torn. Samuel then said, "This is a sign: God will tear thy kingly dignity from thee and will give it to a better man, even though Israel be torn asunder in the act." Once more Saul entreated the prophet. "At least honour

me now before the elders of my tribe and of Israel, and return with me."[18]

In consideration of this entreaty, Samuel accompanied him to the altar, where the king humbled himself before God. Samuel then ordered that the fettered king Agag should be led forth. The Amalekite king exclaimed in his fear, "Oh! how bitter, how bitter is death!"18 To this exclamation Samuel replied, "As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women," and Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the king in Gilgal.18

After this scene in Gilgal, the king and the prophet avoided each other. The victory which Saul obtained over Amalek was a defeat for him – his pride was crushed. The announcement that God had abandoned him threw a dark shadow over his soul. His gloom, which later on developed into madness, owed its rise to the threatening words of Samuel, "God will give the kingdom of Israel to a better man."[19] These terrible words were ever ringing in Saul's ears. Just as he had at first hesitated to accept the reins of government, so he was now unwilling to let them pass from his hands. At the same time he felt himself helpless. What could he do against the severity of the prophet? In order to divert himself, he plunged into warfare. There were many enemies on the borders of Israel whom he wished to subdue. He also pursued another course in order to impress the people with a sense of his

[18] I Samuel xv. 12 to 33. In the 32d verse read *mar mar hammaveth*.

[19] I Samuel xv. 28.

importance.

There still lived amongst the Israelites a few Canaanite families and small clans who had not been expelled when the country was conquered, and could not be ejected now. These had led the Israelites to honour false gods, and to indulge in idolatrous errors. Saul therefore thought that he would greatly benefit the nation, and serve the law of Israel, if he removed these idolatrous neighbours, and everything that was foreign. Among the strangers who had been suffered to remain were the men of Gibeon, they having voluntarily submitted to the conquering Israelites. Saul did not respect the oath given to the Gibeonites, but ordered a wholesale massacre amongst them, from which but few escaped.

Together with the foreign Canaanite nations he also persecuted the sorcerers who took part in idolatrous practices. Whilst Saul, on the one hand, endeavoured to acquire the good will of his people, and showed himself the severe champion of the laws given by God, he tried, on the other hand, to impress the nation with submissive dread of the kingly power. He wore a golden crown on his head, as a sign of greatness and exaltation above the masses. His contemporaries, who had known him as a plough-man, and might have been inclined to treat him as their equal, were to forget his past and become accustomed to gaze at him with awe as the anointed wearer of the holy crown. Saul also indulged in the royal luxury of polygamy. He took wives in addition to his first wife Ahinoam, whom he had married

when he was still a peasant. Among them was the beautiful and courageous Rizpah.

Saul showed much energy in his raids against the enemy and, no doubt in order to dissipate the fears aroused by the prophet's harsh words, displayed great pomp and ostentation, until then foreign to his nature. But sooner than he had anticipated, the evil spirit of his imagination took form in the shape of a youth that charmed him despite himself.

It happened during one of the frequent fights with the enemy that Saul's troops were drawn up in martial array against the Philistines, and the two armies stood face to face, separated from each other only by a deep ravine. Both were fearful of taking the first decisive step. At length the Philistines made the proposal that the battle should be settled by single combat, and they sent forth as their champion the gigantic warrior Goliath. King Saul would gladly have seen one of his army go forth to the duel, and he promised the victor rich presents, exemption from taxes, freedom from compulsory service, and the hand of one of his daughters. But not even at such a price did any one of the Israelite army dare to oppose himself to Goliath. Then, as if by chance, a shepherd boy of Bethlehem, a town near to the field of battle, presented himself, and brought about a decisive issue.

This shepherd of Bethlehem, directly or indirectly, was the cause of a revolution in the history of Israel, and in the history of the human race. David, then known only to the inhabitants of the village or town of Bethlehem, has since become a

celebrated name throughout the world. After his disagreement with Saul, Samuel had received the prophetic mission to repair to Bethlehem in order to anoint the future king of Israel from amongst the eight sons of the aged Jesse as successor to Saul. Samuel set out in secret, lest he should be pursued by the king. The prophet selected David as the future king chosen by God, and anointed him as king of Israel in the presence of his brothers. This simple but important act was naturally performed in privacy, and was kept secret by David's father and brothers.

Jesse, the father of David, was not descended from a distinguished house of Judah, but, like all the inhabitants of Bethlehem, belonged to a very humble family. David was about eighteen years old when he was anointed, and was not distinguished either by his experience or by any deed. The beautiful pasture-land round about Bethlehem had till then composed his world. But faculties lay dormant in him which only needed to be aroused to make him excel his contemporaries intellectually as Saul surpassed them physically. David was pre-eminently gifted with poetic and musical talent, and whilst he yet tended his flock, his harp awakened the echoes of the mountains. A single circumstance, however, sufficed to change this youth into a man.

Samuel returned to Ramah as secretly as he had left; but he kept an eye on the youth whom he had anointed, and drew him into the circle of his disciples. Here David's poetic talents were developed. Here he was able to perfect himself in the

use of musical instruments. But he learnt something more in Samuel's surroundings; he learnt "to know God." His spirit was pervaded with the Divine presence, and became instinct with that piety which refers all things to God, and submits in all things to Divine guidance. This reliance on God had been awakened and strengthened in him by the influence of Samuel. David frequently journeyed from Bethlehem to Ramah, and from Samuel's house to the flocks of his father. The noble courage, with which his anointment and the influence of Samuel inspired him, did not desert him when he tended his flocks in the meadows of Bethlehem. When war with the Philistines broke out, in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, David could no longer remain a shepherd of his flocks, and he gladly undertook to deliver a message to his brothers who were serving in the army, so as to have an excuse for entering the camp. On his arrival there, he timidly told the bystanders that he was willing to risk an encounter with the blaspheming Philistine that reviled the army of the living God. The news soon reached the king's ears that a youth had offered himself for the combat. Half convinced, half in scorn, Saul gave him permission to engage in the duel, and offered him his own armour. The first stone, cast with his skilled hand from the sling, struck the heavily-armed giant from afar; he fell to the ground. David threw himself upon Goliath, drew the sword out of the scabbard, and cut off the giant's head. The Philistines, from the hilltops, had witnessed the fall of their champion, whom they had thought invincible; they declared

themselves conquered, and no longer sought to prolong the war, but fled to their fastnesses. The troops of Israel, on the other hand, carried away by David's victory, followed their enemy in hot pursuit.

Holding the bleeding head in his hand, the youthful victor was led before Saul, to whom he had till then been unknown. He had not the remotest suspicion that this youth, from whom he could not withhold his admiration, might become a dreaded rival. He felt great joy at the signal victory. His son Jonathan, who had an open, tender and unselfish heart, was enchanted with the young victor. His love and attachment for David became stronger than man's love for woman. The fame of David's name and the victory he had obtained in Ephes-Damim soon resounded throughout the valley of Terebinths, and in the territories of all the tribes. David, however, returned to his father's house as though nothing had happened, and merely took Goliath's shield and armour with him as memorials. But he did not long remain at home. The destiny of Saul had begun to be fulfilled, and David was its chosen instrument. The gloom of dejection, which had obscured the soul of the king since his breach with the prophet, became still darker. His ill-humour deepened into sadness and melancholy, and sometimes paroxysms of wild madness took hold of him. "An evil spirit hath entered the king," his servants whispered to each other. Instrumental music alone was capable of rousing him; his faithful servants therefore proposed that a skilled musician and poet should come to the court, and they advised him to

select the son of Jesse, who was handsome, brave, eloquent, and a harpist. David came, and his musical talent, as well as his general bearing, delighted the king. Whenever Saul fell into melancholy, David touched the harp, and the king was relieved from his depression. Saul felt himself enchained by David. He began to consider him as a son, and at length entreated David's father to leave him permanently at court. Saul appointed him his armour-bearer, thus securing to himself the cheering influence of his presence. This was the first step towards David's rise. But not only was the king attracted by him, David exercised an influence over the entire court, and all hearts turned towards him. Jonathan, however, loved him best of all. Saul's second daughter, Michal, was also secretly devoted to him. At the court, David learnt the use of weapons, and exchanged the harp for the sword. As he was full of courage, he soon distinguished himself in the small frays in which he took part, and came off victorious and successful. On one occasion, when David had inflicted a signal defeat on the Philistines, and when there were great rejoicings throughout the Israelite territory, the women and maidens of the various cities which he traversed on his return came forth to meet him with songs, timbrels and cymbals, dancing around him, and joyfully proclaiming him victor, saying: "Saul has killed his thousands, but David his tens of thousands." These honours, unanimously and enthusiastically offered to the youthful hero, at length opened Saul's eyes. This was "the better man," the one whom God had chosen as king over Israel; the rival with whom

Samuel had threatened him, whom he dreaded so greatly, but who had hitherto only appeared to him as a visionary being, was now actually before him in the person of his own favourite and that of his people.

It was a terrible disillusion for Saul. "To me they give but thousands, and to him tens of thousands – they place him above me. What is yet wanting to make him king?" The joyous shouts of the singing and dancing choruses of women rang in his ears from that time, and brought to mind the words of the prophet: "Thou art deserted of God." Saul's love for David now changed to bitter hate, which soon turned to madness.

On the very day succeeding David's return from his triumphal procession, Saul was seized with frenzy, and twice hurled a spear at David, who skilfully avoided the thrust. When the mad fit had left Saul, the failure of this attempt seemed to him a proof that God was protecting his enemy. From that time he sought to destroy his rival by stratagem. He pretended to honour David; made him the leader of the picked detachment of a thousand men, ordered him to direct attacks of great importance and danger, and offered him his eldest daughter, Merab, as a wife. Saul hoped to bring the man whom he hated to ruin by these apparent marks of favour. David, however, avoided the danger by refusing to marry Merab, and, on the other hand, he had the good fortune to defeat the Philistines. He was to have the king's second daughter in marriage, if he brought proofs of having killed one hundred Philistines. He brought evidence of

having slain double the number, and Saul was obliged to keep his promise, and give him his daughter Michal. She and Jonathan sided with David against their father, thus incensing Saul still more. He sought to take David's life, at first secretly, and then openly by leading his forces against him. David was proclaimed an outlaw, and became utterly desperate. He was now joined by youths and men as forlorn as himself, and anxious for war. Chief amongst these was his kinsman, Joab, who, with his two brothers, formed the nucleus of the body of *heroic warriors* (*Gibborim*), by whose assistance David was to rise step by step to the throne. A prophet, named Gad, belonging to the school of Samuel, also joined him. The last representatives of the sacerdotal family of Eli, the high-priest, were driven by Saul into the arms of his supposed enemy. Saul, hearing that the priests of Nob, the relations and descendants of Eli, had been aiding David, caused them to be cruelly murdered, and the priestly city to be destroyed. One family alone, that of Abiathar, escaped death, and fled to David, who received the fugitives with open arms. Hatred of his rival made Saul cruel and bloodthirsty. All attempts on the part of Jonathan, who desired to mediate between his father and his friend, proved fruitless, and only served to widen the breach. Saul being clearly in the wrong, a part of the nation sided with David; but unable to assist him openly, they gave him secret help, by which he was enabled to escape from repeated persecutions. It is to be deplored that David, in his wanderings and privations, was obliged to form friendly relations with the

enemies of his country – with the king of Moab, with the Ammonite king, Nahash, and with the king of the Philistines, Achish. He thus incurred the suspicion of having become a traitor to his country, and apparently justified Saul's enmity towards him. The terms of David's alliance with Achish, by whom he had been at first refused protection, but with whom he had, on the second occasion, found refuge, seemed especially apt to implicate him. Achish granted him protection on the condition that he would break entirely with Saul and his country, so that, in case of war, he and his troops, amounting to six hundred men, might join the Philistines against his own tribe, and, in times of peace, make incursions on the remote portions of Judah, and deliver up a part of the booty to his liege lord. David, it is true, appears to have determined to evade these conditions, and eventually even to join his own people against his allies. But thus he was compelled to enter upon crooked ways, and to give up the honesty of purpose which had hitherto distinguished him. It is probable that the wild appearance of David's troops did not make a very pleasant impression on the inhabitants of Philistia. The Philistine chiefs were displeased that their sovereign should ally himself with a leader who owed his glory to victories over their own people. King Achish, however, expected so much from this alliance that he paid no heed to the warning of his counsellors. But David himself felt the discomfort of living amongst the Philistine population. He therefore begged Achish to assign to him and his followers a dwelling-place in one of his citadels.

This proposition being agreeable to the Philistine king, he gave David the town of Ziklag. No sooner had the news spread that a special city had been appointed for David's occupation, than warlike men, both strangers and natives, joined him, many of whom distinguished themselves by their heroism later on. Achish believed that, in David, he had secured a faithful ally, who was employing his military knowledge and courage against members of his own tribe, and who, consequently, could never again make peace with his own people.

Thus adroitly deluded by David, Achish thought himself secure in undertaking a decisive war against the Israelites. Saul was sunk in melancholy, and since his quarrel with his son-in-law had lost his former energy in warfare. The strong arm which had fought for him, and the quick brain which had planned for him, were now turned against him. The bravest youths and men in Israel had placed themselves under David's command. Achish summoned all his troops, in order to inflict a decisive blow on Israel. Marching through the plain along the coast of the Mediterranean (which belonged to the Philistines since their victory over the Phœnicians), he led his army right into the valley of Jezreel. This territory, apart from political considerations, offered a better field than the mountain regions for employing the cavalry and chariots. In consequence of their treaty, Achish demanded that David should aid him in this great war against Saul, and unite his troops with the Philistine army. David's heart must indeed have been heavy when he joined the army,

but he had no choice; he had sold himself to the enemies of his nation. The Philistine nobles, however, delivered him from his equivocal position. They loudly and vehemently demanded that the king should send away David and his soldiers, whose fidelity they mistrusted. The Philistine king was forced, by their almost rebellious demand, to dismiss David. After giving him the assurance of his unshaken confidence in his fidelity, he sent him back to Ziklag. This was fortunate for David, as he was thus saved from the dilemma of either becoming a traitor to his own people, or breaking faith with his ally Achish.

The Philistines meanwhile went forth to the number of thousands, and encamped near the town of Shunem. Saul, who had received news of the preparations of the Philistines, and of their final expedition, called together the Israelitish troops, advanced in forced marches to meet the enemy, and encamped at first at the foot of Mount Gilboa. He then marched around the opposite heights, and, having proceeded northward, encamped at the north-west base of the mountain range near Endor.

Saul lost heart at the sight of the great number of Philistines, especially when he beheld their cavalry; the evil days which he had brought on himself had deprived him of his former courage. He felt himself deserted by God, since neither priest nor prophet gave an answer to his inquiry as to the result of the war. Having waited in vain for an inspiration to come to him in a dream, he finally, in despair, went to a ventriloquist in Endor, who had escaped persecution, and practised her witchcraft in secret. It

was peculiar that Saul had to have recourse to the arts of jugglery, which formerly he had desired to banish from his dominions. Discouraged by the ominous predictions of the witch, Saul went into battle with a heavy heart, and as though his fears had infected his troops, the result proved disastrous. The Israelites, indeed, fought bravely, and the battle lasted the whole day, but they could not contend with the cavalry and war chariots on the plain. They fled to the mountains of Gilboa, but they were pursued, and routed by the Philistines. Saul's three sons, the amiable Jonathan, Abinadab and Malchishua, all fell, and the father found himself suddenly alone, attended only by his armour-bearer, whilst the Philistine bowmen pressed on him. He did not wish to flee, nor to be taken prisoner, and exposed to the scorn of the Philistines. He, therefore, entreated his servant to give him the death-blow, and when the latter refused to lay hands on the king, Saul had no alternative but to fall on his own sword, and die a death worthy of a king. The destruction was fearful. The flower of the Israelite troops lay strewn on Mount Gilboa and the plain of Jezreel.

After resting during the night from their hard day's work, the Philistines revisited the battle-field, and stripped the slain of their clothing and ornaments. Here they found the corpses of Saul and his three sons. The king's head and his weapons they sent as trophies to Philistia; the skull they preserved in the temple of Dagon, and the weapons, in a temple of Astarte to commemorate the great victory over Israel. They then forced their way into the towns in the plain of Jezreel, and into those in the north-eastern

territory near the Jordan and occupied them. The inhabitants, on hearing of the defeat at Gilboa, had fled to the opposite side of the Jordan. The Philistines, as an insult to the Israelites, hung the headless bodies of Saul and his son Jonathan on the walls of Bethshan. It appears that the Philistines, following up their victory, turned to the south of Mount Gilboa and Bethshan, and occupied every town of importance. Saul's capital, Gibeah-Saul, was filled with terror at the approach of the Philistines. The inhabitants fled to the mountains, and while attempting to save Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, then five years old, his nurse dropped him, and he was lamed for life.

At his death, Saul left the country in a deplorable position, for things were even worse than they had been at his accession. The defeat was so thorough and unexpected that, at the moment, there was no thought of resistance, all courage having vanished. It was even considered an act of daring that some men of Jabesh-Gilead (from the opposite side of the Jordan), ventured, out of gratitude to Saul who had brought aid to their town, to rescue the king's body from its disgraceful exposure. They crossed the Jordan, at Bethshan, by night, took Saul's and Jonathan's bodies from the walls, buried them under a terebinth, and mourned for them during seven days. The tribes on this side of the Jordan were not equally courageous, or perhaps felt no gratitude to Saul, who had brought misery on the land by his persecution of David. Such was the end of a king whose election the nation had hailed with so much hope and joy.

CHAPTER VII.
DAVID AND ISHBOSHETH

Burning of Ziklag – Defeat of the Amalekites – Judah elects David as King – Abner and Ishbosheth – War between the houses of Saul and David – Murder of Abner – Death of Ishbosheth – David recognised as sole King – Capture of Zion – Fortification of Jerusalem – War with the Philistines – Victory of David – The Heroes – Alliance with Hiram – Removal of the Ark of the Sanctuary to Jerusalem – The High-Priest – Choral Services of the Temple – Internal Government of Israel – The Gibeonites and Rizpah – Mephibosheth.

1055–1035 B. C. E

David, too, in whom the people had once set high hopes, seemed to be forgotten by them. What had he done while his fatherland was bleeding? Whether or not his expedition with the Philistines was known, it must have appeared strange to all that, in this sad crisis, he was keeping himself aloof from every danger, only caring for his own safety, and that, instead of hastening to the aid of his oppressed people, he was holding to his treaty with the Philistines. It is true, he was himself at

that time in distress, but the events which concerned him became known only later on. Meanwhile it must have been mortifying to those who cared for the weal of the kingdom that David was allied with the enemy, and that, during the absence of king Achish, in the war against Israel, David seemed in a measure to guard the enemy's frontiers. When David was sent back from his intended expedition with the Philistines on account of the suspicions of the nobles, he found that his town of Ziklag had been burnt down, and the women and children and all those who had joined him had disappeared. The Amalekites, who had suffered from David's incursions, had made use of his absence to undertake a raid against him. The grief of the troops was so great when they found that their belongings had disappeared and their town had been destroyed that they turned on David in their anger, and threatened him with death. However, they were encouraged by the oracular words of Abiathar, the priest, and permitted themselves to be appeased. Hurriedly David and his men then followed in pursuit. They discovered the camp of the Amalekites by the aid of an Egyptian slave whom they had found ill and deserted by the wayside. They pursued the Amalekites, and David's angry soldiers routed them so completely that most of them were left dead on the field of battle, and only a few could escape on camels. David and his troops returned to Ziklag, buoyed up by victory. They commenced to rebuild their town, and to settle down. Parts of the booty taken from the Amalekites David sent as gifts to the elders of the people and to his friends in

many towns from Beersheba to Hebron, so as to spread the news of his victory, and, at the same time, gain partisans for himself. Hardly had he regained a firm footing in Ziklag, when he heard the evil tidings of the defeat and death of Saul.

The chief men of the tribe of Judah, at the instigation of those friends whose interest he had won by his attention, chose David as king. He then entered into communication with the tribes on the other side of the Jordan, in order to win also their affection. To the tribes on this side of the river he could not appeal, as they were still under the yoke of the Philistines. To the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead, he expressed his contentment and his thanks for having shown their fidelity towards Saul even after his death, and for having rescued the corpse of the king from ill usage. He also informed them of the fact that the tribe of Judah had elected him as Saul's successor.

His unhappy fate, however, still kept him in alliance with the Philistines, and his prudence was struggling with his patriotism. The latter incited him to risk everything, in order to release himself from the fetters which bound him, whilst the former, on the other hand, warned him not to arouse the anger of his powerful neighbour. Achish gave David full permission to consider himself king of Judah, and to make incursions on the border lands of the desert, on condition that he received his share of the booty. But beyond this David was not permitted to advance a step. The deliverance of the land from the Philistines, which David, whose hands were bound, was unable to carry

out, was effected by Abner, Saul's general. He had succeeded in escaping in the great defeat at Gilboa, and he did not lose courage, but saved what he could from the ruin which befell the house of Saul. Attended by some fugitives, he took refuge on the other side of the Jordan (beyond the reach of the Philistines), where many hearts were still faithful to Saul and his house. Abner conducted the surviving son of Saul, Ishbosheth, and the remaining members of the helpless royal family to Mahanaim, and induced the tribes residing on that side of the river to acknowledge Ishbosheth as Saul's successor. Having collected a powerful force from among the tribes and the Benjamites who joined him, he commenced his contest with the Philistines. Abner was successful in ousting the Philistines from the neighbouring border towns, but it was only after a struggle of four or five years that he was enabled to free the whole country (1055–1051), so arduous was the contest. The tribe of Benjamin was the most difficult to reconquer, as the Philistines could most easily march their troops into its territory. Every tribe which Abner delivered was eager to pay homage to the son of Saul. Abner achieved great results: he not only regained independence, but even induced tribes, which had shown themselves unruly under Saul's government, to join the commonwealth. He was the actual founder of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes of Israel, and he firmly welded the links which bound them to one another. But, notwithstanding his victory and his exertions, the nation was suddenly divided into two kingdoms – that of Israel and that of

Judah – and two kings ruled them. The tribe of Judah, which the energy of Samuel and of Saul had drawn from its seclusion, and reunited with the other tribes, was thus again separated from the whole.

Abner's victories aroused no feelings of joy because they led to disunion. The historian's pen hurries over his deeds, and touches but lightly on the hero's achievements. The state of affairs made an amalgamation of the houses of Judah and Israel impossible. Not only were the two kings, David and Ishbosheth, averse to the reunion of the several tribes (as in this case one of the two would have to resign his kingly dignity), but their adherents, and especially their respective generals, Joab and Abner, displayed a great degree of mutual jealousy. The scales were turned by the fact that the house of Judah was led by a brave and martial king, who had been consecrated by Samuel, and whose person was therefore considered holy, whilst Ishbosheth, a king only in name, had not been confirmed in his dignity by the voice of God, and besides, it seems, was by no means of a warlike disposition. The whole power rested in the hands of his general Abner, while Ishbosheth remained in some remote corner of his possessions, whereas David had his dwelling-place in the midst of his tribe, and thus could direct everything from his residence in Hebron.

After Abner had won or reconquered all the tribes, with the exception of Judah, a civil war broke out between the houses of Israel and Judah, or, more correctly speaking, between the

houses of Saul and David. This war lasted two years (1051–1049), and raged very fiercely. At length Abner called upon Joab to put an end to the slaughter of the masses. He cried, "Must the sword slay for ever; dost thou not know that only misfortune can arise from this warfare? Why dost thou not command thy people to hold off from their brethren?" At length Joab also found it advisable to put aside his weapons, and to proclaim an armistice. He and his people bore the corpse of his brother Asahel, whom Abner had slain against his will, to Bethlehem, in order that it might be interred in the ancestral tomb, and thence they repaired to Hebron. Abner and his followers crossed the Jordan, and went to Mahanaim. But a tragical destiny threatened the house of Saul. Abner had cast covetous glances at Rizpah, the beautiful slave of Saul, who dwelt in Mahanaim with her two sons. Although Ishbosheth allowed his general many liberties, he could not permit him to maintain intimate relations with his father's widow, which implied the intention of laying claim to the throne. Abner, feeling himself slighted by the rebuke he received, reproached this mock-king with ingratitude, and turning away from him, entered into secret negotiations with David, offering to secure to him the homage of all the tribes. In return for this service, he probably stipulated that he should retain his office of commander-in-chief of the Israelitish tribes. David gladly entertained his proposition, but demanded, as a preliminary concession, that his favourite wife Michal, who had been torn from him by Saul, and married to a Benjamite, should be restored

to him. Ishbosheth himself no doubt saw the justice of this demand, and did not perceive in it any evil intention towards himself. Thereupon Abner, leaving the king under the pretext of bringing about Michal's separation from her husband, entered the Benjamite territory, compelled Phaltiel, Michal's husband, to give up his wife, whom he followed, with many tears, till Abner's angry threats compelled him to turn back in sorrow, and David recovered the beloved wife of his youth. Abner then wandered about amongst the tribes trying to obtain secret adherents for David. Many Israelites no doubt privately wished that the luckless civil war would end with submission to the king of Judah; even some of the Benjamites were not averse to a union. Attended by twenty trusty followers whom he had secured for David, Abner secretly entered Hebron; David had succeeded in sending away Joab and his brothers (the distrustful and jealous sons of Zeruiah) on a predatory expedition. During their absence, David personally arranged with Abner and his twenty followers the manner in which the elders of the tribes should be won over to his side, and how the dethronement of Ishbosheth should then be effected. Abner had already left Hebron in order to call upon the elders of the tribes to follow his example, and do homage to the king of Judah. When Joab returned from his expedition, he heard the astonishing intelligence that Abner, the enemy of David's house, had been received, and permitted to depart in full favour, and that the king had made a secret treaty behind his back. As it seemed to him inevitable that he must be the victim

of such a compact, he quickly decided on his course, and sent messengers after Abner, who induced him to return. Joab and Abishai lay in wait for him at the gates of Hebron, and Abner, unaware and unwarned, was felled to the earth by their swords. David felt the death of Abner acutely. The man who alone was able and willing to obtain for him the adherence of all the tribes by peaceful measures was thus foully murdered, on the very eve of the realisation of his plan. David was placed in an awkward position. In order to destroy any suspicion which might arise against him, David gave solemn expression to his sincere grief at Abner's loss. He commanded a grand, imposing funeral in Hebron for Israel's fallen hero, ordered all his followers to attend the funeral procession, and accompanied it himself. He breathed forth his tearful grief in an elegiac poem, the beginning of which has been preserved, and which made a powerful impression on all hearers. All burst into tears, and were convinced of the sincerity of his sorrow by the manner in which he recited his threnode. On the other hand, David feared to take the sons of Zeruiah to account, or even to reproach them for their conduct; he could not spare their assistance. In the circle of his intimates only, uttering bitter complaints of them, he said, "Know that a great prince in Israel has fallen to-day."

The news of Abner's murder made a deep impression on Ishbosheth. He had no knowledge of his fallen general's treacherous league with David, and he therefore deeply mourned the death of a hero whom he supposed to be faithful, and whose

loss seemed to be irreparable, for he considered Abner as the chief support of his throne.

After Ishbosheth's death the kingdom of the ten tribes naturally fell to David. Among them, too, he had adherents of long standing, who remembered his warlike deeds against the Philistines in Saul's time, and who honoured him as the chosen one of God through his prophet Samuel. Others had been won over to his side by Abner. Even those who took offence at David's league with the enemies of Israel, could not hide from themselves the consideration that no choice was left them but to do him homage. The Benjamites also acknowledged him, but with a secret grudge, which they could hardly conceal. David's dearest wish was now realised; from having been the ruler of a little, insignificant tribe he had become, after many obstacles and troubles, the king of all Israel. The breach between the houses of Judah and Israel was healed apparently, and everything seemed favourable to him. The priesthood and the prophets did not take a hostile attitude towards him, as they had done towards Saul, but joined with heart and soul in his cause. A descendant of the house of Eli, named Abiathar, who had shared David's troubles, belonged to his court; and the prophets welcomed in him the man who had been anointed by Samuel, and had belonged to that great man's circle of disciples. The prophet Gad was also a member of the court; and another prophet of the time, named Nathan, was to a certain extent the keeper of David's conscience. Thus encouraged in all his undertakings by his spiritual advisers,

everything tended to level the way for him, as far as the internal government was concerned. But his foreign relations occasioned him great difficulties, which had to be overcome before he could rule as an independent king.

In the first place, David was forced to break with the Philistines, if he wished to be independent, and to win back the love of his people. He had to prepare himself for fierce warfare with his former auxiliaries. But he did not immediately commence hostilities with them; they were too powerful for him. He wished first to free himself from other bonds. In the midst of the Benjamite territory was an enclosure, which had remained in the possession of the Jebusites, because the Israelites, on their entry into the land, had not conquered it. The high hill of Zion was rendered inaccessible on three sides by narrow valleys and artificial fortifications. The most impregnable point was the south side, where the rocky wall of the hill rose almost in a vertical line from an abyss below. From this mountain fortress, the Jebusites ruled the entire surrounding territory, and felt themselves secure from all intruders. They appear to have lived in a state of peace with the surrounding Benjamites and Judæans, as even Saul did not disturb them in the possession of their territory. David, however, considered it conducive to his interest to obtain possession of this citadel of Zion before commencing hostilities with the Philistines. He therefore resolved to storm the citadel, and subdue its defenders. As soon as the Jebusites found all opposition useless they sued for peace, which was granted them

by David. They were allowed to remain in their city, but not in the fortress; he permitted them to settle in the east of the town, on Mount Moriah. This victory, which had appeared so difficult, and had, in fact, been easily obtained, had been preceded by the boast of the Jebusites about the blind and the lame, which gave rise to a proverb.

After its conquest, David removed his capital from Hebron to Mount Zion, and it was henceforth known as the town of David. The city itself lost its old name of Jebus, and received the new name Jerusalem (*Jerushalayim*), the meaning of which is not known. Hither David removed with his warriors and their families, and his courtiers. The spot where the bravest soldiers had their dwellings was called after them the house of the brave (*Beth-ha-Gibborim*). Such was the beginning of the place which since then, and for centuries, was to be known as the "Holy City." The choice of this spot as a capital was a happy stroke, as circumstances soon proved. It is true, Shechem would have made a better metropolis, on account of its position in the midst of the tribes, and the fruitful territory around it. But David found it impossible to move his dwelling to the town of the Ephraimites. The inhabitants were not especially well disposed towards him, and rather unwilling that the half-savage king, who sprang from Judah, should prescribe laws to them. Besides, he needed the support of his own tribe, and this he could have in Jerusalem, which was situated on the boundaries of Benjamin and Judah, and which would serve as a protection in the event of

unruliness on the part of the other tribes. The territory on which the new capital was erected was not sterile, though it could bear no comparison with the part of the country in which Shechem lay. In the valleys flow everlasting springs, the springs of Siloah and En-Rogel in the south, the Gihon in the west; so that in the dry season the town and fields can always be supplied with water. On three sides Jerusalem is surrounded by a range of hills which protect and embellish it. On the east is a high watershed (2724 feet), Mount Olivet, so named from the olive trees which cover it. In the south the hills are not so lofty, and the valley dividing them from the city is narrower. The valley is that of Henna (Gehenna), which was thus named after an individual or a family, and which was destined to acquire a sad renown, and to supply another appellation for hell (*Gehenna*). On the west the summits are also low, and can hardly be called hills. On the north, the hills gently slope down to the plain. By these hills and valleys, which form natural walls and ditches, Jerusalem is sheltered on three sides. Within Jerusalem, on the high plateau and between the three valleys on the east, south, and west, there are three ranges of hills rising above the plain. On the west is Zion, the loftiest summit. On the north is a hill of no great height; and opposite the third is Mount Moriah, which has an offshoot towards the south, called "Ophel." Moriah, though much less lofty than Zion, was destined to eclipse it and the greatest heights on earth in importance.

The Philistines could not ignore the fact that the choice of

David as king of the entire Israelite nation had not only greatly loosened the bond which united him to them, but that it must in the future force him to take up a hostile attitude towards themselves. They did not, however, wish to break with him. But when the conquest of Jebus (Jerusalem) took place, they considered the fact of his removing his dwelling thither as a premonitory sign. They hastened to join with him in battle, before he had time to arm the available troops of the various tribes. A Philistine band pressed forward across the plain into the mountains, and approached Jerusalem. Whether David was surprised by their attack, or whether he wished to avoid an action near his capital, is unknown, but he left it with his troops, and moved southwards to Adullam. Encouraged by this retreat, the Philistines pressed on to Bethlehem, David's birthplace, where they encamped, and whence they sent out predatory expeditions to ravage the land of Judah. David delayed attacking the Philistines; his army was probably too weak, and he expected reinforcements from the tribes. In order to stimulate his warriors to trials of strength during the pause before the decisive contest, David expressed a wish to drink water from a well in Bethlehem, which was in the possession of the Philistines. Three of the chief warriors, Jesheboam, Eleazar, and Shammah, immediately set out against the Philistines, daringly drew water from the well, and brought it to David at Adullam. David, however, would not drink the water for which his warriors had risked their lives. He had only put them to the test. At length the Israelite

troops went forth to meet the Philistines, and utterly routed them at Mount Baal-Perazim. This victory was so decisive that it was compared with Joshua's at Gibeon. In their hurried flight, the Philistines left behind them their idols, which were burnt by the Israelites. The enemy did not, however, relinquish their intention of subduing David and his people. They made repeated attacks, once in the valley of Rephaim, another time near Ephes-dammim in Terebinthea; David's troops and warriors performed miracles of bravery, they defeated their enemies, and pursued them as far as Gaza. David did not content himself with mere defence, but he determined on attacking the Philistines. If he wished to protect his people, it was necessary either constantly to harass, or to subdue the small but powerful nation which depended on incursions and warfare for its maintenance. He therefore proceeded with his soldiers as far as Gath, the former capital of the Philistines, which was situated nearest to the land of Judæa. The Philistines made a very obstinate resistance, and violent conflicts arose, in which David's heroes had ample opportunity for distinguishing themselves. It appears that the Philistines suggested, according to their custom, that there should be combats with the remnant of their Rephaitic giants. Times had changed, however, and whilst in David's youth the Israelitish troops had not had among them a single soldier who would accept Goliath's challenge, there were now more than thirty who burned with eagerness to take part in the duels. On this occasion the warriors entreated the king not to expose himself in battle, and,

in fact, not to go to war himself, in order that "the light of Israel" might not be extinguished.

At length the Israelites succeeded in utterly routing the Philistines, so that they were obliged to surrender their capital Gath, and its villages and the surrounding territory. The town in which the son of Jesse had first appeared, entreating help in the guise of an imbecile, thus fell before him. One of the thirty warriors, Sibbechai of Hushah, killed the giant Sippai of Gath; another man from Bethlehem named Elhanan, killed the brother of Goliath, named Lahmi, who had sallied forth to the contest like Goliath, laden with armour. David's nephew Jonathan killed a giant who had an additional finger on each hand, and an additional toe on each foot. David himself was once, when exhausted from the long struggle, in imminent danger of being overcome by the giant Ishbi of Gath; Abishai, however, Joab's brother, hurried to his aid, defeated the giant, and killed three hundred Philistines with his spear. The overthrow of the Philistines was an event of the greatest importance; it ensured lasting peace and freedom of action to the people, for none of the other enemies of Israel harassed it so persistently. David did not push his victory further; he left the important cities of Gaza, Askelon, Ashdod and Ekron undisturbed, and even the town of Gath he appears later on to have restored to its king. No doubt he had reasons for not using extreme measures with the Philistines. It appeared to him better to rule them as a tributary power than to drive them to a war of desperation.

By his victory over the Philistines, David attained great importance and respect in the eyes of the neighbouring peoples. Hiram, the king who had transferred the Phœnician power from Zidon to Tyre, despatched ambassadors to David, offering to make an alliance with him. He also offered to send supplies of cedar wood and building materials for adorning the new capital of Jerusalem in a fitting manner. He rejoiced at the subjection of the Philistines, probably because they would no longer be able to cast covetous glances at the Phœnician coast-lands. It was a matter of great interest to the king of Tyre to secure an alliance with David, in order that the Phœnician caravans might have free passage, and find protection for their goods when they passed backwards and forwards between Phœnicia and Egypt. David willingly accepted his advances, and thus a sort of friendship arose between him and Hiram. He accepted Hiram's offer in order to fortify the capital which had been founded by him, and to obtain materials for adorning it with architectural works, so that Jerusalem might vie in outward appearance with the other capitals of those times. In the first place Jerusalem was fortified, especially on the north, where it was most liable to be attacked. The hill of Zion, or City of David, was, in fact, not sufficiently extensive to contain all the inhabitants who had already settled there, and it had become necessary to take measures to provide for the increasing population. For this reason, the hill which lay to the north of the town was included in its boundaries. Between Zion and this hillock lay a narrow valley. The northern elevation

of the town was called *Millo* (border); it was considered the newer quarter of the town, in comparison with the more ancient city of David. Mount Moriah and its offshoot Ophel remained outside the circuit of the city, and in those days was not considered as belonging to Jerusalem, but was inhabited by the surviving remnant of the Jebusites. David also built a palace of cedar, the wood for which was procured from Lebanon. To Joab and the other important personages of David's court were assigned roomy and well-built houses, which were not constructed of cedar wood, but of cypress.

David further sought to make Jerusalem the centre of religious life, in order that the eyes of the whole nation might be turned towards it. He therefore took measures to remove the ark of the sanctuary from the house of Abinadab at Kirjath-Jearim, where it had remained since its recovery from the hands of the Philistines. A splendid tent was built for its reception in the city of David. David had vowed not to remain in his house, nor to rest on his bed, nor to close his eyes in sleep until he had found a resting-place for the ark of the covenant. Accompanied by a great concourse, the king repaired to Kirjath-Jearim (which lay at about an hour's journey to the north-west of Jerusalem), and many Levites followed in the king's train. The ark of the sanctuary was placed on a new carriage drawn by bullocks, which were led by two sons of Abinadab. Choirs of Levites sang hymns, and accompanied themselves on stringed instruments, and David also assisted them with all his might. An accident,

however, occurred on the road. Uzzah, who walked next to the chariot, suddenly fell down dead. David was so shocked at this catastrophe that he hesitated to carry the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem. He feared that it might bring down misfortune on the people, as it had done in the case of the Philistines. It was therefore placed in a house for three months, and, seeing that no evil came of it, David determined on making a second attempt at bringing it to Mount Zion. On this occasion, however, it was not placed on a chariot, but was carried by Levites. Followed by a mass of people, and amidst shouts of joy, blasts of trumpets, and dancing, the ark was conveyed to the tent appointed for it. The king himself, oblivious of his dignity, sang and danced in exultation before the ark. His conduct called forth a rebuke from his wife Michal, who scoffingly charged him with behaving like a public clown.

As it had done in the case of Shiloh, the arrival of the Ark raised Jerusalem to the dignity of a holy city. In such a place of public worship, it was necessary to maintain a priest, or rather a priesthood. Abiathar, David's faithful follower in all his wanderings, was, as a matter of course, raised to the office of High Priest to the sanctuary in Zion. There was, however, another high priest in Gibeon, whom Saul had placed there after the destruction of Eli's family in Nob. David could not entirely displace him, for such a course would have led to dissensions. He therefore confirmed his predecessor's appointment, and thus retained two high priests in office at the same time – Abiathar in

Jerusalem, and Zadok in Gibeon. A former pupil of the Levitical choirs, himself a poet and a musician, David naturally followed Samuel's example and introduced choral singing into the solemn religious services. He also composed hymns of praise at times, when a victory over the enemy, or some other success filled his heart with thankfulness, and animated him with poetical fervour. It may be said that his songs have become the prototypes of this lofty and inspiring style of verse. Besides the royal psalmist there were other poets and musicians, such as Asaph, Heman, a grandson of Samuel, and Jeduthun. Their descendants were the Asaphites and Korachites (Bene Korach), who are named with David as the most famous composers of psalms. David arranged that Asaph and his choir should lead the choral service in the sanctuary at Jerusalem, whilst his fellow-musicians, Heman and Jeduthun, performed the same functions at the altar in Gibeon. Samuel's creation of a spiritual divine service was thus firmly established by David; and though he was an upholder of sacrificial rites, he valued the elevating and refining influence of psalmody too highly not to make it an integral element of the public cult. At a time when poetry as an art had hardly awakened amongst the other nations, it already occupied a prominent place in the divine service of Israel.

As David was the actual founder of a sanctifying divine worship, he was also the creator of a system of government which was based on justice. He presided at the tribunal, listened untiringly to the disputes of individuals or of tribes, and

administered justice with strict impartiality. His throne was not only the high seat of government and power, it was also that of order and justice. Succeeding generations pronounced David the ideal king. His throne was looked upon as the prop of justice, and his sceptre as the standard of civic peace. Jerusalem was by him made an ideal city, where a pure worship of God had been established, and justice, in its most exalted form, had found its earthly resting-place. A later psalmist says —

> "Jerusalem, that art builded as a city that is compact together,
> Whither the tribes go up, even the tribes of the Lord;
> For a testimony unto Israel,
> To give thanks unto the name of the Lord.
> For there are set thrones for judgment,
> The thrones of the house of David."
>
> *Psalm cxxii. 3–5.*

Jerusalem was considered "a faithful citadel – full of righteousness – where justice had its dwelling-place." These circumstances, the deliverance from the yoke of the Philistines, the universal safety, and the establishment of justice under David's rule, rendered him again the favourite of the people, as he had been in his youth. A feeling of loyalty to him prevailed, which was of spontaneous growth, and in which force had no share.

David partly altered the internal arrangements of the country. The constitution of the tribes remained intact. The elders

represented the families, and the head of the oldest family was also the prince of his tribe (Naszi-Beth-Ab). The princes were the representatives of the tribes with the king. But it was necessary to limit the freedom, or rather the arbitrariness of the tribes, in regard to military arrangements. Each tribe, in case of war, was bound to contribute a number of capable soldiers (over twenty years of age) as its contingent to the national army (*Zaba*). A special officer was appointed over this contingent, who was called the enumerator (*Sopher*), or the keeper of the rolls. He wrote down on a list the names of the men fit for active service, looked to their enrolment, and compelled the attendance of all defaulters. This duty David delegated to a man named Shavsha, from whom it passed on to his heirs. As soon as the army was assembled, it was commanded by the field officer (*Sar-ha-Zaba*), who at this conjuncture was Joab. David also supported a troop of mercenaries whom he recruited from the heathen soldiery, the Cherethites, who came from a territory belonging to the Philistine dominions, and the Pelethites, whose origin is unknown. Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, one of the bravest of David's soldiers, was their commander. David also appointed a special officer on whom devolved the duty of reporting to the king all important, or apparently important events. He was called the recorder (*Maskhir*). As favouritism is inseparable from kingly will, David also had a favourite (named Hushai the Arkhi) on whom he could rely under all circumstances, especially in cases requiring discretion. He was also fortunate in having an adviser

at hand, who could give suitable counsel in various emergencies; his name was Ahithophel, and his birthplace was the Judæan town of Gilo. At that time his advice was currently said to be as infallible as the oracles uttered by the lips of the high priest. This wise and over-wise councillor of David was destined to exercise a great influence over his royal master. At one time David's judicial conscience was put to a severe test. A famine of long duration overspread the land on account of a two years' drought. The distress continued to grow when, at the commencement of the third year, no rain had fallen, and the people turned to the king for help. This misfortune, in which the entire country shared, was interpreted as being God-sent retribution for some secret and unavenged sin. David therefore inquired of the priest Abiathar what sin required expiation, and the answer came, "on account of Saul and his ruthless persecution of the Gibeonites." David then sent to the remnant of the Gibeonites, and inquired of them what atonement they desired. Not satisfied with an expiatory sum of money, they demanded that seven descendants of Saul should be hanged in Gibeah-Saul. The demand of the Gibeonites seemed just, for according to the views of the time, only blood could atone for the shedding of blood and a breach of faith. With a heavy heart David had to comply with the demand of the Gibeonites, and satisfy the desire of the nation. The two sons of Saul's concubine Rizpah, and his grandson, the son of his daughter Merab, were sought out, handed over to the Gibeonites, and killed by them in cold blood, in Gibeah-Saul, the town in

which their father had won a crown.

David spared only Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, for he remembered the oath made to his friend, that he would always protect his descendants. The corpses of the seven victims were to remain on the gallows until rain should fall from the heavens, but it was long ere the rainfall came. It was in those dire days that the beautiful Rizpah, for whose sake Abner had quarrelled with Ishbosheth, showed of what a mother's love is capable. In order to prevent her sons' corpses from being devoured by eagles and jackals, she made her couch on the rocks on which the bodies were exposed, and guarded them with a watchful eye through the heat of day. Nor did she relax her vigilance in the night, but continued her work of scaring away the beasts of prey from the dead. When at length in the autumn the rain fell, the seven bodies were taken down, and at David's command the last honours were bestowed on them. He also seized this opportunity to remove the remains of Saul and Jonathan from Jabesh-Gilead, and to bury them, together with the remains of their kindred, in the family tomb of the house of Kish at Zelah. It appears that, on this occasion, David caused his deeply touching lament for the death of Saul and of Jonathan to be reproduced, in order to express publicly how deeply the destruction of the royal house of Benjamin had affected him. He directed that the elegy should be committed to memory by the youths of the country. Jonathan's surviving son, Mephibosheth (who had been living in the house of a much-respected man on the other side of the

Jordan) was brought to Jerusalem, and David received him in his own house, placed him at his own table, and treated him as one of his own sons. David also restored to him Saul's lands in the tribe of Benjamin, and entrusted the management of them to one of Saul's slaves, named Ziba. Notwithstanding this, the Benjamites accused David of destroying the house of Saul, and of having preserved Mephibosheth, because he was lame and unfit to rule. When David's fortune was on the wane, the embittered Benjamites cast stones at him.

CHAPTER VIII.
DAVID

War with the Moabites – Insult offered by the king of the Ammonites – War with the Ammonites – Their Defeat – Battle of Helam – Attack of Hadadezer – Defeat of the Aramæans – Acquisition of Damascus – War with the Idumæans – Conquest of the town of Rabbah – Defeat of the Idumæans – Conquered races obliged to pay tribute – Bathsheba – Death of Uriah the Hittite – Parable of Nathan – Birth of Solomon (1033) – Misfortunes of David – Absalom – Wise Woman of Tekoah – Reconciliation of David and Absalom – Numbering of the Troops – Pestilence breaks out in Israel – Absalom's Rebellion – Murder of Amasa – Sheba's Insurrection – David and Nathan – Adonijah.

1035–1015 B. C. E

When David had completed two decades of his reign, he became involved in several wars, which withdrew him from the peaceful pursuits of regulating the internal affairs of the country, and of attending to the administration of justice. These wars with distant nations, forced on him against his will, gave him an immense accession of power, and raised the prestige

of the people in a surprising degree. David first began a fierce warfare with the Moabites, who dwelt on the opposite side of the Dead Sea. With them he had been on friendly terms during his wanderings, and amongst them he had met with a hospitable reception. It is probable that the Moabites had ousted from their possession the neighbouring Reubenites, and that David hurried to their rescue. It must in any case have been a war of retribution, for, after his victory, David treated the prisoners with a severity which he did not display towards any of the other nations whom he conquered. The Moabite captives were fettered, and cast side by side on the ground, then measured with a rope, and two divisions were killed, whilst one division was spared. The whole land of Moab was subdued, and a yearly tribute was to be sent to Jerusalem.

Some time afterwards, when Nahash, king of the Ammonites, died, David, who had been on friendly terms with him, sent an embassy to his son Hanun, with messages of condolence. This courtesy only roused suspicion in Rabbath-Ammon, the capital of the Ammonites. The new king's counsellors impressed him with the idea that David had sent his ambassadors as spies to Rabbah, in order to discover their weakness, to conquer them, and to deliver them over to the same fate that had befallen the Moabites. Hanun was so carried away by his suspicions that he offered an insult to the king of Israel which could not be passed over unnoticed. He obliged the ambassadors, whose persons, according to the laws of nations, were inviolable, to

have their beards shaved off on one side, and their garments cut short, and thus disgraced he drove them out of the country. The ambassadors were ashamed to appear at Jerusalem in this guise, but they informed David of the occurrence. He immediately prepared himself for battle, and the militia was called out; the old warriors girded their loins, and the Cherethite and Pelethite mercenaries sallied forth with their heroic leader Benaiah at their head. Hanun, who feared the valor of the Israelites, looked around for help, and engaged mercenary troops from among the Aramæans, who lived in the regions between the mountains of Hermon and the banks of the Euphrates. Hadadezer, king of Zobah on the Euphrates, contributed the greatest number – 20,000 men. David did not personally conduct this war, but left the supreme command with the careful and reliable Joab. Having led the Israelite army across the Jordan, Joab divided it into two bodies. With the one he attacked the Aramæans, the other he left under the command of his brother Abishai. He aroused the enthusiasm of his army by inspiring words: "Let us fight bravely for our people and the city of our God, and may the Lord God do what seemeth good unto Him." Joab then dashed at the Aramæans, and put them to flight. On this, the Ammonites were seized with such fear that they withdrew from the field, and took shelter behind the walls of their capital. It was a most successful achievement. Joab hurried to Jerusalem to report to the king, and to lay before him a plan by which the Aramæans might be totally annihilated, and any future interference on their part prevented.

The victorious army, having been recalled from the Ammonitish territories, was reinforced, and with the king himself at its head pursued the Aramæan enemy on the other side of the Jordan. King Hadadezer, on his part, also sent fresh troops to the aid of his defeated forces, but in a battle at Helam, the Aramæan army was again defeated, and its general, Shobach, fell in the encounter. The vassals of the mighty Hadadezer then hastened to make peace with David.

Tôi (or Tou), the king of Hamath, who had been at war with Hadadezer, now sent his son Joram to David with presents, congratulating him on the victory over their common foe. David followed up his successes until he reached the capital of king Hadadezer, situated on the banks of the Euphrates. The Aramæans were then defeated a third time; their chariots and soldiers could not withstand the attack of the Israelite army. The extensive district of Zobah, to which various princes had been tributary, was divided into several parts.

The king of Damascus, an ally of the king of Zobah, was also defeated by David, and the ancient town of Damascus henceforth belonged to the king of Israel. David placed land-overseers in all the Aramæan territories from Hermon to the Euphrates, in order to enforce the payment of tribute. David and his army themselves must have been astonished at the wonderful result which they had achieved. It rendered the king and his army objects of fear far and wide. Meanwhile the king of the Ammonites had escaped punishment for his insults to the ambassadors of Israel.

In consequence of the campaign against the Aramæans, which lasted nearly a year, the Israelitish army had been unable to resume the war against Hanun. It was only after the great events narrated above that David was again enabled to send his forces, under Joab, against Ammon. Yet another war arose out of the hostilities against this nation. The Idumæans, on the south of the Dead Sea, had also assisted the Ammonites by sending troops to their aid, and these had to be humiliated now. David deputed his second general, Abishai, Joab's brother, to direct the campaign against the Idumæans. Joab was in the meantime engaged in a long contest with the Ammonites, who had secured themselves behind the strong walls of their fortified capital, and were continually making raids on their foes. The Israelitish army had neither battering rams nor other instruments of siege. Their only alternative was to storm the heights of the city, and in their attempts to carry out this plan they were often repelled by the bowmen on the walls. At length Joab succeeded, after repeated attacks, in gaining possession of one part of the city – the Water-Town; he reported this victory to David at once, and urged him to repair to the camp in order to lead in person the attack on the other quarters, so that the honour of the conquest might be entirely his own. When David arrived at Rabbah with fresh troops, he succeeded in subduing the whole town, and in obtaining rich booty. David himself put on his head the golden diadem, richly adorned with precious stones, which had heretofore crowned the Ammonitish idol Malchom (Milchom).

It appears that David did not destroy the city of Rabbah, as he had intended. He merely condemned the male inhabitants, or perhaps only the prisoners, to do hard work, such as polishing stones, threshing with iron rollers, hewing wood with axes, and making bricks. He treated the other prisoners from the various towns in a similar manner. Hanun, the original cause of the war, who had so deeply insulted David, was either killed or driven out of the kingdom. In his stead David appointed his brother Shobi as king. Meanwhile Abishai had been engaged in a war against the Idumæan king, and had utterly routed him in the Valley of Salt – probably in the neighbourhood of the rocksalt mountain, near the Dead Sea. Eighteen thousand Idumæans are said to have fallen there. The rest probably submitted; and for this reason David contented himself with placing excise officers and a garrison over them, as he had done in Damascus and the other Aramæan provinces. The Idumæans, however, seem later on to have revolted against the Israelitish garrison and the tax collectors, and to have massacred them. Joab therefore repaired to Idumæa, caused the murdered Israelites to be buried, and all Idumæan males to be put to death. He was occupied with this war of destruction during half a year, and so thoroughly was the task executed that only a few of the male sex could save themselves by flight. Amongst them was a son or a grandson of the Idumæan king.

By these decisive victories, in the west over the Philistines, in the south over the Idumæans, in the east (on the opposite side

of the Jordan) over the Moabites and Ammonites, and in the north over the Aramæans, David had raised the power of Israel to an unexpected degree. While, at the commencement of his reign, when he was first acknowledged king of all Israel, the boundaries of the country had been comprised between Dan and Beersheba, he now ruled over the widespread territory from the river of Egypt (Rhinokolura, El-Arish) to the Euphrates, or from Gaza to Thapsacus (on the Euphrates). The nations thus subdued were obliged annually to do homage by means of gifts, to pay tribute, and perhaps also to send serfs to assist in building and other severe labour.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.