

mined. *By the hand of Moses.* Jehovah's plan for the march was made known to Moses, either by a direct communication from heaven, or by a supernatural illumination of his mind, and he, in turn, gave orders to the leaders of the tribes.

### II. Israel's Guide, 29-32.

Vs. 29, 30. *Hobab, the son of Raguel.* Raguel or Reuel (Ex. 2 : 18) is otherwise known as Jethro, this, as is commonly held, being his honorary title. He had come to visit Moses at Sinai, Ex., ch. 18. *Father in law.* Hobab, his son, was, therefore, Moses' brother-in-law, —brother to Zipporah, Moses' wife, Ex. 2 : 21. He, with probably a portion of his tribe, had come to visit the Israelites as they were about to advance to Canaan. *The place of which the Lord said.* See God's promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Gen. 12 : 7 ; 13 : 15 ; 17 : 8 ; 26 : 24 ; 28 : 13 ; Ex. 3 : 8. *Come thou with us, and we will do thee good.* With good right could Moses give this invitation and assurance. For he offered to Hobab and his tribesmen, in exchange for their wandering, purposeless desert life, a share in the glorious task of building up on the soil of Canaan a nation in league with God, destined to extend His kingdom and make it a blessing to the whole world. Besides, Hobab would share, not only the splendid future of Israel, but their present blessings as well—the manna, the guiding pillar, the tabernacle, the continual presence of God. *I will not go ;* a refusal springing from the true Arab's passionate love of his country and of his life of liberty, despite its hardships.

Vs. 31, 32. *Instead of eyes.* Hobab's greater experience of wilderness life would make his help of the utmost value. The alliance with the Israelites therefore would be to the advantage of both. The opportunity of usefulness is one of the strongest appeals to a noble nature. *If thou go with us,* etc. This was an offer of a formal treaty putting Hobab and the Midianites on an equality with Israel. The offer was apparently accepted. At any rate, some descendants of Moses' father-in-law were afterwards found in Canaan, dwelling with Israel, Judg. 1 : 16. The alliance included, however, only a portion of the Midianites, others of whom long con-

tinued to be among the enemies of Israel, ch. 22 : 4 ; Judg., chs. 6 to 8.

### III. Israel's Trust, 33-36.

Vs. 33, 34. *Three days.* The first move after so long a rest at one place would be a difficult one to make, and the Israelites would cover no great distance in three days, probably not more than ten miles a day, if as much as this. *The ark ;* the ark of the covenant (see on v. 11), which was borne, with the tabernacle, in the midst of Israel, v. 21 and ch. 2 : 17. *Went before them.* It is probable that many of the Israelites moved about over a large area with their herds and flocks to find pasture. The ark was the rallying point wherever it went. *To search out a resting place.* The company which bore the ark went in advance to fix upon a suitable site for a camp. To this the rest of the host gathered as soon as they could.

Vs. 35, 36. *When the ark set forward. . . Moses said, Rise up, Lord, etc.* This was a sort of ritual hymn, which long continued to be the watchword of the people. (See Ps. 68 : 1.) The warlike tone of the hymn arose from the fact that the ark was supposed to lead them into battle (see 1 Sam. 4 : 3-11). It was the token of God's leadership—the pledge of victory. *When it rested, . . . Return, O Lord, etc.* This was the hymn of peace after victory. We catch an echo of it in Ps. 132 : 8, which celebrates the removal of the ark to Jerusalem by King David. It was an anticipation of Israel's rest in Canaan.

### Light from the East

MONTH—The Hebrew month was lunar, that is, it extended from one new moon to another, which is about twenty-nine days and a half. Twelve of these months would make a year of 354 days, but it was evident that the sun did not come round to the same position again until after 365 days. So to make the year according to the moon correspond to the year according to the sun, they introduced an extra month three times in every eight years. In the fifth century B. C. they adopted a calendar devised by an Athenian named Meton, which had seven extra months in nineteen years. The pass-over was not allowed to come before the vernal equinox.