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REVIEW SECTION.

I.—THE PENTATEUCHAL DISCUSSION—PRESENT OUTLOOK.

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BEFORE the present discussion began, a definite theory of the origin and structure of the Pentateuch (or Hexateuch) can scarcely be said to have existed. It was simply held, in a general way, that it came from Moses. Those who hold substantially to the same opinion have now a much clearer conception of what they mean when they say that it came from Moses. They do not deny that Moses is likely to have had documentary sources of information—mostly, however, in Genesis—of which he made considerable use; that he may have had the help of historiographers, possibly professional, in bringing the books to their present form; that the last part of Deuteronomy, as well as Joshua, were written after his death; or that all the books, but especially Genesis, contain evident traces of editorial supervision, apparently intended to render certain geographical and other obscure statements more intelligible, although they maintain, as suggested, that such editorial matter is mostly obvious in itself and of very limited extent. They do not deny that there are different codes of laws, three in number, in the Pentateuch, whose *immediate* circumstances and purpose are unlike. But they hold, with no less tenacity than ever, that the Pentateuch is properly Mosaic in that, essentially, it arose in his age, was, at least in part, written by him, and bears throughout the stamp of his personality and masterly hand; that its different strata of laws are in perfect harmony with one another when the circumstances of their original promulgation in the Mosaic period and their immediate object are sufficiently considered;* and they stand firmly by the historical character of the matter of these books and the strictly literal interpretation to be put upon such expressions as “the Lord spake unto Moses,” etc.

The theory which has arisen to dispute the way with this original and, until now, almost universally prevalent one, offers also the boldest contrasts

* See the writer's paper on “The Codes” in “Moses and his Recent Critics,” Funk & Wagnalls, New York, 1889.