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THE NEW BIBLICAL GUIDE.



THE NEW  
BIBLICAL GUIDE.

VOL. III.

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EDITED BY THE  
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*"What are we to Believe?" "Modern Discoveries and the Bible;"*  
*"The Inspiration and Accuracy of the Holy Scriptures."*

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# THE NEW BIBLICAL GUIDE

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## MODERN DISCOVERIES AND THE BIBLE.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE TOWER OF BABEL.

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WE now resume our study of those chapters in the early history of mankind which the Scripture alone has preserved. In the tenth chapter of Genesis, the relations between the various races are shown in clear and lasting outlines; and now in the eleventh chapter, a not unnatural question finds its answer. If mankind was originally one, what broke its unity? If the fathers of the nations once dwelt in the same paternal home, and spoke one common primeval speech, whence have sprung those huge differences which separate the languages of to-day?

We shall listen, first of all, to the Scripture narrative. "The whole earth," we are told, "was of one lip, and was one in words" (Genesis xi. 1). That is, men used the same words, and they pro-

nounced their words in the same way. There was no difference in language; and there were, as yet, no differing dialects. Speech placed no barrier between man and man. Communion was immediate and perfect. The unity of the race was untouched.

The first chapter in the unhappy story is that which tells of the change which men made in their abode. The ark, in which Noah and his family were preserved, had rested in Armenia, which had also been the Divinely-selected abode of man at his creation. It was chosen to be the cradle of the second race as it had been the cradle of the first. But, as men multiplied, the barren table-land no longer sufficed. Men must either separate and be scattered abroad, or, if the race *will* keep together, a more fertile territory must be found. The latter course seems to have been resolved upon, and so they passed down into the rich, but enervating, lowlands. They journeyed together, taking their flocks and herds with them. Proceeding westward, "they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there" (Genesis xi. 12).

The fertile plains, watered from one side by the Euphrates, and from the other by the Tigris, formed too desirable a region to be abandoned. The fathers of humanity consequently resolved upon a permanent settlement. One of the first results of this decision was the exchange of the tents, which had hitherto sufficed, for more substantial, enduring, and luxurious, dwellings. There was no stone to build with, for Babylonia has neither hill nor quarry; but human

ingenuity has overcome many a greater difficulty than that. They could mould and bake the clay, with which the land abounded, and so fashion building material as durable as stone. We should like to call the attention of those who believe that we are here dealing with dim and misty traditions, and not with a revelation that lifts the veil and shows us the past in sharp, clear, outline, to the words which follow. The reader will notice how, in one word, the condition of the society of the time is perfectly mirrored. It is the word translated "go to," but better rendered by our now idiomatic "come." "And they said one to another, Come! let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly." In a state of perfect liberty and equality, it is in just such bright, cheerful fashion that a plan is mooted, and co-operation is suggested and secured.

So far, nothing had been done in which evil could have been supposed even to lurk. But the rapid increase of the new race begot fears which seemed to call for decided action. The unity of the race was threatened. In the cry of new generations, "Give us room that we may dwell," they were reminded of the Divine command, to replenish the earth, which everywhere waited for man's home-coming—for the advent of God's princes to their inheritance. Man was to grasp the reins of nature's forces, to subdue the earth, and lead up its strength into more glorious beauty, and into fuller and more manifold ministry. He was to inhabit its waste places, and to make its wildernesses rejoice and blossom as the rose. God's



SITE OF ANCIENT BABYLON.

plan for man's life was not congested city life, with its crowding, and crushing, and strife; with its frightful contrasts of rioting in endless abundance, and its want of all things; with its Satanic pride and its cringing meanness. God meant all His children to have breathing space and a wide domain; and He meant them to be everywhere *men*. He meant them not only to dwell together, but also to walk with Him. As He led Abraham forth from city life, from the home and the land of his fathers, so He meant man to live daily and hourly in felt contact with His own Divine ministry, and to have over and above all else the consciousness that in God he lived, and moved, and had his being. But men feared this separation from their fellows; and, rejecting the command of God, they set themselves to resist the pressure of the forces which would have led them to obey it. They said, "Come! let us build us a city." That is, "Let us not only refuse to separate; but let us so bind ourselves together that separation will be neither desirable nor possible" (verses 3, 4).

They had another fear. Man's life, mighty as its span still was, lay under the shadow of the doom of death. The fathers of the new race saw the generations springing up behind them. The new life, with its ever-growing force, would soon take the place of the old, and wash away every trace of its existence. No man can think unmoved of his passing away and leaving behind him no memento of his ever having lived, and thought, and worked upon this green earth and beneath these blue skies. And, with the fathers

of our race, the thirst for an earthly immortality seems to have been a passion. Their hearts rebelled against the hardness of their fate, and they bent all their ingenuity and strength to sweep back the waters of oblivion. They would, in spite of God's command, keep humanity together. For His ideal of human life they would substitute another. Where God would separate, they would congregate. They would organise men into a community that should be bound together for ages. They would establish ordinances and laws, and rule mankind even from their tombs. And they would, in addition to all else, rear one gigantic monument, stable as the rocks, and lofty as the heavens, which would perpetuate their memory to earth's latest day. It mattered nothing to them, apparently, that they were arrogating to themselves the place of God, and that they were, in effect, erasing His name from the human spirit that they might write their own names upon it. It was nothing to them that they prevented men walking apart with Him, and gathered them rather round themselves. They said, "Come! let us build us a city, and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered upon the face of the whole earth."

The building of the city marked a crisis in human history. There were other designs, no doubt, behind, as yet unformed, but which would speedily develop. Man would have been made to bear, even in his infancy, the yoke of human mastery. The brotherhood of the race would have been effaced before it

had time to impress itself upon custom or upon law. Freedom would have been lost at the very beginning, and slavery would have moulded the spirit, and have impressed itself upon the institutions of humanity from the very first. In that crowded city life, too, with man displacing God, all evil would have rushed up as in a hot-bed. The apostasy of man would have been accomplished as in a day, and the revolt would have been more utter, more self-conscious, and, therefore, more defiant of God, than this world, with all its sinfulness, has ever yet witnessed. It was a time which called for the stretching forth of God's hand; and the Scripture lifts the veil from the unseen:—

“And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the LORD said, Behold, the people *is* one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.”

Judgment was tempered with mercy. No man perished for his sin; but the counsel of the wise was turned into foolishness, and the separation, which they had fought against, became a necessity and a relief.

Such is the Scripture story; and it may be well to note, in view of an identification which awaits us

farther on, that the Scripture speaks of a city *and* a tower, not a city *with* a tower. The two undertakings, though begun at the same time, were quite distinct. This will remove any difficulty that might be felt in identifying the Tower at Borsippa with the Tower of Babel. Borsippa, though some miles distant from Babylon, was situated between the inner and outer walls of that great city. But we have now to ask whether recent investigation and discovery have tended to justify the faith which has held this narrative for truth, or whether they support the unbelief which has doubted it and scoffed at it as myth and fable. That unbelief has been outspoken and triumphant. The notion that there could be any shadow of defence was not to be entertained. Davidson, in his *Introduction*, refers to the narrative as "an example of a pure myth," and speaks of "the grossly anthropomorphic language in the fifth verse," in which the Lord is said to have gone down "to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded." One fact, not generally noticed, shows how suddenly a laugh may be stilled. *It is only here and again in the account of the destruction of Sodom* that we read of God's coming down to see what was being done, and to reward men according to their deeds. That fact is remarkable enough, it will be admitted, to be noted and pondered. There are judgments enough narrated in the Old Testament, but in regard to none of them save these two do we read of God's "coming down."

It can not be true, then, that this is to be ascribed

to "grossly anthropomorphic" ideas; for if such were the notions entertained by the writers of Scripture their expression would not be confined to those two instances. But is there any lesson to be read there? Every student of the Bible is impressed by its suggestiveness; and it would not surprise us to find that these statements are meant to lead to a still deeper study of those incidents. The attempt at Babel to unify humanity, and to redeem (by human devices) from the curse of sin, is typical of the revolt of the last times. The Anti-christ—apparently, too, at Babylon—will repeat this very attempt. *That will be frustrated by the Lord's coming.* Sodom, on the other hand, symbolises the final destruction of the world "reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (II. Peter iii. 7). In connection with that, also, there will be a revelation of God. "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was no place found for them" (Rev. xx. 11). The mention of the Lord's coming in connection with those two events in man's primeval history invests them with a new significance, and shows that the words were given by Him who sees the end from the beginning.

A closer study of the passage will supply other reasons for surprise at the contempt with which "scholars" have viewed it. We may notice, to begin with, the statement that the three families came upon the land of Shinar as "they travelled

from the east." This has been pointed to as an inconsistency. The position of Armenia, the northern part of the Central Asian table-land—which, we know from various indications, was the cradle of the race—would have necessitated, it is said, an entirely different route. Armenia lies to the north of Babylonia, and the descendants of Noah, in seeking the land of Shinar, must have travelled southward, and not from the east. This has been felt as a difficulty, even where there was no thought of urging it as a contradiction. Kalisch translates, "They journeyed *in* the east," instead of from the east, and, in his notes, says "they migrated all *southwards*." Even the margin of the Authorised Version ventures an alternative rendering, suggesting the translation "eastward," instead of "from the east," thus actually reversing the line of march indicated in the text! One is inclined to ask—and that with astonishment—why any difficulty should ever have been felt, and why the Scripture phrase should not have been gratefully accepted as a valuable hint of the line of march pursued by the sons of Noah. It is plainly indicated that they did not set out *to seek the land of Shinar*. They chanced upon it in the course of their search for a desirable settlement. Why, then, should it be insisted upon that they must have taken a straight course to reach it? If, in reading Scripture, we are to be on the outlook for whatever may excite a suspicion of inconsistency, would not the statement, that they had travelled southwards, have served equally well with, if not still better than, this, that

they were travelling "from the east" when they came upon it? A glance at the map, too, would have at once suggested another explanation. It is quite true that Armenia lies to the north of Babylonia, but it is equally true that the table-land, of which it forms part, trends away to the south-east. It lies on the map like a broad line ruled from north-west to south-east. What more likely, then, than that they, first of all, in leaving their old home, kept along the table-land, until, finding themselves far enough south, they descended into the plains, and then travelled westward? Looking upon the map, this would strike anyone as the probable explanation, and we may add that he would feel thankful that this phrase, shedding light as the Scripture so often does upon a vast vista with the lightest touch, tells us almost the entire story of their first wandering. But investigation, as Dr. Kitto has shown long ago in his *Sacred Geography*, has given the most complete answer to the objection, and proved that in this expression, so long a stumbling-block, the Scripture bears the stamp of perfect truthfulness. The route which prudence and even necessity would point out for such a caravan to-day, largely composed as it was of women and children, and flocks and herds, is just that which seems to have been taken by the fathers of the race.

Coming now to the main part of the narrative—the building of the city and the tower, and the consequent dispersion of the human race—have we any proof that these are real events in human history? It might have happened that, in dealing with so

remote a period, no proof was possible ; but modern discovery has now supplied what my readers will feel to be a strong demonstration. There were always traces, however, in ancient tradition, which were felt to be significant. It is the fashion, no doubt, in certain quarters, to designate all such traditions "myths," and to dismiss them as unworthy of consideration. It was thus that the early traditions of Rome were treated, till investigation demonstrated that those so-called myths had more of history in them than the wisest had suspected. Even a myth must have had an origin. The outgrowth may be strange, but its roots are set down somewhere in the life of the past. The story, which was latterly enveloped in exaggerations and mythological additions, was originally a more or less accurate transcript of fact. And the more widely spread and persistent any tradition is, the more decisive is the testimony that some such event took place. If there be any truth in this reasoning, the Scripture statement, that the confusion of tongues and the scattering of the race were the result of human arrogance and defiance of God, must be accepted as proved. "Most of the ancient nations," says Kalisch, "possessed myths concerning giants who attempted to storm heaven, either to share it with the immortal gods, or to expel them from it. In some of these fables the confusion of tongues is represented as the punishment inflicted by the deities for such wickedness; the tower, by which the rebellious offenders intended to ascend up to heaven, was overthrown by a mighty tempest ;

they were scattered into various regions, and thenceforth spoke different languages." Plato has left on record the Greek form of the story. The languages of men, he says, were divided because of their arrogance, and their asking of the gods immortality and eternal youth.

In this case, as in every other, we find the more ancient, and, consequently, the more intelligible, form of the tradition in the Babylonian legends. Abydenus, an Egyptian priest, attached to the temple of Osiris, at Abydos, wrote, with the aid of the work of Berossus, so famed in antiquity, a history of Chaldea. The book is lost, and some fragments of it quoted here and there in other authors are all that remain. Among these is the following: "It is said that the first men, puffed up beyond measure by their strength and their great height, grew to despise the gods, and to count themselves their superiors. Incited by this notion, they reared a tower of prodigious height, which is now Babylon. It had nearly reached the heavens, when the winds came to the succour of the gods, and overthrew the entire scaffolding, casting it down upon the builders. Its ruins are called Babylon, and men, who had till then only one language, began from that time to speak, by command of the gods, different dialects." Another writer, Alexander Polyhistor, who also borrowed from Berossus, has given a similar account. His version runs thus:—"The Sybil says, that all men, having the same language, constructed an exceedingly high tower in order to

ascend into heaven; but the mighty God, having raised a tempest, overthrew the tower, and gave to each a different language. This is why the city was called Babylon." The Armenian tradition varies little from the foregoing. Men in ancient times, it says, were of huge size, and of great strength. Filled with pride and envy of God, they resolved "to build a high tower; but whilst they were engaged on the undertaking, a fearful wind overthrew it, which the wrath of God had sent against it. Unknown words were at the same time blown about among men, wherefore arose strife and confusion." With the Hindoos, the story underwent a change in some of its chief features. They seem to have mixed the story of the Fall with that of the Tower. There was a Knowledge Tree (so their story ran) which was so lofty that it reached well-nigh to heaven. "It said in its heart: 'I shall hold my head in heaven, and spread my branches over all the earth, and gather all men together under my shadow, and protect them, and prevent them from separating!' But Brahma, to punish the pride of the tree, cut off its branches and cast them down on the earth, when they sprang up as Wata trees, and made differences of belief, and speech, and customs, to prevail on the earth, to disperse men over its surface."

This incident in man's history has thus left almost as deep a mark in the traditions of the nations as the Flood itself. We find widespread traces of it both in ancient and in modern times. It formed part of the folk-lore of the Esthonians and the Australians. It

has been met with among the Mongolians in the North of India; and Dr. Livingstone came upon traces of it in Africa. But the form in which the story was preserved by the Mexicans, is perhaps the most striking of all. It ran: that those saved from the Flood resolved to build a tower which would reach to the skies. Xelhua, one of their number, was their architect. He ordered bricks to be made and to be conveyed to Cholula, where the tower was built. A file of men, reaching from the brickfield to Cholula, passed the bricks from one to another. The gods beheld the rising structure with indignation. They hurled fire upon it, overthrew it, and slew many of the builders. The work had to be discontinued, as each family engaged in the undertaking received a language of its own, and the builders were thenceforth unable to understand each other.

The Chaldean account, as I have already said, approaches nearer to that of the Scripture than any other. The history of Berossus, however, has not itself come down to us. It is one of the lost great books of antiquity, and we are indebted for what we now possess of it to extracts made by various ancient writers. Those, from whom the above quotations are made, were not regarded as quite reliable, and it was suspected that in this case the quotations had been altered, or coloured, to bring them into conformity with the Bible narrative. Assyrian discovery has proved that suspicion to be unfounded. George Smith found some cylinders, the pictorial representa-

tions on which refer to some event in Babylonian history connected with building. But he was fortunate enough to discover still better evidence of the existence of the Babylonian tradition. The tablets which contain it are in a very mutilated condition, but enough remains to enable us to grasp the story. Professor Sayce, in his edition of George Smith's *Chaldean Genesis*, says:—

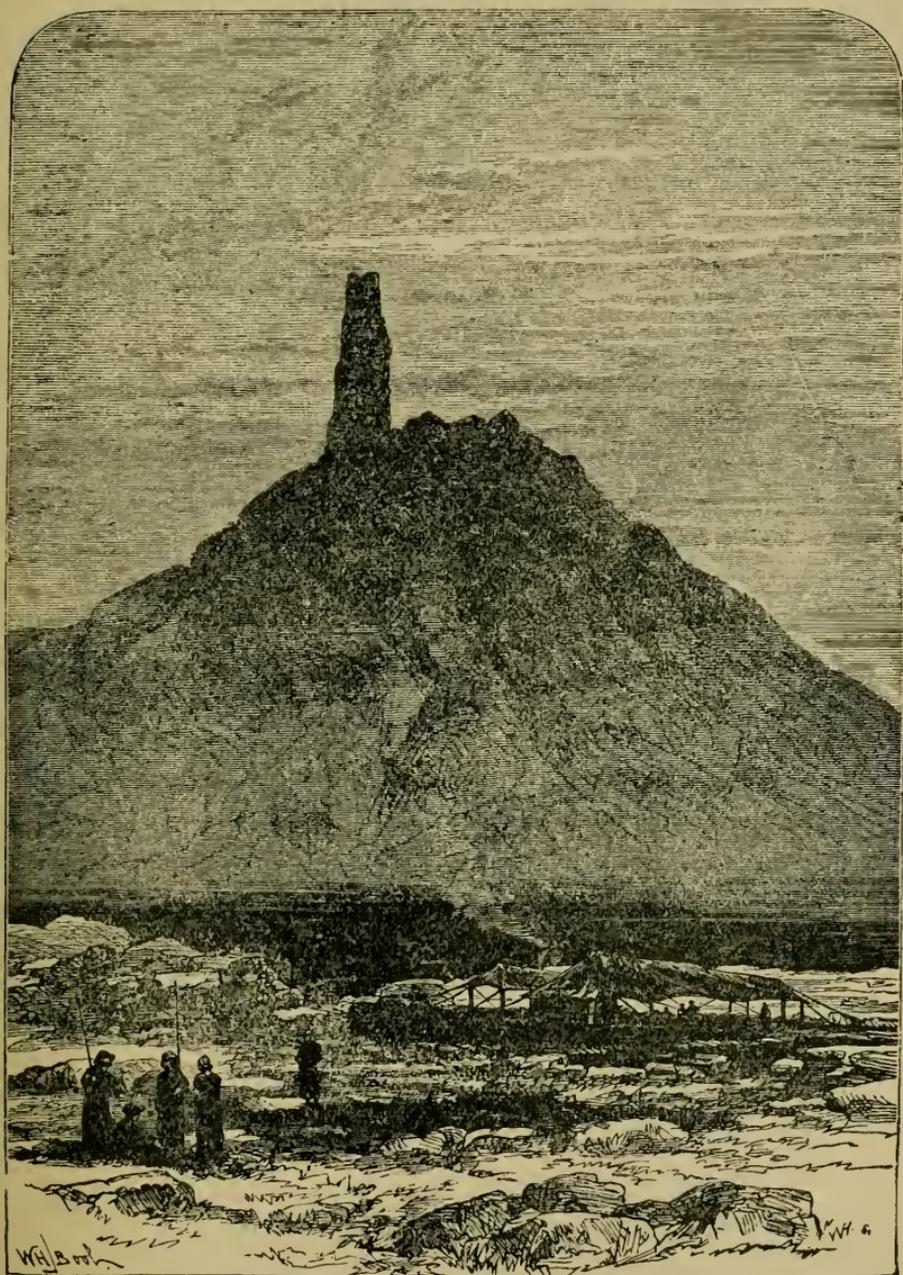
“These fragments are so remarkable that it is most unfortunate that we have not the remainder of the tablet. In the first part we have the anger of Bel, the father of the gods, at the sin of those who were building the walls of Babylon, and a mound of the tower or palace. This mound is termed ‘the illustrious,’ and the god Anu, who destroyed the builders, is accordingly called *Sar-tuli-elli*, ‘the king of the illustrious mound.’ Since the Accadian name of the month Tisri, our October, was ‘the month of the illustrious mound,’ it would appear that the construction of it was believed to have taken place at the time of the autumnal equinox. The builders were punished by the deity, and the walls that had been set up in the day were destroyed by night. Professor Delitzsch has drawn attention to a possible reference to this legend in an Accadian hymn, in which the poet says to Merodach, ‘Found during the day, destroy during the night.’ It is plain from the first lines that the whole attempt was directed against the gods: in fact, that, like the giants and Titans in Greek mythology, whose assault on Zeus is probably but an echo of the old Babylonian tale

conveyed to Greece through the hands of the Phœnicians, the builders of the tower of Babylon intended to scale the sky. They were, however, confounded on the mound as well as their speech. It is interesting to find the very same word signifying 'to confound,' used in the Babylonian as in the Hebrew account, namely, *Balal*, or rather *Balah*."

So far, then, the traditions point indisputably to facts which seem to be lucidly and naturally detailed in the Bible narrative. Here the very word used in Scripture re-appears in the Babylonian tradition. The Scripture goes further, however, and from this word derives the name afterwards applied to the city. It was named Babel, or confusion. Many Assyriologists have rejected this because Babylon is called on the monuments Bab-ilu—"the gate of God." But this form of the name, as we shall see, may be an after-thought. Let us now, however, inquire whether any other testimonies remain. The tower, we are told, was a huge structure. Those fathers of our race bent their utmost ingenuity to make it durable. They had no stone; but they said: "Let us make bricks, and burn them THOROUGHLY." "And they had brick for stone, and bitumen had they for mortar." Such a structure might be overthrown, but it could not easily be effaced.

Now, if the tower still stood, and was able to be investigated to-day, and was found to agree in every point with the Bible description, one would think there would be something there at least to stagger unbelief! And, strange to say, this is the fact! The

ruins remain to the present time, and still form the most remarkable feature of the country. Nebuchadnezzar, who did so much to execute God's judgment on Israel, has been used in Divine providence to bear witness to the truth of the Scriptures, which the Jews neglected. He has made himself our guide in the identification of this relic of man's impious pride. The town of Hillah, which seems to have been the part, or suburb, of ancient Babylon assigned to the poor, is the only portion which is now inhabited. It has a population of about 10,000 Jews and Arabs, a wall, and a garrison. On all sides Hillah is surrounded by huge mounds of rubbish, the only remains of what was once the mistress of the world. They begin about eight miles to the north of Hillah, and continue in enormous masses all along the plain, till about six miles to the south-west of Hillah we come upon the still mightier mass, which bears to-day the name Birs-Nimrud, or tower of Nimrod. It covers a square surface of 49,000 feet, and is nearly 300 ft. high. Travellers have dwelt upon its striking appearance. They describe it as towering like a mountain above the plain. Herodotus saw it while it still retained something of its ancient glories. He "dwells upon it with emphasis. He describes it as a square building extending two stadia (two furlongs) on every side; the tower was one stadium in length, and one in breadth. On this tower another was erected, which again bore another, and so on to the number of eight. They were ascended from the outside by a way running spirally around them, and provided in



REMAINS OF THE TOWER OF BABEL.

the middle with convenient resting-places. In the uppermost story . . . was a spacious temple. . . It was partially destroyed by Xerxes when he returned from Greece (B.C. 490). . . A part of this magnificent edifice existed still more than five centuries later; but the other part was, in the time of Alexander the Great, a vast heap of ruins; the ambitious Macedonian determined to rebuild it; he issued the orders accordingly, and, when the work did not proceed with the vigour and result he had anticipated, he resolved to undertake it himself with his whole army; he lacked, however, the perseverance of the Oriental despots, for, when 10,000 workmen were unable to remove the rubbish within two months, he abandoned his pretentious designs. However, the portion of the structure which was in existence in Pliny's time, was imposing enough to be still called the temple of Belus; and Benjamin, of Tudela, in the twelfth century, described it as a brick building, the base measuring two miles, and the breadth 240 yards. He added that a spiral passage, built round the tower in stages of ten yards each, led up to the summit, which allows a wide prospect over an almost perfectly level country."\*

Two cylinders, on which Nebuchadnezzar describes the history of the tower and his re-building of it, have been found at its base. We give Schrader's translation:—

"We announce the following: The temple of the seven lights of the earth, the tower of Borsippa, which a former king † had

\* Kalisch on Genesis.

† F. Lenormant translated "the most ancient king," thus carrying back the structure to the very beginning of Babylonian history.

erected and had completed to a height of forty-two yards, whose pinnacle, however, he had not set up, since remote days had fallen to ruin. There was no proper care of the gutters for its water; rain and storm had washed away its bricks; the tiles of its roofing were split; the bricks of the buildings were flooded away to heaps of ruins. To restore it the great god Merodach urged (?) my mind; its site, however, I did not injure, did not change its foundation walls. In a month of good fortune, on an auspicious day, I improved the bricks of its building, and the tiles of its roofing, into a compact edifice, renewed its sub-structure, and put the inscription of my name on the cornice of its edifice. To restore it and set up its pinnacle I raised my hand; as it was ages before, I built it anew; as it was in remote days, I erected its pinnacle."

Here we have only the assurance that Nebuchadnezzar's building was merely a repairing and completing of that which had come down from remote days, and that in the present ruins we have what seems to be the ancient tower. But Assyriology takes us still farther.

Of the original tower there were many imitations, but all of them were called by a common name, *Ziggurat*, or *Zikkurat*. *Zikkurat* comes from the verb *Zakar*, to remember. The meaning of the term, therefore, is "a memorial," something to perpetuate one's memory, or name. That term is applied both to the Tower of Borsippa itself (it is called *Zikkurat-Barsipa*), and to all the imitations of it. It designates the purpose for which the tower was reared, and that purpose was to preserve the memory of some one or more persons. The tower was "a memorial." Have we not there, in this very name, an undesigned but striking testimony to the truth of the Scripture

statement, that the purpose of the builders was to make themselves a name?

Bishop Colenso spoke with confidence as to the mistaken derivation of the name of Babylon. "The derivation of Babel,"\* he said, "is incorrect. There is no doubt now, among scholars, that the word has some connection with the name 'Bel,' and means 'house of Bel,' 'gate of Bel,' or something of this kind." In that matter, the "scholars" were absolutely wrong. *The word has no connection whatever with the name of Bel.* There were others, however, with fuller knowledge than Colenso, and with better claim to be regarded as "authorities," who imagined themselves compelled to condemn the Scripture in the name of science in regard to this matter. Professor Sayce has set the name Babel (as derived from *Babal*, to confound) aside as a mere play upon words, and has said, following in this a native Babylonian etymology, that the name of the city was *Bab-Ilu*, which means "the gate of God." M. Alfred Maury, writing in 1868, in the *Revue des deux Mondes*, said, in like manner, that "the etymology which explained *Babel* by 'confusion' has no value. We must regard this as one of those interpretations forged after the event, like so many others in the writings of the ancients. . . . The ideographic signs which are used in writing the word prove that it signifies 'the gate of *Ilu*,' that is, 'the gate of God.'" But Schrader, writing later, now informs us that the original Babylonian

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\* The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua, critically examined. IV. 75. 76.

pronunciation was Babil. And Oppert has gone further still, and shown that the original name was, just as the Bible says, Babël, and that its meaning is "confusion," and not "the gate of God." The confidence with which Assyriologists formerly spoke of the meaning of the name Babylon is disappearing, and opinion is coming into line with the Bible statement. Mr. Pinches writes me: "I am in doubt as to the nationality of the word Babel. Besides *Bâb-îli*, or *Bâb-îlu*, it was also called *Babilam*, a form of the name which may be derived from the word *Babalam*, quoted by me in the *Babylonian and Oriental Record* for February, 1887, p. 54. *It was written in such a strange way as to suggest that the root is not Semitic*, though the *m* must be the Assyrian mimmation. I am inclined to think that it has nothing to do with *balal*, but that it is imitative, something like the English word, *babble*."

Bab-ilu, the Semitic Babylonian form of the name, was an after-thought. The sound lent itself to the new and more honourable signification, and so "confusion," or "babble," became "the gate of God." This was a common practice with the ingenious and complimentary Assyrian scribes. Nineveh, for example, in Assyrian *Ninaa*, or *Ninua*, is said by some Assyriologists to have been formed from the root *Nava*, "to dwell," and means simply "habitation" or "abode." There is reason, however, for believing the word to be of Accadian origin. It is probably derived from the name of the god whose designation is written with the same characters. But the word

*nun* in Assyrian means "fish," and a new meaning was found for the city—that, namely, of "Fish-town." It was a still more happy bit of flattery to change "confusion" into "the gate of God." But, if the name of the first of cities was "confusion," how did the name originate? That name presented no attraction in itself. It could never have been voluntarily bestowed by its inhabitants. It must have been forced upon them by some calamity with which the early history of the city was associated.

This sets before us a new problem. Scholars, as we have just seen, have blundered in regard to this matter. Even Assyriologists have made mistakes. Ancient Babylonian and Assyrian scribes were apparently in ignorance as to the meaning and origin of the name of the great city. Whence, then, came the full information of the Scripture? That is a question which demands consideration. There is one explanation in the belief that we have here a Guide who walks surely, and whose information never fails. Is there any other explanation which will quite cover the facts?

The reader will feel that there could hardly be a more conclusive vindication of Scripture as "the word of truth." We have here not fiction, or myth, or parable, but a God-given history, which guides us with unerring step through the most dim and distant regions of the past. Before passing from this point let us note the testimony of the ruins. I have already referred to the gigantic character of the remains. We have seen that 10,000 men, labouring for two

months, under the personal direction of the hero whom they loved and revered, Alexander the Great, could not remove the rubbish. The mountain-like structure, indeed, still stands, and a closer examination of the ruins yet further demonstrates the accuracy of the Scripture. We are told that they burned the bricks "thoroughly." The bricks of the main part of the building are kiln-burnt. "The upper-most part," says one, "is a solid piece of masonry, twenty-eight feet broad, and thirty-five feet high, one of the most beautiful examples of Babylonian architecture, so compact that no stone can be loosened from it, apparently indestructible, and, though split from one end to the other by some unknown catastrophe, still standing erect with its bricks elegant and perfect." We are also told that they had slime, or rather, bitumen, for mortar. This is literally the case. "The cement by which the bricks were united," says Layard, "is of so tenacious a quality that it is almost impossible to detach one from the mass entire."

The facts, however, about Babylon and the Tower, sink into comparative insignificance when we note another statement of the Scripture. I have already shown\* that the evidence of language testifies to the accuracy of Scripture in its threefold division of the human race. Does this new science take us further, and does it testify to the truth of the Scripture which so long ago occupied the field, and declared that there was a time when the whole earth was of one lip, and of one language; that is, when not only the words in

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\* Vol. I., page 409.

ordinary use were the same everywhere, but were also pronounced in the same way? There is, as every one who has the slightest acquaintance with philological research will immediately recognise, a remarkable significance in the expression, which tells us that the alteration in language was brought about by confounding "the lip" of the builders of the Tower, so that no man might understand "the lip of his neighbour" (verse 7). Bopp traced the changes in pronunciation which have veiled the identity of words in closely allied languages, and his famous "Law" showed how, by the substitution of one letter for another closely allied to it, the words cast off their strangeness and disclose their identity. The differences which separated these languages was a difference in pronunciation—a "confusion of lip." Abel Hovelacque \* says: "Once launched on their historic life, the phonetic system and forms of language soon begin to change, and become gradually modified. Consonants and vowels often change to stronger or weaker consonants, to sharper or more open vowels. But they also frequently influence each other mutually, and such influence becoming more and more pronounced, the various branches of a given family, each with their peculiar modifying tendencies, depart daily farther and farther from each other." That is, in other words, languages separate through "confusion of lip." In following this process, languages are continuing in the path which they have always followed. Granted that all languages were once one speech, scientific

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\* *The Science of Language*, 308.

observation reveals the fact that the changes which have made that one speech many languages, must have obeyed the same law and taken the same course. It was, first of all, a change produced by varying pronunciation. How has it happened that, long before comparative philology was dreamed of, the Scripture should have placed the finger so unerringly upon this "confusion of lip" as the radical source of change? Full verbal inspiration, guiding the writer not only to absolutely correct thoughts, but also to absolutely correct phrases and words, would fully account for this strange fact. I do not know that any other theory of the origin of Scripture will account for it.

But is there any such deep-lying connection between languages as will justify us in saying that there was at one time only one speech among mankind, and that not only was "their lip one," but that also "their words were one?" It cannot be said that this original unity of languages is accepted by philologists generally to-day. The favoured theory is that there was a plurality of languages from the first. But the facts which philology has ascertained are all in the direction of the statement of the Bible. Every discovery in this comparatively new science has been a revelation of connections binding the peoples of the earth together. The Aryan group, the Semitic, and the Hamitic have been gathered together. Is the recognition of relationship, however, to stop there? We are told by many that it must stop there, and that there is no connection, for

example, between Aryan and Semitic speech. Others, who appear to be pioneers in a further advance, believe that there is a connection between Semitic, Aryan, and Hamitic speech. In a paper read by Major C. R. Conder, before the Victoria Institute, in 1894,\* he says: "About 170 roots, all connected with the most ordinary ideas of action, serve to connect together the various groups of Asiatic languages, and of these, about 50 are still traceable throughout the entire number; that is to say, in Accadian, in Egyptian, in Aryan, in Semitic, and in Mongolic speech alike. It appears to me that the number alone is sufficient to prove that these resemblances are not accidental, and especially so, since the more advanced languages—the Aryan and Semitic—in a great many cases agree, not only in the monosyllabic, but also in the derived bisyllabic roots."

He adds: "The roots and some of the demonstratives have the same value in all the languages under consideration, but the later use of these differs exceedingly. The commonest of all are MA, SA, and KA, which deserve a special notice. In Accadian, *ma* means 'this' and 'I,' and in Aryan speech we have *ma*, 'this,' while in Assyrian *ma* is also a demonstrative. It probably comes from the old root MA or AM, 'to be.' In like manner, SA, which means a 'man' or 'person' in Accadian and Egyptian, becomes the demonstrative Su, 'he,' in Aryan speech, in Assyrian, in Egyptian, and in Mongolic. It probably comes from the old root AS, to

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\* *Transactions*, Vol. xxvii.

‘breathe.’ . . . Dr. Isaac Taylor has been the first boldly to claim an ultimate connection between Finnic and Aryan languages, and has given many cogent reasons for his views, which have not been met. Quite recently, I believe, at the Oriental Congress of 1891, the similarities of Egyptian to Aryan and Semitic speech have again been pointed out, and though I have not had the advantage of reading what was then said, these comparisons are so evident that they must strike every enquirer. But what is more interesting is, that Egyptian often supplies the link between words, which might otherwise be thought to have no connection. Thus, for instance, MAR means ‘to die’ in Aryan languages, but in Semitic speech the root is MAT. At an early period, when R and T were undistinguished, these roots might be the same. In Egyptian we find both *mer* and *met* for ‘to die,’ and it is not conceivable that for such an idea a foreign word would be used. The root MAR means ‘to crumble’ or ‘decay,’ and in this sense is not unknown in Semitic speech.

“Dr. Isaac Taylor’s proposition is, however, capable of greater development than that of his original publication. Not only do the roots which he observes in Finnic languages, as well as in Aryan, exist also in Turkic and Mongol speech, when they are beyond suspicion of Aryan influence, but they are very often traceable also in Accadian, back to at least 2000 B.C.; and as shown in the table of common roots, they can be further traced to Egyptian and Semitic vocabularies. . . . I have only to add that the

present paper was not penned with any ulterior object, to support any particular theory as to the origin of mankind, but merely grew up out of the constant inspection of various grammars and dictionaries, undertaken for quite other purposes. I have been gradually led, however, to the belief that the evidence of languages favours the supposition that Asiatic man, as a whole, was descended from a single original stock, and if what we hear stated as to other languages be proveable, it would seem that from Asiatic man sprang the entire population of the modern world."

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## CHAPTER II.

### BABYLON, THE METROPOLIS OF THE NATIONS.

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THERE is still one important matter in connection with the early story of Babylon, which claims our attention. The building of the city and of the tower was not an enterprise in which one family or one nation only was concerned. The entire race was involved in the attempt. This is clearly implied in the narrative, and it meets us again in those words which conclude the story: "So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth; and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon

the face of all the earth " (Genesis xi. 8, 9). Babylon is consequently the great mother-city of the nations. It is the centre from which all the peoples of the earth have passed out to seek and make a possession for themselves.

We have already seen\* how marvellously the statement of Scripture that the Assyrians were originally Babylonians has been confirmed by recent research. It might well have been that the original home of both peoples had been in the north of Mesopotamia, and that the Babylonians had gone out from Assyria and colonized the south; or it might have happened that the two nations had had no connection originally. But in the face of these varying possibilities, the Scripture pledged itself definitely and emphatically to the statement that the Assyrians had come from Babylon. And, when we question those who have brought back the records of those two peoples from the graves of a dead and long-forgotten past, and ask what they have to tell, we discover that they only repeat the Bible story. The language, the religion, the customs, and the arts of the Assyrians have all come from Babylon. Has research, then, a similar testimony to bear to this wider statement of the Scripture? Does it repeat the Bible story that all nations have come from this one centre?

I do not presume to say that science has so far summed up all its findings, and passed its final verdict upon this matter. But it is long since its

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\* See preceding Vol., p. 434.

attention was drawn to it ; and almost every year has added, and is yet adding, something to the steadily growing demonstration. I shall have occasion, later on, when speaking of the fatherland of Abraham and of the Israelitish people, to show that the cradle of the Semites was in Babylonia. It is universally admitted that they were originally one family ; but an attempt has been made to prove that Arabia and not Babylonia was their original fatherland. The argument which is mainly relied upon is that the Arabs have undoubtedly preserved in greater purity the primitive form of what was once the common tongue of this great division of the human race. But, as has been pointed out, Sanscrit and Greek have in the same way preserved in greater purity the primeval language of the Japhetic races, and yet no one would think of maintaining that either India or Greece was the original home of the race. The language itself, indeed (as we shall afterwards see) has settled this question in favour of the Scripture. The original home of the Semitic races was Babylonia.

It is equally clear that the Japhetic race once dwelt together. "The most ancient traditions of the Japhetic, or Indo-European race," says Lenormant, "do not carry us much farther back than 3000 B.C. This great division of the human race was then entirely concentrated at no great distance from the primitive cradle of post-diluvian humanity, the starting-point of the sons of Noah, in Bactria. . . . The whole of this great race assumed a common

name, that of Arya, or Ariya, 'the noble,' a name preserved unaltered in Indian traditions, and in the name of that Asiatic district specially called Aria."\* There was a tradition, however, of an earlier dwelling-place which they called "the Aryanem Vaedjo, or primitive Ariana," "when a *Divine necessity* compelled them to quit temporarily that pleasant abode, to sojourn in a rigorous climate, where there were, as one of their sacred books says, 'ten months of winter and two only of spring.'"† "That pleasant abode," so tenderly remembered in the ancient tradition, was no doubt the well-watered and perennially fruitful valley of the Euphrates and the Tigris. For a close study of the ancient written language of that region, reveals that in the earliest days of all the Aryan race had been there. "We need never indeed be startled," writes Sir Henry Rawlinson, "at finding Arian analogies in examining the old Babylonian terms, for there is abundant evidence of a primitive Arianism, anterior probably to the development of Sanscrit, in the construction of the cuneiform alphabet."‡

But it is still more clear that the same region of Babylonia was also the original home of the Hamitic race. They seem to have been the majority of its inhabitants and its early masters. They throve and multiplied faster than their brethren, and their colonies swept out and first possessed the lands. They form the original inhabitants in India and elsewhere on the east, as well as on the west, and on

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\* *Ancient History of the East*, Vol. II., pp. 1, 2. † *Ibid.*, p. 2.

‡ *The History of Herodotus*, Vol. I., p. 510, note.

the north. They also developed skill and enterprise which have left a lasting impress upon the writing system, and upon the institutions of Babylonia and of humanity. I have already referred to the lack of *close* relationship in language among the multitudinous and widely scattered branches of this great section of our race. This has led to doubt as to their having all proceeded from the cradle-land of Babylon. Sir Henry Rawlinson, while showing that there had been an undoubted connection, for instance, between Babylon and Egypt, declared that it was impossible to say from the indications whether the Babylonians had passed out from Egypt, or the Egyptians had come from Babylon. But the veil that rested then over the origin of the Egyptian people has now been lifted by later research, and Hommel tells us that there can be no longer any doubt that the Egyptian civilization was derived from Babylon. This has been confirmed by further research. "Some five years ago," says *The New York Independent*, an organ famed for its well-informed and accurate notes upon Oriental research, "Professor Hommel, of Munich, at a meeting of the International Oriental Congress at London, surprised the scholars there present by a paper, which he afterward amplified into a volume, in which he presented evidence to show that the Egyptian religion and civilization had their origin in immigration from Southern Babylonia; thus making Babylonia the original home of civilized man, as represented in the Book of Genesis. Scholars were

slow to accept so revolutionary a theory of Egyptian antiquities, as it had been generally supposed that Egypt was the oldest of all countries, and that if any civilization was autochthonous it was that of the Nile. But now from the very headquarters of Egyptology comes a testimony to the same effect. M. J. de Morgan, the successor of Mariette and Maspero in the administration of the Egyptian Museum at Bûlak and Ghizeh, has been devoting his studies especially to the early history of Egypt, going back to geological times and the first dynasties. He has just published a volume of *Researches on the Origins of Egypt*, in which he concludes that the Egyptians came from Asia, and that their probable origin was in Chaldea or Southern Babylonia. Of course, he supposes there was a rude autochthonous people of the rough and polished stone periods, who already occupied Egypt; and he regards the present fellahin of Egypt as the product of the mingling of these primitive inhabitants with Nubians and Egyptians. This conclusion, coming from a scholar of the highest authority in Egyptian antiquities, will be interesting also to the student of the Bible."

A recent discovery regarding the Chinese has laid bare another testimony to the truth of Scripture. The Rev. J. C. Ball prefaces his papers, which were read before the Society of Biblical Archæology in 1889 and 1890, with the following:—"Some time ago I began to study Chinese, not so much with a view to mastering the literature of that remarkable language, as for purposes of philological comparison.

I had not gone far before I was struck by an apparent parallelism of sound between a series of terms with which I was already familiar in the Babylonian syllabaries, and a Chinese series of similar import. The Accadian terms were these:

A-A (or AI),	“father.”
A-A (or AI),	“moon.”
A	“hand,” “side.”
A	“son.”

and the Chinese:

<i>Ye</i>	“father” (Amoy <i>iá</i> ).
<i>Yueh</i>	“moon.”
<i>Yu</i>	“hand.”
<i>Yu</i>	“young.”

These coincidences appeared to me so curious, that I thought it might be worth while to make further investigation in order to determine, if possible, whether there might not be something more in them than mere accident. I could not help remembering that in Accadian the moon is a *goddess*, and the consort of the sun, just as she is in Chinese, whereas in the Semitic languages generally, the term for “moon” is in the masculine gender. . . . Then, again, the Turkish *ái*, “moon,” was present to my mind, as also the Coptic *Ioh* (a descendant of the old Egyptian *aāh*. . . . It seemed noteworthy that all these names contained the y-sound, which Assyrian scholars consider to be either expressed or suppressed in the sign for a-a or a-i.” This was the beginning of an investigation which showed that the Chinese was closely connected with the ancient

Accadian, the language of the first masters of Babylonia, and that the Chinese had also proceeded from the great metropolis of the nations.

On another side, that, namely, of religion, the evidence of close relationship between Babylon and the nations is still stronger. As soon as the religion of the Babylonians was investigated, the connection between it and the religions of Greece and Rome, for example, was quite apparent. "The same general grouping" of the gods, Sir Henry Rawlinson wrote as early as 1858, "is to be recognised; the same genealogical succession is not unfrequently to be traced; and in some cases even the familiar names and titles of classical deities can be explained from Babylonian sources." He can account for the facts only by supposing that at a very early period, when the Accadian writing "was first applied to the purposes of religion," a race went out from Babylon and carried with them into Europe their ancient mythical traditions; and he adds: "We are at present able in some cases to explain obscurities both of Greek and Roman nomenclature, not simply from the languages of Assyria and Babylonia, but even from the peculiar, and often fantastic, devices of the cuneiform system of writing." \*

The old Babylonian superstitions are also found among the nations, and are another proof that they have been scattered abroad from this one centre. The magical practices of the ancient Finns, the ancient superstitions of China and those which prevail among

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\* Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, Vol. I., p. 481.

the Parsis in India, to-day, all bear the same Babylonian stamp.\* There is, however, one indication which, of itself, suffices. It is connected with the very tower, the building of which brought this doom of separation upon the nations. There have been various opinions entertained as to the purpose which that huge erection was intended to serve. Some have imagined that primeval man wanted to force his way into heaven, and therefore built this tower so high that he might step from its roof on to heaven's floor. But it is to be feared that heaven had less attraction for the Babel builder than it ought to have had, and that to get there was one of the last things he thought of. Another theory has been that it was an attempt to provide against a second flood. There are equally apparent objections to this also. If they had wished to build a refuge against a flood they would have erected the tower upon the mountains, and not upon the low level of the Babylonian plain. The Scripture explanation, however, is clear and ample: "And they said, come, let us build us a city and a tower, and its head in the heavens, and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered over the face of all the earth" (Genesis xi. 4). Their avowed object was to perpetuate their fame by this huge erection and by the building of a city to prevent the scattering of humanity. It is a striking comment upon this intention of theirs, that the tower which they built, as I have already pointed out, is called by the Babylonians, a *Zikkurat*, that is, a "memorial!" It was intended,

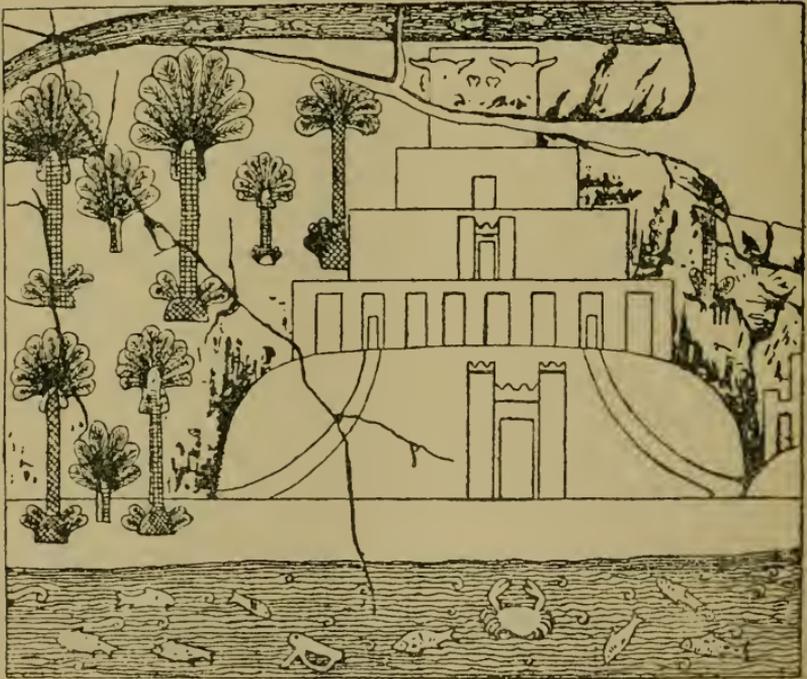
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\* See Lenormant's *Chaldean Magic*.

so its name declares, to keep some memories green. They desired to defeat God's doom of death, and by this huge building, to live on in men's thoughts long after their bones had fallen into dust. "Let us make us a name," they said—a name that death could not cover, and that would go on sounding down the ages. It is significant of Nebuchadnezzar's sinful pride, which God also punished, that when he restored the tower, he did it with the like intention. An inscription of his says: "*To astonish mankind* I re-constructed and renewed the wonder of Borsippa, the temple of the seven spheres of the world." Now that tower was copied and repeated all over Babylonia; and wherever it was repeated it was named by this name *Zikkurat*, a "memorial." These "memorial" towers were in terraces. There was also a mound, which seems to have formed a base for the erection. The reader will remember the name given to God, who judged the builders—"the King of the illustrious mound." I give on next page a representation from an Assyrian monument, which shows both the terraces and the mound. There is either a chapel, or an entrance gate, at the bottom of the mound. But the real entrances appear to be by ascents on the mound, and gates which lead in to the first and largest tower.

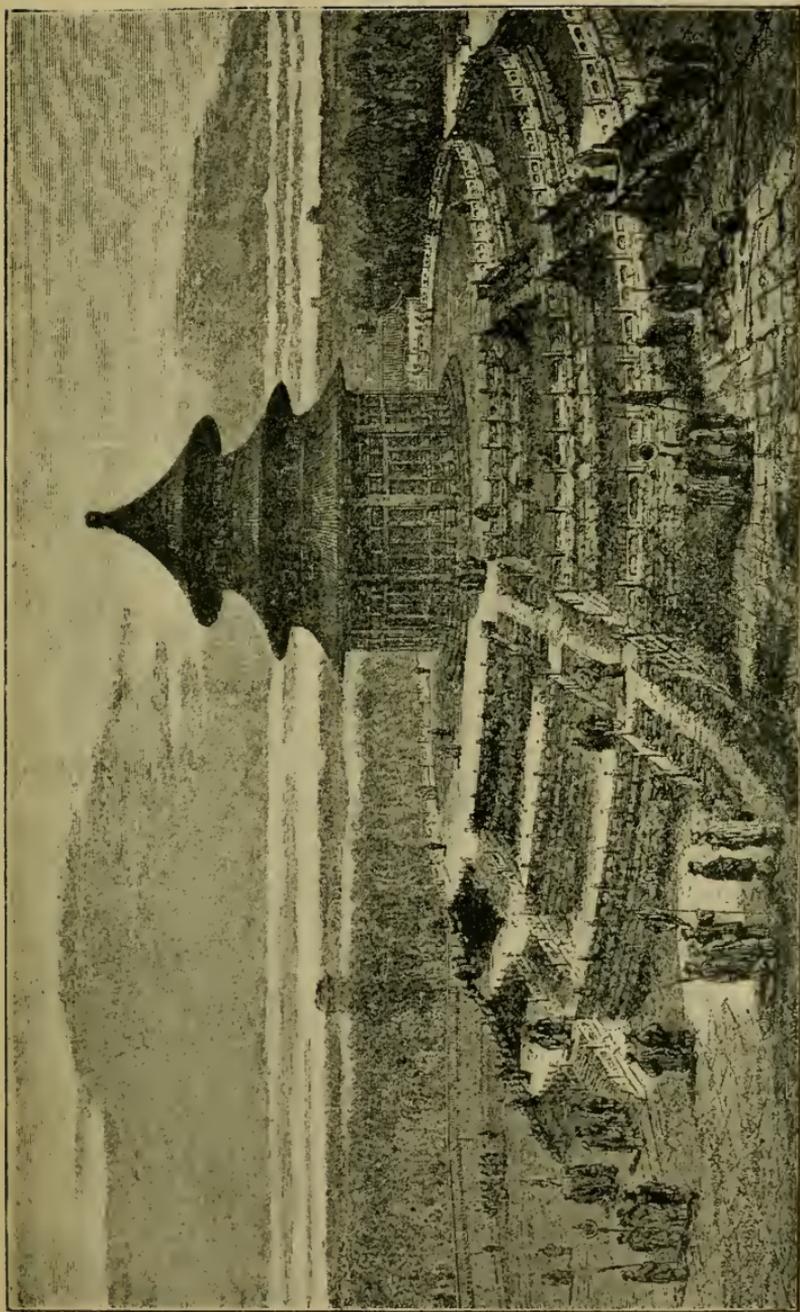
Mr. William Simpson communicated a striking paper in 1893 to the Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology. In it he says: "I propose to identify the terrace tower or pyramid of the Mesopotamian plains with an ancient class of structure of which remains are still to be found over nearly the

whole of the old world. These are the grave mounds and their developments. From Egypt to China such monuments exist in which I can trace a similarity of origin. I shall be able to speak of these remains of the past with some confidence, having visited and



AN ASSYRIAN TOWER IN STAGES, FROM THE MONUMENTS.

made drawings of them." The resemblance to the terraced tower of Borsippa will be marked by the reader in the accompanying drawing of "the Temple of Heaven," at Peking. There are three terraces, the tower in the centre forms a fourth, and the three-fold roof completes the number seven. Similar



"THE TEMPLE OF HEAVEN," AT PEKING.

erections were raised in India in enormous numbers. "They are known," says Mr. Simpson, "as Stupas, Topes, Dagobas, and Chaityas. Asoka, who lived about 250 B.C., is said to have erected 84,000 stupas." "The Chinese pilgrims," he adds, "often describe stupas as being composed of 'the seven precious substances.' According to Professor Beal, these substances were gold, silver, lapis lazuli, crystal, cornelian, coral, and ruby. Some of these, as far as metal and colour go, are the same as in the temple of the Seven Spheres" (at Borsippa). "In . . . one of the lately published volumes of the *Sacred Books of the East*, there is a description of the apparition of a stupa which bears a curious resemblance, in one point at least, to the Tower of Babel. The stupa was, of course, composed of 'the seven precious substances,' and 'its row of umbrellas rose so far on high as to touch the abodes of the four guardians of the horizon and the gods.'"

The erection of mounds of stones or earth over the graves of those whose memory it was thought well to preserve is common to every land, and seems to be connected with this same traditional practice. Speaking of these "primitive grave mounds," Mr. Simpson says: "For kings, chiefs, or persons of importance, the earth was heaped up to a considerable size; this marked the place of the grave, and became a monument. In addition it was also a temple; the rites connected with the dead were performed at it. In the old Greek dramatists many references will be found to such mounds, and to the ceremonies.

Homer describes the heaping up of the tomb of Patroclus; altars were placed on the mounds, and sacrifices offered on them. Herodotus describes the great Tumulus of Alyattes, near Sardis, where there is still to be seen a large group of mounds. I visited the spot a few years ago, and by stepping round the largest one, which is said to be that of Alyattes, I made it about 800 yards in circumference. . . . When a boy I have thrown a stone on a cairn in Scotland, marking the spot where a man had been killed; and during the last Afghan war I threw a stone on a cairn in the Khyber Pass, which also marked where an Afghan had met with his fate. There is a wide geographical space between the two localities, but what is here related becomes valuable evidence, showing how universal the custom has been of heaping up a cairn as a monument." When we connect these with that primeval attempt to roll back the deepening oblivion of death, the Scottish cairn, like the Egyptian pyramid, and the Tumuli, the stupas, dagobas, and pagodas, all receive a simple and complete explanation. They are part of the inheritance of tradition which the nations carried with them as they went forth from the great ancestral home. And that home, the place "of the illustrious mound" and the mother of the idolatries of the earth, was Babylon.

## CHAPTER III.

THE PATRIARCHAL HISTORY.  

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THE eleventh Chapter of Genesis, which begins with man's attempt to unify the race, ends with God's provision for our ingathering. It commences with the building of Babel: it concludes with the calling of Abraham. Babel's unifying meant slavery and degradation for the many, and ennobling only for the few. God's ingathering is freedom and royalty for each.

The very placing of these two things together, and the blotting out of all intermediate events, so that these may confront each other across the long lapse of ages, are eloquent of purpose. That is a purpose, too, which no man, even in the time of Moses, could have formed. It was possible only to Him who had already decreed and planned the earth's salvation. The very grouping of the eleventh chapter bears in this way the clear stamp of inspiration. But it is just here that the unbelief of the time is intrenching itself in the most determined fashion. At the very head of its objections to belief in the Old Testament, as a revelation, stands the assertion that the Old Testament is a simple natural growth. We are told that it clearly bears the marks of gradual advance; and that what we have taken to be a

miracle of Divine intervention for our enlightenment and salvation is only the outcome of a merely human development.

That is the principle and the motive of what is known as "the Higher Criticism." It is in vain for us to appeal to the testimony of the books of the Old Testament, and to show, for example, that the clearest views of the unity of the God-head are expressed in the very first words of the Bible. That, we are told, only proves that this part of the Scripture was written at a late period. The critics have accepted the principle that "miracles do not happen"; and as it would have been a miracle had Israel possessed a teaching which no other nation had, it is clear, from their point of view, that whatever teaching of that kind there is in the Old Testament must be brought down to a time when other nations had that light as well as Israel. It is only the awkward fact, that the books of the Old Testament were in existence at least two centuries before our era, which prevents criticism assigning the prophecies which tell of the Lord's coming, origin, character, and work, and which picture the spread of His influence among the Gentile nations—it is only that stubborn fact of the undeniable pre-existence of these predictions which prevents them assigning these also to some date after the birth of Christ and the conquests of Christianity.

Audacity has its triumphs. And, though they are frequently short-lived, they are for the moment complete enough. An artifice of this kind, which tells

us that our witnesses are frauds, *just because they support us*, paralyzes speech. The solid ground of fact on which our case rested, disappears at that one wave of the critic's hand. And there is another element in the case which increases the bewilderment of ordinary people. Position and character have their responsibilities, which no man regards lightly; and when these are ranged upon a certain side, they carry weight with them, which things less esteemed could not convey. Had this high-handed annihilation of facts to save an infidel theory been attempted by Bradlaugh or Ingersoll, we should have smiled at its impudence and futility. But when the same thing is done by a "Regius Professor of Divinity," by Theological Tutors, and by Very Reverend Deans, Canons, and other dignitaries, what are ordinary people to think or say?

Well, as no one can answer for our souls but ourselves, we shall look this matter in the face, and see what it amounts to. Some of those who devote their energies to the spread of these views are apparently not above a quibble. They remind us that everyone admits the Bible to be

IN WHAT SENSE a development. There is a distinct  
 IS THERE progress as we proceed from Genesis  
 DEVELOPMENT to Malachi, and from Matthew to  
 IN Revelation. David shows the coming  
 SCRIPTURE? Christ more fully than Moses, and  
 Isaiah than David. Why, then, it  
 is asked, should anyone object to the development  
 theory as applied to Scripture? This question might

be answered by asking another. Every man parts with his money. He has to pay it away in the ordinary course of business, or in his daily expenditure. But when he is robbed he also parts with his money. Wherefore, then, should any man object to be robbed? The reply to that is, that his parting with money in one case is very different from his parting with it in the other. And no men know better than these do that the "development" of Wellhausen is a totally different thing from the "development" always perceived and acknowledged by every reader of the Bible. The latter is *the progressive unfolding of a Divine plan*—a plan that was full and perfect from the first, and a plan to which the ages have added nothing. It is the gradual conveying to men of truth, as they were able to hear it; but the truth is known to the Unfolder in all its fulness from the first, and was not learned in the process of conveying it to others. That is the only "development" in the Old Testament, or in the New. But the other recognizes no teaching coming from without. It proceeds from first to last on the assumption that men needed—or, to be quite accurate, that they received—no more Divine help to arrive at a knowledge of theological and moral truth than they needed or received in building the sciences of astronomy, of geology, of physics, or of mathematics. It was a gradual advance from crude and mistaken notions to more or less clear perceptions of the truth. But here we have man throughout; and man only. In the former case we have God throughout; and God

only. In the latter case, *man discovers* by untiring industry and by fortunate chances: in the former, *God communicates*; and *God chooses* the times, the seasons, the race, and the men to whom and through whom His communications shall be made. Now, to tell us that, because we admit that there is "development" in God's communicating, we must therefore admit that the Bible is "a development," in the sense of its being the result of mere human thinking and experience, is not only to adopt dishonest tactics: it insults our understanding.

I have already referred to the preacher in a Scottish city, whose ambition it was to be abreast of the times, and who on one occasion selected as his text Genesis 1. 27: "So God created man **DID ISRAEL** in His own image, in the image of God **MAKE GOD?** created He him." But to make the text quite suit the sermon, he would take the liberty, he said, to invert the statement of Scripture, and read: "So man created God in his own image, in the image of man created he **Him**." That inversion of the Scripture is the statement of one of the chief contentions of the higher criticism. The God of the Bible is not a God, say the new school, who has revealed Himself to Israel: Jehovah is, on the contrary, a product of Jewish thought. God did not fashion Israel: Israel made God.

This will shock the reader, but it need not surprise him. If the critics were to grant that the Old Testament teaching regarding God is a revelation, what would become of their fundamental doctrine

that the Bible is a development? They judged rightly when they chose this battle-ground. If men from the first believed in the existence of one God, the Creator and Ruler of all things, they must have received that truth by distinct revelation, and the disbelief in the miraculous is rebuked by that earliest possession of humanity. For monotheism, that is, belief in one God, is distinctly scientific. Men like Matthew Arnold and Herbert Spencer have been compelled to admit the existence of an unseen Force and Intelligence. Atheism has been killed by the same evidence which has constrained them; for atheism has now been supplanted by agnosticism. The atheist feels that he dare not say there is no God, and now refuses to go further than the declaration that he does not know that there is a God. That confession is eloquent: it admits that the attempt to combat the evidence for the existence of God is hopeless. But the researches of science have carried us further. The universe (as its very name implies) is a unity. The perfect order which reigns throughout; the million adjustments which make all things a majestic harmony; the infinite sweep, and splendid co-operation of those Laws of Nature which it is the glory of Science to have discovered—all these reveal that the Arranger and Maker of the Universe is One and not many. For we are confronted by *one* design, *one* Mind, *one* Will. That is the teaching of Science. But how could men have reached that knowledge before Science existed? If they had it from the first, they could not have obtained it by observa-

tion and reasoning: *they must have received it by revelation.*

The reader will remember that the testimony of the Bible is that men did receive this revelation at the beginning. God revealed Himself to the first pair. Enoch walked with Him. Noah was chosen in a time when all flesh had corrupted God's way, and the Lord revealed Himself to him, and made him the father of a new humanity. The Scriptures only restore that Revelation which was given at the beginning. God manifests Himself afresh, and becomes the Teacher of a people, as He had been previously the Teacher of mankind. The unity of the Godhead is proclaimed in the midst of the gross errors and corruptions which have flooded the earth afresh. Idolatry is rigorously condemned. Arrangements are made by which Israel may dwell continually in God's felt presence, and by which, while made conscious of their sin, they may enjoy the assurance of reconciliation. An elaborate ritual is given them, every part of it being stamped as Divine in the fact that it is prophetic of the salvation that is yet to be.

All this the critics set aside as manufactured history—as a complete fabrication. Neither at the Creation, they say, nor at the Flood, nor at the founding of the Israelitish nation, was there any revelation whatever. This teaching about the unity of God was never revealed at all, and was utterly unknown anywhere *till long after the days of Moses*. Men began, say they, with "the fetish"—something,

living or dead, which the savage imagines to possess magical powers, and which he consequently cherishes and worships. This is the lowest form of idolatry to-day, and the lowest depth to which human superstition has sunk. But just because it is the lowest, the critics declare that it was the beginning. The next step upward was the worship of natural forces, and of the heavenly bodies. Higher yet man's growing faith ascended in its steady march towards the discovery, or the making, of God. There were beings, somewhat like ourselves, behind nature. These were modelled in human shape and worshipped. And now came the great reform instituted by Moses. He found Israel, like the rest of the nations, worshipping gods many. It seemed to him that such a practice confused mind and heart, and hindered progress. So he counselled Israel to make choice of one idol, and to cling to it only.

In a Manual in use now in Bible Classes (happily to a small extent only), the teacher is directed to emphasize this Mosaic service by explaining to his class the distinction between *monotheism* and *monolatry*, that is between belief in the existence of one God, and the clinging to one idol. It is the latter discovery only that is to be assigned to Moses; for he was quite unaware that there was only one God. He was much in advance of his time; but such knowledge was too early even for him. But he planted the seed, from which the full truth was in due time to develop. Israel had a tribal divinity—an idol, that is to say, belonging to one of the tribes.

This idol was named Jehovah. They thought that the counsel of Moses was good, and so they said Jehovah shall be our idol, and, though they still believed in the existence and in the power of "gods many," they had only this one national god. Having only one idol, it was sharply contrasted with the idols of the surrounding peoples, and Israel began to say Jehovah is far better than these. By-and-bye they went farther, and the great discovery (!) was made. They said all the idols of the nations are vanity: Jehovah is the only God.

This is the corner-stone of the Higher Criticism, and it is this that we are asked to adopt when we are pressed to admit that the Bible is a natural development, and not a Divine revelation. "At first," says Kuenen, "the religion of Israel was *polytheism*. During the eighth century, B.C., the great majority of the people still acknowledged the existence of many gods, and, what is more, they worshipped them. And we can add, that during the seventh century, and down to the beginning of the Babylonish exile (586 B.C.), this state of things remained unaltered. This polytheism of the mass of the people cannot be regarded as a subsequent innovation: on the contrary, everything is in favour of its originality."\* The beliefs regarding Jehovah passed, according to him, through three stages: "The Jahvism of *the people*, of *the prophets*, and of *the Law*" † (the italics are Kuenen's). Well, did the prophets come with a revelation? No: "*The prophets* saw in Jahveh the

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\* *The Religion of Israel*, Vol. 1., p. 223. † P. 230.

only god (the small 'g' is Kuenen's), and so came naturally, as it were, to ascribe to him alone all the attributes and characteristics which in polytheism, and by the people, were distributed among the different gods." *The Law* was "a compromise between the popular religion and the Jahvism of the prophets." \*

Wellhausen is equally outspoken. There was no such thing as a choosing of Israel by God. "The expression, 'Jehovah is the God of Israel' . . . . did not mean," he says, in Article "Israel," in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "that the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth was conceived of as having first made a covenant with this one people, that by them He might be truly known and worshipped. *It was not as if Jehovah had originally been regarded as the God of the universe, who subsequently became the God of Israel*; on the contrary, He was primarily Israel's God, and only afterwards (very long afterwards) did He come to be regarded as the God of the universe. For Moses to have given the Israelites an 'enlightened conception of God,' would have been to have given them a stone instead of bread." It was only after a long process that "He came to be thought of as the highest, *and at last as the only*, power in heaven and earth." †

That is the belief which the new infidelity spends all its strength to enforce upon the churches of Christ. Our "scientific theology" thus joins hands with our "scientific materialism," which gives the

\* *Ibid.*

† Article *Israel*, pp. 437, 438.

very same account of the origin of religion. It is the crowning achievement of evolution. Man, say these scientists, sprang from protoplasm, and man made God! The idea of the one living and true God, the critics say, is a development: it has not been given to us by revelation from on high. They must therefore strain every nerve to demonstrate that neither with Jew nor Gentile did men begin with that notion: it came late. The Scripture gives us an entirely different account of the matter. In Romans i. 21 we are told that men began with clear knowledge of the one living and true God, and the origin of idolatry is traced to man's ingratitude and intellectual pride: "because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."

That testimony of Scripture is sustained by the results of modern research. The study of the personal names on the monuments of ancient South Arabia, in which the name *ilu*, God, so frequently appears, has led Professor Hommel to the conclusion that "there must have been a time in the history of Arabia when these gods"—the objects of idolatrous worship in later times—"did not receive worship, *and when some* higher form of devotion of a type which involuntarily reminds one of what we are told about Melchizedek in the Old Testament must have prevailed."\* Here we have the clearest indications that the tendency was not as the critics urge: it was

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\* *The Ancient Hebrew Tradition*, p. 82.

not upward: it was downward. Men did not shed from them grosser conceptions, and rise into more worthy thought of the Deity. They lost the light they had; and, as the Scripture has said, "they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."

The same proofs meet us wherever ancient peoples have left behind them literature or monuments. I have already referred to these testimonies in the preceding volume (p. 72); but from much else that might be quoted, I add the following. There are traces in the most ancient Vedic hymns that show us a monotheism which the fathers of the Hindoos had carried with them from their primal abode, but which was being rapidly thrust into the background by superstition and idolatry. The one living and true God has already become "the unknown God." The following shows us the One Absolute Existence from whom all else has sprung. It is taken from the Rig-Véda, and is entitled *Paramátma*, "The Supreme Spirit."

Nothing then existed, neither being (*sat*), nor non-being (*asat*); no world, no air, no firmament. Where, was, then, the covering of the Universe? Where the receptacle of the water? Where the impenetrable depths of air? Death was not, nor immortality, nor anything that marked the boundaries of day or night. But THAT breathed in solitude, without afflation, absorbed in His own thought. Besides THAT nought existed. . . . But who can know such things exactly? or who can declare them?

These beings, whence come they? This creation, whence did it originate? The *dévas* were themselves created or produced. But THAT—who knows His nature and His origin? Who can tell how all this varied world has issued into being? Can it, or can it not, support itself? He who, from the heights of heaven is gazing on the universe, He alone can tell whether it exists, or only seems to exist.\*

Here is another of those ancient songs which tell of the light which men were leaving behind them as they wandered away from the old thought and belief.

One Sovereign Ruler pervades this world of worlds. Nurture thyself with this one thought, abandoning all others, and covet not the joys of any creature. He who in this life performs his religious duties may desire to live a hundred years; but even to the end thou shouldst have no other occupation. It is to regions, left a prey for evil spirits and covered with eternal darkness, that those men go after death, who have corrupted their own soul. This One single Spirit, which nothing can disturb, is swifter than the thought of man. This primal mover, the *dévas*, even cannot overtake. Unmoved itself, it infinitely transcends all others, however rapid be their course. It moves the universe at its pleasure: it is distant from us, and yet very near to all things: it pervades this entire universe, and yet is infinitely beyond it. †

The ancient fathers of the Aryan race had clear ideas of sin as well as of the great Judge and Father

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\* Hardwick: *Christ and Other Masters*, Part II., pp. 93, 94. † Pp. 95, 96.

of all. In an old hymn in the Vedas, the singer cries : “ Grant that I enter not yet into the house of clay. Have pity on me, O ! Almighty, have pity on me. If I go trembling like a cloud driven before the wind, have pity on me. How could I come to Varuna ? Would he accept my offering without displeasure ? I turn to thee, O Varuna, desiring to know my sin. Absolve me from the sins of our fathers, and from those which we may have committed in our own bodies, that, purified from all sin, I may give satisfaction to the living God.” \*

We can see from these extracts how it happened that men were driven by deepening darkness into idolatry. The One living and true God had been driven from the heart. The heart no longer knew Him as Father. His dim and distant form was now only seen by the eye of the intellect. There was nothing that the soul could rest in among those high-sounding declamations, and the works of God were eagerly worshipped, first as revelations of God, and then as substitutes for God. The same story meets us in Egypt as in India. In his “ *Conferences on the Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*,” M. de Rougé says : “ We are able to state what ancient Egypt taught regarding God, the world, and man. I have said ‘ God,’ and not ‘ the gods.’ The first type is the most energetically expressed unity. God is one, alone, unique, no others with Him. He is the only truly living being : ‘ Thou art One, and the myriads of beings proceed from Thee.’ He has made

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\* *A Study of Origins*, Pressensé, p. 448.

everything, and He alone is not made. Considered in His relation to the world, God is Creator: 'He made the heavens; He created the earth; He made everything that exists; He is Master of the things that are, and the things that are not!' These texts are at least a thousand years earlier than Moses. . . . Is it that these lofty doctrines are the product of the ages? Positively, no; for they existed more than two thousand years before the Christian era. On the contrary, polytheism, whose sources we have marked, is developed, and progresses without interruption up to the times of the Ptolemies. It is more than five thousand years since that hymn to the unity of God began in the valley of the Nile . . . and we behold Egypt, in the last times, arrived at the most frightful polytheism."

Although Maspero, under the strain of present tendencies, no longer speaks with his old decisiveness on this matter, other Egyptologists present a testimony as explicit as that of de Rougé. Mariette Bey says, in his *Notice du Musée Boulaq*: "At the summit of the Egyptian pantheon there hovers an only God, immortal, uncreated, invisible, and hid in the inaccessible depths of His being; He is the Creator of heaven and of earth; He has made everything that exists, and there is nothing which has been made without Him. This is the God reserved for the initiated in the sanctuary. But Egypt was unable, or was unwilling, to remain at this sublime height." "A study of ancient Egyptian religious texts," writes Budge, in beginning his *Book on Egyptian Religion*,

“ will convince the reader that the Egyptians believed in One God, who was self-existent, immortal, invisible, eternal, omniscient, almighty, and inscrutable; the maker of the heavens, earth, and underworld; the creator of the sky and the sea, men and women, animals and birds, fish, and creeping things, trees and plants, and the incorporeal beings who were the messengers that fulfilled his wish and word. It is necessary to place this definition of the first part of the belief of the Egyptian at the beginning of the first chapter of this brief account of the principal religious ideas which he held, for the whole of his theology and religion was based upon it; and it is also necessary to add that, however far back we follow his literature, we never seem to approach a time when he was without this remarkable belief. . . . This sublime idea was never lost sight of; on the contrary, it is reproduced in the religious literature of all periods.”

The testimony of Lenormant is equally emphatic. “ However far we go back,” he says, “ in the documents relating to the Egyptian religion, we find there as a foundation, the grand idea of a Divine unity. Herodotus affirms that the Egyptians of Thebes recognised a single God, who had no beginning, and was to have no end of days. And this assertion of the father of history is confirmed by the reading of the sacred texts in hieroglyphic characters, in which it is said of this god ‘ that he is the progenitor in heaven and earth, and that he himself is not begotten . . . that he is the sole god existing in truth, begotten of himself . . . who exists from

the beginning . . . who has made all things, and was not himself created.' But this sublime notion, if it was retained in the esoteric doctrine, soon became obscured and disfigured by the conceptions of the priests and the ignorance of the people." \*

In Babylon, the most ancient of the civilisations, this disfigurement took place at an earlier period. But the traces of the earlier and purer belief are clear. I again quote Lenormant: "The religion of Assyria and Babylonia was, in its essential principles, and in the general spirit of its conceptions, of the same character as the religion of Egypt, and in general as all pagan religions. When we penetrate beneath the surface of the gross polytheism it had acquired from popular superstition, and revert to the original and higher conceptions, we shall find the whole based on the idea of the unity of the Deity, the last relic of the primitive revelation, disfigured by and lost in the monstrous ideas of pantheism, confounding the creature with the Creator, and transforming the Deity into a god-world, whose manifestations are to be found in all the phenomena of nature. Beneath this supreme and sole God, this great All, in whom all things are lost and absorbed, are ranked in an order of emanation, corresponding to their importance, a whole race of secondary deities, emanations from his very substance, who are merely personifications of his attributes and manifestations. . . . In the period of the Seleucidæ, the doctrine of the unity of God was distinctly taught there (at Erech);

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\* *Chaldean Magic*, pp. 79, 80.

as we know from tablets with cuneiform inscriptions, dated in the reign of several Greek kings, found at Warka, and now in the British Museum. The only name of a Deity found in them, and this is many times repeated, is 'God One.'\* \*

Similar testimony comes from all sides, and from the most unlikely quarters. "The existence of a primitive monotheism," says Pressensé, "is a fact receiving ever fuller demonstration. It is certain that the sun and the heavens have been most frequently identified with the supreme God, but not without having been raised above their natural sphere, spiritualised and glorified, as well as humanised, for they have always had a personality attributed to them. Among the Khonds, there is a real hierarchy of gods:—First, the multitude of local gods: then the tutelary gods of the tribes; higher still, six great deities of the rain, the chase, &c.; lastly, at the head of all, the god of the sun, *Būra-Pennu*, the Creator of all things. This creator-god is found among the Mexicans, the Tahitians, the Australian Aborigines, the Dyaks of Borneo. Many savage nations distinguish their supreme god from the sun. The Red Indians say that the Great Spirit is greater than the heavens and the stars, and that he dwells in the heavens. The Zulus worship the Lord of all. The same distinction is found among the Samoyedes and the Incas. Uiracocha was invoked as the one who, after having given life to the sun, commands it to shine, and even protects it. Taaoroa is the supreme

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\* *Ancient History of the East*, pp. 452, 495.

god of the islanders of the Pacific. He was before the heaven, the earth, and man. He has created the world and the inferior deities." \*

The distinction is clearly felt and constantly emphasized, notwithstanding all their superstitions by the negroes of the Gold Coast. It is found everywhere. I have said that those who maintain that man has made God, and that he has evolved the idea by banishing one crude conception after another, till he reached the idea of one Creator and Governor of the universe, forbid us to appeal to the Scriptures. Every proof we bring from David, or from Moses, is disposed of by the statement: "That is not ancient testimony: it is a comparatively modern forgery." But they cannot in that way dispose of the Vedas, or sweep away the testimony of ancient Egyptian texts and monuments, or annihilate the results of modern travel and investigation. And these are in themselves quite enough to show that their development theory is a dream.

Monotheism is not a late discovery: it is a primal revelation. Men *began* with the knowledge of the one living and true God; and when, through unthankfulness, and a vain intellectualism, they lost possession and knowledge of God, these were restored first through Moses, and then more fully in Jesus. The progression in the Scripture is not men's progress through a wilderness of blunders: it is the gradual fulfilling of a Divine plan, where every touch is blessing, and every word is true, and where, in the earlier

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\* *Ibid.*, pp. 477, 478.

revelation, we see the prophecy and the type of the revelation which is to follow.

I may add that two other facts complete the demonstration that the development theory of the critics is a blunder, and that the Patriarchal History which they have written down as fable must be restored as history. What we now know of the condition of Egypt and Palestine and other lands in the time of Moses, shows why the Scripture insists upon fidelity to the one living and true God, and forbids under the severest penalties idolatry in every form. Idolatry then pervaded and corrupted everything. It entered into every relationship of life. It dominated the State. If a people was to be separated for God, it must have been separated in this very way. These earlier Scriptures thus fit in with the times: these Scriptures and the times explain each other as only contemporaneous things can do.

That is one fact: the other is still more conclusive. We find the Jews, in undeniable history, before the beginning of the Christian era, possessed of the clearest convictions and the most perfectly defined teaching regarding the one living and true God. We find the Jews in this respect singular and solitary. They are the one and only purely monotheistic people in the whole world. Their monotheism is their badge and their offence among the nations, every one of which sits in idolatrous darkness. Whence came this sharp division? How came it that, when Egyptian darkness brooded everywhere besides, there was light in all the dwellings of Israel? That is, next to Christ

and Christianity, the most marvellous thing in history. Put back the Pentateuch as history, and say that God again revealed Himself to this people, and strove with them by judgments and by returning mercies, and we understand everything. The monotheism of the Jews thus makes belief in the genuineness and inspiration of the Old Testament a logical necessity.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

##### ABRAHAM AND HIS TIMES.

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WE now enter upon a section of sacred history which, in recent years, as I have just indicated, has been confidently set aside as mythical. Wellhausen rejects these early chapters of Genesis as utterly unhistorical. To him and his followers the story of Abraham is merely part of a bundle of what they call "patriarchal legends," and is, indeed, according to their belief, in rather a worse case than the rest, being a later conception than many of the others. Wellhausen is not quite sure that Abraham was known even in the time of the prophet Amos. He affirms that Abraham was not originally regarded as the progenitor of the people of Israel, for that place was Isaac's. Indeed, he is at a loss where to place Abraham, and as to how his presence in the narrative is to be explained. "Abraham alone," he says, "is certainly not the name of a people like

Isaac and Lot : he is somewhat difficult to interpret. That is not to say that in such a connection as this we may regard him as a historical person ; he might with more likelihood be regarded as a *free creation of unconscious art*. He is, perhaps, the youngest figure in the company, and it was probably at a comparatively late period that he was put before his son Isaac"!\*

This fiat from the critical throne ends all controversy for that large section of scholarly people who dread being "behind the times," and who are labouring hard to mould British opinion regarding these things. Canon Cheyne does not argue the matter ; but he has long since announced that no teacher of youth, who hopes to be accounted capable of fulfilling the duties of that responsible position, must talk as if he knew, or must suffer his pupils to imagine that he knows, anything whatever of Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob.† It is, henceforth, to be part of the ordinary instruction imparted to the young in this country, that those fruitful chapters of Genesis present us with as little reliable information regarding either God or man as the myths of Greece and Rome! What this is shortly to mean for the religious instruction of the country is seen in *The Old Testament and Modern Life*, by the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke. He ranges through the Old Testament history from Abraham to Elijah ; but he first of all begs his "readers to affix this general critical statement to every discourse in this book"—

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\* *History of Israel*, p. 320. † See *The Contemporary Review*, August, 1889.

“Not one of the stories here treated is taken as historically true. Some facts generally underlie them, but the older the story the less of any historical truth is to be found in it. The great patriarchal tales in the book of Genesis are prehistoric, no more historically true than the tales of Achilles, of Aeneas, or of King Arthur.”

*That* is the greatest of the alleged “discoveries” of the Higher Criticism! Happily, we are now in a position to test this so-called “discovery,” to triumphantly show its falsehood, and to strip this boasted learning of its pretensions. But even before this test was placed in our hands, there were facts which ought to have repelled those conclusions. This part of the Bible history, for example, bears more clearly than almost any other the stamp of Divine origin. Hitherto, in the Book of Genesis, we have followed the fortunes of the entire human race; but from this point onward, our attention is concentrated upon the history of one man, and of that one man’s posterity. Abraham is called out from the midst of the idolaters of Ur, in the south of Babylonia. He removes to Haran, in the north of Mesopotamia, accompanied by his father and his father’s family. There, again, the command comes to him, on his father’s death, to leave his kindred, as he had left his early home, and to travel to a land which God will show him.

Abraham dies; but still our attention is fixed upon this one line. The Scripture makes it perfectly plain why this is done. This, it is announced from the

very first, is the rise of a new humanity, whence redemption will by and bye flow forth and visit all nations. We company with the son as we companied with the father. The son also dies ; but still we keep with this one race. Page after page is devoted to the story of Jacob, just as page after page was devoted to the story of Isaac. And so we keep with Israel and its fortunes till the Old Testament ends. It is only in the New Testament, when the long foretold salvation is provided, that we come forth again from this side stream, and that the Bible history becomes once more the history of the world.

An irresistible argument for the Divine origin of the Scripture, and specially for this portion of it, is supplied by that one fact. Everyone admits that, with the advent of Christ, a new era *has* dawned upon the world. That era has worked the most wonderful changes in human thought and life. From the bosom of this one race—the race of Israel—light and health have flowed into the midst of all the peoples. Whence came the foresight which made the Bible fix expectation upon the Jews and upon the Jews alone? What led the Bible to persistently, age after age, century after century, make *their* history its history? That very abiding with Israel clearly declared that the expectation of God and of man rested upon this one people. Can anyone explain, then, how it is that this expectation has been fulfilled, and how it has happened that a Jew's name is the sweetest name on human tongue to-day; His life the one ideal life for humanity; His influence utterly

alone in its far-reaching and abiding power; and that heart-union with Him is binding men of all nationalities in a fellowship such as humanity never knew before? Can any explanation be given short of this—that the work and the Book are alike from God?

I might expand and enforce this argument, but my special purpose at present is of a more lowly but not less needful kind. The unceasing assault to which the Christian faith is exposed sweeps along the bulwarks from point to point. It is directed to-day specially against the character of the Old Testament. The students in many of our Theological Halls and Divinity Schools are being taught that the critics have hopelessly shattered the old beliefs. What kind of teaching these students are to give to the Churches is becoming painfully clear. Men are being thrown back upon “the everlasting principles” of a morality which has never yet saved a soul. But some of the critics are so eager to accomplish their mission that they cannot content themselves with the seclusion of their schools, and they have addressed themselves to the general public. The public are informed that the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is a dream, and that the miraculous narratives, and even what seems ordinary history, are very largely a collection of myths and fables. Satan, who, in a former age, sought to take from the Churches in these lands the Divine Master, seeks now to rob them of the Divine Book. I believe that no slight service is rendered in repelling the attack just at this point, and showing that the Mosaic

authorship cannot be truthfully denied, and that, at every step in the Divine narrative, we are dealing with facts and not with fictions.

Discoveries of very recent date have given an unexpected proof of this. Abraham, the father of the Hebrews, was a Semite, through the line of Eber. Now, in Genesis x. 25, we are told that "unto Eber were born *two* sons." The name of one was Peleg, the ancestor of Abram and of the Israelites, and that of the other was Joktan from whom, we are told in the succeeding verses, proceeded the various tribes which peopled Arabia. While the descendants of Joktan moved westward from Babylonia, and spread over the Arabian peninsula, the children of Peleg remained in the old ancestral land, and Terah and his family are found at the beginning of Abram's history residing in the ancient Babylonian city of Ur.

The most firm believer in the absolute accuracy of the Bible could hardly have expected that proof should have been forthcoming, in this twentieth century of the Christian era, of the truth of a minute point like that. With more than four thousand years of endless change standing between us and them, how should it be possible to trace these ancient relationships? But documents, written in the days of Abraham, and in the very land in which he lived, have been brought back to the light of day. In the Assyrian Eponym Canon, we find the very name, Abu-ramu, or Abram, as one of the names borne by men in that land. There are other names in documents of the time of the dynasty of Khammurabi,

a monarch about whom we shall presently have something to say, and who was a contemporary of the Patriarch, which show that men of Hebrew race were in the land at that very time. Mr. Pinches has discovered such names as *Ya'qub-ilu* and *Yashup-ilu*, that is, Jacob-el and Joseph-el; also *Sar-ilu*, in which we are reminded of Israel, and *Isme-ilu*, or Ishmael. *Mut-ili*, another form of *Mutusa-ili*, or Methusael, has long since been pointed out. These are distinctly Hebrew names, and they prove the presence of a Hebrew population in Babylonia at that very time.

Now other discoveries have brought back the ancient records of Arabia, and have made it plain that Khammurabi and his dynasty *were from that region, and were closely allied in language with the Hebrews*. Referring to these discoveries, Professor Sayce declares that one of their most astonishing results is the unlooked-for confirmation of this part of Scripture history. "There were, therefore," he says, "Hebrews—or at least a Hebrew-speaking population—living in Babylonia at the period to which the Old Testament assigns the life-time of Abraham. But this is not all. As I pointed out five and a half years ago, the name of Khammurabi himself, like those of the rest of the dynasty of which he was a member, is not Babylonian, but South Arabian. The words of which they are compounded, and the divine names which they contain, do not belong to the Assyrian and Babylonian language, and there is a cuneiform tablet in which they are given

with their Assyrian translations. The dynasty must have had close relations with South Arabia. This, however, is not the most interesting part of the matter. The names (Khammurabi, Ammi-Zaduga, &c.), are not South Arabian only, they are Hebrew as well. . . . When Abraham, therefore, was born in Ur of the Chaldees, a dynasty was ruling there which was not of Babylonian origin, but belonged to a race which was at once Hebrew and South Arabian. The contract-tablets prove that a population with similar characteristics was living under them in the country. Could there be a more remarkable confirmation of the statements which we find in the tenth chapter of Genesis? There we read that unto Eber was born two sons; the name of the one was Peleg, the ancestor of the Hebrews, while the name of the other was Joktan, the ancestor of the tribes of South Arabia. The parallelism between the Biblical account and the latest discovery of archæology is thus complete, and makes it impossible to believe that the Biblical narrative could have been compiled in Palestine at the late date to which our modern 'critics' would assign it. All recollection of the facts imbedded in it would then have long passed away."\*

The statements in Genesis x. regarding the origin of the Hebrew and South Arabian peoples, intrude still more fully into, and pre-occupy more broadly, the domain of archæology. They make Babylonia the cradle-land of the new humanity and the

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\* *Patriarchal Palestine.*

primeval home of all the Semitic races. We have just seen how investigation is steadily proving the truth of the first and larger statement. Referring to the Library of Assur-bani-pal, which, with its vast and priceless store of ancient texts, has so widely extended our knowledge of the past, Hommel says: "The literary treasures it contained belonged to an epoch far earlier than that of the Assyrian monarchy, namely, to that which is now known as the *early Babylonian* period. Original monuments of that era having been discovered in increasing numbers, *it now grows daily more apparent* that in it are to be found the sources, not only of early Asiatic civilization (including that of primitive Egypt), but also of Western culture, *i.e.*, of classical antiquity, with which our own is bound up."\*

Coming, however, to this specific statement that the Semitic races sprang from Babylonia, we are confronted with statements which are not in harmony with those of the Bible. The opinion that Mesopotamia is the fatherland, not only of the Assyrians and Babylonians, but also of the Hebrews, the Arabs, the Syrians, and the Ethiopians or Abyssinians, has been and is still challenged. The Semitic languages resemble each other much more closely than the languages of the Aryan or Japhetic races. The similarities between Greek, Latin, and Sanscrit, or between Gaelic and German, are by no means constant and striking. Their kinship is not broadly stamped upon every feature, so that one finds

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\* *Ancient Hebrew Traditions*, p. 30.

it impossible not to recognise the relationship. It is shown rather in marks which escape the ordinary eye. But with the Semitic tongues the reverse is the case. The connection between them is so evident that no one can mistake it. The dictionaries and grammars are almost the same. Their root words—consisting of three letters, and therefore called trilateral—and their grammatical inflections may be said to be identical. Were the written character the same, the student might almost conclude that he had to do with different dialects rather than with distinct languages. This fact has appeared to many to make it a very easy matter to decide as to the common fatherland of the Semitic races. Should there be one district, they have argued, where the language is purest and least affected by the intermixture of foreign words and idioms, it is probable that that district is the centre whence all the others have migrated. The river is purest at its source; and, if we find one part of these Semitic waters exceptionally clear, we may conclude that that is the fountain whence all the other streams have flowed.

Now there is one Semitic language which, viewed in this aspect, seems, in the judgment of many, to possess unrivalled claims to be the parent stem; but these claims are in decided conflict with the statement of Genesis regarding Abram's Chaldean origin. The Arabic seems, at least at first sight, to be undoubtedly purer than any other branch of Semitic speech. The Arabs appear also to have preserved the ancient manners, customs, and religious beliefs more intact

than any other branch of the Semitic race has done. The opinion has, accordingly, been strongly maintained that the other Semites are only emigrated Arabs. Arabia, and not Chaldea, is declared to be the fatherland of the Semitic peoples, and what seems to be distinctly implied in the Divine record as to their Babylonian origin is contradicted in the name at once of Archæology and of Philology.

There is no necessity, however, for the defenders of the infallibility of Scripture to say anything. Science may make mistakes, but she makes generous amends. Philologists now doubt the reputed purity of Arabic. Its very richness seems to them to imply extensive borrowings in ancient days. It is now also largely admitted that the facts which I have mentioned are not sufficient to maintain the claims which have been advanced on its behalf. Its purity and its retention of ancient manners and ideas are fully explained by the position of Arabia. There are districts in England where old forms of speech and ancient customs still survive; but no one thinks of concluding on that account that these are the centres from which the rest of the land was peopled. The natural conclusion is of quite another kind. Customs and forms of speech might remain undisturbed for centuries in some remote corner of the country, which would not endure for fifty years in London; and when such unbroken continuity is met with, we invariably find that it is due to the comparative seclusion of the district. Everything is fully explained when we find that the place has been shielded from the incursion

of fresh life. The streams of other thought and speech and custom have not flowed into those quiet pools. They have passed along channels so far removed that even the sound of their rushing waters has been seldom heard. A glance at the map would be enough to suggest this explanation, although we had no experience to guide us. On East, South, and West, Arabia is shut off from other regions by the sea. And as if this were not enough, it is shut up, as one might cover a huge jar, by the deserts on the North. Secluded in this way, it was simply impossible for Arabia to change as the other Semite countries were compelled to change; and the comparative purity of its speech and the antiquity of its customs and ideas are really the natural result of its isolation.

But research has gone further, and triumphantly proved the truth of the Bible statement. To feel the full weight of the facts about to be named, let me ask the reader to note the following philological law. If several races have dwelt together as one people at some remote period, one consequence of their original unity will be their use of the same names for familiar objects; and these names will tell us much as to the kind of life which they lived in their ancestral home. It is in this way we learn that the Indo-European, or Japhetic, races enjoyed a high civilization before they separated. They had the institution of marriage; they dwelt apart as families; they had flocks and herds; they were acquainted with agriculture: they had several domesticated animals. We

know all this because the various languages—the Sanscrit, Greek, Latin, German, &c., retain common words which indicate these facts. If these had been new experiences to them after their separation from each other, each nation would have had its own names for them. But seeing that the names are the same, the conclusion is irresistible that these customs were older than the parting of the Indo-European peoples.

In the same way we are able to glean a good deal of information as to what the Semites were, and what they knew before they separated. We can, indeed, avail ourselves of this law to learn more. The similar names of objects will tell us not only *how*, but also *where* they lived together. If Arabia, for instance, is the Semitic fatherland, then the names of the animals and the plants which are natives of that region, will be among their common words. If Chaldea, on the contrary, was the first home of the various races, then the plants and the animals, whose names they have carried with them as household words, will be the plants and the animals of Chaldea.

This question of fatherland is, therefore, one which the reader will see can be easily settled by scientific inquiry. It has now been settled, and the result is another tribute to the truth of Scripture. All these languages have the same name for the camel, but have different names for the ostrich. The camel was, therefore, known to the children of Shem before their separation, but the ostrich was not. In other

words, *Arabia*, which is the home of the ostrich, was not the fatherland of the Semitic races. The Arabic name for the ostrich is *na'ām*, while the Hebrew name is *ya'ēn*. If the Hebrews were Arab emigrants, the Arabic name for the ostrich would have been carried with them more surely than their tents and their flocks.

The bear is found in Mesopotamia, as well as in Syria and in Palestine; but it is not found in Arabia. Now all branches of Semitic speech have virtually the same term for this animal. It is called in Ethiopian *Deb*, in Hebrew *Dob*, in Aramean *Debba*, Arabic *Dubb*. It must have been known, consequently, before the separation, and to have known it the Semites must all have resided in a country where bears are met with. That country was not Arabia; but it may have been Babylonia.

In the same way the wild ox is called in Hebrew *reēm*, and in Assyrian *rému*. The word *rému* is used in Arabic, but it is applied to quite a different animal. *Raimu* is explained in Arabic dictionaries as meaning "a young gazelle with a white skin." The explanation of this change is simply that the wild ox is not found in Arabia; but the Arabs, emigrating from a country such as Babylonia where the animal is met with, carried the name with them, and applied it to an animal which reminded them somewhat of that which they had formerly known. The Semitic names for the panther, again, are substantially the same. It is called in Ethiopian *Namr*, in Hebrew *Namer*, in Aramaic *Nemra*, in Assyrian *Nimru*, and in Arabic

*Namir*. This word belongs, accordingly, to the mother tongue of the Semites, and the animal must have been well known in their early home. But that home could not have been Arabia; for the panther is, and has always been, very rarely met with there.

The names of plants in the Semitic languages take us still further. The races lived, before their separation, in the home of the date-palm. It is called in Assyrian *tamaru*, in Hebrew *tamar*, in Ethiopian *tamart*, while in Arabic, *tamr* not only designates the date, but also fruit in general. But the home of the date-palm is in the northern and central portions of the country which is fertilized by the Euphrates and the Tigris. This region is also indicated by the names applied to other plants. Mesopotamia does not boast a large variety of vegetable life; but the plants, which are indigenous to that country, such as the various species of poplar, the tamarisk, and the pomegranate, bear, like the palm-tree, the same names in all the Semitic languages. On the other hand, plants which grow in the temperate zones or on mountains, such as the elm, the ash, the chestnut, the oak, the beech, the pine, and the cedar, have either different names in the various branches of Semitic speech, or have received the same name only in comparatively recent times. Quite in keeping with this we find that wheat, barley, and oats, produced so abundantly of old on the well-watered plains of Babylonia, as well as hunting and fishing, the various labours of the field, and the occupations of pastoral life—all of

them extensively practised in Babylonia—bear the same designations in the various Semitic tongues. And not only is Chaldea thus indicated by its animals and plants, and by the occupations which it afforded to its inhabitants, but the very geography of the country has also left its impress on Semitic speech. It has great rivers but no mountains, while the sea sweeps up into the land on the south. Now the names for river and sea are alike in Hebrew, Ethiopian, Aramean, and Assyrian, but each of these languages has a different name for mountain. Other features of the country and of its ancient life have impressed themselves in similar fashion. Chaldea is distinguished for its numerous marshes, on which grow gigantic reeds. All the Semitic languages designate both marshes and reeds by the same name, *agam*. There are two other marked characteristics of Chaldea—its bitumen and its bricks. The names for these are also alike, showing that they, too, were a feature of the Semitic fatherland. To take a last illustration, the languages further prove that the metals with which the Semites were acquainted in their ancestral home, were gold, copper, and bronze, but not silver, iron, or lead. “These results,” says Guidi, an Italian author, who has laboured upon this subject most indefatigably and with brilliant success—“these results agree in a remarkable manner with the state of metallurgy in the Babylonian region, as shown by the objects found in the most ancient tombs. In Babylonia gold was known, silver unknown, while bronze was common. Lead and iron

were so rare, that it is clear that they were introduced at a later period."

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## CHAPTER V.

### ABRAHAM'S CITY.

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THE Bible, as we have just seen, has enriched all who have received its testimony with the last results of scientific enquiry, when it is said that Abraham, and consequently the Hebrews, came from Chaldea. But the Scripture has gone further, and specified the particular spot in Chaldea from which Abraham set out. It was, we are told, Ur of the Chaldees. Now, if the book of Genesis were of late origin, or if the writer of it had been left to grope his own way amid the obscurity and uncertainty of tradition, this is a point on which we might expect mistake and confusion. The fact might be known that Abraham belonged originally to the plains of the Euphrates and the Tigris, and yet no one might have been able to say from what special locality he had set out. Or some city might have been fixed upon which had no existence two thousand years before the Christian era, the time when Abraham was called upon to become a pilgrim and sojourner. As a matter of fact, an impenetrable darkness seems to have settled upon this part of Abraham's history some centuries before the time of our Lord. The makers of the

Greek version of the old Testament (the Septuagint), writing some time about 300 B.C., represented Ur of the Chaldees not as a city but as a country. And not till within these last years has the darkness been dispersed. Guesses were made, but all of them were wide of the mark. Bochart and many others identified Ur of the Chaldees with a city named Ur, mentioned by Ammianus Marcellinus, in his account of the retreat of Julian's army. Dean Stanley has argued strongly for Edessa, which local, but somewhat late, traditions asserted to be the birth-place of the patriarch. So numerous, in fact, were the opinions entertained, and so ably were they supported, that the student and the scholar were alike bewildered. As an evidence of this uncertainty, it may be mentioned that *The Speaker's Commentary*, one of the very best guides on all questions of Biblical Archæology, merely recorded the opinions which had been advanced, and declined the responsibility of deciding which was to be preferred.

All this is now changed. The Hebrew name is *Ur-Kasdim*. Kasdim is now, thanks to the Assyrian discoveries, found to be the proper name of the ancient people whom we call Chaldees. George Smith connects it with the Assyrian word *Kasidu*, "to possess, or conquer." The Kasdim were, accordingly, "the conquerors," a name given to them probably on their conquest of the country. The exact location of that country has now been fixed by the monuments. It was situated to the South of Babylon and its territory, and extended to the shores of the

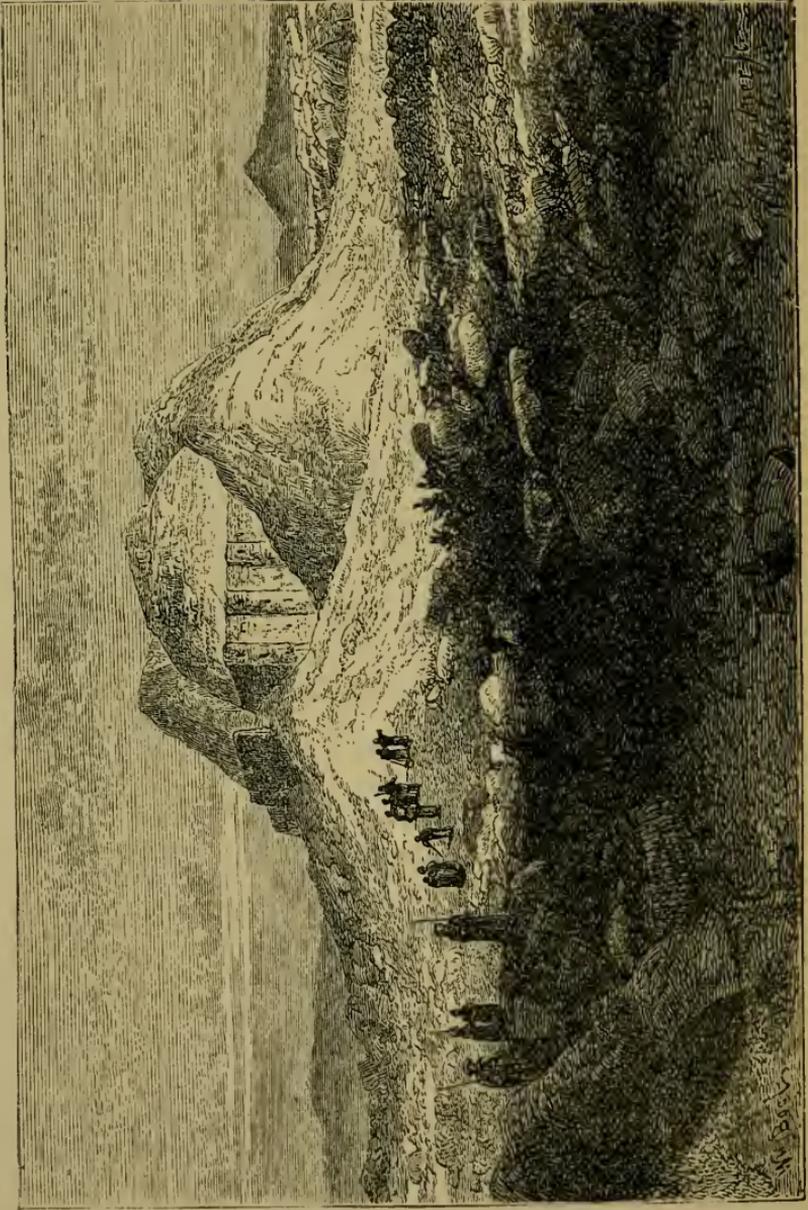
Persian Gulf. But advancing knowledge has not only enabled us (as we shall see) to find the ancient city; it has also shown the marvellous accuracy of Bible history, and its perfect reflection of the time with which it deals. Why should the city be called Ur-Kasdim, and not simply Ur? It is now known that it was the chief city of the Kasdim, and that this form of the name *Kasdim* is a distinctive mark of the time of Abraham. "Ur," says Hommel, "was the only Babylonian city of any importance on the western bank of the Euphrates. The narrow strip of country between the Euphrates and the Arabian desert, from Borsippa in the north to the Persian Gulf in the south, and the region between the mouths of the Tigris and Euphrates at the lower extremity of southern Babylonia, was known to the Babylonians as the land of Kaldu. This name, Kaldu, was originally Kashdu, then (as early as the second millennium B.C.), Kardu, from which the kings of the Kassite dynasty obtained the name Karduniash, and finally (certainly from the 9th century B.C. onwards) Kaldu (whence the Greek *Chaldaioi*, Chaldæans). To this original form, Kashdu, we owe the Hebrew Kashdim. . . . This at once furnishes us with fresh proof of the fact, that the Hebrew tradition which designates Ur-Kasdim as the original home of Abraham, dates from the beginning of the second millennium B.C., i.e., from the time of the Khammurabi dynasty, and of Abraham himself; for a few centuries later we find the name Kashdu replaced by Kardu, and at the time of the captivity

Kaldu had long been the only term in general use."\* Here again, therefore, we encounter a fact which is fully explained by the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, but which is utterly opposed to the critical belief as to its late origin.

The situation of Chaldea, then, no longer admits of doubt; and this identification has disposed of almost all the opinions advanced as to the locality of Ur. But *where* was the city? Sir Henry Rawlinson had long believed that Ur was to be found in the present Mugheir, a representation of which the reader will find upon the next page. It always attracted attention, because of the remarkable mound which forms the centre of the picture. "The name Múgeyer," says Loftus, who published the account of his visit in 1857, "is peculiarly given to a remarkable building, seventy feet high, which stands near the north end of the mounds, and is the only example of a Babylonian temple remaining in good preservation, not wholly covered by rubbish. It is built of large bricks, and from their being 'cemented with bitumen,' originates the modern name of Múgeyer. It consists of two distinct but massive stories, having the plan of a right-angled parallelogram, the longest sides of which are the north-east and south-west. One angle points due north, which feature, I may remark, is observable in all the edifices of true Chaldean origin. As each story rises, it gradually slopes inward at an angle of nine degrees, for the purpose, doubtless, of bearing great superincumbent

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\* *The Ancient Hebrew Tradition*, pp. 212, 213.



MUGEYER, THE ANCIENT UR OF THE CHALDEES.

pressure, and to this fact may be attributed the remarkably perfect condition of the whole remaining edifice.'"\* This building (which is the main feature in our illustration) is remarkable for some notable discoveries, which resulted from its close examination. It "has settled," says Loftus, "the important architectural question, whether the Babylonians were acquainted with the arch. Two regularly constructed semicircular arches, running through the entire thickness of the walls, are in admirable preservation—the bricks being wedge-shaped to form the voussoirs." †

Mr. Taylor, Vice-Consul at Busrah, had been asked by Sir Henry Rawlinson to undertake excavations on the site, in the hope of discovering some inscription which might throw light upon its name and history. "With astonishing patience and perseverance" he had "penetrated through the solid mass of the brickwork to the very heart and base of the edifice, without discovering anything to reward his labours, or to throw light upon its construction or object; until, in excavating at the south corner of the upper story, he found, at a depth of six feet below the surface, a perfect inscribed cylinder, standing on one extremity in a niche, formed by the omission of one of the bricks in the layer. He afterwards sunk shafts at the other corners, and secured a precisely similar record from each, all of which are now deposited in the British Museum. This discovery at Múgeyer convinced him that the

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\* *Chaldea and Susiana*, p. 128.

† P. 133.

commemorative cylinders of the founders were always deposited at the corners of Babylonian edifices. With this knowledge before him, Sir Henry Rawlinson, in the following Autumn, at once disinterred his beautiful cylinders of Nebuchadnezzar from the corners of one of the lower platforms at the Birs Nimrud, to the great amazement of the Arab workmen." \*

But those cylinders found at Múgeyer played a remarkable part in the confutation of the critics who were glorying in the belief that they had proved that Belshazzar was a myth, and that *Daniel* was a forgery. They were inscriptions of Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon known to profane history. They recorded the fact that he had built the temple to the moon-god, and they contained a prayer that the god would be gracious to Belshazzar, Nabonidus' eldest son! The inscription brought the lost Belshazzar back to the light of day, and convinced Sir Henry that he had been co-regent with his father.

He was equally correct in his belief that Múgeyer was the Ur of the Chaldees, Abraham's early home. He had previously accepted the opinion of the Talmudists and early Arabs, that Ur was to be found at Warka, now known to be the ancient Erech. But he now discovered the name *Uru* upon the cylinders, and immediately surrendered his previous belief, before what he believed to be indisputable monumental evidence. Further than this, however, he was unable to adduce any convincing proofs that

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\* Pp. 130, 131.

his identification was correct; and it need hardly surprise us that his opinion did not meet with much favour, and that it was accepted with some hesitation even by his brother, Canon Rawlinson. The publication of an Assyrian bilingual tablet, however, which was found at Nineveh among the remains of the Library of Assur-bani-pal, the grandson of Sennacherib, has cleared away every shadow of doubt, and proved that Múgeyer is the site of the ancient Ur of the Chaldees.

The difficulty which stood in the way of earlier identification, was that the name of the city was written in signs, the meaning of which might be clear, but the pronunciation of which was unknown. The Assyrian bilingual tablet gave the pronunciation. The bricks dug up at Múgeyer bore a name which might be read Sis-x-Ki. The dictionary shows that these syllables were pronounced Uru. This is the Ur, or as the word seems to indicate, The "City" of the Chaldees. It has received its present name Múgeyer, as Loftus intimates, from the character of its ruins. It was called Múgeyer, the city of Asphalt, because the bricks, which are met with at every step, are covered with that substance. The ruins stand on a slight elevation, on the west bank of the Euphrates. The remains reveal that it was in Abraham's time a centre of learning and of civilization, of the sciences and the arts, as well as a place of wealth and luxury.

It is highly important that this should be noted in view of the words of Hebrews xi. 9, which remind us that Abraham "by faith sojourned in the land of

promise as in a strange country, *dwelling in tents* with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise." This is commonly explained by the statement that Abraham and his descendants were Nomads, and that, like the Arabs, they could not have breathed freely if cooped up within stone walls. But Abraham was not a Nomad. He had been a city dweller. There can be no doubt that he was born and reared in one of the palaces of majestic and luxurious Ur; for Terah, his father, was one of the princes of the people. When he came out he was at the head of flocks and herds, and an immense following. Abraham's tent-dwelling was, therefore, the choice made by a man who desired that he and his should walk blamelessly with God. When Lot entered Sodom, corruption flooded his home. But "by faith" Abraham kept apart, giving up the luxuries and the conveniences of city life, enduring the heat of summer and the cold and damp of winter, "dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise."

What were the religious ideas which Abram acquired in his early home? If it is true that there had been a Primeval Revelation, there must have been truth as well as error in that inheritance. There *was* truth there which accounts for much in Abraham's thought and life. "The traces," says Mr. Tomkins, "of religious belief on the great subjects of human destiny in the life to come are very important, and stir our deepest feelings. As we draw nearer the fountain-heads of history, 'such thoughts,

the wreck of Paradise,' more clearly reveal themselves.

“The consciousness of sin, and its desert and punishment, the origin of temptation and transgression, the fall of angels and of man, the flood as the punishment of human iniquity, the fear of death (‘death I feared, and lay down on the ground,’ ‘the waters of death will not cleanse thy hands’),\* the reverence and yearning for righteousness, and belief in its reward at the hands of God, the belief in the immortality of the soul, in judgment to come, in a heaven of blessedness and a place of punishment, are all now brought to light as ‘articles of faith’ among Accadians and Semites alike, gradually entangled and overlaid in the ‘many inventions’ of ‘the evil imaginations of man’s heart,’ losing their only true significance, as men ‘did not like to retain God in their knowledge.’ In fact, the result of all the investigation of recent years is that which has been most accurately summed up by St. Paul in the beginning of his Epistle to the Romans.”†

But the monuments also show what value is to be placed upon the statements of those who imagine that Abraham had carried away with him traditions, or written records, which Moses afterwards used as materials for Genesis. That notion has had a marvellous attraction for many; but strange materials for Genesis would these documents have been! The ruins, as well as the ancient literature of Babylonia,

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\* These are quotations from ancient Babylonian texts.

† *Abraham and his Age*, pp. 36, 37.

prove abundantly the truth of the Spirit's testimony by Joshua: "Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor; and they served other gods" (Joshua xxiv. 2).

This is also clearly indicated in what we are told in Genesis xxxi. 53. Laban and Jacob make a covenant. A heap of stones is raised; and beyond that heap Laban is not to pass to injure Jacob, nor is Jacob to pass to injure Laban. When this engagement came to be solemnly confirmed by oath, Laban swore by "The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the god of their fathers. And Jacob swore by the fear of his father Isaac." It was quite like the wily Laban to remind Jacob that he had left the worship of the ancestral divinity. And so he indicates that Abraham once worshipped the idol which Nahor continued to adore and in whom Laban himself still trusted. Jacob, on the other hand, invokes Jehovah, whom alone his immediate father trusted from the dawn of life to its close. The form of his oath was a reply to the form of Laban's. When he "swore by the fear of his father Isaac," he reminded Laban that the implied accusation could not stand, and that he was not unfaithful to the sacred traditions of his home.

The darkness of idolatry had long before descended upon the fathers of the Hebrews, and upon Ur of the Chaldees. The mound of the ruins seen in the engraving is formed of the remains of a temple erected to Sin, the moon-god, by Ur-Engur, who reigned in Ur before the birth of Abraham. The

bricks bear, sometimes, the inscription : “ Ur-Engur, King of Ur, is he who built the temple of the god Sin ; ” and sometimes this other : “ To the god Sin, his lord, Ur-Engur, King of Ur, has caused this temple to be erected.” Sin (the moon), was adored as “ the chief of the gods,” and the “ father ” of his worshippers. The researches in Babylon and Egypt have enabled us to understand the time and the significance of the fact that just at this point in the world's history Abraham was separated. The idolatries of the earth were now fully elaborated, and their sway over the nations was firmly established. At first, as with the canonized saints of the Romish Church, the worship of the gods had a lower place than the worship of the Creator. But by this time it had quite displaced the earlier and purer faith. Speaking of the development of the worship of Ishtar, the Astoreth of the Scripture and the Venus of the Romans, George Smith says: “ Her worship was at first subordinate to that of Anu (the Accadian name for the One living and true God) ; and as she was goddess of love, while Anu was god of heaven, it is probable that the first intention of mythology was only to represent love as heaven-born ; but in time a more sensual view prevailed, and the worship of Ishtar became one of the darkest features in Babylonian mythology. As the worship of this goddess increased in favour, it gradually superseded that of Anu, until in time his temple, the house of heaven, came to be regarded as the temple of Venus.”\*

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\* *The Chaldean Genesis*, p. 56.

Lamentable as that degradation of the primeval worship was, there were other departures that assumed terrific forms. "The mode of worship in primitive Babylonia," writes the Rev. H. G. Tomkins, "is receiving fresh illustration day by day. It is certain that it was observed from week to week, and from festival to festival, and from fast to fast, with all pomp and splendour; with processions, music, and hymns of high wrought adoration, and impassioned prayer."\* But in the victims which were slain before their altars, they did not confine themselves to the beasts of the field. Human sacrifices were offered. The following is a translation by Professor Sayce of an ancient Accadian text: "The Augur cried thus:—The offspring who raises his head among mankind;—(his) offspring for his life he shall give; the head of the offspring for the head of the man he shall give; the neck of the offspring for the neck of the man he shall give; the breast of the offspring for the breast of the man he shall give." And a passage from an ancient astronomical work shows how fully the custom was established. It indicates the appropriate time for the human sacrifice. "When the air-god (Rammanu) is fine, prosperity. On the high-places the son is burnt."†

And that dark page in the story of the world's ancient civilisation did not stand alone. An alliance with the powers of evil was resolutely sought, with what success we are as yet unable to say clearly. Had there been no success it would be strange

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\* *Abraham and his Age*, p. 33. † *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 77.

indeed that the attempt should have been so largely made and so long continued. The practice of magic became the absorbing and the daily and hourly occupation of the priesthood. "The Assyrians, and the Babylonians before them," says Mr. Tomkins, "thought to utilize for their malicious ends the power of those swarming evil spirits who were (as they believed) the authors of every species of disease, and who might, as Professor Sayce writes, 'be swallowed with the food and drink that support life.' They counted no less than 300 spirits of heaven and 600 spirits of earth. The charms were in the old Accadian tongue, and doubtless of most ancient date. They are bad enough for the hags in 'Macbeth.'"\*

In these dark idolatries Abraham and his forefathers had been brought up. Idolatry had triumphed. Recent discovery has shown that the authorities of Ur had power to compel an inhabitant to erect a temple in his own ground. Any clinging to the older and purer faith would have been regarded as treason against the gods, and would have been mercilessly stamped out. And now the time to intervene had come. The earth's cry has ascended into the ears of Jehovah of Hosts, and He will kindle once more the extinguished lamp of truth. And so into the depths of that fearful darkness God passed in His mercy, and took Abraham and revealed Himself to him, and made him His servant and His friend, and the head of His redeemed. The saving of Abraham was God's promise that one day the

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\* *Abraham and his Age*, p. 42.

earth's curse should thus be wholly rolled away. For this was only the first-fruits of the harvest—a handful plucked from the great field of humanity and waved before the Lord. The day of the full ingathering will assuredly come, when the whole earth shall be the Lord's, and all mankind shall walk in the brightness of His face! But how could the thoughtless makers of myths have fashioned that story? How could they have placed the Divine intervention just there? How could they have begun the new time just where the old time had perfected its apostasy? It has often had to be remarked that unbelief creates mightier improbabilities than those which it seeks to remove; and this perfect foresight and fitness attributed to blind chance may now be added to the other demands upon the credulity of rationalism.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### THE CHALDEA OF ABRAHAM.

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IT may be interesting to note at this point from what kind of country and from what kind of people Abraham comes out. I have already referred to the notion that he and his descendants were Nomads. That notion was part of a wider misconception which was due to our ignorance. We imagined that those ancient times were as far removed from our own in culture and in knowledge

as they are distant in time, and that Abraham and his contemporaries were only slightly in advance of the rude barbarians with which travel makes us acquainted to-day.

But it cannot be said that those notions were gathered from the Bible. The peoples with whom Abraham comes into contact are city-dwellers. They are under regular governments, and have their kings, princes, priests, and laws. When Abraham purchases a field for a burial-place, the transfer of the property is made in accordance with regular forms, and these are evidently in accord with long established custom. In their intercourse with him, the leading men of the various communities show a civility and courtesy which plainly imply a condition of society very far removed from barbarism; and Abraham's demeanour is always equal to theirs. The old notions, to which scholars and even ordinary Bible readers clung, must have found in all this a serious difficulty. But we now know that the old notions were entirely wrong, and that Abraham came out from one of the grandest civilizations which the world has ever seen, and made one of the biggest sacrifices which faith has ever offered. He came out from the midst of culture and of luxury. At God's command he turned his back upon all their prospects and their allurements, their honours and their ease, and became a wanderer and a stranger, a man without a fatherland or a continuous resting place, and whose only home was the fellowship of God.

It will, therefore, not be wasted time to linger a

little here, and to look back over the land which the patriarch—the father of all them that believe—is now abandoning. And, first of all, let me say a word as to its physical characteristics. Loftus speaks, in his book on “Chaldea and Susiana,” of the glories of a Chaldean sunrise, and dwells upon it as one of the sights of a life-time. That was a spectacle which Abraham must have often gazed upon. The clear sky laid bare night after night, also, the mighty heavens, and spread before the eye a vision that raised questionings in the child’s bosom and solemnized the maturer thoughts of the man. Abraham knew, too, the extremes of heat and cold. Loftus speaks of “the fearful heat at the head of the Persian Gulf.” “Even at Baghdad,” he says, “during the day, in summer, the thermometer in the shade often rises to 117 degrees Fahrenheit; and frequently, when the wind blows from the south, the oppression on the senses is so great as to be almost unendurable. The atmosphere is, however, dry; consequently the lassitude produced is not to be compared with that experienced in a moist climate, like that on the sea coast of India, or of the Gulf. The heat of the day is relieved in some measure by the agreeable temperature of the night.”\*

The cold of winter is equally intense. “It was now,” he says in another place, “winter in the Arab plains, and the thermometer stood at freezing-point as we advanced northwards from the Sheik’s encampment. On quitting the date-groves, clouds

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\* Pp. 8, 9.

concealed the sun, and the wind blew so keen and cuttingly across the level desert, that it was necessary frequently to dismount and walk, that the blood might be kept in proper circulation. Although I had crossed the snows of the Alps and the Taurus, I never before experienced such an intensity of cold. I was almost paralysed, not from the lowness of the temperature, but from the passage of the wind over the soil impregnated with saltpetre; we were as if in a spacious refrigerator. The Arabs, with their bare feet resting in large iron stirrups, were completely benumbed and useless, frequently falling from their faithful mares, and requiring to be again lifted into their saddles. Wherever we passed an encampment, a wretched camels'-dung fire imparted a degree of warmth to the half-clad Arabs, which only caused them to feel the cold more acutely. They sat shivering and grinning, their faces alone visible from beneath their rags, and bearing more resemblance to monkeys than to living human beings. All had dreadful coughs, and their constant barking jarred horribly on the ear. It is almost incredible that the Arab of the Tigris and Euphrates can endure such extremes of temperature as there prevail—at one season scorched under a burning sun, at another almost frozen to death.”\*

To-day the vast plains, watered on the east by the Tigris and on the west by the Euphrates, are a desert. But this is due to the absence of anything worthy of the name of government. The canals—

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\* Pp. 146, 147.

those great arteries of the land which ought to convey the vitalising fluid to every part—are neglected and ruined, and in most cases their ancient banks really obstruct the inflowing waters from the flooded rivers, and turn the country into a pestiferous marsh. But wherever the waters have a chance the wondrous fertility of the land appears. I quote again from the pages of Mr. Loftus. “A great change was taking place in the aspect of the country; and many old channels and water-courses which I had been accustomed to see empty and dry, were now rapidly filling with river water. In many spots it reached up to my saddle-girths, proving the propriety of the step I had taken in ending the excavations. Within the space of a week, or less, passage in that direction, or indeed in any other, would have been impracticable. Hennayin, as he walked by my side, broke into frequent exclamations of delight at the sight of little runners of the vivifying fluid as it trickled along, gradually filling the canals. ‘Is not this a beautiful country?’ he continually exclaimed, while he looked up into my face with undoubted signs of gratification.”

“While the embarkation was being effected, I was in full enjoyment of the scene before me. After the dust and barren dreariness of the ruins, nothing could exceed the beauty and luxury of that river side and its now verdant banks. The shouts and squabbles of the Arabs about the daily division of their pay were ceased, and in their stead bee-eaters, king-fishers, herons, pigeons, hawks, and other birds,

in all their bright and varied plumage, were flying about, uttering their several cries, and luxuriating in their native element, scarcely deigning to notice the presence of human beings. . . . A thick forest of luxuriant date-trees fringes the bank on either side of the noble river, which supplies innumerable canals for their nourishment and for the cultivation of cereals, which flourish in large quantities even beneath the shade of the palms.”\*

He says in another place: “It was mid-spring. Instead of the Arid sands, which the word ‘desert’ implies to the uninitiated in Mesopotamian travel, broad plains of the richest verdure, enlivened with flowers of every hue met our delighted gaze on either side of the noble river. Coleopterous insects swarmed upon the banks, culling the sweets of the fleeting vegetation.”† In all this Loftus gives us a glimpse of what Abram had found in his fatherland. But it is, after all, a very inadequate picture. Even the brightest of these rapidly fading beauties of to-day poorly represent the glories of the ancient time. “In former days the vast plains of Babylonia,” he writes truly, “were nourished by a complicated system of canals and watercourses, which spread over the surface of the country like network. The wants of a teeming population were supplied by a rich soil, not less bountiful than that on the banks of the Egyptian Nile. Like islands, rising from a golden sea of waving corn, stood frequent groves of palms and pleasant gardens, affording to the idler or the traveller

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\* Pp. 274-277. † P. 5.

their grateful and highly valued shade. Crowds of passengers hurried along the dusty roads to and from the busy city. The land was rich in corn and wine.”\* Herodotus, who visited the country during the Persian occupation, and who did not see it in its full splendour, says: “Of all the countries that we know there is none which is so fruitful in grain.” He adds that the yield is commonly two hundred-fold and often reaches to three hundred-fold, and he declines to state the height to which the millet and the sesame grow, lest he should be accused of exaggeration. The resources of the country were so great that it was reckoned by the Persians as equivalent to one-third of their vast empire.

Such were the climate and the country, and we have to picture to ourselves that fertile land at its best. But the eye rests on something more than well-kept canals, thickly growing corn-fields, rich pasture lands, and groves of palm trees. Chaldea is the home of architecture, and where the mounds with their buried ruins now meet the traveller’s eye, there stood then rich, luxurious, and noble cities, some of them of vast extent. Herodotus says that Babylon itself formed a square, each side of which was 120 furlongs, or fifteen miles, long, so that it must have covered the enormous space of 225 square miles. He also tells us that the country contained “a vast number of cities.” This was, indeed, many centuries after the days of Abraham; but the records which have recently come to light show that the

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\* P. 14.

description is also applicable to the time of the patriarch. Chaldea was from the first the land of cities.

If it is asked what those cities were like, we are now able to answer the question. The sculptures show us large pleasure gardens, with ponds well stocked with fish. The cities were spacious, and there was no overcrowding, at least in those portions which were occupied by the wealthy. The various quarters of the city were adorned with spacious temples, some of them at least soaring upwards in seven staged towers in imitation of the great Babel Zikkurat, and sending back the sun's rays steeped in the many hues of their coloured stones. For these buildings and for the statues which adorned the temples and their precincts, stone had been brought from vast distances, and in particular from the wilderness of Sinai. The dwelling-houses were built of brick and faced with plaster. The Chaldeans were also fond of colour and delighted in ornamentation. The dull uniformity of the plastered wall was relieved by coloured cones stuck into the plaster, and arranged in various artistic patterns. The lower apartments of the houses afforded a refuge from the intense heat of the day-time; and on the flat terraced roofs the inhabitants were able to enjoy the evening coolness and quiet.

And what of the people? Chaldea was an ideal spot for the infancy and youth and manhood of him who was to be the father of the new humanity. It was the cradle-land of our race, and Abraham was

here in daily contact with men of all nationalities. The people, whom we call the Accadians, had apparently been the first to make progress in the arts. To them was due the invention of writing. They had been the first architects, and their tongue was still the official language in Abraham's time. It is surprising to learn that these early masters of our race find their nearest representatives in the Turks, the present rulers of Babylonia. The Accadian name for God, for example, was *Dingir*, the Turkish is *Tengri*. The grammatical forms of both languages place this relationship beyond doubt. Besides these Accadians there were, as has been said, representatives of all the races and a strong body of Semites to which race Abraham belongs.

It is still more important, however, to learn something of the habits and of the disposition of the people. The ruler was called "The Shepherd" of his people, which implies a clear perception of the obligation of the governing to look after the well-being of the governed, as well as of the duty of obedience incumbent upon the latter. It is abundantly plain, too, that all regulating law had long laid its grasp upon the community. Marriage, just as we find it with Abraham and with Lot, was as sacred as among ourselves. It will be remembered, too, that Sarah moves as queen within her home. This is quite in accord with what we now know of the position of woman in ancient Babylonia. "The power of the daughter," says Mr. Pinches, "to represent a house in which there was no son, testifies

to the honour paid by the Accadians to women in a part of the world where she was, and still is, regarded more or less as a chattel. This Accadian custom seems to have had its influence even to the latest times of the Babylonian empire, as we see from the part which Babylonian women took in bearing their share of the burthens of life, as shown by the late Babylonian contract-tablets.”\*

“Of course the Accadians were slave-holders, but they seem to have been of a kindly disposition, and to have treated their slaves well. Seven days’ holiday are said to have been given them, and this is the only record known of such a thing.”† Readers will recall Abraham’s treatment of Eliezer of Damascus. Other traits are also touched upon by Mr. Pinches. “The Babylonian,” he says, “seems to have been less warlike than the Assyrian, that is all. The Babylonian was warlike too when the occasion demanded it. The Babylonian was a keen trader, careful in money matters, ever ready to drive a hard bargain. He lent money out at an interest of 20 per cent. per annum, and took a substantial security, as a rule, for the same. . . . Painsstaking in study, he easily became a learned man in his own particular way; but, better than this, he was kind-hearted, respectful and considerate to his parents, and steadfast in friendship.

“One of the most interesting texts, bearing upon this, is now in New York (it belongs to the Wolfe collection, which was obtained by Dr. Hayes Ward

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\* *Transactions of the Victoria Institute*, vol. xxvi., pp. 138, 139.    † P. 139.

in Babylonia). It is a will in which a man, named Nabu-sum-iddina, whilst leaving certain slaves and the produce of certain lands to his wife, Tablutu, takes care also to make provision for his mother. Day by day, and year by year, as long as she lived, she was to receive a certain quantity of grain, fruit, &c., as well as meat and poultry. . . . The next stage, that of charity to people in distress, was not unknown among the Babylonians. The lending of a fairly large sum of money, without interest, for an indefinite period, during a time of famine, is not what every business-man would do; but Remut, in the year 648 B.C., when the armies of Assur-bani-apli had devastated the land, did so."\*

The wrecks, too, of the old primeval revelation were still in the land. They still had the Sabbath. "One of the most interesting facts that result from this hemerology," that is, from their seven-day division of time—"is, that the Sabbath was known to the Babylonians and the Assyrians. The institution must have gone back to the Accadian epoch, since the term used to represent it in the text is the Accadian *udu Khulgal*, an unlawful day, like the Latin 'dies nefastus,' which is rendered by *sulum* or 'rest-day' in Assyrian. Semitic Babylonian, however, possessed the term Sabbath as well, and a vocabulary explains it as being 'a day of rest for the heart.'"† But round these wrecks of the primal faith the dark flood of idolatry and superstition was raging and had covered all besides. How thoroughly

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\* *Ibid*, pp. 146, 147. † *Sayce, Hibbert Lectures*, p. 76.

all knowledge of the true God was obscured may be seen in the Babylonian accounts of the Creation and of the Flood, which have been called "the Chaldean Genesis." And now Abraham is separated that he may come evermore into the light of God's presence, and that through him and his the light may by and by sweep out and flood all lands.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### ABRAHAM IN BABYLONIA AND IN EGYPT.

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THE Scripture gives a large place to the story of Abraham. It is the first prolonged biography of the Bible. The entire story of the human race till his day is summed up in ten chapters, while Abraham's alone stretches over fourteen. We have here an indication of that unity of Scripture which is, perhaps, the most overwhelming proof of its inspiration. There are many writers whose pens have traced the words which we read to-day. Few of them were contemporaries. The most of them were separated by long intervals during the fifteen centuries in which this book was being put together. And yet, notwithstanding that the men are many, and that they belong to many and far-sundered ages, the book is pervaded by one deeply specialized and never-forgotten purpose. All sections of the Book *unite in carrying out one plan* which controls and permeates everything. That plan becomes fully

evident in the New Testament. The Scripture is there fully seen to be a Book for a spiritual people. In view of that the prominence given to the history of this Chaldean wanderer becomes significantly plain. The life of Abraham is given at such length, not because the writer of Genesis found in his story a congenial theme, but because Abraham was to be *the Father of the new era*, the progenitor of Israel, and the type and pattern of all them that believe. Like him, we hear and obey God's call. We, too, sunder, if need be, the dearest ties. We forsake our father's house and break with all our past. We become pilgrims and sojourners, feeling and confessing that this is not our rest, and that we seek a better country, even a heavenly. Like him, we hope for that we see not; we rest surely upon promises, while as yet we have no possession; and our faith, like his, is counted for righteousness. It was well, surely, that this pattern life should fill so large a space; that it should stand out apart from ritual, and be separate even from national or tribal surroundings—that it should be a life apart and alone, in the earth yet not of it, but in closest fellowship with Him who is "our dwelling-place in all generations." The conception of any such plan as that was simply impossible to man. No man could then have foreseen the advent of a people who in all lands should confess themselves strangers and pilgrims, and walk with God like faithful Abraham. No man could therefore have made this large provision for their instruction and their comfort. God alone who

foresaw the people and their need, could have thus provided for their coming.

The story of Abraham's life, just because it is so extended and minute, presents many points which afford an opportunity for confirmation or the reverse. We have tested the story of Abraham's origin, and we have seen how wonderfully recent discoveries have proved the truth of that part of Scripture. A great German authority,\* as late as the year 1869, saw in the name *Abraham* the word *Brahman*, and maintained that the Jews came from India, and were not Semites at all, but Aryans and Hindoos! All such learned nonsense is now made impossible by the Assyrian discoveries, which, in every case where certainty has been reached, have justified the Scripture. Abram, I need hardly repeat, is a purely Semitic name. It was found long ago upon the monuments as the name of an Assyrian prince in the time of Manasseh. But recent discoveries, as has been already said, have carried us far beyond this, and have furnished a demonstration which leaves nothing to be desired. "Abram—Aburamu, the exalted father," says Sayce, "is a Babylonian name, and is found in contracts of the age of Chedorlaomer." † That is, *the name belongs to the very time to which the Scripture assigns the life of Abraham.*

That the Jews are Semites no one will now be found bold enough to dispute. Nor can it any longer be doubted that they had once lived in the closest

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\* Hitzig in his "*History of the Israelitish People.*"

† *Patriarchal Palestine*, pp. 169, 170.

relationship with the Semites of Babylonia. The ancient Hebrew and the Assyrian bear marks of the closest affinity. The numerals, for example, are almost identical. The following show how close the resemblance is :—A form of the Assyrian for “one” is *ahadu*, the Hebrew, *echad*; for “twenty” (Assyrian) *esrâa*, (Hebrew) *esrim*; for a “hundred” (Assyrian) *me* or *meatu*, (Hebrew) *meah*. A remarkable proof of the connection between the two languages is found in the following fact. The Hebrew word for “eleven,” *aste asar*, had baffled the most learned and ingenious Orientalists. *Asarah*, they knew was ten, but what *aste* was they could not say. There was nothing in any other of the known Semitic languages which could explain it. The Assyrian has now cleared up the mystery. *Aste* is a relic of the time when the two languages were identical. It is the Assyrian for “one,” so that *aste asar* means simply “one-ten,” that is, eleven. Other words have found a similar explanation. *Meod* means “exceedingly,” “greatly,” “very.” *Tobh Meod* is “very good.” But there is nothing in the Hebrew to show how *Meod* comes to have this meaning. We now know that it comes from a root preserved in Assyrian, and which means “to be numerous.” Hence springs the sense of “exceedingness,” if I may coin a word, in which the term *Meod* is used in the Hebrew Scriptures.

I shall not weary the reader by referring to a multitude of terms. It is enough to say that, not only are the names for “month” and “year” the same, but *the calendars are also identical*. The two

peoples had the same names for weights and measures; for animals, and metals; for heaven and earth; and sea, and river; sun, moon, and stars; day and night, fire and water; for the various members of the human body, and for articles in every day use. To all this we have to add that the Assyrian and ancient Hebrew have modes of thought and speech in common, a circumstance which it is absolutely impossible to explain except on the ground of such ancient connection as the Book of Genesis has stated. Prayer is with both peoples "the lifting up of the hands." To say to one's self is "to speak in one's heart." For one to stubbornly resist good counsel is "to harden one's heart." And, were it possible to explain all this away, one other fact would still remain. The Hebrew and the Assyrian resemble each other in their grammatical forms much more closely than any other two members of the Semitic family. Between Judea and Assyria another Semitic race intervened—the Syrians. But their language does not show nearly so close an affinity to either the Hebrew or the Assyrian, as the Assyrian and the Hebrew do to each other. How could this have been possible if the Hebrews had not once been in closer relationship to the Assyrians than the men of Damascus, and indeed lived with the Semites of Babylonia and parted from them at a later period than the Syrians had done? This, as we know, is the representation of Genesis. When Abraham leaves Haran and passes westward to Canaan, *he finds the city of Damascus already in existence*, and takes with

him a servant from it, "this Eliezer of Damascus," who afterwards becomes the head of his household. That simple circumstance implies that *the Syrian emigration was much earlier than that of the Hebrews*, and here the Assyrian language has risen as it were from its sepulchre to tell us that even in such a matter as this the Bible is absolutely reliable!

We shall see by and by that even the account of the pause at Haran and the settlement there of Terah's family has been marvellously confirmed by modern research. But leaving this, and the account of Abraham's life in Palestine for following chapters, let us note now what we are told regarding the going down into Egypt (Genesis xii.). Abraham was to be made perfect by trial. God had called him into Palestine. He had come with his flocks and herds; and now the pastures fail, and food ceases for man and beast. "The famine was grievous in the land." Abraham neither murmurs nor doubts; but pasture must be had for his cattle, and food for his household. He was journeying southward when the blight fell, and he now continues the same course, and passes down into the fruitful Nile valley.

We must here pause a moment to mark one of the very few spots in the sun of Abraham's fair fame, and one which the Scripture does not seek to hide. It is laid bare, indeed, that it may warn as loudly against duplicity as the rest of this man's career incites us to faith and righteousness. Abraham's glory, as one has remarked, is *his obedience*. Where he has clear direction, he obeys—no matter what the sacrifice

may be—and he does not err. But here he has no direction. He does not seek light, however, and he stumbles and falls. For on the confines of Egypt a new danger occurs to him. The licentious character of the people and of the court was known throughout the East. There are many who are eager to obtain the monarch's favour, and they make small scruple as to the means by which it is secured. Abraham's shrewdness is shown in his perception of the danger, and also, some might imagine, in the method which he adopted to avert it. He feels certain that, if Sarai is known to be his wife, he will be slain, and she will be carried off as an acceptable present to the King. So Abraham, in his fear, persuades Sarai to deny the relationship and to say that she is his sister. The statement was true; but, being made with the purpose of concealing, and, indeed, denying what was equally true, it was in its intention and effect a *lie*. It was, at best, one of those pitiable equivocations which, as Macaulay has remarked, differ so little from downright falsehood that it is highly questionable whether the difference is worth the expenditure of the needful ingenuity.

Turning now to the narrative, let us ask whether it accords with what we know of ancient Egypt. That ancient civilization has been brought nearer to us than even the life of our own land two centuries ago. Almost every age of Egypt's past has left its impress in monuments and literature, preserved in the sepulchres of its dead. These monuments and this literature have now been largely read, and we

have been brought into the closest fellowship with the past from which they sprang. We look into its face, we hear its speech, we mark its customs. The Egypt of the time of Abraham is no exception; we know it almost as well as we know the Britain of the eighteenth century.

Here, then, comes a question of the utmost interest and importance for every lover of Scripture, and, indeed, for every one who wishes to know whether this Bible is the absolutely true book which it has been held to be. There is a picture of the Egypt of the time painted, as it were, undesignedly, in this record of Abram's going down into the valley of the Nile. As the grass, and trees, and rocks, and houses, and cattle on the lake-side are reflected in the waters, so the customs and the life of the people among whom Abraham sojourned are reflected in the patriarch's story. Then we have another picture painted by the time itself, and which, seeing that it is the very impress of the time, cannot lie. Are these two pictures the same? Let not the reader imagine that this is a trivial question. On the contrary, vital issues depend upon it.

Let it be remembered that Moses never saw *that* Egypt. It was separated from the time in which he wrote by more than four centuries. We are now in the year 1900 of the Christian era. A like interval would, therefore, take us back to, say, 1470, when the Moors were still in Spain, and Louis XI. filled the throne of France, when Edward the Fourth reigned in England, and James the Third in Scotland. Most

of us know something of our country's history ; but how many of us could sit down and write the story of some German or French pilgrim of that time, and give an accurate reflection of the period ? Would any one of us be certain that he would not import something of present day circumstances and ideas into the picture, and that he would not fail to omit some things that a writer of the time would have inevitably supplied ?

The truth is, that we have here one of those tests which have been providentially given us to try the present day theories by which so many seek to explain away the mystery of the Bible. We are told that Moses did not write Genesis, and that it was not written at all till a thousand years after his day. We used to be told, too, before the belief in the Mosaic authorship was "exploded" (that is to say, exploded among the critics, and those who are always waiting with open mouths for the last thing which the critics have got to say), that Moses had no inspiration to guide him, but had to search among old, musty, and I suppose, mythological, documents for light upon the history of his fathers and of the human race. Now, with either of these theories, *perfect* accuracy would be impossible. But there is another explanation. Speaking of this book, as of the rest of the Law and the Prophets, Jesus said, "Thy Word is truth." According to this, the book in its every sentence is *God's Word*, the Word of Him for whom neither past nor future has any veil. The minute and perfect accuracy which would be simply impossible with

any other origin, would be utterly in harmony with this.

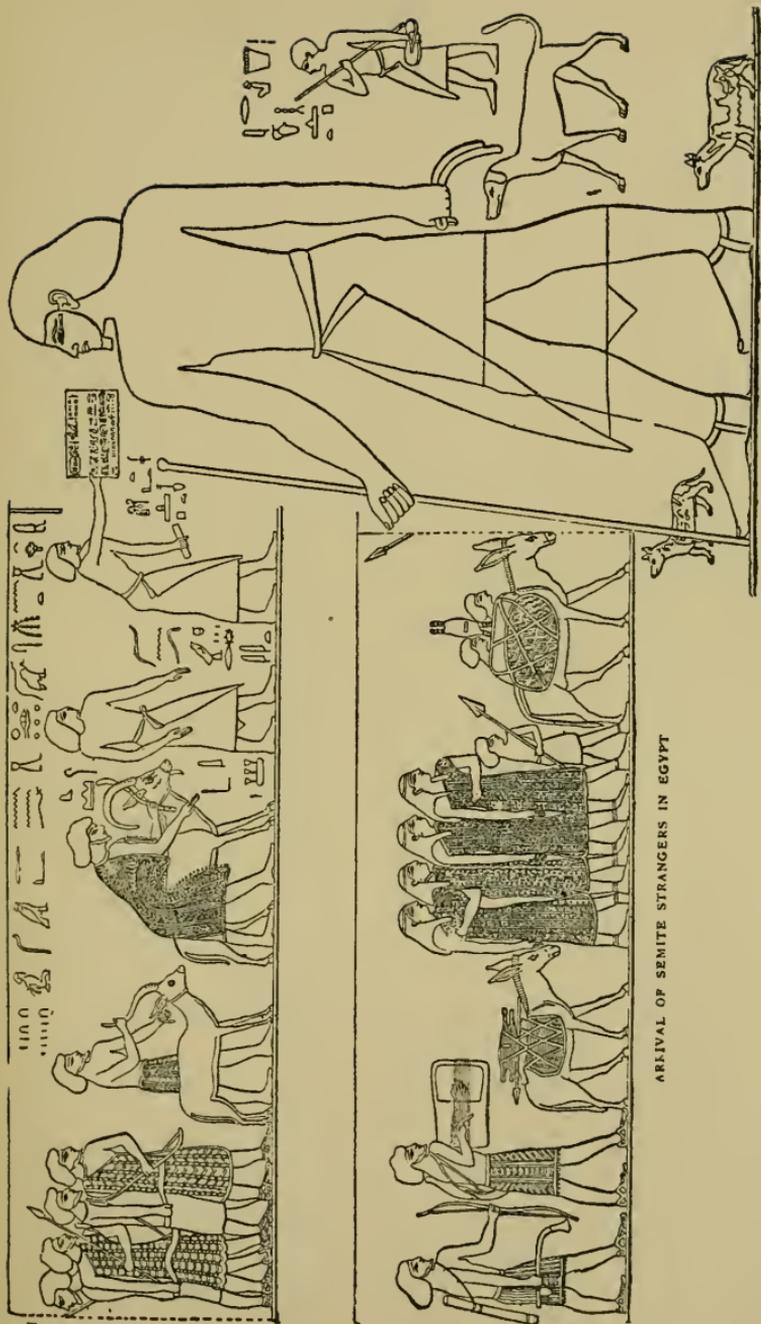
Let us now listen to what recent discoveries have to say of the picture given of the Egypt of Abraham's day. There is one thing implied in the narrative. It is, that *Egypt was open to strangers*. Abraham goes down without any apprehension that he will be refused entrance to the land, or that the supplies which he needs will be denied. It is only on account of his relationship to Sarah that he entertains any fear at all. The sons of Jacob undertake a similar expedition for a like purpose, without apparently dreaming of refusal or of danger. This may not seem extraordinary to us. We are so accustomed to free intercourse of country with country, that it may seldom occur to us that in the former times the case was different. There are some lands even to-day, however, through which travellers can make their way only in disguise. Travel in foreign lands used in former days to be attended with many perils. Governments were suspicious, and peoples were jealous and hostile. One of the most marked providences which prepared the world for the coming of Christ was the sovereignty of Rome. It opened gates which would else have been barred to the heralds of the cross, and gave them access to countries into which at a former time they could hardly have penetrated. The Egyptians shared the prejudices of the other ancient peoples. Their hatred of foreigners was proverbial. Strabo and Diodorus Siculus have stated that Egypt had no intercourse

with foreigners till the time of Psametichus (B.C. 654). They state that he "was the first king of Egypt who opened the ports to strangers, and granted foreign traders security in his dominions; and that the ancient princes, being content with the abundant riches of their own country, permitted strangers to have no access to it, fortifying the frontiers against them, and particularly against the Greeks."

Had this narrative, then, been the fruit of mere literary activity in a later age than that of Moses, it would have reflected these traditions of Egyptian exclusiveness. The writer would have said, if Egypt was opened to foreigners only in the seventh century B.C., then it must have been closed against them in the days of Abraham. And so, if this history had been the late production it is declared by some to be, Abraham would never have been represented as having gone down into Egypt, or, if he had been, its gates would have been closed against him. But the narrative represents it as quite a matter of course that Abraham and his people should be received in a perfectly friendly fashion, and recent discoveries have shown that in this there is the most faithful reflection of the time. It is now placed beyond all doubt that under the twelfth dynasty, in the days of which it seems probable that Abram went down into Egypt, it was customary to treat foreigners in this friendly fashion. On a tomb at Benihassan, belonging to a man of high rank, a near relative of the reigning Pharaoh, and Governor of the Province, an event is pictured which occurred during his

governorship. The reader will find an engraving of the sculpture on the following page. The figure of the Governor is of colossal size, the artist intimating in this way that he is "the big man" of the company. The rest depicts the arrival of a Semitic chief, with his family and following. The chief is called in the inscription, *Hak*, or prince, a name applied to the head of a tribe, and corresponding to the modern "sheikh." They visit Egypt because of a famine; and although they approach bringing gifts with them, and offering obeisance, they are nevertheless received with distinction. A slave stands behind the Governor, bearing his sandals, which were only taken off on occasions of ceremony.

But a still more striking proof is supplied in the story of Saneha written upon one of the oldest papyri in existence. Saneha lived about the time of Abraham, and was like him, a Semite. He came to Egypt from the same district, was received into the service of Pharaoh, and rose to high rank. For some cause he had to flee from Egypt; but, after a long residence in a foreign land, he was restored to favour, and, in the words of the papyrus, was made "a counsellor among the officers, set among the chosen ones; precedence is accorded to him among the courtiers; he is installed in the house of a prince, and prepares his sepulchre among the tombs of the chief officers." Such was the Egypt of Abraham's time, and the character which it then had for hospitality was peculiar to the period. The shepherd kings, who afterwards captured Egypt, are said to exhibit



ARRIVAL OF SEMITE STRANGERS IN EGYPT

“a certain harshness and even ferocity of character.” The native rulers, who eventually drove them out, were not likely to do anything to encourage the visits of the now dreaded and hated foreigner. We have already seen that this was also notoriously the attitude of the Egypt of later times. Here, again, therefore, what has seemed to many a strong objection to the narrative in Genesis, becomes a striking testimony to its perfect truth.

We may notice, in passing, the name by which, from this time onward, the Scriptures denote the Egyptian monarchs. They are always spoken of as *Pharaoh*. This is, of course, not an English word. We have taken it bodily out of the Hebrew text, and simply put it in English letters. Nor is it a Hebrew word. The same process was gone through when it was placed in the Hebrew text. It was taken bodily out of the Egyptian and put into Hebrew letters. It has as little meaning in Hebrew as it has in English, and is a purely Egyptian term. But, strange to say, this title, assumed, according to the Scripture, by every Egyptian monarch, has entirely disappeared from history. There are many references in classic literature to Egypt. Herodotus and Strabo have described it, and shed light upon its history. But in none of these do we find any mention of this royal title. We meet it nowhere, indeed, but in the Bible, and in writers who have borrowed from it. Egyptologists did not find it on the monuments, and could not agree upon its interpretation as an Egyptian word. This afforded

too ready a weapon of offence not to be used against the Scriptures. A comparatively recent discovery has, however, solved the mystery, and, as usual, justified the Bible. There was a hieroglyph which occurred upon the monuments as the regular title of the Egyptian kings, which signified "the great house," or "the double house," but the pronunciation of which was not known. M. de Rouge discovered the true pronunciation, and brought to light the long lost "Pharaoh"! He has shown that the sign must be read "Perao," or "Pherao," the very form of the word which occurs in the Hebrew. This is now proved to have been the distinctive official name of the Egyptian monarch, and he is constantly spoken of by this name in Egyptian narratives, in the very same way as in the Bible. It is also supposed to occur in the phrase *Pir'u sar mâti Musri* (that is, "Pharaoh, king of the land of Egypt") in the Annals of Sargon. Mr. Pinches says that the Assyrians probably pronounced "Pir'u" as "Pher'o," in which case, he adds, the Assyrian word would correspond very closely with the Hebrew form of the Egyptian royal title.

Returning to the story of Abraham's sojourn, let us note some other features of the narrative. While Abraham proceeds to Egypt in the undisturbed belief that he would find a hospitable reception there, he is also attracted by the promise of abundance. His flocks and herds are in want of pasture, and his household is in want of food; and he is undertaking this journey plainly in the conviction that all he requires

will be met with in the land of Egypt. But was Egypt at that time a land of undiminished plenty, when famine raged in neighbouring countries? Everyone is aware that Egypt is not dependent upon rain as those other lands are. The enormous river, which runs through it like a great artery, bearing and dispensing its life-blood, is fed by the rains, and by the melting snows of the mountains in the heart of Africa; and thus, though drought may desolate countries to the east and west, Egypt, with a high Nile, may look for bountiful harvests.

But something more was needed than even a high Nile. Extensive and well-kept canals are required, as well as skilful and diligent cultivation. Were all these found in the Egypt of Abraham's day? Had the visit been paid much earlier, they might not have been found. From the sixth to the eleventh dynasty Egypt had passed through a long and mysterious eclipse. But now, in the time of the twelfth dynasty, during which it appears that Abraham visited the land, the country had waked from its long sleep and sprung into activity and great prosperity. "Under the Amenemhats and Usertesens," says Mr. Tomkins, "Egypt was in full activity. Not only were the frontiers vigorously protected, but the land was admirably cultivated, the administration of public affairs organized with perfection of detail, gigantic engineering works carried out for the storage and distribution of the all-fertilizing Nile water, by the formation of a vast artificial lake, as reservoir to equalise the effects of the annual floods, and provide

irrigation for the district to the west of the river, still called 'Fayûm' (in ancient Egyptian *Pi-ôm*).

"Pastures and fields were channelled, and innumerable trickling rills drew the water pumped by the *shadoof* over all the thirsty land. The plough was drawn by oxen, which also threshed the corn to the music of the cheery song which still remains to us. The abundant harvests were stored in long ranges of vaulted granaries. Orchards, vineyards, gardens, were exquisitely cultivated. Flowers were everywhere, indoors and out: in the hand, on the head, on the altar of offerings, wreathed round the sacred vessels; above all, the exquisite lotus, which has almost disappeared with the papyrus from the waters. Grand cattle were carefully tended and housed in majestic ranks; large flocks of sheep were among the ample possessions, of which the inventories were duly presented to the lords of the soil." \*

The Egypt that attracted Abraham was, therefore, this very Egypt of the time. It may be well to note, too, that his approach to Egypt came in the course of a slow but continuous progress. We read that "he removed" from the plain of Moreh "unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west and Hai on the east; and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord. And Abram journeyed, going on still towards the south" (Genesis xii. 8, 9). A writer, who speaks from a full personal acquaintance with the country traversed by the patriarch,

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\* *Abraham and his Age*, pp. 141, 142.

says : " He moved southward, leaving the hills over which his flocks and herds had fed, and where the pasturage must have been exhausted as the summer advanced. The hill country of Judæa, south of Jerusalem, and in the Hebron district, even now affords pasture for sheep and goats, who browse upon the undergrowth of wood and upon the aromatic plants that clothe these mountains.

" Flocks are sent there towards the end of summer, when the heats of the dry season have parched up the grass and flowering plants. Abraham went on from Bethel (going on journeying still toward the south). The rolling plains and downs of the south country, or Negeb, so well described by Messrs. Drake and Palmer, from Beersheba onwards, are excellent winter quarters for tents and for cattle, as the Tiyayah Bedaween of our own day know by experience. Upon the mountains the climate is suitable for summer, for there the cool breezes temper the heat ; but in winter shelter is needed from the driving blast, the snow, and the rain-storms to which the hill country is exposed. Abraham consulted the comfort and the safety of his people and of his cattle, when he took them to the south ; for he had no landed property whereon to build houses or stabling for their protection."

" His journey to Egypt must also have been made in the cool season, when the short desert can be comfortably crossed. He went because of the famine in Canaan. Now the pressure of famine is in this country most felt in winter. We had several

instances, when scarcity of the grain-crops caused a good deal of distress, almost amounting to actual famine. Even though a harvest may be bad, there is sure to be some corn produced; and the summer fruits, the melons, figs, grapes, and the different kind of vegetables, yield a very large proportion of the provisions needed for summer consumption. But it is in winter that the stress comes. What little grain can be spared must be reserved for seed, and then there are no fruits to take the place of corn. Then is felt the want of bread for man, and of fodder, grain, and straw for beast. Then do those who are near the south-country go down into Egypt. We have known this to happen; and when, two years ago (namely, in 1870) the distress was very great, the Philistine country was almost depopulated, the inhabitants having gone into Egypt for food."\*

It will be acknowledged that to come thus so thoroughly into line with experience would have been an extraordinary feature in a fictitious narrative. But the Scripture history bears the inimitable stamp of truth everywhere. We read that "It came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon. Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife; and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, that thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live

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\* Mrs. Finn, *The Sunday at Home*, 1872, p. 327.

because of thee" (verses 11-13). There can be no doubt that Abraham was thoroughly shaken by the sense of their danger. And it turned out in one respect exactly as he feared; for we read: "And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair. The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh, and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house" (verses 14, 15).

Now this appears to contradict what we have noted as a mark of the Egypt of that period—its hospitality. But contradictions of this sort are always meeting us in biography and in history. Taking our stand upon one trait in the character of an individual or of a people, we should say that another was quite improbable; but both have to be accepted, and have to find a place in the picture. In the most marvellous way, this is shown to be true of the Egypt of Abraham. The oldest known bit of fiction in the world is contained in an ancient Egyptian papyrus, now in the British Museum. It is called "The Story of the two Brothers," and "the Pharaoh of the time, *acting on the advice of his counsellors*, sends two armies to fetch a beautiful woman by force, and then to murder her husband." There is not the slightest indication that such an act was regarded as wrong. The king is not described as a tyrant or a scoundrel. He is beloved by his people, and at his death passes unchallenged into heaven! It will be noticed that here the action is prompted by the courtiers, just as it happened in Abraham's

experience: "The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house." The morality of the Egyptians seems to have been frightfully low in regard to such matters. "What can we say," asks Erman, referring to this laxity, "when an ancient *sacred book*, describing the life of the deceased Pharaoh in bliss, assures him, with the addition of some words which we cannot understand, that in heaven he will 'at his pleasure take the wives away from their husbands?'"\*

This confirmation is wonderful; but there is another which is still more astonishing. An ancient papyrus in the Berlin Museum relates an event that occurred a little earlier than the time of Abraham. A foreign artizan enters Egypt and has his ass seized by an inspector. He appeals to the Governor, who sends on the cause to the king, Neb-Ka-Ra, of the eleventh dynasty. The result is that the Pharaoh of the time seizes the foreigner's wife and children, and orders so much bread and beer to be given daily to the workman. As in the case of Abraham, the woman is seized, and the husband is provided for out of the royal bounty.

Here, strange to say, we have an exact parallel; so that what is told us as having befallen Abraham, was absolutely in keeping with the customs of the times. Unbelief has also challenged what is implied in the Egyptians seeing Sarai—and with the usual result. It has been said that this shows ignorance

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\* *Life in Ancient Egypt*, p. 155.

of Egyptian and Eastern customs; that the women went veiled; and that the Egyptians would, therefore, have necessarily had no knowledge of Sarai's beauty. But the monuments show that the present customs of the East were not, in this matter, those of ancient Egypt. The monuments prove that Egyptian women moved about as freely, and were as little accustomed to veil their faces, as our own countrywomen. And we have only to turn back a few pages and study the engraving which we have given of the arrival of Semites in Egypt, to see how the thing happened. In the lower part of the picture, after the three children, come four women. *These are unveiled.* This is a transcript from the very time. When Abraham presented himself with his gifts to gain permission to enter the Egyptian territory, the women of the household joined the procession, and passed under the eyes of the Egyptian Governor and his officials.

The presents which Pharaoh showered upon Abraham are minutely detailed, and the accuracy of these details has also been challenged. A German critic, Von Bohlen, has maintained that some of the animals mentioned were quite unknown in ancient Egypt, and that this account must be condemned as unhistorical. "The narrator," he says, "has named animals of his own country, which Abraham could not have received in Egypt. He has said nothing of his receiving horses, and yet horses were exceedingly plentiful in the valley of the Nile. On the contrary, he speaks of his receiving sheep, which are as rare as camels in the marshes of Egypt. That country

produced no camels, according to the testimony of the ancients; nor did it any more produce asses, which were thoroughly detested on account of their colour."

Our readers will notice the confidence of these assertions, and how absolute they are in their rejection of the claims of Scripture. It is the manner of the school, and apparently, notwithstanding the many severe lessons it has received, will be its manner till it dies. It is hardly conceivable that the sole foundation of such bold assertions is ignorance and mistake. Yet so it is. Sheep, said to be unknown in Egypt, are pictured on the monuments of the twelfth dynasty, and were therefore well known and plentiful enough in Egypt at the very time of Abraham's visit. So much was this the case, indeed, that we find mention made of large flocks as forming part of the wealth of Egyptian grandees, and the god Num is very frequently pourtrayed with a ram's head.

"It is evident," says Wilkinson, that "they abounded in Egypt, and even in Thebes, being frequently represented in the tombs; and large flocks are seen to have been kept, especially in the vicinity of Memphis, if only for the sake of their wool. Sometimes they amounted to more than 2,000; and in a tomb below the pyramids, 974 rams are brought to be registered by the scribes, as part of the stock of the deceased; implying an equal number of ewes, independent of lambs, which in the benign climate of Egypt were twice produced within one year." \*

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\* *The Ancient Egyptians* (1878), Vol. II., p. 22.

The Scripture is borne out in the same way in regard to the oxen which Pharaoh gave to Abraham. These have always been raised in great numbers in Egypt. Lyell mentions that, in the course of some geological excavations which were made in Egypt, the bones of oxen were found at a great depth. The monuments also show that they were used in Abraham's time for the same purposes as now. Ameni, an official of the twelfth dynasty, boasts of having gathered together in the Nome of Sahou, of which he was Governor, three thousand bulls with their heifers. The ox was usually employed for drawing chariots, and milk had a large place in the daily food of the Egyptians, and in the offerings which they presented to their gods. Everyone knows, too, that so honoured was this animal in Egypt that the bull *Hapi*, or Apis, was among the most venerated of their deities.

The critics fare quite as badly in regard to the ass. This animal is often mentioned in the ancient papyri; it is represented on the most ancient monuments, and herds of them are seen pictured on the tombs of the pyramids. Egyptians, in their epitaphs, boast of having possessed thousands of asses. Khafra-Ankh, a high court official of the founder of the second pyramid at Gizeh, possessed seven hundred and sixty asses, and a bas-relief is found on a tomb of Ti, of the fifth dynasty, representing a herd of asses. That dynasty had passed away long before Abraham crossed the borders of Egypt, and the ass had accordingly long been numbered

among the valued possessions of the land. The Pharaoh of his day could, therefore, have experienced no difficulty in adding some of these animals to the other gifts, which he heaped upon the supposed brother of Sarai. Referring to sculptures found in ancient tombs, Wilkinson says of one that it "is particularly interesting from the numbers being written over the animals, answering, no doubt, to the report made to the steward, who in the presence of the master of the estate, receives it from the head shepherd. First come the oxen, over which is the number 834, cows 220, goats 3,234, asses 760, and sheep 974; behind which follows a man carrying a basket slung upon a pole. The steward, leaning on his staff and accompanied by his dog, stands on the left of the picture; and in another part of the tomb, the Scribes are represented making out the statements presented to them by the different persons employed on the estate. The tomb where this subject occurs is hewn in the rock near the pyramids of Gizeh, and possesses additional interest from its great antiquity, having the name of a king who lived about the era of the founders of those monuments, as well as from the subjects it contains, which show the Egyptians to have had the same customs at that early time, and to have arrived at the same state of civilization as in the subsequent ages of the 18th and later dynasties, a fact which cannot but suggest most interesting thoughts to an enquiring mind respecting the state of the world at that remote period."\*

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\* *Ibid.*, p. 448.

With regard to the camel, the monuments would seem to give the victory to the critic. It appears very rarely among the sculptured figures. But the triumph would be short lived. Some animals, plentiful enough in Egypt, such as hens, which are artificially reared in great numbers, were, from some cause or other, excluded from representation on the monuments. This would appear to have been the case with the camel, which bears in ancient Egyptian the very same name which we use to day, *Kamal*. But camels were employed in Egypt from the remotest antiquity. Ancient texts tell us that they were trained to dance, and that they were used for carrying merchandise. To this it is enough to add that Geology has given this question its *quietus*. Lyell is again our authority. He relates that Hekekyan Bey, in the course of excavations which he made in Egypt, found at a great depth the bones of dromedaries mingled with the remains of other quadrupeds. It may give our readers some notion of the weight of all this testimony to know that Chabas, the distinguished French Egyptologist, who, as late as 1862, denied the accuracy of this portion of Scripture, afterwards fully admitted his error. This old objection has again been brought forward, however. Maspero, in recent works, declares that the camel was unknown in ancient Egypt, and Victor Hehn says that "the camel was first introduced into Africa in the third century of the Christian era."

The Rev. W. Houghton, in "*The Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archæology*" (Vol. XII., p. 81),

reminds him, however, that the following passage occurs in the works of the Greek Geographer, Strabo. Speaking of Ptolemy Philadelphus having formed a much needed road, he says: "Formerly the camel-merchants" (that is, those who carried their goods on camels) "performed their journeys by night, being guided by the stars, and like mariners, carried with them a supply of water, but now watering-places are provided, and rain water, which is scarce, is collected in reservoirs."

That was about 280 B.C., so that the camel was in Egypt at least five centuries before Hehn, a great naturalist, believed that it could be found there. But this is not the only reply to these confident assertions. Esarhaddon, a son of Sennacherib, tells us in an inscription that, when he invaded Egypt and found the boundary stream dry, the kings of Arabia supplied him with camels to carry water for the use of his army during the campaign.

That takes us back another 400 years, and the indications plainly are that the camel was no new and strange animal in Egypt. Mr. Houghton gives extracts from four ancient texts in which Brugsch and Chabas believe that the camel is referred to by name. It would thus appear that the camel, as Genesis says, was well known in Egypt, and it was just the kind of gift which Pharaoh would have given to Abraham in view of his desert journey.

But Von Bohlen has made another point: he says that the horse was well known and prized in Egypt, and that the omission of any mention of it shows the

writer's ignorance. He could not have placed his finger on a more striking proof of the minute and absolute accuracy of the sacred narrative. When Moses wrote, the horse *was* well known and highly prized in Egypt. He speaks of "the horsemen" of Pharaoh, and tells us that "the horse and his rider" were cast into the sea. Besides, in the history of Joseph, in this same book, he tells us that there went with Joseph "chariots and horsemen" when he went up to Canaan to bury his father. Why, then, should he keep silence as to the horse when speaking of the gifts given to Abraham? If the Scripture were a thing of human manufacture, this silence might be hard to explain; but, if it is of God, its minute and unfailing accuracy is at once intelligible. The monuments have now informed us that the horse was unknown in Egypt *before the invasion of the shepherd kings*, an event which occurred at a later time. They appear for the first time among the hieroglyphic characters of the eighteenth dynasty.

"It is only recently," says Maspero, "that the horse has been known in Egypt; the shepherds introduced it into the land, and they perhaps owe the incredible rapidity of their success to the terror which their steeds inspired in the first encounters with the Egyptians. The horses are usually strong and of good height. The forehead is convex, which gives a slightly curved and sheepish profile to the head. The neck is tapered, the croup thin and rather narrow, the thigh lean, the leg square, the tail long and full. They resemble in all respects

the horses always seen amongst Asiatic peoples, but it is only with great trouble that they can be prevented from becoming weak and degenerate. The climate enervates them, the season of the inundation does not agree with them, and the race has to be continually recruited with stallions and mares bought or taken from Syria. Thebes, Memphis, Hermopolis, most of the great cities of Middle Egypt, contain breeding studs. The possession of many chariots is the chief luxury of the nobles. Pharaoh encourages it as much as possible by rewarding the owners of well-kept stables, and reprimanding or even punishing those who do not take sufficient care of their animals."\* The fact that the names applied to horses and war-chariots are Semitic, tells the same story. This absence of the mention of the horse is, therefore, one of the most valuable circumstances in connection with the story of Abraham's going down into Egypt, as it enables us to fix the date of his sojourn as having occurred previous to the invasion of the shepherd kings, and about the time of the twelfth dynasty.

One thing more may be mentioned before I close the present chapter. We are told that when Abraham returned he was exceedingly rich in (literally, heavy weighted with,) silver and gold. Now these metals were, at that time, rare in Palestine. An Egyptian document, which describes the riches of Southern Palestine, as it was a little before the time of Abraham, makes no mention of them. They were

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\* *Egypt and As-yria*, pp. 81, 82.

abundant, however, in the Nile valley. Gold-mining was carried on from the most ancient times in Egypt, and silver, though less plentiful, had long been known under the name of *Nub het*, or "white gold." Abraham, no doubt, acquired these during his stay, by the sale of cattle from his numerous flocks and herds. But, in the mention of the circumstance that, *after his sojourn in Egypt*, he was exceedingly rich in silver and gold, the two facts which follow are reflected as in a mirror: first, that silver and gold were plentiful in Egypt; and secondly, that abundance of these metals was at that time unusual in the land of Canaan.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### ABRAHAM IN THE NEGEB, AT SICHEM, AND AT BETHEL.

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THE thirteenth chapter of Genesis tells the story of Abraham's return into the land of promise. "And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai; unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the Lord" (verses 1-4).

The reader will note the phrase "went up" out of Egypt. The return to Palestine was an ascent; and in this seemingly insignificant expression we find the stamp of the place and also of the time. The same expression occurs, as Chabas, the great French Egyptologist, has pointed out, in the ancient Egyptian references to expeditions to Palestine. Seti I., of the 19th Egyptian dynasty, is spoken of as having made "the ascent" to the country of the Amorites; and officers and kings are represented as "going up" to the same districts.

An equally notable word ends the first verse, where we are told that Abraham went into "the south." This is a word which used occasionally to make considerable difficulty for commentators; for sometimes "the south" was spoken of, when it was quite plain that the direction taken was not south but north. Had the meaning not been made quite clear here by the connection in which the words stand, something of that difficulty might have been found in the present passage. For the patriarch is plainly travelling eastward, and *not* southward. Had he gone southward from Pharaoh's palace, he would have travelled up the Nile and into Nubia. But his face is turned towards the north-east, and his desire is to be back in the land of Canaan.

Recent research (as we shall see more fully when dealing with Israel's marches from Sinai) has brought back knowledge of the district which had been utterly lost, and has now quite cleared up the difficulty. The Hebrew word in Genesis xiii. is

*Han-Negebah*, and its very form should have prevented its being translated "into the south." It is literally "towards the *Negeb*." *Negeb* does mean "south;" but the word was also applied to an important district in the very south of Palestine, and it is as a *proper name* that it is used here. If the reader will turn to a map of the Holy Land; put his finger upon the southern part of the Dead Sea, and then glance westward, his eye will sweep over the ancient *Negeb*. Just bordering upon the Dead Sea he will find the desert of Judah among the rugged Judæan hills, and then still further west the region through which Abraham passed, having Beer-sheba on its western border. Abraham's journey was probably taken in the spring. Mr. Drew, who would appear to have followed almost in the steps of the Patriarch, describes the district as it is at that season. "Now (at Beer-sheba) we came in view, north and north-east, of the hills of Judæa; and as we went on our way there was the richest profusion of wildflowers I ever beheld. Imagine the Sussex downs enclosed on all sides by gently rising embankments, and cover them with flowers of golden and purple, and, above all, of scarlet hues, and you have the plain of Beer-sheba as I saw it. Flocks of sheep and goats, of camels and asses, were browsing everywhere, but we saw no oxen. . . . Through a long winding pass, singularly beautiful with its living green, we came to Dhoheriyeh, beyond which we were in the hill country of Judæa. Naked grey rocks, swelling and rounded in their outlines, and here and there covered

with rich verdure by the terrace cultivation, gardens, vineyards, and frequent walls, surrounded us everywhere, while we were still some distance from Hebron. . . . I shall never forget the glaring grey of the landscape just before [at eleven a.m.] we rode up the hill whence we had our first view of the old city, April 15th. For a few weeks late in spring time a smiling aspect is thrown over the broad downs, when the ground is reddened with the anemone, in contrast with the soft white of the daisy, and the deep yellow of the tulip and marigold. But this flush of beauty soon passes, and the permanent aspect of the country is not wild indeed, or hideous, or frightfully desolate, but, as we may say, austere plain; a tame unpleasing aspect, not causing absolute discomfort while one is in it, but left without one lingering reminiscence of anything lovely, or awful, or sublime."\*

“‘The entering in’ of the Land of Promise from the south,” says Canon Tristram,† “is as featureless and unpicturesque as ‘the entering in of Hamath’ from the north. Yet to every traveller from Egypt the first glimpse of ‘the south land,’ as it melts into the Philistine plain, must indeed be welcome and refreshing. We have called it ‘the entering in,’ and so for ages it has been the route taken alike by warriors and merchants, the gate of the thoroughfare between Egypt and Assyria, the rival empires of the east. Before the introduction of steamers few travellers entered Palestine by any other road, save

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\* *Scripture Lands*, p. 6.

† *Picturesque Palestine*, Vol. III., pp. 167, 168.

those who undertook the long desert journey by Sinai and Petra. From the Nile to Wady el Arish is a dreary desert journey of nine days, but now we have entered the boundary of Simeon, and a few villages surrounded by palm and olive trees near the shore are gratefully refreshing to the eye, while scanty verdure takes the place of sandy wastes. When we have reached the last of these villages, Deir el Belah, the 'convent of dates,' we are in the true pastoral country of the patriarchs. The country is broken up by frequent wâdys and rounded hills, few showing any cliffs or rocks, but all covered with turf, chequered by wide unfenced tracts of cornland, and dotted with many a black encampment of the Bedawîn. The common notion that this southern region is a desert is at once dispelled. But covered though it be with countless flocks, not a tree relieves the monotony of the green expanse, and it is doubtful if this district was ever wooded as the inland region of Beer-sheba certainly was in early ages. Most of the streams are dry in summer, and the dependence of the Arabs is on wells, always carefully concealed, and seldom known except to the tribe which claims the pasturage."

That was a district in which it was not advisable to make a prolonged stay in a time of famine. And consequently "Abram went on his journeys from the Negeb even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai; unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first" (Genesis xiii. 3, 4). Before speaking of

these two places and the incident which took place in their neighbourhood, let me speak for a moment of the previous visit to which we are here referred. So little is said in chapter xii. 6-9 of the new land into which Abraham came that all comment could well be deferred until his return from Egypt would lead us to speak of the Land of Promise more fully. But the passage has become a most important one in the present controversy. We read: "And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem"—he was at that time approaching Bethel from the north—"unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him" (Genesis xii. 6, 7).

Now here the critics discover a mighty proof in favour of their belief in the comparatively late origin of the Pentateuch. It is in the words: "And the Canaanite was then in the land." They argue that it is plain that these words were written *after the Canaanite had been expelled*, and when the Canaanite was no longer in the land. This is one of those sudden suggestions which enliven the writing of the present-day leaders of theological thought. Ordinary readers are content with noting the plain and evident meaning, and, having grasped that, they pass on to the next thing. But what is the good of criticism if it cannot do better than that? And so the critic, like Sergeant Buzfuz, puts his head knowingly on one side, and asks an intelligent British

jury to say whether the expression is not "a cover for hidden fire." But the penetration which cannot content itself with the obvious may carry its possessors too far. It has done so in the present instance. They insist that the expression was only possible when the Canaanite had passed away and was no longer in the land. And when was that? Certainly not at any time to which the critics assign the composition of the Pentateuch. For Phœnicians flourished when the Jews were swept out of Palestine at the beginning of the Christian era; and Tyre and Sidon, cities of the Canaanites, were not only still dwelt in, but were populous, rich, and famous in our Lord's time, though their territory belonged to the land promised to the seed of Abraham. The woman of Syrophenicia, who besought our Lord to heal her daughter, was "a woman of Canaan," literally, "a Canaanitish woman" (Matthew xv. 22).

It is simply impossible, then, to take the words in the critical sense. There has been no time, since the days of Abraham, when the Canaanite was cleared out of Palestine. But let us now turn back to the Scripture and cease to attend to the over-acute Serjeant. We are here told that, when Abraham arrived in the land, *the Canaanite was already in it. This fact is stated so that we may understand what follows.* Abraham was not promised a land that was a desert, any more than the meek are promised an earth that is uninhabited. Both are possessed, but there is to be a change in the possessors. This land in which Abraham is a stranger, his seed shall yet possess in

all its length and breadth. The fact that the Canaanite was then in the land gives point to the promise, and formed the reason why the promise should be then so fully and so solemnly given.

The reader will also notice that the promise of the possession of the land is given in connection with an appearing of God. Hitherto the Lord had *spoken* to Abraham, but now *He manifested Himself*. Did this accompaniment of the promise indicate that the possession of the land by Abraham's seed would be accompanied by an unvailing of God? If so, the world was gloriously redeemed in the incarnation of the Son of God; and it will yet be fulfilled more gloriously when He shall come the second time without sin unto salvation.

In connection with this, it is well to note that the presence of the Canaanite seems to have entailed a serious deprivation upon the destined heir of the land. The words, "And the Canaanite was then in the land," stand significantly between the statement that, "He passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh;" and those other: "And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel." Shechem was, and is, the gem of Palestine. Bovet, leaving the district to which Abraham now removed, and journeying towards Shechem, which the patriarch was apparently obliged to leave, says:—"Soon after (leaving Bethel), we find ourselves . . . among those passes of Benjamin, which serve as a gateway into Judah; but soon nature changes; the country assumes an appearance

which I had not before observed in Palestine ; the cultivation becomes richer and more general. We are in the fine country of Ephraim, very different from Judah. It would not be so true to say that we are here among *mountains separated by valleys, as among valleys separated by mountains*. . . . One does not any longer feel oneself, as in the whole of Judæa, ‘*in the mountain country* ;’ it is a delight to find oneself once more *in the rich country* ; one feels much as one does in Switzerland, on passing from the stern uplands of the Jura into the fair and pleasant valleys of *l’Argovie*.

“ It is particularly on arriving at the great valley in which is Jacob’s well, that the change becomes apparent. This plain has, it is true, no trees ; and the mountains which enclose it are still bare and rocky ; but the bottom of the valley is filled with cultivated fields, and with meadows of the freshest and most brilliant verdure. In a few days’ time the fields will be ‘white to the harvest.’ This corner of the country, so smiling and so fertile, attracted, even in their remote day, the notice of the patriarchs. It is still called *the valley of the encampment (Wady-el-Mokhna)*. Here Abraham first pitched his tents and built an altar to the Eternal. Here, at a later time, Jacob came to settle on his return from Padan-Aram ; and he gave this tract of country—true gem, as it is, of the Holy Land—by preference, to his favourite son.”\*

“ Nablous ”—the ancient Shechem—“ is,” says

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\* *Egypt, Palestine, and Phœnicia*, pp. 314, 315.

Dean Stanley, "the most beautiful, perhaps it might be said the only very beautiful spot in central Palestine." M. Van de Velde, who approached this valley from the richer scenery of the North, is not less struck by it than those who contrast it with the barren hills of Judæa. After speaking of the grandeur of the gorge of the Leontes, and of the hills of Lebanon; of the wild oak forest and brushwood of Naphtali; of the mountain-streams of Asher; of Carmel, with its wilderness of timber-trees and shrubs, of plants and bushes; he says: "The Vale of Shechem differs from them all. Here there is no wilderness, here there are no wild thickets, yet there is always verdure; always shade, not of the oak, the terebinth, and the carob-tree, but of the olive grove—so soft in colour—so picturesque in form, that for its sake we can willingly dispense with all other wood. Here there are no impetuous mountain torrents, yet there is water; water, too, in more copious supplies than anywhere else in the land. 'There is a singularity,' he adds, 'about the Vale of Shechem, and that is the peculiar colouring which objects assume in it. You know that wherever there is water, the air becomes charged with watery particles; and that distant objects, beheld through that medium, seem to be enveloped in a pale blue or grey mist, such as contributes not a little to give a charm to the landscape. But it is precisely these atmospheric tints that we miss so much in Palestine. Fiery tints are to be seen both in the morning and the evening, and glittering violet or purple-coloured

hues where the light falls next to the long deep shadows; but there is an absence of colouring, and of that charming dusky haze in which objects assume such softly blended forms, and in which also the transition in colour from the foreground to the farthest distance loses the hardness of outline peculiar to the perfect transparency of an eastern sky. It is otherwise in the vale of Shechem, at least in the morning and in the evening. Here the exhalations remain hovering among the branches and leaves of the olive trees, and hence that lovely bluish haze. The valley is far from broad, not exceeding in some places a few hundred feet. This you find generally enclosed on all sides: there likewise the vapours are condensed. And so you advance under the shade of the foliage along the living waters, and charmed by the melody of a host of singing birds—for they, too, know where to find the best quarters—while the perspective fades away, and is lost in the damp, vapoury atmosphere.’ It need hardly be said that it is from its abundant supply of water that this beauty is derived: twenty-seven springs, each known by its peculiar name, besides a crowd of smaller sources, pour their treasures into the valley, and have thus secured the perennial glory of its green, grassy sward, its olive groves, its orchards of fig, and vine, and pomegranate.’\*

To these descriptions I add another which will lend fresh emphasis to some of the points already dwelt upon. Dr. Thomson, in *The Land and the*

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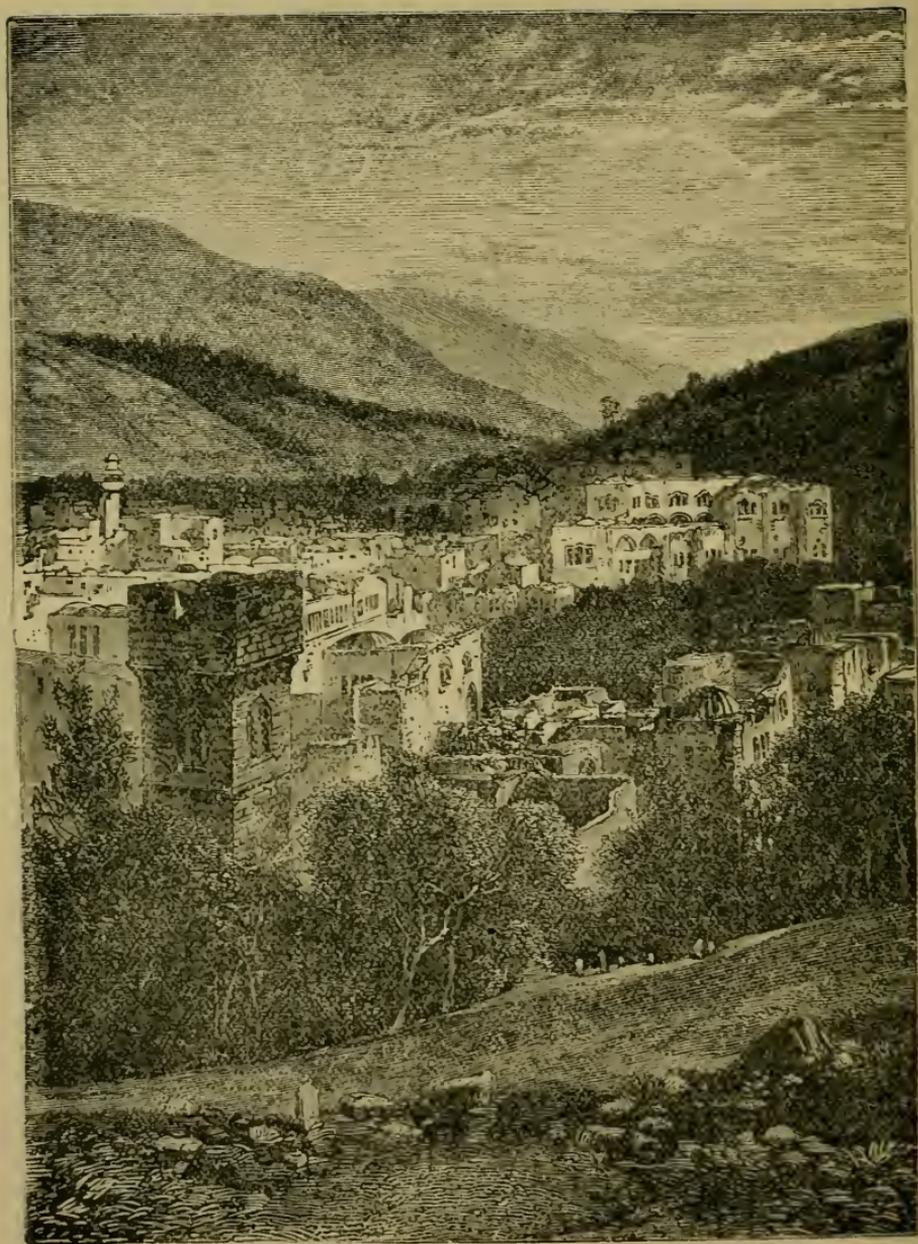
\* *Sinai and Palestine*, pp 233-235.

*Book*, says:—"A valley green with grass, grey with olives, gardens sloping down on each side, fresh springs rushing down in all directions; at the end a white town embosomed in all this verdure, lodged between the two high mountains which extend on each side of the valley, that on the south Gerizim, that on the north Ebal, this is the aspect of Nablous. . . . The general situation of the place must have been determined then as now, by the mighty burst of waters from the flanks of Gerizim. Thirty-two springs can be traced in different parts. Here the bilbul delights to sit and sing, and thousands of other birds delight to swell the chorus. The inhabitants maintain that theirs is the most musical vale in Palestine."\*

But from these green pastures and still waters Abraham had to go; and probably this migration was necessary, because "the Canaanite was then in the land." "And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east" (xii. 8). It is to this resting-place, sanctified by God's appearing to him, that Abraham makes his way on returning from Egypt; and here, during his second visit, an incident occurs which is in such striking accord with the circumstances and with the place that, were any further proof required that we are dealing here with veritable history and not with fiction, this would be evidence enough in itself. The ties which bound Lot to Abraham are here severed. He, too,

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\* Page 470.



NABLUS, THE ANCIENT SHECHEM.

has become rich, and riches frequently alter relationships. But note how impartial the Scripture is. Abraham's side is not taken against Lot, nor is Lot's side taken against Abraham. "And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land. And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left. And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other" (xiii. 5-11).

We have to remember that the resources of the country were reduced by drought, for "there was a famine in the land." Away from the well-watered plain of Shechem and on the uplands of Bethel this would be severely felt, and wells and herbage would become priceless in the eyes of the herdsmen.

Here we have an explanation of the strife of the servants, and also of the evident gravity with which Abraham views the situation and advises an immediate separation. The whole narrative thus hangs together as only a narrative of truth can. But the incident supplies us with another test. Lot is said to have lifted up his eyes and to have seen the whole plain—or rather circle—of the Jordan. Now is “the circle” of the Jordan really visible from the neighbourhood of Bethel? And when we notice the account which follows, our question becomes still more emphatic. When Lot had gone, and Abraham was left to realise the deepening loneliness and the ever recurring sacrifices to which he seemed to be destined, we are told that the Lord said unto him: “Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed for ever” (Genesis xiii. 14, 15). Is there, then, a point from which any commanding view of this kind can be had, and was it likely that Abraham’s tent would be pitched just there?

That is our question; and now here is the reply. We have to remember, writes Dean Stanley, that Abraham’s “tent and altar were not, strictly speaking, at Bethel, but on ‘the mountain east of Bethel, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east’ (Genesis xii. 8). This is a precision the more to be noticed, because it makes the whole difference in the truth and vividness of the remarkable scene which

follows. Immediately east of the low grey hills, on which the Canaanitish Luz and the Jewish Bethel afterwards stood, rises—as the highest of a succession



OLIVE TREES.

of eminences, each now marked by some vestige of ancient edifices—a conspicuous hill; its topmost summit resting, as it were, on the rocky slopes

below, and distinguished from them by the olive-grove which clusters over its broad surface above. From this height, thus offering a natural base for the patriarchal altar, and a fitting shade for the patriarchal tent, Abraham and Lot must be conceived as taking the wide survey of the country 'on the right hand and on the left,' such as can be enjoyed from no other point in the neighbourhood. To the east there rises in the foreground the jagged range of the hills above Jericho; in the distance the dark wall of Moab; between them lies the wide valley of the Jordan, its course marked by the tract of forest in which its rushing stream is enveloped; and down to this valley a long and deep ravine, now, as always, the main line of communication by which it is approached from the central hills of Palestine—a ravine rich with vine, olive, and fig, winding its way through ancient reservoirs and sepulchres, remains of a civilisation now extinct, but in the times of the patriarchs not yet begun. To the south and the west the view commanded the bleak hills of Judæa, varied by the heights crowned with what were afterwards the cities of Benjamin, and overhanging what in a later day was to be Jerusalem" (he adds in a note: "A white building close to the outskirts of Jerusalem is visible, but not the city itself"), "and in the far distance the southern range on whose slope is Hebron. Northward are the hills which divide Judæa from the rich plains of Samaria."\*

Bethel itself is situated on the highest point of the

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\* *Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 217, 218.

watershed ; and the mountain on the east, with its broad olive-shaded resting-place, affords still the very outlook from which Lot and Abraham surveyed the land.

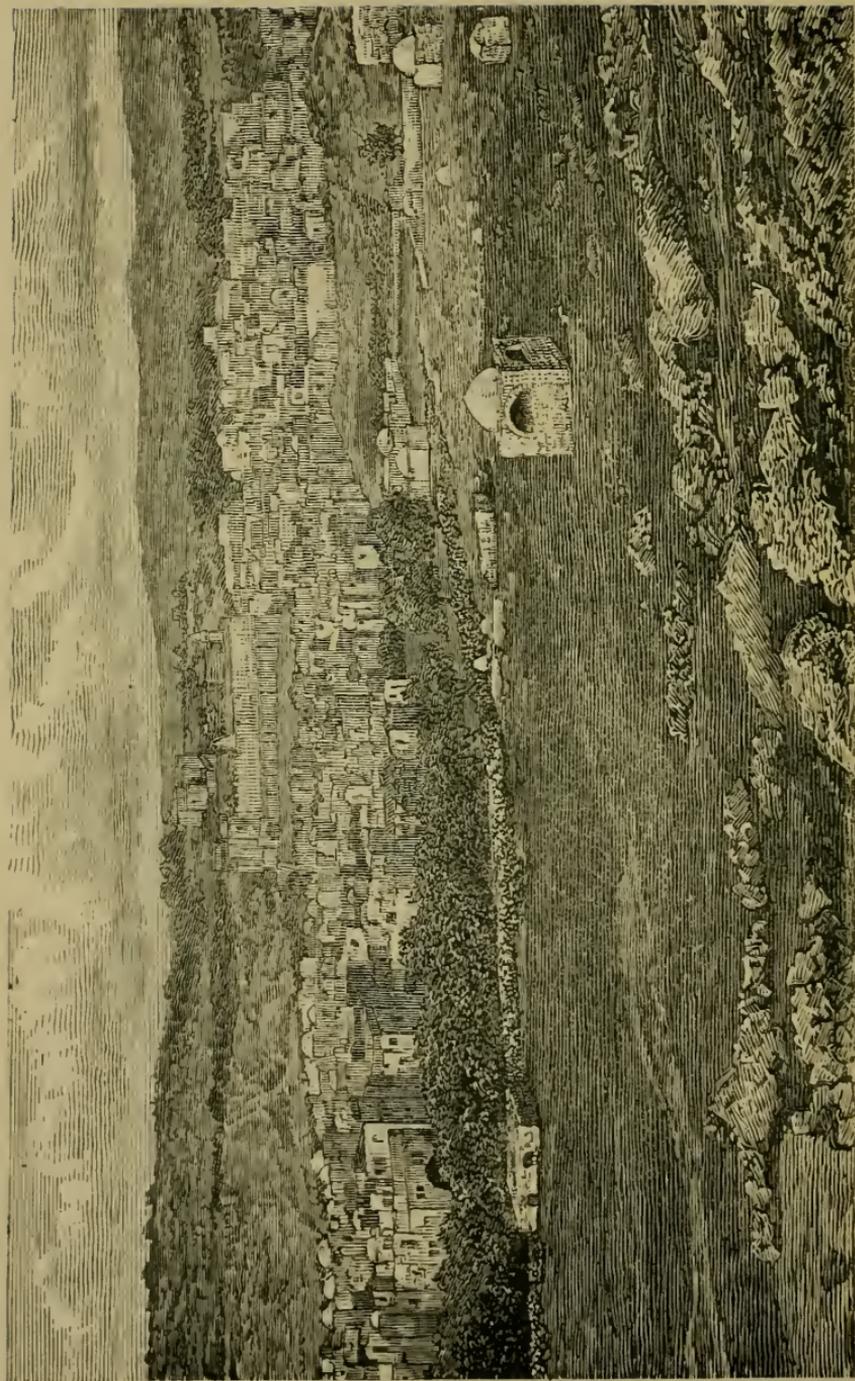
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## CHAPTER IX.

## ABRAHAM AT HEBRON.

THE Patriarch appears to have removed from Bethel after Lot had made his choice. It may have been that this was in consequence of his promise that if Lot went to the left hand he would turn to the right. He judged it wise to make the separation complete ; and so the pleasant olive-grove on the mountain top, with its wide survey, was abandoned, and the journeyings began again.

This time the resting-place was Hebron, a city which still remains, and where we are able, well-nigh with certainty, to trace Abraham's steps, if not to ascertain his actual dwelling-place, lies about 2,800 feet above the level of the sea. Notwithstanding its great elevation, however, it is situated in a sheltered position. It lies at the southern end of a deep valley. Near the city the valley narrows, while the surrounding hills rise higher ; but looking southward again from the city, the valley, after running north-east for about two-and-half miles, widens out into a broad and level plain. The valley produces an abundant supply of splendid grapes and oranges, which are carried to Jerusalem, and are famous all



HEBRON (ANOTHER VIEW).

over the land. De Saulcy, who passed through the town travelling northwards towards Jerusalem, journeyed through "a grove of magnificent olive-trees, and we soon find ourselves," he writes, "on a paved ascent—in all probability the ancient high-road from Hebron to Jerusalem. . . ."

"To the right and left of the road are beautiful vineyards, interspersed frequently with huts and round towers, consisting, no doubt, of working stations and watch-houses, intended to accommodate those who are placed there for the protection of property."\* Dean Stanley, approaching the city from the south, says: "With Ziph the more desolate region ended. The valleys now began, at least in our eyes, 'to laugh and sing.' Greener and greener did they grow—the shrubs, too, shot up above that stunted growth. At last on the summits of the further hills, lines of spreading trees appeared against the sky. Then came ploughed fields and oxen. Lastly a deep and wide recess opened in the hills—towers and minarets appeared through the gap, which gradually unfolded into the city of 'the Friend of God'—this is its Arabic name (*El Khalil*): far up on the right ran a wide and beautiful upland valley, all partitioned into gardens and fields, green fig-trees and cherry-trees, and the vineyards—famous through all ages: and far off, grey and beautiful as those of Tivoli, swept down the western slope the olive-groves of Hebron."† Dean Tristram speaks similarly of

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\* *Journey round the Dead Sea*, Vol. I., p. 546.

† *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 100.

the fertility of the district: "Bare and stony as are the hill-sides, not an inch of space is lost. Terraces, where the ground is not too rocky, support the soil. Ancient vineyards cling to the lower slopes; olive, mulberry, almond, fig, and pomegranate trees fill every available cranny to the very crest; while the bottom of the valley is carefully tilled for corn, carrots, and cauliflowers, which will soon give place to melons and cucumbers. Streamlets of fresh water trickled on each side of our path. The production and fertility, as evidenced even in winter, is extraordinary; and the culture is equal to that of Malta. That catacomb of perished cities, the hill country of Judah, through whose labyrinths we yesterday wandered, is all explained by a walk up the vale of Eschol; and those who doubt the ancient records of the population, or the census of David or his successors, have only to look at this valley, and by the light of its commentary to read the story of those cities."\*

It is deeply interesting to trace in this way the steps of him who forsook all to walk with God, and in whom both Jew and Gentile have a part. But the fruitfulness and beauty of this "city of the friend of God"—the Queen of the South—are an indication of Abraham's clear-eyed wisdom. This was also shown in his resolve not to enter the city. Lot was being ensnared at this very time in Sodom. He made his home there, no doubt believing that he could keep it pure among the vileness of the place,

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\* *The Land of Israel*, p. 397.

and possibly imagining that his presence might abate the excesses of Sodom. How vain that dream was is shown in the corruption which found its way into his own home, and which left that fearful blot upon his own story. Abraham was wiser. He keeps his home and himself away from the city life with its idolatry and its sin, and sets it where he and his, unwatched and undisturbed, may wait upon, and walk with, God.

The Scripture tells us that he "came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, the brother of Eshcol, and Aner" (xiv. 13). The margin of the Authorised Version has "plains," intimating that the word is in the plural. But we require to go beyond this correction, and to substitute quite another word to get the information supplied to us in Genesis. *Elōn* does not signify a "plain," but an "oak," and we are consequently told that Abraham pitched his tent among the oaks, or in the oak-grove, belonging to Mamre. He who had the promise of the land, who was its possessor and its lord by Divine appointment, had to make an arrangement with this Amorite chief that he might dwell there. The mistake of our version was never made in the land of the Patriarchs, and tradition has long linked the name of Abraham with the gigantic trees in the neighbourhood of Hebron. Oaks, we know, are themselves the patriarchs of the forest; but it exceeds belief when we are told that we may to-day gaze upon the veritable tree under which Abraham sat thirty-nine centuries ago. But the fact that those huge and

venerable trees still form a feature of the place is one of those impressive testimonies, the force of which every traveller feels who has looked upon them.

Referring to the relics of Abraham in Hebron, Dean Stanley mentions "the beautiful and massive oak on its green sward, called by his name, and which, with two or three near it, at least enables one to figure the scene in Genesis xviii., and to understand why it is that the spot was called 'the oaks' (mis-translated 'the plain') of Mamre."\* Dean Tristram says it is about a mile and a half to the west of the city, and describes it as "a noble holm oak, the finest tree in Southern Palestine." He adds:—"It was not until we had been long wandering in Northern Galilee that we met with an oak tree to surpass this one in size. The tree is sound, measuring over twenty-two feet in circumference, and stands close under the vineyards in a grassy field, with some of its descendants not very far off, and with a fine old well of sweet water just behind it. Under its shade, in quiet seclusion, we sat and spent our Sunday afternoon in reading the history of Abraham, and the promises of blessing through him to all nations, pledged to him in these valleys near 6,000 † years ago, and fulfilled now to ourselves." ‡

I give (facing page 160) an engraving which represents the traditional oak as it is now. There is one stupendous event of which the oak-grove of Mamre was the scene, and on which a word or two may be said before we pass on. The Scripture puts

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\* Page 102. † An evident misprint for 4,000. ‡ Pp. 396, 397.

it vividly before us. "And the Lord appeared unto him by the oaks of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said. And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat" (Genesis xviii. 1-8).

The quiet of the mid-day rest is thus suddenly exchanged for the activity of a generous hospitality. Unstinted preparatious are made. The hand-mill is vigorously plied by Sarah's handmaids. The wheat is poured by handfuls into the central opening in the upper stone, and the white flour is received on the clean cloth on which the mill is placed. Others scoop up the flour and sift it; for, though the flour as

it falls from between the stones, may do for themselves, *fine* flour is required for these honoured guests. Another—perhaps Sarah herself—receives the sifted flour, mixes and kneads it, and fashions it into cakes. Abraham is meanwhile busied with his part of the preparations, and soon a princely meal is spread under the leafy oaks.

There was in all this something which was not unworthy of that supreme moment, and which must have been a delight to the Divine Visitant. But here we may have to face a lurking doubt; for how slow of heart are we to realise the condescension and the nearness of the Lord our God! Is it credible that God did in very truth appear there to Abraham? Can we believe that the Creator of heaven and of earth came in the lowly guise of manhood, that *He* sat there in that oak's shadow, and that He actually partook of the food which Sarah and Abraham had provided, and that He spoke face to face with this man, "the father of all them that believe?" That is a question which, I may venture to say, lurks in every breast, and which has been dragged forth, accepted, and enthroned by not a few. The lurking doubt has been made their open confession. Not only are we told that these things never happened, but also that the presence of such a narrative in Genesis reveals the character of the Book. For this, they say, is a bit of pure anthropomorphism; that is, it belongs to a time when men conceived of God as if He were one of themselves. They pictured the Creator as a magnified man; and this narrative, and

the Book which contains it are, we are assured, men's work, and not His.

There are two things which they have evidently failed to observe, and which, when observed, may shake their confidence. The first is that in the whole narrative there is not one touch which is not in harmony with the loftiest conceptions of the Deity. The Greek legends never proceed far without degrading the Divinity. *There*, indeed, we have man's conception of God, and it is a conception that reveals its human origin. But here, as in the presence of Jesus, we bask in the light of a real unvailing of God! We are conscious that we, too, are in the presence of Him with whom we have to do—the Searcher of hearts, the God of truth, the Father of mercies. If this be legend, how does it happen that we have here what no other legend besides has ever given? Not only are the lowering of the Divine and the profanity of legend entirely absent in this, but the revelation of the Divine, which legend never contains, is here in fulness and in power. How is this to be accounted for? If we are to place the like and the unlike together, and to put these narratives of Genesis on a par with the legends of Greece, unbelief must first give us some rational account of this startling difference.

And that is only the beginning of difficulties for the legend and myth theory. For here is a second inquiry. We find that *the patriarchal life is steeped in the consciousness of God's presence*. It is shut off from all other life by that one grand characteristic. Abra-

ham, Isaac, and Jacob are men who are shut in with God. They are separated by this as by a deep and impassable gulf from the idolatries, and from the men, who are round about them. Whence has this deep and abiding sense of God's livingness, character, and nearness come to them? They have no Bible. They have no ritual. They have no temples. We cannot explain it by anything which they have, or by anything which they do. And, nevertheless, it must have an explanation; for it is one of the most marvellous phenomena in all human experience. Multitudes have yearned and cried that they might have this continual sense of God's reality and nearness, and they have not had it. Their thought of God is but for a moment, and is speedily submerged by the intruding flood of passing interests and cares. This happens although they have Bibles, and ritual, and churches. Whence, then, I once more ask, have these men this perpetual consciousness of God's presence? It is there apparently, without their seeking. Their thought, I repeat, is steeped in it. In Him they live, and move, and have their being. Now, say that *these appearances of God to those men were facts*: admit that they were startled, awed, and held by these revealings of God to them; and you have there an explanation that accounts for everything.

It need not astonish us that He, who was, in the fulness of the times, to assume our nature and to become man, should give the fathers a foretaste of what was by-and-bye to be so bountifully ministered to the children. Another memento of the past which



ABRAHAM'S OAK AT HEBRON: AS IT IS TO-DAY.



has attracted many a pilgrim to Hebron is the reputed tomb of Abraham. The reader will remember what we are told in Genesis regarding the purchase of the cave of Machpelah. That cave is said to be enclosed within the massive walls of the Mosque, called the Harem. Regarding the identity of this spot Dean Stanley and many others have no doubt. "Above all," he says, "the cave of Machpelah is concealed, beyond all reasonable doubt, by the Mosque at Hebron."\* This has been built round an undoubted cave upon a hill side. The building, which is in good preservation, is unquestionably ancient, and is among the most perfect and the most interesting of the architectural remains found in Palestine. The same writer says: "High above us on the eastern height of the town—which lies nestled, Italian-like, on the slope of a ravine—rose the long black walls and two stately minarets of that illustrious Mosque, one of the four sanctuaries of the Mahometan world, sacred in the eyes of all the world besides, which covers the cave of Machpelah, the last resting-place of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." †

"On our return from the oak," writes Dean Tristram, "we walked round the Harem; and, accompanied by Hamzi, and one or two of his friends, personages of importance in Hebron, had less cause to apprehend molestation than ordinary travellers. We were permitted to ascend the staircase, which gently rises from the south-east corner of the inclosure, having the massive stones of the

\* P. 149.

† P. 101.

Harem wall at our left, smooth and polished like marble. The enclosure thus embraces not a level space, but the side of a very steep hill, just such as would contain a sepulchral cave. We were not allowed, however, to turn again to the left, or look in—the angry scowls of a few loungers, and the noisy shouts of some mischievous boys, warned us it was time to return; and we beat a precipitate retreat, without further molestation than some unpleasant jostling at the foot of the stairs. We had, however, abundant time to look through the little hole near the entrance, where the Jews are at times permitted to peep at the sepulchres of their fathers, but we could make out only an open space. I believe that, had we made a dart at first, we might have had a glance at the mysterious area within, for our visit was unexpected, and none were on guard against us; but, with Dean Stanley's full description in our minds, we were well satisfied by our external survey. We afterwards made the circuit of the Harem as closely as we could, and from above, on the upper side, we climbed on to the roof of the adjoining building, the Mosque of Jáwali, and looked down through a window in its little dome, but were unable to discover anything of interest, though we were not far from the summit of the old megalithic (large-stoned) wall, and had hoped to find a point where we could peep down into the area. The Harem wall is about 200 feet long, by about 115 wide, and upwards of 50 feet high, without a single window or opening of any kind except the doorways at the north, which are

completely concealed from view. The stones are sumptuous in size and dressing, exactly like those of the substructure of the temple area at Jerusalem. We had no opportunity of measuring exactly the size of these enormous stones, but could not doubt the statements that some reach the amazing size of thirty-eight feet by three feet and a half, or, as we should say of some, four feet. The shallow pilasters, which, two feet and a half wide and five feet apart, relieve the outer face and run evenly to its top, have a very fine effect; and there is a simple and austere grandeur about the massive plainness of the ancient wall which not even the paltry Saracenic addition on its top, and the two minarets at the corners can affect. The design is unique and patriarchal in its magnificent simplicity.”\*

He is clearly of opinion that the building is not later than the Jewish period. It is guarded with the utmost jealousy by the Mahommedans. No known Christian was permitted to enter the sacred enclosure; but Badia, a Spanish renegade, who took the name of Ali Bey, has left us a description of the interior. In 1861 the Porte authorised the Prince of Wales to enter, and Dean Stanley, who was in his suite, has also given us a full account of all that was visible. But the party saw nothing of the tombs themselves. The Marquis of Bute, and the then Crown Prince of Prussia, both obtained similar firmans authorising them to enter the Mosque, but their researches were restricted in the same way. Our own royal princes,

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\* Pp. 397, 398.

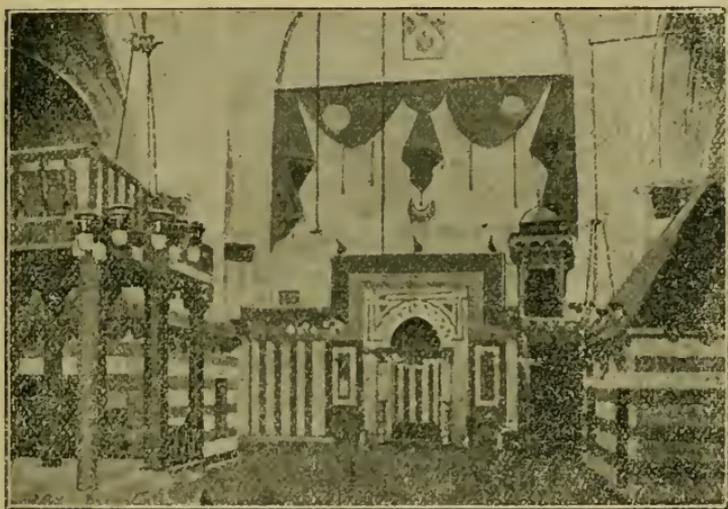
with Colonel Conder, visited Hebron in 1882, and saw the Mosque, but were not allowed to enter the cavern. The Prince of Wales, during his visit, came to the descent, and naturally wished to look down. An unlighted lamp hung above the staircase. He requested that this should be lighted, but received the reply that Abraham permitted the lamp to be lit at night but not in broad daylight !



THE SACRED TOMBS.

There is nothing, however, that can stand in the way of the Sultan's desire ; and, wishing to have views for his album of the interior and of the tombs of the patriarchs, an artist was introduced a year or two ago into the inner sanctuary and photographed the supposed resting-places of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Through a friend, M. Vigoroux obtained copies of the photographs, and reproduces them in

the last edition of his splendid work, *La Bible et les Decouvertes Modernes*. I have also reproduced them for my readers, who will now be able to behold what so many exalted personages have desired, and failed to see. But *are* these, after all, the resting-places of the patriarchs? A document by an anonymous writer of the 12th century, which was made known by Count Riant, in 1883, throws the gravest doubts



LOWER CHAPEL WITH THE TOMBS.

upon their genuineness. The Mahommedans have here, as elsewhere in Palestine, merely taken over early Christian shrines. This anonymous author recounts the story of the finding of the bodies. The discovery was made by a monk belonging to the convent at Hebron in the beginning of the 12th century. When he first explored the cavern, he found nothing in it. The prior, however, prevailed

upon him to make a second attempt and to dig the soil on all sides with the greatest care. This time he succeeded. He found the bones of Jacob. He then discovered the entrance into another cavern, and found there the bones of Abraham and of Isaac.

As Jacob's body *had been embalmed* in Egypt, the flesh must have been preserved as well as the bones. It may be confidently set down, therefore, that Jacob's body is not in any of the three tombs. There is quite as little likelihood that the other identifications were more fortunate. The monks seem to have stumbled upon one of the numerous burial places in the neighbourhood. They found about fifteen clay vases full of human remains.

We shall be better satisfied when we return to the account in Genesis of Abraham's purchase of the Sepulchre, which I shall deal with further on. Meanwhile I conclude this chapter with a reference for which our following the Patriarch in his journeyings will have prepared us. I refer to the picture of Canaan, which is implied, rather than painted, in the life of Abraham. Evidently the Palestine of the time is not a land crowded with large cities, teeming with inhabitants, and divided into estates and farms, which are owned by possessors jealous of a neighbour's encroachment and uneasy at a stranger's presence. The land is open, and stretching out in grassy wildernesses east and west and north and south. Two possessors of large flocks and herds, and of troops of herdsmen and servants travel unhindered through the country, and encounter no difficulty in

obtaining free pasturage for their cattle. Abraham and Lot, in a way, divide the land between them. The two hosts were crowding upon each other. There were questions about wells and about coveted stretches of pastures. And, as we have seen, "Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left."

Was that the actual condition of the land at the time? It might well be supposed that this is a question which it would be impossible to answer. But, fortunately, we have a picture of a closely adjacent country as it was at this very time. There is a papyrus, brought by Lepsius from Egypt, and now in the museum at Berlin, which gives us a picture of Edom. It contains the record of the adventures of Saneha, or Sinuhit,\* an Egyptian noble, belonging to the Twelfth dynasty, *the very period in which Abraham lived*. He seems to have been connected with some Egyptian State intrigue, and to have sought safety in flight. He landed at last in the country of "Edima," or "Eduma," the land of Edom. The prince of the country entreated him to stay with him, and heaped favours upon him. "He set me," says Sinuhit, "above his children, marrying me to his eldest daughter, and he granted that I

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\* *Records of the Past*, New Series (Edited by Professor Sayce) 11. pp. 11-14.

should choose for myself in his domain, among the best of what he possessed on the frontier of a neighbouring country." Then follows the description of the district. It is unfortunate that we do not know with certainty on what side of Edom this "neighbouring country" lay; but we may safely conclude that its condition reflected more or less accurately the aspect of the Canaan of the time. "It is," he says, "an excellent country; Aïa is its name. There are figs in it and grapes; its wine is more plentiful than water; abundant is the milk, numerous the olives and all the products of its trees; there are corn and meal without limit and every kind of cattle." Among the various other luxuries which he enjoyed was "the game that I caught or that was placed before me, over and above what my dogs brought from the chase. Plenty of butter was made for me and boiled milk of every sort. . . . When a traveller went and returned from the interior, he turned aside from his road to visit me, for I rendered services to all the world. I gave water to the thirsty, I set on his journey the traveller who had been hindered from passing by, I chastised the brigand." He was made general of the chief's forces, and he says: "Every country towards which I marched, when I made my invasion, they trembled on the pastures beside their wells; I seized their cattle, I removed their vassals and I carried away their slaves, I slaughtered their population."

His own wealth mainly consists in cattle. He is challenged by a rival to single combat, and he tells

us that his challenger desires "to throw himself on my bulls, on my sheep, and on my oxen in order to take them for himself." God, he tells us, gave him the victory; and "The Prince, Ammi-Ânshi gave me all that the conquered one possessed, and then I carried away his goods, I took his cattle; that which he desired to make me do I made him do; I seized what there was in his tent, I despoiled his abode; so that the riches of my treasures increased and *the number of my cattle.*" When a favourable response to his petition, to be permitted to return to Egypt, comes from Pharaoh, he invests his children (to whom apparently he bids a final farewell) with his property, which is therefore once more described. "My eldest son," he says, "was chief of my tribe, all my property passed to him, and I gave away *all my cattle* as well as my plantations of every species of fruit-tree." This picture of the land is the very picture presented in Genesis. It is a land largely of pasturage. It is when the people meet *at the wells* that they have an opportunity of exchanging news and conversing on the events of the time. The largest portion of the rich man's wealth is his cattle; and Sinuhit, like Abraham, entertains the traveller, who turns out of his lonely way, to seek refreshment and shelter.

## CHAPTER X.

ABRAHAM AND CHEDORLAOMER.  

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IN continuing our review of these confirmations of the history of Abraham, it may be well to answer one question. Are the confirmations of any practical use to us? Does it matter very much whether this, or any, part of Genesis, is fact or fiction? Shall we be aught the poorer if it turns out that the story of Abraham is as legendary and fabulous as the story of Romulus and Remus, or of our own King Arthur? And do we, on the other hand, gain anything if it is proved that every page bears the stamp of perfect truth?

The answer to this is obvious. Though it may not seem that there is much at stake, everything really is. One hole is quite enough to sink a boat. If that cannot be stopped, the process may be slow, but the boat will surely fill and go to the bottom. To break our faith in a man, it does not need to be proved that *every* word he has ever uttered is untrue. *One* clear case of falsehood will accomplish the deadly work. And so, if but one chapter in this book is shown to be "legendary," there is an end to the old belief in the Bible as the Word of God. It is no longer the one Book among books, on the statements of which we can place our trust for time and for eternity. When our fathers rejoiced in the Bible as

God's gift and not man's, they had a very different idea of the Scripture from that now advocated by certain Professors in Oxford, Edinburgh, Marburg, and elsewhere. *They* never pictured to themselves "holy men of God" raking among the traditions of the past and building up a fabric of wood, hay, and stubble, and calling that "the Word of God." People may be found who will contend that somehow, notwithstanding the wood, hay, and stubble, it is still the Word of God; but our fathers would have been honest enough, and those who will follow us by-and-bye will be honest enough, to name it the word of man.

That is one thing we should lose: we should have henceforth to wend our way through life and death without a Bible. But there is another loss. The whole fabric of the Kingdom of God upon the earth falls in ruin. Leave this calling of Abraham a fact, and God's redeeming work is a glorious unity: it is complete and Divine. In the call of Abraham, in the watching over Israel, and in the preparing of a place and a people for the coming of the Messiah, we see the outputting of the Divine hand. We watch the beginning and the progress of a Divine work. With that left in its completeness, who can doubt that the Gospel is indeed of God? But, say that this completeness is a dream—that there was no calling of Abraham and no choice of Israel—then the Divine seal is gone. This, that we supposed to be the Kingdom of God upon the earth, is a thing of chance and not of Divine purpose. How much we should

lose, the next generation would know only too well. Our own generation might not realise all that its unbelief implied. The force of custom, and the stream of religious impulse, which flow from the faith now denied, would bear us on for a time along the old ways. We should still attend church, and should probably subscribe to missions. We might even have living trust in God. But the impulse would gradually fail and die ; and soon the Redeemer's question would echo, answerless, through a slumbering and dead Church : " Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, will He find faith on the earth ? "

This is what we should lose. What, now, do we gain from the confirmations which we have had, and from those which we shall still meet with ? They do not directly prove, and they cannot directly prove, that God really called Abraham and spoke with him face to face as a man with his friend, and gave him promises. These promises, indeed, may be tested, and *they* may prove whether they were from God ; but we repeat, the *confirmations* by themselves cannot directly do this. Nevertheless, they do much. *They reveal the character of this book.* They will show whether Genesis is legend and romance, or true, sober, well-informed, and thoroughly accurate history. When the jeweller tests what is alleged to be gold, he does not try *every* particle. He applies his test here and there, and when each trial brings out the answer, " gold," he lays it down perfectly satisfied. With undisturbed confidence, he will risk his reputation or his money upon the genuineness of the trinket or the

coin. And when we test this book of Genesis, we do not require to test *every* statement in order to bring out the true character of the book. We are told that this and that narrative are "legendary;" but, when we test them and find ourselves face to face with fact, and not fable, what is our feeling? Is it not that we have been sitting in judgment upon the book, and that the verdict, given with our whole soul's consent, is that the book is true? We go back with it into the dimmest regions of the past; and here the "enlightenment" of to-day steps in, and, with an air of the utmost finality, tells us that, of course, the Creation story is a myth. We test it, and we are amazed at its truth: there, at least, the book is an unpretending but astounding record of fact. "Ah!" says our wise friends, "but what of the Deluge? What defence can you make of that?" Again we appeal to science that is real. We inspect the result of researches of which those men are ignorant—they seem to have heard nothing from science since the days of Lyell—and we are amazed to find that the Bible is abreast with the latest discoveries, and that its opponents are left hopelessly behind. In the same way, we take the original unity, the first home, and the three-fold division of our race; and again we discover that this Book is the sole depository of startling facts. We test its statements regarding the early races and the civilization of Babylonia, the migration of the Hebrews, the customs of Egypt in the time of Abraham, and the animals whose possession formed part of its wealth; and,

wherever we look, we read the same answer—"fact." If we repeat the process now, and discover that we are met by the same unpretentious but perfect knowledge, the same unswerving veracity—what shall we say? Shall it not be that the book, so marvellously true wherever we have tested it, is true everywhere? And shall we not, as the jeweller rests upon the genuineness of the gold, repose with perfect confidence upon the testimony that this book is of God?

Let us now proceed with our study of the life of Abraham. We have followed the patriarch to Hebron. In the chapter which immediately follows, that to which our attention has just turned—Gen. xiv.—we find a marvellous narrative which brings us suddenly face to face with the life of Babylonia. It is the story of the battle of the kings. The kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, with their confederates, had been subject to Chedorlaomer, king of Elam. For twelve years they had faithfully sent him the agreed tribute; but in the thirteenth year they cast off the yoke, and the ordinary token of their subjection was withheld. The year following, Chedorlaomer crossed the Euphrates with an army in which were three monarchs, who, apparently (seeing that the quarrel was not theirs, but Chedorlaomer's), had been also subjected by him. These were Amraphel, king of Shinar; Arioch, king of Ellasar; and Tidal, king of Goim (*English version*, "nations"). The campaign was most masterly both in design and in execution. The Babylonian army first fell upon the nations which inhabited the north of Syria, then passed down

by the east of the Jordan valley, swept round by Mount Hor on the south, then northward again through the territory of the Amalekites and of the Amorites, and poured down from the mountains upon the cities of the plain. Sodom and its allies made a vain attempt to stay the torrent. Their forces were beaten and dispersed. The cities were pillaged, and the inhabitants were led away captive.

The district, in which Abraham dwelt, had been hid by the hand of God from this terrible visitation. The righteous have often been God's hostages to many a land. God's children were there, and His angels watched before the gates. But the saved have often to succour and to deliver others. Tidings were brought to Abraham that Lot, with his wife and children, had been led away captive. We do not know that any appeal was sent by the captives. And there was no need of one; the news was enough. Without staying to listen to the dictates of selfish prudence, or to weigh the improbabilities of success, Abraham armed his servants, summoned his neighbours who had entered into a league of mutual defence with him, and, within an hour or two, he was following in the track of the invaders. They had had the start of Abraham, and they seem to have travelled fast, for Abraham had to traverse the entire length of the country, from Hebron to Dan, before he came up with them. Bringing prudence to the aid of valour, he concealed his force, carefully observed the arrangements which the enemy made for camping during the night, and then, dividing

his band into three divisions, he broke in upon them while they were wrapped in slumber. The panic was complete. There was no attempt to struggle; their only thought was flight. Abraham had, by his three-fold attack, barred the way behind and on either side. It would not have done to have allowed them to scatter all over the country, and to have permitted himself, when day dawned, to be surrounded and cut off. There was but one passage left open, and that was the way which led to their own land. From every other side came the noise of conflict; and so, abandoning everything, casting away weapons, clothing, and all that could impede their frenzied flight, they sped toward the east. Gathering his forces together, Abraham pursued the fleeing host. Up through the mountain pass he dashed after them. Down the declivities on the other side they fled, and he followed reaping the terrible harvest of blood, but blood of men who had changed themselves into beasts of prey. The pursuit was continued unto Hobah on the north of Damascus, for Abraham was resolved to strike a blow which would make those ravagers long dread the land which they had harried.

Such is the story written by Moses some four and a-half centuries after the event. The reader will notice that it is written with as much confidence and precision as if the event had happened but the day before. There is no haziness or uncertainty dimming the picture. Everything is clear and well-defined. The names and the territories of the nine kings are



HEBRON AS IT IS TO-DAY.



given. The route taken by the invading army, the attack and the flight, are all so portrayed that we are not merely readers of the narrative, but are also spectators of the events. If all this is true; if every touch is as exact as it is definite, then the impression upon our minds is not exhausted when we say that Genesis is to be accepted as truth. For this is not history: it is inspiration. The writer is not trying to thread his way through varying traditions. The veil of the past is lifted. It is lifted fully. He *sees* the things of which he speaks.

*Is the narrative true?* This is the question on which so much depends. If we listen to the Rationalists we shall not spend much time upon the matter. Von Bohlen declared that the story had not so much as a single traditional event for its basis. In other words, he believed it to be an entire invention. Knobel, writing in 1860, admitted that the narrative had *some* historical foundation; but he added that other details were plainly legendary, that is, contrary to fact. He specially indicates the position assigned in the narrative to Elam. Chedorlaomer, he says, is accompanied by the three other kings, and the cities of the plain pay tribute to him and to him alone. This implies, he argues, that Elam, which at no other time ever rose into prominence, had, in the days of Abraham, extended its dominion almost to the shores of the Mediterranean and exercised a kind of universal sovereignty. This he rejects as utterly unhistorical, and declares that there was no trace of any such Elamitic supremacy, or of

anything that would lend the slightest probability to the notion. Hitzig went still further. With that piercing insight, that spirit of divination in which the critics rejoice, he discovered how the story had arisen! He found that Sennacherib came up against Judah "in the fourteenth year" of king Hezekiah. The reader will remember that Chedorlaomer came up also "in the fourteenth year." *There* is the key to the whole matter! The forgers of the sacred history have been caught in the very act! Seeing that Hezekiah had a deliverance "in the fourteenth year," Abraham must also have a victory "in the fourteenth year;" and so some forger made up this 14th chapter of Genesis after the days of Hezekiah! Grotefend, who first led the way in the decipherments of the Assyrian inscriptions, which were to sweep away the dreams of himself and of his contemporaries, went still further. It may be said, in extenuation of *his* error, that the myth theory was then believed to explain almost everything in ancient history. He applied it to the narrative of Abraham's victory. The four kings from the east were the four seasons, and the five kings of the cities of the plain were the five days which the Babylonians and the Persians add to their twelve months of thirty days each in order to make up the year!

We now turn to the books in stone to which Grotefend first led the way, and what do we find? After all this learned derision of simple-hearted faith, it has to be acknowledged that faith was right, and that the critics were deplorably in the wrong!

While we are thankful for the result, who can help feeling how terribly sad it is that the opposition should ever have arisen? Knobel was right when he maintained that the Scripture represents the king of Elam as lord paramount of Babylonia and of the west. But he could not have chosen a more fatal battle-ground than when he took his stand here against the Scripture. The inscriptions have long since placed it beyond a doubt that, *at this very time*, Elam was supreme from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea, and from the eastern borders of Persia to the Mediterranean. An inscription of Assur-banipal, the grandson of Sennacherib, was found, which speaks of an early Elamitic conquest and gives its date. He tells of his having captured the city of Susa, the capital of Elam, and having recovered the statue of the goddess Nana, which had been carried away from Babylonia by Kudurnankhundi, king of Elam, 1,635 years previously. This makes the commencement of the Elamite conquest date back to 2,280 before the beginning of our era, and 200 years before Abraham entered Canaan.

This has been one of the biggest surprises of Eastern archæology, and the Bible is the only book in the world in which the fact was indicated and, indeed, indicated clearly. Elam has been discovered to have been one of the great empires of antiquity. One indication of its greatness is the fact that down to the time of Alexander the Great its capital city, Susa, never ceased to retain its place among the greatest cities of the east. He seized an immense

spoil within its walls. Besides vast sums of money he found seven-and-a-half millions sterling in silver ingots, and 5,000 hundredweight of the renowned Hermione purple, which was valued at £25 a lb., and which was accordingly worth another fourteen millions of our money. Loftus says: "It is difficult to conceive a more imposing site than Susa, as it stood in the days of its Kayanian splendour—its great citadel and columnar edifices raising their stately heads above groves of date, konar, and lemon trees—surrounded by rich pastures and golden seas of corn—and backed by the distant snow-clad mountains. Neither Babylon nor Persepolis could compare with Susa in position—watered by her noble rivers, producing crops without irrigation, clothed with grass in spring, and within a moderate journey of a delightful summerclime. Susa vied with Babylon in the riches which the Euphrates conveyed to her stores, while Persepolis must have been inferior, both in point of commercial position and of picturesque appearance."\*

Maspero has briefly, but powerfully, summed up the story of the Elamitish conquest of Babylonia. After speaking of the great Sargon and his son and successor Naram-Sin, who made the Semites masters of Babylonia and the west, he says their empire did not long survive them. Up the west bank of the Tigris the non-Semitic tribes were conquered and gradually absorbed; but no impression was made upon the dwellers on the eastern shore of that river. From that line began the territory of Elam, and it

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\* *Chaldea and Susiana*, p. 347.

commenced with a rich alluvial plain as fertile as that of Chaldea itself. The wheat and the barley yielded a hundred-fold, and sometimes even two hundred-fold. Palms and dates flourished exceedingly, especially in the neighbourhood of the towns. The surface, however, rose gradually till the Median plateau was reached; the climate became steadily colder and the earth less and less productive. The mountains rolled down a number of rivers, some of which in the latter part of their course were as large as the Tigris and the Euphrates. At the junction of the two arms of the Choaspes, on the border of the great plain, and from eight to ten leagues within the mountains, the kings of Elam had built Susa, their capital. Higher up the river Madaktou, the Badaca of the classic writers, was met with. There were other great walled cities, the majority of which bore the title of royal cities. Susiana was in fact a kind of feudal empire, divided into small states, independent of one another, but often united under the same prince, who resided by preference at Susa. It was the seat of a flourishing civilisation, possibly earlier than that of Babylon. The little that we know of its religion from the monuments of a later time transports us into a new world full of strange names and forms. In other respects the Susian civilisation appears to have very closely resembled the Chaldean; Elamites and Chaldeans had almost the same customs, the same military usages, the same industrial and commercial aptitudes.\*

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\* *Histoire Ancienne des Peuples de L'Orient*, pp. 159, 160.

But what of Palestine, and of the times of Abraham? Is there any proof that, at this very early period, the Elamitic armies had traversed the vast distance between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean, and had conquered Syria and Canaan? Here, too, the Bible is triumphant. The Elamites had also conquered Palestine. George Smith found an inscription on a brick which was discovered at Ur (the city of Abraham's nativity), and this simple piece of hardened clay has stopped the mouths of the critics. It is an inscription of a king called Kudur-Mabug. He is described as "Father of the land of the Amorites," that is, of Palestine. This means that he was the ruler of the land of the Amorites. His other inscriptions, since discovered, are numerous. He is named lord of Syria and lord of Elam, "so that," says George Smith, "this ruler claimed dominion over the whole country from Syria to Elam. Kudur-Mabug, from the number of his inscriptions and the extent of his dominion, appears to have been an important monarch."

These were staggering blows to the men who had paraded *their* "discovery" (!) that the narrative of the 14th chapter of Genesis had "not so much as one traditional event as its foundation." But the advance of true discovery proved to be still more unkind to them. The historical character of the supposed "myth" was shown by the discovery of one of the names of the kings mentioned. "Arioch, king of Larsa," is frequently spoken of in the Babylonian inscriptions, and is no other than the son of

our former friend, Kudur-Mabug! More than that, though the name of Chedorlaomer had not then been met with, it was seen to be a thoroughly Elamitic name. "Chedor" is the same as "Kudur" in "Kudur-Mabug." *Kudur* means "servant" in the Elamitic tongue; and scholars were struck by the fact that this word seems to have formed part of the name assumed by a king of Elam on his accession to the throne. There was an early king called Kudur-Nankhundi, and we have already met with Kudur-Mabug. In the very form, therefore, of the name there was the true historical stamp. But this was not all. The second part of the name has in it a letter, called Ayin, which was not sounded generally by the later Jews, but which had the power of "g" at an earlier time. We have, then, to read "Lagomer" as the second part of the king's name. This is now seen to be the name of the Elamitic deity "Lagamar," so that "Chedorlagomer" is good Elamitic for "the servant of Lagamar."

In the face of these and of the other facts which I have already named it will not surprise us to hear that Professor Maspero says: "From the outset Assyriologists have never doubted the historical accuracy of this chapter (Genesis xiv.), and they have connected the facts which it contains with those which seem to be revealed by the Assyrian monuments."\* But even this is only the beginning of the story. Through the researches of Mr. Pinches, of the British Museum, the names of Chedorlaomer and of the others have

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\* *Struggle of the Nations*, p. 47, note.

been recovered, and the fact has been established beyond the possibility of question or of doubt that the Scripture has here preserved for us a full and accurate reflection of the time. This is one of the many similar facts which have led Sayce, Hommel, and Halévy to abandon the critics, and to range themselves upon the side of us who believe in the reliability of the Bible. "Are the events narrated in Genesis xiv.," asks Hommel in his recent book, "actual historical facts? Is it conceivable that at this early date an Elamite king, not only exercised supremacy over the whole of Babylon, but even penetrated as far as the Sinaitic Peninsula in his lust for conquest? Or ought we, as some would have us believe, to regard the whole matter as originally nothing more than the narrative of some predatory raid against Canaan by a party of Bedouin Arabs, to which legend had tacked on the names of Lot and Abraham, the whole story being afterwards elaborated by some later writer into the shape it now presents in Genesis xiv.?"

"As a matter of fact, a distinguished Orientalist long ago declared this chapter to be a fantastic grouping together of names, which either belonged to some remote period, or were expressly invented for the occasion; and since that time it has become the fashion among 'the Higher Critics' of the Old Testament to echo this view ever since 1869, when Theodore Nöldeke attempted to prove the 14th chapter of Genesis to be the biassed invention of a later—though possibly pre-exilic—date. Modern

'critics' have unhesitatingly endorsed his verdict. Scholars began afterwards to study the cuneiform texts, and showed that king Arioch of Ellasar was identical with king Eri-aku (G. Smith, 1871) of Larsa (H. Rawlinson); they next pointed out that there was an Elamite goddess called Lagamar, or Lagamal (G. Smith), and that there were two ancient Elamite kings, one named Kudur-Mabug, father of the aforesaid Eri-aku, and the other Kudur-Nankhundi (G. Smith). What did the modern critics do in the face of this evidence—since to admit the presence of such an ancient tradition in the Old Testament would be virtually equivalent to cutting the ground away from beneath their own feet? They could not, of course, deny that Kudur-Lagamar (Chedor-la'omer in Gen. xiv.) is a genuine Elamite name, or that the supremacy of the Elamites in Syria (including Palestine) is proved by one of Kudur-Mabug's inscriptions—though the reading of Eri-aku, as the name of a son of Kudur-Mabug, was at one time, though wrongly, disputed.\* They were therefore obliged—since there seemed to be no other way out of the difficulty—to fall back again on the theory of a post-exilic forgery, and to suggest that, like a nineteenth century novelist in search of 'local colour,' the

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\* "By many," adds Hommel in a footnote, "it was regarded as nothing more than an ingenious conjecture, and it was occasionally quoted as such, but its accuracy was questioned by Assyriologists (such as Fr. Delitzsch in his little book on the Cossæans, which appeared in 1883), the result being that the identification came to be discredited by theologians and historians alike; the present writer stood alone in his disregard of the doubts cast on this theory, and, thanks to a mass of fresh evidence that now no longer admits of question, he has been able to establish both the correctness of the reading Ira-aku and the identity of the bearer of this name with Arioch."

Jewish writer must have gone to the Babylonian priests for his antiquarian details. 'It would seem, therefore'—I quote Meyer's own words from the first volume of his *History of Antiquity* (Stuttgart, 1884)—'that the Jew who inserted the account (Genesis xiv.), *one of the latest portions of the whole Pentateuch*, in its present position, must have obtained in Babylon exact information in regard to the early history of the country, and for some reason which we are unable to fathom, mixes up Abraham with the history of Kudur-Lagamar; in other respects his version of the story accords perfectly with the *absolutely unhistorical* views held by the Jews in regard to primitive ages.'

"By adopting this attitude," continues Hommel, "it was no longer necessary for modern critics to deny that the events related in Genesis xiv. rest on an actual basis of historic fact; they had now to admit, whether they liked it or not, that the names of the hostile kings especially were not pure inventions. But that the history of Abraham, whom they regard as not merely a legendary but rather a purely mythical being, should contain in its midst an ancient historical tradition, was something which they could not accept; for in that case the whole theory, according to which everything before the time of David is wrapped in the mist of legend, would begin to totter on its base, and the account drawn up by Moses would begin to appear in another and far more authentic light; in a word, the whole doctrine of the untrustworthiness of the earlier

history of Israel—so dear to the hearts of modern critics of the Pentateuch—would suddenly find itself attacked in a vital part. In order, therefore, to save this master principle from ruin, there was nothing for it but to adopt the above opportunist expedient, the inherent absurdity of which must, one would think, be patent to every unprejudiced observer. This merely serves to show us once again how true it is that once the critic refuses to be convinced by the sheer force of facts, because to do so would involve the sacrifice of a carefully elaborated theory, he is apt, like a drowning man, to catch at the veriest straws, provided they seem to promise him a way out of his difficulties. For it is absolutely inconceivable that a Jew of the post-exilic period should have been the first to derive from the sacred Babylonian records such exact information in regard to an incident in the history of the earliest kings of Babylon—an incident, moreover, in which the king of Babylon played a passive and comparatively subordinate part. Besides, even assuming Gen. xiv. to be nothing more than a ‘very late narrative of a Midrash character’ belonging to post-exilic times, how came its author (who, by the way, may be congratulated on the production of such a masterpiece as this chapter) to introduce into it a whole host of ancient phrases and names, to which he himself is obliged to add explanatory glosses in order that they may be better understood? It is merely necessary to glance at verses 2 to 8, ‘king of Bela (the same is Zoar);’ verse 3, ‘the vale of

Siddim (the same is the [later] Salt Sea);' verse 7, 'En-Mishpat (the same is Kadesh);' verse 14, 'his trained men, *i.e.*, born in his house;' and verse 17, 'in the vale of Shave (that is, the King's Vale).' Are we to assume that he did this intentionally in order to invest his story with an air of higher antiquity? In that case, all we can say is, that no similar example of literary finesse can be found throughout the whole of the Old Testament, and that if he was capable of such subtlety in this one instance, it is strange that he should have limited himself to dressing up this one scene from the life of Abraham in Canaan, in finery borrowed from the ancient Babylonian archives, when there were so many other episodes, both in the story of Abraham and elsewhere, in the primitive history of the Israelites, which would have readily lent themselves to similar adornment and elaboration.

“The reader will now understand why it is that this fourteenth chapter of Genesis has come to be a sort of shibboleth for the two leading schools of Old Testament critics. The purely literary question as to whether the so-called 'Priestly Code' is the oldest or latest of the sources of the Pentateuch, is, by comparison, of merely minor importance. It is the question of the nature of history itself which divides the students of the Old Testament into two irreconcilable factions. The authenticity of a narrative such as that under consideration is, however, in itself, an unanswerable criticism upon the views which are now in fashion with regard to the credibility of

the ancient Hebrew tradition. The subject matter of the present chapter will, therefore, for ever remain a stumbling-block in the path of those who refuse to recognise a single line of the Pentateuch—not even the decalogue and the blessing (Deut. xxx.)—to be genuine; and try how they may to remove it, it will continue to defy their persistent efforts.”\*

Every advance which has been made in the knowledge of this Elamitic dominion has added to the confirmation of the Scripture. The names show an intimate acquaintance with the time. All these men, we now know, were contemporaries. The first name that was discovered was that of Arioch, king of Ellasar. This was identified with Eri-Aku, king of Larsa, whose name has been found in a number of inscriptions. The identification was made by George Smith in 1871, and has been accepted by Assyriologists. Arioch of Ellasur is, “in my opinion,” writes Schrader, himself a rationalist, “unquestionably identical with Iri-Aku, that is, ‘servant of the moon-god,’ king of Larsa. He was the son of Kudur-Mabug, king of Ur, and also king of Sumir and Accad, that is, of the superior monarch, to whom he held, as long as he lived, the position of a vassal-king. Professor Sayce suggests that the “el” (el-Lasar) in the Scripture form of the name, may be the Accadian *al*, a city. No further progress was made till 1894, when Mr. Pinches submitted a report of some discoveries to the Congress of Orientalists which met in Geneva in September of that year.

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\* *Ancient Hebrew Tradition*, pp. 160-166.

Among them is an account of the devastation of Northern Babylonia by Chedorlaomer. The name of Tidal (*Tid-gal* in the Hebrew, and *Tud-khula* or *Tud-ghula* in the inscriptions) has also been found. Some years before, Schrader had expressed his belief that the Amraphel of Genesis was no other than the great Khammurabi himself, the conqueror of Chedorlaomer, and the founder of the early Semitic-Babylonian Empire. One objection to the acceptance of Schrader's suggestion was the form of the name. Khammurabi cannot be changed into Amraphel by any system of transliteration. But the name Amraphel, Hommel points out,\* suggests the form *Ammu-rapaltu*, a form which belongs to the very time. "Such a reading," he says, "as *Ammu-rapaltu* could not possibly occur except in a cuneiform text dating from the time of the Khammurabi dynasty, for at that period alone do we find the variants *Ammu-rabi* and *Ammi-rabi* side by side with *Khammu-rabi*. That the second element *rabi* was actually regarded, in Khammurabi's time, as an ideogram equivalent to *rapaltu* is evident from the Babylonian form *Eki-rapaltu* with which the variants of later times, *Kimtu-rapashtu* and *Khummu-rapaltu* are connected." Another explanation is proposed by Dr. Lindl. He believes it to stand for *Ammirabi-ilu*, "Khammurabi the god." "We know," says Professor Sayce, who accepts this explanation, "that many of the early Semitic kings of Babylonia were deified like the Pharaohs of Egypt." †

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\* Page 139. † Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology, xx. 75.

The critics have fully realised what these confirmations mean. Their entire theory of the Old Testament Scripture is at stake; for, if we have here an actual glimpse of the time, then Genesis is history and not the bundle of myths and fictions which they declare it to be. They have accordingly made the most strenuous efforts to discredit the discovery of the names of Chedorlaomer and his allies. In view of the misrepresentations which have appeared on this subject, I here reproduce a popular account of his discovery which Mr. Pinches published in *Knowledge*, in 1876. It is entitled:—"Babylonia and Elam four thousand years ago."

"The cuneiform inscriptions of Babylonia and Assyria have thrown a flood of light upon the history of the countries in which they were written. That they would do so was to be expected; but they also incidentally restore the history of the nations around, and one of the powers of which their records constantly speak is Elam. Thus, one of the important facts of the early history of Babylonia and Elam is that related by King Assur-banî-apli, of Assyria, who tells us that 1532 or 1632 years before his time (= 2180 or 2280 B.C.), Kudurnankhundi, King of Elam, invaded Akkad or Babylonia, and carried off from Erech the image of the goddess Nanâ; and contemporary documents furnish us with the names of Simti-silkhak and Kudur-Mabug, his son, Elamite kings who reigned in Babylon, probably at a somewhat later date. For other periods native records furnish some data, and the Babylonian Chronicle

and Assur-banî-apli's history of his reign are of great value. Though the gaps are many, it must be admitted that satisfactory progress in restoring the lost history of Elam has been made.

"No inscription, however, had revealed to the explorer in the realms of Assyriology the name of Chedorlaomer, of Genesis xiv. Kudur-Nankhundi and Kudur-Mabug had been found, but Kudur-Lagamar (or Lagamal), which would have been the Babylonian form of Chedorlaomer, was wanting. Not only was this royal name lacking, but those of Tidal and Amraphel, his companions, were absent too. The name of Arioch alone, of the four allied kings who went against Sodom, had been recognized in the inscriptions.

"Yet Chedorlaomer, Tidal, and Amraphel were important rulers—powerful in the extreme, to come so far (all the way from Elam and Babylonia) to the valley of the Jordan, to defeat and subjugate again the nations of the district, which had rebelled against them. Was the story true, or merely a romance? Why did these names not occur in the extensive literature of Babylonia and Assyria?

"It would probably be a difficult matter, even now, to answer all the possible questions that a well-armed critic might put; but we can at least say one thing, and that is that we are in a better position to answer them than we were a short time ago.

"It came about in a very simple manner. Being on the look-out for historical texts, the writer chanced upon one of more than ordinary difficulty, which he

decided to copy. It was a tablet of a late date, probably of about 350 B.C., and it was very mutilated; but one name shone out with an attractive clearness, namely, that of 'Tudkhula, son of Gazza—.'\* Now, any Assyriologist would have had the thought that immediately occurred to the writer: Can this be the Tidal† of the Hebrews? The consonants all corresponded—it was the vowels alone that differed; but even these did not differ more than those of Tukulti-apilêsarra do from the Hebrew (and Aramaic) form of the name Tiglath-pileser. Proceeding, therefore, hopefully, there were found on the same tablet the names Eri-[E]aku, probably Arioeh, and Kudur-lakhmal, a name mentioned in close connection with Elammat or Elam, and therefore possibly Chedorlaomer.

“It is true that there was not much to be learned from the fragment, but it proved to be, in any case, a text of the greatest importance. There is the usual number of references to killing which are to be found in the records of those ancient nations. Besides this, however, we learn that the son of Eri-[E]aku was called Dur-makh-îlâni, that some place was spoiled, and that (apparently) a flood invaded Babylon (or Babylonia) and the great temple called Êsaggil (or Saggil) within the renowned capital. Then there is a statement to the effect that ‘the old man and the child [were slain] with the sword,’ and executions took place. Two lines after the mention of Tudkhula

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\* The complete form of this name was, possibly, *Gazzani*.

† Properly, this name should be transcribed Tid'al, for a more ancient Tidghal. The Greek gives Thargal, a mistake for Tbadgal.

(or Tidal), son of Gazza—, it is stated that ‘his son (Gazza—’s, Tidal’s, or another’s) fell upon him with the weapon of his hand,’ and then ‘his dominion (?) [was proclaimed?] before the temple (of the goddess) Annunit.’

“Whether in consequence of these high-handed proceedings or not we do not know, but ‘[the King of?] Elam spoiled the city Akhkhelal (?) and the land of Rabbat,’ rendering [the land] ‘like heaps of ruins,’ and capturing, in all probability, ‘the fortress of Akkad and the whole of Borsippa (?);’ after which ‘Kudur-lakhmal, his son (probably the son of the King of Elam), pierced (?) his heart with the steel sword of his girdle,’ and afterwards it is to be supposed, took the throne and captured his enemy.”

“The discovery of another tablet which followed shed some light on the names, but did not give a very satisfactory sense. It referred, however, to the above-named Elamite prince, and seemed to state distinctly that he became King of Babylon:—

“[The gods?] in their faithful council cared for Kudur-Lakhgumal, King of Ela[m]. He descended, and the thing that unto them was good [he performed?], and he exercised sovereignty in Babylon, the city of Kar-Dunias (= Babylonia).”

“This passage gives an extra syllable to the name (Kudur-lakhguma for Kudur-lakhmal), bringing it one degree closer to the Hebrew Chedorlaomer (Greek Chodollogomor), and rendering it probable that it is the same king. Of real history, however, this second fragment does not give much, partly on

account of its imperfect state: but it refers to Durmakh-ilani, whose father's name is called Eri-Ekua (a variant for Eri-Eaku, or Arioch, which the first text gives), and to certain letters which passed, in which he seems to emphasize his superior right to the throne of Babylonia (over that of Kudur-lakhgumal).

“It was gratifying to find this second tablet, notwithstanding the imperfect nature of the text. The present writer then, with a view to rendering his translation as complete as possible by reference to other texts, proceeded to look through his copies for references to words, names, &c., and was agreeably surprised to find on another tablet the name Kudur-lakhgu—, who was called ‘the Elamite.’ The completion of this as Kudur-lakhgumal was, as may be imagined, the most natural thing possible, and an examination of this third inscription gave some very interesting items of ancient history.

“It is a text divided into paragraphs, and is written in poetical style, resembling, in some things, that of the Creation tablets, which are undoubtedly very ancient as to their composition. This new text, where it begins to be complete, speaks of someone (probably the Elamite whose doings form the subject of the tablet) who descended to Du-makh (‘the supreme seat’) like *Ura la gamil* (‘the unsparing pestilence’), and he saw there the temple, and spoke with the children (probably the officials) therein. He then sent a message to all his warriors, (saying) ‘Carry off the spoil of the temple, take also its goods, take away its image, break down its enclosing

wall.' 'Against the god Ennun-dagalla' ('the guardian of the broad place') 'the enemy pressed forward evilly.' The god, clothed with light before him, flashed like lightning, and 'the enemy was afraid.' Nevertheless, he gave instructions to take the crowns of the god, and to 'seize his hands' (probably instructions to carry the image out of the temple)—'he did not fear, he did not regard his life,' but, notwithstanding this, 'he did not remove his crowns.' This practically closes the obverse, the sense of the remaining lines being doubtful in consequence of the mutilation of the text.

"The reverse, which is divided into short paragraphs, continues the narrative after a gap which is probably considerable. The first complete lines tell us that 'The enemy, the Elamite, devised evil, and the god Bel devised evil against Babylon.' After referring again to the temple, the tablet says: 'The enemy, the Elamite, took its goods——, the god Bel had displeasure towards his sanctuary (?).' After several lines in the same strain, in which the unfavourable attitude of the heavenly powers and the elements (*e.g.*, 'storm and evil wind went round in the heavens') is referred to, a paragraph occurs in which the question is asked, 'Who is Kudur-lakhgumal, the maker of the evils? He has gathered the barbarians . . . . the people (?) of the god Bel, he has laid in ruin . . . . by their side.' 'He se[t his face to go] down to the land of Tiamtu' (probably by the Persian Gulf), then ruled, apparently, by a prince named Ide-Tutu. The writer of the tablet,

however, again goes back to the misfortunes of the temples, &c., of his beloved country : ‘ [The enemy], the Elamite, directed his yoke and set his face (to go) down to Borsippa. . . . The princes he subjugated with the sword, he carried off the spoil of the temples, he took away and carried off to Elam their goods.’

“Such is, in short, the contents of these three interesting and remarkable, though mutilated, Babylonian texts. They lose much value by their imperfection—indeed, were they perfect they would probably present no difficulties to the historian, and but few to the translator. Badly preserved as they are, however, it is a matter of great satisfaction that time has spared them to us, for they throw light on a dark period, and one of great interest. Whether Kudur-lakhgumal (better transcribed, perhaps, Kudur-laghgumal) be really Chodollogomor or Chedorlaomer, and Eri-Eaku Arioch, time alone can decide ; but the fact that the three names so closely resembling Chedorlaomer, Tidal, and Arioch all occur on the same tablet is, of itself, a great argument in favour of the identifications that have been proposed. That Kudur-lakhgumal, King of Elam, is the enemy, not the ally, of the King of Babylonia, is probably due to a change in the feelings and policy of the two rulers, and presents no difficulty, as far as our knowledge at present goes. In whatever manner, however, time may compel the student to regard the events these tablets refer to, there can be no doubt as to their real importance. The absence of any reference

to an expedition to the valley of the Jordan is probably due to the mutilation of these clay records (one baked, perhaps by the Arabs who found it, and the other two unbaked), but may be due to the fact that they are written exclusively from a Babylonian point of view. They testify, as do other texts, Babylonian and Hebrew, to the power of Elam at a period which Babylonian chronology fixes at rather more than four thousand years ago."

As the controversy, which this discovery has excited, sheds light upon the jesuitry of the higher criticism, I venture to draw the attention of my readers to some of the facts. The story of these tablets had to force its way to the general public through determined opposition. In concluding his more elaborate communication to the Victoria Institute,\* Mr. Pinches said: "The author has not thought it necessary to reply specifically to the various criticisms that have been made, the critics having commented upon the texts without taking into consideration all the facts, even when they knew them, and he could, he thinks, place his finger upon at least one case of deliberate suppression. These critics it would be absolutely impossible to convert, even if the author had any desire to do so." † These words, which have no parallel in any of Mr. Pinches' communications—communications that are very specially marked by modesty and courteousness—tell their own tale. The opposition has since resorted to practices which I shall not characterise. *The Exposi-*

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\* *Journal of Transactions*, Vol. xxix., pp. 43-90. † Page 81.

*tory Times*, which was started with the object of popularising the findings of the higher criticism in this country and in America, and of gaining for them an acknowledged place in the Scottish Churches, has made itself particularly prominent in this attempt to stamp upon the torch of truth.

Mr. Parke B. Flourney, writing in *The Presbyterian Quarterly*, says: "It is not strange, then, that the reality of the discovery should have been hotly disputed, and that the claim that the names in Gen. xiv., had been found on the tablets, should have elicited angry denial and sarcastic criticism. There seems to have been much of this sort of comment in England, and *The Expository Times*, reprinted in this country, (that is, in America) takes up the strain.

"The lecture of Mr. Theophilus Pinches, of the British Museum, before the Victoria Institute, January 20th, 1896, announcing the probable discovery of these four names on Babylonian tablets, was published in *The Journal of Transactions* of that Society for 1897, and *The Expository Times*, endorsing a critique of *The Church Times*, speaks of the lecture as follows:—"Mr. Pinches practically surrenders the whole case, for he says, "I now come to what many will probably regard as the most interesting part of my lecture, namely, the tablets which seem to refer to Arioch, Tidal, and Chedorlaomer." At the word "seem" you find a reference to a note at the foot of the page. The note is this:—"At this stage I purposely say 'seem to refer,' and I wish it to be noticed that I have never spoken of these names

without a note of interrogation, though this was probably an excess of caution." But he continues, and says:—"With such imperfect texts as these, dogmatising is impossible, and the author disclaims any such intention. It is quite indifferent to him whether it . . . be Chedorlaomer, Arioch, and Tidal respectively—they may be entirely different personages, but if they are not what they seem to be, it is a remarkable historical coincidence, and deserves recognition as such." "That," says *The Church Times*, "is not the way men talk when they have made an important discovery." And it adds:—"After this, its advocates can do no less than give their dead tablet a decent and honourable burial."—*Expository Times* for June, 1898.

"The writer of this editorial stops quoting Mr. Pinches' foot-note just at the point to serve his evident, though perhaps unconscious, purpose to discredit the evidence adduced later on, and to make it appear that the lecturer 'practically surrenders the whole case.' This is plain when the reader is told that the rest of the foot-note reads:—

"My audience will be able to judge whether three names so similar to those in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis are, or are not, those of the personages mentioned in that chapter. I do not ask them, however, to express an opinion as to the magnitude or strangeness of the coincidence if they should decide that the names given by the tablets are not those of Arioch and his allies. The other Assyriologists are now adopting the views regarding these names held

by Professor Sayce, Professor Hommel, and myself.'

"This, while modest as becomes true scientific investigation, making no dogmatic deliverance before the evidence is in, is surely no 'surrender of the whole case,' either practical or theoretical.

"One does not like to charge the Editor of so very scholarly a periodical as *The Expository Times* with garbling and intentional *suppressio veri*, and prefers what seems the only alternative supposition—that such is his devotion to an adopted theory, that he is absolutely blind to all facts that militate against it. There is a great deal of our poor, common, human nature even in specialists of the most remarkable attainments.

"Whatever may be the explanation, when one has before him the complete lecture with the facsimiles of the tablets, the lecturer's transcription of the words of them in ordinary letters, his translation of them, and his notes upon them, his impression is precisely the opposite of that which he would gain from extracts from *The Expository Times*.

"The lecturer's view of the matter may be seen quite clearly, whatever disclaimers he may make of an intention to dogmatise, from such words as these: 'It is in the highest degree unlikely that tablets containing the names of Tidal and others closely resembling Arioch and Chedorlaomer, the last being designated "king of Elam" and "the Elamite," should not, after all, refer to these personages.'"

The pressure, before which the fairness, we might say the honesty, of the critical party has given way,

may be estimated by the following from the same writer:—"The improbability of such an invasion, at this time, has been asserted by Wellhausen to amount to a certainty that it *did* not, because it *could* not, occur, and he has spoken in the most scornful terms of the historical character of the account in Genesis xiv., asserting that 'all these incidents are sheer impossibilities.'" These facts, if admitted, would break their faith in their leader, just as they will ultimately break the faith of the public in themselves. And the reading of these names upon the tablets—a reading which proves Genesis xiv. to be history—still stands. In a letter to myself, dated April 6th, 1900, Mr. Pinches writes:—"My belief still is, that the texts I have published refer to the Tidal, Arioch, and Chedorlaomer of the Bible. Whether I am right or not must necessarily be a matter of opinion. Here we have a name which can only be read Tud-hula, the consonants of which, in accordance with the laws of sound-change governing the transcription of words in Assyro-Babylonian and Hebrew, are practically what we should expect to find represented by Tid'al in Hebrew; a name given in the two forms, Eri-Eaku and Eri-Ekua (the latter apparently due to a mistake of the scribe, who has misplaced the *a*), both of which represent, or rather, reproduce very well the Arioch of Genesis; and a fancifully-written name, the first two characters of which, according to analogy, ought to be read *Ku-dur* (recognised many years ago as the Babylonian form of Chedor), the third may be pronounced *lah*,

the fourth *gu* (omitted in one copy), and the last *mal*. This name is pervaded, naturally, with the uncertainty which must necessarily attend names written in a polyphonous script, but the reading that I have proposed must be regarded as the best suggestion for its pronunciation that can possibly be made. In addition to, and quite apart from the above considerations, however, is the fact, that he is called 'king of Elam,' and that two of the tablets which mention him do so in connection with Eri-Eaku or Eri-Ekua, and one of the two speaks also of Tud-hula. It is as if it were contended that a piece of an old newspaper mentioning Wellington or Wellingtone, Blüchere,\* and Napo \* \* n, Emperor of the French, did not refer to Wellington, Blücher, and Napoleon I. at all. Whilst we do not possess any confirmatory document, doubt will always exist concerning the names I have referred to, but as to the strength of the presumptive evidence, everyone can judge for himself. The extremely defaced condition of one of the documents does not affect the fact that it contains all three names, and that the characters of those three names are absolutely certain."

The defeat of Chedorlaomer in Syria seems to throw light on the events referred to in the inscriptions of Khammurabi. The power of the Elamitic monarch was shaken, and a rebellion of the Semitic monarch and of the other sovereigns whom Chedorlaomer had subjected, was the consequence. It

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\* I have purposely altered these names to furnish an analogy with the changes of form in the Babylonian texts.

seems to have fared hard with the rebellion at the outset, as Chedorlaomer over-ran Babylonia and, possibly, almost captured Khammurabi himself. But it was the last spring of the expiring lion. Chedorlaomer had been too severely smitten to recover. The Elamitic forces were beaten back, and Elam was subjected to devastation in its turn.

I may mention that recent research has added two other confirmations to the 14th of Genesis. "The name," writes Sayce, "even of one of the Canaanite kings who were subdued by the Babylonian army, has found its confirmation in a cuneiform inscription. This is the name of 'Shinab, king of Admah.' We hear from Tiglath-Pileser III. of Sanibu, king of Ammon, and Sanibu and Shinab are one and the same. The old name of the king of Admah was thus perpetuated on the eastern side of the Jordan."\* In a letter which is published at the conclusion of Mr. Pinches' Paper, Professor Sayce says that light has also been shed upon Tidal's title, "king of nations," which is given in Genesis. One of the tablets deciphered by Mr. Pinches states that Chedorlaomer "assembled the Umman-Manda," or nomad hordes of the east when he "did evil" to the people and land of Bel. He adds:—"The Biblical Goyyim, 'nations' would be the Hebrew equivalent of the Babylonian Umman-Manda; and in Tidal, therefore, I see a king of the nomad hordes who adjoined Elam on the north. This throws light upon a passage in the great Babylonian work on

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\* *Patriarchal Palestine*, p. 70.

astronomy which runs as follows:—‘The Umman-Manda come and rule the land; the mercy-seats of the great gods are removed; Bel goes to Elam. It is prophesied that after thirty years the vanquished (?) shall be restored, and that the great gods shall return with them.’ As Kudur-Lagamar was king of Elam, we can understand why the consequence of the incursion of the Umman-Manda was *that they should go to Elam*. I may add that the texts discovered by Mr. Pinches seem to be oracles addressed to the Babylonian King Khammurabi.”

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## CHAPTER XI.

### ABRAHAM AND MELCHIZEDEK.

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AS Abraham returns with the spoil taken from the Babylonian army an incident occurs, the story of which has always deeply impressed the reader of Genesis. Abraham is now in the near neighbourhood of the district from which a large part of the captives and of the spoil had been taken—Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain. He had come “to the valley of Shaveh, which is the king’s dale” (Genesis xiv. 17). We are enabled to fix this locality with great probability, if not with absolute certainty. We learn from II. Samuel xviii. 18, that Absalom reared for himself in the same place a pillar, which was evidently intended to adorn his tomb. Josephus, the Jewish historian, refers to this pillar of Absalom’s,

and says that it was about a quarter of a mile from Jerusalem. This appears to show that "the king's dale" was the valley of the Upper Kidron.

In any case, Abraham was now close upon the home land of the numerous captives who had been delivered along with Lot and his family. Abraham's way to Hebron lay past Jerusalem; and, probably, not wishing to turn aside, or to be unnecessarily detained, he had sent messengers to Sodom to tell the survivors of his approach, and of the safety of their friends. We can imagine the astonishment and the enthusiasm with which the news was received. The king, who had returned to his desolate city, hastens to meet the conqueror. He strikes in upon the road along which Abraham must proceed on his way to the south, and encounters him, as the Scripture tells us, in the king's dale. But just here there is a peculiar break in the narrative. Verse 17 speaks of the king's arrival; but nothing whatever is said of any conversation between him and Abraham. As we study the narrative we see plain indications of a dramatic interruption. Before the king of Sodom can present his felicitations, another arrival attracts every eye. It is that of the priest-king of Salem, with a train of servants who carry with them bread and wine for the refreshment of Abraham and his companions. All give way before the servant of God. Even the king of Sodom takes for the moment a secondary place, and becomes one of those who look and listen. What follows helps us to understand how he commands this universal deference. He is

plainly a man worthy of his great position. He says nothing of himself, and he repeats none of the flattering compliments which are now being showered upon the shepherd-hero in abundance. Abraham and all who hear are lifted up into the presence of God. "And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the Most High God, who hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand." And Abraham accepts him as God's representative, and hands over to him the portion which belongs to God. "And he gave him tithes of all"—that is, of the flocks and the herds and of all the spoil.

This passage has been surrounded with difficulty both for Jew and Gentile. To begin with, there was trouble about the place. No one could say with confidence that "Salem" was part of the name "Jerusalem," or that "Jerusalem," as a name for David's city, was not of a date long after the time of Abraham. It was contended, too, that the scene of the transaction was far removed from Zion. Dean Stanley maintained "that there is every probability that Gerizim, and not Jerusalem, is the scene" of the meeting.\* Then others asserted, still more confidently, that there had been no meeting at all. "The critic," writes Professor Sayce, "has made his own ignorance the measure of the credibility of an ancient document. The earlier history of Jerusalem before the Israelitish conquest was unknown; the story of the priest-king Melchizedek stood alone,

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\* *Syria and Palestine*, pp. 249, 250.

unsupported by any fragment of antiquity that had come down to us; and accordingly it was asserted to be unhistorical.”\* “Whatever lingering scruples the critic might have felt about rejecting the historical character of the first half of the fourteenth chapter of Genesis, he felt none at all as to the second half of it. Melchizedek, ‘king of Salem,’ and ‘priest of the Most High God,’ appeared to be altogether a creature of mythology.” †

But even for believers, who accepted the narrative unhesitatingly, there were difficulties. How can we account for the deep reverence with which the Canaanitish priest-king is received? A large number of the Rabbins believed him to be the patriarch Shem. The Targum (that is, the paraphrase and commentary) of Jonathan says:—“But Melchizedek, he is Shem, the son of Noah, king of Jerusalem.” The Jerusalem Targum expresses the same opinion in words which are almost identical:—“But Melchizedek, king of Jerusalem, he is Shem, who was the great priest of the Most High.” This belief, even if it could be maintained, would be quite opposed to the statements of Scripture. The superiority of this priesthood over that of Aaron is said to be shown in the fact that Abraham, and therefore Levi in Abraham, paid tithes to Melchizedek. But if Shem were Melchizedek, it might be said, seeing that Shem was the father of Abraham, and also of Levi, that Levi in Shem *received* tithes.

Christian scholars have shown equal disregard of

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\* *The Higher Criticism and the Monuments*, p. 16. † *Ibid*, p. 74.

probability. Some of them have identified him with the patriarch Ham; another, strangely enough, believed him to be Enoch, returned to earth for the occasion. Others have concluded him to be an angel, a man specially created to hold this office, or the Lord Jesus. We need not argue as to these identifications, for all are equally without foundation. The only one on which a word may be said is the last which identifies Melchizedek with Christ; and even here it is enough to say that, when the Scripture speaks of him as a type of Christ, it plainly implies that he is not identical with our Lord. The person typified cannot be his own type any more than a man can be his own portrait.

These references of the Scripture show the importance of the recent discovery which shed so unexpected a light upon this matter. The first of these references is in Psalm cx. David sees in vision one seated at God's right hand upon the throne of the universe. In Jehovah's own presence the Psalmist, inspired by the Spirit, hails this personage as "Lord," thus paying Him Divine honours. It is the installation of the ascended Redeemer; and in this supreme moment that old incident in Abram's story is suddenly invested with the highest interest. The dignity with which the Lord is now invested finds its explanation there. "Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (verse 4). The only other reference is equally suggestive and important. The significance of the type is enlarged upon in words which

seemed to invest this bit of the patriarchal history with additional mystery. "For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him ; to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all ; first being by interpretation king of righteousness, and after that also king of Salem, which is, king of peace ; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life : but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually" (Heb. vii. 1-3).

Leaving these statements for the present, let us come to the discovery which has lifted the veil from the past, and brought us, in a measure, face to face with what Abraham beheld. In the south of Egypt there are the ruins of an ancient city, the only ruins in that land which present us with the recognisable remains of houses, and which give us any idea of their internal arrangements. The unusual preservation of the city is due to its having been built by a heretical king, and being completely abandoned when his son died, and when the heretical stain was wiped away from the Egyptian throne. The place was, no doubt, regarded as lying under a curse, and was largely left undisturbed. Some years ago a peasant woman, searching in the mounds for curios to sell to European travellers, picked up some small bricks, which were covered over with fine writing of a most unusual kind. She had come upon "The place of the records of the palace of the king," as it is called upon the bricks themselves. The news spread

among her friends, who visited the place and secured additional tablets. "These," says Professor Petrie, "were shown to dealers; they sent some to Dr. Oppert in Paris, who pronounced them to be forgeries; others were sent to M. Grebaut, then head of the Department of Antiquities, and were treated by him with customary silence. At last, when they were supposed to be almost worthless, a quantity were carried in sacks to Luqсор to hawk about among the dealers there, and these were largely ground to pieces on the way. What has been preserved, therefore, is but a wreck of what might have been, had any person equal to the occasion placed his hand upon them in time. The tablets thus reaching the dealer's hands became known, and were bought up mainly for the British Museum and for the Berlin Museum."\*

These tablets held the key to our difficulties, contained the solution of Dean Stanley's geographical problem, and brought with them an overwhelming demonstration that here again rationalism had spoken to its own confusion. When they were really examined, the enormous value of those bricks was immediately recognised. They shed light upon a time and upon a quarter of the globe where, but for Bible references, all was in profound darkness. These were mainly letters from Palestine which had been sent to the Pharaohs Amenophis III. and Amenophis IV., about the time of the Exodus. What no doubt led Professor Oppert to pronounce

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\* *Syria and Egypt from the Tel el Amarna Tablets*, p. 2.

them forgeries was the fact that, although found in Egypt, and sent from Palestine to Egyptian kings, they were written in Babylonian. This was one of the startling results of the discovery; for it showed that the supremacy of Babylonia had been so firmly and so long established in the west, that the Babylonian writing and language had become—even for Egypt—the medium of diplomacy and of universal intercourse. It was the “*lingua Franca*” of the time.

But for the student of the Bible there were surprises equally great. At the time of the Exodus, *Egypt possessed the land of promise*, and the tablets are the official correspondence of the princes of Palestine with their Egyptian master. Not only did the Egyptians hold the Israelites in bondage, but they also held that land which was their destined possession. This fact has a significance which we shall have to note by and by when we come to speak of Israel in Egypt and its mighty deliverance. We shall confine ourselves now to the light shed upon this part of Abraham’s history. Among the letters are some from Melchizedek’s successor! His name is written, as usual, in characters which were pronounced in several ways. This has led to various renderings. Professor Sayce gives the name as Ebed-Tob, “the servant of the Good One.” Others as Abedkhiba; Colonel Conder believes that the name should be read Adonizedek, and he identifies him with the king of Jerusalem mentioned in the Book of Joshua.

Whether this identification can be maintained

time will show. But when we turn to his letters we find light shed upon one of the dark places in the Epistle to the Hebrews. I refer to the statement that Melchizedek was without father and without mother. These words have almost always been understood to be explained by those which follow immediately—"without descent,"—that is, without genealogy, his position not having been obtained through his descent from one who had previously held it. This interpretation is now verified, for the very same phrase is found in Ebed-Tob's letters. Here are three passages from his correspondence in which this very phrase is found. I give Hommel's translation. "Lo, in so far as I am concerned, it was not my father who installed me in this place, nor my mother, but the arm of the Mighty King has allowed me to enter into my ancestral house." In another letter he writes:—"Lo, in regard to the region of this city of Jerusalem, it was not my father, not my mother who gave it me, but the arm of the Mighty King gave it to me." A third letter has the following passage:—"Lo, I am no Prefect (that is, no Egyptian viceroy), but a Friend of the king's, and one who brings offerings to the king am I; it was not my father, it was not my mother, but the arm of the Mighty King that placed me in my ancestral house."

Both Hommel and Sayce are clear that "the Mighty King" referred to by Ebed-Tob is no earthly monarch, but the Deity to whom he owes his position and whom he serves. The reader will recall the words used by Melchizedek in speaking of the Lord,

whose blessing he invokes upon Abraham. "And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth" (Genesis xiv. 19). The conception of the Divine authority is the same. God is the only Possessor, the holder of all power, the one ruler of heaven and earth. It is abundantly plain also from the correspondence that Jerusalem was at this time a most important city, and a strong fortress. It also appears that the rule of its possessor extended over a wide district. "Ebed-Tob," says Professor Sayce, "describes himself as repairing the roads in that very 'Kikkar,' or 'plain' in which Sodom and Gomorrah stood. It would seem, then, that the priest-king of the great fortress in the mountains was already acknowledged as the dominant Canaanitish ruler, and that the neighbouring princes had to pay him homage when they first received the crown. This would be an additional reason for the tithes given him by Abraham."\*

The name also which is given to the city in Genesis was absolutely accurate, and is another indication of an acquaintance with the Palestine of the age of Abraham entirely irreconcilable with the contentions of Dr. Driver and his fellow-critics. "The origin of the name of Jerusalem," says Professor Sayce, "is now cleared up. It is no invention of the age of David; on the contrary, it goes back to the period of Babylonian intercourse with Canaan. It is written in the cuneiform documents Uru-Salim, 'the city of

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\* *Patriarchal Palestine*, p. 76.

Salim,' the god of peace. One of the lexical tablets from the library of Nineveh has long ago informed us that, in one of the languages known to the Babylonians, *uru* was the equivalent of the Babylonian *alu*, 'a city,' and we now know that this language was that of Canaan. It would even seem that the word had originally been brought from Babylonia itself in the days when Babylonian writing and culture first penetrated to the West. In the Sumerian or pre-Semitic language of Chaldea *eri* signified a 'city,' and *eri*, in the pronunciation of the Semites, became *uru* . . . . We can now understand why Melchizedek should have been called the 'king of Salem.' His capital could be described either as Jeru-Salem or as the city of Salem. And that it was often referred to as Salem simply is shown by the Egyptian monuments. One of the cities of Southern Palestine, the capture of which is represented by Ramses II. on the walls of the Ramesseum at Thebes, is Shalam or Salem, and 'the district of Salem' is mentioned between 'the country of Hadashah' (Joshua xv. 37), and 'the district of the Dead Sea,' and 'the Jordan' in the list of places which Ramses III. at Medînet Habu describes himself as having conquered in the same part of the world."\*

This unexpected glimpse into the remote and long forgotten past shows once more the absolute accuracy of the Bible. Its every word, the turn of its seemingly least considered phrase, is like the touch of

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\* *Ibid*, pp. 73, 74.

light that sets before our eyes the path or the object as it actually is. The Bible does not so much give us description as personal contact with the past of which it speaks. There are many qualities which distinguish it from all other literature; but this is among the most marked and wonderful of them all. The Bible is not literature: it is revelation. It is not merely a record of the past cast in the mould of some man's thought, or a dull echo of it coming down through the muffling or jarring noises of later times. It opens the gates which God alone can unlock; we pass through, and we are among the things, and we mingle with the men, of a time long since vanished, but who were once as real as the men and the things of to-day.

In concluding this reference to the priest-king of Jerusalem, a question will present itself to most. There were many things in the life of Abraham which find no record in the Scripture. There must have been incidents, even in this expedition, which form no part of the history. *Why, then, was this recorded?* As we have already seen, there is one reference to it besides in the Old Testament, and only one. In the 110th Psalm, Jehovah swears to Him whom David describes in the words, "My Lord:" "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." The picture placed in Genesis is thus taken in the Psalm as a prophecy of another Priest-King, before whom Abraham and his seed are to bow, and to whom they will present the things that are due to God. The marvels of this type are

still further displayed when we note that Melchizedek offers no sacrifice. Hundreds of oxen are lowing and thousands of sheep are bleating; but neither from flock nor from herd is a single animal taken and placed upon God's altar. When, therefore, God declares: "Thou art a priest for ever AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK," it is implied that the work of the sacrificing priesthood—the priesthood of Aaron—is ended, and a new priesthood introduced *which offers no sacrifice*. Could there possibly have been a more strikingly true description of Him, who, having put away sin by one sacrifice for ever, is our Priest and King? By what kind of chance did that get fixed into the framework of Abraham's story in Genesis, and whence comes this finger in Psalm cx. that points back to it as the portrait of One who does not appear till long centuries have passed and the fulness of the times has come? Will any theory of development, or any theory that teaches or implies that the Bible is of merely human origin, give an explanation of these facts in which any honest mind can rest?

And even this is not the whole. The service which Melchizedek renders has other striking resemblances to the ministry of our abiding High Priest. Every reader has noted the statement that Melchizedek met Abraham with "bread and wine." It may be said that there was nothing extraordinary in that; and that bread and wine formed the ordinary food of the country; and that though it is striking to find them so prominently mentioned here, it would be a

manifest straining of the Scripture to suppose that there was any reference here to the Lord's Supper. These are points which I have no inclination to argue. Let me, however, remind the reader that the statement that bread and wine were the ordinary food of the country is not quite exact. When Abraham prepared a meal for the travellers who came to him, there is no mention whatever of bread and wine; and in the Passover feast the bread and wine, though part of it, were by no means the main portion. But what everyone will feel to be the marvellous thing here is, that in this picture everything<sup>is</sup> is arranged so as to form a perfect picture of our High Priest. First of all, there is his authority. All bow to it. Then his very name and title are prophetic. He is Melchizedek, king of righteousness, and he is "king of Salem, which is, king of peace." Then he here entertains with bread and wine, the very elements with which the Lord Jesus meets His wearied servants. Shall we not say that this part of Scripture, written some fifteen hundred years before our Lord appeared, and arranging what another part of Scripture, written one thousand years before His coming declared to be His type—the picture of His office and His work—has been guided both in its speech and in its silence on this matter by the controlling influence of Him who alone can paint what lies in the distant, and to man utterly unknown, future? Whatever may be said about the bread and wine, this is a conclusion in which there is no extravagance, and to which the weight of evidence will compel any candid mind to come.

Let us now return to the singular break in the narrative which we have already noticed, and which has led Hommel, not yet fully emancipated from rationalistic traditions, to maintain that Genesis has suffered here from the meddling of some audacious editor. We are first told, as we have already noted, of the arrival of the king of Sodom, but nothing is said of any greeting between Abraham and King Bera. The narrative stops there to chronicle the arrival of Melchizedek, and it is only after the interview with him is concluded that the conversation between Abraham and Bera begins. The significance of this will be apparent if we try to realise the circumstances. Abraham was never in greater peril than he was at that moment. Hitherto the very contempt with which the men of the cities of the plain had viewed his self-controlled life had been safety to him. If that life repelled them, their contempt repelled him. But their estimate of Abraham has been revolutionised. He has become the hero of the hour. He has swept to the winds an army which had beaten the united forces of the Confederacy. Here was an opportunity upon which a heart like Abraham's might have seized with eagerness. Here was a rare chance to go down and benefit Sodom! They will now listen to him. He may emancipate them from their sins and establish them in the way of righteousness! And, just at the moment when a fatal choice might have been made, and the whole aftercourse of his life might have plunged into disappointment and deepening degrada-

tion, God's royal priest steps in and brings his spirit into God's presence. From the midst of that holy peace, and fired with holy zeal for God, he can now see things rightly, make the right decision, and give the right reply. Here once more we have the ministry of the risen Redeemer, and the break in the narrative gives it emphasis. This is just how the Lord breaks in with the feast of the bread and wine, and the blessing which brings us right into the presence and the holy love of God. The picture, marvellous in its other details, receives the perfecting touch in this. Whose hand painted it? Could it have been any other than the hand of God?

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## CHAPTER XII.

### THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM.

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LATER events showed how wisely Abraham had been guided, when he refused to have any intercourse with Sodom. The heavy chastisement, and the unlooked-for mercy by which it was so speedily followed, might have led the sinful cities to deep and abiding repentance. They might have remembered and judged their sins. A moment of national calamity is peculiarly adapted for such a review and decision. The false light of pleasure—its gaslight glare—is suddenly extinguished. Things are seen in the sober, but penetrating, light of day, and the delights of the flesh are then as unattractive

as the disordered scene of last night's feast, when the morning sun shines in. And the way in which their deliverance came might have guided erring feet. The victory and the bringing back of the captives from bondage, and possibly from death, were a wreath twined around the brow of the man of righteousness. But neither chastisement nor deliverance availed to change or, apparently, to touch the men of Sodom. The revels were resumed. The mad, degrading, rush for pleasure went on as before. And then there came a day when Mercy hid her face, and Judgment stepped in with bared sword.

The fate of the cities of the plain was foreshadowed in that marvellous interview with Abraham (Genesis xviii. 16-33), to which I have already referred. While the two angelic messengers went on towards Sodom, "Abraham stood yet before the Lord." He knew enough of Sodom and of God to dread the result of this judicial inquiry. He therefore drew near and pleaded for mercy. He based his plea upon the supposition that God would not permit the righteous to suffer with the guilty. He could not ask that Sodom's iniquities should go unpunished; but he could, and did, plead that the good should not perish with the evil, and that for their sakes the cities should be spared. To Abraham it seemed impossible that there should not be many, even in Sodom, who still feared God, and who trembled at the things which they saw and heard. Fifty, at least, would surely be found among the multitudes within the city. And so he said: "Peradventure there be

fifty righteous within the city : wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein ?” He was heard in that request ; and, still trembling for those who were troubled by no concern for themselves, he interceded again and again until the number of hostages for Sodom’s safety was reduced in succession to forty-five, forty, thirty, twenty, and ten.

But, alas ! there were not even ten righteous persons left in Sodom. Abraham was up with the dawn and hurried to the place of yesterday’s interview, “and he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace” (Genesis xix. 28). The judgment had fallen ; for “the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven ; and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground” (verses 24, 25). Referring to the words, “brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven,” Prof. Sayce writes : “The expression is found in the cuneiform tablets of Babylonia. Old Sumerian hymns spoke of ‘a rain of stones and fire,’ though the stones may have been hail-stones and thunder-bolts, and the fire the flash of lightning. But whatever may have been the nature of the sheet of flame which enveloped the guilty cities of the plain, and set on fire the naphtha-springs that oozed out of it, the remembrance of the catastrophe survived to distant ages. The prophets of Israel and Judah

still refer to the overthrow of Sodom and its sister cities, and St. Jude points to them as 'suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.'"\*

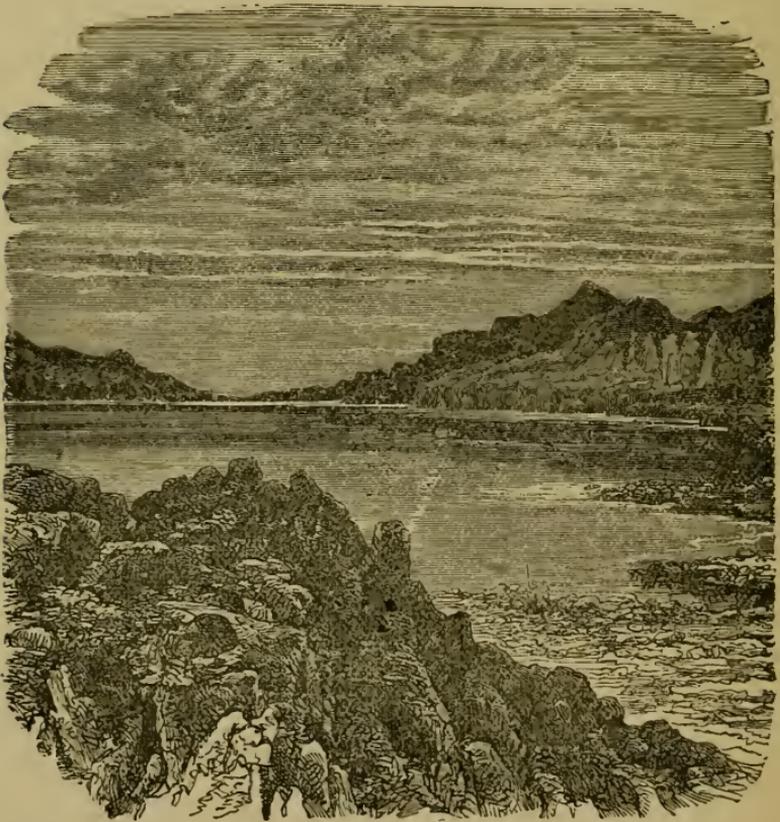
Recent research has something to tell us regarding this event of which no clear account exists outside the Scriptures. But it is necessary, first of all, to clear away some misconceptions which have no foundation in Bible statements. It has been taken for granted for ages that the remains of the cities lie buried beneath the waters of the Dead Sea; that the judgment was accompanied by an earthquake and a tremendous subsidence; that the southward course of the river Jordan was broken; and that the waters filled the terrific chasm which was thus created, and formed what has since been called the Salt Sea, or the Dead Sea. But there is not a single hint of all this in the narrative. The narrative is, indeed, plainly opposed to it. How could Lot and his daughters have dwelt at Zoar, or have afterwards fled to the mountains, had such a terrible upheaval taken place?

What has, no doubt, led to the error has been a hasty inference from Genesis xiv. 3, which reads: "All these were joined together in the vale of Siddim, which is the Salt Sea." This plainly indicates that the battle-field was afterwards submerged, a statement which we shall immediately see is in accord with the geological indications. But the field of battle would be at some distance from the cities, as the battle-field was chosen to prevent Chedorlaomer's

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\* *Patriarchal Palestine*, p. 177.

threatened inroad. But, as Reland long ago, and again in our own times, De Saulcy, the distinguished Orientalist (to whom the honour of the re-discovery of the ruins of Sodom belongs), have pointed out, the belief that the cities themselves were submerged is



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distinctly opposed to the statements of the Scripture and to the testimony of Josephus and of other writers. Referring to the words (Genesis xiv. 3) which I have just quoted, Reland says: "There is but one thing

stated here, that the valley which was formerly called the valley of Siddim, became afterwards the Dead Sea, a fact which I do not mean to controvert. Indeed this valley may have been flooded by the waters forming this sea, either in consequence of an increase of the Jordan, or of the gushing out of subterranean or other springs; but as no one knows when or how this happened, nothing is gained by dwelling on the point. The inspired writer does not say that the five cities, Sodom and the rest, were situated in the valley of Siddim; on the contrary, the text quoted leads to an opposite conclusion; that the kings of these five cities, after having collected their armies, joined together *VERSUS VALLEM SIDDIM, towards the valley of Siddim*. Supposing the translation to be *IN THE VALLEY*, the meaning is still the same. The probability is, then, that the valley of Siddim was quite distinct from the country in which the five cities were situated. For instance, is there any man who would think of saying: the inhabitants of Amsterdam, of Haarlem, and of Leyden have marched against the enemy and have joined together in Holland? No; precisely for this reason, that the towns here mentioned are all in Holland. But we might very properly say, the inhabitants of these towns have joined together on the spot where the Lake of Haarlem is now placed; and the reasonable conclusion to be drawn from that expression would be that the Lake of Haarlem is perfectly distinct from the country in which those towns are situated."

That Reland here gave the true solution of this matter will be immediately apparent. The ancient authorities, as well as the Scripture, are quite distinct in their testimony that the ruins of the destroyed cities are on the shores, and not under the waters of the Dead Sea. The ancient geographer, Strabo, who visited the East, about a quarter of a century before the commencement of the Christian era, writes as follows: "It is said that this country is burnt up by fire; evidences of this fire are traceable in certain baked and calcined mountains, in the direction of Masada; in deep rents and clefts; in a soil like ashes; in rocks distilling pitch, and in rivers of boiling water, emitting from afar off a loathsome odour. Here and there, places formerly inhabited by man, are now confused masses of ruins. It is thus easy to put faith in the tradition universally believed throughout the country, that thirteen cities formerly existed there. We are even told that ruins still exist of the metropolis, Sodom, the circumference of which extends to about sixty stadia. Earthquakes, eruptions of subterraneous fires, warm, bituminous, and sulphurous waters are said to have caused this lake to overflow its original borders; rocks have been set on fire; and at the same time these cities were either swallowed up or deserted by as many of the inhabitants as were able to escape."

Tacitus, the Roman historian, who wrote in the first century of our era, speaking of the Dead Sea, says: "Not far from this place are fields that, we are told, were formerly fertile and occupied by large

cities, but they were burnt up by thunder and lightning, and the ruins still remain upon them. It is also related that the very earth, scorched by heat, has lost all productive power." Here, as in the reference by Strabo, the territory of Sodom is spoken of as being still visible, and not a word is said about the submersion of the cities. The statements of Josephus, the Jewish priest and writer, who was a contemporary of the Apostle Paul, are quite as irreconcilable with the current belief. A very strong passage occurs in his work on the Jewish Wars. "I think if the Romans," he writes, "had delayed punishing this wicked people, the town would have been either swallowed up in the abyss, or overwhelmed under the waters, *or else* that it would have been destroyed by the fire of heaven like the land of Sodom." Here it is plainly implied that "the land of Sodom" was *not* "overwhelmed under the waters."

The Scripture references are equally clear. When, for example, we read the following in Deut. xxix. 21-23, is it possible to understand the words in any other way than as meaning that Sodom and its fellow cities were still open to observation, and were an abiding witness to the awfulness of sin? "The Lord shall separate him" (the evil-doer) "unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel . . . so that the generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the Lord hath laid upon it; and that the whole land thereof is

brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in His anger, and in His wrath." Here, again, it is plain that Sodom was open to inspection, and that it bore upon it the awful imprint of sin's judgment. Isaiah (xiii. 19-22) declares that Babylon shall be "as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there." All this implies that the ruins of Sodom and Gomorrah were accessible, but were avoided and were desolate. Jeremiah's reference (xlix. 17, 18) to the coming fate of Edom affords a still broader basis for the same inference. "Edom," he says, "shall be a desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof. As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the Lord, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it." Here Sodom and Gomorrah are represented as bearing, before the observation of every passer-by, the evident curse of the Almighty, and as being deserted and loathed.

But M. de Saulcy has done more than remind us of these ancient testimonies: he has been the first in modern times to discover the sites of the cities. For this purpose he followed an unusual route. In previously going round by the south-west, south,

and eastern shores of the Dead Sea, he came upon what seemed to him undoubted traces of the ancient cities. He now explored the northern end of the sea, proceeding along the western shore. In this district he came upon abundant traces of ancient ruins. The following brings before us some of his experiences: "Ruins are apparent everywhere, and the Arabs give them the name of Kharbet-Fechkhah. The beach keeps constantly widening, and spreads out four hundred yards on our right, when we are in front of the Ayn-Araout which flows along the edge of the reedy border. By thirty-five minutes past eight, we intersect a boundary ditch; five yards wide, evidently constructed by human labour.

"The foot of the mountain bears away from our course, which has not changed, and is now one hundred yards from the road. Almost immediately after having crossed the ditch I have just named, ruins appear again in much greater quantities, and these are unquestionably the skeleton of a large city, of which the vestiges we descried on the opposite side of the ditch formed perhaps a suburb. We have now in sight, thirty yards off on our right, a ditch lined with stones, which we follow in a parallel direction to a considerable extent. This is most probably the same boundary ditch that we crossed a moment since, and has made an elbow in the direction of the north-north-east. The portion of these ruins, through which we are now proceeding, is still called by our Arabs, Kharbet-Fechkhah. By forty-one minutes past eight we are five hundred

yards from the water's edge, and between our road and the mountain we descry the piled-up remains of a ruined tower. The border of reeds continues following the windings of the beach. Six minutes later we arrive opposite the northern extremity of a long wall; in all probability, merely the continuation of the ditch lined with stones, of which we have already encountered two considerable portions. We are now marching over the foundations of a tolerably extensive square enclosure.

“I have said that the ruins through which we are proceeding are not easily distinguished, and that it is very probable a hundred successive travellers might pass them by without the slightest idea of their existence. This remark is so feasible, that on my first warning the Abbé Michon of their presence, he laughed in my face, as much as to tell me that I was dreaming. Luckily the boundary ditch, which we had to cross, and the walls that appeared next, enabled me to make him recognise, with his own touch, what I called ruins, and which he maintained were merely heaps of stone, thrown there by chance through a freak of nature. The Abbé, who is always open to conviction, when he sees actually, surrenders at once to conclusive evidence, and as soon as he actually made out a single foundation of an ancient wall, he required no further assistance from me to recognise the spot where ancient buildings once existed, of a strange barbarous construction, characterising a period certainly contemporaneous with the catastrophe of the Pentapolis.

“By ten minutes to nine, we are three hundred yards off from the foot of the mountain, and eight hundred yards distant from the sea-shore. Just then opens to our left the Ouad-Goumran, or Oumran, in front of which project boldly two immense mounds of compact sand, strewed with large quantities of rubbish, and amongst other heaps, a very apparent square ruin particularly called the Kharbet-Fechkhak. These two mounds extend so far in front of the Ouad-Goumram, that we are obliged to oblique considerably to the right of the line we had followed without deviation, since leaving our last encampment. We, therefore, make a circuit round the bases of these two mounds, passing at a distance of twenty-five yards, and still marching through ruins. Having cleared the mounds, the flat range of country, strewed with rubbish, towards which we keep ascending, widens at the foot of the mountain, and the direction of our road is then due north. On our right, between us and the sea, a large ravined plain extends, covered with hillocks of sand.

“By five minutes past nine the mountain is two hundred yards to our left, and we are separated from it by a small hill, the foot of which is fifty yards from our road. The plain separating us from the sea is here twelve hundred yards in extent. Ruins are still visible in abundance. By six minutes past nine we ascend a small mound covered with rubbish, in the midst of which appears an avenue of upright stones, in good preservation, and we next reach the top of the opposite declivity, on the banks of a large ravine,

which forms the mouth of an ouad called the Ouad-Djoufet-Zabel. By a quarter past nine we are inclining to the north-west, over a high range of flat country, and passing through a fine avenue of stones, still accompanied to the right by a few ruins, which become more thinly scattered, until they disappear completely a few minutes later. We are then distant at least eight thousand yards from the sea-shore, and can perfectly descry the low swampy beach we followed the day before. Thirty yards off on our left a dark brown mountain rises, rent, and looking as if it had been roasted. Behind this mountain, and at the foot of the huge cliffs of the range of Canaan, runs the Ouad-Djoufet-Zabel, the mouth of which we crossed a few minutes since.

“From the head of the Ouad-Goumran, the extensive ruins which we have found on our way bear the name of Kharbet-Goumran or Oumran. Let us begin by pointing out the very strange, if merely fortuitous, analogy between this name and that of the Gomorrah destroyed by fire from heaven, along with Sodom and the other condemned cities. My own conviction is, without the slightest hesitation, that the ruins called by the Arabs Kharbet-il-Yahoud, Kharbet-Fechkhah, and Kharbet-Goumran, which form a continuous mass, extending, without interruption, over a space of more than six thousand yards, are, in reality, the ruins of the Scriptural Gomorrah. If this point is disputed—a controversy for which I am fully prepared—I beg my gainsayers will be so obliging as to tell me what city, unless

it be one contemporaneous with Gomorrah, if not Gomorrah itself, can have existed on the shores of the Dead Sea at a more recent period, without its being possible to find the slightest notice of it in either the sacred or profane writings. Until they can give me better information respecting these ruins, which are unquestionably of some importance, since they cover a space of no less than half a league (about four English miles) in extent, I must resolutely maintain my own opinion, and reply to my opponents: 'These are the ruins of Gomorrah; go and verify them on the spot, if you think it possible to maintain a different opinion from that which I now set forth.' \*

When M. de Saulcy first published his discoveries they were received with a storm of derision. His growing fame, as a distinguished Orientalist, enabled him, however, to hold his ground. Since then, "a veteran traveller in Palestine, Fr. Lievin, has visited the ruins of Sodom, which he finds as De Saulcy found them. The eminent archæologist, Clermont Ganneau, has undertaken excavations in a very ancient cemetery by Gomorrah. M. de Saulcy himself has again visited the ruins on both sites, and emphatically renews his statement to the following effect:

"North of the lake there is a mount, called by the Arabs, *Gebel Sedoum*, 'Mount of Sodom,' and below the mount, ruins called *Kharbet Sedoum*, 'Ruins of Sodom.' The Arabic exactly repeating the Hebrew name.

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\* *Journey Round the Dead Sea, &c.*, Vol. II., pp. 42-46.

“These ruins do not lie in the route by which travellers in the Holy Land are generally conducted, but they are conspicuous enough not to be overlooked by those who pass near them, and to the eye of an archæologist they are of sufficient age and proper Biblical character. They consist of blocks of hewn stone, regularly laid by the builders, but much overthrown and in confusion, yet not in such confusion as to conceal the regularity of construction when the walls were standing. The other towns of the pentapolis are not yet certainly identified.”\*

The references of Scripture to the salt and burning by which the land has been wasted, are emphatic; and both are prominent features of the district as it is now. De Saulcy speaks, as we have just seen, of one “dark brown mountain . . . rent, and looking as if it had been roasted.” Similar traces of the action of fire were frequently met with. He believed that he found Zeboim on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea. This would explain the use of the term *kikkar*, translated “plain,” but which really means “circle.” It would also throw light upon the choice of the vale of Siddim as the battle-field, for on the south of the Dead Sea the army of Sodom and its allies would be able to arrest the advance of Chedorlaomer along either side of the Sea, and so, if they were able to make a successful stand, would protect all the allied cities.

There is no ground, as has been already shown, for the wide-spread belief that the Dead Sea owes its

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\* *Oriental Records*, p. 56.

existence to the catastrophe which blasted its shores. The geological indications show that the greater part of the Dead Sea is of much older formation than the time of Abraham. But geology has something to say which confirms a statement which is really made in Genesis, and from which possibly, as has been suggested, the misconception regarding the fate of the cities of the plain has sprung. In specifying the place where the battle was fought, it describes it as "the vale of Siddim, *which is the salt sea*" (Genesis xiv. 3). Here, beyond a doubt, the vale of Siddim is represented as having been afterwards submerged. This plain must, as we have just seen, have been at some distance from the cities; for the kings had gathered their armies together and had gone forth to meet the foe. For the strategical reason just mentioned they chose the vale of Siddim, and awaited there the onslaught of the Elamite host. Let the reader also remember that Chedorlaomer was now advancing from the south, and that the object of the king of Sodom and his allies was to interpose a strong force between him and their cities.

The field of battle must apparently, then, be placed *on the south of the Dead Sea*. Now the Dead Sea presents a very singular feature. Lynch, the commander of the American expedition which so thoroughly explored this stretch of water, says: "The bottom of this sea consists of *two submerged plains, an elevated and a depressed one*; the former averaging *thirteen*, the latter about *thirteen hundred*, feet below the surface." This shallow southern

portion, says another writer, "is a flat plain with the greater part of its area nearly level, a very few feet only below the surface, shoaling gradually at the edges till the brink is reached; so shallow is this lagoon that it is sometimes possible to ford right across from the west to the east side." This southern portion appears to be the submerged plain of Siddim. The latter writer, from whose contribution to Smith's Bible Dictionary we have quoted,\* denies that this or any portion of the Dead Sea is, geologically speaking, of recent origin, and says that its formation cannot date merely from the time of Abraham. But this judgment was based on what the writer confesses to be very partial investigation. Here again, however, we have a proof that time and fuller knowledge are always with the Bible. The latest authority on the subject, M. Lartet, in his *Exploration Géologique de la Mer Morte*, published in 1878, believes that the indications point to this shallow, southern, submerged plain as having been the vale of Siddim on which the battle was fought; and he finds in the Scripture statement, which identifies that vale with the Dead Sea, a valuable hint that enables him to interpret the phenomena which the southern portion of the lake presents. In connection with this question regarding the vale of Siddim, let me ask the reader to recall a statement made in the account of the battle. It is that the vale of Siddim "was full of slime-pits." These slime-pits are still a feature of the Dead Sea shores. De Saulcy had a

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\* Art., The Salt Sea.

narrow escape on the northern shore. "At a particular moment," he writes, "my unlucky horse sinks up to the nostrils in the mire through which we are slowly picking our steps. I confess that I am horribly alarmed. I scramble out as well as I can from the hole in which we are buried, and leave to Mahmoud and Mohammed the care of digging out my unfortunate charger." There is an exactly similar tract on the southern shore, both of which are marked upon his map, which shows that these tracts cover some square miles in extent.

One point more deserves at least a brief notice. For this I shall avail myself of the remarks of Canon Tristram in *The Sunday School Times* for February 3rd, 1894.

"Nothing strikes the careful observer on the spot, in the Holy Land, more than the wonderful exactness of minute and incidental expression, when tested by the actual topography of the country. It is so with respect to the situation of what may be termed the pre-historic cities of the plain, Sodom and Gomorrah.

"Now, at the time of the destruction of Sodom, Abraham was encamped at Mamre, the site of which is universally identified very near Hebron. Abraham, we are told in the sixteenth verse, accompanied the angels who looked towards Sodom, to bring them on the way. That way could only be by ascending the range of hills immediately east of Mamre. Here Abraham halted, and remained standing before the Lord, whilst the two proceeded on their way.

"It is nowhere stated that they could see Sodom,

but it is stated that on the following morning Abraham got up early and went to the same place, and thence looked towards Sodom and Gomorrah and towards all the land of the plain, and saw the smoke of the country going up as the smoke of a furnace. Now, looking from those heights towards the south end of the Dead Sea, the distant view is completely shut in, and it would be impossible to recognize whence any smoke might ascend. But towards the north, although it is impossible to see the surface of the plain of Jordan itself, yet the wide, flat depression, which is formed by the plain of Jericho on the one side and the plain of Shittim on the other, can be easily recognized by the wide gap between the lofty plateau on which we stand and the distant but still more lofty range of the mountains of Moab and Gilead on the other side of the Jordan valley, with a gauzy cloud of haze intervening. Thus the spectator could exactly locate the spot whence he saw the smoke arising, while smoke from no other part of the valley could be so identified. Hence the notable accuracy of the expression, 'looked towards Sodom.'

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### CHAPTER XIII.

#### THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC.

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THE trial of faith in the Divine command to offer up Isaac was apparently not confined to Abraham. It seems to be still active and to produce

most astonishing and deplorable results in our own time. Vigorous, and even violent, attempts have been made to relieve the Christian conscience supposed to be labouring under the burden of a literal interpretation and an absolute acceptance of the Scripture history. We are told that such a command could never have proceeded from God, and that the best that can be said for the story is that it was the temporary delusion of a good man. The incident has been described as "Abraham's Mistake." He had had a vivid dream; or, he imagined that God had spoken to him and made this terrible request for the sacrifice of his son. Others, with a lofty indifference to the statements of the Bible, explain the matter in the following way. It was customary among the surrounding peoples to show reverence and devotion for their gods by just such an offering as this. Abraham resolved to show that his love for Jehovah was not less than theirs for Moloch or for Baal; and he accordingly took his very best—his beloved Isaac, in whom all his hopes lay—and proceeded to a solitary place to offer *him* a burnt offering to the Lord. He was prevented from carrying out his purpose by Divine interposition. God approved of the motive, but condemned the contemplated immolation of a human being.

In this way the Divine honour is supposed to be rescued, and burdened consciences are thought to be relieved. But all this is done at the cost of the Bible. To relieve the burdened conscience we are asked to extinguish the only light which conscience

has; and we save the Divine honour by casting away that revelation by which alone we know God and attain to any right idea of His attributes. We do not question the sincerity of the men who have said these things. They are, undoubtedly, sincere, and the stand which they have taken, and still maintain, will assure anyone of their earnestness. But men are never more earnest and sincere than when labouring under foolish panic. A householder in a Scottish village, whose reputation for eccentricity was considerable, heard that a neighbouring dwelling was on fire. Rushing to the conclusion that his own was in immediate danger, he proceeded to rescue his belongings. He threw up a two-storey window, seized upon an eight-day clock in its huge wooden case, dragged it along and precipitated it upon the street below. Of course it was sent into a thousand fragments; but the would-be rescuer of endangered property was seen looking down upon his work with the most absolute satisfaction. To the bystanders who gazed up at him in amazement, he exclaimed: "that's one thing saved, at any rate!"

That is how those friends would save the Bible. They see it already in their imagination in just such fragments at their feet, and they expect us to applaud their work! But we have manifestly something else to do first. We have to inquire whether there is any good ground for their panic, and whether those whose consciences are burdened might not be more effectually relieved if their intellect was enlightened. If the result of that inquiry is to show

that this narrative, instead of being a stumbling-block to a believer, is one of the mightiest buttresses to our faith, then the conclusion will inevitably follow that, whatever may be said about the sincerity and earnestness or other qualities of these men, they are the very last whom any rational being should follow or approve.

But, before I deal with this, it is necessary to notice another question which has been raised. Dean Stanley and others in this country have argued strongly against the identification of the Moriah to which Abraham journeyed with the mount on which the Temple was afterwards built. In this they are merely adopting and repeating the rationalistic view, which desires, above everything, to erase from the Bible every trace of the miraculous. That the place where Abraham was directed to offer Isaac should be identical with the scene of the Great Substitutionary Sacrifice, was too startling an indication of Divine intervention and plan to be permitted to remain. Spinoza made the suggestion that the two places were not the same, and this was afterwards taken up by Vater, the father of the higher criticism, in its present form. The place suggested is Mount Gerizim near Sychar, or Nablous, where the Samaritans contended that the sacrifice was really offered. It is suggestive that Dean Stanley would place there also the meeting with Melchizedek. "There is every probability," he writes, "that Gerizim, and not Jerusalem, is the scene of two of the most remarkable events in the history of Abraham." We need not trouble

ourselves again with what he says about Melchizedek; for the discovery of the Tel-el-Amarna tablets have proved Salem to be Jerusalem. We hasten to hear the Dean's reasons for the second suggested correction. He first of all gives us the Samaritan tradition. "Beyond all doubt (this is the form in which the story is told amongst the Samaritans themselves) 'Isaac was offered on Ar-Gerizim.' Abraham said, 'Let us go up and sacrifice on the mountain.' He took a rope to fasten his son; but Isaac said, 'No; I will lie still.' Thrice the knife was raised to cut, then God from heaven called to Gabriel, 'Go down and save Isaac, or I will destroy thee from among the Angels.' From the seventh heaven Gabriel called and pointed to the ram. The place of the ram's capture is still shown near the Holy Place. The Jewish tradition, as represented by Josephus, transfers the scene to the hill on which the temple was afterwards erected at Jerusalem, and this belief has been perpetuated in Christian times as attached to a spot in the garden of the Abyssinian convent, not, indeed, on Mount Moriah; but immediately to the east of the church of the Holy Sepulchre, with the intention of connecting the Sacrifice of Isaac with the Crucifixion. An ancient thorn-tree, covered with the rags of pilgrims, is still shown as the thicket in which the ram was caught. But the Samaritan tradition is here again confirmed by the circumstances of the story. Abraham was 'in the land of the Philistines.' From the south of the plain he would advance, till on the morning of

'the third day,' in the plain of Sharon, the massive height of Gerizim is visible 'afar off,' and from thence half a day would bring him to its summit. Exactly such a view is to be had in that plain; and on the other hand, no such view or impression can fairly be said to exist on the road from the south to Jerusalem, even if what is at most a journey of two days could be extended to three. The towers of Jerusalem are indeed seen from the ridge of Mar Elias at the distance of three miles; but there is no elevation, nothing corresponding to the 'place afar off,' to which Abraham 'lifted up his eyes.' And the special locality which the Jewish tradition has assigned for the place, and whose name is the chief guarantee for the tradition—Mount Moriah, the Hill of the Temple—is not visible till the traveller is close upon it, at the southern edge of the valley of Hinnom, from whence he looks down upon it, as on a lower eminence."\*

Some of these objections are undoubtedly strong, but so much can not be said for the rest. Too much reliance should not be put upon the phrase "he lifted up his eyes," as if this signified the gazing upward toward some lofty eminence. In a previous chapter we read that Abraham "sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; and *he lift up his eyes* and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him" (Gen. xviii. 1, 2). The strong points in the Dean's case are (1) that the journey from Beersheba (where Abraham was residing when the command was given) could

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\* *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 251.

not have occupied three days; and (2) that Mount Moriah is not visible from afar, being overtopped and concealed by the neighbouring heights. It will be more satisfactory if we cite some witnesses whose personal acquaintance with the district enable them to set all doubt at rest on these points. Robinson, one of the very highest, though among the earliest, of our modern authorities on The Holy Land, says that the journey from Beersheba to Jerusalem took him, though travelling on camels and by the straight road, 20 hours and 25 minutes. If we remember that Abraham and his companions were on foot, and that they had with them only one ass which carried the wood and the provisions, it is quite evident that they had not loitered on the way, when the early part of the third day's journey found them in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. I may add that Robinson's testimony, like that which is to follow, is equally clear against the possibility of reaching Gerizim from Beersheba in three days. From Jerusalem to Sichem travelling on mules, and again by the straight road, fourteen hours and a-half were occupied in the journey. Thirty-five hours continuous travelling would consequently have been required with camels and mules to cover the distance between Beersheba and Gerizim, and it was, therefore, physically impossible for the Patriarch and those who were with him to have practically finished their journey in the early part of the third day.

Canon Tristram says: "Some of the arguments for Gerizim have a strong *primâ facie* plausibility as

contrasted with the site of Solomon's temple; as, for instance, Abraham lifting up his eyes and seeing the place 'afar off,' which, strictly true of Gerizim from all points of the compass, is not applicable to the temple site. But the words 'afar off' as a measure of distance are most vague and indefinite, and 'the place' might be taken in a wider sense than the exact rock on which he was to devote his son. Not indefinite, however, is the statement that it was on the third day that he reached the neighbourhood, and though 'afar off,' it was not so far but that he could calculate upon arriving at the spot, though delayed by the burden of the wood, performing the sacrifice, and returning to his young men before sunset, else he would have taken provision with him. Now, travelling at the ordinary rate of the country, Jerusalem would just be reached on the third day from Beersheba—to reach Nablous in the same time *is impossible*\* at a pace of fellahin with their asses. Nor will it remove the difficulty to suppose Abraham to have travelled by the plain of Sharon. The time occupied would be as long, and the fatigue to the ass, if not to the pedestrian, greater. I have traversed and timed these routes repeatedly in a greater or less portion of their course, and feel satisfied that so long as the sacred text remains as it is, 'on the third day,' the claims of Gerizim are untenable. There is certainly also a peculiar fitness in the offering of the type having taken place on the

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\* Well-mounted Europeans frequently ride in one day from Nablous to Jerusalem; but their muleteers and baggage occupy two days."—*Note by Canon Tristram.*

same spot as the offering of the Anti-type, the Great Oblation for the sins of the whole world."\*

Dr. Thomson, the well-known author of *The Land and the Book*, is equally clear and emphatic. He says: "In regard to the question about the true site of that most wonderful act of Abraham, I believe it was on Mount Moriah where the altar of burnt sacrifice was erected by Solomon, and near the spot where the greater sacrifice of an infinitely greater Son was finally offered; and it would take a vast amount of contrary evidence to force me to abandon this idea. Mr. Stanley's geographical argument is more than feeble. It is almost absurd to maintain that Abraham could come on his loaded ass from Beersheba to Nablûs in the time specified. On the third day he arrived early enough to leave the servants 'afar off,' and walk with Isaac bearing the sacrificial wood to the mountain which God had shown him—there build the altar, arrange the wood, bind his son, and stretch forth his hand to slay him; and there was time, too, to take and offer up the ram in Isaac's place. That all this could have been done *at Nablûs on the third day* of their journey is incredible. It had always appeared to me, since I first travelled over the country myself, that even Jerusalem was too far off from Beersheba for the tenor of the narrative, but Nablûs is a two days' ride further north! Nor will the suggestion of Mr. Stanley, that Abraham came up through Philistia and then turned into the mountains, bear examination.

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\* *The Land of Israel*, pp. 154, 155.

The supposition is entirely gratuitous, and at variance with all the lines of patriarchal travel through the country, nor does it render the achievement of the journey in three days any more feasible. If Mr. Stanley had travelled over those interminable plains of Philistia and Sharon, as I have, he would not select this route for Abraham on his sad errand. Let us rejoice in being permitted to rest with entire confidence in the correctness of our received tradition, that the priest of the Most High God reigned in Jerusalem, and that Abraham made the typical sacrifice of his son on Moriah and not on Gerizim." \*

There has been no sufficient answer so far, however, to the Dean's second point as to the invisibility of Moriah. Dr. Thomson shows, indeed, that the place must have been near enough to enable so many things to be done before the light failed; and the fact that Abraham dispenses with all help for the further conveyance of the sacrifice-wood, shows that the "afar off" could not have been more than a mile or two. But the following from Dr. Cunningham Geikie's large and valuable work on *The Holy Land and the Bible*, will make this still more clear, and dissipate any doubts that may remain. He is speaking of the Monastery of Mar Saba, some three or four miles south of Jerusalem, and situated on the road along which, no doubt, Abraham journeyed. "The view," he writes, "from the Monastery hill, however, is remarkably fine. To the south stand the white houses of Bethlehem on their

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\* P. 475.

height ; on the north, beyond a broad plain, rise the walls and buildings of Jerusalem—the high, sloping top of Neby Samwil closing the view on the distant horizon ; on the east the eye wanders over hills, sinking, wave after wave, towards the Dead Sea, of which part lies, in deepest azure, between these and the yellow-red table-land of Moab, which seems, in the transparent air, only a few miles distant. On the west the landscape is shut in by high ridges of hills. This spot, from which the traveller coming from the south first sees Mount Moriah, the site of the Jewish Temple, wakes the tenderest recollections in every heart that reverences the Father of the Faithful. Here Abraham, on his sad journey from Beersheba, at God's command that he should offer his only and well-loved son Isaac on Moriah, first came in sight of the hill. It was on the third day of his torturing ride from the south that, lifting up his eyes, he saw the place afar off. 'Then Abraham said to his young men, abide ye here with the ass ; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.' This must have been spoken just about where the Monastery of Elias now stands ; and yet, strange to say, the monks have thought only of fables respecting Elijah, and have never realised the peculiar interest of their dwelling in connection with Abraham and his son. The land round the Monastery is carefully tilled, and fenced with strong walls of dry stone, gathered with heavy labour from the surface of the ground to make it fit for cultivation. The monks have also planted

fine olive-groves, and show the real benefit such a colony may be in a wild region, when industrious and intelligent. The building itself is strong enough to resist a Bedouin attack, should one at any time be made.

“The road sank very gently from Mar Elias towards the north, and presented the very unusual sight, in Palestine, of gangs of men at work to make it passable for carriages. Levelling, filling up, smoothing were all in progress; the labourers swarming, in turbans, fezzes, wide “abbas,” or close cotton skirts, and bare-legged, in all directions. Such a phenomenon, in any part of the Turkish Empire, well deserves notice. How long the spurt of activity will last, who gave the money, and who will get it finally, are all questions more easily asked than answered. Still sinking, the road leads gradually to the valley of Hinnom, through stony slopes, sprinkled, as I passed, with the green of rising crops; but very different from English land, for there were, as it seemed, more stones than grain. It was the valley of Rephaim, and promised what in Palestine is thought a rich harvest, such as it yielded when Isaiah, passing perhaps along this very track in the Summer, saw ‘the harvest-man gathering the corn, and reaping the ears with his arm.’ But one might look in vain for the wood of mulberry trees behind which David, thanks in part to the rustling of the leaves in the wind, was able to steal, unperceived, upon the Philistines when encamped in this valley. It was here, also, that at another time these foes of Israel

were gathered when the three braves broke through their host and brought David the water from the well at the Gate of Bethlehem. The wide plain it offers for nearly two miles before one reaches Jerusalem, made Rephaim, in fact, the scene of many a fierce onslaught in ancient times between the Hebrews and their invaders.

“The road now crosses the valley of Hinnom, over which the walls of Jerusalem look down, at this part, across a pleasant slope dotted with olive and other trees. The aqueduct from Solomon’s Pools passes to the side of the valley next the city, just above the Lower Pool of Gihon; and our path crossed close below it, after passing a row of cottages built on the hill-side for his fellow Israelites by the late Sir Moses Montefiore. To the left, as we rose out of the valley of Rephaim, the long upward slope of the hill, facing the west side of the city, was covered with olives; and there was also a windmill. Passing along the east side of the pool the road kept straight north, on the east side of the valley, which was not broad; a steady rise of nearly 200 feet in all bringing us at last to the Joppa Gate, past the gardens of the Armenian Monastery within the walls, and past the mossy citadel, with its great slanting foundations, cut off from the road by a deep fosse, into which it jutted out in grim strength, one of the few relics of the great Herod, my feet stood at last within the gates at Jerusalem!”\* This prolonged journey shows that even from Mar Saba there was

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\* Vol. I. pp. 454-456.

still distance enough to justify amply the use of the expression "afar off."

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC.

*(Continued.)*

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HAVING disposed of the geographical question, we can now turn our attention to the incident itself. "And it came to pass after these things"—no doubt, lest he "should be exalted above measure by the abundance" of the glory given unto him (II. Corinthians xii. 7)—"that God did try Abraham." There has been needless trouble imported into this matter by the rendering "tempt"—"God did tempt Abraham"—given by our translators to the Hebrew word *nasah*. The word means clearly "to try," or "test." It occurs, for example, in I. Kings x. 1, where we are told that the Queen of Sheba came "to prove" Solomon "with hard questions;" and again in I. Samuel xvii. 39, where David says of Saul's armour, "I have not proved them." God resolved to prove Abraham; and in the Divine purpose no doubt Abraham's good as well as ours was considered. The demand which was made to surrender the very best of all God's gifts—"thine only son Isaac (in whom his seed should be called, and in

whose death would perish the hopes which had led him to abandon everything besides)—whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer *him* there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of" (Gen. xxii. 1, 2).

Has Abraham's dependence upon God become less since his success filled all that region and even distant lands with his fame? Is his trust in God as profound and unhesitating, and his love to God as fervent, as in the days of yore? These are the questions which the Lord is now about to put; and He will put them now as ever in the valley of trouble. He is asked to give up Isaac, and to give him up, too, to a terrible death. And not only so. Horror is piled upon desolation and grief. Abraham's own hand is to deal the death-blow! The trouble which we feel in view of that command is but a pale reflection of that which bowed the strong soul of Abraham. The command was so given as to leave no room for doubt that it was *God's* command. It did not come by an angelic messenger: God himself spoke with him. Was it ever harder in all man's history to obey, and was it ever harder to trust that, since it was God's command, all was well, and that in some way or other all would issue in praise and in glorious revelation of the Divine love? But, in answer to all those dark questionings sweeping round him with the deadly chill of doubt raining from their beating wings, Abraham's faith arose and proved itself the faith of yore. Whatever bands the Delilah of worldly fame and abounding wealth had wound

around it, were snapped asunder as it awoke, and rose, and shook itself with giant strength, and went out to follow, without murmur and even without question, in God's way. Was it not enough that God had spoken? *Could* obedience to His commandment lead to wrong, or to the blotting out of the promise which God Himself had given? To the terribleness of these questionings faith had one triumphant answer—the answer in which it finds to-day joy in tribulation—it was God's will.

One can see at a glance that there was in this way mercy in the trial. The trial was rightly placed; for “after these things” it may have been sorely needed. Abraham, man of faith though he was, was only man. Notwithstanding his isolated life, the world may have been more with him and have become more to him than was well for him. But now at this call his faith is given back to him in all its early strength and beauty. And we shall see immediately that if this faith met God with its child-like and precious confidence, God met it with one of the very richest of His revelations. That revelation is so glorious that when it is marked there is an utter end of doubt in regard to this part of God's Word. To the question, “could such a command be given by God?” we shall be able to reply with another—“Could the command have been given by any other?”

The first thing that strikes us is the peculiar phrase—“the land of Moriah” (verse 2). What land is this? Never before, and never after, do we hear mention made of any part of Palestine by that

name. Had "the land of Moriah," then, no previous existence? And did it from this moment for ever disappear? To the reader of Hebrew there are references in what follows, which lend us valuable help in solving this difficulty. There is much said about "seeing," and "Moriah" contains the same word "see" as part of its composition. "The land of Moriah" is simply, when we translate the whole of the Hebrew into English, "the land of the seeing of Jehovah." In some way or other, Abraham's sacrifice is connected with an event, or events, which will give the land to which he turns this new name. It will become—giving the word *Moriah* its full and distinct significance—"the land of the appearing of Jehovah."

A careful study of verses 8 and 14 will throw further light upon this matter. Isaac, who had no doubt accompanied his father frequently when sacrifice was to be offered, was struck upon this occasion by a remarkable omission. They had everything with them except the victim. One can understand something of the pang which pierced the Patriarch's heart as the lad said: "My Father: . . . Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" (verse 7). The exact relation of Abraham's reply to what follows is obscured in our translation. It is the same verb which appears in "Moriah" that is rendered in verse 8, by "provide." It is doubtful whether it is ever really used in that sense, and it does not seem to have been so used here. Abraham's reply is designedly vague—with perhaps just a hint in it that may break

the terrible truth to Isaac. It is, "God will see for Himself a lamb for a burnt-offering, my son!" The lamb we are to offer is of God's own selection, not ours! Verse 14 is not helped by the margin, which would thrust in again the word "provide"—"And Abraham called the name of the place *Jehovah-jireh* (the Lord shall see): as it is said to this day. In the mount of the Lord it shall be provided." The translation in the text is literally exact, "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen;" but the bearing which this has upon Abraham's naming of the place is not apparent. The Septuagint translation, made between two and three centuries before the time of our Lord, renders the words, "In the mount the Lord will be seen."

This approaches what is evidently the correct rendering. In the light of what is about to be noted it will not surprise us to find in these words a clear prediction of another and greater scene which was afterwards to be witnessed in that very place. Two things are predicted. (1) The Lord will see. His gaze will rest on some sacrifice to be accepted there, and on a sacrifice which is represented in this substitutionary offering by which Isaac is saved. (2) In connection with the same transaction Jehovah Himself will be manifested: "In the mount of the Lord He shall be seen." So strong was the assurance that this Divine manifestation—this open vision of God—should be accorded there, that it became a common saying, and was so in Israel when Genesis was written by the hand of Moses. It was the

common conviction that "in the mount of the Lord He would be seen."

In the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ this two-fold word was literally fulfilled. God then saw the Lamb that availed for a burnt-offering; and God was manifested in the person of Jesus, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree. The Father saw, and accepted, the sacrifice of the Son. But let us now note the Divine stamp upon the narrative. There is truth here that no man could have foreseen, and which God alone could have revealed. This record shows us that upon the very foundations of the Kingdom of God in the earth there was written the great truth which that Kingdom was to proclaim as the condition of citizenship, and the means of salvation for all mankind. *It is the doctrine of substitution.* The life of all Israel was bound up in the life of that lad. Had Isaac perished that day, not a single Jew ever could have lived. They exist because he was saved; and he was saved because a sacrifice was found, which took his place upon the altar. In other words, he was saved through substitution; and Israel exists, and has existed from its first day until now, through substitution. I need not remind the reader that Israel after the flesh is the type and the prophecy of Israel after the Spirit. The elect nation is the picture of God's chosen-out people. Is it not simply startling, then, to find this truth written so broadly and deeply on the foundation of the nation's history, and that this trial of Abraham's faith—and may we not add of Isaac's filial love?—should have

been so arranged as to make the carnal Israel an utterly true picture of the Spiritual Israel? But who arranged this picture? Who issued the command to Abraham and prepared this scene in the Patriarch's story, and who preserved its record throughout all after generations? Why, if this is, as they tell us, a fiction, it needed the foresight of God to construct the fiction!

But there is more than even this in the picture, much though it be. We are only indeed at the beginning of the story; for we have here what is infinitely better than the best treatise on the Atonement that man has ever written. It gives us God's picture of the coming salvation; and that picture is perfect. The question has often been asked: What is the relation between the Father and the Son in the work of Atonement? That question is here fully answered, and the Scripture guides us safely between the Scylla and the Charybdis, the rocks and the shoals on either side on which so many theorists have made shipwreck. Let us look upon the picture presented in this father and son. We mark (1) their isolation. They have left the companions of their journey behind them, and they pass on alone, no man besides being with them. No one knows their destination, or their purpose; but it is the theme of their own converse. They are shut in with it. Its mystery makes Isaac press into his Father's confidence. Notwithstanding the endeavours of Jesus to make the disciples understand what lies before Him at Jerusalem, they cannot comprehend. Their eyes

are blinded. The moment comes at last when even their bodily companionship will fail: "Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me" (John xvi. 32). As Abraham and Isaac went up the mountain-side alone, communing regarding the sacrifice that was to be offered, so from Bethlehem to Calvary did Jesus, bearing the cross on His heart, as Isaac carried the wood for the burnt-offering upon his shoulder, commune with the Father in a fellowship which no man shared.

We mark (2) that there is no reason to be found in themselves for the terrible tragedy which is to be consummated on the mountain-top. Isaac has done nothing worthy of death. There is no wrath in Abraham's heart against his son. His is a life which Abraham would guard as the apple of his eye. To spare him there is no sacrifice which Abraham would refuse to make. Why, then, is death to be inflicted? The reply is that there is a Divine necessity for the father to smite and for the son to suffer. In that wisdom, which embraces within the sweep of its vision time and eternity, the Godhead has decreed that thus it must be. The Father must smite, and the Son must suffer; but there is no wrath in the Father's heart and no wrong-doing in the Son. It was needful for a world's redemption. It was only thus that the eternal purpose could be fulfilled; and this purpose was made known to Abraham in the promise given from heaven over that altar on Mount

Moriah: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Genesis xxii. 18).

We note (3) Isaac's self-surrender. The absence of the victim, and his father's reply when asked as to this may have awakened no suspicion in Isaac's mind as to what was intended. The moment came, however, when the intention was all too plain. But when he sees that he is to be the victim he makes no effort to save himself. He does not attempt to flee. When the cords are being wound about his limbs he does not struggle. Though he is laid upon the altar and the knife is raised to smite, he lifts neither remonstrance nor cry. Could there be a more perfect picture of our Lord's surrender to the Father, or a more beautiful comment upon the words: "Not My will, but Thine, be done?" But (4) we have a glimpse also of the Father's sacrifice. This is a side of the Atonement frequently forgotten; and it is one upon which, even when remembered, we dare hardly touch. We can look, however, upon this picture and allow its slightest details to convey their message. But this is by no means among the slightest, for the Scripture directs our special attention to it when it reminds us that "he that had received the promises offered up his only-begotten son" (Hebrews xi. 17). The death of Isaac meant to Abraham the surrender of all that he had hoped and prayed for. If Isaac died, what was left of all that had led him forth from his native land and his father's house, and that compelled him even now to be a pilgrim and a sojourner in the earth? If Isaac perished, the blackness of

darkness fell upon Abraham's own soul. There, in that suffering of Abraham, we have an intimation, if not an unfolding, of the suffering of God in the yielding up of His Son for our salvation.

There are other features of the Calvary story that become visible, as we linger before this page of the Patriarch's history. For example, who were to slay Jesus? Here that very horror with which this scene is invested—that fearful feature of *Abraham* slaying Isaac—explains its presence. It could not be spared. It was a necessary part of the picture, for in this alone do we read the fearfulness of that awful deed which filled to overflowing the cup of Israel's iniquity. He who in this picture stands with uplifted arm by the altar's side is the man who has prayed, and entreated, and waited for this lad's birth. The gift of that life, which his knife is about to drink, has been his hope and the glory of his future. And who were to slay Jesus? The Abraham among the nations! It was the very people who hoped and longed for His appearing, who rejoiced in the promise of His coming and in the glories which He was to bring, who prayed and entreated and watched for His advent. That is the horror of Calvary; and it was pictured in the horror of Moriah. Seeing that it was to be enacted in after time on Calvary, it could not be absent from Moriah. That part of the story, therefore, is not "Abraham's mistake;" but a Divine revelation and warning. And the revelation serves God, though it did not save Israel from this fearful deed: for, just where the devil

seemed to win his biggest triumph in getting God's own people to reject His Christ, and to proclaim to the nations that Jesus of Nazareth was *not* Man's Redeemer, God has turned their repudiation into a stamp of genuineness. The story of Jesus would not have answered to this picture painted from of old had not the waiters for the Christ bound Him and laid Him upon the altar. Seeing that there was a Moriah, it was evidently foreseen that there was to be a Calvary.

It also served Abraham; for there is no trial of faith which does not lead to blessing. It was a time of revealing, when he saw the day of Christ afar off and was glad. God was leading this solitary man, who had forsaken all besides to walk with his Creator, into the fellowship of the salvation for the revealing of which his separation and life was part of the long preparation. And God leads his "friend" into the very heart of the mystery—into the fellowship of the Divine suffering. In Abraham's suffering, in the yielding up of his only-begotten unto death, there was fellowship with the Father in His surrender of His Son. And in the rejoicing over his son given back from that awful doom, he also tasted heaven's joy over the resurrection of Jesus. Need I again ask who placed all this in that ancient picture? One touch follows another from this great Painter's hand till every detail is there and the painting is complete. It is so complete that, if any man desires to understand the mystery of Calvary, he has only to go back and lift the curtain from this scene in the life of

Abraham. Again I ask: Who arranged this scene? Who caused its record to be written? And who has watched over and preserved it to our own time? To all these questions one answer, and one answer alone, will suffice. The Guide of Abraham and the author of the Book is God.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### THE PALESTINE OF ABRAHAM.

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“**P**ATRIARCHAL PALESTINE!” exclaims Professor Sayce, in commencing the admirable volume which bears that title. “There are some who would tell us that the very name is a misnomer. Have we not been assured by the German critics, and their English disciples, that there were no patriarchs and no Patriarchal Age? And yet,” he continues, “the critics notwithstanding, the Patriarchal Age has actually existed. While criticism, so-called, has been busy in demolishing the records of the Pentateuch, archæology, by the spade of the excavator, and the patient skill of the decipherer, has been equally busy in restoring their credit.”\*

I have already spoken of the physical characteristics of the country which are clearly indicated in the narrative of Abraham’s life; and we have seen that this picture of the land, strange in many respects as it is, is proved by contemporary documents to be exact. But discovery is elaborating daily another test of

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\* *Patriarchal Palestine*, p. 15.

which I have as yet said nothing. Reference is made from time to time to the fact that the land is inhabited, not by one nation only but by quite a variety of peoples. Take, for example, the account of the Babylonian raid in Genesis xiv. 5-7. "And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and smote the Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim, and the Horites in their mount Seir, unto El-paran, which is by the wilderness. And they returned, and came to En-mishpat, which is Kadesh, and smote all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazon-tamar." En-Mishpat, "the well of judgment," or Kadesh, is an oasis on the borders of Southern Palestine and the wilderness, which was discovered and identified a number of years ago by Dr. Rowlands and Dr. Clay Trumbull. The two names have been blended together by the Arabs, and it is now known by them as Ain-Qadis ("En-Kadesh"). But here there are no fewer than six distinct races named as inhabiting the ravaged districts. This multiplicity of peoples is now ascertained to have been a distinct feature of the Palestine of the period. Too little is yet known of the most of these peoples, or tribes, to permit us to dogmatise upon identifications. In due time, no doubt, the veil will be wholly lifted. But meanwhile a beginning has been made. "The Amalekites," says Sayce, "were the Shasu, or 'Plunderers,' of the Egyptian inscriptions, sometimes also termed the

Setti, the Sute of the cuneiform texts. Like their modern descendants, they lived by the plunder of their more peaceful neighbours.”\*

A few years ago little was known about the Amorites in addition to what was told us in the Bible. This was largely owing to a mistaken reading of a cuneiform sign. Palestine was designated on the Babylonian inscriptions by a phrase which was read—*Mat-Akharri*. This meant the land which lies behind—“the hinterland,” or west country. But it has since been discovered that the true reading is *Mat Amurri*—“the land of the Amorites”! This ancient people thus sprang suddenly into unlooked-for prominence. From remote antiquity Palestine was spoken of as *their* land. Our readers will remember that Kudur-Mabug, the father of Arioch of Ellasar, is described as “Father of the land of the Amorites.” The reader will notice how thoroughly this agrees with the position which the Amorites evidently hold in the time of Abraham. The three chiefs with whom Abraham enters into a league of mutual defence are the Amorites, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre. This explains also what was said to Abraham when it was announced to him that four centuries were to intervene between the making of God’s covenant with him, and the giving over of the land to his descendants. There was to be delay, God said, “for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full” (Gen. xv. 16). That is, the handing over of Canaan to the Israelites was to be *the dispossessing of the Amorites*. It was

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\**Patriarchal Palestine*, p. 40.

*their* land that was to be given away, and it was *they* who were specially to be punished. We have there a confirmation of the most striking and convincing character. The land is not called in the Scripture "the land of the Amorites," but a statement is made which that name, or rather the ancient glory it implies, can alone explain.

But recent discovery has done more than this. It has shown us who these Amorites were, and permitted us to look upon the features, and to know something of the character and the habits, of the race that was "confederate with Abraham." They are admirably depicted upon the walls of the Egyptian temples and tombs, and we now know that they were a people closely allied in race to ourselves. "While the Hittite type 'of features,'" writes Prof. Sayce, "is Mongoloid, that of the Amorite is European. His nose is straight and somewhat pointed, his lips and nostrils thin, his cheek-bones high, his mouth firm and regular, his forehead expressive of intelligence. He has a fair amount of whisker, ending in a pointed beard. At Abu-Simbel the skin is painted a pale yellow—the Egyptian equivalent for white—his eyes blue, and his beard and eye-brows red. At Medinet-Habu, his skin, as Professor Petrie expresses it, is 'rather pinker than flesh-colour,' while in a tomb of the eighteenth dynasty at Thebes it is painted white, the eyes and hair being a light-red brown."\*

Their modern representatives are the Kabyles and

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*Ibid.*, pp. 47, 48.

other Berber tribes of North Africa, European in type, and allied to the Celtic race. They seem to have spread in early times over the south coast of the Mediterranean, to have entered Egypt and Palestine, and to have extended their conquests still farther to the East. Their modern representatives "are still found in large numbers in the mountainous regions which stretch eastward from Morocco, and are usually known among the French under the name of the Kabyles. The traveller who first meets with them in Algeria cannot fail to be struck by their likeness to a certain part of the population in the British Isles. Their clear-white freckled skins, their blue eyes, their golden-red hair and tall stature, remind him of the fair Kelts of an Irish village; and when we find that their skulls, which are of the so-called dolichocephalic or 'long-headed' type, are the same as the skulls discovered in the pre-historic cromlechs of the country they still inhabit, we may conclude that they represent the modern descendants of the white-skinned Libyans of the Egyptian monuments."\*

Another race, represented as inhabiting the land, and, indeed, as dwelling in the immediate neighbourhood of the Amorites, is the Hittite. It is from these children of Heth that Abraham buys the cave of Machpelah at Hebron (Gen. xxiii). Esau took a wife from among them. Uriah the Hittite was one of David's captains, and "the kings of the Hittites" are referred to in after times as forming an important power towards the north of Syria.

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Sayce, *The Hittites: The Story of a Forgotten Empire*, pp. 15, 16.

All these references were discredited, and were set down as undeniable proof of the unhistorical character of the Scriptures. No other ancient literature knew anything of such an Empire, or made any mention even of such a people. "Nearly forty years ago," writes Professor Sayce, "a distinguished scholar selected" the mention of the Hittites in II. Kings vii. 6, "for his criticism. Its 'unhistorical tone,' he declared, 'is too manifest to allow of our easy belief in it.' 'No Hittite kings can have compared in power with the King of Judah, the near and real ally, who is not named at all . . . nor is there a single mark of acquaintance with the contemporaneous history.' Recent discoveries have retorted the critic's objections upon himself. It is not the Biblical writer, but the modern author, who is now proved to have been unacquainted with the contemporaneous history of the time."\* The Hittites have been discovered since then, and the discovery of them has been named "the romance of ancient history." They have left behind them a large number of inscriptions, which still baffle all the efforts of our trained decipherers; but the existence, place, and power of the Hittites is now placed beyond question. Their ancient enemies, the Egyptians and the Assyrians, had too much to do with them to permit of silence; and what they have told us has restored this ancient people to their place in history. "The Hittites," writes Professor Sayce, "were a people with yellow skins and 'Mongoloid' features, whose receding

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\* *Ibid.*, p. 11.

foreheads, oblique eyes, and protruding upper jaws are represented as faithfully on their own monuments as they are on those of Egypt, so that we cannot accuse the Egyptian artists of caricaturing their enemies. If the Egyptians have made the Hittites ugly, it is because they were so in reality.\* They are called by the Egyptians Kheta, or Khata; and on the Assyrian monuments are named Khatti, or Khate.

Two other peoples are mentioned as being in Palestine at the period of Abraham's sojourn. The land is called "the land of Canaan." We are told that "the Canaanite was then in the land," the words apparently indicating that, not only had the Canaanites, or—to use the name by which they were known to classical antiquity—the Phœnicians, arrived by that time in the country, but that they had also obtained the mastery. This is borne out by entirely independent ancient testimony. The Canaanites, or Phœnicians, entered Palestine, according to Herodotus, long before the time of Abraham. He says that the Syrians placed the date of the foundation of their principal temple 2,300 years before his visit. This would fix their arrival in the country as not later than 2,800 years B.C. That their conquest had gradually extended from their settlements on the sea-coast to the interior of the country seems also to be borne out by the name given to the land in the Tel-el-Amarna tablets. It is called *Mat-Kinahi*, or "the land of the Canaanites," or "of Canaan," the very name which Palestine bears in Genesis.

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\* *Ibid.*, p. 15.

The Philistines are mentioned (Genesis xxi. 32-34) as being also in the land during Abraham's sojourn. The accuracy of this representation has been denied by German scholars such as Bertheau and Knobel; but here also the Scripture has been vindicated. Speaking of this people, Maspero says:\* "It is certain that in the earliest period, at least, of their sojourn in Syria, as well as in that before their capture by Rameses III., they were successful in sea-fights, but the memory of only one of their expeditions has come down to us: *a squadron of theirs having sailed from Ascalon somewhere towards the end of the Twelfth dynasty*, succeeded in destroying the Sidonian fleet, and pillaging Sidon itself." The days of the Twelfth dynasty were the days of Abraham. The Philistines were, therefore, already in the land. One of the very latest conclusions regarding this people is that of Prof. Flinders Petrie in his *History of Egypt*. He finds that the relationships mentioned in the 10th chapter of Genesis, as existing between the Egyptians, the Canaanites, and the Philistines are borne out by the most ancient monuments of Egypt.†

We have now completed our present survey of the tribute which true discovery is laying at the feet of this part of the Scripture history. There never was an age which has contributed so much as our own has done to confirm faith in the absolute accuracy of the Word of God. The conflict over the Bible has largely ceased to be a conflict between faith and un-

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\* *The Struggles of the Nations*, p. 700. † Vol. 1., pp. 14, 15.

belief: it is fast becoming a struggle between science and a vain-glorious scholasticism, which has set itself to erase from our records every trace of Divine interposition. The end is not yet. There are developments before us which will surprise and sadden. The faith of many will be tried. But, when we mark how God Himself has intervened on our behalf, how can we despair? These triumphs of research have been strangely timed for this day of need; and if God be for us, who can stand against us?

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE TIMES OF ISAAC AND OF JACOB.

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IN the volume which bears the title "Authority and Archæology," Dr. Driver tries to interpose some hastily wrapped-up bundles of eager arguments between the battering-ram of archæology and the tottering walls of the higher criticism. He maintains that nothing has been discovered which proves that the Patriarchs ever existed, or that there ever was a Joseph who saved Egypt, or that any portion of the earlier narratives of the Bible was written by a contemporary—that is, in other words, has been so written as to show that it must be accepted as history.

Our previous pages have revealed how much there is to justify the professor's alarm. We have seen so-called myth assume the clear-cut, harmonious features

of universally remembered facts. Abraham's story (which is said to belong to that most airy form of romance called legend and folk-lore), has taken us at every step right into the life of the time. The incidents of his life suddenly mingle with what we now know to be the political history of that far-off day. Contemporaries of his are mentioned, whose names, positions, and relationships are exactly those which a remarkable discovery has recently revealed; and, as we company with this far-travelled man, we find ourselves in the Babylonia, the Palestine, and the Egypt, not of a later time, but of that very period, 2,000 B.C. To ask us to pay no heed to all this because we have not met any reference to Abraham himself upon the monuments is a childish device. The critics' contention is that Genesis is not history; and, tried by the severest of all possible tests—confronting it with the unveiled life, and the recovered story of those very times—we find that it *is* history. It shows us the same things which we find recorded upon the historic page; and it must have been written by one who had the fullest and most exact information that any contemporary could possess. In the story which we now resume, the thunder of the battering-ram will still be heard, and we shall have to mark how it fares with another part of the critical bulwarks. There is not much, indeed, in what is recorded of the lives of Jacob and of Isaac which enables us to test the Bible account. But the little which we find there is amply sufficient to display its character. We are told that, when

God first called Abraham, he was apparently either unable to break right away from his father's house, or his relatives were unable to bear the thought of parting with him. But, whether he persuaded them to leave the ancient fatherland and to accompany him, or whether, finding Abram resolved to quit Ur of the Chaldees, they themselves determined to throw in their lot with his, the whole family of Terah migrated from Ur to Haran, or Charran. When the call came again to Abram, he went forth accompanied by Lot only. The rest of the family remained at Haran. It seems to have been a final settlement. When Abraham sends his servant to take a wife for Isaac from among his own people, he sends to Haran, not to Ur. In the next generation, when Jacob requires a safe refuge from Esau's revenge, Rebekah sends him to her brother Laban, who is still residing at Haran. Now this immigration of a new race might be a historical fact, and yet have left no race which should be recognisable to-day. But if there are traces of it, and traces so marvellously distinct and conclusive as to have awakened the astonishment of men who are unbelievers, then we shall have cause again to mark God's purpose that, dark as the last times may otherwise be, faith in His Word shall not be allowed to fail.

Haran lies at the meeting of the great commercial highways in the north of Mesopotamia. It "was," says Dr. Harper, \* "The frontier town of Babylonia, commanding both the roads and the fords of the

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\* *The Bible and Modern Discoveries*, p. 4.

Euphrates. The word Haran means 'road.' Abram would here be brought into contact with Semitic traders, as it was the great caravan road to Damascus and Egypt." "The road he traversed," writes Sayce, "had been trodden for centuries by soldiers and traders, and civil officials, by Babylonians making their way to Canaan, and by Canaanites intending to settle in Babylonia for the sake of trade."\*

It is situated, says one, in "a beautiful stretch of country, which lies below Mount Masius, between the Khabour and the Euphrates." It is described by Ainsworth † as "very fertile," and "a well-known granary of rice." It possesses also an abundant supply of water, which attracts the Arabs, and which would largely account for the permanent settling of the Terahites, as we may call the family out of which Abram had come. The city itself, which bears this name, is, and has long been, desolate. But there are significant indications that Haran was just such a place as the family of Terah would find a fit resting-place in. "The plain was very fertile," says Ainsworth, "and is a well-known granary of rice. . . . It is watered and irrigated by numerous streams and artificial channels." There is a well in the neighbourhood which is called by the natives, "the well of Rebekah." There is nothing to distinguish it from the other wells of the district except limestone slabs, the accumulation of which shows that the well must have been in use from remote times. It may have been that Laban's homestead was placed

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\* *Early Religion of Israel*, p. 38. † *The Euphrates Expedition*, Vol. I., p. 203.

close by, and that at this very spot Eliezer lifted up his heart in silent prayer to God, and bowed in fervent thanksgiving when the sign he had asked was given, and the maid not only gave him drink, but also quenched the thirst of the camels, and of the servants who were with him.

Of the ancient city itself little remains. When Ainsworth visited it, he found the remnants of a castle, a long stretch of dilapidated walls, and ruins of considerable extent. These mounds have not hitherto been explored, and they are therefore unable at present to tell us anything. But, fortunately, the position of the city, lying upon the ancient highways, has led to frequent mention of it in the Assyrian and Babylonian monuments.

But recent research has laid bare another reason for the disinclination of Abram's kindred to go further with him in his journey or to return to their ancient home. We are told in Scripture that the father of all them that believe came out from an idolatrous home (Joshua xxiv. 2). This is borne out by two incidents narrated in the history of Jacob. Rachel, when Jacob and his household fled, took with her her father's gods; and those idols were so highly prized by Laban that he hurriedly got together an armed force and pursued after Jacob in the hope of recovering them. The second incident is Jacob's commanding his household to put away their strange gods. They surrendered them and he "hid them under the oak which was by Shechem" (Genesis xxxv. 4). Now, being idolators, *Terah's household*



EASTERN WOMEN AT A WELL.

found in Haran the religion to which they had been accustomed in Ur. "Its temple was dedicated to the Babylonian moon-god like the temple of Ur. Between Ur and Haran there was thus a natural connection, and a native of Ur would have found himself more at home in Haran than in any other city of the world."\* Sin, the moon-god, is called in an inscription of 800 B.C., "the Lord of Haran."

Here, then, these recent discoveries suddenly reveal to us that what is being confidently set down as pure romance is veritable history. The story is utterly of a piece with the times. When discovery lifts the veil, and we are enabled to see the places and the circumstances for ourselves, we see everything to be intelligible and reasonable. We understand the actions that are merely indicated in Scripture, but the motives for which are now plainly disclosed. Abram's kindred found the advantages of the place, and the attractions of the old religion too strong for the earlier promptings of affection. And so they stay, and he passes on attended only by his own household and by Lot, who clings to him. It has often happened that a man's story or testimony has been doubted and denied. But it has never happened that, when it has been found to fit in so completely with facts, the story or testimony was any longer denied or doubted. Common sense and conscience have recognised it as true, and criticism will contend in vain against the verdict which these deliver here.

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\* Sayce, *The Higher Criticism and the Verdict of the Monuments*, p. 159.

There is also another striking testimony that the migration and sojourn were facts, and that, in this early portion of Genesis, we are reading history, and not romance. If Abram's kindred really settled, and increased, and became important personages in this district by reason of their wealth and possibly also of their personal worth, we might expect to find some references to their presence and importance. If inscriptions were discovered which spoke of the victories in that region of the Assyrian armies, and if individuals were there mentioned by name, we might expect that the names would reveal the presence of a Hebrew element in the population. Now this is exactly what has happened. Long ago, Oppert pointed out this curious feature; and Schrader, who while admitting, as he is forced to do, the testimony of the inscriptions to the historical truth of the Scriptures, does his best to shield the distressed critics, says in a note to his comments on Genesis: "We take this opportunity of remarking that in the Assyrian inscriptions in the districts of the Middle Euphrates—on the east side of that river, in Bit-Adin and higher up towards the Tigris, we often meet with names whose Kanaanite type" (that is, Phœnician, or Hebrew type) "is at once obvious, and has long been recognised. . . . Whence have these Kanaanitish names drifted hither? Or are they the traces which yet remain that the Kanaanites, or, properly speaking, the Hebrews, formerly rested in this region (Haran) for a time, as they migrated from Ur-Mughair to Kanaan, not

without permanently leaving settlers behind them?"\* He again refers to this matter when noticing the statement in Genesis xi. 31, that Terah and his family abode in Haran. "From this statement," he says: "We conclude that Abraham and his tribal companions made a considerable stay in this region—between Belias and Euphrates. With this tallies the fact that even in the more ancient Assyrian inscriptions there occur proper names which decidedly wear a Kanaanite and not an Aramaic type." †

Here Schrader is compelled to part company with his critical friends. The results recorded by his science make it utterly impossible for him to believe that the Scripture account of Abraham is myth or folk-lore. That theory goes to pieces when it strikes against stubborn facts like these. The Scripture says that Terah's family abode in Haran; and now Assyriology steps in and explains how it was that their disinclination to part with Abraham, their beloved and honoured kinsman—a disinclination which had led them to sacrifice much and to travel far—is finally overcome. It then, as if this were not enough, brings us proofs that men of their nationality were actually there, that they dwelt in Haran along with the original inhabitants, and that they rose to prominence among them. Could any confirmation of ancient references be more complete, and is there any more effectual test to distinguish history from fable?

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\* *Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament*, Vol. I., p. 95.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 119, 120.

We may notice another minute, but most significant confirmation of the earlier patriarchal history. In Genesis xxx. 20, we are told that Leah names her sixth son Zebulun. Our translation runs:—"And Leah said: God hath endowed me with a good dowry; now will my husband dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons; and she called his name Zebulun." The word which is translated "dwell" is *Zabal*. But *Zabal* is not used elsewhere in this sense of dwelling, and the passage has been long a difficulty to Hebrew scholars. How great their difficulty was may be estimated by Dr. Payne Smith's note on the verse in Bishop Ellicott's *Old Testament Commentary for English Readers*. He says:—"Leah is more than usually obscure in the reasons she gives for this name." He then speaks of the word *Zabal* as one of which "there is no trace," and says that the meaning "dwelling," given to Zebulun in the margin of our Bibles finds no support. The recovered language of Assyria and Babylonia has removed the difficulty. *Zabal* is an Assyrian word which means "to honour," "to be high" in one's esteem. As the verse stands now, it represents Leah as expressing a hope which was not fulfilled, for Jacob did not forsake Rachel and dwell with Leah. Besides, too, the connection between the first and the latter parts of the verse are far from clear, if the meaning "dwell" is to be given to the word. But translating, "Now will my husband honour me," everything is plain. God had acted towards Leah as a kind father. He had given her a large and splendid dowry in these

six sons. And now she realizes that she has a place in her husband's esteem from which no one can remove her. But this welcome explanation comes to us with additional light. *It proves that, in these very words of Genesis, we have the impress of truth.* Leah is said to be a member of a tribe that has come out of Babylonia, and that she speaks that ancient language which is identical with the Assyrian of the time. And here is the confirmation. Treating her words as later Hebrew, they yield no right meaning. Taking them for what the Scripture plainly implies that they were, the meaning instantly becomes clear.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOSEPH.



## CHAPTER I.

### THE VALUE OF THE HISTORY.

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STRIKING and convincing as the few points are to which we have just referred, we have really to pass over those two generations before we find another part of the sacred narrative which enables us to once more fully display its minute, unfailing, and continuous accuracy. Isaac's life was lived in the quiet of an unambitious prosperity. It was unmarked by any event that links his name to the history of the time. On the other hand, the even tenor of Jacob's way was soon broken. He had to flee from the home of his childhood, and to pass a considerable portion of his life in a strange land. But that land was then as far removed from the scenes of what we now call history, as the plains on which he spent his youth. It is only in the person of his best loved son that the life of the chosen race breaks in again upon that of the great peoples of the time, and links once more the experiences of the Hebrews with the history of the world.

The story of Joseph forms one of the most beautiful and touching pictures contained in the entire Word of God. It is also filled with incidents which invest it with the deepest interest. His life was marked by vicissitudes such as none of his

house, for three generations at least, had known. He was brought lower, and he rose higher than his fathers. And, just as the gold that is passed through the fire shines brighter, there is a glory about this life which we fail to mark in theirs. Even Abraham's trust seems to be outshone by Joseph's fellowship with God. There is a light of compassion in his eye, and an imperial sweep in his thought, which make him stand alone in the whole of Old Testament story.

Altogether apart, then, from the general claims of Scripture, we have an interest in determining whether this picture is a reality, or whether it is merely the offspring of imagination. It means something to know that such a life as that was really lived. It is something to be assured that this man was brought so low only to be raised the higher, that he was permitted to suffer only that he might be able to reign. If God did, in very truth, so guide and bless him, there is light there for our deepest darkness, and a well of consolation just where we need its waters most. But a still larger issue hangs upon the historical character of this part of Genesis. The reader is, no doubt, acquainted with the fact that we have types of Christ in the history of the Old Testament, as well as in its rites and ceremonies. In the story of many a deliverance, Israel had a prophecy of the days of the Messiah. There is light for ourselves now in these experiences, and they will yet minister conviction and hope to the Jews of the latter day when the veil will be lifted, and when they

will see Christ everywhere in the sacred Record. Take, for example, the life of Moses. In his wonderful preservation in childhood from the power which had decreed his destruction; in the rejection, by Israel, of the man who confessed his brotherhood with, and left the side of royalty to bear the burden and champion the cause of, the slave; in the bringing back, after so long a time, and from a distant land "this very Moses, whom they refused, saying, 'who made thee a ruler and a judge?'"—in the bringing back of *him* to break their chains and to end their misery—who does not see in all that the outlines of the story of Jesus? And does it not remove our difficulties to-day to note that, in Israel's rejection of Christ, history is only repeating itself, and that in the final acknowledgment and triumph of Moses, we have a pledge of Christ's return and coming glory?

The picture of the Redeemer, presented in the life of Joseph, is still fuller, and bears still more plainly the impress of the Divine hand. The ties which bind Joseph to those whom he is to save, are closer than in the case of Moses: they are literally his brethren, begotten of the same father, and brought up under the same roof with him. They hate him, and they resolve upon his death. They imagine, as the Jews did when they took counsel against Jesus, that death will blight all the promise of coming greatness. They said, "We shall see what will become of his dreams," and yet they were, nevertheless, ensuring the fulfilment of them. Joseph was thrust out into another land, as Jesus and His

people have been thrust out into the midst of the Gentiles. Joseph went there to bless the Egyptians, and, eventually, to bless the brethren also that hated and sold him; and here, he was again the type of Him who has so greatly blessed the Gentiles; and who will, by-and-bye, bless Israel also. We need not pursue the analogy. We have seen enough to show how mightily it may afterwards tell upon the heart and conscience of these brethren of Jesus according to the flesh. But we may add that the picture meanwhile serves ourselves. The tracing of it is the decipherment of a prophecy, and our hope grows into assurance as we gaze. We say, so much has been fulfilled. The parallel holds here and here. It will go on! The whole will be accomplished. The day will come when the brethren of Jesus will seek Him in their need, as the brethren of Joseph sought the deliverer whom they had wronged.

Now all this gives increased urgency to the question whether we have here history or romance. Was this in very truth a human experience, guided and shaped by the hand of God? Did God really fashion this type, looking onward to the coming of His Son—the promised Seed of Abraham? To these questions various answers are given. Ewald tells us that this is not history. He asserts that it was composed by an Ephraimite during the contentions of his tribe with that of Judah, and that its evident purpose was to glorify the ancestor of the Ephraimites at the expense of the fathers of the other tribes. Bleek is not of this opinion. He

holds that Ewald's view "is quite inadmissible," and rightly points to the fact that this history has been handed down to us, not by Ephraim, but by Judah, the very people who, if Ewald's guess were right, would have rejected and abhorred it. But Bleek, in common with the most moderate of the critics, maintains that the story of Joseph, like the rest of the Pentateuch, is a patchwork. They are by no means agreed as to the number of writers who were concerned in the work, or as to the times in which these imaginary writers lived; but they all alike believe in a complex authorship. Indeed, their Pentateuch is the most curious piece of mosaic that was ever imagined by man. One writer drew up the original narrative, perhaps in the time of Samuel, perhaps earlier, perhaps later. A century or two afterwards another stuck in a few verses here, and a chapter—sometimes two or three chapters—there. A century or two rolled on again, and then another writer ventured to enlarge the so-called sacred book, adorning the work by various additions, sometimes contenting himself with the composition of a verse, sometimes of even half a verse. Ewald maintains that the life of Joseph is the work of five different writers.

## CHAPTER II.

THE CAPTURE OF JOSEPH.  

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WHAT value is to be assigned to records manipulated in such a fashion as that? A history of Joseph, written in the time of Samuel, that is 600 years after the events, must have been, even at the beginning, a very legendary affair. And, if it were added to and enlarged 400 and 600 years after that again, he would be a bold man who, with such a theory, would ask us to accept the book as a record of fact. But we now propose to test the story of Joseph as we have tested the story of Abraham. We shall confront it with the very times with which it professes to deal. If we discover that it presents a picture altogether foreign to that time, and that the Palestine and the Egypt of which it speaks, are not the Palestine and the Egypt of 1800 B.C., when Joseph is said to have lived, but the Palestine and the Egypt of a time six, or eight, or ten centuries afterwards—then we shall have—sorrowfully it may be, yet honestly and fully—to confess that for once, at least, the critics are right. But if, on the other hand, these countries are, in every lineament, the countries of the time assigned to Joseph, then we shall have tried the pretensions of the critics, as well as the claims of Scripture. The latter will stand, and the former will fall. The ark of the Lord was

brought into the temple of Dagon, and the Philistines rejoiced that the glory of Jehovah had paled before that of their idol. But, "when they arose early in the morning, behold Dagon was fallen on his face before the ark of the Lord." They set him up again, but only to prepare him for a heavier fate. The next morning "the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him." The book of God has been brought, with quite as mighty a jubilation, into the sanctuary of the higher criticism. But it has come to be glorified, not to be abased. Dagon will fall. He may be set up again: but it will only be to meet a mightier disaster.

We are told that "Israel loved Joseph because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a coat of colours." This circumstance might be supposed to be of too trivial a kind to be cited either for or against the character of the narrative. But Jacob would hardly have clad his beloved son in raiment which would have made him an object of ridicule. The gift was one which the customs of the place and of the time rendered a peculiar mark of honour. When that is noted this apparently insignificant circumstance assumes sudden importance. *Was* the wearing of such a garment a fashion of the Syria of the period? Had it been implied that it was the custom of Egypt, we should have had there a mark of ignorance of the time. *But it is distinctly true of the Syria of the time.* "The general character of Egyptian dress," says Erman, in his *Life in Ancient*

*Egypt*, "is in direct contrast to that which we meet with at the same time in North Syria. The Syrians wore narrow, close-fitting, plain clothes, in which dark blue threads alternated with dark red, and these were generally adorned with rich embroidery. In *Egypt* wide robes with many folds of white transparent linen were worn, without any adornment."\* The tombs at Beni-Hassan represent captive Jebusites clothed in this very fashion, and a Syrian ambassador is clad in a garment woven of alternate threads of blue and red. The paintings in the Egyptian tombs, whose colours are as fresh to-day as when they were first laid on by the artist's brush, have preserved for us the style and pattern of those ancient garments. The same monuments show us both men and women from Syria clad in garments in which red, blue, and white alternate. If our readers will turn back to page 117 of this volume, they will find this shown in the representation of "the arrival of Semites in *Egypt*." Both men and women are clad in what is manifestly their best attire, seeing that they are being presented with great ceremony to the Governor of the district. But that attire, as the reader will observe, is this of diversely coloured garments. It must have been a strange chance that one of the host of writers who move to and fro in critical dreams should have hit upon that characteristic feature of the Palestine of the time; and that, though living a thousand years after, he should not merely have escaped blunders in specify-

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\* Pp. 216, 217.

ing the fashions of so remote an age, but should have also laid his finger upon what was really a high mark of honour in that place and time. The critics are much too modest. Their substitutes for a genuine revelation are quite as marvellous as the reality. Such men as these must have been ought no longer to be hidden away behind the algebraic formulæ, P. J. E., and the rest. They should be suffered no longer to remain unknown quantities; and we suggest that the critics should undertake, as their next labour, the clothing of these shades with flesh and blood, and the finding for them of a local habitation and a name.

We note, next, the impress of perfect truth in the circumstances connected with Joseph's capture. The Palestine into which the sacred writer takes us is still the Palestine of that time, and *of that time only*. It is a land of extensive and unforbidden pasturage. Joseph goes to Shechem in search of his brethren, and wanders about the valleys as in some vast solitude. He sees nothing of his brethren, nor of the flocks which they tend. There is apparently no one near of whom he may inquire, and he obtains information only by meeting a chance wayfarer. When he reaches Dothan, it is much the same. The country seems to be as sparsely populated then as now in its comparative desolation. Joseph's brethren note his approach on the distant horizon; and they have abundant leisure to talk over and to complete their plans before his arrival. Now, as we have already seen, that *was* the condition of

the Palestine of the time. It was not so with the Palestine of the Exodus. The country was then full of warlike tribes. It was covered with great cities, which were girded with cyclopean walls that towered up to heaven. Nor was it the Palestine of the time of Israel's sojourn in Egypt; for then the Hittites ruled in the land, and measured their strength with that of Egypt herself, the Queen of the nations. Was it possible for a writer, or writers, whose conception of Palestine must have been fashioned by the Palestine of their own time, to divest their mind of those notions, and to *paint unconsciously* the Palestine of this very time? Even in the case of Moses, inspiration alone can explain the picture. It is the mind, the consciousness (so to speak), of the Spirit of God that is reflected in the history, and from this cause alone it is that the history never errs, even in the minutest detail. But, if it was impossible for Moses to paint that picture unaided, what shall we say of its being painted by men six hundred, or a thousand, years later?

It may be noted also, that every fresh addition to our knowledge of Palestine increases our astonishment at the fulness and accuracy of the picture, which is implied rather than painted in the Scripture narrative. The valley of Shechem, which opens out into the plain of Mukhna, is said to be unrivalled in beauty. The Mahommedan residents celebrate its praises in song, and quote Mohammed as saying that it is "the place beloved by Allah above all other places," and that "His blessing rests upon it continually."

Through that valley the sons of Jacob had passed, feeding their flocks by the way, and then spread themselves out upon the plain beyond. The pastures of the Mukhna were either exhausted or impoverished, and they then proceeded northward to Dothan, which still bears the ancient name. All travellers speak of its remarkable fertility. "It is obvious," says Robinson, "that Joseph's brethren well knew the best places of pasturage. They had exhausted that of Mukhna, and had afterwards repaired to the still finer pastures here around Dothan." "The neighbourhood affords," Dr. Thomson remarks, "the very best pasturage." "Just beneath Tell Dothan, which still preserves its name," says Canon Tristram,\* "is the little oblong plain, containing the best pasturage in the country, and well chosen by Jacob's sons, when they had exhausted for a time the wider plain of Shechem." The plain is almost entirely free from cactus, and, previous to 1860, when the place was devastated by the troops of the Kaimakan of Nablous, it might have been described as an orchard. It was planted with lemon, orange, and pomegranate trees.

Both Shechem and Dothan, therefore, were places to which shepherds with undisputed right to unlimited pasturage, would naturally guide their flocks. I have now, however, to call attention to a feature in the sacred narrative which cannot by any possibility be reconciled with the opinion that Genesis is a patchwork. It will be noticed that the sending of

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\* *The Land of Israel*, p. 134.

Joseph is closely connected with the statement that his brethren were pasturing their flocks *at Shechem*. "And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here am I. And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem" (Genesis xxxvii. 12-14).

Now *what was there at Shechem* to excite such uneasiness in Jacob that he must send to see how they fare? He had troops of servants; and he might have dispatched one or more of these. But he plainly desires intelligence that can be got through a discerning eye, and from truthful lips, and so he risks sending his well-beloved son. But again I ask: What was there at Shechem to beget such anxiety? Was there any special danger or temptation in that neighbourhood? That is a question which even those, to whom the book of Genesis has long been familiar reading, may not be able to answer. But when we turn to chapter xxxiv., we find a sudden light cast upon this part of the patriarchal history. It was at Shechem (verses 25-30) that Simeon and Levi had committed that terrible atrocity. They had utterly exterminated the male population, and had taken captive the women and the children, and seized upon the cattle and every moveable article of value which the place contained. That deed of horror could

not be forgotten ; and when Jacob heard that his sons were again in that neighbourhood, his anxiety can easily be imagined. There might be attempted reprisals by the relatives and friends of the slain ; or there might be reproaches and insults, and these might once more kindle the fires of fierce and deadly Israelitish hate. And so Jacob sends his trusty son so that he may know exactly how matters are. That this is the explanation, no one who has read through Genesis can doubt. But there is no explanation given here, nor the slightest shadow of a hint to suggest an explanation. The writer takes it for granted that his readers will remember and place the two things together. Could there possibly be a stronger demonstration of utter unity of authorship ? Could anything make it plainer that we have to do here with one writer and not with many ? How otherwise could the statements and the very phrases of chapter xxxvii. make this subtle answer to the statements and the phrases of chapter xxxiv. ?

There are other two features in the narrative which are also specially illustrated and confirmed by modern research. We are told that Joseph was lowered into a pit. Dr. Thomson, in an early edition of *The Land and the Book*, remarks that he is not aware of the existence of ancient cisterns at Dothan. But, since then, Mr. Anderson has discovered numerous cisterns hewn in the rock, and which, being formed in the shape of a bottle with a narrow opening at the top, were admirably fitted to prevent the escape of any one unfortunate enough to be confined in them.

“Major Conder mentions two wells very near together, and in fact there are many cisterns of this kind, contracted towards the top in the shape of a bottle, and for the most part dry even in the winter. One in particular gives its name to the khan close by, ‘the Khan of Joseph’s pit.’”\* The second feature to which I refer, is the advent of the Midianite merchants. How was it that these happened to come upon the scene, and to give a new direction to the malice of Joseph’s brethren? There is nothing in the Scripture to explain their presence. We are told only that, “behold, a company of Ishmaelites came from Gilead with their camels, bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt” (Genesis xxxvii. 25). The mystery, however, has received a full explanation. It is now known that Dothan lies on what has always been the commercial route from the east to Egypt. Robinson found many traces of the ancient road, and it is still followed by the same tribes to-day. “The caravans,” says Dr. Thomson, “come up the Ghor Beisan, pass by Zer’in and Lejjûn, enter the hill country by the wady of Dothaim, and thence go on to Ramleh, Gaza, and Egypt.” “It is worthy of remark,” he adds, “that these modern Ishmaelites would not now hesitate to make just such a purchase (as that of Joseph), and actually do in certain parts of the country.”

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\* Rev. H. G. Tomkins, *The Life and Times of Joseph*, p. 35.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE MIDIANITES AND THEIR MERCHANDISE.

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SO far the narrative is an absolutely perfect reflection of the Palestine of the time. But this slight reference to the Midianite merchants leads us further. They are carrying "spicery, balm, and myrrh," down to Egypt. Is there a market for them there? And are they in such demand at this time that these commodities should be selected before all others, as sure to fetch a price which would remunerate the traders for their long and perilous journey? They stop to buy a slave. They pay down for him twenty shekels of silver. They have him to feed, and possibly to carry, till they reach Egypt. Was there such a market for slaves there, as to make that, too, worth their while?

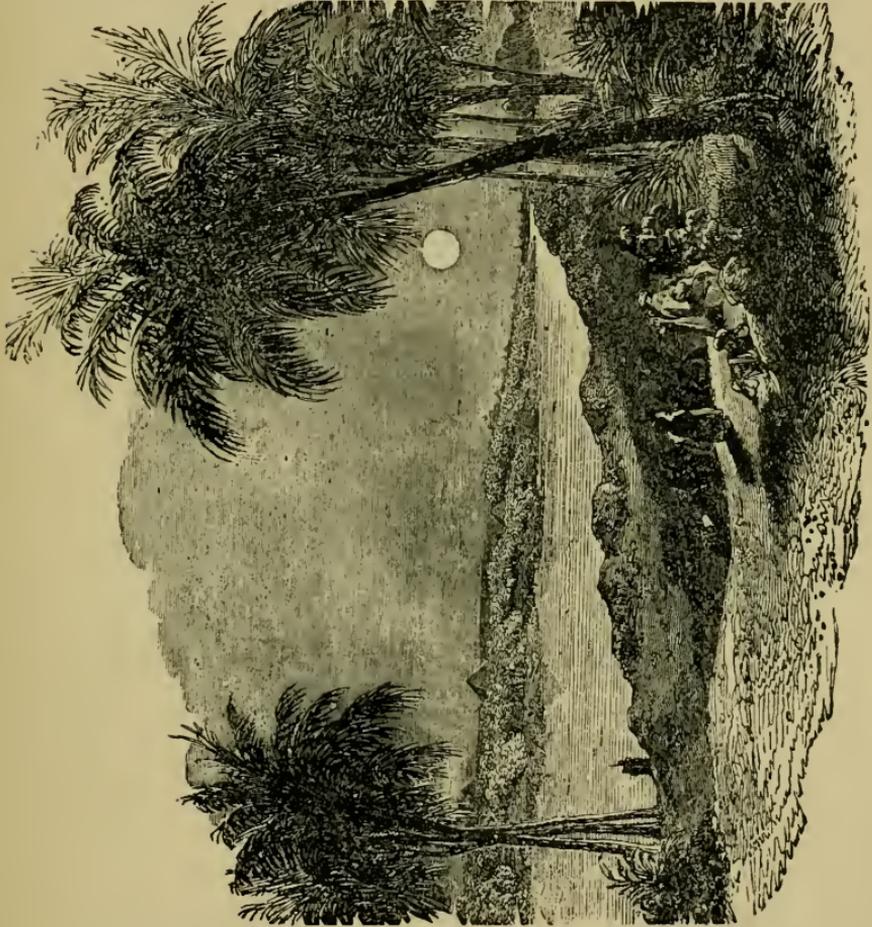
In these questions we lay our finger upon some of the most striking confirmations we have yet met with. The needs of Egypt, rendered great and numerous by its advanced civilization, were met *by just such caravans as these*. Ebers, one of the greatest authorities on Egyptology, says that the more we study the authentic history of Egypt in its sculptured monuments and written documents, the more we see the Egyptian attached to the soil of his fatherland, and full of dislike for distant journeys. What they required to purchase from foreigners, they procured

by means of the Arab merchants, those navigators of the desert. The eastern trade of Egypt, which is largely conducted by them even now, was in earlier times, and in the days of Joseph, wholly in their hands. We now learn that the trade was thoroughly organized, and that arrangements for the traffic were made in the most generous and elaborate fashion. "So early as the sixteenth dynasty"—about the very time of Joseph—"stations were formed," says Kalisch, "temples erected, and wells dug and protected in the Arabian Desert, for the benefit of those who had occasion to pass through it in their commercial travels." The products which the Ishmaelites bear with them are exactly those, too, for which there was a large and remunerative sale. The balm, for which Gilead was famous, was highly prized for the cure of wounds, and "was eagerly bought by the Egyptians." The perfumes were also in large request for embalming the dead; and the incense was used to an enormous extent in their religious ceremonies, and in purifying the air of sick chambers. This is shown by thousands of passages in the inscriptions. "Those published by Dümichen, from the Laboratory of Edfu," says Ebers, "are sufficient to prove that the Egyptians required for religious purposes alone, a multitude of perfumes and aromatic substances, which were brought to the country by foreign agency."\* The kings are represented on the monuments offering incense to the gods. A well-known manuscript mentions, among

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\* See his *Ägypten und die Bücher Mose's*, p. 288, &c.

the presents made by Rameses III. to the temple of his gods, 62 jars of white incense, 3,883 measures of incense, 83 jars and 1,100 *hins* of sweet balm, &c.



THE NILE.

Gums were also used by the Egyptian artists in the preparation of their colours. We read in the *Book of the Dead*, or the Funereal Ritual, the direction: “paint with *hesteb* in a solution of gum.” Inscriptions in the treasure chamber of Rhampsinit inform

us that the gum used came from Arabia, *and the land of Canaan*. Between two well-known trees of Arabia, sculptured on the monuments, there is a representation of a heap of grains of gum with the legend: "gum from Arabia." Beneath are two stone columns, between which are two weights in the form of animals with the words: "grains of gum from the land of Canaan."\* "Anubis," says the Rhind papyrus, "fills the head (of the mummies) with Syrian perfumes." To all this we may add that the very names of the two first articles mentioned, are found in the inscriptions of the laboratory of Edfu. They are embraced among the ingredients of a celebrated Egyptian perfume called *Kuphni*. The name of the third article, translated in our version myrrh (in reality *ladanum*),† has not yet been met with, but the article itself is often found at the bottom of tombs, and its odour has been detected among the perfumes used in embalming the dead.

These matters are in themselves of very slight importance; but let none imagine that the mention of them in the sacred narrative is to be judged of accordingly. It concerns us very little to know what the Midianites were carrying down into Egypt; but it concerns us much to know *that every one of those details is absolutely correct*. For it is just here where present-day theories attempt to weaken faith, and to sow the seeds of doubt. We are told that the spiritual purpose and teachings of Scripture are all

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\* *Ibid.*, note p. 291.

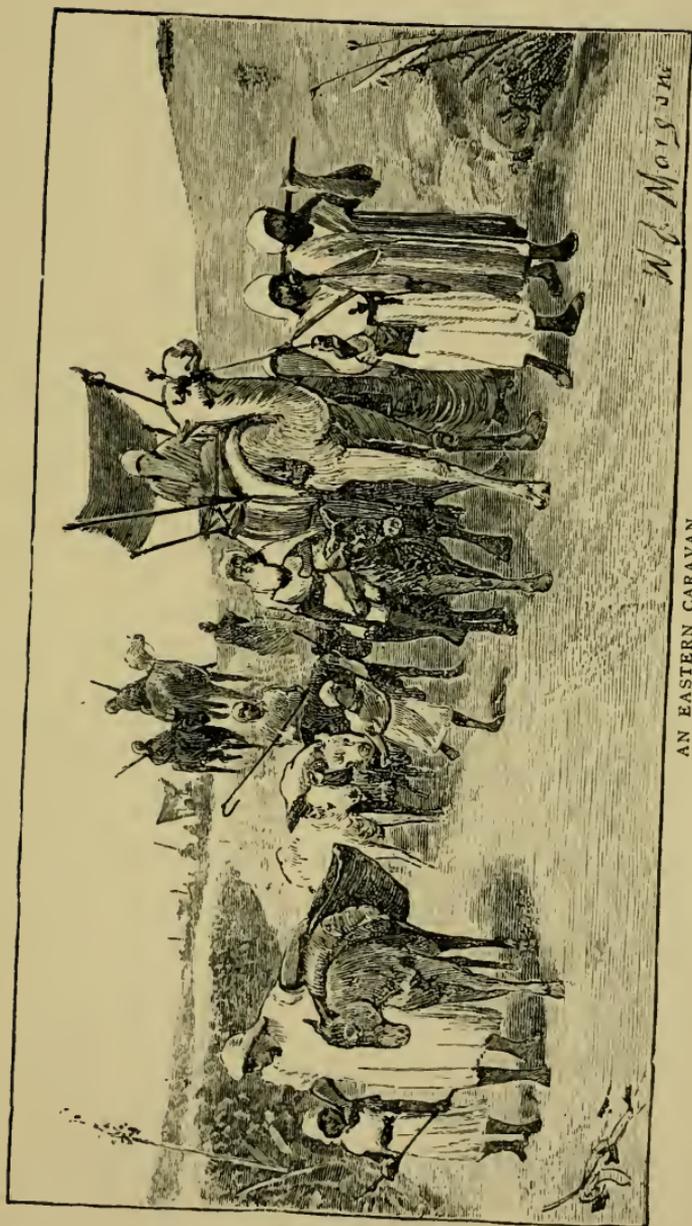
† A resinous juice collected from the *cistus creticus*, which grows in Crete and in Syria.

right, and that, perhaps, the main events recorded in the Scripture history may be regarded as having occurred; but that only a blind superstition—a senseless fetish worship—will expect every detail to be accurate, and will regard it as having proceeded from the unerring mind of God. Now investigation and discovery have laid bare facts, and these facts, as it were, step in and decide this controversy. The descriptions and the very allusions of Scripture are now set side by side with the times, the places, the customs, and the events with which they deal; and the verdict everywhere is what we find it to be here. The Scripture is *unfailingly and absolutely correct*. We never complete such an examination without having to exclaim, in the words of our Redeemer, “Thy word is truth!”

We have still one question to ask. We saw that the very advent of the Midianites suggested to Jacob’s sons the sale of their brother. This, as well as the fact that the Midianites close with the offer, implies the existence of a ready market, and that Syrian slaves were in considerable demand in Egypt. No inferences could be more in accord with facts. There was a constant and eager demand for slaves in Egypt. “The Egyptians,” says M. Chabas, “appear never to have had a sufficient supply of domestics: negroes, Bedouin, Syrians, Arabs, Lybians, islanders from the Mediterranean, Etruscans, and Greeks from Asia Minor,” are represented on the monuments. Documents of all epochs speak of fugitive slaves. Rewards are offered for their capture,

and the most ancient treaty which is known to exist, that made between Rameses II. and the Hittites, contains a clause that the fugitives who have found a refuge in Syria shall be sent back to Egypt. The high value set upon Syrian slaves characterises an age also that was much more ancient than that of Rameses II. Among the documents found in the ancient city discovered by Professor Petrie near the pyramid of Illahun was a will, part of which runs as follows: "I am making a title to the property to my wife—of all things given to me by my brother, the devoted servant of the superintendent of works, Ankhren, as to each article. She shall give it to any she desires of the children that she has borne me. I am giving her the four Eastern (Syrian) slaves that my brother gave me. She shall give them to whomsoever she will of her children."

Slaves were, consequently, in such demand that a special provision for their recovery is inserted in a solemn treaty with a foreign power. But the monuments shed a still fuller light upon the transaction at Dothan. Syrian slaves were in special request. Greece and Rome, as everyone acquainted with classic literature is aware, held the slaves brought from Syria in special esteem. The words *Syrus* and *Syra*, designating, respectively, male and female Syrian slaves, are constantly met with in the Greek and Latin comedies. But in this, as in so many things besides, Greece and Rome were merely copying the older and more perfect civilization of Egypt. So much were Syrians in demand there, that the Semitic



AN EASTERN CARAVAN.

term for slave was a word in common every-day use in Egypt, as one of the names by which their unfortunate bondmen were known. "From all time," writes M. J. Soury, in an article in the *Revue des deux Mondes*,\* "the Egyptians have held in peculiar esteem the services of Semitic slaves. Many ages before Aristophanes, as Chabas has said, the papyri of the Age of Rameses mention the classic 'Syrian.' It was not only spices and balms with which the caravans were laden that traversed Palestine on their way to Egypt; they also carried with them, for the markets of Memphis or of Thebes, choice slaves, rare subjects, real objects of luxury. In the crowded streets of the towns, Syrians and negroes ran before the chariots of rich citizens, clothed in linen, a gold cane or a whip in their hand, while they themselves drove their teams of horses." The fair complexion of the Hebrew lad would make him bring a high price in the slave-market. Ebers points this out, and says of the Egyptians: "Their complexion itself had become darkened through climatic influence and obscuration of the blood by admixture of race with blacks, for on the one hand we see, even on the oldest monuments, the men and women of rank painted more fair than the ordinary man; on the other hand, the word *ami*, 'the fair-complexioned,' stands distinctly for 'belonging to a higher class,' and, taken in opposition to *hon* and *hon-t* (male and female slave), used for 'free man' in the sentence 'fair people 5, slaves and female slaves

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\* 15th February, 1875, quoted by Vigouroux.

with their children 1,579.' It seems likely that the fair and goodly Joseph would not be regarded as an ignoble captive, but as high and well-born when 'stolen out of the land of the Hebrews.'" We can now understand how the thought sprang up in the breasts of those unscrupulous men to sell their brother into hopeless captivity; and, also, how God made use, even of an atrocious custom, and turned the arrival of the Midianites into a means of working deliverance for His servant, and of accomplishing His will.

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## CHAPTER IV.

## IN THE HOUSE OF POTIPHAR.

WE now go down with Joseph to Egypt, where, like himself and his father's house, we shall abide for some time. The journey through Palestine and along the desert, to the south of the Mediterranean Sea, is over. The caravan has entered lower Egypt. Joseph, in all likelihood not the only slave in possession of the Midianitish merchants, has been exposed for sale in the market-place. He has been seen and purchased, either by his new master or by some one acting on his behalf. He enters the home of the Egyptian noble, having, we may well believe, no great place to begin with. He is merely an additional "hand," and is turned over to assist in the work of some department of the great household.

But, if a man is "known of God," men are bound to take knowledge of him also. Whatsoever Joseph did, it prospered. The Hebrew lad became the admiration and the wonder of the palace. He reigned at last in Potiphar's home, as he was afterwards to reign in Egypt and over Potiphar himself.

Here, then, is a field broad enough to put to the test the character of Genesis. The language, the customs, the religion, and the life of ancient Egypt, by a long series of brilliant discoveries, have been brought fully into the light of day. We know them as the Israelites in the days of Samuel, or in the Babylonian Exile, did not know them. What knowledge *they* had, had come to them by tradition; whereas modern discovery has put us back into the very midst of the life itself. It is, consequently, impossible for this story to take us into the house of an Egyptian courtier, down into an Egyptian prison, up to the throne of the Pharaohs, and on through radical changes in the government of the land, without it being abundantly shown whether we have here romance, legend, or history.

I need hardly say that these fast accumulating confirmations of the Old Testament are far from welcome to all. There are some who remind us that, while the discoveries prove much, they do not prove everything, and that they do not, and cannot, demonstrate that the Bible is inspired. But this is a vain attempt to confuse the issue. The discoveries, certainly, do not prove everything; but they do not require to prove everything. Criticism has

challenged belief in inspiration *on the ground of alleged inaccuracies, mistakes, and contradictions*. The discoveries are proving that these allegations are unfounded, and that the inaccuracies, mistakes, and contradictions are on the side of the critics, and not on the side of the Bible. And to meet this formidable attack with complete success, *we have need of nothing more*. Criticism is not a direct assault upon inspiration, but upon the accuracy and the historical character of Scripture; and, if, in the face of this challenge, the truthfulness of the Bible is more marvellously displayed than ever, the Bible has once more triumphed, and the confusion, which, it was imagined, would be brought upon its friends, will rest upon its foes.

I have suffered myself to make this digression so that the issues of the conflict may be kept constantly before my readers. A cause is sometimes injured, if not lost, by an advocate's failure to see clearly what his witnesses prove. I have no desire that this best of causes should so suffer at my readers' hands, or at mine. Let us remember that every critical difficulty removed, as well as every critical allegation disproved, is a defeat for the opponents of revelation, and a victory for the Bible. We now enter upon the story of Joseph in Egypt. We are made acquainted with an Egypt in this history; and we have now to ask whether this is the Egypt of reality; in other words, is it the Egypt of the 18th century B.C.? Let us take, to begin with, the name of Joseph's master. It is given as Potiphar. Does this name bear the

stamp of the place and time, or does it indicate ignorance of both? The reply is full and satisfactory. It is an Egyptian name; and it is one which our present knowledge of ancient Egyptian enables us to translate and understand. Champollion found it in an ancient papyrus—the papyrus Calliaud. He says, in his commentary on the Egyptian text: “This proper name should be transcribed in Coptic letters *Peteprè* or *Petaphrè*, and we here recognise the hieroglyphic transcription of the name known as Potiphar, which, in the Coptic text of Genesis, is regularly written *Pétéphrè* like our hieroglyphic name.”\* The name means “consecrated to Ra,” the sun-god; and as Ra was one of the gods of lower Egypt, the name was just one which would naturally be met with in the neighbourhood of Memphis, or of On or Heliopolis, to which Joseph was brought by his Midianite masters. Had it been such a name, for example, as *Petèsi*, “consecrated to Isis;” or *Petammon*, “consecrated to Ammon” (names which are found in Greek writings), we should have had a name belonging to *upper* Egypt, where these divinities were worshipped, and a question would naturally have arisen how such a name could have been borne by a native of a different region.

Here, then, at the outset of the story of Joseph in Egypt, we meet one of those unobtrusive and, apparently, slight, corroborations which are, nevertheless, among the most important we can name. But we now come to a part of the description the

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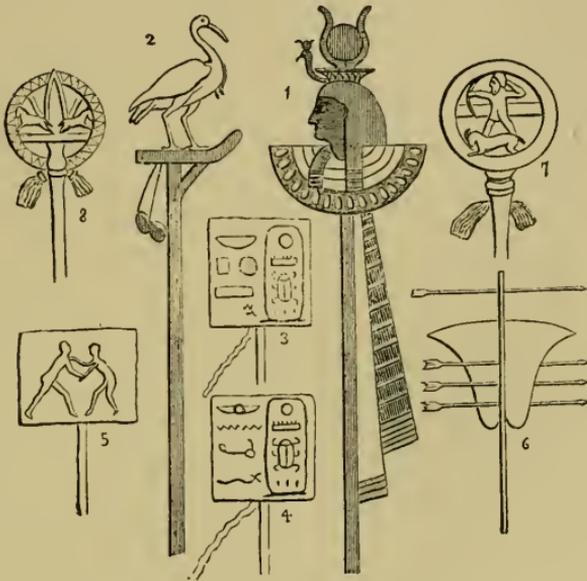
\* *Précis du système hiéroglyphique*, p. 177.

accuracy of which has been confidently challenged. Potiphar is called "an officer of Pharaoh" (Genesis xxxix. 1). The word translated "an officer" is literally "a *Eunuch*." It is used as synonymous with "courtier" throughout the whole of the Old Testament, and its use here has been declared to be a sure sign that the author of Genesis lived in a later age. It was urged that the writer, who was shown by the use of this term to belong to a late period, takes, without thought, a term in daily use in his own time as a designation of the court officials of the Jewish or Israelitish kings, and applies it to a court official in an entirely different age and country. To this it was natural to reply that the Hebrew court was following a more ancient Eastern custom, and that the term might be as properly applied to an officer of Pharaoh as to an officer of Ahab, or of Hezekiah. Von Bohlen, however, denied that eunuchs had ever existed in ancient Egypt, and refused to admit that the name could in any way have become a common designation for officials of the Egyptian court. This contention, like many another, it is impossible to repeat to-day. Eunuchs are figured both on the Assyrian and on the Egyptian monuments. In the former country they seem to have been exceedingly numerous. They occupy the highest official positions. They fight in chariots, and on horse-back. They are entrusted with the command of troops and of armies. At the close of the battle they receive the prisoners and the heads of the slain. They are always found

in the King's suite. They play an important part in religious ceremonies, where they appear to be invested with a sacred character; and, in Assyria, at least, there seems to have been no position short of the throne itself to which these objects of man's cruelty might not aspire.

Eunuchs are represented on the monuments of Egypt as they are upon those of Assyria. The cruel practice is, evidently, more ancient than both. Even the marriage of Potiphar was quite consistent with the literal truth of the epithet applied to him in Genesis. There are eunuchs in the East, to-day, who have harems; and in *The Romance of the Two Brothers*, an Egyptian papyrus as old as the time of Moses, we are told that Bitauou, who had been made a eunuch, was, nevertheless, married. We read that the Egyptian Divinity Num "gave him a companion to remain with him. Bitauou loved her greatly. She remained in his home while he spent his days in hunting the beasts of the country, which he brought into her presence, and laid down before her." There were other officials, however, besides eunuchs, in the court of the Pharaohs, as well as in that of the Assyrian kings; and it would seem that the name, even in the time of Joseph, had become a common term which was applied indiscriminately to the dignitaries of the court, and that our version, while not literal, is nevertheless correct in describing Potiphar as "an officer" of Pharaoh. He is also spoken of as "Captain of the Guard," the same title which is applied, for example, to Nebuzaradan, who

led the armies of Nebuchadnezzar against Jerusalem (II. Kings xxv. 8, II, 20). There was a corps of the



EGYPTIAN AND ASSYRIAN STANDARDS.

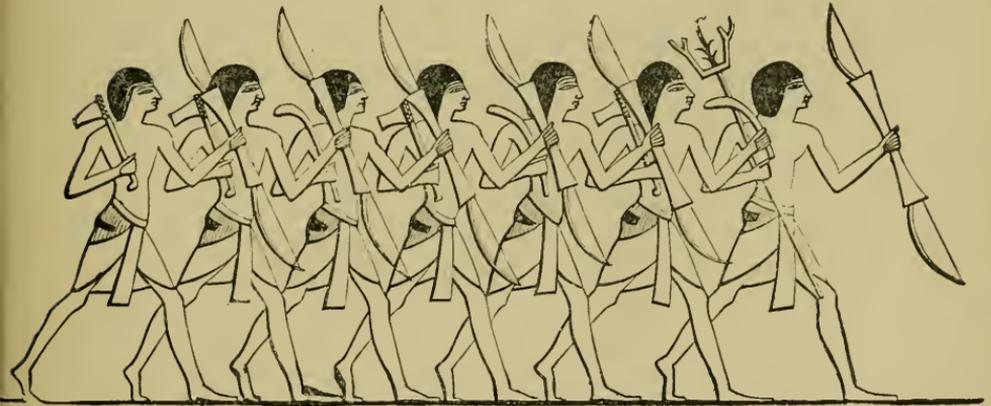
Egyptian army which bore the name of the *Madjaïu*. It was specially charged with police duties, and with the execution of the royal orders. In consequence of the position thus assigned to it, the corps gave its name, afterwards, to the entire armed force of the country. The Coptic term for soldiers is *matoi*. This name is taken from that of the *Madjaï*, or *Matoi*, a Libyan tribe whom the ancient Pharaohs conquered, and to whom they afterwards assigned this important post. The *Madjaïu* were treated with the greatest respect, and they are frequently called in the hieroglyphic documents "the two eyes of the

king of Upper Egypt," "the two ears of the king of Lower Egypt." The reader need hardly be reminded how these duties fit in with the existence of the prison in connection with Potiphar's house, and with the confinement in it of Pharaoh's officers. The indications clearly are that Potiphar was the officer who bore the name of *her Madjäu*, the commander of the *matoi*. The reader of the Bible indeed, putting the name "Captain of the Guard" side by side with the fact of the state prison being under Potiphar's charge, would arrive at the very conclusion as to his position which the monuments show that the chief of the *Matoi* held. Is not this another indication of the wonderful minuteness and precision of the reflection which the sacred page here gives us of the Egypt of the time?

There is another part of the description of Potiphar which must strike the reader as somewhat strange. Three times within the compass of five verses (xxxix. 1-5) he is described as an "Egyptian." What should we expect the Commander of the Guard of a King of Egypt to be but an Egyptian? And if so, why should we be told, and told again, that he is an Egyptian? We shall by-and-bye find a full explanation of this, and, meanwhile, I only ask the reader to make a mental note of it.

We pass now from Potiphar to the position given to Joseph; and here we find ourselves confronted by another custom of the place and time. He entered Potiphar's service as a slave, entirely new to the country and to its speech. His position, to begin

with, must almost necessarily have been of the lowest. But, we are told, whatever the lad did was done well, and whatever was committed to him prospered. God cheered him in his desolateness by tokens of His favour. When God's hand is with us in our toil, there is dignity in the meanest, and refreshment in the hardest, tasks. Joseph's labours thus became daily communion with the God of his fathers; the place of exile and of bondage grew to be a fatherland



EGYPTIAN DISCIPLINED TROOPS.

—a paradise. It was impossible that such a circumstance should not be noticed. Faithful and successful service like his, was too rare and too valuable not to be observed and used. He was advanced from post to post, till he was brought from the field and the farm into the palace of his master. And there, too, the cry was still: "come up higher;" for the same wondrous aptitude and success still attended the Hebrew bondman. It was so wonderful

that Potiphar was convinced there was but one explanation to the matter: he "saw that the hand of the LORD was with him." The master's conviction made the slave's progress still more rapid. Joseph became the head of the entire establishment. Everything was placed under his care. The nobleman's entire property was confided to the slave, as well as the management of his household and estates. "He left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat."

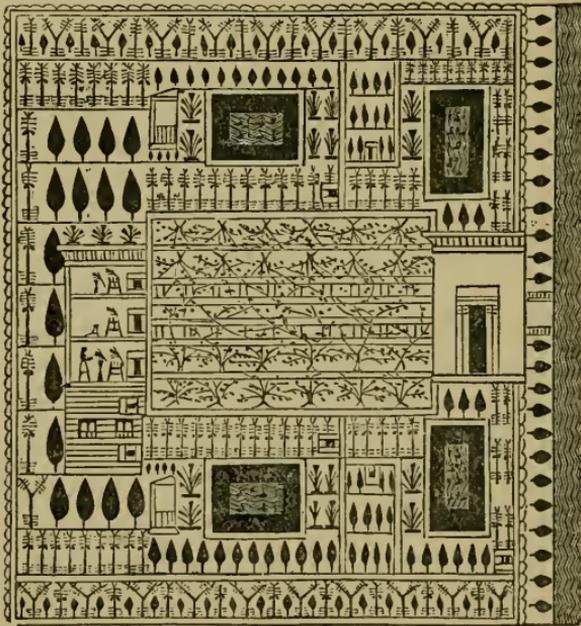
Now in all this advancement and lofty elevation, we have a distinct reflection of Egyptian civilization and society. It is first of all taken for granted that the post of superintendent was an institution of the country; and then it is assumed that it might be filled by a slave. The monuments show that in both these representations we have a faithful picture of the place and time. *Every great Egyptian family placed a chosen slave at the head of its establishment.* In the midst of the agricultural and pastoral scenes which are represented on the monuments, we frequently see the steward with a baton or writing-tablet in his hand, and a pencil or reed-pen behind his ear, counting the number of the sheaves or of the cattle. Frequently the steward, carrying the baton, the symbol of his office, is seen taking no part in the work, but presiding over the labour of the slaves and of the scribes. On one of the monuments, the steward is pictured as of much larger stature than the other servants (indicating his comparative greatness), and he is called *merpa*, "chief of the

house." *This was the very title borne by Joseph, who, as we are told in the Scripture, was made by Potiphar "overseer over his house."*

The monuments also indicate how great this position was. The chief steward ruled, just as Genesis tells us was the case with Joseph, both over the internal arrangements of the home, and over the labours in the field and in the forest. In the service of a man of Potiphar's rank, the responsibility which rested upon the chief steward was immense. The leading courtiers had most extensive possessions. One recounts on his tomb that he owned 405 oxen of one kind, 1,237 of a second, and 1,360 of a third. He had 1,220 calves of one kind, and 1,138 of another; 1,308 antelopes; 1,135 gazelles, etc. He also mentions geese, ducks, and pigeons by thousands. The houses of those grandees were correspondingly magnificent, and luxurious in their arrangements. The rich Egyptians delighted in tastefully arranged and highly cultivated gardens. We give a representation of one, which, with its symmetrically arranged trees and shrubs, and beds, and ponds, will speak for itself. They rejoiced, also, in numerous and splendidly appointed apartments. The furniture of the various chambers depicted on the monuments have supplied our modern upholstery with some of its choicest designs. The representations also show that these apartments were filled with vases of all kinds in gold and silver, and with all sorts of eatables.

It was into just such a scene of luxury and splendour that Joseph was brought. The actual

mastery of possessions so vast, and the daily exercise of an authority so far-reaching and so absolute, was a giddy height even for Joseph to occupy. He might have forgotten his lowliness, and left the lessons of the past behind him. The world and the flesh might have taken the place of early piety. Men quite as wise as he, and whose early promise was as great as



EGYPTIAN GARDEN—*from the Monuments.*

his, have found less prosperity than this too much for them. But God has something still better for Joseph to do and to enjoy, and neither the good nor the service must be missed. Satan is, therefore, allowed an opportunity to tempt and to abase. The tempter never lacks, in this world of sin, a willing emissary, and one is found in the house of Potiphar.

But this account of Joseph's trial has been objected to as indicating ignorance of Egyptian customs, and as showing that Genesis must have been composed at a much later period than that of Moses, and at a distance from the supposed scene of Joseph's story. The Egyptian women were so secluded, Von Bohlen has said, that Joseph could have never seen his master's wife. "The narrative," says Tuch, "gives a false idea of the Egyptian nobility. In their houses the women had separate apartments."

It will be noticed that these statements lack nothing in point of confidence. The words last quoted occur in a so-called commentary on Genesis. How often has faith in the Word of God been slain in the hearts of the young by assertions like these, made as if they were the result of the fullest investigation, and as if they were placed for ever beyond the reach of doubt! No man will repeat those words to-day, except to acknowledge them to be amongst the most mistaken which men have ever uttered. The error lay solely with the critics—not at all with the Bible. They imported the present customs of the East into a region in which they had no place. The Egyptian women were not secluded. The monuments show that, on the contrary, they enjoyed the greatest freedom. They go into the city, and along the fields, unveiled. They mingle freely with men, even in the secluded apartments of the house. They join the men in concerts. They take part with them in processions, and in religious ceremonies. An ancient papyrus speaks of a beautiful young woman who

went, accompanied by numerous servants and followers, to the temple of Phtah to pray. While there, a young man approaches her without any difficulty. The analogy between the customs of ancient Egypt and our own, extends to other matters besides this absence of restraint in social intercourse between men and women. Woman had rights which were fully acknowledged. She shared her husband's dignity. Indeed, she seems to have enjoyed a certain pre-eminence. She is called *neb-t en pa*, "Mistress of the house," and *neb-t úr pa*, "Great mistress of the house." She retained her own property, and transmitted it to her children. In some genealogies, indeed, the children take her name in preference to that of their father. From the time of the second dynasty, women enjoyed the right of succession to the throne. Occasionally they reigned both in Upper and in Lower Egypt. The queens were recognised, equally with the kings, as children of the sun, and were, like them, deified after death. Every founder of a new dynasty sought to establish his family by marrying a princess of the previous royal house. The queens also, by right of marriage, enjoyed freedom, and a state of which few royal consorts of modern times would dream. They had officers attached to their person, who accompanied them everywhere. Men as well as women were admitted into their presence, and the duty of receiving foreign ambassadors was often discharged by them rather than by their royal husbands.

The position of women was indeed one of the most

distinctive features in Egyptian civilization. "The Egyptian woman of the lower and middle classes," says Professor Maspero, speaking of ancient Egypt, "is more respected and more independent than any other woman in the world. As a daughter, she inherits from her parents an equal share with her brothers; as a wife, she is the real mistress of the house, *nibit pi*, her husband being, so to speak, merely her privileged guest. She goes and comes as she likes, talks to whom she pleases without any one being able to question her actions, goes amongst men with an uncovered face, a rule quite opposed to the habits of the Syrian women, who are always more or less strictly veiled."\* "To the end she is 'the beloved of her husband' and the mistress of the house. The children display their affinity by her name rather than by that of the father. The divinities themselves set a good example to men on this point, and the young Horus is styled *Harsi-isit*, Horus son of Isis, without any allusion to Osiris. The father, when necessary, encourages and re-animates by his counsels the children's affection for their mother. 'It is God himself who gave her to thee,' says one of them, the sage Khonshotpou to his son Ani. 'From the beginning she has borne a heavy burden with thee, in which I have been unable to help her. When thou wast born, she really made herself thy slave. During three years she nursed thee at her breast, and as thy size increased, her heart never once allowed her to say, "Why should I do

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\* *Ancient Egypt and Assyria*, p. 11.

this?" She went with thee to school, and whilst thou wert learning thy letters, she placed herself near to thy master, every day, with bread and beer from her house. And now that thou art grown up, and hast a wife and a house in thy turn, remember always thine helpless infancy, and the care which thy mother lavished upon thee, so that she may never have occasion to reproach thee, nor to raise her hands to heaven against thee, for God would fulfil her curse.' " \*

All this was equally true of the women of the upper classes. The queen drives her chariot in the royal processions, and is followed by her court. Women belonging to the noble families fill high positions in the priesthood. Among the official classes, "The wife helps her husband to superintend the household; she and the children look on while he is netting birds, or she accompanies him in his boating expeditions for sport through the swamps." One who occupied a similar position to that of Joseph's master, thus addresses the shade of his wife: "Behold when I commanded the foot soldiers of Pharaoh, together with his chariot force, I did cause thee to come that they might fall down before thee, and they brought all manner of good things to present to thee." †

The reader will see by the above details, how fully in accord the representation of Genesis is with the ancient civilization to which it leads us back. The rest of the picture is, unfortunately, quite as faithful

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\* Pp. 15, 16.

† Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, p. 151.

a reflection of the manners of the time. The wife of Potiphar was no striking exception. "Although honoured in society and venerated in the family," writes Jules Soury, "the Egyptian matron was none the less a woman. The great liberty, which custom allowed, led her frequently into sin, and delivered her over, defenceless and weak, to temptation. The charming pictures of the underground apartments testify to their taste for dress, and for all the refined elegancies which make life a festival. Does not the wife of Anepou, a peasant, spend the long hours of the morning in painting herself? It is the same with the rich matrons of Thebes, and of Memphis. The slaves enter the women's apartment, their hands laden with fine embroidered tunics of striking colours, with bottles of perfumes, with caskets full of collars and bracelets, with bronze mirrors and costly trunks, bearing hieroglyphics and, perhaps, the coat of arms of the mistress of the house. Reclining in an arm-chair of ebony, inlaid with ivory, she is waited upon and dressed by her women. One arranges her black hair in fine and numerous tresses, not without adding a few false plaits. Another covers her arms, her fingers, and her chest with rings, jewels, and amulets. She tries some gold seal rings bearing representations of cats, chooses ear-rings which she will wear during the day, and while the boxes of collyrium are being opened, and the various ingredients which are used in staining the nails, the eye-brows, and the eye-lashes are being poured into the toilet-spoons, she listens dreamily,

caressed by the soft wafting of the fly-flaps, to the sweet music of lutes, and harps, and flutes.”\*

One consequence of this excessive luxury was the immorality of which we gain a glimpse in the story of Joseph. This was almost as much a feature of Egyptian life as the other. “The women,” says Dr. Birch, “known in Egyptian history, or depicted in romance, do not bear a good character.” Severe laws were passed to repress the corruption of the times, and the terrors of religion were employed for the same purpose. One of the oaths, which the deceased Egyptian was represented in *The Funereal Ritual* as called upon to swear before the forty-two judges of the dead in the lower world, made him solemnly declare, in the presence of those heart-searchers, that he had not violated the sanctity of marriage. Documents and monuments, paintings and legends, bear the same testimony. The women of the upper class appear to have permitted themselves extreme liberties. They are frequently represented as drunk at banquets, and there are scenes pictured upon the walls of some of the ruins which it is impossible to describe. One of the most ancient papyri which we possess calls woman “a heap of all sorts of iniquities, a bag full of every kind of stratagem and lies.”

This testimony is more than enough to dispose of the objections to which I have referred, and to show once more that, where criticism and the Bible have been opposed, the critics have been wrong, and the

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\* *Etudes historiques sur les religions de l'Asie Antérieure*, pp. 166, 167.

Bible has been right. But it may be as well to add, in closing, that *The Romance of the Two Brothers*, an Egyptian papyrus to which reference has been made more than once, contains a plot almost identical with the narrative of Genesis—the main distinction being that the papyrus bears the stamp of fiction, while the Bible history shows everywhere the sober lineaments of fact. The resemblances, indeed, are so striking, that the probability is that the romance is based, if not upon the Scripture narrative, at least upon the story itself, which must have lived on among the Israelites and among the Egyptian families related to Joseph by marriage, and which must have been often told by sire to son long before it was placed on the sacred page by the hand of Moses. In any case, *The Romance of the Two Brothers* disposes of the last remnant of the contention that there is any improbability in this incident in the life of Joseph. Criticism now passes this part of our bulwarks in silence, and seeks for some spot which it judges to be more exposed to assault.

One thing more may detain us for a moment. We read (Genesis xxxix. 11) “that it came to pass about this time that Joseph went into the house to do his business.” It is here implied that Joseph’s work led him *into* his master’s house, and caused him, as it would seem, to traverse the interior, and to pass through what may be called the private apartments. When we recall the fact that his work was superintendence, and involved nothing whatever of menial labour, this necessity of traversing the interior apart-

ments must seem somewhat strange. But everything is made clear by recent discoveries. The discovery of the city of Tel el Amarna has shed much welcome light upon the domestic architecture of Egypt. The town was abandoned within fifty or sixty years from the date of its foundation, and the buildings fell upon and protected their foundations. I reproduce here an inside view of the house in which a grandee, named 'Ey, lived with his family at Tel el Amarna. Erman, from whose valuable and interesting book I am kindly permitted to reproduce the engraving, accompanies it with the following description: "If we enter from the street, we find ourselves in front of three small buildings, and of these the one on the left alone (the room of the servant on duty) has rather a dignified appearance, the other two being merely additional store-rooms for wine and oil. Were it not for the fan-bearers standing in front of the door, no-one would guess that this insignificant house was the residence of the mighty favourite of Pharaoh. To the right of these buildings we pass through a small door into a narrow court where the servants are busy with their brooms and water-pots. The stately building beyond is the dining-hall, which is arranged in the usual manner.

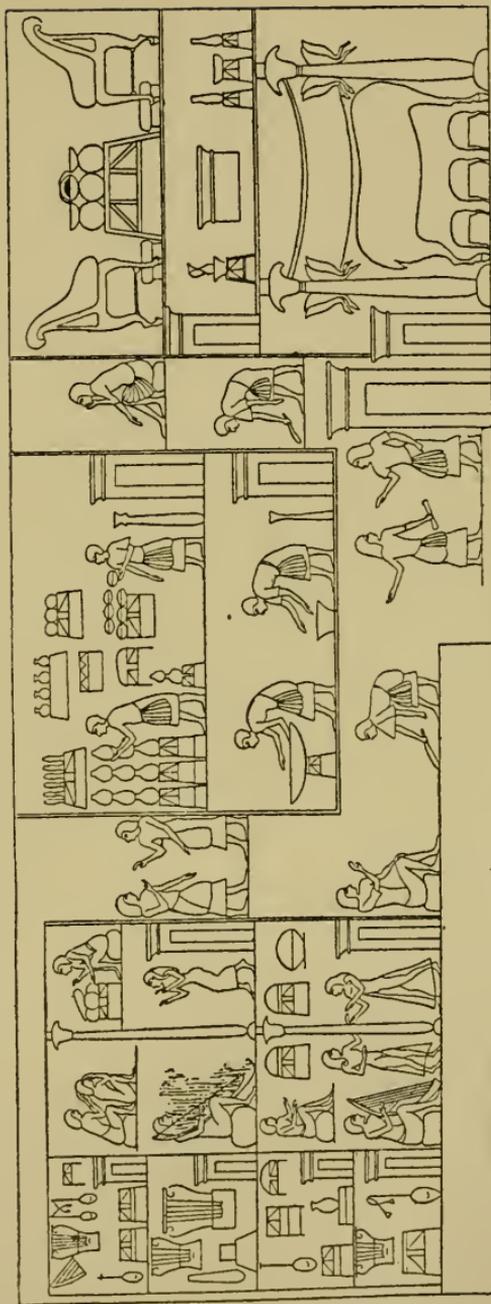
"A door leads from the back of the dining-hall into a court, through which we reach the kitchen and the master's bedroom. In the middle of the latter is an immense four-post bedstead, near which stand three small beds, which may be intended for 'Ey's children. A second smaller dining-room adjoins the

bedroom; it contains, as usual, two arm-chairs with footstools, a large dining table, and jars of wine; the jug and wash-basin have also not been

forgotten. Apparently 'Ey and his wife only used their great dining hall on festive occasions.

"This court, and the long wing which stretches to the left of it, is the scene of the daily life of the household.

"Servants are grouped together in the corners, gossiping busily over the news of the



Bedroom and dining-room beyond, with large chairs on each side of the table.

Women's apartments, with musical instruments, &c.

PART OF THE HOUSE OF 'EY.

(Reproduced by permission from Erman's *Life in Ancient Egypt*).

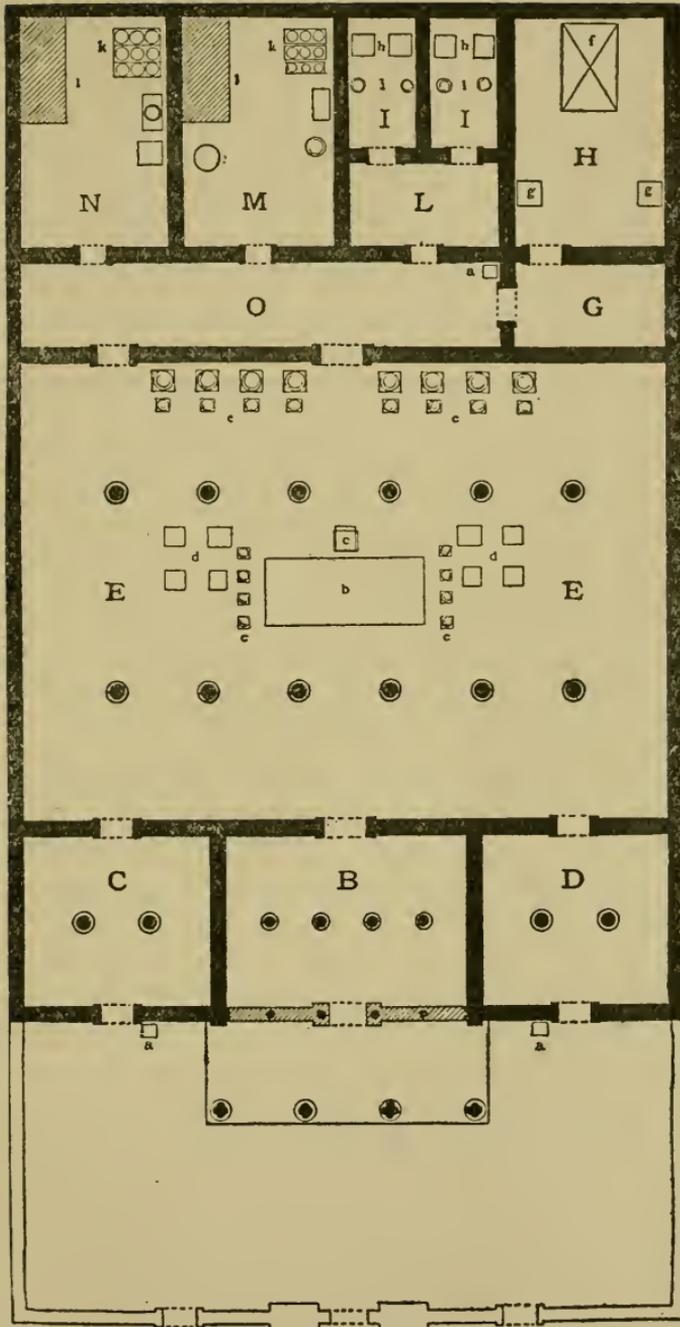
day ; sitting on the low stones before the entrance to the master's rooms are the porters, who join, though from a distance, in the interesting conversation."\*

The above will give us some notion of the household over which Joseph ruled. But the accompanying plan of an Egyptian house, founded upon the paintings in the tomb of the high priest Meryrê, will explain why Joseph had to enter, and to pass through, the house. The house is entered through the Court at the bottom of the plan (which forms the entrance), and by the porch, the four pillars of which are marked in front of the middle of the building. B is the vestibule, and C and D are porters' rooms on each side of it. Through any of these three apartments we pass into the chief room of the dwelling—the great dining-hall, which was also, no doubt, the place where guests were received. In the centre is a large table with a seat for the master. On each side are four small tables. In just such a hall as that must Joseph have stood when he received his brethren and commanded his servants to "set on bread." At the back of this hall (which extends along the whole width of the house) are entrances into a court (O). Facing us, as we cross over, are the kitchens, the bakery, and the store-rooms (M, N, L, I). At the right hand of the court is an ante-chamber (G) which leads into the bedroom (H), a large apartment, with toilet tables on each side (g, g), and a large bed at the upper end (f).

This plan will now make it plain why Joseph had

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\* Pages 181, 182.



PLAN OF THE HOUSE OF THE HIGH PRIEST, MERYRE.  
 (Reproduced by permission from Erman's *Life in Ancient Egypt*).

to pass through the house of Potiphar daily. The store-rooms which he had to inspect, to keep replenished, and from which daily supplies had to be dispensed, were *at the back of the building*. Here the implied necessity of traversing the inner apartments shows that before the eye of the writer there stood just such a building as was *customary in the Egypt of that very time*.

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## CHAPTER V.

### JOSEPH IN PRISON.

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JOSEPH'S was a strange pathway. No one could have divined, from the incidents which have occupied us so far, and which will occupy us now, that God was leading His young servant straight on to the highest place which the king of Egypt had to bestow. Yet it was so. "The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous." Not only is He acquainted with it: it is His work and plan. He knew Christ's way, though it went by the cross and the grave. He knew Joseph's, though it passed through false accusation, and shame, and loss, and the prison-house. He knows ours when it goes down through grief and scorn; and faith can safely cheer the darkness of the way with the notes of that sweetest earthly song: "He leadeth me."

The revenge of Potiphar's wife had been fully

satiated. Potiphar's wrath was kindled as he listened to her story, and he "took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound" (Gen. xxxix. 19, 20). But, though Potiphar's favour was gone, the favour of that higher and more discerning Master, whom Joseph served, remained. He had tokens of it even in the prison. As it had been in Potiphar's palace, so was it here. The keeper of the prison learned to trust him utterly. Everything was committed to him. "The keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under his hand" (verse 23).

We have now to enquire whether, in this new sphere, we meet similar indications that we are dealing with history and not with fables. I believe we shall have fresh cause for astonishment at the clear reflection which the narrative gives of the place and the time. It is believed that the Pharaohs of Joseph's time had their court at Memphis. It is there that tradition has located the scene of Joseph's sufferings and triumphs. If the tradition is reliable, the inscriptions have something to say about the very prison \* in which Joseph was confined. They speak a great deal of a fortress which was called "the white rampart." An inscription mentions an engineer of this fortress who is called *Sam en sebti*, inspector, or surveyor, of walls and fortifications.† In the Egyptian museum at the Louvre there is a mummy-shaped sarcophagus of black basalt of a

\* See Osburn Monumental Hist., II., p. 92; and Ebers, *Aegypten und die Bücher Mose's*, p. 318.

† Brugsch, *Geographische Inschriften*, I. Taf. xlii., 1095.

priest, who is called "priest of the gods of the district of the White Wall of Memphis." It is mentioned by Thucydides and Herodotus, who call it "the White Wall." An ancient commentator on Thucydides says it was so called because it was built of white stones, while the houses of the town were constructed with red bricks. "This citadel," says Ebers, "certainly contained the houses of the soldiers, temples, and prisons. The monument of Pianchi informs us that it sustained a regular siege when the city was captured by Cambyses. Potiphar, in virtue of his office as minister of police, would have his residence there; and, if the court was then really at Memphis, it is probable that this citadel is the *Sohar* (the word translated prison) of Genesis. The word corresponds exactly to the hieroglyphic *sohar* which has always the sense of violent resistance."\* The Hebrew *Beth-has-sohar*, as Jablonski long ago pointed out, is in all probability one of those Egyptian words whose presence in the Pentateuch forms such an extraordinary feature of that part of the Old Testament. The name would then really mean "the house of the fortress." This word occurs only in the 39th and 40th chapters of Genesis, and in connection with the imprisonment of Joseph. We do not meet with it throughout the whole of the Old Testament except in this one narrative. Joseph himself speaks of a prison for one of his brethren (Genesis xlii. 19), but the word there used is *Mishmar*, a place of ward. *Sohar* has, indeed, been a puzzle to

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\* *Ibid.*

commentators; but there, in "the white fortress" of Memphis, the whole seems to find a full explanation.

Joseph's experience increases, and his and our acquaintance with Egypt is enlarged even in his prison life. He has companions in affliction. Pharaoh's chief baker and chief butler, or cup-bearer rather, have fallen under the severe displeasure of their lord—just as Joseph had fallen under that of his own master. We ask, then, as we make the acquaintance of these functionaries, whether they are realities. In this broadening out of the story, are we really acquiring an insight into the court and the vanished state of the old Egyptian monarchs? If this whole story is a fabrication which formed the amusement of some captive in Babylon in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, or of some priest after the return from the exile who wanted to teach his countrymen the fear of God by means of pious fiction, these authors could hardly give us what they themselves did not possess. Knowing only in some more or less dim fashion the court arrangements of the Babylonian, or of the Persian, kings, they must have betrayed themselves in the attempt to paint the court and to name the officials of a country which they had never seen, and of an age separated from their own by more than a thousand years. But if, on the contrary, the writer makes no mistake, then we must conclude that the critics have blundered. If every fresh incident gives us, like the *Beth-has-sohar* into which Joseph was thrown, a fuller knowledge of the place and time; if

at every fresh touch the things named rise up before us exactly as they were, and the Egypt of Joseph lives again before our eyes—then we are compelled to see in every line the stamp of truth. The critical “reconstruction of the Old Testament” would require an inspiration quite as wonderful as that which the critics reject; and then it would be an inspiration in aid of an imposture and a lie.

We shall now glance at the Egyptian court as it was, and then judge whether the reflection given of it here is accurate. All the offices in the royal household were much run after, and were regarded as conferring high distinction. At the head of all was the *hir ahu tep en honef*, “the chief of his majesty’s court.” The monuments show that among his subordinates were a *chief baker* and a *chief cup-bearer*, “*chief of the banqueting house.*” \* A title which has been misread “the controller, scribe of the altar,” is now ascertained to mean really “cup-bearer, scribe of the drink table.” † The cup-bearer, in recounting his dream, describes one act, which he was accustomed to perform in the discharge of his office. He says: “In my dream behold a vine was before me, and in the vine were three branches: and it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes. And Pharaoh’s cup was in my hand: and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh’s cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh’s hand.”

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\* *Journal Asiatique*, 1867, Part II., p. 449.

† See “The Rollin Papyri and their Baking Calculations,” by Professor Eisenlohr, *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, Vol. XIX., p. 197.

The monuments pourtray the very scene which is here described; and thus, during all those generations from which the monuments have been hidden, the readers of Scripture have found the life of ancient Egypt as truly, and almost as vividly, depicted upon the sacred page. The vintagers gather the grapes just as the chief butler did in his dream. The servant hands the cup to the person seated just as he did to Pharaoh.

Here we come upon the traces of an old battle. The statement is no longer numbered among "the mistakes of Scripture," that vines existed in Egypt, and that wine was drunk in it at the time assigned to the history of Joseph. The tide of war has long since rolled past that point. But it may be well to recall the fact to mind that a battle had to be fought there. Some names, high in the annals of criticism, will always be identified with the objection that the writer of Genesis here betrayed the late origin of his work and his ignorance of the customs of ancient Egypt. The Greek historian Plutarch, writing concerning the Egyptian divinities, Isis and Osiris, remarks that even the kings of Egypt were limited by their sacred books as to the quantity of wine they might drink, and that, before the time of Psammetichus (about the time of king Josiah), it was not drunk at all, nor used even in offerings to their gods. This passage was borne out by some words of Herodotus, who states that there were no vines in Egypt; and by the later testimony of Plutarch, who says that the natives of the country abhorred the vine, looking

upon it as the blood of those who revolted against the gods. These assertions were quite irreconcilable with various statements in other profane authors; but it was quite enough that Plutarch gave this broad contradiction to the Bible! Is it not lamentable that, on such a flimsy foundation as that, the veracity of the Scripture should have been impugned by men who were looked upon as embodiments of learning, and whose very word was accepted by crowds of admirers as having all the weight of a judicial, and, indeed, of an irreversible, sentence? Critics are now rightly ashamed of the objection, and some of them seek to show that their predecessors really misunderstood Plutarch. The truth is that, here as elsewhere, those who accept implicitly the statements of Scripture have only to wait to find that the Word of God is more reliable than the word of learning or of science. These may err. There is not a book which science or learning has ever written that does not bear the impress of a knowledge which after-times have found to be limited, or bound up with positive error. The Scripture alone remains in advance of every age, as the pillar of cloud and fire went before the hosts of Israel.

All are now agreed either that the passage in Plutarch, or the construction once put upon it, is a mistake. The vine has been known in Egypt from the earliest times. The Egyptian god Osiris has been identified, even in ancient times, with the Greek Bacchus, on the very ground that the Egyptians ascribe to him the first cultivation of the vine. There

are statements even in Herodotus which might have killed the objection at the outset. He says that at the annual festival at Bubastis more wine was consumed than in all the rest of the year, plainly implying that its use was known. He also relates that the son of a master mason, who robbed the royal treasury, first intoxicated the guards with wine; that each soldier of the royal guard was allowed four cups of wine a day; that Mycerinus drank wine day and night; and that the priests themselves had a daily allowance given them. But the literature and



EGYPTIAN VINE—*from the Monuments.*

the monuments of Egypt have now led us past reports of travellers and historians. The Harris papyrus mentions that hundreds of vases of wine were offered to the gods by Rameses III. It also records that he assigned vineyards on the shores of Lake Mareotis to the Temples of Thebes.\* The sculptures on the tombs in the pyramids and elsewhere show that the vine was largely cultivated in

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\* *Records of the Past*, Vol. VI., pp. 28, 31, 33, 37, 41, 45, &c.

Egypt from the earliest times. Egyptians also imported wine from foreign countries. One inscription speaks of a gift of wine which had been brought from Syria. And not only was wine produced and imported: it was thoroughly well known. The Egyptians were connoisseurs in wine. The grape was called *el-el*, *alel-t*, and *sep*. Wine was *erp*, or *arp*. White wine, *abs arp*, was distinguished from red wine, *tesr arp*. One kind, called *kakem* wine, which was frequently mixed with honey, was specially famous. They boasted also of their mareotic, plinthic, thenotic, sebennytic, and anthillic wines.

It also appears that wine was not reserved for the great alone, but was used by the people as well. On the back of a papyrus, a note can be read to-day which was made by an officer of Rameses II. in the fifty-second year of that monarch's reign. It indicates that along with the rations of bread, given out to the labourers employed upon the public works, rations of wine were also allowed. It was drunk also by women as well as by men. They are represented in paintings as in a state of intoxication. The truth is that wine was not merely used: it was abused. The monuments speak frequently of drunken men and of drunkenness. On a tomb at Beni-Hassan, there are representations of Egyptians whom the servants are bearing away on their shoulders, after a banquet, in a state of helpless intoxication. At the festival of *tehu*, that is of drinking, which was celebrated at Denderah, drunkenness was a positive duty. The festival was held in

honour of Hathor, the goddess of pleasure. She was called on this occasion "the goddess of intoxication," and even "the intoxicated." The people gave themselves over to bacchanalian orgies. A description of the feast runs thus: "The gods of heaven are in transports of mirth; the *Terti* rejoice; the earth is filled with gladness; the people of Denderah are drunk with wine; a crown of flowers is upon their heads."\*

The production of wine was, consequently, one of the necessities of the country. The paintings on the tombs at Thebes show that vines were cultivated in the gardens. A child is represented chasing away the birds which peck at the ripe grapes, while we see

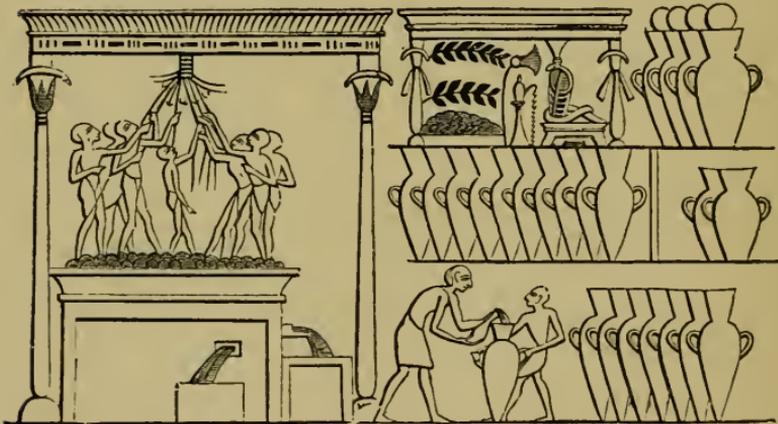


VINEYARD AND WINE-PRESS—from the Monuments.

others gathering them. On the tomb of Ti, which is as old as the pyramids, there is a representation of a wine-press, and above it the inscription: "Grapes are brought to be pressed." The monuments also show that there were two modes of pressing out the juice. At Thebes we have pictures of men holding on by ropes which are attached to palm trees, and, while they chant a song, pressing with naked feet the grapes into the vat. On some figures of wine-presses we see the wine pouring out

\* Ebers, *Aegypten und die Bücher Mose's*, p. 326.

through openings in the lower part of the press into troughs placed along the side. It is afterwards poured into vases. These the scribe counts, and, when he has written upon them one after another, he causes them to be carried into a neighbouring cave. At Beni-Hassan the grapes are treated in a different way. They are put into a kind of bag. The bag is fastened at one end to an upright post. Through a corresponding post on the opposite side a rope is

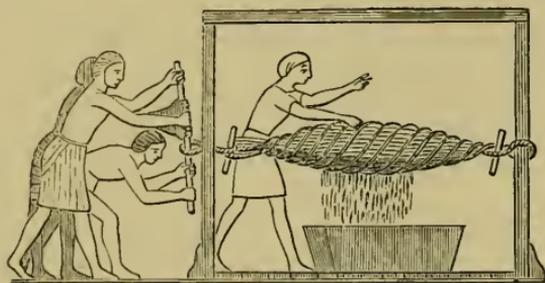


WINE-PRESS AND WINE CELLAR—*from the Monuments.*

passed. By twisting this the bag is contracted. The juice runs out into a vessel placed below.

But while it has been so abundantly proved that the vine and its fruit were known in Egypt in the time of Joseph, there was till recently one essential part of the confirmation lacking. The chief cup-bearer describes himself as taking fresh grapes and pressing them into Pharaoh's cup. This is not wine, but grape-juice, and here again objection is taken to

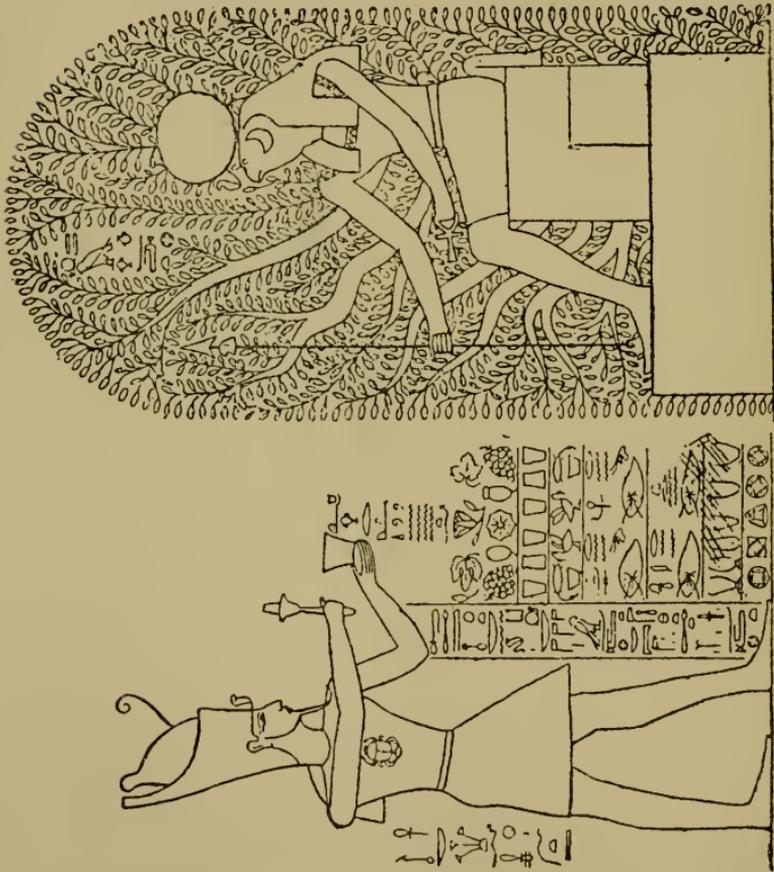
the representation of the Scripture. Pharaoh, like the rest of his subjects, did, indeed, drink wine, it is said, but there is nothing whatever to show that the use of grape-juice was customary. And up till 1870, nothing was known which proved that the use of *that* was customary in the time of Joseph. But in the year we have named M. Naville published some texts from the Temple of Edfu, and the lacking confirmation was at last supplied. Plate No. xxi. in his collection represents the king holding the cup in his hand, and the text which gives the expla-



EGYPTIAN WINE-PRESS—*from the Monuments.*

nation begins with the words: “grapes have been pressed in water: the king drinks it.” Further on we are told, that the grapes are pressed in water in memory of the victory of Horus over the companions of Set, and we read: “Thou pressest grapes in water, and, when they appear, thou rejoicest in them.” It is a striking coincidence that *Sakhat*, the Hebrew word used in Genesis xl. 11, for “press” seems also to have had the sense of mingling wine with another liquid. Such is the sense in which it is used in Arabic. Before leaving

this point it may be well to remind the reader of its full significance. This pressing of the grapes in the cup was plainly a rare custom. The monument, to which we have referred, is the only one yet known



THE PHARAOH OFFERING GRAPE JUICE MINGLED WITH WATER TO THE GOD.

which presents an example of it. And yet it *was* a royal custom and one of high religious significance. This will be seen in the accompanying reproduction of the scene pictured on the monument. The king

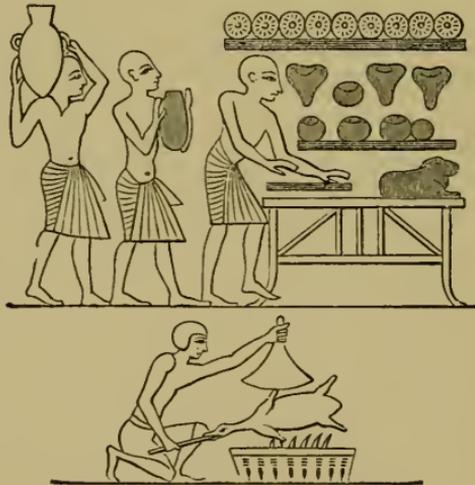
is offering the mixed grape juice before the god. The man who joined the king, in what was a kind of sacramental remembrance of the victory of the god Horus, must have been high in office as well as high in favour. To notice this brings out a new significance in the chief butler's dream. The participation in that ceremony pronounced that in the king's estimation he was faultless. But how was it that this high and rare ceremony could have been referred to so quietly and incidentally, yet with such absolute fidelity, by a writer living a thousand years after the time and in utter ignorance of the place as well as of the period? And yet that, and nothing less than that, is what we are asked by the critics to believe. Do we not do well to refuse any credence to them, and to predict that their successors will be as much ashamed of this contention, as they themselves are of the objection that wine was unknown in Egypt?

What is said about the chief baker leads us back, quite as surely, into the midst of the ancient civilisation of Egypt. The details of this part of the history, says Ebers, "are quite Egyptian."\* The chief baker, encouraged by the cheering interpretation given to the dream of his fellow-prisoner, tells his own. "He said unto Joseph, I also was in my dream, and, behold, I had three white baskets on my head: and in the uppermost basket there was of all manner of bake-meats for Pharaoh; and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head (Gen. xl. 16, 17). Here it is plainly implied that the

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\* *Aegypten und die Bücher Mose's*, p. 330.

baker's art was by no means in its infancy. The baker is carrying a supply which in its variety tells of knowledge and elaborate work. The same story is told on the monuments. The arts of pastry-making and of baking were even then in a very advanced state. On one of the walls of the tomb of Rameses III. at Thebes, we see bakers leaning upon their staves and kneading the dough with their feet. Others are busy giving to it various shapes, resemb-



EGYPTIAN BAKING AND COOKING.

ling stars, triangles, globes, &c. Some bake it in a kind of oven or frying-pan.

Referring to another pictorial representation, Wilkinson says: "This department (the baking) appears even more varied than that of the cook. Some sifted and mixed the flour, others kneaded the paste with their hands, and formed it into rolls, which were then prepared for baking, and being

placed on a long tray, or board, were carried on a man's head to the oven. Certain seeds were previously sprinkled upon the surface of each roll . . .

“ Sometimes they kneaded the paste with their feet, having placed it in a large wooden bowl upon the ground; it was then in a more liquid state than when mixed by the hand, and was carried in vases to the pastry-cook, who formed it into a sort of macaroni, upon a flattened metal pan over the fire. Two persons were engaged in this process; one stirred it with a wooden spatula, and the other taking it off when cooked with two pointed sticks, arranged it in a proper place, where the rest of the pastry was kept. This last was of various kinds, apparently made up with fruit, or other ingredients, with which the dough, spread out with the hand, was sometimes



EGYPTIAN COOKS PREPARING FISH.

mixed, and it assumed a shape of a three-cornered

cake, a recumbent ox, or other form, according to the fancy of the confectioner."\*

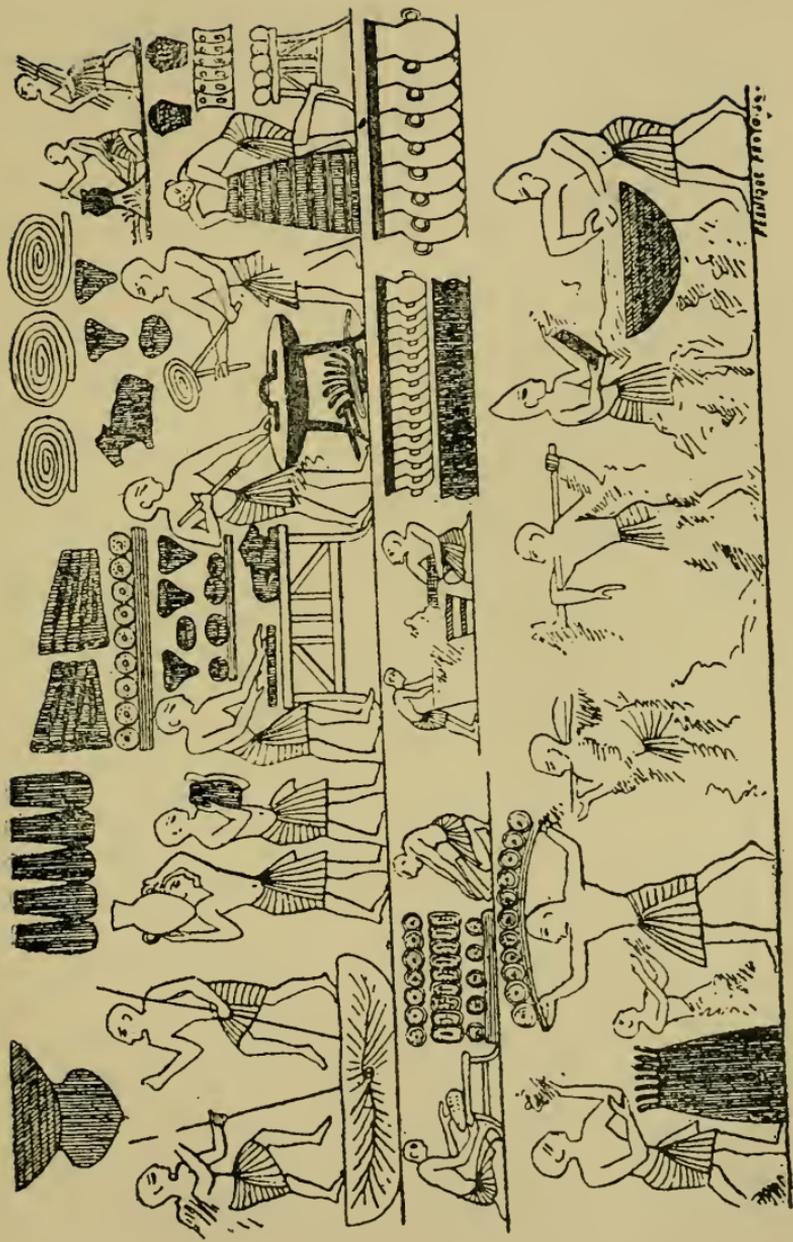
The pastry or bread already baked is placed upon tables in vases, or in flat wide baskets. The chief baker saw himself in his dream carrying the baskets on his head. The paintings show that even in this detail the narrative is in striking accord with the customs of the time. "The bakers carry their wares on their heads."† With regard to this the reader can satisfy himself. He will note, in the corner of the illustration copied from the monuments, that one of the bakers is conveying away the bread in this very manner. The picture shows us the palace bakery of Rameses III. Even the title borne by the chief baker has been handed down to us in an Egyptian manuscript. A papyrus now in the Paris National Library, and which belongs to the time of the 19th dynasty and to that of the Exodus, gives the Egyptian name which corresponds to this of "Chief Baker." It is Djadja, "the chief." Four bakers are named, and the first among them bears this title of Djadja. The importance of his position is shown in the statement which is made in the inscription that he has in store 114,064 loaves. It is striking to find in an inscription the words: *pan-u ari em sebtî het*, "bread made in the white fortress," that is, in the very prison in which Joseph and the chief baker were confined.‡

The chief baker's fate was tragic. He was to

\* *The Ancient Egyptians* (last edition, 1878), II., p. 33.

† Ebers, *Ibid.*, p. 331.

‡ *Records of the Past*, II., p. 126.



ANCIENT EGYPTIAN BAKERS AND PASTRY COOKS AT WORK.

be condemned to decapitation, and his body was to be given to the birds of the air. In both of these indications of Egyptian vengeance, we find unmistakable features of the place and time. Beheading was not a Jewish punishment: it was practised, however, in Egypt. No representation of capital punishment has yet been met with on the monuments; but, in the scenes of Kar-Neter, or Hades, both beheading and strangulation are represented. Decapitated mummies have been found, which prove that this mode of punishment was practised. The exposure of the body so that it might be consumed by the birds has a peculiarly Egyptian character. The preservation of the body was, in their belief, essential to the fulfilment of their hope of immortality, and the destruction to which the corpse of the chief baker was given over, specially marked the enormity of the crime of which, in the king's judgment, he had been guilty.\*

The reader has also, no doubt, remarked what is said about Pharaoh's birthday. It was evidently a great occasion. The king makes a feast to all his servants. The prisoners are remembered, and their fates are determined. Those who can be pardoned have mercy extended to them; and those who cannot be pardoned are given over to judgment. Was that also an Egyptian feature? Tuch, in his commentary on Genesis, says it was not. On the contrary, he finds here what is, in his view, one of the clearest proofs that this account of Joseph came into existence only

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\* See *Ebers*, p. 334.

after the time of the exile. The observance of birthdays was a *Persian* custom. Herodotus says, speaking of the Persians, that "among all their festivals each individual pays particular regard to his birthday, when they indulge themselves with better fare than usual. The richer prepare on this day an ox, a horse, a camel, or an ass, which is roasted whole: the poorer are satisfied with a lamb or a sheep." Now we have here a fair sample of the kind of sleight of hand by which many a poor student, or reader of books, has been robbed of his faith. There is an imposing array of wide reading and of great learning. These are in themselves a stumbling-block over which faith is ready to trip at the very outset. How can learning so great as that, one asks, be in opposition to the Scripture, unless there are good grounds for the opposition? That is a question which makes itself felt even where it is not formulated. And then, when to this imposing array of learning there is added the flash of ingenuity, the triumph is complete. Faith surrenders at discretion! Belief in the Scripture is no longer possible, and the poor captive now waits, with the most touching and childlike dependence, to be told by the critics what he is to receive and what he is to cast away!

The ingenuity and the learning are united in Tuch's "discovery." This respect for the day of one's birth was, he says, unknown in Egypt. It was, however, a custom of Persia. Place these two "facts" together, and the conclusion at once sug-

gests itself. The writer of Genesis betrays his locality and his age in that one incident. He is importing into ancient Egypt a custom which it did not know, and we are consequently able to fix him down to the time and the place where he became acquainted with it and fancied that it was a characteristic of all the gentile peoples! But those who draw conclusions cannot be too careful in making sure of their facts. The quotation from Herodotus does not say anything about the custom of the Persian *court*, so that is a matter of inference after all. Even here there is a culpable want of caution. But what shall we say when we discover that the other so-called fact is a gigantic blunder? The keeping of the *royal birthday was a custom continued in Egypt down to the latest days of the Egyptian monarchy*. Our readers have all heard of the Rosetta stone with its three-fold inscription in Greek, and Demotic (the ordinary Egyptian writing), and hieroglyphics. It was this inscription which, with its Greek translation of the Egyptian text, gave scholars the key to the literature and the monuments which have given us back a dead language and restored Egypt to her place in the history of the past. Now what was this inscription about? Our readers will agree with us in thinking it somewhat wonderful that it should be a direct answer to this rationalistic objection, and that the first discovery in Egyptology, like the first in Assyriology, should be a tribute to the truth of Scripture. The Rosetta stone contains a decree by a convocation of priests,

assembled at Memphis, that *the birthday of the king*, Ptolemy Epiphanes, as well as the day on which he was crowned, should be celebrated by a festival in his honour. A similar stone, called the trilingual inscription of Canopus, was found in 1866 at Tanis, where excavations were being made in connection with the construction of the Suez Canal. Strangely enough it contains a similar decree. It records the assembling of the priests on *the birthday festival* of king Ptolemy III., which it calls "the festival of the new year of his majesty." The Ptolemies were only following the customs of their predecessors. A fragment of an ancient writer, Hellanicus of Lesbos, mentions this ceremony in connection with the reign of Apries the predecessor of Amasis, and an inscription says of Rameses II. that, "there was joy in heaven on the day of his birth." The reference to the amnesty is also exact. It was the custom on this festival to release prisoners. The Rosetta inscription makes mention of the release of prisoners in connection with the Royal birthday festival.\*

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## CHAPTER VI.

### DREAMS IN EGYPT.

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THE Scripture has occasionally recorded a dream, as that of Jacob at Bethel, and those of Joseph's own youth. But this is exceptional, and is

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\* Ebers, pp. 334-337.

by no means a feature of the Bible. While the significance of certain dreams is admitted, there is nothing that indicates a superstitious regard for those visions of the night. But in the Egypt to which the narrative of Genesis introduces us, it is plain that a very different estimate is placed upon them. Joseph's two fellow-prisoners are evidently deeply impressed by the conviction that they have received a message from the unseen; and both are plunged into deep sadness because their confinement makes it impossible for them to have that message deciphered. We read that Joseph "looked upon them, and, behold, they were sad. And he asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sadly to-day? And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it" (Genesis xl. 6-8).

From this we gather that it is a usual thing in the Egypt of Joseph's time to regard dreams with this seriousness; for these court officials are plainly representative of their age. If there were any doubt as to this, it would be dispelled by their complaint, "And there is no interpreter of it." The Egyptian people are here represented as paying such regard to dreams that a class of men exists which devotes itself to their interpretation. Had the chief butler and the chief baker enjoyed their freedom, they would have had immediate recourse to the services of these; and now their imprisonment brings the additional sorrow that they have dreamed a dream, and "there is no interpreter of it!" This feature of

the Egypt of Joseph is still more plain in what is told us in the following chapter (xli.) The great king himself has two dreams in one night, which evidently point to some coming event. In the first, seven lean kine consume seven that are well-favoured ; and, in the second, seven thin ears of corn devour seven rank and full ears.

These visions were peculiar and vivid enough, and we cannot be astonished that the king should have been moved by them. But it is in what follows that we mark the same superstition and the same customs that have been revealed to us by Pharaoh's prisoners. The king does not merely hint at his dreams, or tell them to his friends, or to one or two favourite Councillors. No, there is a special class whose business it is to deal with what is regarded as a necessity of the time ; and at once these are sent for and the dreams are told *to them*. "And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled ; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof : and Pharaoh told them his dream " (Genesis xli. 8).

Here, then, we have an Egypt which has the most unquestioning belief in the importance of these visions of the night, and which constantly occupies a large number of what are apparently the most reputable men in the community with the work of finding interpretations for them. That would not be a true picture of the civilization of the 19th century in any country. There are, no doubt, people here and there who are superstitious enough ; but such a

belief in dreams, and such an elaborate provision for their interpretation, are not features of our time. Neither is there anything to indicate that they were characteristic of any age among the Jews. Were they characteristic of the Egypt of the time of Joseph? Do we, in reading the Scripture, find here again the clear, sharp impress of the place and time, and so meet another indication of the absolute truth of this part of God's Word?

The answer to this is that we have here once more the Egypt of reality. It was impossible to dip down into the life of that age as Joseph did, without coming into contact with just such facts as these. Egypt has always been the home of abounding superstition. Astrology was sedulously cultivated there. The priests were largely employed in drawing horoscopes. And they attached the very greatest importance to dreams. "The diviners and the interpreters of dreams," says Pierret, in his *Dictionary of Egyptian Archæology*, "were certain of making their fortune in a country where the highest science, I might say the only one, was magic." The discoveries have shown the large place which dreams held in the life of the Egyptians, and the honours which were awarded to those who could interpret them. Dreams are bound up with the history of Egypt. Tacitus, mentioning the origin of the god Serapis, says that "the account given by the priests of Egypt is as follows: At the time when Ptolemy, the first of the Macedonian race who settled the government of Egypt, had raised walls and ramparts to defend the

new-built city of Alexandria, and afterwards gave a temple and the rites of national worship, a youth of graceful mien, and size above the human form, *appeared to him in a midnight vision*, commanding him



OSIRIS.

to send some of his trusty friends as far as Pontus, to bring from that place into Egypt the statue of the preternatural being then before him. By his compliance with those directions the prosperity of the

whole kingdom would be advanced, and the city which should be so happy as to possess that valuable treasure would be great among the nations. In that instant the youth was seen mounting to heaven in a column of fire. *Ptolemy had recourse to the Egyptian priests, the usual interpreters of dreams and prodigies.* But those religionists had no knowledge of Pontus, nor of any foreign modes of worship. Timotheus, the Athenian, a man descended from the race of the Eumolpides, was called in to their assistance.”\* The result of the conference was that an embassy was sent, and, after great difficulty and delay, the statue was conveyed to Alexandria.

In this account the Egyptian priests moulded their story in accordance with the practices and the beliefs of their country. How close the parallel is to the Scripture narrative will be noted by the reader. Tacitus describes the Egyptian priests as “the usual interpreters of dreams and prodigies.” The same notions ruled in still more ancient times. “The universal empire of Sesostris” (that is, Rameses II.), says Chabas, “had been announced in a dream by the god Phtah. Not to speak of the famous dream of Sethos, priest of Phtah, so well told by Herodotus, one can still read of another in a hieroglyphic inscription at Karnac, which relates the exploits of Menephtah I. against the foes who invaded Egypt from the Mediterranean. It explains how this Pharaoh saw in a dream a statue of Phtah. It placed itself before him, hindered his advance, and pre-

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\* *The History*, B. IV., 83.

vented his marching with his armies.”\* Another inscription, discovered among the ruins of Napata, the ancient capital of the Ethiopian kingdom, tells how the Pharaoh, Nouat Maïamon, saw in a vision of the night two serpents, one on his right hand, the other on his left. He awoke and found them gone. He demands that some one shall give an immediate interpretation of the dream. The reply is recorded. The king is to possess the south, and to conquer the north. Two diadems are to adorn his brow, and he is to reign over the entire country in its length and breadth.† “A tablet on the breast of the great Sphinx,” says Tomkins, “commemorates a remarkable dream of Thotmes IV., as he lay weary under its shadow: and readers of Egyptian lore will never forget the story of the possessed Princess of Bachtan.”‡

We shall come back again to Pharaoh's dreams. Meanwhile, let us note that dreams were, in fact, not only believed in, but were highly esteemed and sought after. The numerous magical manuscripts show that all sorts of means were adopted in order to procure dreams and to obtain them from the gods, and especially from the god Thoth, “the lord of divine words.” A papyrus, translated by Mr. Goodwin, indicates the means that must be taken to obtain, during sleep, an answer from Hermes or Thoth, and how to procure dreams in general. Isis was believed to communicate by dreams with the sick who prayed to her, and to reveal the remedies

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\* *Etudes sur l'antiquité historique*, p. 214.

† J. Soury, *Etudes sur les religions*, p. 170, and *Reconis of the Past*, V., pp. 79-86.

‡ *The Life of Joseph*, p. 43.

necessary for their cure. Dreams were sought for by sleeping in special places, or by writing mystic sentences on small tablets, and then placing them in the mouth of a black cat. Other means were



ISIS.

adopted. A piece of linen cloth was taken. On this a man's figure was drawn with four wings, &c., and on the outside mystic sentences were written. Another plan was to take a bit of byssus and to draw,

with the blood of a quail, the figure of a god standing upright and with the head of an ibis, and to invoke him in the name of his father Osiris and his mother Isis. Various plants and minerals are named which were useful for the purpose.

But it is not necessary, fortunately, to wade through these forgotten superstitions. I shall only mention one more instance of how dreams were regarded by royal personages. In an inscription of Rameses II., we are told that an Asiatic prince, whose daughter the Pharaoh had married, implored him to send a diviner to cure the queen's younger sister. The request was granted; but the diviner does no good. The malady is beyond his skill. At the end of eleven years the father sends a new embassy. He asks this time for a god. Pharaoh consents; and the narrative solemnly informs us, that in the twenty-third year of his reign, and on the first day of the month Pachon, at the time of the festival of Ammon, he implores the god Khons to go to the relief of his sister-in-law. The upper part of the monument depicts the journey of Khons. He is placed in a shrine which is put in a sacred boat. This is borne on the shoulders of ten Egyptian priests. The journey takes a year and five months. But the end is at last attained. The princess is cured.

The presence of the god, however, is valued at Bachtan, the country of Pharaoh's father-in-law. "He reflects in his heart and says: 'This god will be a blessing to Bachtan. I shall not send him back to Egypt.'" He remains there three years and nine

months. What is to be done? Is Khons to remain in exile? The remedy is found in a dream. The prince of Bachtan, resting on his bed, has a vision. He sees the god leave his sanctuary and, flying upward in the form of a golden hawk, direct his course to Egypt. He awakes and immediately commands the priests to carry back the god to Egypt. He loaded the god with gifts, giving him in addition footmen and horsemen in great numbers; and so Khons, the inscription concludes, "re-entered happily his abode at Thebes on the 19th day of the month Mechir, in the thirty-third year of the king of Egypt."

I have dwelt at length upon this latter incident to show with what profound and solemn conviction these things were regarded. There is one thing more to be noted, before we pass on. As we look back from these things upon Joseph's earlier life, do we not catch the glory of a Divine purpose binding his earlier and his later years together? We have perhaps wondered at his boyish dreams, and have sympathised somewhat, it may be, with the impatience and the rebuke of Jacob. To Jacob it was, apparently, a strange and most unfortunate development. He felt that he must repress it; and so, beloved as Joseph was, he had to bear the chiding of his father as well as the mockery of his brethren. But these dreams *were a training for the country he was soon to enter, and for the work which he was by and bye to do.* By those symbolical visions his thoughts were exercised in the search for hidden meanings, and in waiting upon the Spirit of God to make dark

things plain. Now, we have here, once more, an evidence of plan—and of a plan which is not obtruded. Not a word calls attention to it. It is left, like the designs of God in creation, to be sought out of all them who have pleasure therein. But is not this plan in Joseph's life a token that we are tracing here the working of the same hand that has filled the earth with wonders, and that has covered the heavens with the Divine glory ?

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## CHAPTER VII.

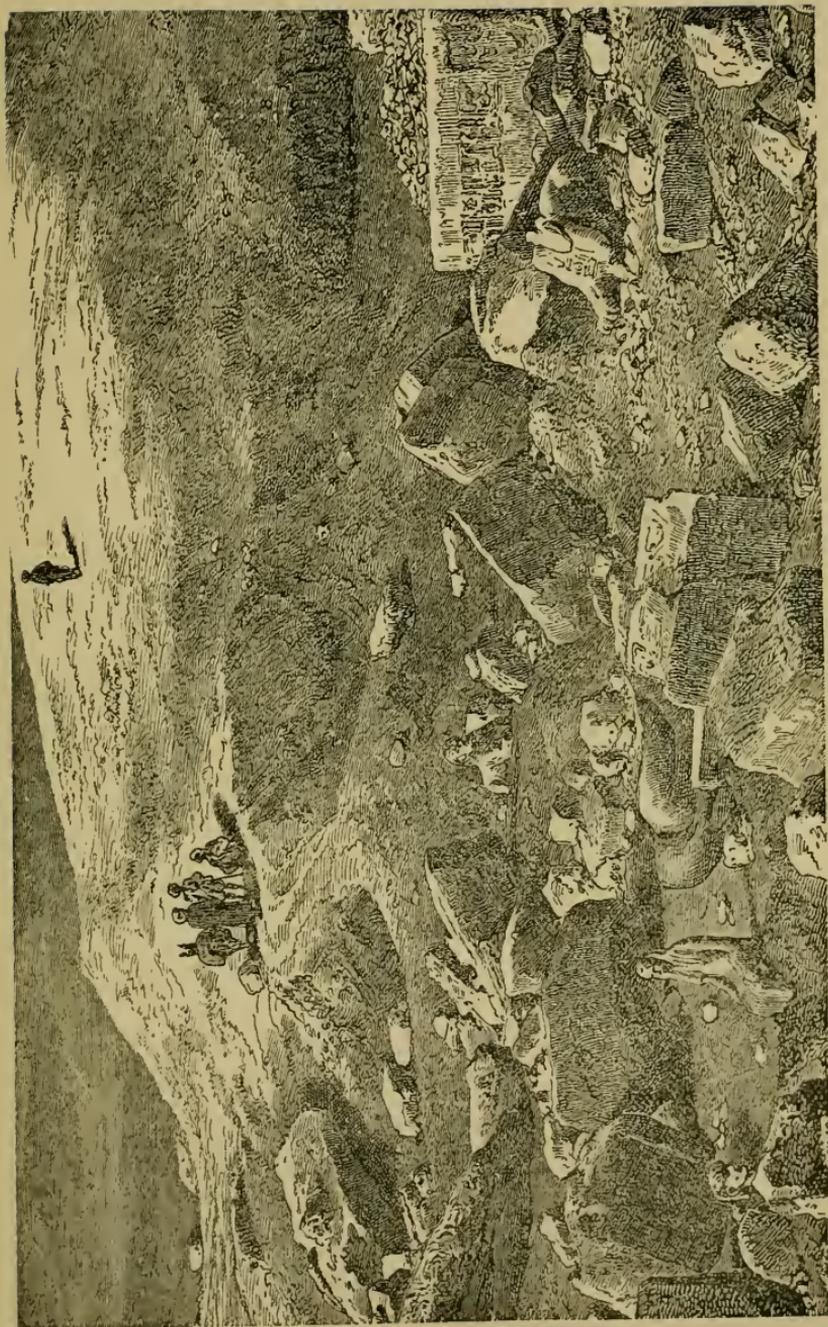
## THE PHARAOH OF JOSEPH.

“**S**EEST thou,” asks the Scripture, “a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men” (Prov. xxii. 29). The promise holds in the face of all accidents and reverses. These may lead many to prophesy that his career is closed, and that he has fallen beyond recovery. But the prediction of the Scripture still stands and lightens the hour of deepest darkness. Accidents and reverses will only be incidents that heighten the interest of the story: they will not form its ending. It was so with Joseph, and it will be so with every other who fears God, and who walks in the way of His commandments.

We shall now have to leave the dungeons of the *Beth-has-sohar*, the house of the fortress, and to follow

Joseph to the king's palace. But before we do so, let us ask whether anything is known of the monarch with whose reign the after life of Joseph is to be so closely connected. Have recent researches shed any light upon the dynasty to which he belonged, or upon his own personality? He will henceforth occupy no mean place in our story, and we shall have, at least, one mighty social revolution to record; and so a frequently-recurring question meets us here again. Does the Scripture here also lead us back into the very life and politics of that far-off time? Is there any trace, for example, of the revolution I have referred to? And as we enter the Egyptian court with Joseph, and pass with him to and fro throughout the land, are the scenes which present themselves reflections of actual history, or merely the fruits of a bold and picturesque imagination?

The reply which I have to give is of the usual character. We test the Bible here again, and find that we are dealing with absolutely accurate history. The reader's attention has already been called to the reiterated statement that the military governor of the fortress was "an Egyptian." I pointed out on a previous page that on the face of it this must seem somewhat strange. The statement, in ordinary circumstances, would be quite uncalled for. Whom should we expect to find in such an important position but a native of the country? Would it be necessary to mention in a history of our time that the Commander-in-Chief, say, of the French army, or the Governor of Paris, was a Frenchman? What



RUINS OF TANIS—FOUNDED BY THE HYKSOS.

*could* be meant by any writer if he not only mentioned that fact, but also emphasized it? Recent research has brought to light the facts to which that and other expressions in the Pentateuch have so long silently pointed. The dynasty to which the Pharaoh of Joseph belonged *was a foreign dynasty*. Syncellus, writing in the third century of the Christian era, mentions that all were agreed that the king whom Joseph served was Aphophis (Apepi II. of the monuments), and this king was one of a long line of foreign masters who had held the proud Egyptian race in the hand of a fierce and resolute mastery for centuries. Josephus, the Jewish historian—of whom Eusebius says that he “was a man most distinguished, not only among his own countrymen the Jews, but also among the Romans; so that they honoured him with the erection of a statue at Rome, and the books that he composed with a place in the public library”—has handed down a precious page from the lost work of Manetho, the Egyptian historian. I shall quote the passage in full, and let Manetho, in the Greek of Josephus, tell us the story.

“There was a king of ours whose name was Timaus. Under him it came to pass, I know not how, that God was averse to us, and there came, after a surprising manner, men of ignoble birth out of the eastern parts, and had boldness enough to make an expedition into our country, and with ease subdued it by force, yet without our hazarding a battle with them. So when they had gotten those who had governed us under their power, they after-

wards burnt down our cities, and demolished the temples of our gods, and used all the inhabitants after a most barbarous manner; nay, some they slew, and led their children and their wives into slavery. At length they made one of themselves king, whose name was Salatis; he also lived at Memphis, and made both the upper and lower regions pay tribute, and left garrisons in places that were the most proper for them. He chiefly aimed to secure the eastern parts, as foreseeing that the Assyrians, who had then the greatest power, would be desirous of that kingdom and invade them; and he found in the Saite Nomos (Seth-roite), a city very proper for his purpose, and which lay upon the Bubastic channel, but with regard to a certain theologic notion was called Avaris. This he rebuilt, and made very strong by the walls he built about it, and by a most numerous garrison of two hundred and forty thousand armed men whom he put into it to keep it. Thither Salatis came in summer-time, partly to gather his corn, and pay his soldiers their wages, and partly to exercise his armed men, and thereby to terrify foreigners. When this man had reigned thirteen years, after him reigned another, called Apachnas, thirty-six years and seven months. After him Apophis reigned sixty-one years, and then Jonias fifty years and one month; after all these reigned Assis forty-nine years and two months. And these six were the first rulers amongst them, who were all along making war with the Egyptians, and were very desirous gradually to destroy them to the very roots.

This whole nation was styled Hycsos, that is, *Shepherd-kings*; for the first syllable Hyc, according to the sacred dialects, denotes a king, as is Sos a *shepherd*—but this according to the ordinary dialects, and of these is compounded Hycsos; but some say that these people were Arabians. Now, in another copy it is said, that this word does not denote *kings*, but, on the contrary, denotes *Captive shepherds*, and this on account of the particle Hyc; for that Hyc with the aspiration, in the Egyptian tongue, again denotes *shepherds*, and that expressly also, and this to me seems the more probable opinion, and more agreeable to ancient history. (But Manetho goes on):—‘These people, whom we have before named *kings*, and called *Shepherds* also, and their descendants,’ as he says, ‘kept possession of Egypt five hundred and eleven years.’ After these, he says, ‘That the kings of Thebais and of the other parts of Egypt made an insurrection against the Shepherds, and that there a terrible and long war was made between them.’ He says farther, ‘That under a king, whose name was Alisphragmuthosis, the Shepherds were subdued by him, and were indeed driven out of other parts of Egypt, but were shut up in a place that contained ten thousand acres: this place was named Avaris.’ Manetho says, ‘That the Shepherds built a wall round all this place, which was a large and strong wall, and this in order to keep all their possessions, and their prey within a place of strength, but that Thummosis the son of Alisphragmuthosis made an attempt to take them by force and by siege with

four hundred and eighty thousand men to lie round about them ; but that, upon his despair of taking the place by that siege, they came to a composition with them, that they should leave Egypt, and go without any harm to be done them, whithersoever they would ; and that, after this composition was made, they went away with their whole families and effects, not fewer in number than two hundred and forty thousand, and took their journey from Egypt, through the wilderness, for Syria ; but that, as they were in fear of the Assyrians, who had then the dominion over Asia, they built a city in that country which is now called Judæa, and that large enough to contain this great number of men, and called it Jerusalem.' '\*

When Manetho steps aside to tell us what happened in a country of which he knows little, he errs. Recent discoveries have shown that the Scripture is fully borne out in the statement that Jerusalem was a city long before the expulsion of the Shepherd kings from Egypt. But his account of what had happened in his own country has been confirmed in the course of Egyptian discovery. This is true even of the account which he gives of the name Hyk-sos.

The two words have been found in the inscriptions. *Hyk* appears in the form *Hak*. *Sos* is found under the form *Shasou*, the name applied to the Bedouin. Little is yet known beyond what we learn from Manetho as to who these Hyksos were. Sharpe says: "The Phenicians, who had settled quietly in the Delta, soon got too strong for the people who had

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\* Whiston's Translation.

given them a home. They rose against the Egyptians, and attacked the cities and temples, and having defeated the king of Lower Egypt, they took Memphis. They then made Salatis, one of themselves, king; and he stationed garrisons in several of the strong places, and made Upper and Lower Egypt pay him tribute, without, however, being able to put down the native kings.\* This account seems to be confirmed by more recent researches. But there can be no doubt as to the reality of their usurpation, and the terribleness of their rule. They swept over Egypt like an avalanche. With one exception, all the temples built previous to the Shepherd invasion have disappeared, or remain only as scattered ruins which still bear marks of their violent overthrow. The Shepherd kings remained in Egypt, Manetho says, 400 years. M. Mariette has made some discoveries which shed a little light upon the history of the Hyksos. He believes that they were a collection of Nomadic tribes, the most of whom were Canaanites, or Phœnicians. The leading tribe was that of the Hittites, the *Khitas* of the Egyptian monuments. They had come originally from the shores of the Persian Gulf, and had taken Palestine on their way. We have, accordingly, another confirmation of the thoroughly historical character of Genesis in the statement made in connection with the record of the call of Abraham, that "the Canaanite was then in the land" (Genesis xii. 6), and also in the notice that Hebron was built seven years before Tanis, the

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\* *History of Egypt*, p. 30.

great northern city which the Hyksos founded in Egypt (Numbers xiii. 22). They had founded Hebron first on their way through Palestine. This would also accord with the fact that the Hittites were at least the lords paramount of Hebron, and that from them the patriarch bought a burial-place. The wave of invasion after passing over Palestine had swept into Egypt and overthrown the religion and the civilization of that country.

After a time the Hyksos seem to have conformed to the customs of the land. This was shown, among other things, in the centralisation of authority. The various chiefs selected one of their number and made him king. Around this king a court grew up, which copied the ceremonial of the native dynasties. Two colossal statues were found in 1879 of a Shepherd king, who bore the name of *Mer-sas-u*, that is, chief of the Shasu, or Shepherds. "The court of the Pharaohs," writes M. Maspero, "re-appeared around the Shepherd kings with all its pomp and with all its array of great and little functionaries; the royal record of the Cheops and the Amenemhats was adapted to the foreign names of Iannes and of Apopi. The Egyptian religion, without being officially adopted, was tolerated, and the religion of the Canaanites underwent some modifications so as not to wound beyond measure the susceptibilities of the worshippers of Osiris. Soutkhou (Sutech), the warrior, the national god of the conquerors, was identified with the Egyptian Set."\*

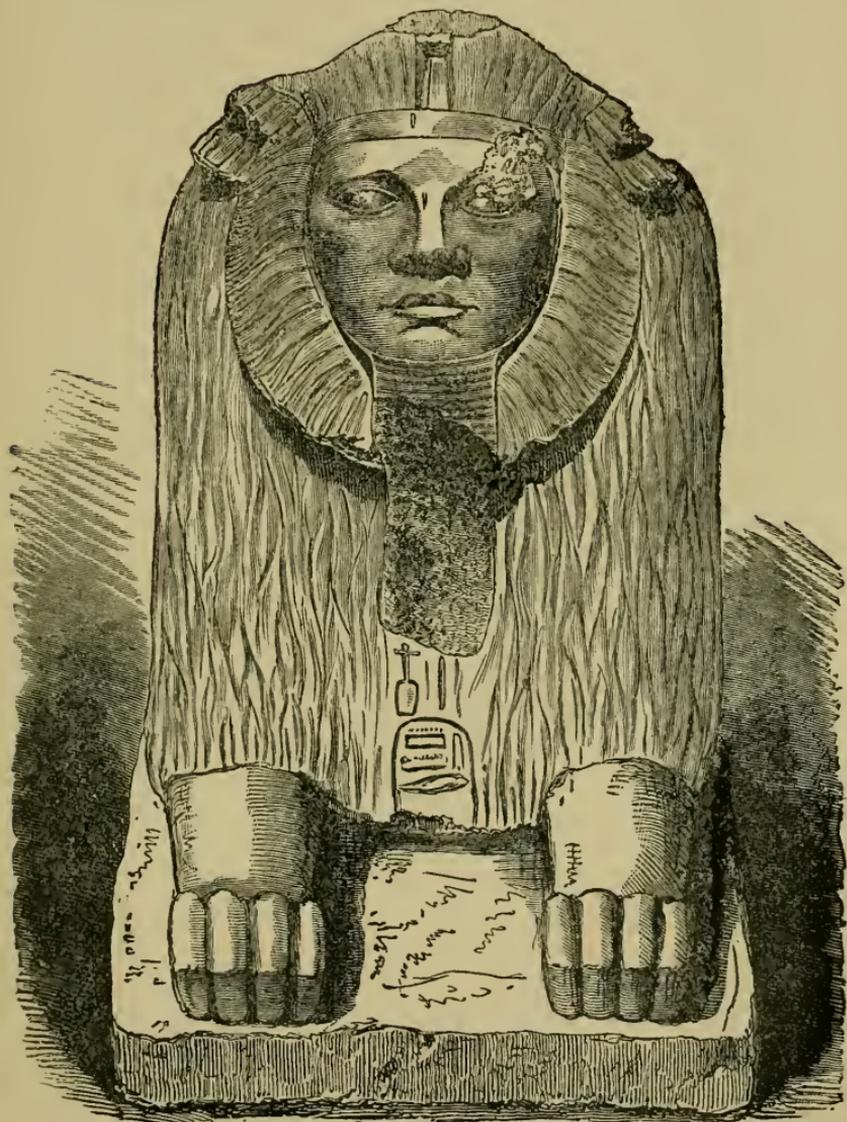
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\* *Histoire Ancienne des Peuples de l'Orient* (4th Edition), pp. 164, 165.

In this way the various officials, with whom the monuments make us familiar, reappear at the courts of the Hyksos. The kings are called Pharaoh; they are surrounded with all the state, and they imitate all the customs of the earlier monarchs. Their capital was fixed, at least in the beginning, at Memphis. In order to guard himself against attack from kindred tribes upon the eastern borders of his kingdom, the first king built the city of Tanis. This became a great military training station, and was occupied by a garrison of 240,000 men. "Thither," says Manetho, "he came in the summer, partly to gather his corn and pay his soldiers their wages, and partly to exercise his soldiers and thereby terrify foreigners."

The dynasty is said by Julius Africanus to have lasted 284 years; but it is believed to have endured for 400. Among the mounds of Tanis, the city which they rebuilt, if they did not found it, sphinxes and statues representing the Shepherd kings have been found. Like all Egyptian monuments, these are accurate portraits of the monarchs they represent. The faces have a strong Semitic cast, and are entirely different from those of the native Egyptian monarchs. A representation of one of these Hyksos sphinxes is given below. All that we have come to know about this Shepherd dominion is of vital interest, for it is now quite certain that it was during their supremacy that Joseph lived and served. But can we answer the question as to which of these monarchs was the Pharaoh of Joseph, and do the

monuments shed any light upon his character and



SPHINX REPRESENTING ONE OF THE HYKSOS KINGS.

his circumstances? Fortunately, both tradition and

modern research help us to a reply. The representation that has come down to us from ancient times has, as we have noted, definitely and constantly mentioned Aphophis, or Apophis (Apepi or Apapi), as the king whose dreams Joseph read. There were two monarchs of that name, Apophis I. and Apophis II. The former belonged to the first monarchs of the race, and was too early; but the latter lived just about this very time, and Apophis II. has been accepted by Egyptologists generally as the Pharaoh of Joseph. Brugsch says: "The arrival of Joseph in Egypt falls in the middle of the 18th century B.C., that is to say, in the epoch of the second dynasty of the Shepherd kings. . . . It appears, too, that Apapi II. was the king who raised Joseph to the high dignity which afterwards permitted him to show favour to his brethren when they arrived from the land of Canaan."\* Birch declares that various considerations are strongly in favour of this identification. † "The real form of the name of the last king of the dynasty," writes Lenormant, "Apepi (in Greek, Apophis), has been found on many monuments. In the reign of this Apepi, according to the express testimony of the extracts from Manetho, Joseph came into Egypt and was made 'Governor over all the land of Egypt.'" ‡ With every desire to treat the Scripture history as mere legend, even M. Maspero has to fall into line with his brother Egyptologists. Speaking of the family of Jacob, he

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\* *History of Egypt*, 1., p. 80. † *History of Egypt*, p. 76.

‡ *The Ancient History of the East*, 1., p. 221.

says : " Tradition places their descent into Egypt under one of the Shepherd kings, whom it names Apophis, evidently one of the Apopi, possibly that one who embellished Tanis, and whose monuments M. Mariette has found." \*

This practical unanimity has only one explanation. The indications in the sacred history point clearly to the Egypt and the time of Apophis II. There are also incidents in the life of this king which confirm the identifications still more completely. I mention only one of these now. There is a precious papyrus manuscript in the British Museum which the Bible history enables us to understand. It is the Sallier Papyrus I. It is only a fragment, and it does not complete the story which it begins. It is evidently the first part of a history of the long war between the last Shepherd kings and their Theban viceroys. These were the descendants of the native kings, whose power had been broken by one of the immediate predecessors of Apophis. The papyrus says that " it happened that the land of Egypt fell into the hands of the *aat-u*" (a name of contempt applied to the Shepherds), " and that no one was king in upper Egypt." Raskenen, a descendant of the ancient kings, was made viceroy. " King Apophis" (Joseph's king) "*chose the god Set (or Sutech) as his master, and served no other god that was in Egypt. He built a temple to Sutech with beautiful and long-enduring labour.*" The manuscript goes on to say that Apophis sent to Raskenen a request that he, too,

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\* *Histoire Ancienne*, p. 167.

should become the worshipper of one god. Raskenen lays the royal missive before his council, but they sit in silence: no one has counsel to give in this extremity. They cannot advise him to offend the gods; and they dare not suggest to him that he should defy the king. But Raskenen chooses rather to incur the royal displeasure than to brave the wrath of heaven. He returns word that he cannot comply with the king's desire.

Nothing more is said on that matter by Apophis; but by and bye he makes complaints about the condition of the canals, and an army is sent up to the south. Here the manuscript breaks off; but, strange to say, the mummy of Raskenen has survived to complete the story. It was hastily embalmed upon the battle-field. A frightful gash, which has distorted the features, shows where a battle-axe had cut its way down through flesh, and bone, and brain. Raskenen's army had been defeated, and he himself was slain. The narrative, no doubt, continued the story, and showed that the struggle, thus commenced, sank for a time only to revive again, and to throw off eventually the Shepherd supremacy, and to banish them and their followers from the land.

But *why should Apophis have become a monotheist?* Why did he "choose Set for his master, and would serve no other god that was in Egypt?" And why, above all, was he resolved at any price—even at the cost of civil war—to have one god only worshipped in his dominions? To those questions, the narrative in Genesis furnishes an answer, and nothing that is

known besides even suggests any other. *The one living and true God had saved the land.* Every one within its borders, from the king to the meanest drudge, had been preserved alive by Him. Apophis rewarded Joseph royally; and he was evidently not a man who would so load the servant with honours, and yet think nothing of the Master upon whose errand that servant had come. His vow to serve no other God, the Temple at Tanis, whose ruins M. Mariette has discovered, and the war with the Theban viceroy tell, no doubt, the story of his gratitude to his Almighty Preserver and Benefactor.

We may here note one thing more. I have referred to the repeated statement in the Scripture that Joseph's master was an Egyptian, and we have already asked what reason there could be for that reiteration. Here is the feature of the time to which the statement and its repetition point. *The office of chief of the police must necessarily have been one of the most important in the Empire.* When the Norman kings seized the English throne, the positions of trust were not given to the conquered Saxons. Even when ages had passed, those offices were held by the descendants of the Norman barons, and not by the impoverished and degraded representatives of the old Saxon nobility. The Norman kings had a Norman following. The difference in Egypt between the Hyksos was a religious as well as a national one. We should, therefore, have expected the lines to be still more rigidly drawn. In any case they must have been retained, and the descendants of the

settlers would naturally expect to retain the offices of the Empire which their fathers had helped to win. All this is faithfully reflected in Genesis xxxix. 2, 3. Potiphar, though one of the great officers of the court, *is not one of the dominant race*; and it is noted, therefore, as a striking fact, that the Captain of the Guard is an Egyptian. Is not this wonderful? How can we explain this sensitiveness to the facts of history; to the condition and the character of the time; to its sufferings and to its prejudices? Is it not that the thought which finds its expression here is in broad, and close, and living contact with that past? Is it not that for Him who takes us back into this past, it still exists and is seen and understood and felt in all that it is? In a word, is not this book the work, not of Moses, nor of man, but of God, to whom alone past and future are for ever as the present?

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### PHARAOH'S VISIONS.

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**J**OSEPH was enabled to read his fellow-prisoners' dreams, and to become to one of them a prophet of good. He had expected that gratitude would bring the deliverance which justice had failed to award. But this expectation was also doomed to disappointment.

It is a question which we have sometimes to ask ourselves—how far we ought to mingle action with trust? We look to God to extricate us out of our difficulty : we ask Him to open up our way. Should we not rest then, and wait till God intervenes? If we do attempt to find a way for ourselves, are we not taking the matter out of God's hands ; and is not our prayer a mockery, or our action an insult? That is one of those apparent contradictions and seeming antagonisms between faith and works which repeat themselves in everyone's experience. This part of Joseph's story supplies an illustration and an answer. We are not told that he prayed to God for deliverance from the prison, but we cannot doubt that he did pray to be delivered, and that he prayed with earnestness and with faith. But he also uses the means which the providence of God places within his reach. He cannot go out and lay his cause before the king ; but the chief butler is about to obtain his freedom. *He* will have access to the monarch's presence. He will come again into favour. A word about the Hebrew slave and what he did may awaken the royal curiosity, and lead to the king's doing justice to the stranger. And so Joseph seizes what seems to be his opportunity. He says to the prince of the cup-bearers : " Think on me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house " (Genesis xl. 14).

Now in doing this, Joseph did not put the cup-bearer in the place of God ; nor did he forget God.

He traced the Divine hand in his meeting this court official in the prison, in the sending of the dream, and in the interpretation which God had given him. He still trusted in God when he made the above request. If this man kept faith with him, he would see in that, too, God's hand. And it will be noticed that *God did honour that trust*. The deliverance came through the very channel by which Joseph had been led to seek it. He reaped on the field which he had sown. But God intervened to make that field fruitful. Faith and works blended together, and yet the result came with all the wonder and joy of direct interposition. There is no opposition between believing and working even here. God inspires, guides, and blesses our efforts. And, when there is delay, it is only, as here, that the gift may come direct from God's own hand.

Two entire years passed, and during all that time the cup-bearer took no thought for Joseph. But one morning there is a stir in the palace. The courtly decorum is disturbed. Consternation spreads throughout the royal household. The king has had a communication from the gods, and no man can say what it is. It is as if a missive had arrived, big with fate, and no man was able to read it! And now, to the cup-bearer's mind, there come both spring and summer. The seed sown so long ago suddenly springs up and bears immediate fruit. Joseph is summoned from the prison. He passes its doorway that morning never to return. He enters the palace gate to take and to keep the highest place among the

nobles of the mightiest and most cultured kingdom upon the earth.

This part of the narrative yields quite a constellation of confirmations. We may notice, first of all, the thoroughly *Egyptian colouring of Pharaoh's dreams*. The king finds himself standing by the river. As he looks, he sees seven fat and beautiful cows come up out of the river and begin to feed among the reeds. Then other seven cows ascend out of the river; but these were unsightly and lean of flesh. Instead of feeding among the reeds, they ate up their predecessors, and were, nevertheless, still as lean and as unsightly as they had been before (Gen. xli. 1-4). We meet in the record of this incident with several purely Egyptian words, the use of which is a striking feature of the Pentateuch, and one of many silent testimonies to its Mosaic authorship. The name given to the river is *Yeor*. This was *the name in everyday use among the Egyptians*. The sacred name of the Nile, which is met with in the hieroglyphics, is *Hapi*; but the term in common use was *aur*, and was often accompanied by the epithet *aa*, great. *Aur aa*, "the great river," became in course of time *iara* or *iaro*. Whence the name "Nile" has come is at present a mystery. The Egyptians always called their beloved stream "the river," or *Yeor*. It is this form which appears in Genesis. It was the name by which the Israelites had called the river while residing among their Egyptian neighbours, and, consequently, the name which was naturally adopted by Moses when placing upon the sacred page those things

which were intended for their learning. We often hear it said that the Scriptures bear the mark of the time in which they originated. In this sense they do. Just as the speech of Jesus was adapted to the men of the age to which He in bodily presence ministered, so were the speech and the writing of Moses adapted to the generation which *he* served. But that generation was one *which had been accustomed to the speech of Egypt*. The speech and the traditions of the land, from which they had fled, were still fresh in the minds of the people. Moses, therefore, *wrote in language which they understood*. Had the book originated, as we are now told it did, after the Babylonian captivity, the use of a purely Egyptian term for the Nile would be simply inexplicable.

There is another indication of the time when Genesis was written. The reader will observe the phrase, “the *brink* of the river.” Where *we* should have said that Pharaoh stood upon the *bank* of the river, the Scripture says that he stood upon “the brink” of the river. The expression is peculiar; but the phrase appears still more strange when we pass from the English version and look into the original. There we read that Pharaoh stood on “the *lip* of the river.” It was an idiom common to both the Hebrew and the Egyptian languages, and indeed the word for lip is the same in both tongues—*sepah* and *sefat* in Hebrew, and *sept* in Egyptian. The Harris papyrus, an ancient Egyptian document, contains the very phrase. In speaking of the bank of a stream it uses the expression *sept en mau*, “the lip of the

waters." The phrase was, accordingly, familiar to the Hebrews whom Moses was leading on to their inheritance. They had heard it continually from the mouths of their Egyptian masters. It had often been in their own. It will be easily understood, then, how, in writing for these men in whose ears the echoes of the speech of Egypt were still ringing, and in telling them the story of Pharaoh's dream, no other form of words would have been possible to the pen of Moses. To use the speech most familiar to the people in such a connection he had to say that Pharaoh stood by "the lip of the river."

We have another Egyptian word in *achu*, translated "meadow" in our version. It occurs in the inscriptions, and signifies that which is verdant. *Achu* is simply the Egyptian plural of the word, and means "green things."\* It has also a special sense, and was used to designate an aquatic plant which grew at the water's edge. Jerome in his day inquired particularly into the meaning of the word, and "was told by the Egyptians that in their tongue everything green that grows in marshes is called by this name." It evidently refers in this passage to the marsh grass. Here, again, in order to convey his meaning distinctly to a people, who had for generations been accustomed to hear and to speak of the marsh grass under this name *achu*, Moses was in a manner compelled to use the Egyptian word. But, if Moses did not write the Pentateuch, and if it was not written for escaped

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\* Professor J. Lieblen, *Mots Egyptiens dans la Bible*, Proceedings Soc. of Bib. Archæology, Vol. XX., p. 202.

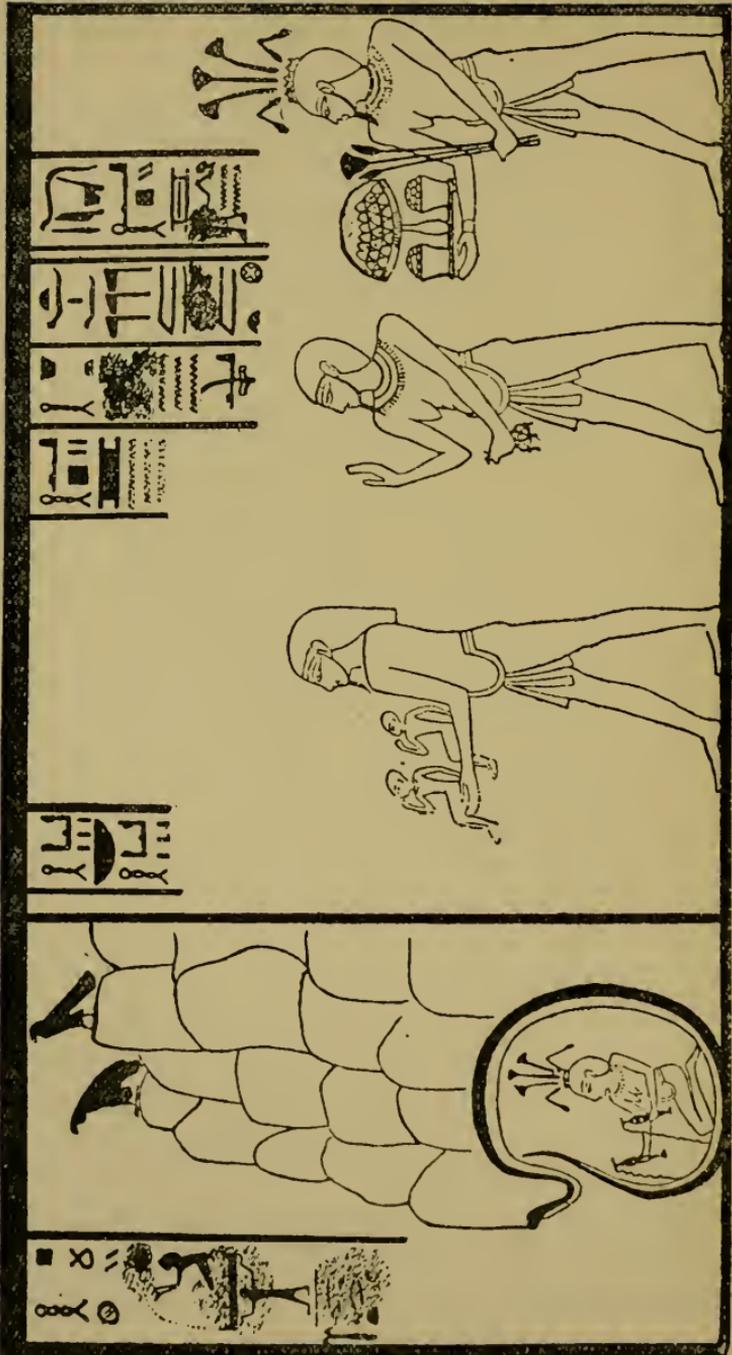
Egyptian slaves, will any one tell us how this Egyptian name for marsh grass makes its appearance here?

The local colouring is not less marked in other parts of the visions. Let us take the place, for example, assigned to the Nile. We all know to-day that the great river is the very life of the country. In that rainless region there is really no other source of fertilisation. Bread for man and food for cattle depend upon the river and upon the canal system which is fed by it. But, though there is no rain in Egypt, the land is nevertheless watered in consequence of the annual deluge of rain which pours down upon the mountain ranges in the far south. These create the torrents which rush down the hill-sides bearing stones and clay with them in their headlong career. The sources of the great river pour their turbid flood into the main stream. Combining most wonderfully with the increase at the sources, the north wind blows steadily up the river for months at this very time, keeping back the flow of the waters to the sea. The Nile visibly swells as it pursues its slow, majestic course. As the clouds still pour down their watery stores, and the torrents bear with jubilant rush their treasure to the plains, the great river rises still higher. The waters pour over the banks, and the valley of Egypt becomes one wide placid sea, the mounds on which the villages stand forming islands in the surrounding ocean. Upon the height of this annual rise, and upon the consequent extent of the inundation, depend the

next year's harvest, and the supply of fish, which formed one of the most important elements in the daily food of the lower classes in Egypt. A high Nile meant then, and means now, abundance; a low Nile meant starvation.

This was, of course, fully understood by all acquainted with the country, and was profusely acknowledged by the Egyptians. There is a beautiful piece of ancient Egyptian sculpture still in existence which proves this. It is a statue of the Nile, and indicates by symbols the varied wealth that the river brings to the land which it blesses with its waters. The accompanying engraving (reproduced from the pages of Vigouroux) will give an idea of the sculpture. The first division, on the left hand, shows the god (crowned with a papyrus bunch) pouring out the fertilising waters at the foot of towering rocks in the far distant region in which the stream was believed to take its rise. In the second division there are three representations. First of all the god, holds two children in his hands, indicating that he gives existence to man. In the next two figures he is pictured bearing the fruits with which the waters bless the land.

The Nile is often called on the inscriptions at Denderah *s-as aman*, "that which multiplies food." On a monument of one of the ancient kings we read: "O that the Nile may procure me food, nourishment, every plant in its season!" The following hymn to the Nile, which is marked by great beauty, will also indicate the place which the river held in the estimation of the Egyptians.



REPRESENTATIONS OF THE NILE AS THE BENEFICENT GOD OF EGYPT.

Besides the close bearing which it has upon the estimation in which the great river was held by the Egyptians, it is valuable as one of the most ancient pieces of poetry in existence. It is arranged in stanzas, the first word in each stanza being written in red letters. We give the first four stanzas.

**H**AIL to thee, O Nile ;  
Thou showest thyself in this land,  
Coming in peace, giving light to Egypt :  
O Ammon (thou) leadest night unto day,  
A leading that rejoices the heart !  
Overflowing the gardens created by Ra.  
Giving life to all animals ;  
The way of heaven descending :  
Giver of food, bestower of corn,  
Giving light to every home, O Ptah !

LORD of fishes, when the inundation returns.  
No fowls fall on the cultures.  
Maker of spelt ; creator of wheat :  
Who maintaineth the temples !  
Idle hands he loathes  
For myriads, for all the wretched.  
If the gods in heaven are grieved,  
Then sorrow cometh on men.

HE maketh the whole land open to the oxen,  
And the great and the small are rejoicing,  
The response of men at his coming !  
His likeness is NUM.  
He shineth, then the land exulteth !  
All bellies are in joy !  
Every creature receives nourishment !  
All teeth get food !

BRINGER of food ! Great lord of provisions :  
Creator of all good things !  
Lord of terrors and of choicest joys !  
All are combined in him.  
He produceth grass for the oxen ;  
Providing victims for every god.  
The choice incense is that which he supplies.  
Lord in both regions,  
He filleth the granaries, enricheth the storehouses,  
He careth for the state of the poor.

This hymn is much earlier than the time of Joseph, having been composed during the twelfth dynasty. The Nile was loved and adored. It was deified under the name of *Hapi*. Priests were consecrated to its service. Its praises were recited, as in the hymn just quoted, and sacred processions and festivals were arranged in its honour. Its annual rise was numbered among the most important benefits vouchsafed by heaven. In the decree, said to have been issued by the god Phtah Totunen in favour of Rameses II., we read: "I give thee a very high Nile; it fills the country for thee with abundance, with riches, and with fruit." In a similar decree, granted in favour of Rameses III., the god is made to say: "The Nile brings to thee . . . ; it fills the country with abundance, with riches, with fruit; it covers the land with fish whithersoever thou marchest." All this shows how deep was the impression that the Nile was the source of all the prosperity of Egypt, and the means through which its very life was preserved. We are now aware that there was really no exaggeration in this impression, wrong and idolatrous though the acts and the words were in which the feelings of Egypt were expressed. It was wholly in keeping, therefore, with all this that the king in his vision should see the emblems of abundance and the emblems of want arise in each case from the Nile. There could not possibly have been a closer agreement with fact. Let the reader also observe another feature. There is not one word in the narrative to explain why the Nile should

have been mentioned. Nothing whatever is said as to why Pharaoh should have been carried in vision to the brink of the river, or why the cattle should have proceeded from its waters—in any other circumstances a most unnatural representation. Now there are two conclusions from all this, the validity of which it is impossible to deny, and the bearing of which upon present unbelief cannot be over-estimated. There is here the most exact knowledge of the country, and it is taken for granted that *this knowledge is shared by the readers for whom Genesis was originally intended*. Again let me ask that these two conclusions be noted and weighed. The writer knows what the Nile means to Egypt, and *the readers are also supposed to know*. These are in reality a signature and a date stamp to Genesis. Any reader can see there—not Babylon—but Egypt; not a writer of the Exile, but a writer of the Exodus. If the book had been written in, or subsequent to, the time of Ezra, mistakes might have been made; but whether made or not, *explanation would have been an absolute necessity*. But the writer of the book knows Egypt; for he makes no mistake, and every word yields, as it were, the perfume of exact and perfect knowledge. The readers of the book *also know Egypt*; for not one word of explanation about the relation of the Nile to abundance or want is held to be necessary. It is simply impossible, therefore, to escape the conclusion that the book was written before the settlement of the Israelites in Palestine.

Similar indications meet us at every step. Why

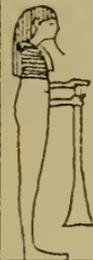
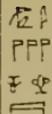
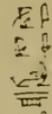
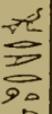
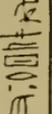
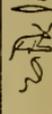
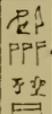
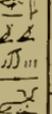
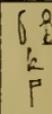
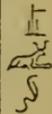
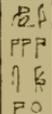
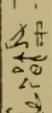
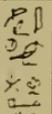
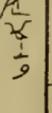
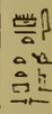
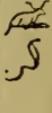
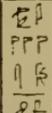
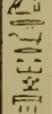
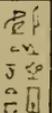
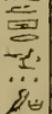
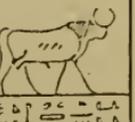
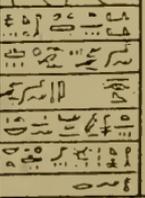
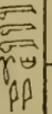
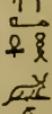
were the kine taken as symbols of the products of the Nile? The answer to this is that God used emblems which would speak most forcibly to the



HORUS.

mind of the Egyptian king. One might suppose that the cow was taken as a kind of natural symbol of plenty. In a fruitful season it yielded its milky

supply in abundance; and in a time of drought and famine that supply would fail. But, if a more direct connection was established in the Egyptian mind between the cow and the fruitfulness of the earth, then the reason of the introduction of that animal into the imagery of the dream would be at once apparent. Was there, then, any such connection? The reply to this question brings out still more fully the Egyptian colouring of the narrative and what I have called its date stamp. The goddess Isis was in some way connected with the earth in the Egyptian mythology, as the Nile was connected with Osiris. Their offspring was Horus, who was supposed to represent summer. *The cow was regarded as the emblem of Isis and of the earth.* "The heifer," says Plutarch, "is the symbol of the earth, of agriculture, and of nourishment." In *The Book of the Dead*, or *The Funereal Ritual*, there is a passage which Emil de Rougé regards as in striking agreement with the Scripture narrative. The Vignette of the 110th chapter of the *Book of the Dead*, a sketch of which will be found on the next page, presents a mystical representation. Osiris is represented as a bull, accompanied by *seven* cows. De Rougé says: "The seven cows of the dream of Pharaoh are a singular trait of local colour, which has a connection with the myth of this chapter." "Of the five or six extracts from the *Funereal Ritual* preserved in the British Museum," writes another, "three reproduce the cows escorting the mystic bull. The cows invariably number seven. The hieroglyphic or hieratic papyri

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MYSTICAL REPRESENTATION (from *The Book of the Dead*) OF OSIRIS AND HIS SEVEN COWS.

of the Leyden Museum, more numerous than those of London, represent at least four times the seven cows and the Osiris bull.”

Although the number seven had in the dream a distinct message, measuring the duration both of the time of plenty and of the period of famine, it is impossible not to be struck by this reference to the Egyptian sacred ideas of the period. The *seven* cows must have challenged the attention and impressed the heart of the king, brought up from his infancy amid these symbolic representations, and the fact that the symbol of the cow was so closely associated with the fruitfulness of the land and with the prosperity and the happiness of the people, clearly explains why that symbol was taken. It carried God's message as another could hardly have done. Here, then, the bearing of this part of the dream is made plain. The Egyptian, from his earliest infancy, was taught to associate the ideas of agriculture and of nourishment, with the cow. His more extensive learning only impressed the symbolism more deeply upon his mind. The cow was, accordingly, the most fitting figure which could be set before the *Egyptian* mind of a good or of a bad harvest. The well-favoured fat kine and the ill-favoured kine, lean of flesh, told their own tale and sent home the lesson to the king's inmost soul, the moment the key was supplied. Joseph's interpretation immediately approved itself. It was received not on his authority; for the authority of a foreign slave, fresh from the prison-house, and with the stigma of crime still on

him, could not be much. It was received because, the moment it was spoken, the whole vision became luminous. It shone with a brightness that declared it to have been sent from God, and that the man who had supplied the key must have done so through the endowment of Him who had sent the vision. Is it possible that this dream, so wonderfully adapted to impress the Egyptian mind and to accredit Joseph as God's servant—is it possible that it could have been invented by a Palestinian or Babylonian Jew a thousand years after the time of the Exodus? Could this offspring, so to say, of the soil of Egypt—this narrative steeped in the ancient thought and life of the land of the Nile—have been manufactured by any amount of Jewish talent or of genius in another age and in another clime? We are told that the present unbelief is a revolt from supposed difficulties. But "the difficulties of the Bible" are infinitesimal in comparison with the coming difficulties of "the reconstruction of the Bible." If there has been uneasiness under the yoke of Solomon, there will be positive and final revolt from the threatened yoke of Rehoboam.

There are two other references in the visions which are worthy of notice. The first need not detain us long. It will be observed that the *seven* ears are in each case upon *one stalk*—"Behold seven ears of corn came up *upon one stalk*." To us, and to other nations, this is an unnatural feature; but it is all the more thoroughly Egyptian. The Egyptian wheat (*triticum compositum*) bears several ears upon one stalk. There

was of old a special difficulty in this passage to the learned. Herodotus says that the Egyptians regarded it as disgraceful to feed upon wheat or barley. How then could wheat, in Pharaoh's dream, be taken as representing the food which was to be given in the years of plenty and to be withheld in the years of famine? Was there not striking ignorance, here at least, of Egyptian customs? As usual, the mistake lay elsewhere than in the Scripture. It is now placed beyond the possibility of question that Herodotus was misinformed. The paintings in the Egyptian temples show that wheat was the main crop on which the country depended for its food. "In spite of Herodotus," says Maspero, "the usual food of the people was wheat and other cereals, which the soil of Egypt produces in abundance."

The remaining point is involved in greater difficulty. It will be noted that the seven thin ears "were blasted with the *east* wind." Here Von Bohlen believed that he had laid the finger upon a distinct mark of non-Egyptian origin. No writer acquainted with Egypt, it was declared, would have spoken of the "east" wind. The prevailing winds in Egypt are north and south, while those which prevail in Palestine are east and west. Was not this a distinct proof that the book originated among a people acquainted with the phenomena of a country like Palestine, and not among those who were acquainted, as Moses and the Israelites of the Exodus were, with the phenomena of Egypt? The difficulty had been apparently felt before Von Bohlen's time. An

ancient Egyptian version of the Old Testament, the Memphitic, which was made in the third century before the beginning of our era, and was regularly read in the Jewish synagogues in Egypt, has dropped the word "east," and merely says that the thin ears were "wind-blasted."

The translator recognised the difficulty, and so omitted the word in his translation. There is, however, an Egyptian wind of a more deadly kind than the east wind of Palestine. The Chamsin, a south-east wind,\* blows from the deserts of Arabia, and withers vegetation by its blighting breath. It carries along with it particles of small dust, which make it dangerous also to human life. So far, then, the difficulty finds a solution. There *was* a wind in Egypt which produced such results in a more marked degree than any which the inhabitants of Palestine were acquainted with. It was much more natural to the Israelites of the Exodus to speak and hear of wind-blighted vegetation than it ever was among their descendants in their own land, or in Babylonia. But the difficulty, in part, still remains. Why should the wind not have been described as *south-east*? To this the answer has been given that the Hebrew has only four names for the winds. That language invariably speaks of a wind as from one of the four cardinal points, and does not combine them as we do. Moses might have described the Chamsin as a south wind, or as an east wind. But, if he had spoken of it as a south wind, he would have given no indication of its

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\* Ebers, *Aegypten und die Bücher Mose's*, p. 340.

hurtful character. He chose, therefore, it was said, the epithet which did declare that character.

That might have sufficed; but a communication from a friend (Mr. Stewart, of Lenzie), who, many years ago, having been shaken by the writings of Bishop Colenso, resolved to find out the truth for himself, and who has engaged in original research both in Assyriology and Egyptology, enables me to go further. "The Egyptians," he says, "like the Acadians and many other ancient nations, believed that all good came from the west and all evil from the east. The west is the land of the good, the east just the reverse. With the Greeks the 'Isles of the Blessed' were in the west; 'the isles of the brave,' of our own Druidical forefathers, basked in the beams of the western sun. To this day in China one of the prayers for the bride at a marriage is, 'May breezes from the *west* blow upon her,' though there is nothing peculiarly pleasant in the west wind of China: and I suspect our own proverb—

'When the wind is in the east  
'Tis neither good for man nor beast,'

has had a mythological origin.

"Be this as it may, the fact remains that in Egypt all evil was supposed to come from the east. Hence in the Egyptian Ritual of the Dead, there are prayers that the deceased may be sent to the west and not to the east. This fact furnishes the key to explain the difficulty. The east wind is simply the bad wind, or the wind from the bad 'airt,' and so far from the using of such an expression casting doubts on the

historical nature of the narrative, it seems to me, when rightly understood, to have quite a contrary effect."

Even here, therefore, a half removal of the difficulty turns out to be totally unnecessary. The Scripture, unlike the productions of men, never requires to be apologised for. The "east wind" was a stronger expression than the Egyptian term for the Chamsin would have been. It was a wind whose effects were such that it could only be fitly designated by a phrase which fully expressed its virulent character. That phrase is still Egyptian, and designates the effect, if not the direction. Will our readers now sum up the various points which we have noticed, and say whether any document written by Moses, a native of Egypt, and for escaped Israelites who also were natives of Egypt, could possibly have borne more numerous or more clearly marked traces of its origin? They are, I may venture to say, a triumphant vindication of the statement that Genesis was written by Moses. They also, on the other hand, place enormous difficulties in the way of the critics. For they will have to explain how these, and many other traces of Mosaic origin, could possibly be found in a work of the date and of the place to which they assign the authorship of Genesis.

## CHAPTER VIII.

PHARAOH'S COURT.  

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WE have considered somewhat minutely the imagery of Pharaoh's dream. But it is not there only that the narrative reflects like a mirror the life of which it speaks. We find the reflection, for example, in the words: "It came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled." Anyone to-day might be impressed by a dream. He might even wonder whether the dream had any significance or contained any needed direction. But he would hardly be troubled or harassed in mind about it. His common sense would rebel at the very thought. We should refuse even to allow ourselves to be depressed by the visions of the night. As a dog shakes out the moisture, retained after some unwelcome bath, we should make a resolute effort and leave every vestige of our dream behind us. But the Egyptian moved in the midst of quite another environment than surrounds us. His ideas regarding the unseen and the source and mission of dreams were utterly different from ours, and also from those of the Israelites; and this phrase bears the stamp of that difference. The words "his spirit was troubled," are almost a literal translation of the usual Egyptian phrase. That it was a common experience we have already had occasion to mark in the case of the chief

baker and of the chief butler. "Joseph looked upon them, and, behold, *they were sad.*" That experience was universal in Egypt. The Prince of Bachtan, to whom we referred in a previous page, saw in a vision the god Khons flying back to his native land. The inscription proceeds: *nehas pu arnef em henuh*; that is, "having awaked, he was filled with fear."

Pharaoh's trouble led him to avail himself of the resource provided by his country and his time. We are told that "he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream." This was the usual course. In every time of difficulty, when ordinary prudence was at fault, and even when it might have sufficed, the men who professed to know the things concealed from ordinary observation, were called together. The consulting of these wise men is, indeed, quite a feature of ancient Egyptian civilisation. We find the following incident, for example, in *The Romance of the Two Brothers*. The heroine throws a lock of her hair into the river, and the river bears it along and leaves it in the tanks used by Pharaoh's washermen. It imparts to the king's garments a peculiar perfume, which the men in vain try to wash out. They daily make the attempt, and with all their efforts only increase the evil. The chief of the washermen, in despair, visits the spot to see whether anything can be done to stop the complaints which are now a daily grief to him. Looking over the side of his barge he espies the lock of hair. He causes it to be brought to him,

and, feeling assured that he has now laid hold of the solution of the mystery, he carries it to Pharaoh. The scribes, who are practised in magic, are immediately summoned, and they give directions as to what is to be done. The way in which these scribes, or learned men, are here named, is also in striking accord with the phrase in Genesis. The Egyptian phrase is literally: "the scribes, having understanding of things." The Scripture phrase is "the magicians of Egypt, and the wise men thereof." The same description meets us in the account of the journey of the god Khons to Bachtan. When the first request for help came, Pharaoh immediately exclaimed: "Fetch me the scribes of the house of life, and the wise men (who know) the secrets of the sanctuary."

There is only one word which prevents the Bible phrase and that of ancient Egypt from being in absolute agreement. Where the monuments speak of scribes, our version speaks of magicians. But the word *Khartumim*, which is rendered magicians in the English versions, is derived by Gesenius from Kharat to engrave, or to write with a *stylus* or graver. He gives to the word the meaning "sacred scribes," and thus, although he was in ignorance of the phrase in the Egyptian inscriptions, he brought the two into absolute agreement. Gesenius is probably right; but the word used for "scribe" in Hebrew is one altogether different. *Khartumim* seems to be a purely Egyptian word, which we shall no doubt by and by understand fully when we light

upon documents which give us further information regarding the priesthood. These *Khartumim* appear to have been the class from which the answer was specially expected.

But the reader of Genesis may have been perplexed by one expression in the narrative. It said that Pharaoh called for *all* the magicians, and *all* the wise men of Egypt. Now it is evident that Pharaoh was eagerly desirous to know the meaning of his dreams. The king's business required haste. How was it possible, then, for him to wait till couriers had passed through the entire land, and till the *Khartumim* and the wise men had time to obey the king's command, and to present themselves before him? It is plain that the dreams were told without any such delay, and, indeed, almost immediately upon the king's awaking. How, then, can this command be explained? No explanation was, in fact, possible to anyone who was not intimately acquainted with Egyptian customs. The priesthood of Egypt formed a very large and most important—indeed *the* most important class of the community. Every temple had a college of priests with an arch-priest at their head.

We now know that the priesthood was divided into classes. "The decree of Canopus," says Vigouroux, "mention six particular kinds of priests; (1) the high priests or chiefs of the temple, *meru hatu maa*; (2) the prophets, *honnu nuteru*; (3) the stologists, *sabu nuteru abu sma er ret nuteru em sati sen*, that is, the purifying priests, charged with investing

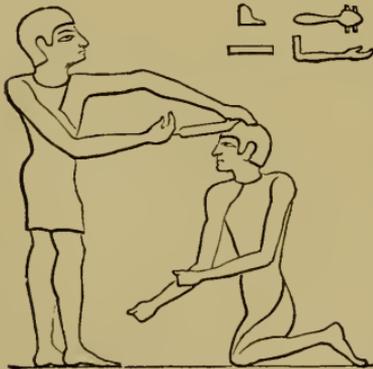
the statues of the gods with their ornaments; (4) the pterophores (wing-bearers), *sahu neter sat*, 'the scribes' having wings above their heads and 'writing the sacred writing'; (5) the hierogrammates, *reh hatu*, 'the wise, the learned'; and (6) 'the other priests,' *nuteru atefu*, literally, 'the divine fathers.'"\*

The priests of a province used to meet and pass decrees, holding a kind of Parliament. But the civilisation of the Egyptians was seen in the organization of their priesthood as in everything else pertaining to that remarkable people. The entire body of priests was divided into four classes, and to each class was assigned *five representatives, who lived in the capital, and were the appointed counsellors of the king*. It was these that the king commanded to be summoned. *They* were the entire body of the *Khartumim*, and of the wise men of Egypt. It was natural for a writer, who knew of this sacred twenty, to speak of them in this way. It was also natural for him to write so of them to a people who were equally well acquainted with the fact that this body represented the entire learning of the land. The Israelites who had dwelt in Egypt found no difficulty in the statement, and needed no explanation. But in this we have one more indication that the writer of Genesis was one who knew Egypt, and that the people for whom he wrote the book were quite as fully acquainted with the institutions and customs of that country. In other words, Genesis belongs to the time of the Exodus and to no other.

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\* *La Bible et les Decouvertes Modernes*, Vol. II., 115.

We have another stamp of the time in what we are told of the preparation made by Joseph for appearing before Pharaoh. "They brought him hastily out of the dungeon, and *he shaved himself and changed his raiment*, and came in unto Pharaoh." We here light upon a feature in the story which is thoroughly non-Jewish and non-Babylonian. In neither land was it customary to dispense with the hair of either face or head. Both Israelites and Babylonians seem to have delighted in the abundance



EGYPTIAN BARBER.

of that natural adornment on both. The Assyrian monuments show us men with long hair and long beards, which are evidently regarded with pride, seeing that they are plaited and adorned with the greatest care. The Jews were also thorough Semites in

this respect. Absalom, a man whom we should expect to bestow much attention on his personal appearance, wore his hair so long that it caught in the trees beneath which he was riding, and left him hanging in the air, a prey to his foes. Everyone is familiar, too, with the epithet of "bald-head," flung at Elisha by the children of Bethel. The shaven crowns of the Greek priests were regarded with as much contempt by the Semitic Mohammed and his

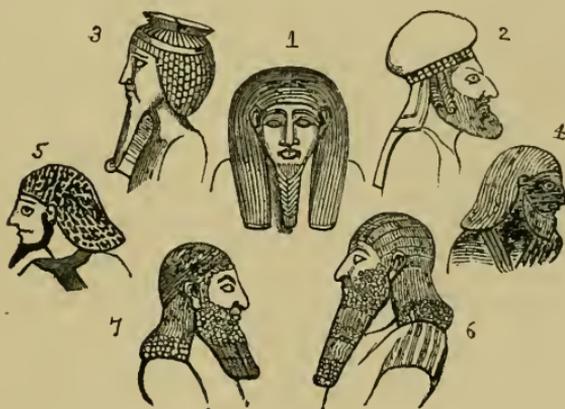
followers. But, if we enquire into the custom of ancient Egypt, we find that it was most distinctly opposed to those notions. There the priesthood, the real nobility of the land, were, so to say, the leaders of fashion. It was necessary, according to their ideas of purity, that they should be completely shaven; and, as the court was most punctiliously ruled by priestly etiquette, no one was suffered to appear before the king, at least in the capacity of counsellor or servant, without submitting to the customs of the court in this matter.

Besides this, it was the universal practice in Egypt. The barber was the most hard-worked man in the land. Among the Egyptian manuscripts which have been preserved to our own time, there is a letter from a scribe, a century or two earlier than the time of Joseph. It contains the following curious passage regarding the griefs of the Egyptian barber:—"The barber shaves until night. When he sits down to eat, then only does he rest his elbow. He goes from one cluster of houses to another to search for customers; he breaks his arms to fill his stomach, like the bees that eat their labours." I give a picture from the monuments of the barber at his daily task. The hieroglyphics in the upper right hand corner, *hak nib* (*haku* was the old Egyptian for barber), explain what is being done. A razor has been found, which is now in the Louvre Museum, in Paris. With the exception of its greater length, it is an exact pattern of the English razor of to-day, and it proves the excellence of the metal work of the

Egyptians. It is made of a bronze so mixed and tempered, that although the razor is several thousand years old, it still preserves its surface and its sharp edge. Mummies are frequently found with long hair; but this exception only proves the absolute prevalence of the custom. To suspend the practice was a sign of grief. To go unshaven was to confess themselves unclean, and to indicate that they abased themselves before the gods. In failing health, therefore, or in sickness, the hair was suffered to grow; and the condition of the mummies in this respect is simply an indication to us of the days of hope and fear through which the spirits that once dwelt in them passed on into the unseen. Herodotus is quite borne out by the monuments when he says that "the natives of Egypt shave always, except when they are in trouble: they then allow their hair and beard to grow." To make up for the inconveniences of the custom, the Egyptians wore wigs, and sometimes also false beards. The beard was in favour as a sign of manly courage and vigour. In one case a queen (Queen Hatasou) is represented with one, evidently to show that, though a woman, she was, nevertheless, to be honoured and feared. This confession of respect for the adornment which nature has conferred, makes the imperiousness of the Egyptian custom of shaving all the more marked. "So particular, indeed," says Wilkinson, "were they on this point, that to have neglected it was a subject of reproach and ridicule; and whenever they intended to convey the idea of a man of low condition, or a

slovenly person, the artists represented him with a beard."\*

Let us now glance at the next thing which we are told Joseph did in order to be fit for Pharaoh's presence. He "changed his raiment." The court etiquette was regulated, as has been said, by the priesthood, and they were as scrupulously precise in regard to clothing as to cleanliness. The priests, Herodotus tells us, every third day "shave every



(1) ANCIENT EGYPTIAN WIG AND FALSE BEARD,  
(6, 7) ASSYRIAN, (2) JEWISH, (3, 4, 5)  
OTHER HEAD-DRESSES.

part of their bodies, to prevent vermin or any species of impurity from adhering to those who are engaged in the service of the gods. The priesthood is also confined to one particular mode of dress. They have one vest of linen, and their shoes are made of the byblus. They wash themselves in cold water twice in the course of the day, and as often in the night. It would indeed be difficult to enumerate their

\* *Ancient Egyptians* (Edition, 1878), Vol. II., p. 330.

religious ceremonies, all of which they practise with superstitious exactness." The desire for cleanliness extended to the Egyptians generally. This earliest of travellers adds: "They are so regardful of neatness that they wear only linen, and that always newly washed." We have already noted, in the *Romance of the Two Brothers*, the reference to Pharaoh's washermen, who had a chief appointed to superintend them, and their anxious endeavour to have the king's garments so scrupulously clean that the odour imparted by the submerged lock of hair was a heavy trouble to them. Passing into the very centre of this extraordinary and superstitious regard for the outward symbols of purity, Joseph, notwithstanding the king's impatience to see the man who was his last hope in the endeavour to understand the visions and to obtain rest for his spirit, had to "shave himself and change his raiment."

Let me once more ask the reader's attention to what has now been shown, and especially to the points with which we have just dealt. When any part of Scripture is written for readers who are not acquainted with the customs spoken of, explanations are freely given. We find this especially in the Gospels, which were largely intended for non-Jewish readers. John, for example, referring to the presence in the house at Cana of the six stone cisterns, explains that they were there in accordance with the custom "of the purifying of the Jews" (John ii. 6). So, also, in describing the winding of the body of Jesus "in linen clothes with the spices," he adds:

“as the manner of the Jews is to bury” (John xix. 40). Had John been writing for Jews, such remarks would have been unnecessary, and, indeed, absurd. We can, from this very fact, conclude with certainty, that the readers for whom his book was first intended were not Jews. Now, apply this to the case before us. Here are customs quite as strange to Jews as either of these now noted were to Gentiles. Had this book been written for Israelites *who were ignorant of Egyptian customs*, an explanation must have been made. But, seeing that there is no explanation, what is the conclusion which we are forced to come to? Is it not that, though the book was intended for Israelites, it was intended for Israelites to whom these customs were not strange; who had been acquainted with them for years; and for whom, therefore, no explanation was required? In other words, the book was written, in the first instance, for Israelites who were as fully acquainted as the writer himself with the customs of the Egyptians. It was written therefore for the Israelites of the Exodus. How this conclusion can be avoided I do not know. It is for those of the critical school to say. Meanwhile, we thank God that He has stamped the book thus with the date of its origin so plainly, that, notwithstanding all that can be said against it, we may be certain that the Scripture account of itself is unassailably true, and that the law was given by Moses as surely as grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

## CHAPTER IX.

## A ROYAL REWARD.

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IT does not belong to our present purpose to tell Joseph's story. And, even though it did, there would be small necessity to re-paint the canvas which the Scripture has filled with unmatched pencil and with unfading colours. There is nothing even in Scripture that displays more fully the marvellous force of God-given inspiration than Joseph's reading of the king's dream. Every word sweeps the darkness more completely away, till the meaning of the message is as clear as the vision had been vivid. That palace hall became a place for wonder and adoration. The dream stood out so clear and so consistent, and the interpretation and the dream made such answer to each other, that Divine origin was stamped upon both. It was a moment, it must be confessed, when Pharaoh might well have been lifted out of himself. But the question may arise whether the account of what followed does not exceed the bounds of all that is probable. Joseph is immediately raised to the highest eminence. "Forasmuch as God," said Pharaoh, "hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: Thou shalt be over my house, and according to thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou." There are courtiers

present—men who have thirsted for court appointments and laboured long to win them; and now in one moment this foreigner—this stranger summoned from a prison into which a supposed crime has thrown him—is placed above them all! He is made a second Pharaoh, and upon the breath of his lips their advancement, and even their fate, are to depend! It reads more like the transformation in a fairy tale than sober history.

It is an interesting question, therefore, whether this incident, so strange to modern ears, has any parallel in the ancient history of Egypt. Herodotus tells us that he was informed by the Egyptian priests of a circumstance which happened in the time of the Pharaoh named Rhampsinitus, whose monuments were pointed out to him, and who was the wealthiest prince that ever reigned in the land. To secure his riches he built a strong treasure house. The artisan, who reared the building, communicated to his two sons, just before he died, how he had contrived to leave an entrance by means of a sliding stone, the situation and management of which he described to them. As soon as their father was dead, the young men proceeded to help themselves from the king's store. The monarch, on his entrance the next morning, discovered the theft, but was completely mystified. The seals upon the door were unbroken, and every fastening was exactly as it had been the previous evening. We need not repeat all the details of the story, but the result was that the king, enraptured with the ingenuity and address displayed

by one of the brothers, pardoned him and made him his son-in-law.

The story is marked by more than one extraordinary feature; but the Egyptian priests may be supposed to have been acquainted with their own history, and they related the whole to Herodotus as unquestioned fact. And their narrative does not stand alone. There is a papyrus preserved at Berlin which records the history of an Egyptian courtier, Sineh, who lived at the beginning of the 12th dynasty. He entered the service of the Pharaoh of the time, and was raised to high dignities. He tells the story of his elevation in the following words: "Pharaoh said to me 'Guide Egypt and develop all that there is of good in it. . . Continue with me; thou hast found favour in my sight!' He appointed me governor of his young warriors, and married me to his eldest daughter." \*

There are numerous instances of the like profuse acknowledgment of service or worth recorded on the monuments. Queen Hutshepsu had a favourite architect named Semnut, whose splendid structures long maintained his fame. He records on one of his monuments that the queen made him great in the country, the chief steward of her house, and governor of the whole land. Ahmes, a warrior who took a prominent part in the expulsion of the Shepherd kings, tells how every signal service that he rendered met with profuse rewards, which were crowned by his being made admiral of the Egyptian

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\* *Records of the Past*, Vol. VI., pp. 149, 150.

navy.\* But the most striking parallel to the Scripture narrative is found on an undated monument now in the museum at Turin. The inscription has led some to imagine that it was raised over the temporary resting-place of the body of Joseph. The deceased is named *Beka*, which means “a slave.” He says that he did his duty towards his parents, but these are not named, possibly because they were foreigners. He becomes a favourite of a Pharaoh as to whose name the monument is also silent. The king heaps favours upon him and creates him superintendent of the Public Granaries. There is no reference whatever upon the monument to the gods revered in the country—a most extraordinary omission in an Egyptian inscription. “A like inscription,” says M. Chabas, “might have been placed upon the tomb of the patriarch Joseph.” †

In Egyptian civilisation the monarch was everything and the subject nothing. The highest imaginable bliss of the latter was the obtaining of his sovereign’s favour. The marks of that favour were accordingly looked for, and upon fit occasion were royally bestowed. So far then from this incident, so improbable according to our ideas, affording any ground for doubting the historical character of Genesis, the very reverse is the case. It is a trait *peculiarly Egyptian*.

We shall find that this is equally true of every detail recorded in the Scripture of this momentous

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\* *Ibid.*, pp. 7-10.

† Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archæology, Vol. V., pp. 459-474.

interview, which not only poured the sunshine of God's goodness into Joseph's life, but also prepared an asylum and dwelling-place for the people of God. There is an important indication of the then political condition of Egypt which, in itself, is enough to show that we are dealing, not with a romance of the fourth or third century B.C., but with a history that sees with unerring eye, and describes with unerring speech, that land and people as they were fourteen hundred years before. Pharaoh, we are told, said to Joseph: "See, I have set thee over *all* the land of Egypt." There lies in that decree the consciousness of unlimited and unquestioned sovereignty *over the entire country*. If Pharaoh sets Joseph over all the land, the whole land must have owned himself as its one king. The country could not at that time have been divided into north and south, having one monarch reigning at Memphis and another at Thebes.

Now this universality of dominion, clearly implied in the statement of Scripture, is of immense importance. Dynasties run into each other and members of the same family reign conjointly, so that a sole and undivided dominion is by no means a common occurrence in the history of ancient Egypt. Can we show, then, that it happened in the time of Joseph? When I say that we are able to do this, the value of that simple phrase—"I have set thee over all the land of Egypt," will be felt. Tradition has, as we have seen, persistently identified the Pharaoh of Joseph with Apepi, the Apophis of the

Greeks. There are many indications, as we shall afterwards see, that this identification is correct. To begin with, Apepi seems to have come to the throne when he was 19 years of age; but he was, at the first, merely co-regent with his father and grandfather. There were, therefore, at that time, *three* kings in Egypt. When the grandfather, Saïtes, died, Mœris, the father, and his son Apepi divided the dominion between them. Mœris never took any other title than king of Upper Egypt. When Mœris died, Apepi became king over all Egypt; and it was during this latter part of his reign that Joseph entered upon his great life-work. After Apepi's death and during the reigns of his two immediate successors, it seems that the sovereignty was again divided, and kings reigned at Thebes as well as at Memphis.

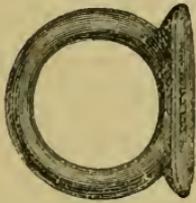
Only at this very time, therefore, was it possible for the monarch to set Joseph over *all* the land of Egypt. It could not have happened immediately before, and it could not have happened immediately after. How was it possible for a late compiler to have known that fact? How could even Moses, writing more than two hundred years after the event, have been acquainted with it except, either by the most minute study of the ever-changing complications of those times, or by the direct inspiration of the Spirit of God? As we shall afterwards see, the monuments of Apepi were defaced, and the memorials of his reign and work were obliterated, by a subsequent dynasty, so that even to a historical

student two centuries later, it would seem to have been impossible to attain the absolutely accurate knowledge manifested here. The truth is that the very battle ground chosen by the enemies of the Bible is becoming more and more the scene of their utter defeat. They have rejected the Bible even as history, and, with a painfully contemptuous confidence and disdain, they have pointed to one "error" and another. But, as the light grows, the supposed "errors" of Scripture become the most convincing proofs, not only of its truthfulness, but also of a knowledge from which nothing is hid; and so, where the Bible was once refused a place as history, men feel that the hypothesis of a merely human authorship, however well-informed, will no longer suffice, and the adversaries themselves begin to ask: From whence hath this book these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto it?

But the generosity of Pharaoh did not merely display itself in the lofty place assigned to Joseph; it was also shown in the profusion of his gifts. And here we have another peculiarly Egyptian feature. The courtiers lived in the sunshine of the monarch's favour, and their monuments are full of passages which read in this very fashion. I have already referred to Ahmes, a great official under the 18th dynasty, and who was head of the Egyptian navy. He says in an inscription: "I received seven times, from the king, a gift of gold before the entire country, as well as male and female slaves. . . . We were fighting on the canal at Patehu at Avaris; there

I obtained rewards." He gives a list of places where, on account of deeds of valour, he received gifts and honours from the hands of the king.

Let us now look more closely at the gifts. Pharaoh "took off his ring and put it upon Joseph's hand." This is one of those minute touches in the narrative where the pen of a late writer has been supposed to show itself. Von Bohlen, in his commentary on Genesis, writes:—"It is hardly necessary to remark that these objects of luxury, especially engraved stones, *belong to a later epoch.*" But there is



EGYPTIAN FINGER  
RING.

hardly a Museum in the world to-day, in which any relics of ancient Egypt are found, which does not refute this rationalistic objection. These rings have been found



SEAL OF FINGER  
RING.

in hundreds. They were worn by all Egyptians of rank. They served not only as marks of nobility, but also as seals. The transfer to Joseph of Pharaoh's ring was not merely the handing over of a valued decoration and a mark of nobility. It was in a measure a transfer to him of the royal authority. It gave him power to seal his orders with the royal signet, and to govern Egypt according to his will.

We are next told that the king "arrayed him in fine linen" (Genesis xli. 42). This "fine linen" was among the most precious things manufactured in

Egypt, whose supremacy in the art has astonished modern artisans. A "piece of linen," says Wilkinson, "which I obtained at Thebes, has 152 threads in the warp, and 71 in the woof, to each inch." Speaking of a still finer sample, he says:—"Some idea may be given of its texture from the number of threads in the inch, which is 540 (or 270 double threads) in the warp, and 110 in the woof." "Another very remarkable circumstance in this specimen is," he continues, "that it is covered with small figures and hieroglyphics, so finely drawn that here and there the lines are with difficulty followed by the eye; and as there is no appearance of the ink having run in any part of the cloth, it is evident that they had previously prepared it for this purpose."\* For long ages Egypt was famed for its fine linen cloth, which sold for more than its weight in gold; and, where the art was carried to a height which leaves the products of modern appliances far behind, there was room here also for royal generosity to exhibit itself.

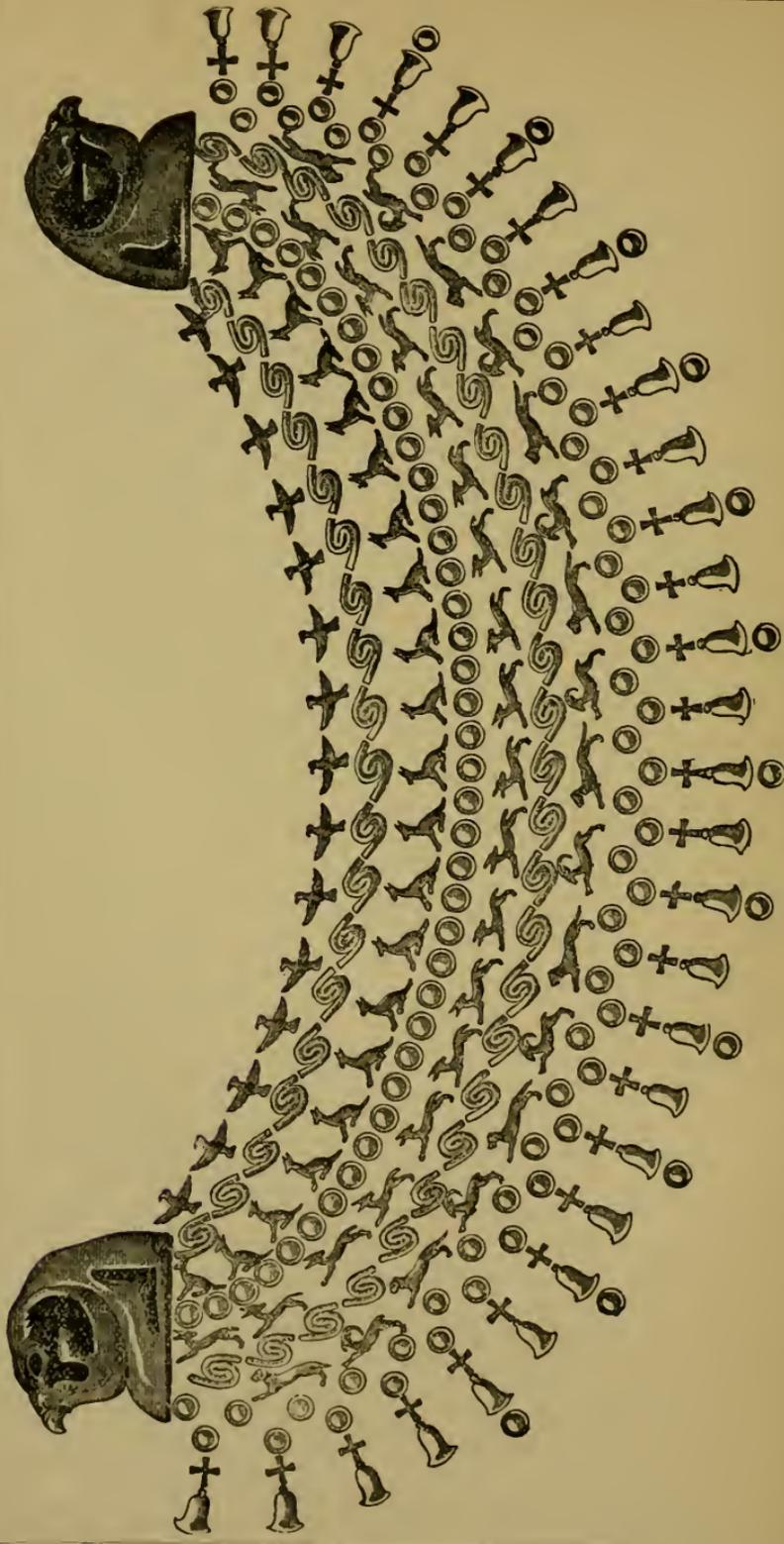
The refutation of the objection is equally overwhelming as regards the neck decorations, the collars, ascribed to the Egyptians in the Scripture. No two ornaments could, indeed, have been pointed to as more characteristic of the time. The collar was a necessary decoration of every Egyptian grandee. It seems that the very word which is used in Hebrew, *rabid*, is of Egyptian origin. Ebers, one of the foremost authorities on Egyptology, says the ordinary Hebrew derivation of the word is very arbitrary. It

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\* *The Ancient Egyptians*, Vol. II., p. 165.

is only by a species of straining that any connection can be shown to exist between it and any other existing Hebrew word. On the other hand, the Egyptian word *repi*t means an image which is worn on the neck, or a collar in the shape of an image. The difference in the two words *rebid* and *repi*t is just such as we might expect to occur in the transfer of a word from one language to another. We have derived many words directly from the French, for example, which have undergone greater changes.

As for the articles themselves, their use and significance are beyond dispute. On the tombs of Beni-Hassan, slaves are pictured who each carry in their hand some article needful for the attire or the decoration of their master. The very first in the procession carries a collar, such as always adorns the neck or chest of Egyptian kings and nobles. The gods are also decorated with them; for they were presented as gifts to the divinities. On a monument belonging to the 26th dynasty, a king is represented as offering two collars to Amen Ra. His sister also offers collars to the same god. One of these articles, so highly valued by the Egyptians, can be seen to-day in the Boulak Museum. It is described as a "splendid specimen." "Its links are of gold, formed in the shape of vultures on the wing, coils of rope, jackals, antelopes chased by lions, cruciform flowers, solar discs, bells, &c. The clasps represent the heads of hawks." A representation of it will be found on the following page. Professor Spencer says it is the most beautiful thing of the kind he ever saw. It



A ROYAL EGYPTIAN COLLAR.

was found upon the neck of the mummy of an Egyptian queen of the 17th dynasty, and was therefore manufactured or was in existence in the lifetime of Joseph himself.

But the discoveries carry us further still. They prove that the very act attributed to Pharaoh by the Scripture was one of high significance. A monument which belongs to the early part of the reign of Seti I., the grandfather of Menephtah, the king who is supposed by many to be the Pharaoh of the Exodus, represents just such a ceremony as is pictured in Genesis. The king is stationed upon a kind of balcony. His hands are stretched out towards Horkhem, his favourite. He commands the officers of his household to give Horkhem "much gold," wishes him long life, a happy old age, and other blessings. While the king speaks, two officials of the court place a magnificent collar of gold on Horkhem's neck. Another monument depicts the investiture of a priest named Pœri, who administers the territorial revenues of Egypt. The king, Menephtah I., is seated on his throne, while the priest is decorated in obedience to his commands. A third representation, which is here reproduced, brings us still nearer the event with which we are now dealing. Amenophis III. is seated on his throne. Before him stands Chaemba, who is called "chief of the granaries of the whole kingdom," and "the eyes of the king in the towns of the south, and his ears in the provinces of the north." All present are bending down in deep reverence before the king except

Chaemba, around whose neck a court official is fastening a chain of gold. These pictures show how truly Egyptian a trait this is, the record of which we have perhaps often passed over so lightly, and which German learning once placed as a stumbling-block on the pathway of faith. The investiture of the



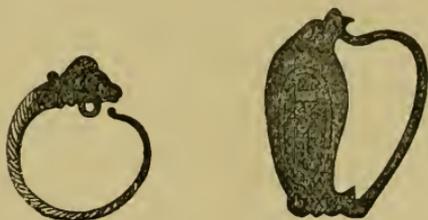
THE INVESTITURE OF THE COLLAR.

collar was so great an honour that it is the only ornament on the monument which was raised by the relatives of Horkhem to perpetuate his memory.

But these were not the only honours heaped upon Joseph. We have already passed over one which lies hid under a mis-translation. Learning has discovered that there was a special significance in Pharaoh's

first words: "Thou shalt be over my house, and *according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled.*" The phrase in italics will be found in the revised version as well as in the old. But it is a guess at the meaning of the Scripture and not a translation. The words, literally rendered, are—UPON THY MOUTH SHALL ALL MY PEOPLE KISS. Every one will be struck by the strangeness of the expression. What could it mean? There was no custom that the old or the new translators either knew, or could imagine, to which the words could be referred. They were, therefore, forced to regard them as a highly figurative description of the

veneration and obedience which the subjects of Pharaoh were now to accord to Joseph. But M. Chabas,



EGYPTIAN EARRINGS.

the distinguished French Egyptologist, in his *Researches on the 19th Dynasty*, has shown that we have in these words a most remarkable proof of a minute acquaintance with the customs of ancient Egypt. The words refer to a very peculiar but very lofty Egyptian dignity. It was called "the superior mouth." "This title," says M. Chabas, "is now known to us by an inscription of the 18th dynasty, published by Brugsch in his *Recueil des Monuments*. A high functionary, named Temouna, is there called 'the great superior mouth in the entire country.' It is to this officer that Pharaoh confides all his

authority. The Bible recalls this detail with the greatest accuracy when it makes the king say to Joseph, 'On thy mouth all my people will depend; only on the throne will I be greater than thou.' When Set-Nekt wished to share his power with Rameses III., he raised him to precisely this dignity of 'superior mouth of the land of Egypt.'"\*

A second proof that we have in this record of Joseph a history which is minutely and marvellously accurate, is found in another hitherto unsuspected mis-translation. Joseph comforts his brethren with the assurance: "So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and ruler throughout all the land of Egypt" (Genesis xlv.8). Here scholars had no doubt whatever that *ab l' parao* was pure Hebrew, and was to be rendered in English "a father to Pharaoh." This has been an undisturbed conviction from the times of the Septuagint, a translation which was made in Egypt itself not later than 200 B.C., until the days of our own revised English Bible. But Brugsch has now shown that in this phrase *ab* is not Hebrew but Egyptian. "We learn," he says, "from the Egyptian texts that, far from being Hebrew, *Ab en Perao* designates the first minister or officer, who was attached exclusively to the household of the Pharaoh. Several of the precious historical papyri of the time of the 19th dynasty, now in the British Museum, the texts of which consist of simple letters and communications

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\* *Recherches sur la XIXe. dynastie*, pp. 14, 15.

written by scribes and officers of the court, relate to these *Ab en Perao*, these superior officers of the Pharaoh, whose high rank is clearly indicated by the respectful style of these scribes of inferior rank."

The other marks of royal favour call for a word or two before I close the present chapter. Joseph is made to ride in the second chariot which belonged to the king. A large number of sculptures and paintings represent the king and other great personages in their chariots. We have, therefore, even here, an incident so peculiarly Egyptian that it was impossible for anyone, writing long afterwards and unacquainted with the manners and customs of the time, to have fixed on that as an important sign of the king's favour. Joseph was not only to go forth as a grandee of the realm, but he was to ride in Pharaoh's own chariot, and the reverence paid to the monarch was also to be paid to his newly-appointed representative.

We are also told that they cried before him "*Abrek!*" This our translators have rendered "bow the knee;" but the difficulty of giving a translation of the word is indicated to the general reader by the alternative rendering which is placed on the margin—"Tender father." Kalisch translates "Governor." *Abrek* has been naturally enough assumed to be a Hebrew word. But, having assumed that, scholars found themselves plunged in difficulties. It was a word which had no evident relationship to any other in the Hebrew tongue, and there was consequently considerable difficulty in determining its meaning.

Recourse was had to a process, to which suspicious characters used frequently to be subjected. *Abrek* was put upon the rack, and pulled, and twisted, so



JOSEPH SHOWN TO THE PEOPLE.

that it might give some rational account of itself. The answers, as was usual in such cases, were various, and reflected more or less the suspicions of the

inquisitors. The Targums render it "father of the king," by taking the first part of the word as Hebrew and the second as Syriac. Others again translated it—"Father and governor of the whole of Egypt!" Luther long ago summed up the situation when he said:—"What *Abrek* signifies, punctilious gentlemen will try to find out till the day of judgment!" The truth is that we have here again the stamp of the time, a proof that Genesis was written for a people to whom the Egyptian cry *Abrek* was one of the most familiar sounds. The Israelites who had fled from Egypt needed no explanation of its meaning, though the word had no relation to any other in their own language. It has lived on in Egypt to the present day. The Coptic (Egyptian) version of the New Testament translates John viii. 8, "he stooped down" (having stooped down) by *Afrek góf*. Here we have the long sought word *Abrek*, and bearing the very sense which most translators have all along felt that the passage made a necessity. It means to bow down, to make obeisance, to pay the mark of veneration which was given to the king. It still remains in the living speech of Egypt. When the Arabs wish their camels to kneel, they use the word *abrok*.

As to Joseph's title Zaphnath-paaneah, its Egyptian character was recognised from the first. This belief has been fully justified by modern researches. Different meanings are assigned to the phrase by Egyptologists; but all of them agree as to its thoroughly Egyptian form. Lenormant and Mariette

point out that the first part of this name, *Tsaphnath*, is Egyptian. *Tsaf-en-to* was borne as a title by the last of the Shepherd kings. It means "the nourisher of the world." Canon Cooke, in *The Speaker's Commentary*,\* says that the name *Zaphnathpaaneach*, or rather *Zaphnathpaanch* "is completely inexplicable in Hebrew, but an exact transcription of the Hebrew letters gives a clear sense in Egyptian." "The meaning," he continues, "is quite clear. The first syllable *Zap* is a word of very common occurrence . . . meaning 'abundance.' Its well-ascertained meaning is 'food,' especially 'corn,' or 'grain,' in general." He shows that it frequently occurs in titles of high officials with this sense. "The next word, 'nt' ('nath'), is the preposition 'of,' used very commonly on the early monuments." "pa" is the Egyptian definite article, and means, of course, "the." "The meaning of 'anch,'" concludes Canon Cooke, "is not questioned. It signifies 'life,' or with the article it may mean 'living.' Thus one name of *Memphis* is *ta-anch* for the land of life, or of the living.

"The meaning, therefore, of the whole name, the only meaning which it could bear to an Egyptian, and of course to a Hebrew of the age of Moses, is 'the food of life,' or 'the food of the living.'" The reader will remember the name assumed by Him, of whom Joseph was a type—"the bread of life." This ancient picture of the Saviour, painted in the deliver-

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\* Vol. I., pp. 480, 481.

ance given in the day of Israel's need, is complete even to the name !

In the closing words which tell us that Pharaoh married Joseph to "Asenath, daughter of Potipherah, priest of On" (verse 45), we have still the same living and full reflection of Egypt as it was in that far-off time. Both names, Potipherah and Asenath, are names of the time and, *what is still more significant*, names of the district of Lower Egypt, where Apepi and Joseph lived. A later writer, giving us a romance and not history, and unaware that Upper and Lower Egypt had different deities and consequently different sets of proper names, would have revealed himself by his blunders. On, called in Scripture Bethshemesh, the house of the Sun, and in Greek Heliopolis, the city of the Sun, was one of the most ancient cities of Egypt, and its most ancient capital. It had, along with Thebes and Memphis, the privilege of sending forth ten judges to administer the law in their respective districts. The priest of On, in the absence of the court, was in all probability the greatest personage in the city and in the surrounding district; and the marriage of Joseph with his daughter set the deliverer of the country among the highest in the land.

## CHAPTER X.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN, AND THE SEVEN  
YEARS' FAMINE.

THE seven years' famine, with which the history of Joseph is so intimately connected, was due to the usual cause of crop failure in Egypt—a deficiency in the rise of the Nile. The waters of the great river did not rise high enough to cover the usual extent of territory with fertilising mud, or to fill the lakes and canals, which supplied the necessary water for after irrigation. The lowness of the Nile, however, was itself an effect, and was due to deficiency in the annual rains. But the withholding of the rain affected a larger territory than Egypt, and we are told that “the dearth was in all lands.”

Palestine felt it. The harvest failed, and the pastures were burned up. Those who had large households to maintain had to look about for help, and in the second year of the famine Jacob sent his sons to Egypt to buy grain. Every reader of the Bible knows the affecting story, and has marked how large a place the Scripture has given to it. An important part of Joseph's ministry is utterly unrecorded. We know nothing whatever of what he did after the seven years' famine. How long he continued in his great position, and whether he served other monarchs besides Apepi, we cannot tell. I

have already spoken of the Bible portrait of Joseph as a type of Christ, and here we mark the process of selection by means of which the picture of the Saviour was fashioned. In this after-part of the story it is not the Egyptian grandee with whom we have to do: it is the brother of these misguided brethren. We thus trace here, both in the silence and in the speech of this book of Genesis, the guidance of Him who holds all ages within His view. It was written with an eye to the after-time, when that very people to whom the book was given should have to be shown that the sin of their race is the rejection of those whom God has sent to be their Saviours. The story of Joseph was repeated in that of Moses: it has culminated in the story of Jesus. The story has hope as well as humbling for Israel. Though they rejected Joseph, God's purpose was not defeated. When they came in their need to Egypt they found Joseph there. They came in need and, it is true, *found trial added to their necessity*. But the dark clouds rolled away. Need was forgotten in royal fulness, and in him, whom they had misunderstood and cast out, they found a brother whom at last they honoured and in whom they fully trusted.

When Joseph recognised his brethren in the strangers who came to purchase corn, he seems to have been shaken by a terrible suspicion. Why was Benjamin not among them? All besides were there: had his old persecutors transferred their murderous hatred to his younger brother? By dexterous management, the facts were ascertained without a

hint being given of the Governor's motive for inquiry, or of the Governor's identity. Benjamin is brought down to Egypt and presented before Joseph. There is one thing more to be done. With a knowledge of the human heart which commands our admiration, Joseph tests how far it is safe to allow them to retain possession of Benjamin on the return journey. There was reason enough why he should have been taken down to Egypt in safety. Without him it was impossible to procure the supply they needed. But their father's fears might be only too well grounded, and, once their purpose was served, the opportunity might be seized of wreaking their vengeance as they returned. If they were indeed animated by hatred, they would rejoice in Benjamin's calamity; and so the accusation of theft was planned with results that blotted out transgression and gathered the scattered ones together.

In the six chapters which are taken up with this part of the history, there are several things which arrest the attention of the archæologist. Let us now confine ourselves, in closing this volume, to that which is assigned as the cause of Joseph's promotion, and of the arrival of his brethren in Egypt—the seven years' famine. Famines have been of frequent occurrence in Egypt. Some of them are noted by Mr. Stanley Poole, of the British Museum, in an interesting article on "Famine," in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*. One occurred in 1200 A.D., a narrative of which has come down to us written by an eye-witness. "He gives a most

interesting account of its horrors, states that the people throughout the country were driven to the last extremities, eating offal, and even their own dead, and mentions, as an instance of the dire straits to which they were driven, that persons who were burnt alive for eating human flesh were themselves, thus ready roasted, eaten by others. Multitudes fled the country, only to perish in the desert road to Palestine."

But what we may call the modern history of Egypt furnishes, as Mr. Poole shows, a still closer parallel to the famine which Joseph providentially alleviated. In the eleventh century of our era *a seven years' famine* occurred, lasting from 1064 to 1071. The people were reduced to terrible straits. Wheat rose to an enormous price, and then failed altogether. Cats and dogs became valuable articles of commerce. The people fed on carrion, and in their dire necessity consumed even human remains. Organised bands of kidnappers infested Cairo, and, by letting down ropes with hooks attached, caught passengers in the streets and made food of their victims. The women of the Caliph's harem had to flee on foot to Syria to escape the death from which no rank was safe.

The stone records of ancient Egypt show that this dreadful scourge has not been confined to the Christian era. Rameses III., in an inscription, speaks of "years of scarcity." An earlier famine is mentioned as having taken place during the twelfth dynasty. Brugsch has translated an inscription

*which speaks of a seven years' famine*, and which has been supposed to be this which occurred in the days of Joseph. The tablet was discovered and photographed by Mr. Chas. E. Wilbour on the island of Sehel, on the upper Nile. There can be no doubt, it appears, that the seven years' famine which is there spoken of, is that which occurred in the time of Joseph. But all these inscriptions have to pass the gauntlet of the acutest and most fearlessly honest scrutiny to which records have ever been subjected. The President of the Society of Biblical Archæology, Mr. Le Page Renouf, showed the inscription to be a forgery which was in all likelihood perpetrated during the Roman occupation of Egypt. To this, and to the testimony which even that fraud affords, I shall return in the next volume.

But there is a perfectly authentic document, which yields almost as striking a testimony. It is an inscription in a rock tomb at El Kab. "From the peculiarities of the language," says Brugsch,\* "and from the style of the internal pictorial decoration of the rock chambers . . . we may consider that the tomb was erected in the times immediately preceding the eighteenth dynasty," that is about the time of Joseph. But the monuments carry us to a still more definite result than this. The owner of the tomb, whose virtues the inscription sets forth, was an official named Baba, who served under the King Sekenen-Ra. Now Sekenen-Ra was a vassal king whom Apepi, *the very monarch whom Joseph served*,

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\* *Egypt under the Pharaohs*, Vol. 1., p. 261.

suffered to reign at Thebes. Baba sets forth his own virtues. He loved his father and honoured his mother. His brother and his sisters loved him. He stepped out of the door of his house with a benevolent heart. He stood there with refreshing hand, and splendid were his preparations for the feast day. His heart was mild and free from noisy anger. All this makes a pleasing picture, and one that is not without its lessons. But there is something more. In the enumeration of his virtues we come suddenly upon a sentence which positively startles us. "I collected the harvest," he says, "as a friend of the harvest god. I was watchful at the time of sowing. *And now when a famine arose, LASTING MANY YEARS, I issued out corn to the city each year of famine.*" The conclusion from this is inevitable. *There was in the reign of Apepi*—the Shepherd King whom tradition has from ancient times declared to be the Pharaoh of Joseph—*there was in his reign a "famine lasting many years."* Brugsch points to the fact that famines following one another, are in Egypt events of the greatest rarity; and he adds: "The only just conclusion is that the many years of famine in the time of Baba must precisely correspond with the seven years of famine under Joseph's Pharaoh, one of the Shepherd Kings!



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