

X.

THE CHARACTER.

THE reader may remember that the character of the extant Hebrew MSS, in which the Hebrew Old Testament is printed, the so-called "Square Hebrew," is not the character used by the ancient Israelite writers; but is an Aramaic alphabet adopted by the Jews sometime after the Return from the Captivity.

From the Siloam inscription¹ and other evidence we know that the ancient Hebrew alphabet was very similar to the alphabet of the Moabite Stone given below.

On the Stone the letters are not absolutely alike, *e.g.* one "B" is not the exact facsimile

¹ See pp. 77 f.

THE CHARACTER

MOABITE ALPHABET.

	SQUARE HEBREW.	MOABITE.	SILLOAM INSCRIPTION.		SQUARE HEBREW.	MOABITE.	SILLOAM INSCRIPTION.
	ז				L		
B	ב				M		
G	ג				N		
D	ד				S		²
H	ה				' P		
W	ו				Q		
Z	ז				R		
H	ה				S		
T	ט	¹	²		T		
Y	י						
K	כ						

¹ This letter occurs only in 'Aṯaroth, lines 10, 11. There is some question as to how far it can be actually seen; hence it was omitted from the table in the *Dictionary of the Bible*.

² Occurs in the Gezer Calendar but not in the Siloam Inscription.

THE MOABITE STONE

of every other, but the foregoing table gives a good idea of their average shape. The letters of the Siloam inscription are given where they differ essentially from the Moabite letters ; where they are not given it may be understood that they are approximately the same.