

Hebrews.

The term Hebrew is used to denote the people who descended from Abraham.

The people who are known by the name Hebrews, came from the other side, as we say of a foreigner, that he is from beyond the sea, and hence the Canaanites might very naturally call them Hebrews or people from the other side.

In the present production, we can give but a very general outline of the history of this extraordinary "people."

1st. Their origin. A man of wealth, wisdom, and integrity was selected by God to be the father and founder of the Hebrew nation, and was favored with many visions and revelations, promises and covenants, all tending to show him the greatness and glory of his posterity.

Abraham was the son of Terah, and was born at Ur, a city of Chaldea, the location of which is uncertain. While he was dwelling in his father's house at Ur, God directed him to leave his country and kindred and go to a land which should be shown him, promising at the same time, to make of him a great nation, and to bless him, and to make his name great, and that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed.

Obedient to the Heavenly call, Abraham took Sarai his wife, and with Terah his father, and other members of the family, left Ur to remove to Canaan, and stopped at Haran. We will not pause to deliberate upon his immediate descendants, but proceed with the promise that his descendants should subdue and possess a most fertile and beautiful country.

About 900 years after Abraham was appointed to this distinction, we find Joseph, his great-grandson, holding one of the principal offices in the government of Egypt, and by a train of remarkable providences, his father Jacob, together with his eleven brethren, also became inhabitants of that country. The great increase of their number and wealth soon provoked the jealousy of the government, and led to a royal decree, that all their male children should be destroyed at the birth. While this decree was in force, about the year 1871 B. C., Moses was born, and being concealed by his mother, he escaped the general slaughter, and was preserved, to be the leader and deliverer of the people.

Being instructed particularly in the religion and expectation of his forefathers, he early became interested in their oppressed condition, and happening to see an Egyptian ill-treat an Israelite, he took part with the latter, and slew the former. Fearing the vengeance of the king, he fled to a distant land, where he remained forty years. He was then divinely directed to return to Egypt, and God was pleased to accomplish his instrumentality the deliverance of the children of Israel from their bondage, and to lead them by a journey of forty years through the wilderness, into the rich and fertile land of Canaan.

Up to this time they had lived under a patriarchal form of government, some traces of which remain through succeeding ages; but in the progress of this eventful journey, God established a government for them, the elements or grand principles of which are found in the law of the Ten Commandments, promulgated from Mount Sinai. This most perfect and admirable constitution or code, embracing as it did, all that pertains to the civil as well as the religious rights and obligations of the people, was formed by God himself, and by Him administered as emphatically Law Giver and Judge and King of Israel, and hence it is called a theocracy.

This theocratic form of government, under various modifications, existed even to the coming of the Messiah.

The Jewish Kings were mere viceroys, bound to govern by certain laws, and fearfully punished for disobedience. They were raised up and displaced by the immediate and frequently visible direction of God. They were subject to his authority; and the prophets, in their long and glorious succession, were appointed to maintain the intercourse between God and his peculiar people, and to reprove and rebuke the kings of Judah and Israel, for all their rebellions against him.

Hence, it is justly inferred that the shocks and revolutions in the Jewish government, however they might interrupt or modify, could never destroy the theocratic relation subsisting between God and the seed of Abraham, until the light of the glorious Gospel arose, and salvation for all, Jews and Gentiles, was proclaimed through the blood of Christ. In due time they entered the land of Canaan, and after a series of severe contests, in which God displayed His power in their behalf, they expelled the original possessors of the soil, and under a long succession of Judges and kings, occupied the country as their promised inheritance.

Their religion. It was evidently the design of God that the Hebrews should be entirely separated and distinguished from all other nations, and to this end their religion and laws were most wisely adapted; and besides this, the rites and ceremonies which they were required to observe, were of the most significant import, and perfectly fitted to engage the attention of such a people.

There was a body of men set apart, to whom was committed all matters relating to religion and law, which under this singular government were one and the same thing. To these persons, who officiated as priests, judges, advocates etc., were allowed one-tenth of all the produce of the land.

The Levites, which were a subdivision of the first class of these officers, had a portion of the lands assigned them; and thus formed a connecting link between the priests and the cultivators of the soil. Commerce was necessarily very limited, as by the very nature of their institutions all connection

with other nations and societies, was in a great measure made impracticable. And yet the feasts, and festivals, which were periodically celebrated, and upon the most important of which the whole nation was required to attend in a body, effectually preserved their social character and habits.

We often read in the Bible of feasts or sumptuous entertainments, and of the customs pertaining to them. They were generally given to celebrate or commemorate some important or joyful event. It was common among the Eastern nations to ask and bestow special favors at these festivals. As the Hebrews brought back with them from their captivity, the custom of lying at meals, so they learned to imitate the Persian voluptuousness. The Romans also were accustomed to this long continuance at entertainments. They assembled early on such occasions, and often remained together all night.

Entertainments in the East are commonly held in the evening, at which time the rooms are brilliantly illuminated. The Roman feast was always a supper, which, however, began about 8 o'clock. We suppose it to have been much the same among the Hebrews. The guests amused themselves with stories or sallies of humor, but more frequently with poetry and music. The custom of the Arabs, resembled those which have been described, and perhaps we may say the same of all oriental countries; and such being the festivity of these occasions, we see how a feast became the emblem of great mirth and gladness.

Some idea may be formed of the number of guests, and the grandeur of an ancient feast, from the fact that Julius Caesar once gave a popular entertainment, the guests of which occupied twenty-two thousand places. The accounts in the Bible, of feasts with a multitude of guests, are not improbable, therefore, as some have alleged.

Under the Mosaic dispensation, the rites of hospitality were rendered sacred, by being connected with religion. The Israelites were not merely allowed, but commanded to rejoice before the Lord in this way. They were ordered to come to the holy place and bring thither their sacrifices, tithes and firstlings, and there (says the law,) "ye shall eat before the Lord your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto." Every member of the family was to join this, and especially the Levite, who had no other inheritance. In these entertainments, not only the children and Levites were to take part, but the slaves of both sexes. The poor, the widow and the orphan were to be invited, and the stranger and the fatherless, and the widow that are among you, and thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt.

In consequence of these regulations, the feasts of the Hebrews were more or less religious observances, and were hence free from the abuses which prevailed on similar occasions among the heathen. We observe, here, likewise, that our Lord gave no new commandment, but simply expounded the ancient law, when he said, "when thou makest a dinner, call the poor, the maimed, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed."

There were also stated seasons of religious worship among the Jews, attended with particular duties and ceremonies, by the observance of which some great event in God's providence was brought into remembrance; such were the Sabbath, which commemorated the creation of the world, the feast of the Passover, and the feast of Pentecost.

The law of the Hebrews, which was given at or near Mt. Sinai, and thus in the wastes of Arabia, and long before any Law-giver arose, of which the world has now any knowledge. A system of laws, and a form of government were prescribed for the children of Israel, which has been the wonder of succeeding ages, and has exerted a boundless influence on the minds and institutions of all succeeding generations of mankind.

As it regards their political history. After forty years' continuance in the wilderness, during which time, every individual but two of the race that left Egypt had died, and given place to their children, they were brought into the land of Canaan. After the death of Joshua, the administration of the government was committed to a body of men called Judges. This was a species of aristocracy, but it would seem that these Judges were appointed only for extraordinary occasions, and for specific purposes. Their power was very great, however. Of these Judges, in all, there were fifteen, from Abimelech to Samson, in whose time the government was changed. When the Hebrews had fallen into idolatrous practices, God suffered their enemies to prevail against them; and as they came to be involved in wars with the neighboring nations, they felt the necessity of a military leader, or some more efficient government; and they asked for a king. Saul was given to them in this relation, but though victorious in many battles, he displeased God, and David, the son of Jesse, was appointed to the throne in his place. Under his reign, Jerusalem was adorned and fortified, and made the seat of government. The temple was greatly advanced, and the prospects of the nation were never more glorious.

He was succeeded by his son Solomon, whose reign forms the most splendid period of the Jewish history, and was distinguished by the erection of the temple of Jerusalem. His costly palace and magnificent court could not be maintained without having contributions from the people, and upon his death and the succession of his son Rehoboam, they demanded some relief from those heavy burdens. This being refused in a very offensive manner, ten of the twelve tribes revolted under Jeroboam, and constituted what was called the kingdom of Israel. Judah, and Benjamin adhered to Rehoboam, and formed the kingdom of Judah. The subjects of the kingdom of Judah were called Jews from this time till the kingdom of Israel, as such, was destroyed, and then the word Jews became the common name for all the descendants of Jacob.

After a series of wars between Judah and Israel, and between them and other nations,

for a period of 350 years, the kingdom of Israel fell into the hands of strangers, and the people of the ten revolted tribes which composed it, were carried captive into Assyria, never to return. The kingdom of Judah too, soon met a similar fate, her people being carried into Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. Seventy long years of bondage passed away before any relief came to them; but then Cyrus, King of Persia, subdued Babylon, and permitted the Jews, then in captivity, to return to their country. But they went back carrying with them the foreign and idolatrous customs and endless dogmas with which they had become familiar in the time of their exile.

The lofty aspirations, the simple piety and pure morality of their better days, were gone. The subtle and self-righteous Pharisee, and worldly-minded Sadducee, and a variety of other sects sprang up, and error, corruption, and superstition prevailed in every form. For three hundred years after their return from Babylon, the Jews were favored with almost uninterrupted tranquility; but at the end of that period, the Romans, seizing a favorable occasion, reduced Judah to the condition of a province of that Empire, and Antipater was appointed by Julius Caesar, the emperor to its government. Soon after Antipater's death, the kingdom fell into the hands of Herod, who, after a cruel reign, which terminated in the first year of our Savior's life, divided it by will between his three sons. In a little more than forty years, however, this dynasty came to an end. Judah sank to a minor province, and thenceforward governors were sent from Rome until the destruction of their once holy and beautiful city of Jerusalem. After this mournful event, the Jews remained subject to the Roman Government, until Adrian became Emperor of Rome, when they rebelled and were entirely dispersed, and so remain to this day.

It has been well said, that to the eye of mere philosophy, nothing can appear more striking than the effects produced upon the world at large, by the opinions and events which originated among the Jewish people. A pastoral family, neither so numerous, so civilized, nor so well instructed in the arts of warlike life as many others in the same quarter of the globe, gradually increased into a powerful community, became distinguished by a system of doctrines and usages different from those of all the surrounding tribes, retaining it, too, amid the numerous changes of condition to which they were subjected, and finally impressed its leading principles upon the most enlightened nations of Asia and Europe.

At a remote era, Abraham crosses the Euphrates, a solitary traveller, not knowing whither he went, but obeying a divine voice which called him from among idolaters, to become the father of a new people, and a rarer faith, at a distance from his native country. His grand-son Jacob, a Syrian, ready to perish, goes down into Egypt with a few individuals, where his descendants, although evil treated and afflicted, became nation great, mighty, and populous, and whence they were delivered by the special interposition of Heaven. In prosperity and adversity they are still the objects of the same vigilant Providence, which reserved them for a great purpose, to be accomplished in the latter days.

W. H. RUSSELL. Farmington, March 15, 1871.

Literary.

Public Education in Russia.

The radical party in Russia has a plan to give a crushing blow to the influence of the nobles, by taking out of their hands the education of the people. Hitherto, says the Pall Mall Gazette, the national schools have been under the control of nobiliary assemblies of the governments and districts, which have very inefficiently performed this as well as the other duties entrusted to them, and have thus given the radicals a ground for demanding a change. That all the schools should be placed directly under the government, and education should be compulsory. Physical and historical science as well as the usual elementary subjects to be taught. The government, of course, easily undertakes the management of the school, and would probably have no objection to its doing so, but the introduction of compulsory education in such a country as Russia is beset with difficulties which under present circumstances appear insurmountable. In the greater part of the country the population is so scattered, and the means of communication are so defective, that it would be impossible to provide anything like a sufficient number of schools to enable every child to be educated. The number of men in Russia, too, who are capable of acting as teachers is very limited. The clergy in the villages are, as a rule, scarcely less ignorant than the peasants, and there are no training schools for teachers, as in other countries.

How little enlightenment there is even among the moneyed classes in Russia, is constantly shown by the verdict of Russian juries. A man stole some clothes from the upper room of a house and afterward sold them. On being tried for the theft, he pleaded that he thought the clothes were his wife's, who was in service there; and although no proof whatever was produced for his statement, he was acquitted. In a second case, a boy twelve years old stole one hundred and sixty-eight roubles; he admitted the theft, but was acquitted on account of his youth, the jury apparently thinking that if they condemned him, his wife would be sentenced to the same punishment as an adult.

Books for Boys.—Edward Eggleston has never wasted any love on the topic of style of literature. The Independent says of it: Give a boy a taste of one of these books of the "Do and Dare" or the "Steam Engine" series, and he will beg, borrow, or steal money to get the rest. Fortunate have been realized out of such books by writers with no

gift but fluency and a clumsy sort of inventiveness. Of course, parents in their innocence knew nothing of the character of these works except that the boys voted them "just splendid," and the religious papers testified that "the young folks read them with avidity." There is nothing a boy likes to dream about so much as the accomplishment of impossible things; and there is nothing much more injurious to his mental habits than this castle-building. But just this side of the boy-nature it is that the "Dash and Dash" books work. Boys navigate a yacht, or they own a brief railroad, all complete, and run it themselves; or, if it is not Optic, but Mayne Reid, who writes, they float for days on impossible logs in impossible forests, with impossible escapes from impossible dangers. The effect of all this it is not hard to see. School soon becomes a prison to the boy whose animal instincts are thus stimulated. Ordinary work is to him like the drudgery of the galleys; and he either runs away in search of the land in which the hero of the red-backed book lived, or he becomes a loafer, dreaming of what might have happened.

From all this weak and watery stuff what a relief a genuine book of adventure like Robinson Crusoe is! How we like to read old "Sanford and Merton," or new "School-days at Rugby," and feel that there are some true books, that not only treat a boy's animal life with sympathy, but lend him genuine help in the battle for manhood.

From Harper's scientific record we gather the following items regarding the German Arctic Expedition. Two vessels undertook the voyage in 1869, one a steamer and the other a sailing ship. The latter was lost, but the crew were saved, after many perils. A portion of the Greenland Coast between latitudes 75 and 77 degrees was put under the German flag and taken possession of; but in behalf of science, little was accomplished, owing to high winds. Extensive meadows were discovered, covered with flowers, butterflies, and bees, and inhabited by herds of reindeer and musk-oxen. The lowest temperature experienced was 58 F. Beds of coal were also found, and many fossil remains, adding new evidence to sustain the theory that these boreal regions once rejoiced in a much warmer climate. Deep-sea collections were made from a depth of 1,500 fathoms.

Literary Items.

A cultivated literary taste is one of the best safeguards for a young man exposed to the temptations of life in a great city. When evening approaches, a feeling of loneliness will creep over the heart of a youth who has but lately left the joys of a loving home circle, now so far away. He feels himself "homeless amid a thousand homes." Then is his hour of peril. A hundred gilded doors are opened wide to welcome him. The theatre blazes forth its manifold attractions, and colored lights flash brightly from the many saloons and halls of pleasure. But also "their steps take hold on hell." If he throws himself within their power, he is lost forever, unless by a superhuman effort he is freed from their chains, and even then the marks of his fetters will go down to the grave with him. To one thus far from home, in a land of strangers, a choice book is a friend indeed. Let him make the little room he calls home as cheery as possible. Place an easy chair in it, and hang up a tasteful picture on the wall.

PRINCETON SEMINARY.—A report which is required by the law of New Jersey every five years, has lately been presented to the Legislature by the Trustees of the Princeton Theological Seminary. The sum of it is as follows: "The real estate belonging to the corporation consists of fourteen acres of land, on which are the buildings—the whole valued at \$119,140. The total value of the personal estate is \$387,815. The funds are invested principally in bond and mortgage on real estate, and securities of the United States.—The amount of income from these sources has been \$129,263, and the expenses \$140,683. There are now in the library 21,681 volumes."

At a supper given at Vienna, in honor of Washington's birthday, Mr. Jay, the American minister, announced that, through the courtesy of the Emperor, new materials for American history had been brought to light in the imperial archives. Several volumes, containing the correspondence of Baron Penten, who was sent to America by the Emperor Joseph II. of Germany, had been discovered. The letters are dated at New York and Philadelphia, from 1784 to 1787. Mr. Jay stated that permission had been given him to take a copy, and he hoped soon to lay these valuable records before the American people.

Scientific and Useful.

THE MARELSTROM.—This celebrated whirlpool is produced by the conflict of tidal currents around the Islands of Logoeodon and Monkeog, lying off the coast of Norway. An intelligent American seaman, about forty years since, sailed through the margin of the maelstrom, and described it as follows: "While navigating a ship from North Cape to Drontheim, I inquired of my Norway pilot about the practicability of running near the maelstrom, and he told me that with a good breeze it could be approached near enough for examination without damage. I at once determined to satisfy myself. We began to near it about 10 A. M., in the month of September, with a fine leading northwest wind. Two good seamen were placed at the helm, and the mate on the quarter deck, all hands at their stations for working ship, and the pilot standing on the bowsprit between the nightlights. I went on the main-topgal yard with a good glass.

"I had been seated but a few moments, when my ship entered the dish of the whirlpool. The velocity of the water altered her course three points toward the centre, although she was going eight knots through the water.

"This alarmed me extremely. For a moment, I thought that destruction was inevitable. She, however, answered her helm quickly, and we ran along the edge, the water foaming around us in every arm, while she was dancing gaily over them. The sensations I experienced are difficult to describe.—Imagine to yourself an immense circle stream of a diameter of one and a half miles, the velocity increasing, as you approached toward the centre, and gradually changing its dark blue color to white, foaming, tumbling, rushing to the vortex, very much concave, as much as the water in a tunnel when half run out. The noise, too, like roaring, dashing, all pressing on the mind at once, presents the most awful, grand, solemn sight I ever experienced.

"We were near it about eighteen minutes, and in sight of it about two hours. It is evidently a subterranean passage. From its magnitude, I should not doubt that instant destruction would be the fate of a dozen of our largest ships, were they drawn in at the same moment. The pilot says that several vessels have been sucked down, and that whales have also been destroyed. The first, I think probably enough, but I rather doubt the latter."

PROFESSOR WINCHELL, of the University of Michigan, has recently promulgated a new theory respecting the origin of the vegetation of the American prairies, namely, that it dates back beyond the historical epoch to the glacial period. He believes the origin of the prairie to be lacustrine; but, contrary to the generally-received opinion, he maintains that lacustrine sediments contain no living germs. Lacustrine deposits, he states, on the contrary, are found everywhere replete with living germs, which, when hidden away from the influence of light and moisture, retain their vitality or power of germination for an indefinite length of time. These living germs of the lacustrine deposits he believes to have been buried during the glacial period, in the course of which the surface was plowed up by glaciers, and afterward exposed to the commotion of the sea, which overspread the land, burying everything in promiscuous ruin; but yet, by this very means, storing away the seeds which, when brought to the surface after the lapse of a geological age, are possessed of vitality, and able to reclothe the barren earth with verdure and beauty. Thus, in proportion as the lacustrine surface became exposed, the flora of the pre-glacial epoch was reproduced. In support of this theory, he brings forward the argument that the fossil plants which have been discovered in the tertiary deposits, show a correspondence of genera, and in some cases even of species, with those existing at the present time.

This wonderful and advantage of photographic microscopy were illustrated during the investment of Paris. The London Times printed an edition intended particularly for the people in Paris. The Times of the 30th ult. gave the following interesting description of the way by which the contents of the paper were conveyed to the Parisians:—"Those pages of the paper which contained communications to relatives in Paris were photographed with great care by the London Stereoscopic and Photographic Company on pieces of thin and almost transparent paper, about an inch and a half in length by an inch in width. On these impressions, there could be seen by the naked eye only two legible words, The Times, and six narrow brown bands representing the six columns of printed matter forming a page of the newspaper. Under the microscope, however, the brown spaces became legible, and every line of the newspaper was found to have been distinctly copied, and with the greatest clearness. The photographs were sent to Bordeaux for transmission thence by carrier pigeon to Paris. When received there they were magnified, by the aid of a magic lantern, to a large size and thrown upon a screen. A staff of clerks immediately transcribed the messages and sent them off to the places indicated by the addresses."

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