

EGYPT'S TESTIMONY AND INFLUENCE IN THE PENTATEUCH.

We would expect, *a priori*, traces of Egyptian influence on the pages of the Pentateuch. For it is scarcely possible that the descendants of a race that had inhabited Egypt for fully four centuries, would not speak the language, or adopt, to some extent, the customs of the country. And it is incredible that within forty years they should or could forget what they had learned. Nor does there seem any valid reason why they should obliterate their past life, and not use the material which they had acquired in the land of their sojourn. If Moses is the author, and if the contents of the Books are historical verities, there would be a necessity for strong traces of Egyptian influence. Though the Hebrews were to forsake the idols of Egypt, there was no command forbidding them to use their knowledge of mechanical arts and architecture. Nor yet was there a necessity to ignore any moral or religious truth, which they obtained from the Egyptian Cultus. It was imperative, however, that the Hebrews should not recognize the idolatrous system of the country, nor be guilty of the terrible vices connected with it. During their desert-life history Jehovah was preparing them for their national mission in the future. This was accomplished negatively, by isolation from contact with heathenism, as a powerful and consolidated system in Egypt, positively, by giving the Law as the standard of life, and by revealing Himself as the Author of forgiveness and holiness.

But did that purpose require an absolute forgetfulness of much they had learned in Egypt? I answer, no. There was no necessary connection between their knowledge of weaving, dyeing and metallurgy, and the idolatry of Egypt. Even if fine linen and wrought gold were intimately associated, in the mind of the Hebrews, with the Egyptian priesthood, was that to constitute a reason why they should not weave linen or work in precious metals any more? On the contrary, their knowledge of the practical arts was utilized in the service of Jehovah. Thus the force of association of ideas was destroyed or weakened.

Besides even a divine enactment would have been impotent, unless the memory and mental acquirements of the nation were first destroyed. Instead, Jehovah made the wisdom both of Moses and the people subservient to his glory and their good. As the Roman roads and dikes in England and Scotland, that remained after the Saxon, Danish and Norman invasions, testify to the occupation of those countries, so the presence of Egyptian art, customs, architecture, and priestly regulations, are a few of the permanent facts that verify the history, and show extensive influence on the life and religious rites of the Hebrews, and meet the *a priori* requirements of the case.

There is no danger, in this theory, of conflict with the question of inspir-