

## Original Articles.

## THE INFLUENCE OF THE HEBREW MIND ON THE WORLD.

## PART I.

The study of the history of the different races of mankind is interesting as well as important. Each race has its own separate influence, and forms a link in the great chain of humanity, and not only fills a place on the world's surface and swells the number of the human family, but also either directly, or indirectly, affects the whole. Each is either decaying, or being mixed up with others, or rising to prominence and power, and for a time to have a conspicuous position in the world; or there has been one that has been swept away on the tide of time and change.

"Like a snow flake on the river,

A moment while, then gone for ever—"

yet it has been only dissolved, not annihilated, and still bears its own part in the analysis of the constituency of existing nations. As the tree it falls in the forest, and crumbles into dust, makes a substance and a soil for another to grow more vigorously than itself, or, as the more weakly decays, that the more vigorous may have room to live; so in the wise arrangements of Providence have we seen it in the history of the world, that no race has existed, is extant, or extinct in vain. Look at our own history. The ancient Britons fused into the Anglo Saxons, and they again into the Saxon Normans—a great and a noble progeny which many tribes have acted and aided to bring to maturity and power—and all lost, absorbed, in the one that now exists. We can, in our own history, see the admixture of rude and warlike tribes, and the steady progress of learning, civilization and power. We can see diversity growing into unity, antagonisms subsiding into combination, and races which have differed in language, manners, and customs, forming a great nation. We can see these Islanders of the North Sea, with Angles, and Celts, and Saxons, and Danes, and Normans, now a one mighty people, constituting the bulwark of freedom and Christianity. We can see that the whole of this great northern continent is destined at no distant year to be under the sway of a branch of our race. We can see India being gradually conquered by our arms, and its majestic idolatry destined to yield to our faith; and Australasia, that new world in the Southern Sea, fast being peopled by our "kinmen, according to the flesh." But there are opposites to ourselves, as we look at the races which were great and renowned in the past. There were the fierce Tartars sweeping over Asia, and then encircled with a warlike glory, but now their name has in it no alarm, and their battle cry causes no dread. There were the Moors with the crescent, the symbol of their faith, and the scimitar, the instrument of their prowess, ruling northern Africa, and carrying their arms into Europe, and in old Spain defying the legions of Rome; but now their glory has departed, and they have sunk back into petty tribes. The Vandals and the Goths have had, too, their rise, their conquests, their glory, and their fall.

But we turn to a race the most remarkable in the past, and which exists undiminished under all changes, and is destined to live and rule when many of the present races shall have perished, or be indistinguishably mixed up in new ones; and when dynasties shall be changed, and when powers shall be broken, this one shall be gathered back from its expatriation; and perhaps, in the long line of men, prove that it is the only one that cannot be destroyed. We refer to the Jews. Already there have been, undeniably, about them, a severity of fate, a tossing on the waves of change, and an existability under every vicissitude which render them both a peculiar and a remarkable people. How many changes in all nations, of rule, of race, of language, since Moses, that wonderful and divinely commissioned Hebrew chief went from the solitudes of Midian to demand from Pharaoh the freedom of his people! How many kingdoms that then were, are now unknown in historic annals! How many great nations have been totally lost, people and language, since the emancipation of the Jewish tribes from Egypt! How many nations that held the rule of the world for a time, have risen since then, and perished too! Where are the Egyptians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Medes, Greeks and Romans? All have passed away. Changes complete have come over them, but here are the Jews, that have come down the stream of time with features, and language and religion, unchanged; and while greater means were taken for their destruction than ever were applied to any

other people, yet there is the solitary and the strange fact that they live. They live while those who carried them away captive have perished, all of them,—and Chaldean and Roman glory have departed, and neither a representative of a Pharaoh, a Nimrod, nor of a Romulus can be found; and scattered though they be, they anticipate a time when Canaan shall be re-peopled by them, when their national superiority shall be felt on the world, and when even the very people who despise and persecute them shall be glad "to take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, say'ng, we will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."

The "chosen people of God" are not despicable, though they are despised. They are not powerless, though they are so often and so severely persecuted. They are a strong nation, though they have no country which by actual possession they can call their own. They are not to be treated with contempt, though they have been through the world a "by-word and a hissing; and though the "Jewish quarter" in almost all cities where they are congregated in great numbers, is poor, and dirty, and crowded,—yet there exists there, and there goes thence, a mysterious power that is felt in the splendid palaces of Gentile nobles. The Jews are not the pariahs of the populations, even though they seem to be the outcasts; but they are a race living among other races, execrated, and yet outliving execration,—scorned, and yet courted,—often denied their place and their rights in the social position, and yet finding a place for themselves greater than that which is ostensibly allowed to them. These may seem paradoxes, and yet they are facts in the condition and history of this peculiar people,—for Jewish captives and slaves have ruled the very kings who conquered them, and have been the political masters of the very countries which robbed them of a national existence. Custom has led many to speak of them with contempt; but they are not all the old clothe-men, and low slop-shoppers, and trinket peddlars, and brokers, and blood-suckers, in the character of unconscionable, extortionate money-lenders, which the popular idea has so severely and unjustly attached to them; for there have been, and there are among them still, many men of the highest intellect in the fields of literature, science and art; and there are those of them, not a few, who are industriously weaving their share of the web of political economies, and who bear a silent, but a powerful influence, on the social condition of the world. And if many of them have sunk low, and have characters, and professions, and usages, which are to be condemned, and which have unjustly given a stigma to the whole, yet in many cases, it may perhaps be said in all, that it is more their misfortune than their fault, and is more the consequence of the social position into which they have been driven, than any avowed and deliberate choice of their own.

Of all races, the Jewish is esteemed the one to be most subjected to contempt. The language, the tone, the laws of opprobrium have been applied to this people, and we may well ask why is this? We can understand it in regard to Christian nations, because there was in them the persecuting spirit; a spirit begun and encouraged by the church, and which proceeded from the conviction that it was doing religious service, a truly meritorious deed to lay the hand of man on those who were already bearing heavily the hand of God; and that this was fulfilling prophecy, and executing a divine warrant to retaliate on those who had crucified the Saviour. But it is more difficult to understand how it is that in heathen lands they should so often have had a severe measure of persecution meted out to them. In countries not Christian, there have not been the same religious prejudices at work, and yet there have been, as there are still, hostilities to scattered Israel. The strong, undying national feeling of the Jews, and their strictness of worship, as well as direct opposition of their religion to idolatry, no doubt, contributed to isolate them from those among whom they dwelt; but we cannot help thinking that there is also a reason deeper still, in the inscrutable providence of God, who gave them up to just punishment, from the pitiless scorn and cruelty of those among whom they made their wretched sojournings.—They were driven as aliens into every land, and the very fact that they were aliens, along with their religion and their talents, made them to be feared and hated. They could live in no country without their power, in some way, being felt, and the fact of their aiming at power, being seen, as in the case of Mordecai with the imperious Haman, begat against themselves national jealousies, and relentless proscriptions. Yet, notwithstanding all the measures of persecution, confiscation, imprisonment and extradition, and even death itself, which have been carried out against them, and all the reproach to which they have been subjected;