

HOSEAH, AMOS AND MICAH.**A STUDY OF RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL LIFE.**

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We desire, with the aid of these three prophets, Hoseah, Amos and Micah, to lift the veil and reveal, so far as we can, the religious and social life of the people of the Kingdom of Israel in the eighth century B.C., and, especially, in the latter half of that century. Nor will the task be such a difficult one as we may imagine; these prophets are so rich in their portraiture of current events, while they declare the will of God to the sinful people.

The political and military history of the kingdom is soon told. The inhabitants imitated the people of the southern kingdom of Judah in looking, now to Assyria, now to Egypt, for help. They did not turn to Jehovah, or they only turned to Him in a half-hearted way; and, accordingly, Assyria, on which they leaned, became the source of their downfall. There can have been no little courage, however, in that small people perched upon their rock, no little military organization and discipline, no little military skill, when, after all their reverses, they withstood the might of Shalmeneser and Sargon for three years. One is reminded of the defence of Plevna by Osman Pasha; but the defence of Samaria must have been a much more serious and terrible affair, when the besieged were reduced to such straits as are told us both in the prophetic and historical books.

There appears to have been great commercial activity among the inhabitants of the northern kingdom. The corn market was in full swing; there was a busy traffic in oil and wine. The farmer brought his well-laden beasts of burden through the city gates, and found a ready market for his produce. The retail shops also were busy. We almost hear the clink of the weights in the scales, and see the petty merchant groaning