

his possession, and the remnant of the degraded Canaanite his bond-servants. For another period of like duration, a period of more than eleven hundred years, the Semitic Israelites made the land their own. The triumphs of David, the glory and the wisdom of Solomon, and the vicissitudes of the divided nationalities of Judah and Israel, protracted until the accomplishment of the great destiny of the princes of Judah, constitute the epos of those who supplanted the settlers in the historic lands lying between the mountains of Syria and the sea, when first "the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, and set the bounds of the people." Then came another displacement. The Semitic Hebrews were driven forth from the land, and for eighteen hundred years, Roman and Saracen, Mongol Turk and Semitic Arab, have disputed the possession of the ancient heritage of the Canaanite.

For very special and obvious reasons the isolation of the Hebrew race, and the purity of the stock, were most carefully guarded by the enactments of their great Law-giver, preparatory to their taking possession of the land of Canaan; yet the exclusive nationality, and the strictly defined purity of race admitted of exceptional deviations of a remarkable kind. While the Ammonite and the Moabite are cut off from all permissive alliance, and the offspring of an union between the Hebrew and these forbidden races is not to be naturalized even in the tenth generation, the Edomite, the descendant of Jacob's brother, and the Egyptian, are not to be abhorred; but the children that are begotten of them are to be admitted to the full privileges of the favoured seed of Jacob in the third generation.

This exception in favour of the Egyptian is a remarkable one. The ostensible reason, viz., that the Israelites had been strangers in the land of Egypt, appears inadequate fully to account for it, when the nature of that sojourn, and the incidents of the Exodus are borne in mind, and would tempt us to look beyond it to the many traces of Semitic character which the language, arts, and civilization of Egypt disclose. Mizraim, the son of Ham, and the brother of Canaan, is indeed ordinarily regarded as the first inheritor of the Nile valley, and this on grounds fully as conclusive as those on which other apportionments of the post-diluvian earth are assigned; but along with the direct evidence of Scripture, we must also take the monumental records of Egypt, which shew that that land was speedily intruded on by very diverse races, and that by the time its civilization was sufficiently matured to chronicle by pictorial and ideographic writings the history of that cradle-land of the world's intellect, its occupants stood in a relation to each other precisely similar to that