

families, or groups of settlers, whose grandfathers were rigid Scotch Presbyterians or simple English country folk, and compare it with the prescribed rules of daily life observed by the preceding generation in the old country ; what sort of parallel would be furnished by the two ? Would it be reasonable to argue from the actual life of the colonial grandchildren, that the religion of the grand-parents could only be the development of a later and more civilized age ?

It seems to me to be forgotten in this kind of comparison between Deuteronomy and the later history, that the Israel of the Exodus lay, so to say, under the shadow of a single hand. The area of a second-rate English city would have comprised them all. Their organization was perfect ; their government centralized and strong ; the Divine presence openly manifested ; at least, this is the picture which contemporary records have presented to our view. Every transgression and disobedience received condign punishment at once. There was no difficulty in this. But two generations later this small handful of people, or, rather, their grand-children, were dispersed over the whole of Palestine,—a country, I will not say partially civilized, but very partially cleared. The very seat of Joshua's government was seriously menaced by wild beasts as much as *seven centuries later* (2 Kings xvii. 24, 25).

Now, what should we naturally expect under such a condition of affairs ? What *could* we expect but a relapse into something like barbarism ? Without churches or schools, or anything that could be called education ; a few persons, who were supposed to teach, scattered in forty-eight places at uneven distances throughout the country, themselves colonists like the rest ; with numerous idols and shrines still standing, and idolatrous worship continued by the natives in every part ; what else *could* happen in the nature of things, *except* a loss of the religion of Sinai and of Moses' life ? It would have been a moral miracle had it happened otherwise.

What else is the actual record of the book of Judges, taken as it stands ? The seed sown in Canaan, sparsely and sparingly, is at first choked by the rank vegetation of the half-cultivated wild. But when it begins to spring up here and