SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

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J. WELLHAUSEN

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OF

ISRAEL AND JUDAH

BY

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PREFACE.

THE following Sketch first appeared as the article ISRAEL in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* in 1881. It was afterwards reprinted in 1885, as an appendix to the English translation of my *Prolegomena*. That volume is now out of print, and there were difficulties in the way of an immediate reissue of the *Prolegomena* which do not apply to a simple reprint of the historical sketch. Nor is there any intrinsic reason why the two should not be separated; the latter therefore now appears, for the third time, as an independent booklet.

Marburg in Hessen
4 Juli 1891

Ehrerbietig
Jhr
Wellhausen

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CHAPTER I.

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE NATION.

ACCORDING to the Book of Genesis, Israel was the brother of Edom, and the cousin of Moab and Ammon. These four petty peoples, which may be classed together as the Hebrew group, must at one time have formed some sort of a unity and have passed through a common history which resulted in their settlement in south-eastern Palestine. The Israelites, or rather that section of the Hebrew group which afterwards developed into Israel, appear at first to have been the immediate neighbours of Edom, and to have extended westwards towards the border of Egypt. As regards the ethnological position of the Hebrews as a whole, tradition has it that they had connections not only with the Aramæans of

Osrhoene (Nahor), but also with certain of the old inhabitants of the Sinaitic peninsula (Kenites, Amalek, Midian). To the Canaanites, whose language they had adopted, their relation was that of foreign conquerors and lords to a subject race, (Gen. ix. 26).[1]

Some fifteen centuries before our era a section of the Hebrew group left its ancient seat in the extreme south of Palestine to occupy the not distant pasture lands of Egypt (Goshen), where they carried on their old calling, that of shepherds and goatherds. Although settled within the territory of the Pharaohs, and recognising their authority, they continued to retain all their old characteristics —their language, their patriarchal institutions, their nomad habits of life.

But in course of time these foreign guests were subjected to changed treatment. Forced labour was exacted of them for the construction of new public works in Goshen, an exaction which was felt to be an assault upon their freedom and honour, and which in point of fact was fitted to take away all that was distinctive of their nationality. But they had no remedy at hand, and had submitted in despair, until Moses at last saw a favourable opportunity of deliverance. Reminding his oppressed brethren of the God of their fathers, and urging that their

[1] Comp. Wellhausen, *Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der histor. Bücher* (Berlin, 1889), p. 342 *sqq.*