Hosea - Commentaries by James M. Freeman

Manners and Customs of the Bible, 600. The Chimney

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Hosea 13:3. As the smoke out of the chimney.

This rendering conveys a wrong impression, since chimneys are comparatively a modern invention, and were entirely unknown to the Hebrews. In an Oriental dwelling the openings which let in the light are the same that let out the smoke; though it is said that in some houses there are, in addition to the lattice windows, holes near the ceiling specially designed for the escape of smoke. The fire being made on the “hearth” in the middle of the floor (see the note on Jeremiah 36:22, #553) the smoke makes its way upward through the room and gets out through such apertures as it can find, usually the windows. Arubbah, here rendered “chimney,” is in other places translated “window.” It would be much more correct to read this text, “as the smoke out of the window,” remembering meanwhile that the window is different from the kind we are accustomed to see. See note on Judges 5:28 (#228).