

THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

VOL. XXXII.—SEPTEMBER, 1896.—No. 3.

REVIEW SECTION.

I.—LIGHT ON THE PENTATEUCH FROM EGYPTOLOGY.

BY PROFESSOR A. H. SAYCE, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S., UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, ENGLAND.

EGYPT was the land in which Israel grew from a family into a nation. It there passed through the "iron furnace" of bondage and trial which fitted it to receive the law delivered from Sinai. The memory of its sufferings in "the land of Ham" and of the mighty arm which had rescued it never faded out of the national consciousness. It lay at the background not only of the history of the people but of their religious convictions as well.

When, therefore, the hieroglyphic writing of ancient Egypt first came to be read, it was thought that some allusion to the Israelites would be found in it. On the wall of a tomb at Thebes a scene was painted from an Egyptian brick-yard, and it was assumed that the brickmakers must have been the descendants of Jacob. In the inscriptions of the eighteenth and two following dynasties mention is made of a people called Aperin, who were employed in conveying stone from the quarries of the eastern desert for the public buildings of Egypt, and in "Aperin" Chabas and other Egyptian scholars professed to see the name of the Hebrews. But with fuller knowledge came the conclusion that neither in the brickmakers of the Theban tomb nor in the Aperin of Thothmes III. and the Ramessides could the children of Israel be recognized, and such light as the Egyptian monuments threw upon the Pentateuch had to be restricted to illustrations of it from the manners and customs, the beliefs and practises which the progress of Egyptology has revealed.

In fact, the more we came to know of the Egyptian monuments, the less likelihood did there seem to be that any direct reference to the Israelites would be found among them. The inscriptions which have been preserved to us are almost exclusively inscribed on the walls of temples and tombs. The subjects of them are accordingly either