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MR. KEITH JOHNSTON'S GENERAL GAZETTEER.

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THE
PROPHECIES
RELATING TO
NINEVEH AND THE ASSYRIANS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE HEBREW,

WITH

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTIONS AND NOTES,

EXHIBITING THE PRINCIPAL RESULTS

OF THE

RECENT DISCOVERIES.

BY

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P R E F A C E.

THE main purpose of this work is, perhaps, sufficiently indicated in the title-page. It is to present to the reader a new version of the Prophecies included in the volume, accompanied by the additional matter needed for their elucidation, in their bearing, more especially, on the connected histories of the Assyrians and Hebrews. The work is, therefore, properly historical in its character, and does not profess to engage in the discussion of Theological questions. The few passages which might seem to afford the opportunity for such discussion, will be found to have been treated in subordination to the leading design of the volume.

In selecting the Prophecies to be translated, I have been guided, very much, by the wish to include only those in which there could be no doubt that the Assyrians were distinctly in the sacred writer's mind, in the whole, or some principal part, of the composition. Slight incidental allusions, such, for example, as we have in Hosea and Micah, have not been thought sufficient to require the introduction of the passages containing them. In most of what is here offered, the Assyrians, or their capital city, are the evident subject of the prophecy; in the rest they are more or less intimately connected with it, even when not expressly named; as, for instance, in Isaiah, ch. xxviii. Among prophecies of the latter class, some

readers may expect to find the book of Joel. I would willingly have included that book, for it is one of the most life-like and picturesque of the Minor Prophets. But I have never been able to see that, by *locusts*, Joel can have intended anything but locusts. He appears to have written at a time when the Assyrians had not yet inflicted injury upon Judah; and hence he does not allude to them among the enemies upon whom, as he declares (ch. iii), judgment shall be executed.

The General Introduction, it will be observed, makes no claim to be more than a short continuous sketch of the chief facts of the history of Assyria; nor does it profess to give any detailed account of the recent discoveries. My aim has been to include in it so much as seemed requisite for the full illustration of the translated prophecies, and for exhibiting the relation of the period to which they belong to the general course and character of Assyrian history. Many of the details here brought together have lain scattered through various publications, and are given on the authority of those to whom we owe the partial decipherment of the Monuments. In the present stage of that work, a number of topics can only be treated conjecturally; and, in all probability, as a better knowledge of the Inscriptions is gained, some things now accepted, or offered for acceptance, will be withdrawn or considerably modified.¹ Meantime, I have availed myself as best I could, and not without the fear of having sometimes gone astray, of the light which has been thrown on these subjects, during the last few years,

¹ The need of caution is well shown in a recent work of J. Brandis, of Bonn; who, while recognising the value and soundness of the principal results thus far obtained, yet gives good reasons for hesitation in regard to some of the details. (*Über d. historisch. Gewinn aus d. Entzifferung d. Assyr. Inschriften*, pp. 24-43. See also the note on the decipherment of the Assyrian Inscriptions at the end of the present volume).

PREFACE.

by the discoveries and investigations in particular of Sir H. C. Rawlinson, Mr. Layard, and Dr. Hincks, to each of whom reference is duly made. The time, it is evident, is not yet come for attempting to write, definitively, the history of the Assyrians. We cannot doubt, however, that the untiring efforts and eminent skill of several of the investigators, English and Continental, now engaged in this work, will greatly contribute to hasten its arrival ; while to the varied learning and the power of historical re-construction of my valued friend and former teacher, the Author of “ Ancient Egypt under the Pharaohs,” and “ Phœnicia,” many will also look for important help in the same field, in case he should give to the public the remainder of his “ contemplated work comprehending the history of those countries of the East whose civilisation preceded and influenced that of Greece.”¹

In preparing the Explanatory Notes, besides the sources just referred to, I have had recourse to the usual authorities ; but would express my especial obligations, in the chapters from Isaiah, not only to the Commentaries of Gesenius and Ewald, but also to the very useful *Handbuch* of Knobel², to which I have often been greatly indebted. It is much the fashion of German Commentators — with one notable exception — not only to give their own exposition of the meaning of their author, but also to discuss, more or less fully, the interpretations of their predecessors. I have not thought it necessary to imitate this elaborate and often tedious method ; but nevertheless I have deemed it well, in places of interest, to report what some one or more of the leading writers may have said upon the passage. In Nahum I have

¹ Ancient Egypt under the Pharaohs. By John Kenrick, M.A. Pref. p. vi.

² Der Prophet Jesaia erklärt von August Knobel, Leipzig, 1854.

made some use of Hitzig¹, but more of Otto Strauss², whose work on that prophet, if rather too diffuse, is a very good proof of the learning to be found in the possession of what many would term the reactionary religious party, which is now, under Hengstenberg and Stahl, so prominent and active in North Germany.

It remains that I should say a few words respecting the translated portion of this volume. The translation, while properly an independent one,—that is, direct, word by word, from the original,—has yet been made under the influence of a constant desire to avoid needless departures from the authorised English version. In other words, highly appreciating the various excellencies of that version, I have, as the rule, sought to retain or imitate its simple and well known phraseology, and have not left it for the mere sake of novelty of expression, nor without some, to myself sufficient, reason for so doing. In cases where the order of the words is here different from that of the English Bible, the change has been made both for the sake of a closer correspondence to the structure of the Hebrew, and also because it often seemed to help to bring out the meaning more exactly. Slight verbal changes here and there, with little or no alteration of sense, must be ascribed to the translator's feeling that the new form is preferable, for some reason of euphony or emphasis, in connection with the rest of the sentence.

POINTS to which I would call the particular attention of the reader are the following:—

(1) *Critical emendation* of the original³ has been but seldom resorted to; and that only, as it is believed, when both manifestly needed, and also supported by ample

¹ Zwölf Kleinen Propheten erklärt, Leipz. 1838.

² Nahumi de Nino Vaticinium, Berol. 1853.

³ The text of Van der Hooght, as edited by D'Allemand, London, 1836.

authority. Some notice of all cases of the kind will be found in the critical notes, at the end.

(2) As much as possible, the *same Hebrew* has been rendered by the *same English* word. It is not always possible, or expedient, to follow this rule. In the same immediate context it generally is so; but not invariably, even here. See Isaiah vii, 15, 22.

(3) The Hebrew language being rich in certain classes of words, a sufficient variety of suitable English terms cannot always be found. In a few instances, in the present work, it has appeared to me that *different Hebrew words*, occurring near to each other, might best be represented by the *same English word*. In such cases, the difference of the original has been marked by printing the repeated English word with a capital letter. See Isaiah viii, 22; ix, 1; xxviii, 21.

(4) When *two English words* are used to express *one Hebrew*, the former are joined together by a hyphen: thus *sour-grapes*, Is. v, 2; *strong-drink*, v. 11; *Holy-One*, v. 18. This has been done throughout, or nearly so, in the case of *nouns*; but has not been extended to *verbs*. Such phrases as *cast down*, *give command*, *take vengeance*, *go forth*, and so on, may, almost without exception, be regarded as the rendering of a single Hebrew verb. The same remark applies, of course, to all the cases in which the auxiliary verb is used in English to form the tense.

(5) *Italics*, to denote supplied words, have been introduced sparingly. Where the sense is clear, and doubt can hardly exist as to what word should be inserted, they have not been used; but in those comparatively rare cases in which a question might arise as to the exact word to be understood, and in a few others, italics have been employed. See Is. ix, 1; xxviii, 8—10.

(6) The frequent recurrence of the word AND will

hardly fail to be noticed. I have not been anxious to disguise, or avoid this, as might often easily be done; because the constant use of this particle, resulting from the simplicity of Hebrew modes of thought, is a genuine characteristic of Hebrew style; and it may well be questioned whether the original *Vau* really had all the variety of frequently changing significations and uses which have been attributed to it. In the vast majority of cases it is simply *and*; and it is better so to render it. If a certain roughness or sameness of expression seems often to result from this and from other sources — *e.g.*, occasional abrupt changes, as of *person*, from second to third; or of *number*, from singular to plural; or again of *tense*, from future to preterite, and *vice versa* — it will be remembered that this belongs to the original. The Hebrew prophets and poets were evidently little solicitous about such matters, and are indeed but seldom smooth reading for long together; while yet we have, occasionally, a passage truly harmonious and beautiful, in both its substance and its form. It is one of the chief merits of Ewald's translations of the prophetic and poetical books, as also of those in our own English Bible, that they so well preserve the rugged strength and simplicity of the ancient style.

June, 1857.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. SITUATION, INHABITANTS, AND EARLY HISTORY OF ASSYRIA.

THE region to which the name ASSYRIA properly belonged, and which appears to have been called by its own ancient inhabitants the Land of Athur, or Asshur, lies principally just within the eastern frontier of the Turkish dominions in Asia. It was a territory of from three to four hundred miles in length, by about one hundred and fifty in average width;—such at least are the dimensions assigned to it in the *Atlas Antiquus* of Spruner, who, however, most probably makes it larger than it really was. Without pretending to speak with more exactness than is warranted by the imperfect geographical notices left by ancient writers, we may state that the region referred to was comprised between the river Tigris, on the west and south-west, and what are now the Kurdistan mountains on the east. It probably included some part of the latter, and had no very clearly defined boundary in that direction. It may also, in its northern portion, have extended beyond the Tigris, and thus comprehended a part of Mesopotamia, as some maps represent. On the north it was overlooked by the mountain ranges of Armenia, and south and south-eastward lost itself in the level country forming the provinces of Babylonia and

Susiana, and extending round the head of the Persian Gulf. The river Zab, the lesser of the name, has been thought to have been the boundary in this direction; but it seems hardly likely that the southern limit should have been reached so soon.

To the eastward of Assyria proper lay the extensive highland region of Media, inhabited by a numerous and warlike race, more than once the rivals, perhaps the conquerors, of the Assyrians themselves. Westward, beyond the Tigris, spread the plains of Mesopotamia, of immense extent, and, in those days, there is every reason to believe, populous and fertile. To the south the Tigris gave to those who lived near its banks easy access to the sea, and to the productions of India; and, far away to the south-east, lay the vast and rugged table-land, now known to us as part of Persia — the primitive home of powerful tribes, who were destined, in conjunction with the Medes, eventually to subvert the later Babylonian empire, and found upon its ruins that of the Persian Cyrus and his successors.

From all that we know it may be inferred that Assyria, thus defined, was, at an early period, productive and well-peopled. Herodotus speaks of the canals made for irrigation, in Babylonia and Assyria; and mentions particularly the abundant crops of large-eared grain grown in the former province, as well as its numerous date-trees, and other productions. What he says of Babylonia may very reasonably be extended to Assyria. Rabshakeh, speaking probably of the latter, describes it as “a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil olive and of honey.” Traces of the canals just referred to are constantly met with by the traveller, showing the care and industry with which the ground was cultivated.¹

¹ Herod. i, 193; 2 Kings xviii, 32; compare Layard, Nineveh and Babylon, p. 636. To the same effect are several statements of Ainsworth,

Researches in Assyria, e.g. pp. 28-31, 256-8; also of Rich, Narrative, ii, pp. 62-3, 88-9.

Assyria is, indeed, possessed of natural rivers and watercourses, descending from the neighbouring mountains, sufficient, with but little artificial aid, for the purposes of irrigation. Mr. Layard speaks of the plain between Nimroud and Khorsabad as “a rich plain, capable of very high cultivation, though wanting in water, and still well stocked with villages.” Captain Felix Jones, to whom we are indebted for a recent trigonometrical survey of the same district, as well as for an interesting account of the Topography of Nineveh, speaks in the highest terms of the natural fertility and of the climate of this portion of Assyria in particular.¹ That the country must have been also populous, we require no direct testimony, beyond its general history, and the various ruins which it contains, to assure us. It could never have become the nucleus of a great empire, had it not possessed a race of inhabitants, who, whatever their remoter origin, were both numerous, and, at the same time, hardy, brave, and energetic.

Bordering upon Media, and probably for a long period mistress of that country, Assyria would have command of the breed of large and excellent horses for which it was famed in the time of Herodotus; and also the means of recruiting her armies from the Median tribes. Abundant materials for building purposes, as well as for implements of industry and of war, were evidently within easy reach of her people, if not the actual production of their own country. Excellent stone and marble, both for building and for sculpture, they would find within their own borders; and these materials would be easily floated by the Tigris to the places where they were wanted. Bricks, together with earthenware vessels of different kinds — even porcelain is suggested by Mr. Layard — they made of clay, baked with fire or dried in the sun. Wood, for fuel and other uses, they obtained among the neighbouring hills and mountains, or

¹ Nin. & Bab., p. 130; Topography of Nineveh, in Journal of Roy. As. Soc., vol. xv, pp. 298-9.

brought from distant places ; while they must also have possessed various hard and well-tempered tools, as well as skilful artisans and workmen to use them, if we may judge from the architectural remains, finely cut sculptures, obelisks and statues, inscribed slabs and tablets, and the multitude of smaller and more delicately worked objects, with which the world has, of late years, been so highly astonished and delighted, through the discoveries of Botta, Layard, and their successors.

The central seat of Assyrian power was, as we have already intimated, the comparatively small district lying between the Tigris on the west and some hills called Gebel Maklub and Ayn es Safra to the eastward, and extending from the Khosr-su on the north-west to the Greater Zab and the Ghasr-su on the south-east. Within these limits are contained the ruins of Khorsabad, those of Koyunjik and Nebbi Yunus, those of Nimroud, and many others of minor importance ; the whole, in short, of the great palaces of the Assyrian kings. This district, distinguished on Captain F. Jones's maps as *Central Assyria*, occupies a space of about 370 square miles. In the flourishing period of the empire it was, doubtless, a thickly populated and carefully cultivated province. Here, too, Nineveh was situated ; which latter point, however, we shall have an opportunity of noticing more fully hereafter, when speaking of the exact site and extent of that capital.

The leading features of the Assyrian character — the character, that is, of the ruling class — are revealed to us, both in what we know of the history of the nation, and in the architectural and other remains which have come down to us. The higher classes, and indeed many of those whom they ruled, were evidently a race of great physical strength, and of indomitable energy ; possessed of considerable talent for the organisation and government of large masses of men, and the execution of warlike enterprises. War seems to have been their usual occupation, or pastime ; and, as we may gather from the sculptured scenes which they have themselves left us, depicting

their treatment of their captives, they were ferocious and vindictive in the extreme. They have not hesitated to employ the artistic skill which they could command, to commemorate such scenes as flaying, impalement, and other horrible modes of torturing their prisoners. Their monarch seems to have taken delight in striking out the eyes of his captured enemies — the unfortunate princes and chieftains who fell into his power. He seems not merely to have allowed it, but to have done it with his own hand. The lot of the wretched multitudes carried off to people distant places, as in the case of the deportation of the Ten Tribes, must have been something terrible to contemplate ; including, as it did, long marches under a burning sun, with little clothing, food, or water, and, most probably, beneath the lash of brutal guards.¹ The intellectual capacity of the Assyrians, and their taste for the cultivation of Art, require no illustration. It is only singular that there should be so much of these, found united with so much that is repulsive and cruel, in conduct and disposition. Their sense of right and wrong and their religious feeling can only have been of the lowest and grossest quality.

The early history of the Assyrian people and their relation to their Babylonian neighbours are still involved in much obscurity. While many interesting facts have been brought to light, we are yet often met by such conflicting statements, or else are left with such slight and imperfect evidence, that it is very difficult to come to a conclusion on various points of importance. As the main purpose of the present sketch is simply the illustration of the Prophecies concerning the Assyrians and of the Biblical portion of their history, we need not here attempt to dwell minutely on either its more ancient or its later period. In both these periods many obscure and intricate questions present themselves. Our object will be not so

¹ Layard, Nin. & Bab., pp. 440, 448, 456-8; Comp. 2 Kings xxv, 7

much to discuss such questions — although it may be necessary to touch upon some of them — as to endeavour to present, in a brief and connected form, the principal facts which appear to be well ascertained, or to be commonly admitted as highly probable.

In the most ancient historical times to which we can ascend, many centuries before the appearance of the Assyrians in the Scriptures under their king Pul, or Phul, there existed, we have good reason to believe, on the banks of the Lower Euphrates, a large and populous community, or state;—whether a considerable empire under one head, or only a collection of cities, each self-governed, but yet united together by common bonds of race, language, and commercial intercourse, has not perhaps as yet been sufficiently ascertained. Of this ancient community the regions now known as Babylonia and Chaldaea were the native home; and Babylon was, probably, the principal and oldest city. The latter point, however, may be somewhat doubtful; while yet it is clear that the earliest notices we possess of this city are such as to favour the supposition of its very high antiquity. We may refer, in illustration, to Genesis x, 10, and xi, 1–9; both of which passages show us that, in the time of the writer of these accounts, the region in which Babylon was situated, “the land of Shinar,” was believed to have been one of the earliest centres of a large population. The representation of the sacred writer corresponds sufficiently with all that we can learn from other sources on the same point¹; and, in a word, there seems to be nothing improbable, but the contrary, in the supposition of a large and populous state, or group of cities, in the region referred to.

It has usually been supposed that the first inhabitants of

¹ Comp. Rawlinson, Outlines of Ass. Hist. pp. xv, xvi; Communication to the Athenæum, 1854, p. 242. For evidence of the ancient populousness of this region afforded by

the enormous extent of existing remains, see also Mr. Loftus's recent work, “Travels and Researches in Chaldaea and Susiana,” ch. ii, and xv.

whom we have any certain historical traces, in this part of Asia, were of the Semitic race;—that race of which the Hebrews, Phœnicians, and Arabians are the most prominent and well-known members. If, indeed, a Scythic population were supposed to have preceded them, yet the period to which it belonged was so remote, and the fact itself so much a matter of speculation, that it seemed to be still substantially correct, as it is certainly most in harmony with the Biblical records, to speak of a Semitic population as the first occupiers of Babylonia and Chaldaea historically known to us. And this, up to a recent date, appears to have been the opinion of Sir H. Rawlinson, among other authorities. We may add, that his decipherment also of the inscriptions, of both Assyria and Babylonia, from the most ancient downwards, appears to have proceeded entirely on the same supposition. The twenty-third century before Christ has been fixed upon as that in which a Semitic empire “superseded a Scythic occupation of Babylonia.”¹ More recently, however, the same investigator informs us that the Scythic race continued to hold their ground for many centuries later than he had supposed; and that it was not perhaps until even the time of Nebuchadnezzar, about 600 b.c., that a Semitic population and language obtained a decided preponderance in that region.² Further confirmation of this announcement will be looked for with much interest. Meantime it will be asked, how is such a statement to be reconciled with the fact of the origin of the Semitic Abraham and his family, in the nineteenth or twentieth century before Christ, in the country of the Lower Euphrates?—for that “Ur of the Chaldees,” his native place, was in that part, is the assertion of Sir H. Rawlinson himself. Again, there is reason for regarding the Phœnicians, another Semitic people, as originally emigrants from the

¹ Rawlinson, Early History of Babylonia, in Jour. of As. Soc., xv, pp. 217-224; Commentary on the

Cun. Insc. pp. 10-16; Memoir on Do., in Jour. of As. Soc., xiv.

² Communication to As. Soc. (in Ath. 1855, p. 1438).

shores of the Persian Gulf; and the date of their removal thence to Palestine must fall within the period during which Babylonia and the neighbouring countries were still Scythic.¹ One conjecture may, perhaps, in some degree harmonise these apparently conflicting facts and statements. It may have been some great and overwhelming inroad of the Scythians, which occasioned the movement westward both of the ancestor of the Jewish nation and of the kindred Phœnician settlers on the Mediterranean coast. The Scythic tribes, having, then, acquired the countries on the Lower Euphrates, may have maintained themselves there for some centuries, until finally overpowered, in their turn, by the Semitic race. This supposition, however, implies that the Semitæ were the original inhabitants of the country; and, even with this explanation, there remains a question of some interest. Many of the Cuneiform inscriptions of the early Babylonian period have been interpreted on the supposition that they were written in a Semitic dialect², whereas the inhabitants of Babylonia, in that period, must have been Scythians, speaking a totally different language. How are we now to regard the alleged decipherment of such inscriptions? However this question may be settled, the announced fact of a Scythic element, settled and predominant in Babylonia to so late a date, is one of such importance as to require the most careful examination; and this, we may be sure, it will receive at the hands of its able expounder.³

The race and language of the Assyrians themselves must now be regarded as finally determined. Until lately it was thought doubtful, by some good authorities, with which of the great divisions of mankind, the Indo-Germanic, or the Semitic, these renowned conquerors of the ancient world ought to be classed. Prof. Newman leaves the point undecided; while

¹ Kenrick, *Phœnicia*, pp. 46-8.

Scythic hypothesis is more than

² Journ. of As. Soc. xv, p. 221, note; Comp. Ath. 1854, p. 342.

doubted by Dr. Hincks. See Letter to Monthly Review, Feb. 1856.

³ It is but right to add that the

Winer denies that the Assyrian language belonged to the Semitic family, and connects it rather with the Medo-Persian stock.¹ If we may rely, however, on the united testimony of the decipherers, the Nineveh inscriptions from Khorsabad, Koyunjik, Nimroud, and other places, are written in a true Semitic dialect. The various inquiries into the forms and meanings of pronouns, nouns, and verbs, have throughout proceeded on the assumption of the closest affinity between the Assyrian, as well as the Babylonian, and the Hebrew and Arabic.²

To the ancient Babylonian period of which we have spoken, belong several facts which may be stated on the authority of Sir H. Rawlinson's communication to the *Athenæum* so often referred to. A monarchy existed at least as early as 1976, and continued until the year 1518, b.c. Nor, as before observed, was this the earliest organised government established in those countries. For it would appear that there were earlier dynasties still, through a lapse of several previous centuries; of which, however, from the nature of the case, little but what is conjectural can be affirmed. To confine ourselves, therefore, to what may be termed comparatively modern times, we have to notice that one of the sovereigns of the line that reigned between 1976 and 1518 was named Ismi-dakan (or -dagon); who lived about the year 1870, and ruled over Assyria, Babylonia, and Chaldaea. He was succeeded by his son Shamasphal, the founder of a temple that was restored by the Assyrian king Tiglath Pileser the First, in the twelfth century b.c., after having existed for a period of seven hundred years:—for such is the record found on an inscribed cylinder from the ruins of Kalah-Shergat, the site of one of the oldest Assyrian capitals. This ancient line of kings is said to have been followed by an

¹ Newman, *Heb. Monarchy* (1847), p. 250; Winer, *Bib. Realwb.*, Art. *Assyrien*. fore; Dr. Hincks, *On the Khorsabad Inscriptions*. Comp. J. Brandis, *Ü. d. historischen Gewinn*, pp. 32-35, 70-1.

² Rawl. Com. and Mem., as be-

Arab dynasty, which ruled until the year B.C. 1273, but of which no certain traces have been found as yet upon the monuments.

There are two or three passages of the Old Testament, referring obscurely to the Assyrian or Babylonian power, which probably belong to the period over which we have thus glanced. For example, in Genesis xiv a “king of Shinar” is represented, along with a king of Elam and other chiefs, as making an expedition into the country of Abraham, and conquering the native kings.¹ This occurrence may be well connected with the existence of an ancient government, or collection of confederate cities, on the Lower Euphrates. Indeed the narrative of the sacred writer lends evident support, or confirmation, to that supposition.

Again, in Judges iii, 8–10, a king of Mesopotamia (or Aram-Naharaim) is stated to have conquered the Israelites. This must have been at an early date in the period of the Judges, and long before the foundation of the Hebrew monarchy in the eleventh century B.C. It appears, therefore, to correspond with the time of the Babylonian government, which existed previous to the year 1273; and the passage may be understood to refer to some expedition into the country of the Israelites similar to that of Genesis xiv.

Another allusion is of a more obscure and difficult character. It is found in Numbers xxiv, 22–24; where Asshur probably means Assyria. Whatever the interpretation of these verses, they have been appealed to as evidence that the Pentateuch could not have existed, as we now have it, till after the commencement of the Assyrian inroads upon Palestine in the eighth century B.C.² It is evident, however, that they cannot be adduced with any effect for such a purpose. For Asshur

¹ Chedorlaomer (Gen. xiv, 1) is identified with a certain Kudur-ma-pula inscribed on bricks found at Mugeyer, the supposed site of Ur

of the Chaldees. Loftus, Chaldaea, pp. 97, 131.

² De Wette, Einl., A. T., § 159.

becomes powerful and prominent in the thirteenth century; and an Assyro-Babylonian state, or confederation of states, earlier still. Judging from the instances just cited, even the latter must have been known to any contemporaneous writer of history or laws among the Hebrews. A reference, therefore, to the dangers threatened by Assyria to neighbouring nations, is no sure proof of lateness of composition.

The same remark applies to some other passages in which the Assyrians, or their country, are mentioned in the Mosaic books;—as, Gen. ii, 14; xxv, 18.

Beyond the slight notices which have just been stated, we have no evidence in the books of Scripture of the existence of any empire in the countries to the south of Assyria, such as we have hitherto spoken of. It may be expected that a further knowledge of the Cuneiform writing will throw light upon this, as upon other obscure points. Meantime, assuming the reality of this ancient government, we have to ask what relation did the Assyrians and their great city Nineveh bear to it? Most probably, if the latter were of any importance at all, they were as yet subject to the southern power. The great centres of population in ancient times, including some of the largest and oldest cities, in most instances existed on, or near, rivers, and in the midst of fertile plains or valleys;—the latter being an obvious condition of a large population. Hence it may be inferred that the flat and well-watered countries about the Lower Euphrates and Tigris were the earliest abodes of a numerous and settled people, and the seats of regular government. Assyria with its cities, lying far to the north, at a great distance from the sea, and on the borders of rough mountainous regions, would thus in all probability be colonised from the south; a statement which is in harmony with the Scriptural account (Gen. x, 8–12) representing Asshur as going out of the land of Shinar to found Nineveh and other cities of Assyria. We may properly, therefore, regard the latter country as originally a part of the more ancient Babylonian state; and it

was probably not until the thirteenth century B.C. that it succeeded in throwing off its allegiance to Babylon, preparatory to becoming, as it eventually did, the supreme ruling power. We are informed by Herodotus that the Assyrians had held possession of Upper Asia for 520 years previously to the revolt of the Medes, an event which took place, there is reason to believe, in the eighth century B.C. This statement gives us of course the thirteenth century for the commencement of the independence of the former people, or rather of their dominion over adjoining countries. It need not, however, be supposed that Assyria attained at this time a complete and undisputed empire over South-western Asia. It is more likely that for some time it would have to contend for supremacy, both with the Babylonians and with other neighbouring peoples. And that this was the case appears from a notice of a battle between a king of Babylon and a king of Assyria, about 1120 B.C., still to be seen in a rock inscription at Bavian, some hours' journey to the north-east of Khorsabad.¹

This gradual and contested attainment of supreme power may help to account for the circumstance that during the reigns of David and Solomon, from about 1050 to 975, although the dominion of these kings is believed to have extended north-eastward as far as the Euphrates, we meet with no trace of any collision between the Israelites and the Assyrians. The latter were, as yet, only forming and consolidating their power; and it was not until after the monarchy of David and Solomon had been split into two, often hostile, kingdoms, and so weakened as to promise but little resistance, that the great eastern conquerors began to be really formidable to the people of Palestine. The small Syrian kingdoms must, however, by this time have been visited by the Assyrians, if, as there is reason to believe, the latter had already pushed their expeditions as far as the countries about the head-waters of the Tigris

¹ Layard, *Nin. & Bab.*, pp. 212-13.

and Euphrates. But the able and victorious rule of David seems to have deterred them from any attempt to penetrate to the Mediterranean by Palestine ; and it must not be forgotten that Egypt, too, was at this time a powerful empire which had perhaps more than once sent its forces as far as the Euphrates.¹ The Assyrians, sufficiently occupied with their nearer conquests, or troubled by internal dissensions, would be in no condition to encounter such opponents as either the Israelites under David, or the Egyptians under kings like Shishak.²

However this may have been, we soon come to the beginning of a series of powerful kings, many of whose names and dates have, with more or less of certainty, been recovered from the inscriptions. One of these, Tiglath Pileser the First, has already been mentioned. He began his reign about 1130 b.c., and carried on wars in the north and north-west, perhaps as far as Asia Minor. He was also the monarch between whom and the king of Babylon occurred the battle recorded on the rock of Bavian, as before stated ; in commemoration of which battle, again, it may be noticed, the great temple of the Birs Nimroud, near Babylon, lately laid open by Sir H. Rawlinson, was originally built by the victor, the Babylonian king, Mero-dach-adan-akhi. The occurrence of this battle and its issue prove that the Babylonian dominion was, as yet, far from being merged in the Assyrian, and that the monarchs of the south were still able to continue the contest with the growing power of their former subjects.

Passing over the names of several kings who reigned subsequently to Tiglath Pileser I, and some of whom may have been the founders of palaces at Nimroud, but of whom only the names have hitherto been recovered, we come, after a considerable interval, to a king whose name has been read both Assar-adan-pal, i. e. Sardanapalus, and also Asshur-akh-bal. The

¹ Kenrick, Egypt, ii, p. 339. Sharpe,
Hist. of Egypt, 3rd ed., i, pp. 62-3.

² 1 Kings xiv, 25 ; 2 Chron. xii, 2.

latter name is now the established one, and has been inscribed upon many of the marbles in the British Museum. It sometimes appears, also, under the slightly different form of Asshur-uchar-pal, or -akh-pal.¹ Of this king, there is a small sitting statue preserved in the Museum. He is a personage of very high interest, from having been the builder of the North-west Palace of Nimroud, the sculptures from which are the most grand and striking, as well as finely executed, of all that have been recovered from the Assyrian ruins. Asshur-akh-bal is believed to have reigned in the last quarter of the tenth century, between 930 and 900 b.c. The account of his exploits, as well as of his re-erection of the palace, which had been originally founded by one of his ancestors, but had fallen into decay, is inscribed upon an immense slab of alabaster, forming the floor of a recess in an inner chamber of one of the temples at Nimroud.² The inscription is found on both sides of the slab, the upper and the under, the latter indeed containing the larger number of particulars. It has been in great part read by Dr. Hincks, and contains minute statements as to the countries overrun and conquered by this victorious monarch. He seems to have carried his arms both north and south, from Elam to Armenia, and then again westward, as far as Syria and the Mediterranean. He includes the Phœnicians among his tributaries, but the Israelites would appear to have still escaped. This is the earliest king of whom we have such full details; and his inscriptions furnish a remarkable proof of the pains taken by the Assyrians to perpetuate the fame of their deeds to future times. And not without effect, must we of this nineteenth century confess, as we look upon the many curious and noble objects now in the British Museum—the actual visible relics as they are of the old heathen conquerors, and their magnificent palaces!

¹ Brandis (*Hist. Gewinn*, p. 60) adheres to the form Assardonpal, or Sardanapalus.

² Layard, *Nin. & Bab.*, pp. 352-6.

The son of the preceding king comes next in the order of succession. He has been variously named Temenbar, Divanubara, Shalmanubar. We may adopt the last of these as very probably correct. The monarch so called reigned in the earlier half of the ninth century B.C., and is on several accounts a remarkable character. In the first place, he was the builder of the Centre Palace of Nimroud, in which, among other things, was found an obelisk of black marble, now a conspicuous object in the Assyrian department of the British Museum. This very interesting relic is about seven feet in height, and is covered on its four sides with an inscription of more than 200 lines, besides rows of figures in bas relief representing men and animals, with other objects. Much of the inscription has been deciphered and published by Sir H. Rawlinson; and more recently his interpretation has been confirmed and supplemented by Captain Ormsby, in a paper read before the Royal Asiatic Society.¹ On this inscription is found the name of the king now under our notice—who is, therefore, sometimes termed the Obelisk King. There is, in fact, no reason to doubt that it was he who caused the obelisk to be erected, to commemorate his various conquests and the nations from whom he received tribute.

Among the latter, for the first time, we meet with the Jews; for the name of Jehu, king of Israel, has been found in the second of the five epigraphs near the top of the obelisk, having been read about the same time by Dr. Hincks and Sir H. Rawlinson, independently of each other.² The former scholar also read on this obelisk the names of Hazael and Benhadad, (2 Kings viii, 7; x, 32)—although, as we need hardly add, the payment of tribute to the Assyrians by any of these kings is nowhere mentioned in the Biblical history. The epigraphs further enumerate the different articles of tribute received

¹ Rawlinson, Com. on Cun. Ins., p. 31, seq.; Ath. Dec. 2, 1855. ² Layard, Nin. & Bab., pp. 613-14.

from the conquered kings by their Assyrian master. The variety of the animals and other objects show the great extent of the empire at this time—including, as they do, the Bactrian camel, the elephant, the rhinoceros, the wild bull, apes, stags and lions. From Jehu, we are told, come vases, rings and seals of gold, pearls, precious oil, and other articles. Captain Ormsby goes so far as to say that the features portrayed on the epigraph relating to Jehu are Jewish in expression !

One other fact in connection with king Shalmanubar deserves to be mentioned. He was the builder of the great edifice which forms the lofty conical mound or pyramid at the north-west corner of the platform of Nimroud, and which was opened by Mr. Layard, and thought by him to be a tomb. It has been termed the tomb of Sardanapalus ; and the evidence relating to it tends to prove that it once contained the body of the builder of the North-west Palace (sometimes called Sardanapalus I, or the Great), by whom, indeed, the structure appears to have been commenced.¹

The successor of Shalmanubar was Shamasphal, of whom nothing is reported, except that his reign was a short one. As the interval between Shalmanubar and the next Assyrian king of whom we have fuller knowledge is little, if at all, short of 100 years, it is evident that there must have been several other kings during this time besides Shamasphal. Their names have not been recovered, and so we are brought down at once to Phal-lukha, a monarch of the highest interest, as having been identified with the Pul of the Scriptures, the first of the great invaders of Palestine expressly mentioned in the Bible.²

¹ Layard, N. & B., p. 126. But see Fergusson, Handbook of Architecture, i, pp. 164, 180. He thinks that the pyramid was more probably a temple.

² Since the above was written, an

obelisk, “inscribed with the Annals of the father of Pul,” has arrived in England. (Athen. 1856, p. 427.) It may now be seen in the B. Museum.

§ 2. BIBLICAL PERIOD.—FIRST INVADERS OF PALESTINE, PUL
AND TIGLATH PILESER.

Before proceeding with the history of Pul, it is desirable to notice briefly the statements of Herodotus and Ctesias respectively, concerning the duration and overthrow of the Assyrian empire.

(1) Herodotus flourished in the fifth century, b.c. We have very probably to lament the loss of a separate work of his on the Assyrians, to which he twice alludes in his extant books. The brief and fragmentary narrative remaining to us in the latter, is to the following effect:—

The Assyrians had command of Asia for 520 years, before the defection of the Medes and other nations. The Medes, having become free, after a time chose for their king Dejoces, a wise and just man of their own nation. To him succeeded his son Phraortes, who lost his life and whose army was destroyed in attempting to conquer Nineveh, which was still the capital of the Assyrians. Cyaxares his son followed him, a powerful king, who at length succeeded in becoming master of Nineveh.¹ The son and successor of Cyaxares was Astyages, whose daughter Mandane was the mother of Cyrus. The last named rebelled against his grandfather, defeated and captured him, and, seizing his throne, became the founder of the great Medo-Persian empire.² The united reigns of the four Median kings ($53 + 22 + 40 + 35$) amount to 150 years; and as the accession of Cyrus took place in 560 b.c., reckoning upwards, we obtain b.c. 710 for the date of the foundation of the Median monarchy by Dejoces. The defection of the Medes and other nations, of which Herodotus speaks, must have occurred some time previously, we know not how long. It thus appears from Herodotus that the Assyrians were Masters of Asia from

¹ For more about Cyaxares and the Scythians, see *infra*, § 5.

² Herod. i, 95-130.

about 1230, at the latest, until 710 B.C., and that their power continued to be formidable long after this last date, as is seen in their defeat of Phraortes.

(2) Ctesias was a Greek physician, who lived for seventeen years from about 401 B.C. at the court of Artaxerxes Mnemon, and probably wrote his history of the Assyrians and Persians during this time. The work is lost, except fragments in several ancient authors. Some of its contents relating to the Assyrians are preserved in the 2nd book of Diodorus Siculus.¹ According to Ctesias, the founder of the Assyrian empire was Ninus, who subdued all Asia from India to the Nile, and who built Nineveh. His wife Semiramis reigned along with him, and succeeded him on the throne. Her military undertakings rivalled, or surpassed, those of her husband; and she built Babylon. After these two great monarchs comes, during a period of 1306 years, a series of thirty kings, of whom Ctesias has hardly anything to relate, except that one of them sent the hero Memnon to the assistance of Priam in the Trojan war, and that in the reign of another occurred a change of dynasty—Beleus of the line of Ninus being dethroned and succeeded by his chief gardener Balatoras. The whole of these kings were remarkable chiefly for the luxury and effemiancy of their lives, in which, however, they were surpassed by the last of the series, Sardanapalus, with whom the Assyrian empire terminates. This result was brought about by the revolt of Arbaces the Mede, and Belesis a priest of Babylon. They captured Nineveh after a struggle of some duration, in which Sardanapalus roused himself from his sloth and self-indulgence, and headed his troops with the utmost bravery. Finding that he could not subdue the rebels, and that Nineveh was about to fall into their hands, he destroyed himself, with his wives and treasures, in one vast funeral pile, kindled by his own hand. Arbaces became king of Media; while Belesis

¹ See the fragments from Diodorus and others collected by Lion, in his *Ctesiae Cnidii quae supersunt*, pp. 80-118.

retired to Babylon, of which he received, or retained, the government. The Median kings from Arbaces to Astyages, both included, are *nine* in number, and their united reigns make up a period of 317 years. In the Ctesian account, as in that of Herodotus, Cyrus succeeds Astyages; but in the former he is the son-in-law, while Herodotus makes him the grandson, of Astyages. Xenophon, again, differs from both, but on his statements we need not here dwell. Reckoning upwards, as before, from 560, we reach 877 for the date of the subversion of the Assyrian empire; and adding to this 1306 years, we have 2183 b.c. for its commencement.

We have no certain knowledge of the sources from which either Herodotus or Ctesias derived his narrative. The statement of the former is simple, and in itself credible enough; while the other, whatever its origin, is evidently, to a large extent, of a contrary character.

To proceed, now, with the account of Pul. The only passage in the Old Testament in which he is mentioned is 2 Kings xv, 19 (comp. 1 Chron. v, 26), where he invades Palestine and levies a large tribute from Menahem, king of Israel. His identification with the Phal-lukha before referred to rests, mainly, on an inscription found on a statue of the God Nebo, now in the British Museum. This was discovered early in 1854 in the ruins of the South-east palace of Nimroud. The inscription states that the statue was "executed by a certain sculptor of Calah, and dedicated by him to his Lord, Phal-lukha, king of Assyria, and to his Lady Sammuramit, Queen of the palace." The decipherer adds, "I must premise that the reading of Sammuramit is quite certain; and that the type of character employed in the inscription is equally decisive as to the attribution of the legend to Phal-lukha III, and not to either of the earlier monarchs of the same name."¹ The identity

¹ Rawlinson, in Athen., 1854, p. 465. It must be noticed that Dr. Hincks, instead of *Phal-lukha*, would read *Nin-ukh*, i.e. the Ninus of Greek tradition—not, however, the great conqueror of that name, but a much

of this Phal-lukha and the Pul of the Scriptures is made out somewhat as follows. *First*, this is the only instance in the inscriptions of a king of Assyria being named along with his queen, the latter apparently a personage of equal importance with himself. It may be reasonably taken to correspond to the one similar instance in the Graeco-Assyrian lists, in which the only monarchs similarly related are Belochus and Semiramis. But this Belochus, the Βίλοχος of Eusebius, is the Φαλὼχ of the Septuagint (1 Chron. v, 26), the Pul of the Bible. *Secondly*, Herodotus (i, 184) speaks of a Queen Semiramis at Babylon five generations before Nitocris; the latter having probably lived about the beginning of the 6th century (604-580) b.c. Allowing, then, a sufficient number of years for five generations, or thereabouts, upwards from Nitocris, we reach the time not only of the Semiramis of Herodotus, but also of the Scriptural Pul. Hence, from this evident correspondence in time, it may be concluded that *they* are the Phal-lukha and Sammuramit of the statue.

Respecting the monarch thus identified, little beyond the name was until very recently known to us, at least from the inscriptions. It has lately been reported, however, that a tablet has been found in "the upper chambers of the Central Palace of Nimroud," recording an expedition of Pul into Syria and Palestine. Several particulars are given including the amount of tribute exacted from the king of Damascus, "who was probably the son of Benhadad, and the father of Rezin." The conclusion is that this expedition of Pul into the West is the same which is mentioned 2 Kings xv, 19-20, in connection with Menahem¹.

The comparative want of monuments of Pul has been accounted for by the supposition that he was the last monarch of the upper, or older, Assyrian line. If he were dethroned, as

later king, who had a wife Semiramis, so called after the wife of the ancient Ninus.—Letter to Monthly Review, June 1856.

¹ Rawlinson, Communication to Roy. As. Soc., in Athen., 1856, pp. 174-5.

the result of some rebellious outbreak which, at the same time, seated his successor, Tiglath Pileser, on the throne, the monuments and inscriptions relating to him would be defaced or destroyed by the usurper, as appears to have been done in at least one other case. It has even been doubtfully concluded that Pul was the Sardanapalus of Ctesias, in so far as he was the last of the so-called line of Ninus, and therefore corresponds, in this respect, to that monarch. A little exercise of ingenuity easily suggests what may stand for corroborative evidence to the same effect.¹ What if the name Pul be merely an abbreviation, or one of the chief elements, of the name disguised by the Greeks under the longer form? And what if Belesis be merely a transformation of the original Pileser? That a priest should have gained the supreme command of the Assyrian empire and become a great conqueror, is by no means inconsistent with ancient oriental history; as we know, for example, that the connection between the royal and the sacerdotal power was familiar to the Egyptians. Belesis is described as a captain, as well as a priest; and it would seem that the Assyrian king was, in fact, very closely connected with the priestly order, and took a peculiar part in certain religious ceremonies.²

Thus it would appear that the account of Ctesias may not be so destitute of a foundation in truth as has often been supposed. It is true that he places the death of Sardanapalus in the ninth century, whereas Pul lived in the eighth. But then, as he was a credulous and uncritical writer, he may easily have made a mistake of a hundred years, in speaking of what took place so long before his own time. Several of the reigns in his list of kings, from Arbaces to Astyages, are evidently much too

¹ The theory now under notice is substantially advanced by Sir H. Rawlinson, *Athen.*, 1854, pp. 342, 466. Much the same idea is thrown out by a recent German author:—

Von Gumpach, *Abriss d. Bab. Ass. Gesch.* (1854), p. 75.

² Layard, *Nin. & Rem.*, ii, pp. 472-3; N. & B., pp. 351-61.

long. Again, it is true that he speaks of Arbaces as the principal actor against Sardanapalus, which may seem very inconsistent with the supposition that Belesis (as Tiglath Pileser) became the founder of a new Assyrian dynasty, with Nineveh as its capital. But the statements of Ctesias need not be taken strictly in all their details. He is evidently wrong in making the Assyrian empire *terminate* with Sardanapalus; for we know both from Herodotus and the Bible that it continued long after his death. It is, therefore, to be inferred that, after their victory, Arbaces and his Medes, now for a time independent, contented themselves with their own country, and left their coadjutor, Belesis, in possession of Nineveh, or of so much of it as had not been destroyed. Babylon may at first have been his chief capital; but Nineveh would soon revive; and it must have done so, as we know, long before the close of the century.

After all it must be admitted that it is but vain, however amusing it may be, to speculate on these matters, in the absence of positive evidence. The uncertainty and unsatisfactoriness of such speculations, in the present state of our knowledge of the contents of the inscriptions, becomes the more manifest by a reference to the narrative of Herodotus. We cannot venture in this place upon any attempt to harmonise the two authors. It is possible that on this subject the information of Herodotus was no better than that of Ctesias. That his account is not, at any rate, complete, appears from the fact that there was some interval between the revolt of the Medes and their choice of Dejoces as their king, of which he was not able to give us any information.¹

¹ It has been usual to consider the Biblical Pal, as the *restorer* of the Assyrian monarchy after its destruction by Arbaces, thus making, in effect, an *earlier* and a *later* empire; the former being that to which

the narrative of Ctesias relates, the latter that which appears in the height of its power in the Bible. Such, it would seem, is the opinion of Dr. Hineks, who also, at the same time, holds Sammuramit and her

Menahem, the king of Israel from whom Pul takes so large a tribute, is usually understood to have reigned from 770 to 760 B.C.¹; and these dates may be taken to determine the period of Pul's reign as falling within the first half (800–750) of the same century. He must have ceased to reign long before the

husband Phal-lukh (Ninukh) to have belonged to the older dynasty. (M. Rev., *ub. sup.*)

To reconcile Herodotus and Ctesias, we may suppose that the full independence of the Medes under Arbaces was only of short duration. The kings of Media, following him, may have been only Viceroys or Satraps; until the time of Dejoces, when another attempt to cast off the Assyrian yoke was more successful, and gave origin to the Median dynasty of Herodotus. This was at the time of the overthrow of Sennacherib's army in the campaign against Hezekiah, or soon afterwards. That Herodotus does not, in his extant books, go further back than Dejoces, or speak of the remarkable fate of Sardanapalus, and the conquest of Nineveh by Arbaces, may arise from this, that he only designed to show the descent of his chief personage Cyrus, and the position which he and his grandfather held as kings of Media. For this purpose it was not necessary for him to ascend beyond Dejoces. Perhaps in his Assyrian books he had what corresponded to the narrative of Ctesias, in its leading features, though it certainly could not have done so in its chronology. He probably placed Ninus (i, 7) many centuries later than Ctesias had done—at the time, in short, of the origin of the Assyrian empire, 520 years before the Median revolt.

The difference of the Median names in Herodotus from those in the list of Ctesias is an evident difficulty. To remove it we have no other resource but to suppose that the two authors may, from some cause or other, have hit upon different names for the *same persons*. Nor, when we remember the difficulty of oriental names, their frequent complexity and length, as well as the way in which Greek writers have disguised them in other cases, is there any improbability in such a supposition. They are often still a puzzle to Europeans. When Ctesias represents the death of Sardanapalus, as the very termination of the Assyrian empire, he merely confounds the conquest of Nineveh by Arbaces with that which took place under Cyaxares, and which really destroyed the Assyrian power. The latter event must have occurred more than 200 years before Ctesias, and he evidently had not the means of very accurate information, about either the earlier or the later catastrophe.

Another explanation proposed may be mentioned here. It is that the number of the Median kings in Ctesias has been somehow erroneously *doubled*:—Von Gump, *Zeit-rechnung d. Bab. u. Assyr.*, p. 143.

¹ See, however, the Chronological note, at the end of this Introduction.

death of Menahem, for when that event took place Tiglath Pileser, the second of the name, had been for some years on the throne. This appears from the fact that Menahem's name is found upon the monuments so late as the eighth year of Tiglath Pileser. The latter must, therefore, have supplanted his predecessor (if he really did so) about the year 768 b.c.

It was, we believe, Dr. Hincks¹, who first announced that he had read the name of Menahem as that of an Israelitish king paying tribute to a king of the Assyrians in his eighth year. The same scholar, in the communication referred to, thinks that the Assyrian king was Pul; while Mr. Layard is doubtful on the point, but inclines to the opinion that it was either Pul or Tiglath Pileser. The latter is the more in agreement with the various facts of the case. It will, of course, be to the same king that we must ascribe the sculptures found in the South-west Palace of Nimroud, but believed to have been brought there from the Centre Palace, and on the inscriptions of which the name of Menahem may be read, as just mentioned. The latter palace, originally erected by Shalmanubar, was probably rebuilt or enlarged by Tiglath Pileser, and may have been occupied also by his predecessor. It will be this king, again, rather than Pul, who, as related on the slabs so transferred to the South-west Palace, carried his arms into Chaldea, Armenia, and Syria, and as far as Tyre and Sidon; and who is represented on the fine bas-relief of which a drawing is given by Mr. Layard.²

The monuments are stated to contain records of Tiglath Pileser for a period of seventeen years. Little, however, appears to have been as yet reported of their contents, beyond what we have mentioned, except that, in addition to Menahem, there appear among his tributaries Rezin, king of Damascus, a

¹ In Athen., 1852, p. 26.

² Nin. & Bab., pp. 617-19. Sir H. Rawlinson, we may observe, speaks positively of "the name of Menahem in an inscription of the

eighth year of Tiglath Pileser." — Athen., 1856, p. 175. There are two conspicuous slabs in the B. Mus., representing Tig. P. and an attendant.

king of Tyre, and some other petty western kings. There is thus, as in other cases, a fair amount of agreement between the inscriptions and the Biblical history.

Let us now, however, observe more exactly what the Hebrew narrator tells us. He says:—"In the days of Pekah, king of Israel, came Tiglath Pileser, king of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abel-beth-maacah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria" (2 Kings xv, 29). The places mentioned belonged to the Israelitish kingdom; and this early deportation of their inhabitants is probably referred to in one of Isaiah's prophecies (ix, 1). It is not clear, however, from the sacred history, whether the expedition in question was the *same* as that undertaken by Tiglath Pileser at the request of Ahaz, and recorded in the next chapter of the Kings. At first it would appear to have been so; because it is mentioned immediately before the death of Pekah; and we know that the expedition in aid of Ahaz must have occurred during the last three years of Pekah's life, in which alone he reigned contemporaneously with Ahaz. The rapid and fragmentary character of the narrative warns us, however, not to attach too much weight to this inference. And if the allusion of Isaiah be to the invasion of 2 Kings xv, 29, as we have supposed, that invasion cannot have been the one undertaken for the defence of Ahaz, for the prophet's words evidently imply a considerable interval from the event to which he refers. It is, therefore, most probable that Tiglath Pileser came against Pekah *twice*; and that the first statement of the Kings relates to the *earlier* expedition, in which Pekah was reduced to subjection and made tributary, along with Rezin of Syria. Accordingly, both Syria and Israel, we may conclude, remained subject to Assyria for many years; while, meantime, Jotham was reigning prosperously in the neighbouring kingdom of Judah. Whether this king also was dependent on Assyria in any way, does not appear; but, from the fact being nowhere stated, we

are at liberty to conclude that he was not. It may be inferred, either that the character of his reign was such as to save him from the humiliation ; or that the Assyrians, in his time, were too much occupied elsewhere to attempt to extend their dominion over him.

The *later* expedition of Tiglath Pileser was one of great importance to Judah. Ahaz, the son of Jotham, was now on the throne. He was a young man and a feeble ruler ; and his accession appears to have been thought, by Pekah and Rezin, a good opportunity for prosecuting the war already commenced before the death of Jotham, and even for trying to place a vassal of their own over Judah.¹ Their object was, no doubt, to unite the strength of the three kingdoms against Assyria. Egypt was most probably concerned in the plan ; as the evident policy of that country was to unite with the smaller states lying between her own frontier and Assyria, in a confederacy, directed by herself, against the overwhelming power of the larger empire. We may infer this from such expressions as Is. vii, 18 ; and from 2 Kings xvii, 4, where we see Hoshea in league with the king of Egypt, and casting off his allegiance to Assyria. Ahaz was, at all events, now compelled to throw himself on the protection of the Assyrians. His appeal had the desired result. He and his people were saved from the threatened danger ; but the deliverance was evidently purchased by the sacrifice of the independence of Judah, and the payment of a large tribute to the protecting power. (2 Kings xvi, 8.)

On the occasion of the Jewish king's visit to Damascus to meet Tiglath Pileser — the first occasion on which the Jews of the southern kingdom may have come into close contact with the pomp and power of the mighty Assyrian Monarch — the only incident that seems to have struck the mind of the old annalist as deserving of record, was that Ahaz saw

¹ 2 Kings xvii ; Is. vii.

an altar at Damascus, and caused one of the same fashion to be built at Jerusalem, and used there after his return home. The tone of the narrative leads to the inference that the transaction was regarded by the writer as idolatrous. In the Chronicles (2 Chron. xxviii, 23) it decidedly appears in this light. The representation of the two books is sufficiently illustrated by the language in which Isaiah, at the close of his first and second chapters, speaks of the idolatry prevailing in Jerusalem, about the time to which the incident belongs.

The subjection of Judah to Assyria, we may conclude, continued for the rest of the reign of Ahaz; nor is it probable that any effort which the king or his people could at this time have made, would have been attended with success. The kingdom was unable to defend itself from the attacks of its neighbours the Edomites and Philistines (2 Chron. xxviii, 17–18); and we may infer that the Assyrians did nothing for its protection in those quarters, but, as the Chronicles state, distressed Ahaz, rather than helped or strengthened him. This expression should, probably, be understood simply of the exhausting effects of the tribute payments, and not of any failure of the Assyrian king to perform his compact relating to the Syro-Israelitish invasion. The silence of the Chronicles as to the aid given on that occasion is remarkable, and not easy to explain. Possibly the Chronicler deemed it of but little worth, seeing that, after all, it had proved unable to save either Ahaz from further transgression, or his kingdom from the hostile inroads of his bitterest enemies.

Of Tiglath Pileser's reign, nothing beyond what we have already noticed appears to have been recovered from the monuments. That his annals for a period of seventeen years have been found we have before stated; but his reign must have extended over a much longer time if it commenced so early as 768, for there is no positive trace of his successor, Shalmaneser, until we reach the beginning of the reign of Hoshea, king of Israel. This would be some forty-two years from the

first of Menahem, but the Chronology of the period has many difficulties.¹ Taking, then, 42 from 770, the year of Menahem's accession, we obtain 728 for that of Hoshea, a date which, as compared with the beginning of Hezekiah's reign (2 Kings xviii, 1), is rather too late. How long Shalmaneser may then have been king of Assyria (2 Kings xvii, 3) we have no means of determining. Supposing, however, that he ascended the throne not later than 730 b. c., his predecessor's reign would have a length of about thirty-eight years. This is a good deal too long, and it would be better to take off eight or ten years and give them to Shalmaneser, — a change which it seems very allowable to make, where so much is obscure and so entirely conjectural.

§ 3. SHALMANESER AND SARGON.—THE CAPTIVITY OF THE TEN TRIBES.

The name of Shalmaneser has not, as yet, been discovered on the Assyrian monuments. The following statement, however, respecting him has been made by Sir H. Rawlinson :— “There are two inscriptions in the British Museum which almost certainly belong to him (see Brit. Mus. Inscriptions, pp. 66 and 72), for in the one we find a notice of an attack

¹ From the first year of Menahem to Hoshea (2 Kings xvii, 17-30) is 32 years; thus—Menahem, 10; Pekahiah, 2; Pekah, 20. If, however, we attend to the parallel reigns of Judah, we get a different result; thus—Menahem and Pekaiah, as before, 12; Pekah (2 Kings xv, 32), 2; Jotham (v. 33), 16; Ahaz (2 Kings xvii, 1), 12; together 42 years. This discrepancy we have no certain means of removing. The usual supposition is, that there was a long

interregnum, or period of anarchy, in Israel, before Hoshea was recognised as king, of which the rapid narrative gives no account. Too short a duration may also have been assigned to Menahem's reign, or to Pekah's, or both. Mr. Newman, rejecting the supposition of an interregnum as arbitrary, finds reason to lower the date of Menahem's reign by 9 years. (Heb. Mon., p. 149.)

upon a king of Samaria, whose name, although mutilated, I read as Hoshea, and in the other there is an account of a campaign against a son of Rezin, which latter king was, as we know from Scripture, a contemporary of the predecessor of Shalmaneser.”¹

The great event which gives its interest to this reign, and for a knowledge of which we are chiefly indebted to the Scriptures, is the invasion of the kingdom of Israel, or Samaria, ending as it did in the captivity of the Ten Tribes (2 Kings xvii). At first Hoshea appears to have submitted to the Assyrians and paid the tribute. Shalmaneser, having invaded the country, retired again, as we may infer, when “Hoshea became his servant and gave him presents” (v. 3). Within a few years, however, he repeated the visit, and with more serious and lasting consequences.

Between the first of these invasions and the siege of Samaria, we ought most probably to place the siege of Tyre, spoken of by Isaiah in his 23rd chapter. It is to an extract from the historian Menander, preserved by Josephus, that we owe our knowledge of the fact that it was Shalmaneser who attacked the Phœnician cities. The Assyrians, as we are told, first subdued the mainland of Phœnicia; and then, by the aid of the ships of the conquered cities, Sidon and others, endeavoured to master the “crown-giving city” herself. The attempt did not succeed; the Tyrian ships defeated those brought against them by the Assyrians; and at the end of five years, it seems probable, although it is not expressly stated, that a peace was concluded on terms favourable to the Tyrians.² If we rightly place the siege of Tyre between Shalmaneser’s first and second invasion of Israel, it must have terminated not long before the close of his reign. The siege of Samaria may, indeed, have been going on at the same time; for so small an undertaking as

¹ Communic. to Athen., 1854, p. 343.

² Kenrick, Phœnicia, pp. 377-80. For more see Introd. to Is., ch. xxiii.

the latter can hardly have required the whole Assyrian army, a portion only of which would, accordingly, be sent up from the main body against the Israelitish capital. In this case there is nothing to prevent us from even supposing that the peace with the Phœnicians was made by Shalmaneser's successor. There is, in fact, a Khorsabad cylinder which speaks of the capture of Tyre by *Sargon*.¹

It appears to have been, in great measure, the interference of Egypt in the affairs of Israel which brought about the final catastrophe in the northern kingdom. Hoshea, we read, conspiring with So, king of Egypt (2 K. xvii, 4), refused the usual tributary presents to the Assyrians. The Egyptian king, there is reason to believe, was one of the twenty-fifth, or Ethiopian, dynasty, which reigned in Egypt for a period of about fifty years, contemporaneously for a part of this time with Hoshea and Hezekiah. The dynasty consisted of three, or perhaps four, powerful Ethiopian monarchs, of whom So (or Seva, as the word might be written by a different punctuation of the Hebrew letters) was either the first or the second. These two are known in history by the respective names of Sabaco and Sevechus, and to either of these the form Seva may properly enough be referred. The object of the Ethiopian was to strengthen himself against the Assyrian power, by an alliance with Hoshea, hoping, it may be, also to include Judah and Syria in the same confederacy. The attempt only led to a fresh invasion by the Assyrians, about the sixth year of Hoshea, and finally to the destruction of the Israelitish king, whose capital was taken after a siege of three years. As in the case of Tyre, however, it is thought that this siege was concluded, not by Shalmaneser but by his successor Sargon. This view is not inconsistent with what is stated in the book of Kings, which in one place simply relates that the "King of Assyria took Samaria" (xvii, 6),

¹ Rawlinson, Ath., 1852, p. 1362.

without saying whether it was Shalmaneser, or his successor; and in a second place the historian, curiously enough, seems to refrain even from saying that the king of Assyria took the city, for he adds to his statement, that "at the end of three years *they* took it" (2 Kings xviii, 10).¹ Yet it must be admitted that, had we no other source of information, we could only suppose that the monarch to whom Hoshea refused tribute was the same who came up and besieged Samaria, and finally led away the tribes into their distant captivity.

It is more probable, however, on the whole, that Sargon was the king referred to by the historian as finishing the siege. For in the magnificent palace of this monarch at Khorsabad, inscriptions have been found which mention the number—27,280—of Israelites, carried into captivity by the founder of the palace, from Samaria and other places in the kingdom of Israel.²

Principally on account of this correspondence between what is attributed to Shalmaneser in the Kings, and to Sargon in the inscriptions, it has been supposed that Shalmaneser and Sargon were but two names of one and the same ruler. On the face of the matter it is highly improbable that it should be so. For an active and victorious king who made repeated expeditions into Palestine, carried on a long siege in the country, perhaps two or three, and took captive many thousands of the inhabitants, must have been well known by name to the Jewish people, and cannot, therefore, have been spoken of by their writers under two, or even *three*³, perfectly distinct names, and that, too, without any intimation that they intended

¹ It may be observed that the Hebrew might be so pointed as to read, "he took it,"—i. e. Shalmaneser.

² Layard, Nin. & Bab., p. 618.

³ Tiglath Pileser was formerly

considered by Sir H. Rawlinson as only another name or title of the same king (Outlines, pp. 26-8). Von Gumpach, Abriss, p. 75, makes Shalmaneser identical with Sargon.

all the time to designate the same person. Hence we readily adopt the view which recognises Sargon as different from Shalmaneser, and which appears to be fully borne out by the monuments, as well as by the language of Scripture.

It may, accordingly, be supposed that, while the last named king was engaged in the siege of Samaria, Sargon was enabled to usurp the supreme power, to overcome and destroy Shalmaneser, and supersede him in the empire. Of the events leading to this revolution we know nothing. It may be conjectured, however, that it is owing to this that so little remains of the monuments and inscriptions of the two predecessors of Sargon. Their memorials were probably destroyed by the usurper, as those of Pul are believed to have been by Tiglath Pileser. What the relation between Tiglath Pileser and Shalmaneser may have been, whether that of father and son, we seem to have, as yet, no means of determining. The commencement of the siege of Samaria was, according to the common Chronology, in the year 723, and its close in 721 b.c., the latter year being, also, the first year of the reign of Sargon.

The information respecting this monarch to be derived from the Scriptures is limited to a single fact, which, although stated only by way of parenthesis, is a fact of some interest, and one which is suggestive of a whole train of events of high importance. It is, that Sargon sent his general against Ashdod and took it (*Isaiah xx, 1*). The connection in which the statement occurs leads to the inference that Sargon was at this time about to enter upon a war with Egypt and Ethiopia; and it is evident that an issue unfortunate for those two countries was anticipated by the Hebrew prophet.

The inscriptions make up, in great measure, for the scantiness of the information afforded by the Bible. From them it may be gathered, as we have already noticed, that Sargon was the builder of the palace at Khorsabad, which was the first of the great Assyrian ruins laid open, and from which, in the first

instance, the French Consul Botta, and afterwards Mr. Layard¹, obtained a large number of sculptures of excellent workmanship and in the best preservation. The more important of these, consisting partly of colossal human-headed and winged bulls, are now in the Louvre, and a few of a less striking character in our own British Museum.² As to the monarch whom these marbles commemorate, and who is believed to have effected a second dynastic revolution, we have no reason to suppose that he was in any way connected with the ancient line, which terminated in the person of Pul. It seems most probable that he was not, because his father and grandfather, whose names have been recovered from a tablet found in the ruins of the palace of his son Sennacherib, do not appear as monarchs of Assyria; nor has any inscription been discovered attributing such a descent to the founder of the palace of Khorsabad. It may, therefore, be assumed that he was only some great officer, or Satrap, of the Assyrian empire, who by a favourable conjuncture of circumstances was enabled to possess himself of supreme power. He appears, also, to have been a very successful general. Besides completing the conquest of Samaria, as before stated, he, doubtless, kept in subjection the kingdom of Judah, in which Hezekiah had become king, some years before Sargon's accession. No attempt was made, so far as we know, by the Jewish king just named, to throw off the Assyrian yoke, until the time of Sennacherib. After the conquest of the Israelitish kingdom, therefore, Sargon's attention seems to have been directed to the acquisition of the Philistine cities, of which Ashdod was one — probably as the preliminary to his invasion of Egypt. The line of march into this country would lie along the coast, in the south-western

¹ Nin. & Bab., pp. 131-2. See the magnificent restoration of the palace court at Khorsabad, in Fergusson, Hdbk. of Architecture, i, p. 169.

² For an interesting account of the Khorsabad discoveries see Bonomi's Nineveh and its Palaces, 2nd ed., 1853.

part of Palestine; and hence the importance of securing this district before actually entering Egypt. It is probable that at this time Hezekiah was the active ally of Sargon, for when Isaiah (xix, 15) speaks of the land of Judah as being a “terror to Egypt,” he seems to mean that it will be so, not from anything that Judah alone could do, but only through its alliance with the greater power. This interpretation of the words will be found to correspond with the general scope of the passage; and also with the fact, before referred to, that Hezekiah was now, as for several years previously, under the predecessor of Sargon, submissive to the Assyrian power, and, therefore, we may presume, in alliance with it.

Of the result of the Egyptian expedition we have no information, beyond the fact, learnt from the inscriptions, that Sargon received tribute from a Pharaoh of Egypt, which implies, of course, a successful issue. If, moreover, the partial destruction of No Ammon, or Thebes (Nahum iii, 8), be rightly referred to this Assyrian invasion under Sargon, his arms must have penetrated far into the interior of Egypt; and his superiority over the Ethiopians must have been very decided. It appears difficult to admit that such a considerable result as this would imply can have been attained by the invading force, and yet have been left without any distinct record or allusion, either in the prophecies of Isaiah, or in the historical books of Scripture. Any memorial of the event, a memorial of Egyptian humiliation, is not to be looked for on the Egyptian monuments. We may hope, however, here again, that a better knowledge of the Assyrian records will throw light on this obscure subject. The absence from the latter of all notice of so remarkable a campaign, would be tolerably conclusive evidence against its occurrence, and against ascribing to Sargon the destruction of No Ammon.

Nor are we able to determine who the Pharaoh was from whom Sargon received tribute. We can scarcely suppose that any member of the powerful Ethiopian dynasty could have

been reduced to the position of an Assyrian tributary, although Sargon may possibly have penetrated as far as Thebes, and even have defeated the Ethiopian armies. It is more likely that the Pharaoh referred to was some native Egyptian king, who at this time, like Sethos somewhat later, ruled over a portion of Lower Egypt, perhaps by permission of the Ethiopians. Or is the statement of the Assyrians about their receipt of Egyptian tribute a mere vain boast?

It further appears, from the inscriptions, that Sargon waged war with various so-called kings of Ashdod, Gaza, Hamath, and other Syrian cities; the records being in evident harmony with the passage of Isaiah before cited. His armies also fought in Babylonia, Armenia, Susiana, and Media. They appear to have passed over, probably by the aid of the Phoenician shipping, as far as the island of Cyprus, where a memorial tablet of this monarch has been discovered.¹

From these various and distant expeditions and conquests, it is evident that the reign of Sargon must have been one of some considerable duration. It has usually been thought to have occupied only a very few years. Winer, who sufficiently represents this view, gives it a duration of at most from two to three years, adding that it may have been, perhaps, only a few months.² This is, of course, too short a time for a reign embracing so many important events—including, also, as it must have done, the erection of such a palace as that of Khorsabad. On the other hand, Sir H. Rawlinson would extend the reign of Sargon to 19 years, i. e. from 721 to 702 b. c., in which latter year he places the accession of Sennacherib.³ If the annals of Sargon clearly represent him as reigning so long, we

¹ Layard, *Nin. & Bab.*, pp. 618-20. Comp. Kenrick, *Phœnicia*, pp. 381-2. The tablet is now at Berlin, and has been recognised as belonging to the builder of Khorsabad. Rawlinson, *Comment.*, p. 53.

² Realwb. Art. Sargon.

³ On the ground that inscriptions of Sennacherib represent him, early in his reign, as placing Belibus on the throne of Babylon, and Belibus occurs in the Canon of Ptolemy about 702. But is the identification sufficiently made out?

are bound to admit their account, and must make the best we can of any difficulties that may arise in connection with the Biblical Chronology. In the present state of our knowledge, however, it may be allowable to hesitate awhile before making so great a change, or regarding the question as finally settled. For, let us observe the relation in which the longer period stands to one or two precise and familiar Biblical statements. Sennacherib, let it be granted, succeeded Sargon in 702, and invaded Judah, we will suppose, 2 years later, in 700 b.c. The latter was, therefore, the fourteenth of Hezekiah (2 Kings xviii, 13), who, accordingly, must have ascended the throne in the year 714. But, on the other hand, he was king when Samaria was captured in 721 b.c.; and, indeed, this event took place in Hezekiah's 6th year (2 Kings xviii, 10): thus he must have ascended the throne not later than about 726 or 727 b.c., and his fourteenth year must have been, not in 700, but in 712 or 713. It is observable, also, that this want of agreement between the length of 19 years assigned to Sargon's reign, and the years of Hezekiah just mentioned, equally exists, from whatever point we date the commencement of Hezekiah's reign. The sixth of Hezekiah was the year of the conquest of Samaria, and his fourteenth was that of Sennacherib's invasion, whenever Hezekiah began to reign; leaving an interval of not more than eight years for Sargon; and if we attach any value to the Biblical account, these dates should not be lightly altered or departed from. In the face of this difficulty, therefore, we think it better for the present to adhere more closely to the commonly received Chronology, even in reference to the reign of Sargon, and to assign to it a duration rather of six or seven than of nineteen years.

The question remains whether this length of time is sufficient for the various expeditions which Sargon is said to have undertaken. It appears to be so; for, as in the case of the siege of Ashdod, some of them may have been conducted by his generals, while attributed to their master; he himself being

engaged at the same time in others. Sargon may have been pursuing his conquests in Phœnicia, while Tartan was among the Philistine cities, and while another of his generals may have passed over to Cyprus. The invasion of Egypt would not, perhaps, occupy more than two years; and in fact Isaiah (ch. xx) speaks of *three* years, as the limit within which the humiliation of that country by Assyria is to be effected. The campaigns in Babylonia and Susiana need not have occupied more than a single year; while those in Armenia and Media may have taken one or two more. All this time the erection and adornment of the great palace may have been proceeding. Nor is it absolutely necessary to suppose that it was both begun and completed by Sargon, and not rather continued and finished after his death, by his son Sennacherib, in commemoration of his exploits.

There seems, therefore, to be nothing, in the succession or character of the events falling within the reign of Sargon, requiring us to regard it as having lasted so long as 19 years; or even as having *preceded* the reign of Shalmaneser, the *latter* being the short reign—a view which has been adopted by several authors. At the same time it must be admitted, that should the longer duration be established conclusively, such an arrangement of the reigns will be the preferable one; and most probably, in that case, it will be found to be warranted, or required, by a further knowledge of the inscriptions. The fact that the sculptures represent Sargon as the father of Sennacherib will not, perhaps, form an insuperable objection to such a transposition. There are, however, some other considerable difficulties connected with it, but with these we need not at present concern ourselves.¹

¹ Comp. Newman, *Heb. Mon.*, p. 270; Bosanquet, *Jour. of Roy. As. Soc.*, xv, p. 282. A late writer (Kruger, *Gesch. d. Assyr. & Ira-nier*, pp. 135-6, 360) transfers from Sargon to Shalmaneser the 19 years

attributed to the former, giving to Sargon a reign of only 4 years. Among other reasons, this author urges that, according to the Greek account, it was Shalmaneser, not Sargon, who made the conquest of

§ 4. SENNACHERIB'S INVASION.—HEZEKIAH AND ISAIAH.

In the reign of Sennacherib we reach the point of highest interest in the connected histories of Judah and Assyria. Hezekiah was on the throne of the former kingdom, and had been so probably for eleven or twelve years, when Sennacherib succeeded his father Sargon. The Jewish monarch and his advisers probably thought that the death of Sargon, followed by the accession of a young and untried ruler, afforded a favourable opportunity for the attempt to free themselves from the Assyrian supremacy. We are left here, again, as in other cases, almost entirely without certain knowledge, as to the immediate circumstances in the position either of Assyrian or of Jewish affairs, which led to the determination at last to refuse the long-paid tribute. We are told, indeed, in general terms, that Hezekiah's government was successful; that "he prospered, whithersoever he went forth," and that he also "smote the Philistines." (2 Kings xviii, 7-8.) Such expressions manifestly imply a considerable degree of material success, the consequence and the reward, in the sacred writer's view, of Hezekiah's obedience to the Law. The fact that the book of Kings represents Hezekiah as having "rebelled against the king of Assyria and served him not," before it speaks of the capture of Samaria in the sixth year of Hezekiah, ought not, probably, to be regarded as implying that the rebellion of

Cyprus. But how doubtful this is may be seen in Kenrick, Phœnicia, p. 379, note 1; where it is shown that it is not necessary to understand the Greek statement of any *Assyrian* occupation of Cyprus at all. We imagine that a good deal more, in the ingenious attempt of Kruger to extract the early Assyrian history from the Shah Nameh, would not

stand the test of a close examination. In connection with this subject, we may venture to express the hope shortly to see published the very interesting and able paper, on some points in the work referred to, recently read before the Royal Society of Literature by the Bp. of St. David's.

Hezekiah took place previous to that event. The introductory verses of this chapter (v. 1-8) have the appearance of being a summary statement of the general character of Hezekiah's reign ; and the particular details do not appear to be entered upon until we reach the 9th verse. Hence, as we have said, it was, probably, not until after the death of Sargon that Judah went so far as actually to refuse the Assyrian tribute.

In seeking for the motives which may have led to this decided step, besides the opportunity presented by Sargon's death, and the generally successful character of Hezekiah's reign, we must bear in mind the probable influence of Egypt at this time in the counsels of Judah. There are distinct intimations, in the prophecies of Isaiah, of an understanding between Hezekiah and one of the Pharaohs, as well as of friendly relations subsisting with Ethiopia. The object of both the latter powers was, we must infer, as in other cases, to strengthen themselves against the Assyrians, and to secure upon their Asiatic frontier the support of an allied power. Hezekiah, in the same manner, would consider it important to have behind him one or more friendly powers on whose support he could count. It must be confessed that the act of the Jewish king was a bold one ; and one which, whatever the aid afforded by Egypt, was only too likely to bring upon Judah the most terrible calamities. The certainty of an Assyrian invasion, and the consequent desolation of the country, would seem to be evident. An alliance with Egypt, even if it should prove really productive of its desired results, and should bring up a powerful auxiliary force, would only tend to cause greater calamities to the Jewish people. In this case their country would become the battle-field of two great powers — a result, with its attendant miseries, which is alluded to by Isaiah in one or two passages, and which may well have led that prophet, for the sake of his people, to resist to the utmost the policy of an alliance with the Egyptians.

Accordingly, we find him, from the first, decidedly opposed

to that course. He probably thought it not only little calculated, in the distracted state of Egypt, to bring substantial aid to Judah, but also the most certain course to exasperate the Assyrians and hasten the destruction of his people. That the prophet was an advocate of submission to Assyria, and of the continued payment of the tribute, does not, however, appear. The contrary may, perhaps, be inferred from the distinct terms in which he announces that Judah shall be delivered from the yoke, and the power of the oppressor broken: but the source of his reliance for this result was neither the assistance of Egypt, nor the unaided efforts of the kingdom of Judah itself, but, simply, the protection of Jehovah. The most that may be gathered from his writings, in favour of the former supposition, is that he probably would have preferred that his people should have remained quiet (xxx, 15); that they should not trouble themselves with warlike preparations, which, against so overwhelming a power as Assyria, could have no chance of succeeding; that they should trustfully await the great deliverance. It may be said that this was virtually to recommend the continuance of submission; but to the mind of the Hebrew prophet, with his unwavering faith in the Protector of his nation, the matter would not so appear. The quiet trust and expectation, accompanied by the return to national and individual rectitude and purity of worship, which Isaiah so earnestly sought to bring about, this alone, in his view, could win the Divine protection, and secure the wished-for deliverance; while warlike preparations, mere self-dependence, in the midst of so much iniquity, however aided by foreign alliances, could lead to nothing but defeat and renewed humiliation. But the exact position of Isaiah in relation to the Assyrian invasion will be seen more clearly in the section on the prophet's life, and in the remarks accompanying the prophecies relating to this period of the history.

The policy condemned by Isaiah undoubtedly prevailed. The speedy result was that, in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah,

the Assyrians invaded the country in overwhelming force under Sennacherib. We need not dwell at any length on the well-known details. It will be interesting, however, to observe how far the Biblical account is in harmony with what we can learn respecting these events from other sources, including, of course, the Assyrian monuments.

There appear to be ample reasons for identifying Sennacherib as the builder of the great palace of Koyunjik, the most extensive, if not the most magnificent, of the disinterred palaces. Its ruins were excavated by Mr. Layard in his second expedition¹; and some fine sculptures, the fruits of his operations in the great mound opposite Mosul, are now in the British Museum. These slabs are, in their kind, little, if at all, inferior to those from Khorsabad previously mentioned, and indicate, it is thought, a more advanced state of Art than those from the older palaces of Nimroud. The annals of the founder of the palace, for a series of years, occur in the inscriptions on the great human-headed bulls, and upon other portions of the edifice. The name of Sennacherib was first read by Dr. Hincks²; but for the more complete knowledge of the contents of the inscriptions we are indebted to Sir H. Rawlinson.³ His interpretations have been, in the main, confirmed by the independent investigations of Dr. Hincks.⁴ The fact that results so much alike have been thus separately arrived at, is our best assurance that they give us substantially the actual contents of the inscriptions.

The full details will be found in the works referred to. It is enough for our present purpose to state, in regard to the first and second years of the reign of Sennacherib, that various expeditions to the north and south of Assyria took place in those years. It is not until we reach the third year that we

¹ Nin. & Bab., in particular, ch. v, vi, & xx.

² Khorsabad Inscriptions, pp. 34-6.

³ Ath., 1851, Aug. 23 & Sep. 8. Outlines of Ass. Hist. pp. xx-xxxix.

⁴ Nin. & Bab., p. 139.

come to statements immediately bearing on the sacred narrative. We find that, in that year, Sennacherib overran Syria, and after subduing Sidon and other Phœnician cities—of which successes he probably caused the memorial tablet to be executed which is found cut in the rock near the Nahr el Kelb river¹—reached the country of the Philistines on the southwest coast of Palestine. Here he captured and plundered many towns; and here, according to his own account, he encountered and defeated the Egyptians, assisted by the Ethiopians. This battle is thought by both our authorities to have really taken place, and to be alluded to in the narrative of 2 Kings (xviii, 21, 24; xix, 9); but the allusion is extremely slight and doubtful. The Biblical account appears, rather, to pass over without notice whatever, in the series of events, does not immediately relate to the Jewish kingdom. An invasion of Egypt by Sennacherib is, it is well known, mentioned by Herodotus, who was told by the Egyptian priests that the Assyrian army was defeated and forced to retreat, in consequence of a multitude of field-mice, sent by one of their gods, having, in the night, gnawed the bowstrings and shield-straps of the Assyrian soldiers. This story may be regarded either as a mere invention of the priests; or as a version, framed, however, to do honour to the Egyptian god, of the great disaster sustained at this time by Sennacherib's forces, according to the Scriptural narrative. The inscriptions, as might be expected, make no allusion to any such defeat, or destruction, of the invading host, but represent Sennacherib as successful throughout his enterprise. It is very probable that the events of the campaign were of a mixed character, partly prosperous, partly adverse. In the first encounter with the Egyptians Sennacherib may have defeated them, although supported by their Ethiopian allies. He may thus have been enabled to pursue his march towards, or into, Egypt, and then have met with the

¹ Rawlinson, Comment., p. 55

blow which compelled him to turn back. Or, only a portion of his host may have advanced so far as the Egyptian frontier, while the remainder, still encamped on Jewish ground, suddenly found itself disabled from pursuing the enterprise; while its discomfiture occasioned the hasty retreat of the advanced body, ascribed by the Egyptians to the interference of their god. Either of these suppositions would, in some measure, reconcile the inscriptions with Herodotus, and with the account of the Bible—the chief difficulty in connection with the latter being that the scene of the calamity is removed to a distance from Jerusalem.¹ In other respects, the statements of the inscriptions agree sufficiently with those of the sacred writers. The capture of the “fortified cities of Judah,” is distinctly mentioned, as well as the devastation of the country and the deportation of its inhabitants, of both of which Isaiah so pathetically speaks in several instances. It is related also that an increased tribute was imposed upon Hezekiah, in addition to what he had formerly paid, the exact amount being given, and corresponding so far as regards the 30 talents of gold with what is stated in the Scriptures. The silver is set down in the inscriptions at 800 talents, whereas the Biblical account speaks of only 300; but the latter, it is suggested, may have been only the actual money amount carried off, while the larger sum may include, also, the value of the silver in various forms, obtained from the temple doors and pillars, and from other quarters. (2 Kings xviii, 16.) Still, however, Hezekiah, although forced to submit so far as to renew the payment of tribute, yet, encouraged by Isaiah, would not, and did not, give up Jerusalem to the Assyrian army. Sennacherib does not appear to have approached that city himself; but only to have sent his generals to demand its surrender. Hence, we may

¹ This is inconsistent with the words “that night” (2 Kings xix, 35), which, however, are not found in the parallel place of Isaiah. For

some further notice of this point, and of the question of locality, see *infra*, Introd. to Is. ch. xxxvi-xxxvii. Comp. note on xxxvii, 36.

infer, that the main body of the Assyrians were at some distance from Jerusalem, with their king himself. The latter is stated to have been, in the first place, at Lachish (*Is. xxxvi, 2*), and afterwards (*xxxvii, 8*) at Libnah; that is to say, Sennacherib was himself engaged among the cities in the south-west, towards the Egyptian frontier, when the interview took place between his messengers and Hezekiah. It was, doubtless, owing to the sudden destruction which overtook a great part of the Assyrian host, either in Judah, or on the borders of Egypt, that the threats against Jerusalem and Hezekiah were not carried into effect. Sennacherib, having indeed laid the country waste, despoiled its towns and villages, and captured great numbers of its inhabitants, was yet obliged to return to Nineveh, without having obtained possession of Jerusalem; nor do the inscriptions, we are informed, contain anything inconsistent with this representation of the sacred historian.

We have sufficiently noticed elsewhere the difficulty arising in the account of *2 Kings (xix, 35)* from the use of the words “that night.” They are not found in the narrative of *Isaiah*. Even if they be retained, they do not afford any sure ground for concluding that the historian conceived of the fatal blow as falling upon the Assyrians near Jerusalem. If they be disregarded, we are left at liberty to think that the event not only took place at a distance from Jerusalem, but even occupied some time in its accomplishment. If, as some interpreters suppose, the destruction were occasioned by a sudden outbreak of the plague, which possibly may have been also the cause of the sickness of Hezekiah, many days or even weeks may have passed before the final retreat of the remnant of the Assyrians.

Mr. Layard’s identification of a great fortified city, lying in a hilly and fruitful country, and represented on the Koyunjik marbles in the British Museum, with the Lachish besieged by Sennacherib, appears to be satisfactorily established.¹

¹ *Nin. & Bab.* pp. 148-52,

There are several of the Psalms¹ which may with much probability be referred to the great event we have just related. Of these Ps. xlvi is the most striking, and well expresses the feelings with which the deliverance was viewed by probably a considerable number of the inhabitants of Jerusalem—those who, we may suppose, would be most in sympathy with the moral and religious spirit of the prophet Isaiah.

It has been thought that Sennacherib must have made two different expeditions into Palestine, separated from each other by an interval of some years. The question is of but small importance, or interest, in this place ; and it may be passed over with the remark that the supposition is inconsistent with the sacred narrative, and not supported by any other sufficient evidence.

After his return to his own country, Sennacherib lived for many years. Notices of his various expeditions remain on the monuments, and represent him as carrying on wars in Armenia and Babylonia. He even brought Phœnician sailors, we are told, to man ships which he had caused to be built on the Tigris and Euphrates, and conducted a naval expedition successfully against some of his revolted subjects along the shores of the Persian Gulf. Why, then, it may be asked, did he not return to Judah, to endeavour to repair the misfortune that had befallen him, by completing the conquest of that kingdom? We can give no answer to the question, beyond the supposition that the terrible nature of the calamity and the attendant conviction that Hezekiah was under the protection of a Higher Power, probably co-operated in his mind to lead him to abandon any further attack upon either Judah or Egypt. After a reign, it is believed, of not less than 22 years, perhaps of 25, he was assassinated by two of his sons, “as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his God” (2 Kings xix, 37), and then “Esar-haddon his son reigned in his stead.”

¹ E. g. xlvi, xlvii, xlviii.

§ 5. THE SUCCESSORS OF SENNACHERIB TO THE FALL OF THE EMPIRE.

As none of the successors of Sennacherib known to us possess any special interest in connection with the Assyrian prophecies, it is not necessary here to dwell at any length upon their reigns. The name of Esarhaddon occurs in but one other place in the Hebrew Scriptures besides that just cited, and the parallel passage in Isaiah. In Ezra iv, 2, he is mentioned as having brought colonists into Samaria. Hence it may be inferred that, like his father, he made an expedition into the western parts of Asia; and it may be that he effected some great interchange of colonising tribes between the eastern and the western regions of his empire. He has been thought also to have been the Assyrian king who carried Manasseh captive to Babylon (2 Chron. xxxiii, 11), an occurrence of which it is strange that nothing is said in the book of Kings. Neither has any allusion to it been found on the monuments. Esarhaddon was the builder of several palaces, the chief of which are one on the mound called Nebbi Yunus and that called the South-west Palace of Nimroud. The latter was destroyed by fire, but yet the name of Esarhaddon and some record of his wars have been found on the great bulls and some other objects from the building.¹ He obtained materials for his new palace by despoiling the older structures of the North-west and Centre Palaces, erected by monarchs of the ancient line which we have seen reason to conclude terminated with Pul — monuments of the latter, as well as some of Tiglath Pileser, his successor, brought from the Centre Palace, having been found, as we formerly noticed, in the South-west Palace. From the inscriptions it appears that Esarhaddon found his chief occupation in war, like his father,

¹ Layard, Nin. & Bab., pp. 160, 621.

and carried his arms over an equally extensive portion of South-western Asia.

The son and successor of Esarhaddon is not mentioned in the Bible. He has been named both Sardanapalus III, and Asshur-bani-pal¹, and of his reign some very interesting monuments remain to us. These were discovered chiefly in a part of the palace of his grandfather Sennacherib, in the great mound of Koyunjik. He appears either to have enlarged this palace, or else to have completed the decoration of the part referred to, in which were found many very beautiful and elaborately sculptured slabs, as well as colossal bulls and lions.² He was also the builder of the North Palace of Koyunjik, the sculptures of which are more minute and delicate, as well as more perfect in their imitation of nature, than those of the older palaces, though, at the same time, inferior in grandeur and breadth of design.³ Some of the hunting scenes, in particular, have been characterised as belonging to the highest style of Assyrian Art. The same king, although a great warrior, and much engaged in the reduction of his rebellious subjects in Elam and Babylonia, as recorded on some of his marbles, would seem also to be entitled to the character of a patron of letters. To his reign are referred the very numerous inscriptions on tablets of baked clay, which are spoken of as having constituted the "royal library," and are stated to have proved of the utmost value in the task of deciphering the Assyrian writing.⁴

We have no certain information as to the length of the two reigns just noticed. They must, however, have occupied a large part of the 7th century; and the death of Asshur-

¹ Rawlinson, Outlines, p. xl; Ath., 1854, p. 343. He is called Asshurakhbal III on some of the marbles (46, 49) in the B. Mus.; while the name Asshur-bani-pal does not appear to be recognised.

² Layard, Nin. & Bab. pp. 445-59.

³ Fergusson, Handbk. of Arch. i, p. 177. For a list of these sculptures, which are now in the British Museum, see Ath., April 5, 1856.

⁴ Layard, Nin. & Bab., pp. 344-7.

bani-pal may be assumed to have occurred not earlier than from 650 to 640. Perhaps it was even later than this. The Assyrian rule, still, no doubt, retained a large share of its earlier vigour; but it was on the decline; and with the next monarch it is probable that the mighty empire came to an end. His name has but recently been made known, and is stated to have been Asshur-ebid-ilut. He is believed to have built the South-east Palace of Nimroud, an edifice of some extent, but in other respects greatly inferior to the earlier palaces.¹ It is altogether such a building as, in the department of Art, may well enough correspond to that decline of the political power of the Assyrians which, from causes not yet fully known to us, had taken place before the death of this king. It has been conjectured that his father Asshur-bani-pal lost his life while defending Nineveh against an attack of the Scythians, b. c. 634; and that the builder of the South-east Palace, having thus succeeded to the throne, reigned in Nineveh after its capture by the Scythians and by their permission, during the interval which elapsed before the final destruction of that capital by the united Medes and Babylonians, under Cyaxares and Nabopolassar.² The conjecture is unsupported by anything like evidence; and, perhaps, the same remark applies equally to a suggestion of Mr. Layard's³, to the effect that *this* was the king who executed the great act of self-destruction which we have attributed to Pul. If this were correct, Cyaxares would be the Arbaces of Ctesias and Nabopolassar the Belesis. But then, what are we, on such a supposition, to make of the long interval between Arbaces and Cyrus, occupying, as we have seen, a period in Herodotus of 150, in Ctesias of more than 300, years?

These somewhat arbitrary suppositions may serve to warn us that the period of Assyrian history at which we have arrived

¹ Nin. & Bab., pp. 599, 655.

² Rawlinson, Outlines, p. xli.

³ N. & B. p. 622.

is one that is involved in the greatest obscurity. Conjectures in abundance may be put forth; the more easily from the want of facts by which to limit and to test them. It must still be considered doubtful, not only whether the grandson of Esarhaddon was the last king, but also whether the Babylonian empire which now rises into view was not, in fact, only the older Assyrian power under a new name; or whether, again, the commencement of the former does not indicate a total change, not only of the name and capital city, but even of the ruling race. It is not necessary for our present purpose to enter upon the discussion of such questions, or to pursue the subject into the Babylonian period. With a brief notice of the destruction of Nineveh, the task proposed in this outline will be completed.

As we have said, the successor or successors of the son of Esarhaddon were in no position to continue the warlike undertakings of their ancestors; but, on the contrary, were most probably, both personally and politically, little equal to the task of preserving even the ancient boundaries of the empire. The Median power would seem again to have become especially threatening. Herodotus, we have before seen, informs us that under Phraortes, the son of Dejoces, the Medes went so far as to attack the Assyrians who held Nineveh. This statement probably implies that some previous battles had taken place, in which the Assyrians had been defeated. But, if so, they were eventually able to repel the attack, and Phraortes is related to have lost his life in a battle which they won.¹ This may have been about the year 635 B.C. Shortly after this victory, it has been thought, occurred the

¹ The battle has been called the battle of Ragan, from Judith i, 5-15; the Arphaxad of this apocryphal book being thought to denote Phraortes, and Nebuchodonosar the Assyrian king who defeated the Medes.

On these points and on the question of the historical credibility of Judith, see Kruger, *Assyrier*, p. 371-2; also Von Gumpach, *Zeitrechnung d. Bab. & Ass.*, pp. 161-4.

expedition of Holopernes related in the book of Judith — the last vain effort, as it has been considered, of Assyria to recover its ancient predominance over Western Asia. But the historical character of the book of Judith is by no means such as to warrant our receiving so important a series of events on its sole authority.

The struggle against Assyria, which was evidently one of race against race for the empire of Asia, was renewed by the Medes under Cyaxares, the son of Phraortes, who succeeded in bringing up the Median forces again to the siege of Nineveh. But, at this critical point, an irruption of the Scythians saved for a time the beleaguered capital. It seems not improbable that they may have been invited to advance into Media by the Assyrians themselves, who may have seen no other chance of escape from their impending fate than by bringing this formidable enemy upon their besiegers. The wild nomade race which thus burst over the south-west of Asia came from the regions beyond the Caucasus, now forming part of the Russian empire in Europe, and extending from the northern shores of the Black Sea to the Caspian. Their inroad into Media compelled Cyaxares to retire from the siege. He marched against them, but was defeated ; his dominion was for a time at an end ; and the Scythians spread themselves over the continent from Media to the borders of Egypt. It is has been thought that the prophets Zephaniah (ch. i. ii) and Jeremiah (i, 14; iv, 6-7; v, 15, seq.) allude to the threatened invasion of Judea by these wild hordes. If so, the terms in which the latter speaks of them show us the terrible character of their inroad. After some years, however, Cyaxares recovered his power. Partly by force, partly by stratagem, he succeeded in overpowering the barbarians, now probably enfeebled by various causes, and incapable of any long continued effort of government or self-defence. By degrees he extended his authority over the neighbouring countries, as far even as Asia Minor.

Meantime Nabopolassar had become governor of Babylon,

probably ruling there as viceroy of the Assyrian monarch.¹ He saw in the rising fortunes of Cyaxares sufficient encouragement to throw off his allegiance to Assyria. It may be that the expedition of Pharaoh Necho (2 Kings xxiii, 29), stated by the sacred writer to have been against "the king of Assyria," took place at this time; and that by "king of Assyria" is really meant the revolted Babylonian Satrap. According to this view, the expedition was designed to relieve the Assyrians besieged in Nineveh, and Josiah, king of Judah, who was defeated and slain by the Egyptians at the battle of Megiddo, must have been in alliance with Cyaxares and Nabopolassar.² These two rulers now detached Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabopolassar, with a portion of their united armies, to meet and oppose the victorious Egyptians. A battle took place at Carchemish on the Euphrates. The Egyptians were here defeated and compelled to return. Their interference thus proved of no avail, if such were its aim, for the deliverance of Nineveh, and the siege, now renewed by Cyaxares, went on. It may have continued for two or three years, and then Nineveh was finally captured. The marks of fire, found on several of the palaces, may have been caused by conflagrations kindled at the close of the attack. It is singular, however, how little information has been left to us respecting the overthrow of so great a city, the central point as it was of Assyrian power and grandeur. The notices of the ruin of the empire, by the prophets Ezekiel and Zephaniah (Ez. xxxi; Zeph. ii, 13), show, indeed, how complete was the destruction, but give us no details as to the manner of its accomplishment. It is equally remarkable that Xenophon, who, not much more than 200

¹ Another supposition is that Nabopolassar was a chief of the Chaldees, who, at the time of the great Scythian invasion, got possession of Babylon and the government of the country. Comp. New-

man, Heb. Mon., pp. 323-4; and see *infra*, note on Is. xxiii, 13.

² This combination, perhaps, best reconciles the different statements in this part of the history; but must be taken for no more than it is worth, as merely conjectural.

years after the event, must in his retreat with the Ten Thousand have passed by the ruins, yet makes no statement indicating that he was even aware of the true character of the site. Much of the wall surrounding the city existed in his time, as he particularly notices it¹, and gives its measurement; but the name of Nineveh he does not mention; and it would seem that the ruins did not, in any way, recall to his mind that famous word.

With the destruction of the Assyrian capital, the ruling power passed more entirely into the hands of the Medes and Babylonians. The latter now become prominent in the Biblical narrative; and, under Nebuchadnezzar, who shortly afterwards succeeded his father, are seen in possession of an empire rivaling in extent that of their ancient masters.

It has been no part of our plan to dwell on the relations subsisting between Babylon and the Assyrian empire during the century and a half preceding the destruction of Nineveh. It is known that a regular succession of rulers, during much of that period, administered the Babylonian government, from the time of Nabonassar (747 B.C.) downwards. They were probably, for the most part, only viceroys of Assyria. In some instances they appear to have been sons of the Assyrian monarch, as in the case of Esarhaddon, during the lifetime of his father Sennacherib. In some instances, also, they may have made themselves for a time independent, or have attempted to do so, and thus have given occasion to the wars of which records are left in the inscriptions. Merodach Baladan², for example, is found to have endeavoured to maintain his independence against Sennacherib, perhaps encouraged to this by the great disaster of the latter in his Jewish campaign. In other instances, again, there is reason to identify the Babylonian governor with the

¹ Anab., iii, 4-10. When Xenophon states that a *Persian* king took the city, he must be understood to allude to its capture by the united

Medes and Babylonians, of which he evidently had no exact information.

² Comp. Isaiah xxxix, 1.

Assyrian monarch himself, who would of course have his proper place in the separate Canon, or list, of the Babylonian rulers, while, at the same time, he was the head of the whole empire. Thus Asshur-bani-pal is thought to correspond to the Saosduchin of the Canon. Of these Babylonian governors, Nabopolassar appears to have been the first who succeeded in establishing permanently his independent sovereignty; and, under his son Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon, rebuilt and enormously enlarged, took the position which Nineveh had hitherto held; although, from the want of stone in the region of the Lower Euphrates, the buildings of the former city were not such as to survive the lapse of ages, and remain, after more than two thousand years, to be the prize of these later times.

§ 6. NINEVEH: ITS SITUATION, MAGNITUDE, COMMERCE.

THE origin and extent of the city, the downfall of which we have thus slightly traced, are points still involved in much obscurity; but the further decipherment of the monuments will, it may be hoped, help to elucidate them. On the former point we seem to have at present absolutely no information, beyond the statement of Genesis x, 11, and the Greek story attributing the foundation of Nineveh to Ninus. It may be doubted whether we shall ever be able to penetrate sufficiently far back into Assyrian antiquity to ascertain either when Nineveh originated, or by what race it was first inhabited.

The question of its site is one which it appears now more practicable to answer. Indeed, notwithstanding the silence of Xenophon, before mentioned, it is probably correct to say that the knowledge of the true situation of the “great city” was never really lost by the inhabitants of the country. Mr. Layard quotes a passage from Sir Anthony Shirley’s “Travels in Persia,” which seems plainly to show that in Shirley’s time (1598-9) the site was clearly identified with that of the immense mounds lying

eastward of the Tigris near Mosul, and so well known as the Koyunjik and Nebbi Yunus of recent explorers. We are not aware of the grounds on which Shirley so confidently gave to those mounds the name of Nineveh; but he probably received his information from the people living near them. It is known that other old European travellers, as Thevenot, Tavernier, Chardin, in accordance, doubtless, with the traditions of the neighbourhood, regarded the buried remains as those of the Assyrian capital; and Oriental writers are stated to have done the same for many centuries past. Mr. Rich, again, in the year 1820, speaks with equal confidence of the site of Nineveh, or at least of a part of Nineveh, as being here; and gives a plan and dimensions of the mounds and other remains, not materially differing from those of the recent survey of Capt. F. Jones to which we have already alluded.¹

Still it can hardly be said to have been finally determined, or very generally understood, where precisely Nineveh was situated, or what may have been its extent, before the discoveries of Botta and Layard aroused so great and wide-spread an interest in these questions, and afforded such abundant materials for answering them. And indeed, even now, with all the light that has of late years been thrown upon the subject, considerable difference of opinion exists on some points of importance.

We have already spoken of the situation and area of the district termed Central Assyria, within which lie all the great masses of buildings which have been recently excavated. (*Supra*, § 1.) Towards the north-eastern limit of this district is Khorsabad; at the north-western, near the Tigris, are the mounds of Koyunjik and Nebbi Yunus; in the south-western angle, between the Tigris and the Zab, is Nimroud; and towards the south-east, but at some distance inward

¹ *Nin. & Bab.*, pp. 658-60; *Tuch, de Nino Urbe*, pp. 20-5, 38-9; *Rich, Narrative*, ii, ch. xiii.

from the Zab and its tributary the Ghazr-su, is the mound of Karamless. Other remains, which have as yet been but slightly or not at all examined, lie here and there between the four extremes just mentioned. Mr. Layard states that “the great ruins of Koyunjik, Nimroud, Karamless, and Khorsabad, form very nearly a perfect parallelogram.”¹ This statement is hardly borne out by his own maps; but it is nearly so, we may add, by those of Capt. F. Jones. It may, therefore, be received as giving us, correctly enough, a general idea of the form of the space within which lie the great Assyrian ruins.²

The actual size of the parallelogram may be learnt from the following dimensions:—From Koyunjik to Nimroud is about eighteen miles; from Khorsabad to Karamless must be nearly the same; from Koyunjik to Khorsabad, along the northern boundary, is fourteen miles; and along the southern, from Nimroud to Karamless, must again be about an equal distance. The total area will thus be about 252 square miles—or something like four or five times the area of London with its suburbs, at the present time.

The question may now be asked, whereabouts within this large space did Nineveh lie; or, was the whole space, with all that it contained, comprehended under that name? It can, we assume, no longer be open to question that the city did lie within the limits just described. Mr. Layard, to whose judgment in the matter every one will be disposed to attach the utmost weight, maintains that the several masses of ruins so often named are the remains, not so much of distinct cities, as of royal palaces with their connected buildings and parks; and that these structures, together with the habitations of the people lying around them, or extending from one to the other, constituted “Nineveh, that great city.” The oldest of these palaces, he thinks, must have been at Nimroud, and here conse-

¹ *Nin. & Bab.*, p. 640, note.

² See the map of Central Assyria attached to this volume.

quently was the original site. New ones, with their grounds and buildings, would be erected by successive kings, the original name being still retained and applied to all; and so the whole area within which they were included became known as Nineveh. These immense structures were also strongly fortified, so as to be capable of standing a long siege, and of serving as places of refuge for the surrounding population, if attacked by an enemy. Large as must have been the area to which, according to this account, the name Nineveh was applied, it may have been fortified on its different sides by various walls and ditches, as well as by the Tigris. It is not, however, supposed to have been all covered with buildings; but to have included large spaces of cultivated ground—enough, perhaps, in great measure, for the support of its inhabitants.

With this may be compared Mr. Layard's later statement, in his second work. The two substantially agree, except only that the author appears now to concede that the name Nineveh did not originally belong to Nimroud, but to Koyunjik. The latter locality, as being the most important and best defended enclosure, and "especially called Nineveh," may have given its name to the whole city.¹

The view just stated certainly goes far towards explaining the terms in which ancient writers speak of the extent of Nineveh. Some of their accounts have usually been regarded as simply fabulous, and incredible. Strabo tells us that Nineveh was larger than Babylon, a city said to have covered a space of 140 square miles. Diodorus Siculus more precisely says that Nineveh was a city of quadrangular shape, two of its opposite sides being each 90 stadia in length, and the others each 150, making an entire circuit of nearly 60 miles, and an area of more than 200. This does not differ greatly from the parallelogram spoken of by Mr. Layard. Diodorus also says that

¹ *Nin. & Rem.*, i, p. 242, seq.; *Nin. & Bab.*, pp. 638-41.

the walls enclosing this immense area were 100 feet high, and broad enough to allow three chariots to be driven abreast upon them,—a statement which Xenophon appears to confirm, in giving the height of the wall of the ruined city near which he encamped at 100 feet and its breadth at 50. These walls were defended, moreover, by lofty towers to the number of not less than 1500.

The account of Diodorus has been thought to confirm and explain the words of the book of Jonah (iii, 3), in which we read that “Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days’ journey.” If the day’s journey be taken at about twenty miles, the expression, understood of the circuit of the city, agrees closely with the description of the Greek historian. But the next verse would seem at first to require us to understand the “three days’ journey” of the *length* of the city, or, in other words, of the time occupied in going from one end to the other:—“Jonah began to enter into the city a day’s journey.” This interpretation is not quite certain; the meaning may only be that the prophet went to and fro within the city on his mission for one day, and then the people repented. But most probably these expressions of Jonah, as well as the “six score thousand persons” of the same book (iv, 11), ought not to be otherwise understood than as indicating the writer’s belief that Nineveh was a very large city. This book was written, we shall see reason to conclude, long after the Assyrian capital was destroyed; and we cannot, therefore, reasonably regard the author as having either possessed, or wished to be thought to have possessed, exact information as to its size, or population.

Without, therefore, putting forward as precisely correct the statements either of Jonah or of Diodorus, we may yet very well admit both writers in evidence of the ancient and widely-diffused celebrity of Nineveh, as a place of extraordinary magnitude. In this respect they are in harmony with the general tenor of ancient testimony. Hence, again, we must allow that Mr. Layard’s opinion, above given, is essentially more probable

than that of Sir H. Rawlinson¹, who identifies the comparatively small mound of Nebbi Yunus with Nineveh proper, making its immense neighbour, the mound of Koyunjik, represent a mere suburb; and regarding Khorsabad and Nimroud as entirely distinct cities,—the former a city to which the name Sarghun may have belonged, the latter the Calah, or Kalah, of the Old Testament (2 Kings xvii, 6), and the Larissa of Xenophon.² The same investigator, however, admits that the whole group of cities may have been known by the common appellation of Nineveh; and hence there does not seem to be much real difference between our two authorities; except that the one would make either Nimroud or Koyunjik the original site, while the other would assign that distinction to the mound of Nebbi Yunus.

In the present state of the question we may allow ourselves to be a good deal guided by the clear and interesting topographical survey already cited in these pages. Its author, with some points of agreement with Mr. Layard, has also some differences. As the authority who has most recently gone over the ground, and had peculiar opportunities of gaining correct knowledge on many points, his conclusions are entitled to much consideration. According to the maps of Captain Jones, and his long and elaborate paper on the Topography of Nineveh (*supra*, § 1), the masses of ruins called Koyunjik and Nebbi Yunus must be regarded as both marking the true site of the city. It must, however, have included a much greater extent of surface than is now covered by those mounds. Both of them lie within what was its western boundary, and were most probably in the Assyrian times close upon the Tigris, although that stream is now at a distance of nearly a mile. Nineveh was surrounded by various walls and other defences, which may still be traced, with sufficient distinctness, throughout their whole extent. The river wall, on the Tigris, was

¹ Comment. on Cun. Insc., pp. 17-19.

² Anab., iii, 4, 7.

nearly straight, and about 4530 yards in length. At its northern extremity it turned eastward from the river, at right angles to its previous course. The length of this part was about 2330 yards. It continued, after turning sharply round to the south, for a distance of 5300 yards, running at first in a somewhat curved form, the convex being outward, i.e. eastward. Then, making a sharp angle and turning towards the west, it rejoined the river front at its southern extremity, this south wall not being more than about 1000 yards in length. There were extensive moats without the north, south, and east sides, capable of being easily filled with water from the Khosr-su. Traces of dams for regulating the supply are still visible ; and it was, no doubt, practicable, for defensive purposes, to surround the whole city with a very effectual water barrier (comp. Nahum ii, 6, 8). Towards the east, again, Nineveh was still further protected by a lofty double rampart, with a moat nearly 200 feet wide between its two parts, cut with great labour in rocky ground. This immense rampart must have been a most formidable work, and was evidently designed to cover the city on its weakest side. It was nearly parallel, in most of its course, to the eastern wall before mentioned, but at a considerable distance — nearly a mile, indeed, at its northern end. The space between was occupied by an inner rampart, also double, with its connected moats. The course of these great outer defences, as well as of the walls and moats, is, as we have said, sufficiently indicated by various signs — blocks of stone, the elevation or depression of the ground, and fragments of building.

According to this description, the form of Nineveh, within its principal continuous wall, was that of a trapezium, having its smallest side, or end, towards the south. The total circuit of the same wall was about seven, or seven and a half, English miles, which is considerably under even the six parasangs which Xenophon assigns as the circuit of the ruins near which he encamped. If, however, we add the additional length re-

quired by the great outer rampart, we shall have a much longer line of enclosing wall. It will still not amount to six parasangs, even taking the parasang, according to a suggestion of Mr. Layard, merely as a measure of the distance easily walked in an hour. We cannot make it less than two and a half miles, and this will give us fifteen miles for Xenophon's measurement. Possibly he spoke from a mere rough estimate, or from some exaggerated statement given to him on the spot, as to the extent of the ruins. There may also have been other remains of buildings in his time, which have since disappeared, and which he included within the six parasangs.

The dimensions just stated are vastly below those of Diodorus, as well as far less than those suggested by the writer of Jonah. It may, therefore, be that the former had no correct information on the subject, and that the Hebrew author really meant to comprehend, under the appellation of Nineveh, the whole district of Central Assyria, in which, in fact, Nineveh was only one of several closely connected cities, and to which it gave its name, according to Mr. Layard's supposition. It is possible, at the same time, that if the writer of Jonah had this meaning, the Greek historian may have intended no more when he assigns to the Assyrian capital such enormous dimensions. It is evident, however, that in speaking of so great a space as enclosed by the same wall, Diodorus must have been grossly mistaken or misinformed. Nothing has been found to support such an assertion,—the detached mounds scattered over the parallelogram-shaped space lying between Koyunjik, Khorsabad, Karamless and Nimroud, not being so situated as to justify the conclusion that they represent what can ever have formed one continuous wall.

The city of Nimroud, though it may not have been the original foundation, was evidently one of the great enclosed and fortified places which may have been sometimes comprehended, with others, under the one name of Nineveh. The space enclosed at Nimroud is only about half of that at Koyun-

jik. The former must, under some monarchs, have been a seat of the government, as it is known to have been a great site of royal palaces. It may have been distinguished, too, in another character, as a sacred city of the Assyrians; the remains of three temples having been found here, viz., the great pyramid, by some regarded as a tomb, and two smaller edifices examined by Mr. Layard. It may thus, in short, have been another city, in some periods of equal rank and importance with the capital; and this circumstance, again, would cause it to be regarded and spoken of by those at a distance, as either the same city with Nineveh, or a portion of it. The existing remains of Nimroud, are, indeed, older than those, of Koyunjik and Nebbi Yunus, i. e. of the proper Nineveh itself. Granting this,— which, however, Capt. Jones seems inclined to dispute,— yet the comparatively modern palaces of those two mounds may have been erected on an ancient site, originally occupied by structures of which nothing now remains, but which were still older than those of Nimroud. This appears to be by far the most probable supposition; for, if any reliance can be placed on the cuneiform decipherments to which we have so often alluded, there can be no question that the palaces at Koyunjik and Nebbi Yunus, as well as at Khorsabad, are less ancient than the north-west and central palaces at Nimroud. If this last city is to receive its own distinctive name, it is, according to Capt. Jones, rightly denominated the Calah of the Old Testament,—an honour which some have given to the ruins of Kalah Shergat, lower down the Tigris on its right bank;—and Nimroud was also the Larissa of Xenophon.

Khorsabad was probably another of the oldest sites of Central Assyria, although the actual remains of the palace of Sargon are of comparatively modern date. It appears to have been strongly fortified, like the capital, and it may have been connected with the latter by means of strong works of defence extending partly along the course of the Khosr-su.

The situation of Nineveh and its adjacent cities was evidently an advantageous one, in several respects. The entire district formed a strong position, capable of being easily defended against an enemy. To the west, or south-west, the Tigris, a broad, and sometimes rapid and deep river, gave ample protection. Northward the Khosr-su, and the works connected with it, extending from the Tigris to Khorsabad, were probably equally effectual. To the north-east, again, the hills before mentioned afforded another natural barrier; with intervals, certainly, through which a hostile force could pass, but which, at the same time, defenders might hold far more easily than they could have done the whole plain, had it been entirely open in that direction. There may have been artificial defences, too, in this part, of which no traces now exist, and which may have given origin or countenance to the exaggerated statements of the ancients respecting the great extent of Nineveh and its surrounding wall. Perhaps it is to such defences that Nahum alludes, when he speaks of "the gates of thy land" (iii, 13). South-eastward and south the Ghazr-su and the Zab completed the circuit of defensive facilities. Both these streams and the valleys, or hollows, through which they run, could probably be turned to good account in resisting the approach of invading armies.

For commercial purposes the position of Nineveh was equally good. Lying on the Tigris, it had easy access to the sea, and also, by means of the large canals, to Babylon. It lay upon one of the great routes by which the peoples of the West and North-west communicated with Babylonia and the surrounding countries — by way of Northern Mesopotamia and the Tigris. Nineveh possessed, in short, the same advantages which make Mosul an important seat of trade at the present day. Accordingly we find the commerce of Asshur distinctly noticed by ancient writers. The prophet Nahum (iii, 16) mentions the merchants of Nineveh as multiplied "above the stars of heaven." Ezekiel, also (xxvii, 23-4), speaks of the mer-

chants of Asshur as trading with Tyre; and the Phœnicians are said by Herodotus to have been at first mere carriers of the wares of Egypt and Assyria.¹ The riches to which Nahum refers (ii, 9) may, therefore, have arisen partly from the commerce and the manufacturing skill of the Assyrians; while, at the same time, the plunder of many conquered states and capitals, and the annual tribute paid by these, would contribute largely to their stores of silver and gold, "the abundance of every precious thing."

The luxury and magnificence ascribed to some of the Assyrian monarchs may also be taken to express, in some measure, the mode of life of the great nobles. We may even infer that the same material abundance, enjoyed with no small amount of licentious indulgence, was shared by many of the traders and artisans of Nineveh; for it is not likely that the various works of Art, which excite the admiration even of modern times, should have been executed by a race of ignorant and ill-treated slaves.²

NOTE ON THE CHRONOLOGY.

In assigning the year 770 B.C. for the commencement of the ten years' reign of Menahem³, it seems desirable to offer a few remarks, under this separate head, on the general question of the Biblical Chronology, in the period between that reign and the close of the Assyrian history. In the present very unsettled state of the subject, the best course is to adhere to the dates

¹ Tuch, de Nino Urbe, pp. 31-4; comp. Kenrick, Phœnicia, pp. 201-4.

² A very interesting account of their arts and manufactures, as well

as of their manners, will be found in Layard, Nin. & Bab., pt. ii, ch. iii, iv, vi.

³ *Supra*, p. 23.

usually given. These we have mostly taken from the tables of Winer, appended to his *Realwörterbuch*, 3rd ed., 1847. For the period now under notice they will be found not to differ greatly from those of the common Chronology, as given in the margin of our English Bible in many editions; and hence Winer may be regarded as virtually a sufficient representative of the common system. It seems highly probable, however, that a better knowledge of the contents of the inscriptions, as well as a due consideration of other data, will materially affect the received Chronology, substituting a new series of dates, for the most part considerably later than those to which we have been hitherto accustomed. Considerable alterations have been proposed, by various recent authorities, English and German. Hitherto, Sir H. Rawlinson, it would appear, has adhered as much as possible to the usual dates. While, however, lately proposing 762 (instead of 770, as formerly) for the first year of Menahem, he yet would place the overthrow of Pul in 747 or 748 B.C.¹ This is done, apparently, from some imaginary necessity of connecting that event with the era of Nabonassar. But if Menahem were tributary not only to Pul, but, as read in the inscription, to Tiglath Pileser in the 8th year of the latter; and if Menahem only reigned ten years from 762, it is plain enough that Pul's overthrow by Tiglath Pileser must have occurred long before 747, and indeed that it cannot have been later than about 760. To avoid this conclusion it is suggested that the name Menahem given in the inscription as that of a king paying tribute to Tiglath Pileser in his 8th year, is an *error*; or, as the same thing was expressed in an earlier communication, "used improperly for Pekah."² This conjecture may, of course, be correct; but it requires verification; and the necessity for it arises, as we have intimated, only from the assumed relationship between the overthrow of Pul and the

¹ Com. to R. As. Soc., in Ath., 1856, p. 174.

² Ath., *ibid.*; also Ath., 1854, p. 343.

era of Nabonassar, a connection for which there is really very little to be urged.

This will appear from the following remarks. We have seen some reason to consider Pul as the husband of the queen Semiramis, who, as Herodotus writes, lived five generations before Nitocris, i. e. before Nebuchadnezzar, for Nitocris is assumed to have been the wife of that Chaldæan monarch, who ascended the throne about 604 b. c. It is hardly necessary to observe that it is not Herodotus that makes the queen named the wife of Nebuchadnezzar; this is the assumption of the chronologist; and it may certainly now be defended on the ground that the great works ascribed by Herodotus to Nitocris are found by remaining inscriptions to have been done by, or in the time of, Nebuchadnezzar. The assumption is, moreover, in harmony with the interpretation of one part of the great inscription in the East India Company's Museum, which is understood to speak of a period during which Nebuchadnezzar was afflicted with insanity! Supposing, then, the date of Nitocris to be rightly given, the space of five generations, or about 150 years, added to 604, or thereabouts, takes us up, as near as need be, to 747. It is evident, however, that the statement of Herodotus is a very vague and inexact one. Five generations may certainly be regarded as equivalent to 150 years, but may as well include twenty years more or less. It cannot be shown that Herodotus was so precisely informed in this case, that we must allow his statement, taken in the strictest sense, to check and limit every other consideration; and, consequently, we may let the joint reign of Pul and Semiramis fall within 780-70, or 770-60, with just as much probability as within 750-40.

The possible connection of Semiramis (of the statue) with Babylon, and with Nabonassar, must next be noticed. We are told by Sir H. Rawlinson that this queen was probably a princess of Medo-Armenian origin. He further suggests that the

attack upon Pul, which deprived him of his throne and life, was brought about at her instigation, supported by her Median kinsmen. There is, we suppose, no great improbability in assuming such treachery on the part of an ancient oriental queen towards her husband. Granting the supposition, then, we have to ask, how did Semiramis become Queen of Babylon, as she is in Herodotus? The question has been answered with some degree of confidence:— “It seems almost certain that, after the expulsion of Phal-lukha and the establishment of a new dynasty at Nineveh under Tiglath Pileser, she descended upon Babylon, either as a refugee or a conqueror, and there instituted the Era of Nabonassar in b. c. 747.”¹ There is, however, no kind of positive *evidence* to this effect, and little probability in the statement as thus made. If she, as Queen of Babylon, “instituted” an era, surely it would have been an *era of Semiramis*, and not of Nabonassar, for she was manifestly, according to Herodotus, a person of great importance. This difficulty is in some degree met by Mr. Bosanquet², who goes so far as to make Semiramis both mother and wife of Nabonassar. Thus it would seem, that, having come to Babylon, she reigned there along with her son, and caused the works to be executed which are attributed to her by Herodotus. But surely we must admit that such conjectures are a little wild, and of no value whatever as historical data. And how is it that Herodotus does not mention Nabonassar, standing as he did in so remarkable a relation to Semiramis?

So far as we have gone, then, we have found nothing to authorise us to connect Semiramis with the era of Nabonassar; nor consequently have we any reason for dating the overthrow of Pul, her Assyrian husband, later than the year before given, viz. 768 (or 760) b. c.

Granting, however, that Semiramis did reside at Babylon after the destruction of Pul, had she no connection, then, with

¹ Rawlinson, Comm. to Athen., 1854, p. 466.

² Roy. As. Soc. Journ., xv, p. 280.

Nabonassar? Instead of unnecessarily making her both wife and mother of that ruler, suppose that we let her sustain only one of these characters, and make her his mother. We may thus easily arrive at the conclusion that after the attack on Nineveh and the fall of Pul, she retired to Babylon — perhaps with her infant son Nabonassar; or perhaps he was not born until a somewhat later date. She may have ruled in Babylon during his infancy and youth, and have been succeeded by him in 747. He, coming after a period of confusion, caused by the overthrow of the old line of Nineveh kings, would give origin to the new era called after him. Thus the period of Semiramis at Babylon, beginning either in 768 or in 760, and ending in 747, is quite as much in agreement with the statement of Herodotus, according to which she lived five generations before Nitocris, as is the supposition that she did not come to Babylon until the last mentioned year.

If any one should ask who was the *father* of Nabonassar, assuming Semiramis to have been his mother, he may evidently take his choice between Pul and the successor of Pul, viz., Tiglath Pileser. If Semiramis conspired with the latter for the destruction of Pul, there is no great difficulty in supposing her to have become the queen of the successful usurper.

It was formerly proposed by Dr. Hincks¹ to shorten the long reign of Manasseh by thirty years, and reduce various dates preceding his reign in the same proportion. Thus, instead of 770 for Menahem, we get 740; for Jotham, 729; Ahaz, 713; Hezekiah, 697; captivity of Israel, 691; and so on. Dr. Hincks must, however, have seen reason to abandon this scheme, as he has more recently proposed to read “the fifth for the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, as the date of Sennacherib’s invasion. The illness of Hezekiah and the embassy of Me-

¹ Khorsabad Insc., pp. 49-55.

rodach Baladan he places eleven years earlier.”¹ It farther appears that he now thinks that Sennacherib commenced his reign in 703.²

Mr. Bosanquet³, again, maintains on several grounds that the year of Sennacherib’s invasion, the fourteenth of Hezekiah, was 689 b. c. His chief argument proceeds on the very allowable assumption that the year of Hezekiah’s sickness (*Is. xxxviii*) was the year of the invasion. On this basis he endeavours to prove that the recession of the shadow on the dial of Ahaz was caused by an eclipse of the sun, which is known to have taken place in 689. Into the details of his able and elaborate argument we cannot here enter. We are not satisfied that the conclusion sought is sufficiently established; but should it eventually be so, very considerable changes, and some confusion, will be the result. How the Biblical Chronology will be affected will appear, in regard to some of the principal dates, from the subjoined tabular statement.

These various proposed changes are mentioned here, simply to show what is the present position of the Chronological question, in the Biblical period of the Assyrian history. The differences existing afford a sufficient reason for adhering, in these pages, to the commonly received system of dates. While regarding the latter as in all probability erroneous, in placing many of the events from ten to twenty years too early, we do not see that it has been made out clearly what we ought to put in its place, as sufficiently satisfying all the conditions of the problem.

The following short table will exhibit, in a compendious form, the dates assumed by some of the writers who have been named, and who appear to have given particular attention to the subject of Chronology. The dates of Winer, which are nearly the same as those usually received, are added for the purpose of comparison :—

¹ *Nin. & Bab.*, p. 145, note.

² *Ib.*, p. 620.

³ *Ub. Sup.*

TABLE OF DATES ACCORDING TO RECENT AUTHORITIES.

Accession of Kings, &c.	Winer.	Bosanquet.	Von Gumpach. ¹	Kruger. ¹
Pul, king of Assyria	770	750-746	748-732	768-752
Menahem - -	770-760	750-740	746-736	757-746
Jotham - -	758	738	733	743-728
Tiglath Pileser -	between 760 and 730	746 (1st yr.)	732	752-725
Ahaz - - -	741	718	718	728-713
Pekah killed -	738	706	705	—
Shalmaneser -	730	702 (after Sargon).	705-691 ²	725-706
Hoshea - - -	729	706	705-697	716-708
Samaria captured -	720	698	696	708
Hezekiah - -	725	702	703	713
Sargon - -	720	721	—	706-2
Sennacherib - -	—	692	691	702-680
14th of Hezekiah -	712	689	689	699
Esarhaddon - -	696	667	674	—
Nineveh conquered	625	585	607	606
Eclipse of Thales -	—	585 ³	610	—

¹ Zeitrechnung der Bab. & Ass.; Kruger, Gesch. d. Assyrier, pp. 173-6.

² Making Shalmaneser and Sargon the same person.

³ Jour. of As. Soc., xv, p. 417; Athenaeum, Aug. 23, 1856.

THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

§ 1. HIS PERSONAL HISTORY AND INFLUENCE.

WE have but little information respecting Isaiah beyond what may be drawn from the allusions, more or less direct and clear, which occur in his own writings. He was the son of a certain Amoz, mentioned ch. i, 1, of whom we have no further knowledge, and whom there is no reason to regard as the same with the prophet Amos, but the contrary, seeing that the names are in the original two different words. He was married, perhaps twice, and mentions his wife and children several times (vii, 3, 14; viii, 3, 4, 18). He connects his family with his prophetic labours by the symbolical names which he gives his children, making them, as he says, “for signs and for wonders in Israel,” serving to express and keep in view some declaration of his own, or to indicate in some way the period within which what he had foretold should take place. That Isaiah was educated in one of the schools of the prophets, although probable enough in itself, supposing those institutions to have continued to his time, is yet a statement for which no certain evidence can be given. Nor has the opinion of some modern writers any better foundation, to the effect that he was the educator of King Hezekiah, and annalist of the kingdom of Judah during his reign.

According to all the indications which his writings afford, Isaiah was a citizen of Judah. The inscription at the head of his prophecies, stating under what reigns he lived, mentions

only sovereigns of that kingdom ; and, while he shows himself possessed of intimate knowledge of its affairs and constantly addresses the people of Jerusalem, he but rarely concerns himself with the northern kingdom. Jerusalem was most probably his residence, since, in those instances in which he appears in connection with any definite locality, it is that capital, or its immediate neighbourhood, in which he does so. We never read of his coming *into* Jerusalem; doubtless because he is already there.—See vii, 3, 10; xxii, 1, seq., 15, seq.; xxxvii, 2, seq.; xxxix, 3. Hence may be explained the fact that Isaiah frequently addresses, not only the entire people of that city, but also distinct classes, with whom he is evidently well acquainted ; for example the mockers, xxviii, 14, 22 ; the rulers, xxx, 12, seq.; the women, xxxii, 9, seq.

Isaiah lived under the four kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. The first of these began to reign about 811 b. c. ; the last died 699 b. c. As, therefore, we have in the four reigns a period of more than a hundred years, it is most likely that the ministry of Isaiah did not commence before the last year of Uzziah. This is, indeed, directly suggested by the sixth chapter of his prophecies, which describes his call to the prophetic office, and speaks of the event as taking place in the year of Uzziah's death. If this be correct, it may be that this chapter should be regarded as the oldest portion of the book. But, on the other hand, it is certainly not necessary to suppose that it was written at the time of the vision which it describes, or even very soon afterwards ; and some reasons may be urged against such a supposition. The tone of the passage (v. 9, seq.) appears to be that of one who has already had a prolonged experience of the obstinacy and wickedness of his people ; and discloses rather the feeling of a man whose long cherished expectation of better days has been thus far disappointed, than the clear and sanguine hope of a young man just entering upon his office. However this may be, the passage seems clearly enough

to point out to us the date of Isaiah's assumption of the prophetic character. Uzziah died in the year 759, according to the common Chronology. His successor Jotham reigned till 743. Ahaz followed, from 743 to 726, and Hezekiah from 726 to about 699. The whole interval is sixty years; and assuming that Isaiah began to prophecy when a young man of from twenty to thirty, he may very well have lived far into the reign of Hezekiah, or even have survived that monarch. If 2 Chron. xxxii, 32, be rightly understood of a biography or history of Hezekiah written by Isaiah, the latter was of course the survivor of the King; but such an interpretation of the passage is not a certain one, as the statement may refer to the present collection of Isaiah's prophecies, or, indeed, only to the historical section incorporated in it, and forming ch. xxxvi–xxxix.¹ An old rabbinical tradition, adopted by many Christian writers, states that Isaiah was put to death by Manasseh, the successor of Hezekiah; but this tradition has been shown by Gesenius² to be unworthy of credit.

Besides the work referred to by the Chronicles, as just mentioned,—if it be, indeed, a separate work,—Isaiah is also stated to have written an account of the reign of Uzziah (2 Chron. xxvi, 22). These two compositions are the only writings attributed to him, besides his prophecies, by any Old Testament authority.

¹ The Chronicler may, however, refer rather to that part of the 2 Kings (ch. xviii; 13–xx, 19) from which his own account is abbreviated. If so, he terms this portion of Kings the “vision of Isaiah,” because it contained that vision; and writes accordingly, “the rest of the acts of Hezekiah and his goodness, behold they are written in the vision of Isaiah, the prophet, the son of Amoz, in the book of the Kings of Judah and Israel”—i.e. in that part of the Kings containing the

vision, viz., ch. xviii, 13, seq. Gesenius inclines to interpret the passage of a separate work of Isaiah relating to Hezekiah, and containing some of his own prophecies—some such work as that which Gad and other prophets are stated to have written respecting the reign of David, and other reigns. (1 Chron. xxix, 29; 2 Chron. ix, 29.) • Ges., Commentar, Einl., § 4. Comp. *infra*, Introduction to Is. xxxvi–vii.

² Comm., Einl., p. 10.

That Isaiah held so influential a position during the reign of Hezekiah, was due not only to the character of the Prophet, but to that also of the King; and it is unnecessary, in order to account for it, to have recourse to the supposition that the former had been the tutor of Hezekiah; much less to assume that he was a member of the royal family of Judah. In confirmation of this remark, and in explanation of the true cause of Isaiah's influence, the substance of Ewald's estimate of the character of Hezekiah may be suitably quoted here:—

"He was," says that author, "thoroughly noble, not unwarlike, nor wanting in courage¹, but yet more willingly devoted to the arts of peace; the good administration of his kingdom, and the promotion of agriculture, being as dear to him as to his great-grandfather Uzziah, while, even in unprosperous times, his treasury was not empty.² His tender and grateful disposition we see most clearly from the song of thanksgiving which he composed.³ Himself, like his great ancestor David, a poet, he honoured also the precious literary remains of the elder times; and, as we are informed, he caused the Proverbs of Solomon to be collected by qualified persons of his court.⁴ Truly devoted to the Jehovah-religion, according to the elevated conception of it formed by great prophets of his time, he not only banished from the land the traces of heathen religions, properly so called, but was also the first to try to extirpate those relics of the old Israelitish religion to which various superstitions had too strongly adhered. . . . It is distinctly related that he removed the brazen serpent⁵, to which worship was still offered, as though Moses had intended it for an idol. This purification of Divine worship certainly began to occupy him soon after his accession.⁶ But it did not at once penetrate to the idolatrous practices of individual households

¹ 2 Kings xx, 20.

⁴ Prov. xxv, 1.

² 2 Chron. xxxii, 27-29; 2 Kings xx, 13, & xviii, 15.

⁵ 2 Kings xviii, 4.

³ Is. xxxviii, 9-20.

⁶ 2 Kings xviii, 22.

throughout the country¹; and thus it was left to Josiah, to renew, and more strictly carry out, what Hezekiah had commenced. . . . It is still more easy to understand that the good king was not immediately able to correct the moral condition of his people; yet he caused Isaiah, and other prophets of that time, constantly to speak freely concerning it, and so in the best manner to contend against it.”²

We need make no attempt here minutely to set forth the spirit of the writings of this great prophet, or to characterise his style. The power of the latter, the variety and richness of its phraseology, the vividness, and often the beauty, of its many images, can hardly fail to be perceived by any one who has the feeling to be drawn to the perusal of this part of the Old Testament. The animating spirit of Isaiah, as indeed of every true prophet, may be described in a single word—it is *religious*. His polities and his morality are founded upon the deepest consciousness of the Divine presence and power in the world; on the conviction that Jehovah is the One God, the immediate Ruler of His people Israel, and the Sovereign Lord of the universe. The Assyrians are but His instruments; the evils which the nation endures are His punishments, sent to humble and reform the sinful people, whom, amidst all their faithlessness and obstinacy, He still loves and wishes to save. Trust in Jehovah, obedience to the moral law as well-pleasing in His sight, are what the prophet constantly seeks to inculcate on his countrymen. Hence the comparative worthlessness of all ceremonies and sacrifices; the impossibility of idol-worship in any form whatever; and the impolicy and uselessness of seeking protection from foreign powers like Assyria and Egypt. A tranquil faith in God, accompanied by a sincere practice of righteousness, especially on the part of the rich and powerful towards the poor and the weak, of rulers and judges towards the people, is the one great condition of the Divine

¹ Is. xxx, 22.

² Ewald, Geschichte d. V., Is. iii, pp. 327-8. (Ed. 1847.)

protection ; and without these no alliance with other nations will be sufficient to save the state from punishment and its miseries. And amidst the worst times the prophet's own faith in Jehovah never failed him. Whatever the distress which might overwhelm the nation, as at the time of the Syro-Israelitish invasion and in that of Sennacherib, he still holds fast his trust that happier times are in store for at least the remnant of his people ; and he is enabled, by the example of his own steadfastness, to impart courage and hope to others around him.

From the same essential source evidently arose, also, those Messianic anticipations the record of which Isaiah, in common with other prophets, has left behind him. On this subject different persons will, unavoidably, form very different conclusions ; but, at all events, it cannot be far wrong to regard the expectation of a Messiah, so often and so clearly expressed by writers of the Old Testament, as a direct and natural growth of their own strong, unwavering faith in Jehovah, in His power, and His mercy towards His people. In times of distress they could not believe that He had forsaken them, or forgotten them. The affliction would only endure for a while, and until it had performed its work of chastisement and purification. Then would their God again lift up the light of His countenance upon His repentant children, and out of the sorrow and darkness bring forth light and prosperity. From the individual prophet, and the few more devout minds, the belief in question appears to have spread in the course of generations, variously modified, throughout all classes ; until, in the definite personal form of later times, it became one of the most decided and influential beliefs of the nation, and was turned, under Divine Providence, to the accomplishment of the most important ends, in immediate connection with the origin and diffusion of Christianity.

And, indeed, Trust in Jehovah, Religious Trust, the deep consciousness of the Divine presence with man upon the earth, will be found to be the very life of Isaiah's and of the other

prophecies ; manifesting itself not only in the Messianic belief, in reference to the future, but in all that the prophet writes respecting the present. For it is surely a great mistake to suppose, as some persons would seem to do, that the prophets were solely, or mainly, occupied with predictions relating to the distant future. On the contrary, as we clearly see in the case of Isaiah, they were intimately concerned with the immediate affairs of their own day, and exercised often a powerful influence upon them. It is hardly possible to read a chapter of their writings, without feeling how much its interpretation is bound up with references to contemporary events, political and social ; as in Joel, for example, we have the famine caused by the locusts ; in Isaiah, the transactions between Ahaz and the Assyrians ; in Nahum, the fall of Nineveh. Hence one great source of difficulty, in the interpretation of the prophecies—their immediate relation to contemporary events and persons of which we often know little or nothing. But while this is so true, it is also equally true that the prophetic utterances are everywhere full of the spirit of religion, the essence of which was, and is, Trust in the everliving God, and the earnest desire to know and do His will. It is this pervading element of so large a part of these venerable writings which gives them their abiding value, notwithstanding much that is obscure in their interpretation, or national and narrow in feeling,—much, in short, that a Christian reader cannot appropriate, or wish to appropriate.

§ 2. CHRONOLOGICAL ARRANGEMENT OF ISAIAH'S PROPHECIES.

We have already spoken of the political circumstances of the two reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah, to which the prophetic career of Isaiah, as known to us, almost entirely belongs. (Gen. Introd. §§ 2-4.) It will here be sufficient, therefore, to notice that it appears to have been the invasion of Judah, by the kings of Syria and Israel, which first brought him prominently forward. Under

the influence, most probably, of Egypt, the two kings sought, as we may remember, to conquer Judah and to place a nominee of their own on the throne at Jerusalem. They deemed it necessary, we may infer, that the whole West of Asia should present a united front to the expected onslaught of the Assyrians. Hence also the Moabites, and other neighbouring tribes, as we gather from detached prophecies of Isaiah (ch. xv, xvi ; xxi, 11-17), were included in the league, making the position of Ahaz one of great and imminent danger. This view of the state of affairs finds confirmation in some obscure allusions in Isaiah's contemporary, Hosea, to alliances with Egypt and Assyria : — e.g., Hos. vii, 11 ; ix, 3 ; xi, 5-11 ; xii, 1. There are also one or two expressions to the same effect in the older portion of the book of Zechariah, viz., x, 9, seq. (Comp. 2 Kings xvii, 4.)

In the face of this powerful combination against his own little state, the prophet manifested a high and trustful spirit. His great aim was to inspire his people and their rulers with confidence ; to lead them quietly to rely on the Divine protection, and, without themselves resorting to the perilous expedient of calling in the aid of Assyria, to leave it to the course of events to bring that power into the field to recover its lost dominion over the revolted kings, and so ensure the deliverance of Judah from their joint attack.

Hostilities had been commenced by Syria and Israel against Judah before the end of Jotham's reign (2 Kings xv, 37), when perhaps the latter no longer ruled with the vigour and success of his earlier years. (2 Chron. xxvii ; 2 Kings xv, 32, seq.) It was not, however, until the accession of his son Ahaz that the two powers proceeded so far in their designs as to threaten the capture of Jerusalem itself. The warnings and advice of Isaiah at this period were disregarded. Ahaz obtained the protection he asked for, and probably continued to enjoy it during the remainder of his reign.

The Syro-Israelitish invasion may most suitably be referred

to the first year of Ahaz, about 743–2 B.C. The chief reason for this is that the allied kings, having already commenced hostilities before the death of Jotham, would be likely to take advantage of the opportunity, afforded by the accession of a young and inexperienced sovereign, to prosecute their attempt upon his kingdom. It is the more likely that this would be the case, if, as seems probable from an expression of Isaiah (viii, 6), enemies of Ahaz and friends of the invading armies were not wanting among his own people.

With the events of the period thus hastily passed through, we have next to endeavour to connect Isaiah's earlier prophecies, in their chronological order. We have already seen that there is but one chapter (vi), the substance of which can be referred to so early a date as the last year of Uzziah. The reign of his successor, Jotham, distinguished on the whole as it was by prosperity and obedience to the law, probably presented but few occasions of prophetic warning or exhortation. At least the compositions of his time have not come down to us, with the exception of a few pieces, which appear to belong to the closing year or two of his reign. The earliest of these is the passage found in xvii, 1–11, in which the prophet announces the overthrow of Syria and Israel, doubtless anticipating this result both as the punishment of the apostacy of Israel, and as the immediate issue of the approaching attack of the Assyrians. The prophecy may have been fulfilled in the second invasion of Tiglath Pileser (2 Kings xvi). If Isaiah's expectation was that the invading Assyrian army, having subdued Israel and Syria, would pass through the country eastward of the Jordan, we may refer to the same period, chapters xv and xvi, and perhaps the fragmentary prophecies contained in ch. xxi, 11–17. If the Moabites and other tribes took part with the Syrians and Israelites in their defiance of Assyria, the vengeance of the latter power would undoubtedly fall upon them, as foretold in the three chapters just referred to.

To the same early period probably belongs the second section of Isaiah, comprising chapters ii, iii, and iv. This prophecy may have been occasioned by the same threatened attack of the two northern kings, and the accompanying anticipation of great calamities to Judah, the sure consequence, to the prophet's mind, of the wickedness and idolatry beginning to prevail about the end of Jotham's reign. On the date of these chapters, however, authorities are divided ; Gesenius, followed by Ewald, among others, attributing them to the commencement of the reign of Ahaz ; while Knobel, De Wette, and some earlier writers, among whom is Bp. Lowth, regard the older date as the best supported. The difference is not great, and, as the passage in question is not included within the present volume, it is unnecessary to dwell further upon the point.

The portions of Isaiah which have just been mentioned are all that can with any confidence be thought to have been written before the time of Ahaz. With him, so far as we can now ascertain, commences the period of Isaiah's greatest prophetic activity.

The beginning of the reign of this king was marked, as we have said, by the actual execution of the design of the confederate powers. Their forces invaded Judah, and advanced to besiege Jerusalem. To this period we have assigned the first section (ch. v) of Isaiah, included in these pages. The prophet in this passage foresees the devastation of Judah, and announces that Jehovah has permitted these sufferings in order to punish the manifold wickedness of His people. Isaiah did not, however, share the fears of Ahaz and his court that the invaders would succeed in their object. On the contrary, in the following section (ch. vii), he foretells the discomfiture of the undertaking, doubtless, by his clear prophetic insight, perceiving the actual posture of affairs and the results of the complication far better than the terrified monarch and his advisers. He bids Ahaz, therefore, take courage, and gives him a sign

by which he may know that the land will be delivered within a short definite period. Yet Isaiah plainly foresees the desolation that will be caused by the ensuing operations, and the slaughter and captivity of many of his countrymen. And these results he predicts both in the fifth and in the seventh chapters, at the close of the former of which he distinctly threatens the people with additional sufferings, at the hands of the Assyrians themselves. It follows from what we have said that the two sections, viz., ch. v and vii, belong to the same period, and relate to the calamities caused by the Syro-Israelitish army about the year 743-2 B.C., followed by the further misfortunes consequent on the operations of the Assyrians, for the recovery of their lost dominion and the deliverance of Judah.

We shall not err greatly if we interpret our next section (ch. viii-ix, 6) as relating generally to the same course of events. It would seem to be later by a year or two than the sections previously noticed ; and thus it happens that the Assyrians are no longer spoken of with the same apprehension as before. Yet the prophet, in this section also, evidently foresees a period of great distress for his country (viii, 21-2) ; while, nevertheless, he concludes his prophecy with the anticipation of more prosperous and happy times, in the celebrated Messianic passage near the commencement of ch. ix.

The advance of the Assyrians against the allied kings, probably hastened by the application of Ahaz for help, would be necessarily followed by the precipitate retreat of the confederates into their own territories. The invaders had, however, already inflicted great injury upon the subjects of Ahaz. The condition to which they had reduced the country probably gave occasion to Isaiah to address to rulers and people one of the noblest of his prophecies — that earnest expostulation and call to repentance which forms his first chapter, and in which he gives us so affecting a picture of the stricken and desolate condition of Jerusalem and the neighbouring districts. This chapter, therefore, and the retreat of the Syro-Israelitish army

may be ascribed to the year 740, which was the third of Ahaz, and within the period assigned by the prophet for the promised deliverance.

It is no part of our present purpose to attempt a chronological arrangement of all Isaiah's prophecies; but to notice the dates of those only which have been translated in the following pages. Yet we may mention, in passing, that the remainder of ch. ix, with part of ch. x (1-4), as well as a portion of ch. xiv (29-32)¹, addressed to the Philistines, very probably refers to the anticipated prosecution by the Assyrians, at this period, of their successes over the enemies of Judah. The latter kingdom was now, however, to enjoy repose under its powerful protectors. This state of things continued, we may conclude, for the rest of the reign of Ahaz, who lived about twelve or thirteen years after his submission to Assyria. We know little of the condition of the nation during this time, as nothing that throws light upon it has come down to us from the pen of Isaiah or any other prophet.

Hezekiah succeeded to the throne on the death of his father, about 726. With him we commence a period of comparative prosperity for Judah, and one of great importance in the life of the Hebrew prophet. In the earlier years of his reign the new King appears to have submitted to the tribute-payments commenced by Ahaz. Meantime, the course of events in the neighbouring kingdom of Israel had been different, and their issue was a lamentable one for the population. Of the events referred to, resulting in the captivity of the Ten Tribes, we have already spoken, in connection with the Assyrian history (Gen. Introd. § 3). To this period most probably belong the two chapters xxiii and xxviii; in the latter of which the conquest of the Israelitish capital is vividly foretold by the prophet; who, at the same time, threatens the rulers of his own

¹ If the date of this fragment be rightly assigned, v. 28, which attributes it to the year of the death of

Ahaz, must be incorrect. The words may have proceeded from the collector of the prophecies of Isaiah.

nation with a similar fate, as the punishment of their iniquities. The fulfilment of the prediction, in its reference to Samaria, took place about 721 B.C.; and its composition may be assigned to a somewhat earlier date.

About the same period, or at least not long after the downfall of Samaria, must have been composed the large section formed by ch. x, 5-xii, 6; of which we may consider the fragment ch. xiv, 24-27, as a detached portion. The prophet would appear to have expected an immediate advance of the Assyrian army upon Jerusalem (x, 28-32). It is probable, however, that the position of the new monarch Sargon rendered such a step impracticable. (Gen. Introd. § 3.) The section now under notice consists, in great part, of a denunciation of Assyrian arrogance, followed by an announcement of the happier times still reserved for the Hebrew people. Throughout the passage, Isaiah expresses unbounded confidence in the ultimate deliverance of "the remnant of Israel." The coming period of humiliation and suffering will prepare them for the reign of peace under the Branch from the root of Jesse; and in the midst of the actual dangers of their position, almost in the very presence of the victorious enemy who has just destroyed the capital and kingdom of their neighbours, the fulness of his trust overflows in the beautiful song of praise which concludes the prophecy.

After the accession of Sargon and the capture of Samaria, the Assyrians pursued their plans in reference to Egypt and Ethiopia. In ch. xix-xx, the prophet evidently has their contemplated invasion of those countries in his view. The difference of tone observable in these chapters, as compared with the two preceding sections, renders it probable that their composition should be referred to a point of time in the reign of Sargon, when it had become clear that Judah was, for the present at least, to be left uninjured, and was even to join the Assyrians in their invasion of Egypt. Accordingly, to these chapters we may assign the date 719-20. No other prophecy

has come down to us from this period — the interval between the destruction of the kingdom of Samaria and the invasion of Judah by Sennacherib.

Of the events leading to and connected with this great invasion we have sufficiently spoken in the General Introduction (§ 4), and need not relate them again in this place. The earliest prophecy belonging to the period is probably ch. xxix ; in which Isaiah anticipates a siege of Jerusalem, and also its deliverance by the destruction of the invading army. The second passage in the order of time, referring to the same events, is the long section formed by ch. xxx, xxxi, xxxii ; in the course of which the prophet points out the uselessness of the alliance with Egypt, predicts the calamities which the Assyrian invasion will bring upon the country, and at the same time expresses his continued trust in the Divine protection. Most probably in close connection with this Egyptian alliance should be taken the obscure allusion, in ch. xviii, to ambassadors of the Ethiopians. Negotiations appear to have taken place between the Ethiopian king Tirhaka and Hezekiah, for the purpose of forming a defensive league against the expected attack of Sennacherib (Is. xxxvii, 9). Ambassadors of the Ethiopians had, therefore, come to Jerusalem, and to them Isaiah announces, so far as we can now understand the passage, the approaching and speedy destruction of the Assyrian hosts (ch. xvii, 12–xviii, 7).

Meantime the advance of the great army continued, and a siege of Jerusalem was apparently near at hand. We see this in ch. xxii, 1–14 ; but, a little later, ch. xxxiii predicts again the overthrow of the invaders ; at the same time describing in strong terms the distress to which the Jewish people and their country had been reduced, by the presence of the hostile forces. The apprehended siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib — if such were indeed Isaiah's anticipation — did not take place although it appears that a portion of the Assyrian army must have advanced to the very walls of that city. Sennacherib

pursued his march towards Egypt ; his forces were destroyed ; and the remaining years of Hezekiah were spent without any apprehension of danger from the same quarter. The two chapters, xxxvi and xxxvii, in which the invasion and the defeat of Sennacherib's designs are related, form an historical supplement to the first half of the book of Isaiah. There is reason to believe that those two chapters are not from his own hand ; but they nevertheless throw considerable light on several sections of his Assyrian prophecies.

In the foregoing sketch we have brought together, in consecutive order, the positive results arrived at in the introductory notes attached to each of the translated sections. For the fuller details of the evidence from which these conclusions are drawn, the reader will of course turn to the introductory notes themselves. The following list will show the chapters to which a chronological position has been assigned. It will also give a connected view of the whole series of sections, in the probable order of their composition, or, at least, of the events to which they may be referred.

Portions of Isaiah included in the present work in the probable order of their composition.

- Ch. v. Beginning of the reign of Ahaz, 743 B. C.
- „ vii. The same.
- „ viii–ix, 6. A year or two later.
- „ xxiii. During the siege of Samaria, 723-21.
- „ xxviii. The same.
- „ x, 5–xii, 6. } Soon after the siege.
- „ xiv, 24–27. }
- „ xix. } About 719-20.
- „ xx. }
- „ xxix. 714, early in the year.
- „ xxx–xxxii. 714, later.
- „ xvii, 12–xviii, 7. }
- „ xxii, 1–14. }
- „ xxxiii. }
- „ xxxvi–xxxvii. }

Besides the sections just enumerated, we have also, in the foregoing remarks, noticed and assigned a date to the following passages :—

- Ch. i. About 740 B.C.
„ ii-iv. Close of the reign of Jotham, 743.
„ vi. Last year of Uzziah, 759, or later.
„ ix, 7-x, 4. 740.
„ xiv, 29-32. „
„ xv, xvi. End of Jotham's reign.
„ xvii, 1-11. „ „ „
„ xxi, 11-17. „ „ „

It may here be observed that the entire book of Isaiah is divisible into two principal parts ; (1) ch. i-xxxix ; (2) xl-lxvi. The second of these parts relates wholly to the time of the Babylonian captivity, between one and two hundred years after the destruction of Sennacherib's army ; and with this we have not here any further to concern ourselves. Of the thirty-nine chapters forming the first division, it will be found that the larger half is comprised within these pages, as relating more or less directly to the Assyrians. The list last given includes other chapters of the same division, with their probable dates — those chapters, that is, which have been only incidentally mentioned. The remainder of the first part of Isaiah (viz. ch. xiii-xiv, 23 ; xxi, 1-10 ; xxii, 15-25 ; xxiv-xxvii ; xxxiv, xxxv ; xxxviii, xxxix) does not contain matter such as to bring it within the plan of this work. It may also be observed that among these excluded sections will be found all the passages belonging to the first division of the book which can with any great probability be shown *not* to have proceeded from the pen of Isaiah.

§ 3. CHAP. V.

Prophecy of the Assyrian invasion of Judah, introduced by a denunciation of the manifold wickedness which has occasioned this severe punishment.

ACCORDING to the chronological scheme proposed in the last section, this prophecy must be referred to the impending Syro-Israelitish invasion of Judah, in the first year of Ahaz, 743 b. c. Near the close of the chapter, Isaiah speaks distinctly of the approach of the Assyrians, and threatens Judah with calamitous consequences from their visit. He can hardly, therefore, have regarded them as coming in the character of *friends*; and hence the passage must be referred to a date somewhat previous to the treaty between Ahaz and Tiglath Pileser; or, at all events, previous to Isaiah's knowledge of its existence. He probably foresees that the Assyrian power will necessarily be brought into the field, both to recover its lost dominion over the two confederate kings, and to maintain its predominance over the rival power of Egypt. The scene of the conflict will be the central territory of Judah, lying as it does between the hostile nations; and hence the terrible devastation and distress within his own land which Isaiah anticipates (vv. 29-30). Previously to this approach of the Assyrians, however, the country is to be laid waste by other enemies; and these can only be the invading armies of the two kings of Israel and Syria. The consequences are clearly represented by the prophet as the appointed punishment of the wickedness in high places which he denounces in the earlier part of the

chapter. The picture drawn is a fearful one; presenting, as its leading features, avarice, oppression of the poor, habitual drunkenness, neglect of the prophetic warnings, obstinate self-confidence, and corruption in the administration of justice. It is only by the most severe suffering that the nation is to be brought back to a right sense of its moral and religious duties; and this process of purification Jehovah has prepared for his people by the hands of their approaching enemies. The bearing of the parable with which the chapter opens upon this position of affairs will be sufficiently plain, without any special exposition. Its application to Judah is, evidently, the same as that of the very similar allegory contained in the latter part of Ps. lxxx.

1. **N**OW let me sing to my beloved,
A song of my beloved touching his vineyard.
A vineyard had my beloved on a fruitful hill,
2. And he digged it, and cleared it of stones,
And planted it with the choicest-vine;
He built a tower in the midst of it,
And also hewed out a winepress within it;

1. *my beloved*: or friend. It is not necessary to find a special application for every object or action introduced in the parable; yet it seems clear that Jehovah must throughout be conceived of as the possessor of the vineyard. Comp. vv. 6-7. Similar parables, it is hardly necessary to remind the reader, are found in the New Testament, *e.g.* Matt. 20, 1;

21, 33. — *fruitful hill*: or, *on the top of a fruitful hill*; literally, *on the horn of*; suggesting *isolation* and *security*, as well as exposure to the sun and consequent fertility.

2. *a tower*: for the watchers, to guard against depredation by man or beast; or for the use of the owner. *winepress*: the word includes here the *winevat*—both hewn, for coolness

And he looked that it should bring forth grapes,
But it brought forth sour-grapes.

3. And now, inhabitant of Jerusalem and man of Judah,
Judge, I pray you, between me and my vineyard.
4. What is there to do more for my vineyard, that I have not done
in it ?

Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes,
Did it bring forth sour-grapes ?

5. And now, therefore, let me make known to you
What I am about to do to my vineyard—
To take away its hedge, that it may be devoured,
To overthrow its wall, that it may be trodden down ;

6. Thus will I lay it waste ;
It shall not be pruned, nor weeded,
And shall grow up into thorns and briars ;
I will also give charge to the clouds,
That they rain no rain upon it.

7. For the vineyard of Jehovah of Hosts is the house of Israel,
And the man of Judah the plant of his delight ;

out of the rocky substratum of the vineyard — *sour-grapes* : the word expresses *badness of smell*, then of disposition, or nature, in general. The vineyard, therefore, produced bad, foetid fruit, instead of choice grapes, a conception strongly descriptive of the corrupt state of the nation.

3. Isaiah speaks in the character of the owner, and thus, by appealing to his people, makes them pass sentence on themselves. So Matt. 21, 41.

4-5. The transition to the announcement of condemnation and punishment is made naturally and with skill ; nothing has been left undone for the vineyard, and it only remains now to destroy so worthless a possession. — *hedge—wall* : that it had *both* is proof of the great care

of its owner ; but they shall now be removed, so that it may be trampled down by wild animals and passers by. Comp. Ps. 80, 12-13.

6. *give charge* : Jehovah is here more directly suggested as the owner, for He alone can give such a command. The parabolical form is now lightly dropped, having served its purpose of introducing the main object of the prophecy, which is brought out with great directness and power in the next verse.

7. *For* : the application of the parable, and the ground of the preceding declaration : I will give charge, . . . for I speak in the name of *Jehovah*, who will do so ; seeing that by the vineyard I mean the house of Israel, and Jehovah by its owner, my friend. The paronomasia of the original in this verse it

And he looked for justice, but behold bloodshed !
For righteousness, but behold a cry !

8. Woe unto them that add house to house,
Who join field to field,
Until there be no place,
And ye dwell alone in the midst of the land !
9. In mine ears hath Jehovah of Hosts declared it,
Assuredly many houses shall be a desolation,
Great and goodly *houses* without inhabitant ;
10. For ten acres of vineyard shall yield *only* one bath,
And a homer of seed an ephah.

is hardly possible to represent in English :—

“ He looked for *Mishpat*, but
behold *Mispach* !
For *Tsedqa*, but behold *Tse-
aqa* ! ”

The German has greater power of expression in such cases. Thus Ewald renders,— “ Und er wartete auf Recht — doch sich da alles schlecht, auf Gerechtigkeit — doch sich da Gransamkeit : ” and Knobel, — “ er hoffte auf gerechtes Wort, und siehe blutige Mord, auf Milde und siehe Unbilde ; ” neither, however, very exactly. This play upon words, which is not uncommon in Isaiah, can rarely be well imitated in an English version.

8-23. The prophet now, under six different heads, or forms, denounces woe upon the iniquity to which he has referred ; having probably in his mind, throughout, the more wealthy and ruling class of his countrymen.

8. The *first* woe is against the avaricious, who unjustly appropriate the property of others, leaving *no*

place in the land for any but themselves.—*ye* : so the Heb.

9. They are threatened with a deportation which will leave their houses and lands desolate. This rapacity was directly contrary to the spirit of the Law, which sought to prevent the accumulation of property in the hands of a few. Lev. 25, 8, seq. — *Hosts* : a strongly monotheistic expression, common in Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and one or two of the minor prophets ; implying the supremacy of Jehovah over the armies of men, the heavenly bodies, and all celestial beings ; and thus excluding the acknowledgment of either of the latter as objects of worship.

10. *ten acres* : literally *ten yokes*, i. e. ten times as much land as a pair of oxen could plough in a day. The land shall become so unproductive that ten acres shall produce only *one bath* of wine, and a *homer of seed* yield only a tenth of its own quantity—the homer being ten times the *ephah*. The bath and the ephah were each about eight or nine of our gallons.

11. Woe unto them that rise early in the morning to pursue strong-drink,
 Continuing late in the night, *till* wine inflame them,
12. And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and the flute, and wine,
 are in their feasts,
 But the deed of Jehovah they regard not,
 And the work of his hands they do not see !
13. Therefore my people goeth into captivity for want of knowledge,
 Their honourable-ones are famished,
 And their multitude parched with thirst ;
14. Therefore doth the grave enlarge herself,
 And open her mouth without measure ;
 And their glory shall descend into it,
 Their multitude, and their tumult, and he that rejoiceth.
15. Then shall every man be brought low and humbled,
 And the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled.
16. But Jehovah of Hosts shall be exalted by judgment,
 And the holy God show himself holy by righteousness.

11. The *second woe*, against drunken revellers : absorbed in their own self-indulgence, they regard not the warning voice of the prophet. — *rise early*: to drink, or even to eat, early, was a mark of intemperance. Eccles. 10, 16-17; Acts 2, 15.

12. The Hebrews, like other ancient nations, had music and singing at their banquets. Comp. Is. 24, 8-9. So, probably, Is. 14, 11; Amos 6, 5-6. — *deed of Jehovah*: i.e. the invasion of the land, with its consequences, by the Syrians and Israelites, to which this part of the prophecy refers. Further punishment by the Assyrian invasion is not mentioned before v. 26.

13. *want of knowledge*: not seeing that their punishment is Jehovah's work on account of their sins, nor seeking by repentance to avert it from

them. Therefore shall nobles and people be thoroughly roused by hunger and thirst when driven, as captives, into a distant land. These and other evils of deportation are frequently alluded to ; Is. 48, 21; 49, 10; Ps. 107, 5 — terrible contrast to the luxurious feasting previously mentioned ! On the sufferings of captives, comp. Layard, Nin. Bab. p. 440, & Gen. Introd. § 1.

14. They shall perish, falling into the open jaws of the grave. — *he that rejoiceth*: the drunken reveller in Jernusalem.

15. *every man*: the repetition in the original expressed by the Common version merely strengthens and generalises the assertion.

16. By his just punishments of the wicked shall Jehovah manifest his holiness.

17. Then sheep shall feed as in their own pasture,
And the deserted-places of the rich strangers shall devour.
18. Woe unto them that draw down punishment with cords of wickedness,
And as with the ropes of a waggon the penalty-of-sin !
19. Who say, Let him speed, let him hasten his work, that we may see it,
And let the counsel of the Holy-One of Israel draw near and come, that we may know it.
20. Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil,
That put darkness for light, and light for darkness,
That put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter !
21. Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes
And prudent in their own sight !
22. Woe unto them that are valiant to drink wine,
And men of strength to mingle strong-drink !

17. The prophet here recurs to the thought expressed in a different form in vv. 8-9; on the deserted lands of the rich, who have gone into captivity, the *sheep*, even of *strangers*, shall feed — an allusion, it may be, to nomade tribes with their flocks, who sometimes wandered into the country. Gesenius refers to the Rechabites of Jerem. 35, and the Kenites, Judges 1, 16, as illustrative instances.

18. The *third* woe: obstinate perseverance in sin seems to be meant by these figurative expressions, as well as defiance of the divine warnings:— Woe to them that thus with all their might persist in drawing destruction upon themselves! — *punishment*: literally, *iniquity*; but this often stands for

its consequence. So with the word *sin*, in the next line.

20. The *fourth*, against those whose moral perception is darkened and perverted, by their own evil conduct; or who sophistically seek to defend as right what they know to be wrong, and *vice versa*.

21. The *fifth*, against the so-called *wise*, who in their self-confidence think they understand the state of affairs better than the prophet, and reject his warnings. Comp. 29, 14-15; 28, 9.

22. The *sixth* woe, against corrupt judges, who, brave at least to drink wine, if not to defend their country, obtain the means of self-indulgence by taking bribes. — *mingle*: not with *water*, but with *spices*, to improve the strength and

23. Who absolve the guilty for a gift,
And take away the righteousness of the righteous from him.
24. Wherefore, as a tongue of fire devoureth stubble,
And as withered-grass in the flame vanisheth away,
So shall their root be like rottenness,
And their blossom shall ascend like dust;
Because they have rejected the law of Jehovah of Hosts,
And despised the word of the Holy-One of Israel.
25. Therefore is the anger of Jehovah kindled against his people,
He shall stretch forth his hand against them and smite them,
And the mountains shall tremble,
And their corpses shall be as dirt in the streets.
With all this his anger is not turned away,
But his hand is stretched out still;
26. And he lifteth up a standard to the nations afar,
He histeth them from the end of the earth,
And behold with speed, quickly, shall they come.
27. None shall be weary nor stumble among them,
They shall not slumber nor sleep,

flavour of the wine. Comp. Song of Sol. 8, 2.

24. This and the next verse probably refer to the miseries caused by the Syro-Israelitish invasion, which Isaiah has in view, as the first and most imminent medium of punishment. The unjust and dissolute rulers shall be destroyed, like *stubble* burnt on the field for manure or to clear the ground; or shall be dissipated like the *dust* of a rotten tree.—*root*: *blossom*: *i. e.* entirely; or, as we say, “root and branch.” The images express the ease and rapidity of the destruction.

25. The advent of Jehovah is to be marked by terrible natural phenomena. So usually; comp. 13, 13; 24, 19, seq.; Nah. 1, 3-5.—*corpses*: slain by the invading armies, and left unburied. For the

slaughter attending this invasion, see 2 Chron. 28, 5-8. There is no evidence that Isaiah refers here to an earthquake which took place many years before in the time of Uzziah; comp. Amos 1, 1.—*with all this*: yet even this is not punishment enough; Jehovah will bring upon them a still more fearful enemy, even the Assyrian army!

26. At the given signal they shall come eagerly from *the end of the earth*, the distant east, rapid and indefatigable.—*nations*: the different subject races, forming the Assyrian empire and contributing men to its armies; comp. 22, 6.—*histeth*: see note on 7, 18. So Bp. Lowth.

27. Requiring no rest, ever girded for the march; so stoutly clad that they shall not be impeded by even

- Neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed,
Nor the latchet of their sandals be broken ;
 28. Whose arrows are sharpened, and all their bows bent,
The hoofs of their horses are accounted like rock,
And their chariot-wheels like the whirlwind ;
 29. Their roaring is like that of the lion,
And they shall roar like young-lions ;
They shall rage and seize the prey,
And carry it off, and none shall deliver it ;
 30. They shall rage over it in that day like the raging of the sea ;
And if one looketh upon the land, behold darkness of distress,
And the sun shall be darkened in its clouds.

a strap of their sandals breaking
on the way.

28. *rock* : hard-hoofed horses, able to bear the long march. So Homer speaks of *iron-footed*, and of *strong-hoofed* horses. (Lowth, *in loc.*) In the absence of shoes it was a valuable quality.

The whole description is brief, but extremely graphic, and quite in harmony with what we know from other sources of the equipment of the Assyrian troops. Mr. Layard gives some plates which well illustrate the prophet's allusions. See, in particular, *Nin. & Rem.*, ii, pp. 350, 357, 393, 396, where we have both horsemen and chariots, the bent bow and the girdle of the warrior; and at p. 324 the sandal. Some of the slabs in the British Museum afford also excellent illustration of such passages. The Assyrian hosts contained a large proportion of cavalry and of chariots, which are often referred to; *e.g.*, Is. 22, 6-7; 36, 8; Ezek. 23, 6. That the Assyrians are not here mentioned by name is suggestive of the comparatively

early date of the prophecy. They are described only in general terms, as a distant people, as yet unfamiliar, or unseen, but, therefore, the more to be feared. This corresponds well with the date we have assigned to the passage — the first year of Ahaz; if it do not indicate a still earlier composition.

29. The tumult and cries of battle are referred to.

30. The desolation and suffering necessarily caused by the presence of hostile armies are meant. Whether the Assyrians should come in the first instance as protectors of Jndah, or as invaders, seeking to recover their power over their revolted tributaries and resist the encroachments of Egypt, the devastation of the land might equally be foreseen. Isaiah may have anticipated also that they would seize the opportunity to take possession of the country. — *its clouds* : those of the land; the very light of the sun shall be darkened amidst the distress. Comp. note on v. 25.

§ 4. CHAP. VII.

Prophecy of the Deliverance of Jerusalem from the Syro-Israelitish attack, and of the invasion of Judah by the Assyrians and Egyptians.

THE historical passage which throws light on this section, as on the last, is 2 Kings xv, 37–xvi, 9. (Comp. 2 Chron. xxviii). It has been thought that two campaigns of the confederate kings against Judah must have taken place, in the first of which the destruction of the army of Ahaz, as stated in the Chronicles, may have occurred, and in the second the attempt to take Jerusalem and dethrone that monarch. The latter would, on this supposition, be the occasion to which this prophecy refers. Well might the young King tremble at the approach of the powerful enemies who had already so grievously defeated and slaughtered his subjects! There is no absolute necessity, however, to suppose that two campaigns took place; and, indeed, the narrative, both of the Kings and of Isaiah, is opposed to such a view. It is more easy to accept, without amplification, the simple statements of these two books, whatever difficulty there may be in reconciling with them the narrative of the Chronicles, in which the numbers slain and captured are probably overstated. In ancient times large numbers were but seldom accurately counted, and in the statement of them a tendency to exaggeration is constantly observable. There can be no doubt that some errors of this kind, arising from various imaginable causes, have crept into the Biblical accounts.

Why the dethronement of Ahaz should have been considered necessary by the two confederates, or why he should not have joined them in their league, we have no means of explaining. Possibly the ground of this attack upon him lay in the knowledge that the Jewish King and his court were already inclined towards the Assyrians, and more likely to call in their aid than to accept the alliance of their northern neighbours. This political tendency of Judah, again, may have been but the expression of the old enmity existing between that kingdom and Israel since the time of their separation, more than 200 years before (2 Kings xii). There is no clear reference, however, in the prophecy before us, to Ahaz's application to the Assyrians for assistance. Moreover, the decided tone of apprehension in which their approach is still spoken of would seem to prove that the prophet did not regard them, even yet, any more than in the fifth chapter, as coming to *defend* Ahaz. Hence the probability that the application for assistance had not yet been made ; or, if made, that it was not yet known to Isaiah. Whatever the truth on this point may be, we see Ahaz in the greatest terror, and the prophet vainly endeavouring to reassure him, and bring him to rely on the protection of the God of his fathers. It is only on the failure of his endeavours that he proceeds to speak of the consequences of the King's want of faith and firmness, in the invasion of his kingdom by the rival powers of Egypt and Assyria. Hence Isaiah's object may really have been to deter him from calling in the aid of the latter ; but this certainly does not clearly appear from this passage, although it may be inferred from the general feeling of Isaiah in reference to foreign assistance. He, doubtless, anticipated, as the result of the existing state of affairs, that the country would become the battle-field between the two greater nations, and that many of his countrymen would be slain or carried away, and the land left desolate.

1. **A**ND it came to pass in the days of Ahaz, son of Jotham, son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, son of Remaliah, king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem,
2. to war against it, but could not prevail against it. And it was told to the house of David, saying, Syria is encamped upon Ephraim: and his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the forest are moved before the wind.
3. Then said Jehovah unto Isaiah, Go forth, now, to meet Ahaz, thou and Shear-jashub thy son, to the end of the conduit of the

1. *could not prevail*: In addition to the great battle mentioned 2 Chron. 28, a siege of Jerusalem would appear actually to have taken place; *i.e.* the two armies came up to that city and tried to subdue it (2 Kings 16, 5); but before they had time to reduce it, the approach of the Assyrian army to Damascus (2 Kings 16, 9) made it necessary for them to return to defend their own dominions. The historical portion of this chapter must have been written after the failure of the attempt, as indeed may the entire chapter; in which case it should be considered the *record* of the spoken prophecy. And so it may have been in some other instances.

2. *encamped upon*: the Syrian army is now in the territory of *Ephraim*, or Israel; that kingdom being often so called, after the name of one of its principal tribes. Syria and Israel were uniting their forces.

— *house of David*: this expression reminds us of the power of that warlike king, who had ruled over the whole Jewish people, had conquered the Syrians and occupied

their capital. To his descendant Ahaz were left only two of the twelve tribes, while the other ten were now warring against him, in league with a heathen enemy.

3. *go forth*: Isaiah, living in the city, is told to go out into some spot in the neighbourhood, where he would find the king superintending the works for the defence. The latter was engaged about the water-supply, either to secure it to Jerusalem during the coming siege, or to cut it off from the invading armies. Something of the same kind took place on the approach of Sennacherib (22, 9). It has always been difficult for a besieging army to provide itself with water around Jerusalem. Robinson, Biblical Researches, i, p. 479.—*Shear-jashub*: literally, *a remnant shall return*: a name significant of Isaiah's belief in the ultimate safety and return to Jehovah of a portion of his people. This son is thus a standing memento of the prophet's faith and a perpetual prophecy to all who are aware of his name. The same is the intention of the name *Immanuel* (v. 14),

4. upper pool, to the highway of the fuller's field ; and say unto him,

Take heed and be quiet,

Fear not, nor let thy heart become faint,

By reason of the two tails of these smoking firebrands,

For the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria, and the son of Remaliah.

5. Because that Syria hath devised evil against thee,

Ephraim and the son of Remaliah, saying,

6. Let us go up against Judah and besiege it,

And force our way into it,

And set as king in the midst of it the son of Tabeal ;

7. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah,

It shall not stand, nor come to pass.

8. For the head of Syria is Damascus,

And the head of Damascus Rezin,

(And within sixty and five years shall Ephraim be destroyed
that it be not a people,)

and of *Maher-shalul-hash-baz* (8, 1). — *conduit*: we cannot be certain of the place. Dr. Robinson thinks that the *upper pool* is the large reservoir lying westward of Jerusalem and about 700 yards from the Jaffa gate. The end of the conduit must have been on the same side of the city. (Bib. Res. i, pp. 483-4.) The highway may have run along the top of the lower wall of the pool, so crossing the valley.

4. *Take heed and be quiet*: possibly this may allude to the design of seeking the Assyrian assistance ; if so, it will express the prophet's disapproval of that design. Such recourse to foreign aid will be distrust towards Jehovah. The allusion, however, is not clear. — *smoking firebrands*: the epithets are contemptuous, and express the pro-

phet's belief in their inability much longer to injure Ahaz. They are about to be quenched.—*son of Remaliah*: also a contemptuous designation of Pekah as a usurper, the son of an ignoble father.

6. *son of Tabeal*: used in the same way. This person, of whom we know nothing more, was probably a subject, or vassal, of the king of Syria.

8. *the head*: in each kingdom the capital shall remain as it is ; they shall not conquer Judah, but each monarch possess only his own dominions. The latter part of v. 8 may be a marginal *gloss* introduced into the text. So Gesenius and others. The difficulty of explaining the words may be seen in the comment of Bp. Lowth. He holds that the final overthrow of Israel was not effected till the time

9. And the head of Ephraim Samaria,
 And the head of Samaria the son of Remaliah :
 If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.
10. And Jehovah again spake unto Ahaz, saying,
 11. Ask for thyself a sign from Jehovah thy God,
 Ask it in the depth, or in the height above.
 12. And Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt Jehovah.
 13. Then he said, Hear now, oh house of David,
 Is it too small a thing for you to weary men,
 That ye will weary my God also ?
 14. Wherefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign ;

of Esarhaddon, 65 years after this prediction was uttered ; but the supposition is opposed by such positive evidence as we have ; for the captivity of the Ten tribes, *i.e.* the destruction of the northern kingdom, took place within about 20 years from the first of Ahaz (2 Kings 17). The clause, it will be observed, destroys the parallelism and symmetry of the passage, and is unsuitable to the immediate object of Isaiah's address, which is to inspire Ahaz with confidence in the actual position of affairs—an object hardly answered by telling him that two generations later one of his adversaries shall be overthrown.

9. *believe*: another instance of the play upon words before alluded to. It may be expressed thus : *If ye will not confide, ye shall not abide.* Ewald renders : "glaubet ihr nicht, ja so bleibt ihr nicht ;" closely following Luther.

11. *a sign* : some visible object, or present event, taken as the representative, or pledge, of something else, not present, or of some event which is yet future ; it may be also of an event which is *past*, and of

which it is desired to afford a proof, or a memorial (Josh. 4, 5-8). Thus significant names and symbolical actions may be *signs* of what is future (Is. 8, 18 ; 20, 3). Isaiah now requests Ahaz to *ask* for a sign, which may serve, we may suppose, as a memorial of the prophet's assertion, and perhaps as a proof, in some way, that it will be verified. This the King refuses to do, although offered the widest limits within which to make his choice. Had he asked for the sign, he would by so doing have implied his own readiness to act in accordance with the prophet's exhortation. This probably would not have suited the plan of calling in the Assyrians. He therefore rejects the proposal, under the pretext, known by Isaiah to be hypocritical, of keeping the Law (Deut. 6, 16).

13. *weary men* : perhaps the prophet himself. — *God also* : by refusing the trust which the acceptance of the sign would imply.

14. The sign is, in this case, a child yet to be born, whose name, now proclaimed (God-with-us), shall be a record of the promise of de-

Behold the virgin hath conceived, and shall bear a son,
And call his name Immanuel;

15. Milk and honey shall he eat,

liverance. —— *the virgin*: the article points to some definite person known to the speaker and to the King; indeed, it must have been so for the prophecy to carry with it any intelligible ground of confidence or certainty; for otherwise how could its fulfilment be recognised? We have no means of determining, however, *who* exactly may have been within the prophet's view. The word has been variously understood. We need only mention here that it has been taken to denote, (1) Isaiah's wife, the mother of Shear-jashub; (2) a betrothed, or recently married, second wife of the prophet. In either case the expected child will be another son of Isaiah, with a significant name (comp. 8, 1-4); and will become by his name a *sign* of the approaching deliverance. The word has been explained (3) of the wife of Ahaz himself; and (4), in a twofold sense, of some person then present and typical of the mother of the Messiah. This last is substantially Bp. Lowth's interpretation, and so most other interpreters. According to this view the child Immanuel is the Messiah. But it must be observed that Isaiah, wishing to encourage Ahaz, is evidently speaking of a deliverance shortly to be wrought, a deliverance from the enemy then present in the land, or soon to be so; and cannot well be supposed to be referring to any remote descendant of the line of David, to be born long afterwards. The prophecy is indeed cited by St. Matthew, nearly in the words

of the Septuagint version, and applied by him to the birth of Christ (Matt. 1, 23). The words had probably come to be understood in the Messianic sense by the later Jews, and hence the use made of them by the Evangelist and the early Christian church. This application is defended by Lowth on the ground that the verse contains "a higher secondary sense," distinctly intended by the prophet, besides the literal or historical one arising out of the circumstances of the times. Isaiah does not, however, *tell us* anything of this higher sense; and so the reader is of course left at liberty to judge for himself how far it is here admissible. —— *hath conceived*: the original word is a verbal adjective, without any proper mark of *time*. It is found Gen. 16, 11, where it is rightly rendered by a *present* in our English version. The preterite in the text, really equivalent to the present in Gen. 16, 11, has been used, because the context seems only to require that the birth and naming should be future. The question of tense is, however, here unimportant, for the substance or point of the prophecy is in the *limitation of time* expressed in v. 16. See Crit. Note.

15. *Milk*: the original, which in our English version is always rendered *butter*, most commonly denotes curdled milk, the acid of which is grateful in the heat of the East. The word is used also, as here, as a general name for milk, *i. e.* new sweet milk. So Job 20, 17. ——

- That he may know to refuse the evil and to choose the good ;
16. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good,
- The land shall be made desolate, before whose two kings thou fearest.
17. Jehovah shall bring upon thee,
And upon thy people, and upon the house of thy father,
Days such as have not come since Ephraim departed from Judah ;
(The king of Assyria).

honey : was abundant in Palestine. Comp. Jud. 14, 8 ; 1 Sam. 14, 25, seq. : Matt. 3, 4. The word may sometimes denote some sweet aromatic gum yielded by various trees. *Milk and honey* are mentioned by several ancient writers as suitable food for young children. The expression in the text is used in v. 22 to denote a period of *deprivation*. It may have the same meaning here ; and the prophet may intend to say that during his infancy the child, in common with the other inhabitants of the land, shall live on milk and honey, because these shall be the most abundant articles of food ; he shall live on these that he may grow up to know, &c.—*i. e.* until the age of commencing moral consciousness ; or for some three or four years. Lowth understands by the expression a period of *plenty*, to come *when* the child shall know, &c. In using the words, Isaiah may allude to the suitableness of such food for an infant ; while, at the same time, he employs them in his own peculiar sense, as just explained. Such a play upon the meaning of a phrase is elsewhere met with. Comp. 28, 10–13 ; and see Crit. Note.

16. *For* : refers either (1) to the

promise of deliverance conveyed by the word *Immanuel*, in which case v. 15 is parenthetical, and is introduced only to state prominently the length of the interval before deliverance ; or (2) to the implied limitation of the same verse : the deprivation which leads to the use of such food shall last only while the child is growing up to know, &c. ; *for* before the time of his knowledge comes, the deliverance shall have arrived. Comp. 8, 4, for a similar limitation differently expressed. See Crit. Note.

17. The deliverance just spoken of is but temporary ; the promise is accompanied by a threat of later and more dreadful punishment, rendered necessary by the national sins. The Assyrians, having repelled the Israelites and Syrians, will next encounter the Egyptians. Hence the devastation of Judah by the two great powers—the severest calamity that has befallen the nation since the separation of the kingdoms. The words in the parenthesis are omitted by Bp. Lowth, as very probably an old gloss. They are unsuitable to the previous *days* ; nor is it usual for the prophet to add such explanatory sentences.

18. And it shall come to pass in that day,
 That Jehovah shall hiss for the fly
 Which is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt,
 And to the bee which is in the land of Assyria ;
19. And they shall come and alight, all of them,
 In the precipitous valleys and the clefts of the rocks,
 And on all thorn-bushes and on all pastures.
20. In that day Jehovah shall shave with the hired blade,
 By the dwellers-beyond the River, by the king of Assyria,
 The head and the hair of the feet ;
 And also the beard shall it take away.
21. And it shall come to pass in that day,
 That a man shall keep a young cow and two sheep ;
22. And it shall come to pass, from the abundance of milk which
 they shall yield,
 That he shall eat butter ;
 For butter and honey shall every-one eat that is left in the
 land.

18. *hiss*: hiss, or whistle, denoting the sound made to bring bees to settle. Comp. 5, 26.—*fly*: *bee*: expressive both of the numbers and of the dangerous character of the approaching hosts. The terms are appropriate; the overflow of the Nile and the marshy nature of parts of Egypt producing flies in vast swarms; while some districts of Assyria were famous for honey. Comp. 2 Kings 18, 23.—*rivers*: the Nile, with its branches and canals. See notes on 19, 5-7; 23, 3.

20. *hired*: as employed by Jehovah for punishment; or there may be an allusion to Ahaz having engaged the assistance of the Assyrians.—*head*: *feet*: the hair of the whole body, including even the beard, the most sacred of all, shall be cut off—image of the utmost indignity and injury. Comp. 2 Sam. 10, 4-5.—*dwellers*: literally

lands-beyond, here put for their inhabitants. So Is. 23, 13.

—*River*: the Euphrates, and perhaps also, in this case, the Nile; i.e. by means of Assyrians and Egyptians. See Crit. Note.

21-25. These verses describe the future state of the country. Its cultivation will be impossible, and hardly necessary, because the very smallest number of cattle will be sufficient to afford the few scattered inhabitants left the means of subsistence.

22. *milk*: here new or sweet milk; a different word from that in v. 15. The word *butter* is the same as in v. 15, and is taken by some here to mean *cream*. The rendering of the English version has been retained, in this instance, as nearer to the original than *milk*, and to avoid the repetition. The words contain a threat, because the abundance spoken

23. And it shall come to pass in that day, that every place
 Where are a thousand vines worth a thousand *pieces* of silver,
 Shall become briars and thorns.
24. With arrows and with the bow shall one go there ;
 For the whole land shall become briars and thorns.
25. And all the hills which were digged with the spade,
 There shalt thou not go through fear of briars and thorns ;
 And they shall be for the sending-forth of cattle,
 And for the treading of lesser-cattle.

of is only relative, arising from the deportation or destruction of the inhabitants.

23. *thousand vines*: perhaps the usual number in a vineyard ; even the most valuable vineyards, containing vines worth a silver shekel each, shall lie uncultivated. — *pieces*: *i. e.* shekels, the value of which is variously given from 1*s.* 6*d.* to 2*s.* 6*d.*, a very high price. Knobel observes that at the present time in Syria each vine is estimated at about threepence.

24. Wild animals will abound, so that men will pursue them, or guard

themselves from them, with bows and arrows, in the midst of what was once the most fertile land.

25. *fear*: the sense given by our English version is hardly clear or consistent with the context, although it has the sanction of Ewald. We may, after Gesenius and Hitzig, take the word as equivalent to a preposition, meaning *for fear of*, as we say: no one shall go upon the once cultivated hills, covered with vineyards ; only cattle shall be able to make their way through the thorny wilderness — *lesser cattle*: *i. e.* sheep and goats.

§ 5. CHAP. VIII—IX, 7.

Overthrow of Syria and Israel by the Assyrians.—Invasion and devastation of Judah by the latter.—Anticipation of happier times under an illustrious Descendant of the house of David.

IT is evidently necessary to include the first seven verses of ch. ix as a part of this section.¹ The common division into chapters and verses, it need hardly be observed, does not proceed from the sacred writers themselves, and is in some cases objectionable. Of course the interpreter is at liberty, in each case, to adopt such divisions as may seem to him to be required, to bring out the full meaning of his author. We but follow Bishop Lowth and the best authorities of more recent date, in the arrangement of this and the 7th Section.

The passage may properly be regarded as somewhat later than the preceding chapter. We are now evidently nearer to the promised deliverance, since a shorter time is mentioned as intervening before it takes place. In the last chapter it was at least some three years; in the present (v. 4) it is not more, perhaps, than a year and a half. This view is confirmed by expressions in the prophecy which seem to imply that the course of events contemplated in ch. vii has already made some progress. Whereas in vii, 4, Isaiah had spoken contemptuously of the threatened danger; here (vv. 17, 21, 22) he appears to express himself more despondingly. In vii, 15, 22,

¹ Here, as elsewhere, the English division of the chapters is followed. In the Hebrew, ch. viii includes v. 1 of (Eng.) ch. ix; and the former has 23 vv.

the few people left in the country are to be able to find sufficient food of a certain kind ; while here (v. 21, seq.) actual famine is to result from the presence of the invaders. Ch. viii, 6, appears to allude to a party which has now been formed among Ahaz's own subjects, and which is ready to take part with Pekah and Remaliah. V. 9 may refer to the near approach of the attack on Jerusalem ; and v. 12, perhaps, to the fact that Ahaz, in presence of the now imminent danger, and impelled by the known hostility of some of his own subjects, is on the point of concluding his treaty with the Assyrians. If these inferences are correct, it follows that the invasion has made considerable progress towards its accomplishment, and this section must be proportionately later than the last. The Assyrians are, however, still not yet in the land ; and as the prophet does not again mention the Egyptians, he may no longer have feared a conflict in Judah between the two great powers. His trust in the divine protection appears throughout the piece as unwavering as ever ; and at the close it rises out of the midst of the calamities and sufferings which he contemplates to the prophetic anticipation of a glorious and happy period, under the rule of an illustrious scion of the house of David.

1. **A**ND Jehovah said unto me, Take thee a great tablet, and write upon it with the pen of a man concerning Maher-

1. *tablet* : of wood, stone, or metal, made smooth, sometimes covered with a coating of wax, upon which the characters were written with a pointed instrument.—*pen of a man* : in the ordinary writing character, which any man may read, not

in any sacred or hieroglyphic character, known only to the learned. Comp. Rev. 21, 17; Rom. 3, 5; 6, 19, for somewhat analogous expressions. It may be supposed that the prophet intended to place the tablet in his house, where, being *large*, it

2. shalal-hash-baz. And I took unto me faithful witnesses, Uriah
 3. the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah. And I went
 unto the prophetess, and she conceived and bare a son. Then
 said Jehovah unto me, Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz;
 4. for before the child shall have knowledge to call, My father
 and my mother, they shall carry away the wealth of Damascus
 and the spoil of Samaria, before the king of Assyria.

5. And Jehovah spake also unto me, and said,

6. Because that this people hath refused
 The waters of Shiloah which flow softly,
 And hath joy in Rezin and Remaliah's son,

would be conspicuous, and might be read by all who wished. One object is evidently to preserve a record of the prophecy, for the justification of Isaiah himself. — *Maher-shalal-hash-baz*: *i. e.*, Haste-to-the-spoil-Speed-to-the-prey; signifying (v. 4), speedily shall Israel and Syria be despoiled, and our deliverance from them effected. It does not appear that anything but this significant name was written upon the tablet. See Crit. Note.

2. *Uriah*: perhaps the same as in 2 Kings, 16, 10, and probably the high priest; of the other witness we know nothing. The witnesses are to give evidence, when the time comes, that the prophecy was delivered and the tablet inscribed as stated.

3. *went unto*: perhaps we should render, *had gone unto*. — *his name*: the new-born child receiving this name becomes like his brother Shear-jashub, and perhaps Immanuel, a *sign* of the deliverance to be speedily wrought. It has been maintained that this is the *same* child with the Immanuel of v. 7. All that we have

said, in the introductory note, about the later date of this section is against such a conclusion.

4. Before the child shall be able to utter (in the Hebrew) the words which an infant first learns, *i. e.* within a year, or a year and a half, Samaria and Damascus shall be plundered by Tiglath Pileser.

6. *this people*: when Jehovah in the prophetic representations speaks with approval and kindness to the nation, it is with the appellation *my people*; in other cases as here. Comp. 6, 9 — *Shiloah*: the brook so called, which had its source on the south-eastern side of mount Zion; put for the reigning family, which dwelt on Zion. The allusion is not clear. We have before observed that it may be to a party in Judah favourable to the invaders, and even willing to exchange the feeble and unwarlike Ahaz for the son of Tabeal. Hence the prophet announces that the flood which is first to sweep away Israelites and Syrians (v. 7), shall rise high enough to reach also the rebellious of Judah (v. 8).

7. Therefore behold the Lord bringeth up upon them
 The waters of the river, strong and many,
 The king of Assyria and all his glory ;
 And he shall rise above all his channels,
 And come over all his banks ;
8. And he shall penetrate into Judah,
 He shall overflow and pass over,
 Unto the neck shall he reach ;
 And the out-spread of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy
 land, oh Immanuel !
9. Rage, ye peoples, and be dismayed,
 And give ear, all ye distant lands ;
 Gird yourselves, and be dismayed,
 Gird yourselves, and be dismayed ;
10. Take counsel together and it shall come to nought ;
 Speak the word, and it shall not stand,
 For God is with us !
11. For thus spake Jehovah unto me, when his hand grasped
 me,
 And taught me not to walk in the way of this people, saying,

7, 8. Instead of the softly flowing brook they shall have *the river*: the mighty Euphrates, the symbol of Assyrian power, whose waters in the spring and summer, from the melting snow of the Armenian mountains, inundate the country. It shall now rise even to *the neck*, threatening the utmost danger. — *wings*: perhaps the extremities of the army, mounted bands, ravaging the country. — *thy land*: Immanuel is addressed, to recall the promise of deliverance, amidst the danger; the land is still *his*, and shall be.

9. The combined nations are addressed: let them rage and do their worst, their plans will be frustrated. When two imperatives come together in this way, the second often

states some consequence of the action expressed by the first; or the second may contain a threat, or a promise, corresponding to the first. So here, *be dismayed* is equivalent to the threat *ye shall be dismayed*. — *give ear*: calling upon distant nations to witness the coming discomfiture.

10. *shall not stand*: the approach of the Assyrians, or the news of it, shall compel them to retire. We do not know that they went so far as to make any assault on Jerusalem.

11. *grasped me*: the figure expresses the felt impulse of the Divine Spirit in the prophet's mind, compelling him to this inspired utterance respecting the future. Comp. Ezek. 3, 14; 37, 1; Jer. 15, 17. —

12. Say ye not, A confederacy, of all which this people calleth a confederacy,
 Neither fear ye its fear, nor be afraid ;
13. Jehovah of Hosts, Him deem ye holy,
 Let Him be your fear, and Him your dread,
14. And he shall be your refuge ;
 But a stone to strike, and a rock of stumbling,
 To the two houses of Israel,
 A trap and a snare to the inhabitant of Jerusalem.
15. And many shall stumble thereon,
 And fall, and be broken, and ensnared, and taken.
16. Bind up the testimony,
 Seal the commandment by means of my disciples ;
17. And I will wait for Jehovah,
 Who hideth his face from the house of Jacob,
 And I will trust in him.

way of this people: their want of courage and their distrust of Jehovah.

12. *confederacy*: or conspiracy; referring to the combination of Israel and Syria against Judah, which is, in reality, one against Jehovah through his anointed sovereign. This design does not even deserve the name of *confederacy*, so little of success shall attend it in its issue.—*its fear*: the object of its fear; the hostile alliance. Comparing v. 6, we may see that, while a part of the people were ready to receive the invaders, there was another party who feared them; the latter is now addressed by Isaiah.

13. *Him*: some find here an implied allusion to the plan of seeking the help of Assyria. To do this is to distrust and turn away from Jehovah.

14. *refuge*: literally, *sanctuary*,

or *asylum*, like the altar of the temple (1 Kings 1, 50; 2, 28). Such will Jehovah be to those who remain faithful; but the contrary to the *two houses of Israel*: i. e. to those of both kingdoms who forsake Him; to them He will be a cause of overthrow and destruction.—*to strike*: literally *of striking*. The following images are taken from the familiar means of catching and destroying wild animals. So in v. 15.

16. The command of Jehovah to his prophet.—*testimony*: *commandment*: the whole announcement respecting the future involved in the name inscribed upon the tablet.—*my disciples*: Uriah and Jeberechiah, before mentioned. Let them bind up the tablet for preservation.

17. The prophet's own declaration.—*house of Jacob*: i. e. kingdom of Judah.

18. Behold, I and the children whom Jehovah hath given me
Are for signs and for symbols in Israel,
From Jehovah of Hosts who dwelleth in mount Zion.
19. And when they shall say unto you,
Seek ye unto the spirit-charmers and the wizards,
That chirp and mutter,—
Shall not a people seek unto their God ?
In place of the living, shall they go unto the dead ?
20. To the commandment and to the testimony !
Shall not they speak according to this word,
Who have no dawning-light ?

18. *I and the children*: Isaiah's own name was significant, meaning *Salvation of Jehovah*; in his own and his children's names he finds sure and lasting signs of the coming deliverance, and for this he will wait.

19. The prophet still speaks: while himself waiting for Jehovah, his mind turns to those who, in their terror, and their want of faith, seek relief in the superstitious practices of idolatry resorted to in seasons of distress and perplexity. From ancient times they had been prevalent in Judah.—*Spirit-charmers*: persons who pretended, by magic formulas, to communicate with the dead, and by their aid to give advice, or foretell future events, as the witch of Endor (1 Sam. 28, 7, seq): they seem to have employed a kind of ventriloquism (expressed by the Septuagint rendering *ἔγγαστριμέθοντες*), imitating the supposed low and feeble voice of a spirit, and making it appear to come out of the ground. Hence the figure in Is. 29, 4. The word translated *spirit-charmers* denotes either the *person* communicating with the dead, or, also, sometimes, the *spirit* itself, thought

to speak through, or in, him; the latter in 29, 4.—*Wizards*, those who know, *i.e.* about the future.—*chirp : mutter*: alluding to the peculiar sounds with which such persons carry on their pretended necromancy.—*In place of*: so Lowth, we think rightly—meaning, Instead of going for counsel to the living God, shall they apply to dead men? Gesenius, somewhat sharply, rejects Lowth's rendering, and would translate, *For the living*, *i.e.* for the benefit, or information, of the living, will ye go unto the dead ? The sense of either version is appropriate, but the former is the more so, when we consider the prophet's evident purpose to rebuke the idolatrous practices.

20. Probably the prophet's exhortation, in answer to the previous question. —*commandment : testimony*: we naturally look back to v. 16, for the explanation of these words, and must, accordingly, take the sense to be, Let us turn to the commandment, or revelation, which God has given us by his prophet respecting our future deliverance, rather than to the dead.—The following words are very difficult,

21. And they shall pass through it, oppressed and hungry,
 And it shall come to pass, when they shall be hungry,
 That they shall burst into anger and curse their king and their
 God,
22. And turn their faces upward ;
 And they shall look unto the earth,
 And behold trouble and darkness, Darkness of distress ;
 And they shall be driven into thick-darkness.

IX. 1. But *there shall not be* Darkness where Distress *now is* ;
 As the former time brought into contempt
 The land of Zebulon and the land of Naphtali ;
 So the after-time maketh honourable

and various versions have been proposed. We give what appears the simplest, without being sure that it is right.—*dawning-light* : or *morning-light*, the image of returning happiness, after the night of distress and suffering just passed through; “no dawning-light,” of course, is the contrary; and the meaning will be, Shall not they who are suffering the deepest affliction speak thus? shall not their sufferings bring them to their God? See Crit. Note.

21. Isaiah now dwells on the idea just introduced of the coming anguish and desperation.—*it* : *i. e.* the land; famished and enraged even against heaven itself. He has here greater apprehensions than in the last chapter. The hostile army may have been some time in the country, and he looks forward to still further devastation at the hands of the Assyrians.

22. *they* : the verb is singular, and used impersonally; meaning, the suffering people.

ix, 1. This verse introduces that trustful anticipation of brighter times to which the trials of the

present led the prophet and, doubtless, many of his people the more tenaciously to cling, as the clouds and darkness gathered around them.

—*former time* : Gesenius thinks that the devastation of these parts earlier in the *present* war, and by Tiglath Pileser, is meant. The expression “former time,” if we rightly understand it, is against this, and refers to something more remote. We have already (Gen. Introd., § 2) referred the statement of 2 Kings 15, 29, to an earlier invasion by Tiglath Pileser. The injuries inflicted in that invasion may here also be referred to, and it is not necessary to think that Isaiah has anything so far back as Pul in his mind. Having been led to mention the northern districts, by the fact that they especially suffered on a former occasion, the prophet naturally speaks first of their share in the future glory.—*after-time* : may be understood of the deliverance referred to in v. 4, including the restoration of the united people under a prince of the house of David, and their participation in the happy-

The way of the sea, the land-beyond Jordan,
The circle of the Gentiles.

2. The people that walked in darkness see great light,
They that dwelt in the land of the shadow-of-death,
Upon them light hath shined.
3. Thou hast increased the nation,
Thou hast made great its joy ;
They rejoice before thee, as with the joy of harvest,
As men exult when they divide the spoil ;
4. For the yoke of his burden, and the rod of his shoulder,
The staff of his oppressor, hast thou broken,
As in the day of Midian ;

ness of the Messiah's reign. In the last sense the passage will be familiar to the reader of the New Testament, from the application of it to our Lord's ministry in Galilee, by St. Matthew (4, 20).—*way of the sea*: the district about the lake of Galilee.—*circle*: Heb. *Galil*, from which, no doubt, the Galilee of later times originated. It was a northern part of Naphtali, which bordered on the Phenician territory, and in which a Gentile population was intermingled with the Jewish. Hence the appellation of the text; and hence also the low estimation in which the southern Jews held this part of the country, a feeling which we see at its height in the New Testament times. John 1, 46 ; 7, 52 ; Matt. 26, 69–73.

2–3. *see* : this and the other leading verbs, though preterites, must be understood as relating to the *future*; as is common in the prophetic style. The *certainty* of the occurrence appears to be intended by this use of the past tense; as though it were so clearly foreseen that it might be described as already

come. — *light*: the image of deliverance and happiness. — *darkness*: that of captivity and misery, in the land of their enemies. Before this time Jewish captives had been dispersed over many lands. Comp. Is. 11, 11–12; Joel 3, 2, seq. — *shadow of death*: the utmost misery of invasion and captivity. — *increased* : by the return of the captives. — *its joy* : See Crit. Note.

4. *yoke*: they shall be released from the Assyrian dominion, under which Israel has been bowed down since the time of Pul; and to which Judah is now voluntarily submitting under Ahaz. — *his* : the nation's, conceived of as a single individual : so in other instances, in some of which we have rendered the pronoun as a plural, the better to suit the context. — *Midian* : Comp. Judges 7, 8, seq. As Gideon with a handful of men gained that victory, so shall the small Hebrew people repel the great Assyrian power, deliver the captives, and carry off the spoil of its enemies. Mich. 5, 4, seq., for the same anticipation.

5. For all the armour of him that armeth tumultuously,
 And the garment rolled in blood,
 Shall be for burning, fuel for the fire.
6. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,
 And the government shall be upon his shoulder,
 And they shall call his name Wonderful, Giver-of-counsel,
 Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of peace!
7. To the increase of his government and to prosperity there shall
 be no end,
 Upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom,

5. *armour*: perhaps for the lower part of the legs, *greaves*, but it is not certain; it may thus stand for arms in general. Broken arms and soiled garments were often burnt on the field of battle by the ancients. The meaning here, however, probably is that all the warlike weapons and garments shall be destroyed, as no longer required in the new era of peace. Comp. Mich. 5, 5, 10; Zach. 9, 9–10.

6–7. The ground of these great expectations is now given; the advent of an illustrious prince, who shall rule his people in perpetual peace and security. We have here, doubtless, Isaiah's idea of the Messiah and his glorious reign. Comp. Mich. 5, 2–7. It is proper to observe the prominence which in this place, as in 11, 4–9, is given to the moral and religious element, as the accompaniment, or foundation, of the anticipated happiness. Thus it is no mere triumph over enemies, or condition of material prosperity, to which the prophet looks forward; but a state the highest characteristics of which may truly be said to be attained, or attainable, only in and by Christ.—That Isaiah himself, however, looked forward, through so many centuries, to so distant a

day as that of Christ, there appears to be no clear evidence to show, but the contrary. It was, probably, a much speedier arrival of the Messianic glories which he contemplated; one, perhaps, which he himself and some of his contemporaries should behold. If so, we may believe that, in the continued unfaithfulness and unpreparedness of Israel, Divine Providence did not grant, even to its greatest prophet, more than a dim and uncertain foresight of the future age—leaving to the course of events the function of enlightening both him and his nation, as to the full purposes of the Supreme Ruler concerning them. The passage, it may be observed, is not applied anywhere in the New Testament to our Saviour. The Jewish Commentators and some moderns, including Gesenius, think, that Hezekiah was in Isaiah's mind; but that is not probable, as this prince was already some years old on his father's accession, and could hardly be spoken of now as a child just born, or still to be born. The early Christian writers find the application of the prophecy in Christ and the Gospel; but, as is well known, they are not generally good expositors of the Old

To establish it and to maintain it, by justice and by righteousness,

From henceforth and for ever.

The zeal of Jehovah of Hosts shall do this.

Testament. They are followed in this case, however, by the great majority of Christian interpreters.

The various epithets of the passage sufficiently explain themselves. We have translated them as literally as possible, and would only further suggest that they may be intended

as a kind of compound name, like Immanuel, given to the expected prince, and descriptive of his reign and character. We thus have a significant name made up of no less than eight separate words—twice the number contained in Maher-shalal-hash-baz.

§ 6. CHAP. XXIII.

Prophecy of the destruction of Phoenician Cities, and of the eventual restoration of Tyre to her former wealth and prosperity.

In that portion of our Gen. Introd. (§ 3) which relates to Shalmaneser, it has been noticed that the conquest of several Phœnician cities and a siege of Tyre are, by the historian Menander, ascribed to that King. The attack upon Phœnicia took place, we have found reason to believe, about the time of the siege of Samaria, and perhaps, like that undertaking, it was finished, not by Shalmaneser, but by his successor Sargon. The historian just named states that the Assyrians soon reduced the cities of the mainland, Sidon, Aeco, and Old Tyre ; but New Tyre, which was built upon an island, distant about half a mile from the shore, resisted them with obstinacy and success. The Tyrian ships defeated those which the assailants were able to bring against them ; and Shalmaneser, it is stated, was compelled to be satisfied with placing guards on the mainland to prevent the islanders from obtaining water. They supplied themselves, however, by means of cisterns, and the blockade went on for five years. How it terminated is not stated. Probably Sargon, the successor, or supplanter, of Shalmaneser, would, on attaining the supreme power, have his hands sufficiently full, and having got possession of the mainland and its cities, would be willing to come to terms with the Tyrians. The name of Tyre does not occur among those cities which Sennacherib (ch. xxxvi–xxxvii) boasts that he or his predecessor had conquered, while that of Samaria does ; from which it may be inferred that the former had not been captured.

The composition of the prophecy may be best referred to the commencement of the Assyrian inroad upon Palestine, about the year 724 B.C. The prophet evidently anticipates the rapid and complete success of the attack ; which he could hardly have done had he not written before its partial failure, as regards insular Tyre, had become manifest.

Two other sieges of the great maritime city are recorded in history ; one by Nebuchadnezzar, after his capture of Jerusalem and destruction of the kingdom of Judah ; and the other by Alexander the Great, in the year 332. The former is said to have lasted thirteen years, and though Old Tyre, on the mainland, was then reduced to ruins, and so probably remained, yet the island city appears to have again successfully resisted. Alexander, after a siege of seven months, finally took and destroyed New Tyre, although it was certainly in his time, in the words of the prophet, a “stronghold of the sea.” The terrible history of this siege, as well as an account of that by Nebuchadnezzar, may be seen in sufficient detail in Kenrick.¹ Several interpreters, among them Bp. Lowth, have thought that the prophecy before us should be referred to the siege by Nebuchadnezzar ; and some, again, taking the same view, have seen reason to deny that it proceeds from Isaiah, and to attribute it to Jeremiah, or some unknown author. Some discussion of this question may be seen in Knobel², together with a very satisfactory answer to objections urged against the authenticity of the chapter as a composition of Isaiah.

Mr. Stanley, speaking of the revival of Tyre, from time to time, and of the still continued existence of Sidon, insists with much eloquence and truth on the total destruction of both cities for political purposes, as affording “a striking instance of the moral and poetical, as distinct from the literal and prosaic, accomplishment of the Prophetical Scriptures.”³

¹ Phœnicia, Hist. ch. ii–iv.

² Ies., pp. 166–8.

³ Sinai & Palest., pp. 271–3.

1. THE prophecy of Tyre.

- T** Howl, ye ships of Tarshish, for it is laid waste,
So that there is no house to enter!
From the land of the Chittim it is revealed to them.
2. Be struck dumb, ye inhabitants of the coast,
Which the merchant of Sidon, who passeth over the sea, hath
filled;

1. The *title* here, as in some other cases, was probably added by some compiler. The rendering *burden* in our English version is from the *onus* of the Vulgate, used by Jerome to represent the original word, on the supposition that it denotes a prophecy containing a *threat* or *denunciation*, which, however, is not true of all the prophecies with this heading (Zech. 12, 1; Mal. 1, 1). The original term simply means a *lifting up*, *i. e.* of the voice, or speech; and might, therefore, be well expressed by *Announcement*, or *Oracle*.

—*Tyre*: Heb. *Tsur*, *i. e.* rock; the origin evidently of the Greek *Σύρια*, Syria.—*Howl*: *i. e.* wail; the usual word for the most violent lamentation.—The prophet addresses the *sailors* of the ships returning from their voyage to *Tarshish*: Tartessus, an important Phœnician colony, in the south of Spain, whence were brought various metals, including silver (Jer. 10, 9; Ezek. 27, 12–25). The expression *ships of Tarshish* is sometimes used also of large trading vessels, fit for any distant voyages; *e. g.* 1 Kings, 10, 22; Ps. 48, 7.—*it is laid waste*: Heb., devastation has been wrought; *i. e.* (with the next words), Tyre and the surrounding country have been laid waste, so

that there is not a house left standing.—*land of the Chittim*: the island of Cyprus, most of whose cities, among them Citium, belonged to the Phœnicians.—*revealed*: the seamen calling here on the voyage homeward will receive certain intelligence, of what may have previously reached them only as a vague rumour.

2. *Be struck dumb*: addressed to those already in the country, who in the very midst of the destruction may be expected to look upon it with still greater horror.—*coast*: the narrow strip of territory along the Mediterranean (see note on 20, 6), forming the mainland of Phœnicia, filled with the large and industrious population of several considerable cities;—among them *Sidon*: *i. e.* *Fishing station*: such was its origin. It was probably the oldest, and hence the phrase *merchant of Sidon*, used of the trading population of the whole region. Tyre is said to have been founded by fugitives from Sidon, when the latter was conquered by the Philistines. Old and new Tyre formed together one large city, and soon exceeded Sidon in importance. For more, see Kenrick, Phœn. Hist. ch. i.

3. And, by the wide waters, the grain of the Nile,
The harvest of the River, is her revenue,
And she is the mart of nations.
4. Be thou ashamed, O Sidon,
For the sea hath spoken, the stronghold of the sea,
Saying, I have not travailed, nor brought forth,
I have not reared young men, nor brought up maidens.
5. When the report *cometh* to Egypt,
They shall tremble as at the report of Tyre.
6. Pass over to Tarshish !
Howl, ye inhabitants of the coast !

3. From direct address the prophet passes to description. —— *by the wide waters*: by, or over, the sea; or, *by many waters*, in the same sense. The Phœnicians supplied themselves and other nations with the corn of Egypt, carrying thither their own wine, oil, glass, &c. Hence they are said to have as their *revenue* (or perhaps *produce*) the *grain of the Nile*: literally of the *dark*, or *turbid*; an epithet of the Nile, not unknown to Classical writers. Mr. Stanley (Sin. & P., p. xxxv—vi) speaks of its “*brown colour*.” He adds, “Immediately above the brown and blue waters of the river rises a thick black bank of clod or mud, mostly in terræes.” The epithet seems thus to allude to the dark-coloured fertilising soil deposited by the annual overflow. For the rendering *grain* comp. 1 Sam. 8,15; Job 39, 12. —— *River*: *Ieor*, the word of the Egyptians for *their* river, adopted by the Hebrews and often met with, as Gen. 41, 1; Is. 19, 7-8. —— *mart*: or, *gain*; i. e. the produce is so: but comp. Ezek. 27, 3, which favours the former explanation. See Crit. Note.

4. Sidon, as the parent city, is now

called upon to feel the ignominy of being childless — such was the ancient oriental idea — to be *ashamed* that she and her related cities are as though they had never borne children, their population being destroyed. —— *stronghold*: New Tyre, on a rock, as the name implies, and surrounded by the *sea*, must have been a great and populous city, for although only about three miles in circumference it was closely built, and the houses were lofty. It was strongly fortified, particularly towards the land side, where the walls rose to a height of 150 feet, and were constructed of large stones firmly put together, so as long to defy all the efforts of Alexander, as well as of preceding besiegers. Comp. Ezek. 26, 4; 15-17. Remains of buildings may still be seen. Kenrick and Stanley, *ub. sup.*

5. *as at the report*: the fall of such a place shall make Egypt tremble, — because, if so strong a city could not resist the Assyrians, little prospect of doing so remained for that country.

6. *Pass over*: take refuge in your colonies. This was done by many during Alexander's siege. So the

7. Is this your rejoicing *city*,
Whose antiquity is of ancient days ?
Her own feet shall carry her afar to dwell.
8. Who hath decreed this against Tyre,
The crown-giving *city*,
Whose merchants are princes,
Whose traffickers the honoured of the earth ?
9. Jehovah of Hosts hath decreed it,
To profane the pride of all glory,
To bring into contempt all the honoured of the earth.
10. Pass through thy land like the River,

Phœceans abandoned their city
rather than submit to the Persian
Cyrus, and became the founders of
Marseilles.

7. *rejoicing city*: this silent and desolate ruin, is this the once joyful, crowded, luxurious city ? — *antiquity*: Herodotus mentions that Tyre in his time was said by the Tyrian priests to have already existed 2300 years. This was probably an exaggeration; but that the Phœnician settlements on the coast of Palestine may have existed as far back as the time of Abraham is not unlikely. Kenrick, Phœu., p. 57. Comp. Gen. Introd., § 1. — *Her own feet*: walking on foot, as captives, into some distant Assyrian province.

8. *crown-giving*: Tyre, as having become the leading city, had probably a certain authority over the neighbouring cities, and over the colonies of the Phœnicians. — *traffickers*: literally *Canaanites*; the people of this part of Palestine having been great traders, the term Canaanite is found several times in the Old Testament in the sense of

merchant, or trafficker ; as Zeph. 1, 11; Job 41, 6; Prov. 31, 24.

9. *profane*: the verb is expressive particularly of religious desecration; and hence it may be that the ancient and splendid temple of the Tyrian Hercules (Herod., 2, 44) is meant by the words *pride of all glory*: which may, however, include also the stately dwellings of the Tyrian merchants. It would be altogether in the spirit of the Hebrew prophet thus to single out for special notice the place of idolatrous worship.

10. The prophet now addresses a Tyrian colony. Its people, often hardly treated, and compelled to work in the silver and lead mines for their masters, may pass freely where they will ; — they are released from their subjection. Just as the great River (the Nile, as in v. 3) moves on continually without restraint, so now may the Phœnician colonists pass through their territories, uncontrolled by the parent state. The Hebrews had no “abounding river” of their own from which they could draw such a comparison ; hence their use of the Egyptian word. —

Daughter of Tarshish !

There is no longer restraint.

11. His hand hath he stretched out over the sea,
He hath shaken kingdoms ;
Jehovah hath given command against Canaan,
To destroy her strongholds.
12. And he saith, Thou shalt not again rejoice,
O dishonoured virgin, daughter of Sidon !
Arise, pass over to Chittim,
Even there shalt thou have no rest.
13. Behold the land of the Chaldaens, —
This people was not,

Daughter : i. e. population, personified under the image of a female, the child of the place denoted. So *daughter of Zion*, Is. 1, 8. Keeping up, or rather reversing, the figure, the *individuals* of the population may be spoken of as the children, sons and daughters, of the personified city or state.

11-14 : repeats in a shorter form the announcement of the previous verses, and moreover points out the enemy who is to be the chief instrument of the destruction of Tyre.

11. *kingdoms* : the Phoenician cities and colonies, spoken of as separate states. — *Canaan* : here put for Phœnicia, which was properly a portion only of that country. The same word was used by the Phœnicians themselves, as the name of their country, and has been found on their coins. It is stated by Augustin that the Punic peasants of Hippo in his time called themselves *Canani*. The Carthaginians were of Phœnician origin. This is the only instance in the Old Testament in which the name is applied to the Phœnician territory. Comp. Kenrick, Phœn., pp. 41-3.

12. *daughter of Sidon* : the people of the whole country ; otherwise, according to some authorities, still Tyre, a younger city descended from Sidon. Comp. Nahum's description of the ignominy of Nineveh, Nah. 3, 5, seq. — *no rest* : the colonies will throw off their allegiance, and will have little of hospitality to give their former masters.

13. The Chaldaens were originally inhabitants of the mountainous region lying to the north and east of Assyria proper. Some of the race may have settled in Mesopotamia and Babylonia at a very early period, and, in the latter province, may have given origin to the learned class of priests and astrologers called Chaldaens in later times. But it would also appear from this passage that, shortly before Isaiah wrote, a considerable body of the same people had been transferred by the Assyrians from their primitive northern abodes into the southern districts of the empire, perhaps into the region known to the Greeks as Chaldæa, and bordering upon the desert Arabia. Such deportations of large masses of people were, as we know,

Assyria established them as dwellers-of-the-desert —
They set up their siege-towers,
They lay bare her palaces,
They make her a ruin.

14. Howl, ye ships of Tarshish,
For your stronghold is laid waste.

15. And it shall come to pass in that day,
That Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years,
According to the days of one king.
At the end of seventy years, it shall be to Tyre
According the song of the harlot ;

not uncommon in those times; and may have been necessary in this case for recruiting the Assyrian armies. The Chaldaean of the north were a brave and hardy race, fond of war, and addicted to robbery. Bands of them seem to have adhered to their predatory habits, while others were engaged in fighting for the Assyrians, or leading a settled life in Chaldaea. Comp. Job 1, 17; Hab. 1, 6-10; Dan. 2, 2, seq. In the time of Isaiah they were probably a formidable element of the Assyrian forces, and hence the particular notice which he takes of them. As the same people possessed, also, a powerful priestly caste, it is not surprising that they were eventually able to gain the supremacy, and to establish the later, or Chaldaean, empire. Explained in accordance with these remarks, the verse before us need not be regarded as a proof of the composition of this prophecy so late as the time of Nebuchadnezzar, the great Chaldaean monarch, or as written in reference to *his* siege of Tyre; nor does there appear to be any necessity for the conjectural changes of the

text adopted by Ewald and some other commentators. — *was not* : *i. e.* did not exist as a people in Chaldaea until recently. The fact is mentioned, perhaps, in order to render more evident the humiliation of Tyre; this most ancient of cities is to be destroyed by a race whose existence is but of yesterday. — *establish them* : literally *founded it*; *it* referring to the previous *land*, which, again, stands for *people*. The Assyrians founded, or settled, the Chaldaean in their new abodes, thus infusing into their own subject populations the fresh wild blood of the hardy mountaineers. — *siege-towers* : towers for the attack of the high walls, from which the besiegers may hurl their missiles. They were often furnished with the battering-ram, and were either stationary or moveable. They are represented on the Nineveh sculptures; Nin. & Rem., ii, p. 367-8. — *lay bare* : either *despoil, strip bare*, or, less literally, *demolish*.

15. *forgotten* : having lost the renown of former days, Tyre shall pass through a period of obscurity. — *seventy years* : a definite num-

16. Take the harp, go about the city,
O harlot that hast been forgotten!
Play skilfully, sing many songs,
That thou mayest be remembered.
17. And it shall come to pass at the end o' seventy years,
That Jehovah shall visit Tyre,
And she shall return to her gain,
And play the harlot with all the kingdoms of the world
Upon the face of the earth.
18. But her traffic and her gain shall be holy to Jehovah,
It shall not be treasured, nor laid up in store;

ber, put perhaps simply to denote a *long* period, which is further defined in this case as resembling the length of a king's reign, or *life*; the "three score years and ten" of the Psalmist. Comp. Jer. 25, 11-12; 29, 10; also 46, 26; 49, 6-39. In the last two passages the prophet leaves the limit of time quite indefinite; probably he had much the same meaning in all these cases. Ezekiel (29, 12-13) appears to use the number *forty* in the same way. At the end, therefore of this long indefinite period, Tyre shall be again remembered, shall recover her fame; it shall be with her as with a harlot that has been forgotten, but who succeeds in attracting notice by her song.

16. Some have taken these words as a portion of the song which she sings; but they may be only the prophet's address, or exhortation, to her; his application of the idea, intended to suggest that the new period of fame is effectually gained; or *how* it is gained, viz., by means of commerce. The comparison is appropriate to the great maritime city, inasmuch as the prophets considered commerce a source of unfaithfulness towards Jehovah, seeing

that it was the means of introducing strange and idolatrous practices among their countrymen. This conception is more or less clearly expressed in such passages as Is. 2, 6-8. 16; Nah. 3, 4; comp. Rev. 18, 3.

17. *visit*: often used of punishment. Comp. 10, 12. Here the visitation is for a different purpose, to restore the ancient prosperity of Tyre, and make her again populous and wealthy. Tyre recovered even from the destruction caused by Alexander's siege, and was a great commercial city under the Romans, and down to the time of the Crusades.

18. Having in her adversities been taught to know Jehovah, she shall consecrate her wealth to his service. She shall send presents to his ministers in Jerusalem, contributing liberally to their maintenance and dignity.

Such are the results which the prophet anticipates from these political convulsions — here for the Tyrians, as in ch. 18 for the Ethiopians, and in ch. 19 for the Egyptians and Assyrians. The central truth of the expectation is that the

For her traffic shall be for them that dwell before Jehovah,
To eat abundantly, and for stately clothing.

knowledge of the one God, Jehovah, must in due time be spread over the earth. This Isaiah, with his clear eye of Faith, fully sees; and it must be confessed that the vision has been wonderfully *fulfilled*—not indeed in the exact way contemplated by the Hebrew prophet, nor in his time, but in a still better way, and more fitting time.

It may here be noticed that Ewald, judging from the internal character of the prophecy, thinks it the composition, not of Isaiah himself, but of some younger contemporary and disciple, one perhaps of those disciples mentioned (8, 16; comp. v. 2) as taking part in the attestation of the prophet's statements. The same authority maintains also, as others have done before him, that vv. 15–18 are an addition to the chapter, made not earlier than the commencement of the Persian period, and perhaps by the same hand to

which, as he thinks, we owe ch. 12. See *infra*, note on Is. 12, 6. The Babylonian or Chaldaean empire, founded by the father of Nebuchadnezzar, and overthrown by Cyrus the Great, lasted about seventy years. With its downfall various cities and provinces attained for a time their ancient independence. So now Tyre, the prophet, or his imitator, states, shall rise again to importance, after seventy years of humiliation, and shall devote her recovered wealth to the service of Jehovah. So far as this application of the verses in question is concerned, the same position is maintained by several of the older Commentators, including Bp. Lowth. That it is not necessary or *certain*, any more than the assertion that the three verses are a late addition, is perhaps sufficiently shown by the interpretation above given.

§ 7. CHAP. XXVIII.

The speedy destruction of Samaria by the Assyrians.—Warnings drawn from that event addressed to the dissolute and scornful Rulers in Jerusalem.

SOME expressions in this section (vv. 15–18) might be understood to refer to the protection of Ahaz by the Assyrians; to his league or covenant with them securing Judah from any renewal of the attempt of Syria and Israel. If this view were correct, the passage must have been composed at a comparatively early period; viz., not long after the commencement of the reign of Ahaz, when the treaty between him and the Assyrians was still a recent transaction. On the whole, however, it does not appear necessary to give so literal an interpretation to the expressions referred to. They may only allude to a certain confidence in themselves, and their alliance with the Assyrians, which was indulged in by the ruling men of Judah, in the earlier part of Hezekiah's reign, and which led them to think that, whatever might befall the neighbouring kingdom of Israel, they themselves, notwithstanding their iniquities, their drunkenness, their scorn of the prophetic warnings, would remain uninjured. This feeling may have been encouraged also, if not originated, by the generally prosperous character of Hezekiah's first years (2 Kings xviii, 7-8). It must be admitted, again, that some expressions at the beginning of the chapter distinctly imply that the destruction of Samaria is approaching. It may be that the army of Shalmaneser was known to be near, or even that the siege had already begun.

On what grounds, however, does Isaiah anticipate that the kingdom of *Judah* will suffer at the hands of the Assyrians, seeing that it is still tributary to them (v. 22), and, so far as we know, had as yet made no attempt to escape from the obligation? We can only answer the question conjecturally. The prophet may have expected, as did his contemporary Micah (Mic. i, 9–12; iii, 12; iv, 10, seq.; vii, 13), that the Assyrians, after the conquest of Samaria, would pass through Judah on their way to attack Egypt, the protector of Samaria (2 Kings xvii, 4), and it was impossible for them thus to invade and occupy the country without at the same time inflicting many evils upon the unfortunate inhabitants. If, moreover, the people of Judah were busying themselves with warlike preparations (v. 12), the Assyrians might be doubtful of their fidelity, and deem it necessary to take severe measures to secure it, by occupying their cities and strong places, as was done by Sennacherib at a later period. This is, perhaps, what the prophet has in his contemplation when he speaks of the scourge passing through the land, and continuing to do so (vv. 18, 19); and when he speaks of the strange work which Jehovah will execute upon his people (v. 21).

From these remarks it follows that the chapter may be referred to a date shortly preceding the destruction of the kingdom of Samaria and the captivity of the Ten Tribes. Its composition must, therefore, have been contemporaneous, or nearly so, with that of the preceding section.

The expectation of Isaiah that when the Assyrian king had completed his conquest of Samaria he would invade, or traverse, Judah, was not immediately realised,—not, at least, in a hostile sense. Sargon was probably occupied for some time with the siege of Tyre, and when, somewhat later, he pursued the Egyptian campaign, Judah was probably in alliance with him. (Comp. Introductory Notes to ch. xix, xx). We have, accordingly, no account of any severities exercised upon its people at this time.

1. WOE to the crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim,
And the fading flower, their glorious beauty,
Which is at the head of the fertile valley,
Of them that are overcome with wine!
2. Behold the Lord hath a strong and active-one ;
Like a storm of hail, a tempest of destruction,
Like a storm of mighty overwhelming waters,
Shall he dash to the earth, with the hand.
3. With feet shall it be trodden down,
The crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim.

1-4. Addressed to Samaria, the capital of the neighbouring kingdom of Israel, or *Ephraim*, as it is often termed from the name of its leading tribe. (Comp. 1 Kings, ch. 12.) — *crown of pride*: i. e. *proud crown*; the situation of Samaria is probably alluded to. It lay upon a hill, rising up in the midst of a fruitful valley, over which it commanded an extensive prospect. (1 Kings 16, 24.) The city surrounding the summit of the hill, houses and trees intermingling and forming a stately and beautiful object, is compared to a *crown*; there being also, perhaps, an allusion to its rank as the chief city of the kingdom. Similar epithets are used of Jerusalem, Ps. 48, 2; 50, 2. Any allusion to chaplets or wreaths, worn on the head at banquets, is very doubtful. Dr. Robinson speaks of the hill of Samaria as a “fine round swelling hill,” standing alone in the midst of a “broad noble basin.” He adds that “it would be difficult to find in all Palestine a situation of equal strength, fertility, and beauty combined.” (Bib. Res., iii, pp. 138, 146.)

So Mr. Stanley, Sin. & Pal., p. 244.

But this beautifully situated capital was also a place of *drunkards*: it was a chief seat of the vices of the upper classes of the idolatrous kingdom of Israel. (Amos 4, 1; 6, 1-6; Mich. 1, 5.) — *flower*: *beauty*: may be also taken as descriptive of the city; or may be referred specifically to the *nobles* and *rich men*, the flower, as we might say, of the nation, who are so shortly to be slain, or led into exile by the Assyrians; whose *glory*, therefore, is even now fading away. — *their*: literally, *his*; i. e. Ephraim’s. — *overcome*: literally, *struck or stupified*.

2. Explanation of the previous announcement. Jehovah is about to send the Assyrian (10, 5), who shall sweep over the land like a destroying tempest, and *dash down* city and people together; literally, *cause to rest or lie*; i. e. on the ground, without rising again. — *with the hand*: probably in the sense of *with violence*. Comp. 57, 10; 8, 11.

3. *it*: the Hebrew verb is in the *plural*; because *crown*, meaning the

4. And the fading flower, their glorious beauty,
Which is at the head of the fertile valley,
Shall be like an early-fig before the summer,
Which he that looketh upon it seeth,
And, while it is yet in his hand, swalloweth it.
5. In that day Jehovah of Hosts shall be for a crown of beauty,
And a diadem of glory to the remnant of his people;
6. And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment,
And for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.
7. But even these stagger with wine, and reel with strong-drink,

whole city, is a kind of collective, or plural, idea.

4. *early-fig*: the fruit first ripe, about the end of June, is considered a delicacy, and eagerly eaten. (Hos. 9, 10; Mich. 7, 1; Jcr. 24, 2.) — *while it is yet*: *i. e.* immediately, without delay. Such early fruit easily falls from the tree when shaken, and hence the figure expresses not only the eagerness of the Assyrian for the conquest, but also the ease and rapidity with which he will effect it. Thus understood these verses cannot be regarded as written *after* the fall of Samaria, as some have thought; for Samaria did not fall rapidly, or easily, but only, as it would appear, after a prolonged resistance (2 Kings 18, 10). Moreover, the phrase "in that day" (v. 5) clearly points to the future; and in the prophetic style has always that force, or nearly so.

5–13. The prophet now turns more directly to address his own people, warning them of the similar punishment which awaits their wickedness. He begins, however, with a promise; but it is for those only who have proved themselves worthy to be the "remnant," and to survive the coming visitation.

5. *crown of beauty*: to them shall Jehovah be what now the Samaritan capital is to its inhabitants, their boast and ornament.

6. Jehovah shall inspire those who administer justice with the spirit of justice, and give strength to the defender of his country who drives back the enemy from the interior to the gate.

7. Comparing this verse with the last, we may infer that there were now two parties at Jerusalem; *one* of the more upright and faithful rulers, whose counsels probably were most in harmony with the inclinations of Hezekiah himself; the *other*, those described in this and the following verses, containing both priests and prophets, or pretended prophets, irreligious and scornful, who looked rather to Egypt than to Jehovah for their deliverance. The latter may have been the more powerful party, and may often have carried the King with them in their policy, even against his own better judgment. Hence the necessity that a period of calamity and punishment should precede the fulfilment of the promise. — *even these*: many rulers and judges of Jerusalem are corrupt, as well as those of Samaria. —

- Priest and prophet stagger with strong-drink,
 They are swallowed up of wine,
 They reel from strong-drink,
 They stagger in vision, stumble in judgment ;
8. For all the tables are full of filthy vomit,
 There is no place *free*.
9. Whom will he teach knowledge,
 And whom will he make to understand instruction ?
Are we weaned from the milk, taken from the breast,
10. That *he gives us* precept upon precept, precept upon precept,
 Line upon line, line upon line,
 A little here, a little there ?
11. Truly by stammering lips and by another tongue,
 Will he speak to this people,

priest and prophet: singled out to represent the whole class of dissolute rulers, and because the vice was in them particularly intolerable. — *reel*: otherwise *go astray*, or *err* in their decisions. The repetitions in this verse express, perhaps, the *frequency and variety of form* of the vicious practice, as well as the prophet's abhorrence. — *vision*: even in the most sacred function of a prophet, that of declaring the Divine will. Isaiah has probably in his view certain false, or pretended, prophets of his time, who claimed the Divine sanction for their counsels, whatever they may have been. — *judgment*: similarly the priests to whom the administration of the Law was committed (Deut. 17, 9; 19, 17), are guilty of drunkenness, in the discharge of their duties. It was against the Law for the priests to take wine or strong drinks, before entering the tabernacle. Lev. 10, 9; comp. Ezek. 44, 21.

9-10 express the spirit in which the rulers receive the expostulations

of the prophet; or perhaps the very words with which they reply to him. Accordingly, *he* will be Isaiah himself: “Whom does he, the prophet, presume to instruct ? Does he treat us like young children, just weaned, with his constant repetition of what we ought to do, *precept upon precept*, &c., to impress it on our memory ?” Or else the verbs *teach* and *understand* may be used impersonally;—Whom will one teach, &c., with the same general meaning. The words *precept upon precept, line upon line* (in the original, *zav lazav, zav lazav, kav lakav, kav lakav*), may be a scornful imitation of the stammering utterance with which the drunken rulers replied to Isaiah's admonitions.

11-13. The prophet's answer to them: Truly your drunken questioning shall be answered by means of those who speak also with stammering lips and an unfamiliar tongue, even by means of the Assyrians ! The latter, though a Semitic race, doubtless spoke a

12. He who hath said to them, This is rest,
 That ye give rest to the weary,
 And this is repose : but they would not hear ;
 13. So that the word of Jehovah hath been to them
 Precept upon precept, precept upon precept,
 Line upon line, line upon line,
 A little here, a little there ;
 That they may walk, and stumble backward,
 And be broken, and snared, and taken.
14. Wherefore hear ye the word of Jehovah, ye scornful men,
 Who rule this people, which is in Jerusalem :
 15. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death,
 And with the grave made a league ;

dialect that differed considerably in pronunciation from the Jewish, and might not be easily understood at Jernsalem. Moreover, their armies contained Medes, and men of other nations, speaking languages quite different from the Hebrew. Comp. Is. 33, 19, and 36, 11, where the same dialectical difference is most probably referred to.

12. *He who*: in apposition with the previous *he*, and meaning *Jehovah*.—*This is rest*: *repose*: This will be your security and your repose, that ye let the people have rest from your warlike preparations. The nation had hardly recovered from the calamities of the Syro-Israelitish invasion; it had for years past been compelled to pay tribute to the Assyrians; yet the King and his nobles were engaged in various warlike enterprises, which doubtless caused both disquiet and exhaustion to the people. Comp. 2 Kings 18, 8; Is. 22, 8; 39, 2; 36, 1. Isaiah has no faith in these defences, which may both arouse the suspicion and

hostility of the Assyrians, and also still further oppress and agitate the exhausted nation.

13. *the word of Jehovah*: *i. e.* the warnings of his prophet have been to them as an unintelligible lesson, the fact being expressed in their own stammering words. — *That they may walk*: the result spoken of as the *intention*, as is not uncommon in Isaiah's style. Comp. 6, 9-10; 30, 1; Hos. 8, 4: meaning, *so that* they will be overthrown and taken captive by their enemies. Their vices and neglect will lead to this final catastrophe, as in the neighbouring kingdom, unless they repent in time.

14. *scornful*: comp. vv. 9-10.

15. *covenant*: *league*: may be understood of the confidence of the rulers in their security under the Assyrian protection; or else referred to the various measures of defence by which they would seek to strengthen themselves in preparation for their already contemplated refusal of the tribute payment. The latter is the more probable.—

The overwhelming scourge, when it passeth through, shall not come unto us,

For we have made lying our refuge,
And in falsehood we have hid ourselves :

16. Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah,
Behold I have laid in Zion a stone,
A tried stone, a precious corner-stone,
A foundation firmly-laid ;
He who confideth shall not flee.

scourge : can only be the Assyrian army, passing through the land on its way to Egypt. They have secured themselves against attacks from it, and therefore have nothing to fear : such is the confidence which the prophet ascribes to them. — *lying* : *falsehood* : of course the epithets of Isaiah himself, put into the mouth of the rulers. He clearly foresees that the grounds of their trust will fail them in the hour of need.

16. *laid in Zion* : or perhaps *appointed* or *constituted Zion*. See Crit. Note. The meaning may thus be, Behold I have made Zion a well-tried, strongly founded, city of refuge; under my protection it shall withstand all attacks, and be the symbol of security to the state ; he who confideth in my assurance, represented by this defence, shall not flee but find safety there. As the Syrians and Israelites were not able to take Jerusalem, so neither shall the Assyrians. — *corner-stone* : the large and massive stone of the best kind, sometimes expensively worked and ornamented, laid at the corner where two walls meet, and connecting them together. Comp. 1 Kings 5, 17; 7, 9. It was considered an important part of the structure, and

hence the figures drawn from it to denote an object or person of great importance, as a chief, or head, of a nation. Is. 19, 13; comp. 1 Pet. 2, 6. Different views have been held as to what the prophet means precisely by the expression, which is evidently figurative. Ewald thinks the *temple* intended, the place of the presence of Jehovah, and an object of the worshipper's reverence and trust. Gesenius, after some of the Jewish commentators, applies the words to Hezekiah, who may perhaps also be alluded to in one or two other places in similar high terms, as 32, 1; 33, 17. But against this view is the fact that it is not in the manner of Isaiah to speak of any *man* as an object of such trust. See 2, 11–32; 5, 15. The King, too, had probably at this time, not less than his nobles, promoted the warlike preparations, the "lying" and "falsehood" before referred to. He, therefore, would hardly be likely to be pointed out by the prophet as himself a ground, or object, of confidence. Some of the New Testament writers apply the words to the Messiah. (Rom. 9, 33; 10, 11; 1 Pet. 2, 6, seq.) They do so, it may be, only by way of accommodation ; or else quote them as the medium of ex-

17. And I will make judgment a measuring-line,
And righteousness a plummet ;
And the hail-storm shall sweep away the refuge of lying,
And the waters shall overwhelm the hiding-place.
18. Thus shall your covenant with death be annulled,
And your league with the grave shall not stand ;
When the overwhelming scourge shall pass by,
Then shall ye be trodden down by it.
19. As often as it passeth by, it shall seize you ;
For morning after morning shall it pass by,
By day and by night ;
And hard-treatment only shall make *you* understand instruction.
- 20 For too short is the bed for one to stretch himself,
And the covering too narrow for one to wrap himself.

pressing or illustrating their own thought, in each case. In judging of the import of the phrase, we ought not to lose sight of the fact that Isaiah speaks of the corner-stone as *already* laid, and prepared to afford refuge in the approaching time of invasion and calamity. Comp. Note on Is. 9, 6-7.

17. *judgment*: i.e. *justice*.—*righteousness*: the most obvious meaning is that the corner-stone shall be well proportioned, and set up with exactness: but probably the idea hidden under this form of words is that Jehovah will now, instead of continuing his previous forbearance, apply the strictest standard of justice to the conduct of the “scornful men” in Jerusalem, and sweep them and their hiding-place away together, as the reward of their iniquities.

18-19. This punishment is to be wrought by means of the Assyrian army, the *overwhelming scourge* which shall pass through the land. The nobles, in their self-confidence

tempted to resist, shall be destroyed. — *trodden down*: the word *overwhelming*, or *overpowering*, as applied to a *scourge*, was inappropriate enough. Here we have the still more incongruous addition of the idea of *treading down*. The scourge being really an *army*, the phrase is full of meaning. The truth is, that the writers of the Old Testament are little careful about the consistency or elegance of their figures, provided the words used convey the meaning with a certain rough power of expression. — *often*: the prophet seems to contemplate repeated invasions; or, perhaps rather, only repeated attacks, in the same invasion. — *hard-treatment*: the instruction which they would not receive from the prophet (v. 9), which they rejected with scorn, shall be effectually given by adversity.

20. Perhaps a proverbial expression, used to denote the perplexed and miserable state into which they have been brought.

21. For Jehovah shall rise up, as at mount Perazim,
 As in the valley of Gibeon, he shall rage,
 To do his deed, his strange deed,
 And work his work, his Strange work.
22. Now therefore mock not, lest your bands become strong ;
 For *of* destruction and what-is-decreed have I heard
 From the Lord, Jehovah of Hosts, concerning all the land.
23. Give ear, and hear my voice,
 Attend and hear my word :
24. Doth the plougher plough all day to sow ?
 Or doth he *continually* open and harrow his ground ?

21. *Perazim* : in the valley of Rephaim (Is. 17, 5). — *Gibeon* : in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, where the Philistines were overthrown by David. 2 Sam. 5, 20, seq.; 1 Chron. 14, 16. So shall Jehovah now arise to confound and destroy the guilty rulers; to do the work so *strange* to him, as being against those whom he would regard as his own people.

22. *bands become strong* : either their Assyrian bondage (comp. 10, 27; 23, 10), or the punishment of their conduct. — *destruction* : *decreed* : *i. e.* the decreed destruction. Comp. 10, 23.

23-29. The prophet illustrates the course of Divine Providence by the operations of the husbandman. The latter performs the different kinds of work required, each in its right time, and due proportion. He does not continue ploughing, and neglect to sow the seed ; and he sows each kind of seed in its proper manner, broad-cast or in rows. So with the after-operation of threshing. Each grain is treated with the necessary regard to length of time and instruments employed. The evident

intention of the passage is to suggest the thought that God also can adapt his visitations to the varying conduct of men; that He also can discriminate, and execute mercy or judgment, lift up or cast down, reward fidelity or punish wickedness in his creatures, each by its suitable instruments and in its due season. The figures of planting, sowing, reaping, threshing, are not unfrequently used in a similar sense, as 40, 24; Jer. 24, 6; Hos. 2, 23; comp. Matt. 3, 12. Thus understood the passage forms a warning and a threat to the same persons as those addressed in v. 7, seq. Another interpretation, adopted by Hitzig and Ewald, makes the husbandman a pattern, or example, to be followed by the sinful rulers. According to this, they are admonished now to adapt their conduct to the necessities of the approaching times of trial; *i. e.* to put away their frivolity, their revelling, and their scorn, and seek to manifest the upright and earnest spirit which alone becomes their position. This explanation seems less in harmony with the preceding verses (14-22), and im-

25. When he hath made the face thereof even,
 Doth he not also cast abroad the dill,
 And sow the cummin, and place the wheat in rows,
 And the barley in the appointed-place,
 And the rye in its border?
26. Thus doth He instruct him aright,
 His God teacheth him.
27. For the dill is not beaten out with a corn-drag,
 Nor is the wheel of a threshing-dray turned upon cummin,
 But with the flail dill is beaten out,
 And cummin with the rod.
28. Bread-corn is trodden out,
 But not perpetually doth one continue to thresh it,

plies, too directly, that the conduct of the rulers has hitherto been correct and timely enough, requiring to be changed only because external circumstances are changed.

25. *dill*: rendered in our English version *fitches*, i. e. *vetches*. The word probably denotes a plant still largely cultivated in India and other eastern countries, and producing a black seed, or grain, which is easily beaten out with a stick, and which is used as a condiment, and medicine. This account agrees with the Septuagint rendering of the word, *μελάνθιον*. Cyc. of Bib. Lit., Art. Ketzach. — *cummin*: mentioned in both the Old and the New Testament, a plant of similar kind, and producing a seed applied to the same uses.

26. The work of the husbandman, the most ancient of all employments, may be regarded as given, or taught, by God himself. Comp. Gen. 3, 17; 19. 23.—*He*: is not in the Heb., but may be supplied from the next clause.

27. The plants producing their seed in pods were beaten out with the hand; the heavier instruments would have crushed and injured the seeds. — *wheel*: or *roller*; armed with iron teeth, and fixed beneath a kind of sledge-shaped waggon, drawn by oxen over the corn. The *corn-drag* was probably a heavy wooden instrument, with pieces of stone, or sometimes iron teeth, fixed into holes underneath, and also drawn by oxen. Both these instruments appear to have separated the corn, and at the same time cut the straw for fodder. Cyc. of Bib. Lit. Art. Agriculture. Mr. Layard says of the threshing which he saw in Armenia:—“The children either drive horses round and round, over the heaps, or, standing upon a sledge stuck full of sharp flints on the under part, are drawn by oxen over the scattered sheaves.” Nin. & Bab., pp. 17-18.

28. *trodden-out*: by means of cattle driven over the corn, as it lay upon the threshing-floor. Deut. 25,

And drive *over it* the rolling of his threshing-dray,
Nor bruise it with his horses.

29 This also cometh forth from Jehovah of Hosts,
He is wonderful in counsel,
He is great in wisdom !

4. The *flail*, or *rod*, was used only for the lighter kinds of seeds, or for corn in small quantities.

29. *This also* : the knowledge, or skill, which leads the husbandman thus duly to adjust his labours, is given by Jehovah. The latter, therefore, must also be able to adapt his government to the several needs of his creatures.

What, however, may be termed the *application* of the allegory is left to the reader, and not carefully pointed out by the prophet. He has either left his design not quite fully carried out, or else only intended to convey his lesson by light and indirect suggestion, rather than by a complete exposition.

§ 8. CHAP. X, 5—XII, 6.

Punishment of Assyrian pride and self-confidence.—Description of the happier Messianic time reserved for the remnant of Israel, and song of thanksgiving to Jehovah.

It appears from x, 9–11, that the present section is later than the Assyrian conquest of Samaria. Further, according to x, 27, Judah is still tributary to Assyria, and hence Hezekiah has not yet revolted, as we know he did soon after the commencement of Sennacherib's reign. (Gen. Introd., § 4.) We have thus the years 722—715, as the limits of the period within which the composition of the section must be placed. Bishop Lowth, and, more recently, Ewald, suppose the invasion of Sennacherib to be within the view of the prophet; Ewald apparently referring the composition of the piece to the time of that event; while Lowth is silent on the latter point. An earlier date seems to be preferable; chiefly because Judah appears here still tributary, while after Sennacherib's accession it was no longer so. Moreover, the overthrow of Samaria is referred to in such a way as to show that it was not long past.

Some additional reasons in favour of an early date have been found in the fact that the figures introduced, as well as many individual words of the section, have more of resemblance to those of pieces known to be of earliest date, or of actual identity with them, than is found in the later compositions of Isaiah. But on such an argument as this it is not safe to lay much stress; although the fact certainly tends to confirm the inference derivable from the considerations previously stated. Knobel

observes, with justice, that it would be strange if the collection of Isaiah's prophecies contained nothing relating to the important, and, for Judah, anxious and threatening, period, immediately following the destruction of the sister kingdom. We shall, therefore, probably be near the truth, if we refer the composition of this section to about the year 722-1, when the destruction of Israel was still recent, and it was perhaps still doubtful what course the Assyrian king might take in reference to Judah.

On the extent and unity of the whole piece, as it is here presented, perhaps no remark is called for. See Introductory Note to § 5.

5. **W**OE to Assyria, the rod of my anger,
And the staff in whose hand is my indignation !
6. Against a profane nation will I send him,
And against the people of my wrath will I give him charge,
To divide the spoil and to seize the prey,
And to trample them down like the mire of the streets.
7. But he meaneth not so,
Nor doth his heart so intend ;
For to destroy is in his heart,
And to cut off nations not a few.

5-6. Assyria is only, in reality, the instrument of the Divine purposes, commissioned to execute punishment on Jehovah's sinful people. — *nation*: the kingdom of Israel as well as Judah may be meant, although the former has just been destroyed, and the tense is future. The future form suits the fact that the punishment of Judah is still unexecuted (v. 12).

7. He does not know that he is God's instrument, but acts as though by his own power and for his own ambitious ends. Thus he exceeds his commission. — *not a few*: this passage and the triumphant career of the Assyrian power is well illustrated by the self-laudatory inscriptions which have been deciphered by Sir H. Rawlinson and Dr. Hincks. See the notice of the inscription of

8. For he saith, Are not my princes altogether kings ?
 9. Is not Calno as Carchemish ?
 Is not Hamath as Arpad ?
 Is not Samaria as Damascus ?
 10. As my hand hath found in the kingdoms of the idols—
 And their graven-images were more than those of Jerusalem
 and Samaria —
 11. Even as I have done to Samaria and her idols,
 Shall not I do thus to Jerusalem and her images ?
 12. Wherefore it shall come to pass, when the Lord shall accomplish his whole work
 On Mount Zion and in Jerusalem,
 I will visit the fruit of the proud heart of the king of Assyria,
 And the pride of his lofty eyes.

the black obelisk, and that relating to Sennacherib's invasion of Judah in our Gen. Introd., §§ 1, 4.

8. *my princes*: his Satraps or Viceroys, often relatives of the monarch, had sometimes the title of King ; hence he is himself termed Great King, or King of Princes (Is. 36, 4; Hos. 8, 10); a later Chaldean ruler is termed King of Kings (Ezek. 26, 7; Dan. 2, 37), a title usually applied by the Hebrews only to Jehovah himself.

9. The monarch appeals, in his pride, to his former conquests ; first mentioning instances in Babylonia and Mesopotamia. — *Calno* : or *Calne* (Amos 6, 2); probably at a later period Ctesiphon on the Tigris, opposite to which Seleucia was built. — *Carchemish* : the important city of Circesium, in Mesopotamia. The others, except Samaria, were in Syria.

10. Having conquered such great

and powerful places, protected by their numerous idol-deities, he is confident of success in the case of Jerusalem.

11. *her idols* : the images (17, 8) of Baal and Astarte, and of the calf worshipped in Samaria. (Hos. 8, 5; 10, 5; 13, 2.) — *images* : such things were not wanting in Jerusalem also, under some of the idolatrous kings (Is. 2, 7-8), and the prophet represents the Assyrian, in his ignorance, as identifying Jehovah with them. So probably 36, 7.

12. *I will visit* : i.e. punish ; the prophet speaks for Jehovah ; or, without giving us any notice, introduces the latter as speaking directly — a transition not uncommon. When the Assyrian has accomplished his work, then his fall shall come. — *fruit* : the purpose, or else the actions, originating in his pride and ambition ; or perhaps only the *boast* of the following verse.

13. For he hath said, By the strength of my hand have I done it,
And by my wisdom ; for I am prudent ;
I have removed the boundaries of peoples,
And plundered their treasures ;
As a valiant man I have cast down the inhabitants ;
14. My hand hath found, as a nest, the wealth of the peoples,
And as one gathereth eggs that are forsaken,
I have gathered all the earth,
And there was none that moved the wing or chirped.
15. Shall the axe boast itself against him that cutteth with it ?
Shall the saw magnify itself against him that moveth it ?
As if the rod should move him that lifteth it !
As if the staff should lift what is not wood !
16. Wherefore the Lord, the Lord of Hosts,
Shall send among his fat-ones leanness,
And beneath his glory shall he kindle a burning, like the
burning of fire ;
17. And the Light of Israel shall be for a fire,
And his Holy-One for a flame,
Which shall utterly devour his thorns and briars in one day.
18. And the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful-field,

13. *boundaries* : incorporated their territories with my own ; in itself a criminal act, as the boundaries of the nations had been appointed by Jehovah himself, according to the Hebrew conception. Comp. Deut. 32, 8. Again, the best illustration may be found in the records of conquests preserved in the inscriptions found in the various Assyrian palaces. — *inhabitants* : literally, those who *sit* or *dwell* ; therefore, perhaps, those who sit on *thrones*. Comp. Ps. 2, 4; 29, 10.

14. None were able to resist—all were absolutely helpless before him.

15. The prophet's reply to the boast. The Assyrian is but as an *axe*, or a *saw*, or a *rod*, in the hand

of the man using it. — *not wood* : the workman that wields it.

16. *Lord* : here and elsewhere is the rendering of *Adonai*. — *fat ones* : his strong and well-fed soldiers ; his army shall be wasted and destroyed. Some understand the *fat limbs* of the Assyrian king himself, with the same general sense.

17-18. *Light of Israel* : Israel's God, who is light and giveth light, shall be as a consuming fire to the Assyrian hosts. The fire shall ascend from the lowliest and most worthless underwood up to the stateliest trees of the forest. — *fruitful-field* : Heb., *Carmel*, a frequently mentioned and very fruit-

Both soul and body shall it consume,
And he shall be like the wasting away of a sick-man.

19. The remnant of the trees of his forest shall be a number,
Which a child may write.

20. And it shall come to pass in that day,
That the remnant of Israel, and the escaped of the house of
Jacob,

Shall not again lean upon him that smote them,
But shall lean upon Jehovah, the Holy-One of Israel, in truth.

21. A remnant shall return, a remnant of Jacob, to the mighty
God;

22. For though thy people, O Israel, be as the sand of the sea,
A remnant of them shall return;

The destruction *is* decreed, overflowing *with* justice;

23. For Destruction and what-is-decreed doth the Lord, Jehovah
of Hosts, execute,
In the midst of all the earth.

ful region of woodland, corn-fields, and vineyards, on the coast. Mr. Stanley observes, "Rocky dells, with deep jungles of cespse, are found there alone in Palestine. And though to European eyes it presents a forest-beauty only of an inferior order, there is no wonder that to an Israelite it seemed 'the Park' of his country." (Sin. & Pal., p. 352.) Comp. 29, 17. — *sick-man*: see Crit. Note.

19. *a number*: so small; though previously an innumerable host, to read, or call, the list of which would be a work of labour to many strong men.

20-21. The mention of the Assyrian remnant suggests the idea, so often occurring in Isaiah (see 6, 13), of the few to be saved among his own people. The latter, taught by their experience, shall no longer

depend on foreign aid, which has only brought fresh calamities; but shall henceforth be faithful to Jehovah. The statement is repeated (v. 21) with greater emphasis on the superior might of Jehovah. There is perhaps an allusion to the child Shear-jashub (7, 3).

22. Yet, the prophet once more affirms, leaving no room for mistake, it is only a remnant that shall escape; however great may now be the numbers of the people. The chastisement necessary to purification (v. 12) is decreed, and comparatively few will survive it. — *overflowing*: or, perhaps, *flowing in*; as a *deluge* of punishment.

23. *midst*: probably meaning *in Zion*, the central point, in regard to the presence of Jehovah, of all the earth.

However the clause (v. 22-3) may

24. Wherefore thus saith the Lord, Jehovah of Hosts,
 Fear not, my people, that dwellest in Zion, because of Assyria ;
 With the rod will he smite thee ;
 Yea, his Rod will he lift up against thee, in the manner of
 Egypt ;
25. But yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease,
 And my anger shall be for their destruction.
26. And Jehovah of Hosts will stir up against him a scourge,
 As in the slaughter of Midian, at the rock Oreb ;
 And *as* his Rod *was* upon the sea,
 So shall he lift it up, in the manner of Egypt.
27. And it shall come to pass in that day,
 That his burden shall depart from thy shoulder,
 And his yoke from upon thy neck,
 Yea, the yoke shall be destroyed, because of fatness.
28. He is come to Aiath !

be taken as parenthetical and explanatory, we cannot help suspecting some corruption of the text. As it stands the prophet turns abruptly—in the midst of his denunciation of the Assyrians, and while meaning to console his own people—to speak of the all but entire destruction which is to overtake the *latter*. And then, in v. 24, he begins again, “Wherefore fear not, &c.” We have, however, translated closely, seeing no means of escape from the difficulty, except by unwarrantable conjectural changes. If we could refer all that is minatory in the two verses to the Assyrians, much of the incongruity of the passage would disappear.

24. The people of Jerusalem are addressed, as representing the entire nation.

25. *indignation* : *i.e.* against Judah ; this will be past, but directed

now against the Assyrians, which may be understood to be expressed by the words, *for their destruction* : otherwise, *against their destroyer*.

26. *Oreb* : Comp. 9, 4 ; and Judges 7, 25. — *his Rod* : Jehovah’s ; so he now lifteth it up against Assyria, as formerly against Egypt, in the destruction of Pharaoh. See Ex. 14, 16.

27. The tribute and submission shall no longer be rendered. — *because of fatness* : perhaps, literally, from the face (or head) of fatness ; the steer, growing fat, shall burst the yoke ; or else, in high-fed wantonness, shall throw it off. Compare the expression, “Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked.” Deut. 32, 15. Our English version, “because of the anointing,” has little meaning.

28–34. We have now a graphic description of the approach of the Assyrian army to Jerusalem, seat-

- He hath passed through Migron,
At Mikmash he layeth up his baggage ;
 29. They have crossed the pass,
In Geba they spend the night,
Ramah trembleth, Gibeath of Saul is fled.
 30. Lift up thy voice, daughter of Gallim !
Hearken, Laisha,
Answer her, O Anathoth !
 31. Madmena fleeth,
The inhabitants of Gebim hasten away.
 32. Yet a day *hath he* in Nob to halt,
Then will he shake his hand at the mount of the daughter of Zion,
The hill of Jerusalem !

tering the population as it comes on. There is no historical account of any such march as this, and most probably a great army would not choose so difficult a line of country, but would advance by the more level region to the westward. The passage may be regarded as the ideal picture by which the prophet realised to himself and his contemporaries the greatness of the danger and of the deliverance. Dr. Robinson identifies several of the names as those of places still existing. Bib. Res., ii. pp. 114–19; 148–9; comp. Stanley, Sin., & Pal., pp. 202–7.

28. *Aiath*: the Ai of Josh. 7; the name has perished and the site is unknown. So with *Migron*, which Mr. Stanley would here take in its general sense of “precipice,” but the *through* is against this.—*Mikmash*: he leaves such things as would encumber him in crossing the *pass*, and on his nearer approach to assault Jerusalem.

29. *pass*: the deep and precipitous valley between Mikmash and

Gibeath; called the “passage of Mikmash,” 1 Sam. 13, 23; comp. 1 Sam. 14, 4–5. — *In Geba*: this might be rendered *Geba is our night-quarters*; and might be taken as the exclamation with which the Assyrian soldiers march up to that place. — *Ramah*: about an hour’s walk distant from Geba. *Gibeath* is deserted by its inhabitants on the approach of the invaders. — *of Saul*: his dwelling place. 1 Sam. 11, 4; 15, 34.

30. *daughter*: *i.e.* people; or the two words may be one name, *Beth-gallim*. — *Answer her, O Anathoth*: otherwise, *poor Anathoth*; so Gesenius; a slight change in the punctuation gives the meaning we have adopted. Anathoth, the birth-place of the prophet Jeremiah, was four or five miles north of Jerusalem.

32. *Nob*: a Levitical city, not far from Anathoth (1 Sam. 22, 11–19), from whence probably Jerusalem could be seen. The Assyrian rests there a day, previous to the assault. — *shake his hand*: in defiance;

33. But lo! the Lord, Jehovah of Hosts,
 Striketh off the chief-bough with sudden-terror,
 And the high in stature shall be cut down,
 The lofty shall be brought low ;
34. And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron,
 And Lebanon shall fall by a mighty-one.

CH. XI.

1. And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse,
 And a branch shall grow out of his roots ;
 And the spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him,
2. The spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
 The spirit of counsel and of might,
 The spirit of knowledge, and the fear of Jehovah.
 His delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah ;
3. He shall not judge by the sight of his eyes,
 Nor decide by the hearing of his ears ;

or actually raise it to make the attack.

33-34. But this highest degree of presumption shall be followed by his own speedy destruction. The Assyrian army is compared to a forest, even a Lebanon covered with stately trees. It is unnecessary to seek for a special interpretation of each figure, as, e.g., *bough*, *the lofty*, *the thicket*: we may understand the whole as saying, simply, that the proud and mighty host shall be destroyed. — *he*: Jehovah; or the verb may be used impersonally; meaning *one*, or *they*, shall cut down. — *mighty-one*: also Jehovah.

Ch. xi. While the great Assyrian forest is thus cut down, the root and stem of Jesse shall spring up into new life. We come again to the prophet's conception of the Messianic age.

1. *And*: the particle evidently connects the chapter with what has

just preceded; as, indeed, the figures of 10, 33-4, seem directly to have suggested this of 11, 1. — *rod*: i. e. a young slender twig, first; becoming, in due time, a strong *branch*. — *stem of Jesse*: though cut down, yet the trunk has retained its living root; the family of Jesse, i. e. the royal house of Judah, fallen as it has been beneath foreign subjection, shall yet rise again, giving birth to the most glorious of its members. The expression naturally calls to mind the power and splendour of the reign of David, but the coming Prince shall be even more illustrious and mighty than he. The general interpretation of the passage is suggested in the note on Is. 9, 6-7.

2. The spirit of Jehovah shall guide him in all his acts.
3. And he himself shall delight to follow its guidance. — *eyes*: *ears*: he shall not judge by mere

4. But he shall judge the poor with righteousness,
And decide with equity for the afflicted of the earth.
He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth,
And with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked.
5. Thus righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins,
And truth the girdle of his reins.
6. Then the wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
And the leopard shall lie down with the kid ;
And the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together,
And a little child shall lead them.
7. The cow and the bear shall feed,
Their young ones shall lie down together,
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
8. And the sucking-child shall play on the hole of the asp,
And on the den of the viper shall the weaned-child stretch
forth his hand.
9. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain ;
For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah,
As the waters cover the sea.

outward appearances, but shall be able to penetrate into what is most secret and difficult, and pass a just sentence in regard to it.

4. With perfect impartiality he shall judge the poor of the earth, not less than the rich and powerful.—*rod of his mouth*: the severe sentence which his mouth shall pronounce.

5. *girdle*: being constantly with him ; as though a portion of his ordinary dress and adornment.

6-7. Under the rule of this Prince of Peace even fierce animals shall lose their natural dispositions, and dwell quietly with those on which they have been accustomed to prey. Beasts of prey shall be satisfied with the food of the domestic animals.

8-9. Venomous creatures shall become harmless, so that young children may be put to play with them. We may understand these statements, not perhaps as giving us the literal expectation of the prophet, but rather as poetically and figuratively descriptive of the happy period to which he was looking forward.—*For*: the grand cause of this prevalence of peace and righteousness : all men shall be possessed of true religious knowledge. Bishop Lowth cites expressions somewhat similar to the foregoing from Greek and Latin writers ; but none in which the moral and religious elements are so clearly made the foundation on which the happiness of the coming age shall rest.

10. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse,
 Which shall stand as a banner for the peoples ;
 Unto him shall the nations seek,
 And his rest shall be glorious.
11. And it shall come to pass in that day,
 That the Lord shall again, a second time, put forth his hand,
 To recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left,
 From Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros,
 From Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar,
 From Hamath, and from the lands of the sea.
12. And he shall lift up a banner to the nations,
 And gather the exiles of Israel,
 And collect the dispersed of Judah,
 From the four quarters of the earth.
13. And the envy of Ephraim shall depart,
 And the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off ;
 Ephraim shall not envy Judah,
 And Judah shall not distress Ephraim.

10-11. The inspired head of this new state, by his wisdom and righteousness, shall draw to him even distant nations : they shall seek judgment and counsel from him ; and, by their embassies and their offerings, make his *rest*, or resting-place, glorious. All the subjects of his kingdom shall be restored to him, even from the remotest places in which they may be held in captivity.—*Pathros*: Upper Egypt.—*Cush*: Ethiopia.—*Elam*: a country to the east of Babylonia, in which the kings of Assyria, according to the inscriptions, waged wars, and whither some of the Jewish captives may have been carried off. Comp. note on 22, 6.—*Shinar*: *Hamath*: the Assyrian provinces of Babylonia and Syria.—Probably

on the destruction of the kingdom of Israel many Jews had fled to Egypt and Ethiopia, both of which would be friendly to the Israelitish people. Many may have been carried away also into the other regions mentioned. — *lands of the sea*: the coasts and islands of the Mediterranean sea. Comp., as before, Joel 3, 4-6.

12. *exiles*: Heb. masculine. — *dispersed*: feminine; meaning, therefore, all the captive men and women of the two kingdoms.

13. The old enmity shall now cease. — *envy of Ephraim*: towards Judah. — *adversaries of Judah*: i. e. those in, or belonging to, Judah, who are hostile to Ephraim. The parallelism requires this interpretation.

14. But they shall fly upon the country of the Philistines, towards the west,
 Together shall they spoil the children of the East ;
 Edom and Moab shall be the prey of their hand,
 And the children of Ammon shall obey them.
15. As Jehovah dried up the tongue of the Egyptian sea,
 So, with his strong blast, shall he shake his hand over the river,
 And smite it into seven streams,
 That a man may pass through it dryshod ;
16. That there may be a highway from Assyria,
 For the remnant of his people which shall be left,
 As there was to Israel in the day of his coming up out of the land of Egypt.

CH. XII.

1. And in that day thou shalt say,
 I will praise Thee, O Jehovah ;
 Though thou hast been angry with me,

14. The reunited peoples of Israel and Judah shall now be powerful enough to assail their old enemies, the Philistines, the Arabs, the Edomites and others.—*fly*: as a bird of prey. Comp. Hab. 1, 8.—*country*: the word is applied sometimes to a ridge or hill (Deut. 33, 12; Josh. 18, 16); it is used here, perhaps, to denote the *territory* of Philistia. The latter was, however, a plain, though with some elevations. Stanley, Sin. & P., p. 255. We might properly enough retain the rendering *shoulder*, or back, on account of the figure; for a bird of prey sweeps down upon that part of the animal attacked. —*children of the East*: tribes of the Arabian desert, who, always hostile, and not to be reduced under any regular government, are only to be

conquered and despoiled. Comp. Jer. 49, 28-9.

15. *dried up*: divided, so that the Israelites passed through.—*tongue*: the narrow *arm* of the sea, as we say. The meaning, of course, is that Jehovah will again show himself as powerful in the coming deliverance, as formerly in the release from Egypt.—*strong blast*: perhaps, by *his hot wind*.—*shake his hand*: i. e. lift it to strike, or to act, to do what is spoken of. Comp. 10, 32.—*river*: the Assyrian river, the Euphrates.—*seven*: perhaps equivalent to *many*; so that, being changed into a number of small streams, it shall become easily fordable.—*dryshod*: literally, *in sandals*; i. e. without being wet above the soles of the feet. See Crit. Note.

Ch. xii. As in the deliverance from

- Thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me.
2. Behold God is my salvation ; I will trust and not fear,
For my strength and song is Jehovah ;
And he will be my salvation.
3. Therefore shall ye draw water with joy,
Out of wells of salvation ;
4. And say in that day, Give praise to Jehovah
And call upon his name,
Make known among the people his deeds,
Proclaim that his name is exalted.
5. Sing praise to Jehovah, for he hath done excellent things,
Be this made known in all the earth.
6. Cry aloud and shout, inhabitant of Zion,
For great in the midst of thee is the Holy-One of Israel.

Egypt (Exod. 15), so now shall the people sing a hymn of praise to their great deliverer.

2. See Crit. Note.

3. The words of the prophet addressed to the people. — *water* : the frequent image of refreshment, consolation, and happiness; in a burning climate far more expressive than with us. Comp. Job 20, 17; Ps. 72, 6; 73, 10.

4. *Proclaim* : or, remind each other.

6. *inhabitant of Zion* : above all others, on account of the signal deliverance experienced.

The objections raised by Ewald to the authenticity of this beautiful hymn, which he ascribes to some anonymous writer who lived after the exile, appear to have but little force. Granting that words and images are found in it different

from those which we meet with in other compositions of Isaiah, are we to suppose that the richly poetical mind of this prophet must ever be repeating itself in its words and figures and turns of thought ? — that it had no power of adaptation, in these matters, to changing circumstances ? Surely the man who could compose the parable of the vineyard; the description of the approach of the Assyrians at the close of the same chapter; of their march to Jerusalem, near the end of the tenth; who could paint the desolation of his country as in 1, 5—9, and 8, 21—2; and its happiness under the reign of the Branch from the stem of Jesse, as in 11, 1—9; might well also be able to compose the hymn which so appropriately terminates this section of his prophecies.

§ 9. CHAP. XIV, 24—27.

Jehovah's oath to crush Assyria.

THIS short section is by Gesenius connected more immediately with ch. x; while Hitzig and Knobel consider it a somewhat later addition by Isaiah to ch. xii. In the arrangement of the prophecies it may have been accidentally cut off from its proper place by the interposition of ch. xiii-xiv, 23. Bishop Lowth, retaining the passage where it now stands, as a part of a prophecy relating to *Babylon*, suggests that by Assyria may here be meant that power, on the ground that Babylon is sometimes called a city of Assyria by classical writers. But then the prophecy of v. 25 finds no kind of fulfilment in connection with Babylon or the Babylonians, as it does in the destruction of the army of Sennacherib; nor can it be shown that Isaiah in any other case confounds Babylon and Assyria in the way supposed. To apply the passage both to the Babylonians and to the Assyrians under Sennacherib, is to attribute a needless confusion of ideas to the Hebrew prophet. Ewald, standing here, as so often elsewhere, alone, puts these verses at the end of our § 14, a combination from which, he thinks, arises at least an excellent sense, and which gives us a prophecy complete in itself, and consisting of four regular strophes. This seems a little arbitrary, but the question is of no great importance. The passage is distinguished by the regularity and completeness of its parallelisms, as well as by its terse energy of expression.

24. JEHOVAH of Hosts hath sworn, saying,
J Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass,
 And as I have purposed, that shall stand ;
 25. That I will crush Assyria in my land,
 And upon my mountains tread him under foot :
 Then shall his yoke depart from upon them,
 And his burden depart from upon his shoulder.
 26. This is the purpose that is purposed upon all the earth,
 And this the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations.
 27. For Jehovah of Hosts hath purposed, and who shall make it
 void ?

And his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back ?

24. Jehovah by an oath confirms the previous assurance of deliverance.

25. *my* : the land and mountains of Judah, under the special protection of Jehovah. See note on 8.6. — *his yoke* : perhaps Judah's; the yoke which he bears ; and as the pronoun really belongs to a noun of multitude (people), it may be changed for the plural form *them* ; so in the next line.

26. *all the earth* : the great Syrian empire, equivalent to the whole earth, as conceived by a Hebrew mind of the time.— So with the expression *all the nations* : the same empire seemed to include within its armies men of all the different nations. — *this the hand* : *i. e.* this the destruction which Jehovah's hand is already extended to accomplish.

§ 10. CHAP. XIX.

Invasion of Egypt.—Humiliation and helplessness of its rulers and people.—Their consequent acknowledgment of Jehovah.

THE period of Egyptian history to which the following chapter relates is one which is involved in great obscurity; the conflicting statements of various ancient authorities making it very difficult to gain any clear idea of the succession of events, or of the relations between Egypt and other countries. A few leading facts may, however, be discerned, and it will be desirable to give a brief outline of these, to serve as a basis for the interpretation of this and the succeeding chapter.

It may with tolerable certainty be shown, that Psammitichus, the first Egyptian ruler who admitted the Greeks into the interior of the country, and employed them in his armies, began his reign in the year 670 b.c. For fifteen years previously to this date Egypt had been divided between a number of petty kings, whose rule is known in Egyptian history under the name of the dodecarchy. Psammitichus was himself one of these kings, and it was by the aid of his foreign auxiliaries that he succeeded in conquering the rest, and making himself master of the whole country. Previously, again, to the establishment of the dodecarchy, we are told that there was an interval of anarchy, which lasted for two years, and which ensued on the death of a preceding king called Sethos. This last event must accordingly have taken place about the year 687; and, as Sethos reigned thirty-one years, we reach the year 718 b.c. for the commencement of his reign. Sethos

must, therefore, have been on the throne at the time of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah, as, indeed, we know that he was, from the history of Herodotus; and he, accordingly, will be the Pharaoh to whom Hezekiah sent ambassadors to ask for assistance against the Assyrians (*Is. xxx, 1-4 ; xxxi, 1-3*). Sethos was a usurper, and one of the priestly caste. We have no information as to how he obtained the throne: but two things appear certain in connection with him; 1st, that he was able to master and oppress the warrior caste, probably by the aid of the population of the towns; and 2nd, that in consequence of the feud between him and the warriors, the latter would not give him assistance in repelling the Assyrians, or, as we may infer, in helping Hezekiah. This alienation between the royal and the military power appears to be alluded to, both in the chapter immediately before us, and in one or two other places.

Before the usurpation of Sethos, Egypt had been subdued and governed by the Ethiopians, of which nation three monarchs, Sabaco, Sevechus, and Tirhaka, held possession of the country, or some part of it, for a period of between forty and fifty years. One of these Ethiopian kings, probably the second, is stated to have retired from Lower Egypt, on account of the resistance of the priests to his authority, and his own unwillingness to adopt severe measures towards them. It was on his withdrawal that Sethos, a member of, and, doubtless, representing, the sacerdotal body, obtained the supreme power, as before stated. The capital city of this monarch was either Tanis, the Zoan of Scripture, or Memphis; while the Ethiopians retained Upper Egypt, with Thebes as its capital, and possessed under Tirhaka an empire that was formidable even to the Assyrians. The fame of this last-named king and his expeditions, which are spoken of as rivalling even those of Sesostris, was widely spread in ancient times. While the Ethiopians reigned at Thebes, and Sethos at Memphis, there is reason to believe that there was, at the same time, at least one

other native dynasty. To this Psammitichus and his father, Necho I, belonged; and the seat of its government was Sais, in the western part of Lower Egypt. The weakness of Egypt, resulting from these subdivisions, and from the dissensions of the ruling castes, is very distinctly alluded to by the prophet.¹

The recent investigations in Assyrian antiquity have not, as yet, thrown much light on the relations existing between Assyria and Egypt in the time of Isaiah, or, indeed, on those of any other period. We know, that long before the establishment of the Hebrew monarchy, some of the Egyptian kings, and in particular the great Sesostris, had carried their arms eastward as far as the Tigris, and perhaps beyond it. The power of the Egyptians, however, for such distant expeditions, was already declining before the Assyrian empire had been founded; and we have no reason to suppose that the two states came into collision until the Assyrians in their turn began to make distant conquests, and to become formidable to the immediate neighbours of Egypt. In the first instance, and for a long period, they would seem to have been at peace, indications of friendly intercourse between them having been found among the Assyrian ruins. Mr. Layard (Nin. & Rem., ii, pp. 8–11; 205–11) gives an account of certain ivories found at Nimroud, on which are figures and hieroglyphics decidedly Egyptian in their character. Some names, also, of Egyptian origin, occur in the lists of Assyrian kings, and *vice versa* (*ib.* p. 215). The period to which some of the objects just mentioned belong is thought to be that of the Jewish king Solomon, the earlier half of the tenth century before Christ.² Subsequent to this time, such notices as we find in the Bible represent the Assyrian and Egyptian powers most commonly in an attitude of hostility to each other. In

¹ Comp. Kenrick, *Ancient Egypt*, ii, pp. 363–377.

² Some other Egyptian relics found on the Khabour, in Mesopo-

tamia, are attributed to the 15th century B.C. Nin. & Bab., pp.

280–282.

the book of Isaiah we have found this very clearly the case. In the reigns of Sargon and Sennacherib, the Assyrians were probably more than once the invaders of Egypt. Esarhaddon, also, is styled in his inscriptions, "King of Egypt and conqueror of Ethiopia" (Layard, Nin. & Bab., p. 620); nor had this ancient enmity between the East and the West ceased in the later Babylonian and Persian times, as the wars of Nebuchadnezzar and Cambyses against Egypt sufficiently attest.

Some illustration of the period to which the chapter before us must belong, may perhaps be derived from certain Egyptian seals discovered by Mr. Layard in the palace of Sennacherib. (Nin. & Bab., pp. 155-8). One of these deserves especially to be noticed here. It is an impression on clay, containing the cartouche with the name of the Ethiopian king Sabaco, read by Mr. Birch, and said to be distinctly legible. On the same piece of clay is found what is believed to be the seal of an Assyrian king, "the device representing a priest ministering before the king." It is supposed that the two seals were originally attached to a treaty of peace between the Egyptians and the Assyrians. The document itself, being of parchment or papyrus, has perished, while the baked clay of the seals has proved an extremely durable material. Supposing the reading of the name Sabaco, and the conjecture as to the use of the seals, correct, we may conclude that they belong to the time of the Assyrian Sargon. That they were found in the palace of Sennacherib is no certain proof that he was the monarch immediately concerned in the treaty, and the fact that the Egyptian name is Sabaco is inconsistent with that supposition. Tirhaka was Sennacherib's contemporary, and Tirhaka's predecessor, Sevechus, or, as he is also called, Sabaco II, to whom the seal is thought to have belonged, must have had for his contemporary, Sargon, the predecessor of Sennacherib. The treaty of peace may thus have been the result of the invasion of Egypt by Sargon, which is alluded to in Isaiah ch. xx.

The question still remains, to what portion of the Egyptian

history should we refer the prophecy before us? Two or three data, presented by the chapter itself, may perhaps enable us to give a not unsatisfactory answer. And first it is to be observed, that the prophet speaks of the distress of Egypt as caused by *Jehovah* coming to that country (v. 1); and again, it is also evident from what direction he conceives of Him as proceeding, for Isaiah states that “the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt” (vv. 16-17). Now it is clearly not to be supposed that the prophet conceived of the little kingdom of Judah as, in itself, capable of being a terror to Egypt. Neither the form of the expression nor the context seems to require, or to justify, such an interpretation. He must, therefore, have had in his mind some greater power, which, acting as Jehovah’s instrument, and in union with his own nation, was to render the latter thus formidable. That power could be no other than Assyria; and the way in which Assyria is mentioned (vv. 22-4), as third with Israel and Egypt, united with them, in the acknowledgment of Jehovah, shows that Assyria was really in the prophet’s mind. It could not, however, have been the Assyrians under Sennacherib, of whom the prophet had this expectation; for he nowhere speaks of that monarch and his hosts except as the cruel oppressors and devastators of his country. We are thus thrown back upon the reign of the preceding Assyrian king, viz. Sargon, for the means of explaining the peculiar combination of Judah with Assyria to which we have referred. We have no reason to suppose that Hezekiah refused the tribute to Assyria before the commencement of Sennacherib’s reign. He was, therefore, probably at peace with the two preceding Assyrian monarchs. Hence it was that he was left unmolested, when Samaria was destroyed; and when Sargon carried out his campaign against Egypt, of which the siege of Ashdod (Is. xx, 1) was the commencement, the Jewish king was also at peace, and, therefore, in alliance, with him. It follows, again, that the danger to Egypt, of which the prophet speaks as proceeding from Judah, must have been

that which threatened Egypt through the invasion of Sargon. And Isaiah indicated Judah as the direction from which it would come, because he looked upon the Assyrian monarch, advancing from that quarter, and in league with the tributary Jews, as the appointed instrument of Jehovah, in inflicting punishment upon the Egyptians.

If this be a correct conclusion, we must infer that the two chapters, xix and xx, are both in time and substance very closely connected, and that the threat of the latter, so far as Egypt is concerned, is but another form of the prediction contained in the former.

The reign of Sargon, as we know, falls between the years 722–715 B.C., and thus coincides with a very troubled and eventful period of Egyptian history. Egypt had, then, in great part, been long subject to the Ethiopians; who, when they withdrew from Lower Egypt, probably did not do so without a struggle. The priestly order at least had been obstinately hostile to them. About the same time (718 B.C.) Sethos usurped his throne, and, supported probably by the population of the towns, entered upon his contest with the military caste. One other dynasty, the Saitic, existed in the country, perhaps more than one; so that the internal condition of Egypt was such as corresponded in a remarkable manner with the main features of Isaiah's prophecy. It may be conjectured that the threatened invasion by the Assyrians, together with the opposition of the native population, had some influence in causing the Ethiopian Sabaco to retire from Lower Egypt.

It can hardly be determined how early in the reign of Sargon Isaiah may have composed the piece. If, as seems in itself likely enough, it was not far from the time of the composition of ch. xx, it would be near the beginning of Sargon's reign; for this monarch appears only to have taken up the plans of his predecessor Shalmaneser, who intended, after subduing Tyre, to continue his expedition by making the conquest of

Egypt. Judging from the difference of tone in reference to the Assyrians, some interval must have elapsed between the composition of the passages included in the two preceding sections and that of ch. xix, xx. Of these chapters, again, it seems most probable that the former is the earlier in the order of composition. This conclusion rests on the fact that in ch. xx the Ethiopians are joined with the Egyptians as their allies. It would be some time before the former people, after their retirement from Lower Egypt, would enter into an alliance with the new Pharaoh; and probably such a union would only be effected when the danger became imminent, and the need of mutual help was clearly seen. Thus we naturally place the passage which speaks of, or implies, this union, later in the order of time than the one which speaks only of the Egyptians; although it may be admitted that the interval between the two cannot have been a long one.

We may add to the foregoing statements that Gesenius finds the application of the prophecy in the state of Egypt at a much later period. He thinks that the time of the dodecarchy and the contests connected with its close are what is contemplated by the prophet; and that the "cruel lord," mentioned in v. 4, is not the king of Assyria, but Psammitichus. In order to adapt the chronology to this explanation, and especially to avoid making the life of Isaiah too long, he finds it necessary to place the reign of Psammitichus between twenty and thirty years earlier than we have done; and refers the prophet's declaration that "the land of Judah shall be a terror to Egypt," not, of course, to the circumstance that from Judah, and in alliance with Judah, the Assyrian power would attack Egypt—which, it may be observed, gives so appropriate and *full* a sense to the words—but simply to the general condition of weakness and internal disunion, into which Egypt had been brought before the reign of Psammitichus; a condition so feeble that even so small a state as Judah was formidable to the Egyptians. The following or 20th chapter the same authority

separates entirely from the 19th, assigning it to the reign of Sargon, and the interval between the years 720-716; which may be received as a correct enough account of its date. There is no *necessity*, however, for separating the two chapters so entirely from each other, and certainly no advantage in so doing, but the reverse; while the chronological difficulties in the way of the transfer of the commencement of the reign of Psammitichus from 670 to 696 B.C. are really insuperable.

The same reference of ch. xix to the time of Psammitichus and the dodecarchy, has led some writers, on the other hand, to deny the authenticity of the passage, and ascribe it to a prophet who lived later than Isaiah. But the internal characteristics of the chapter are strongly in favour of its authenticity, as has been pointed out by Gesenius, Ewald, and others, whose judgment on such a point ought to be decisive.

The conclusions of the last named critic on the interpretation of the chapter do not differ materially from those of Gesenius. Decidedly asserting the authenticity of the prophecy, yet, on the ground of a certain feebleness of style and want of colour which he is able to perceive, Ewald thinks that it must proceed from the latest period of the prophet's life; and accordingly he places it last, in his arrangement of Isaiah's writings. He infers that it was probably composed about ten years after the defeat of Sennacherib's invasion. As to the particular application of the passage, Ewald simply refers it, in a general way, to the troubles of the times of Sethos and the dodecarchy; not venturing, in the absence of clear and certain knowledge of this portion of Egyptian history, upon any more definite interpretation.

1. THE prophecy of Egypt.

TBehold Jehovah rideth upon a swift cloud and cometh to Egypt,

And the idols of Egypt tremble before him,

And the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it.

2. And I will stir up Egypt against Egypt,

That they may fight each-man against his brother,

And each-man against his friend,

City against city, kingdom against kingdom.

3. And the spirit of Egypt shall faint in the midst of it,

And their counsel will I destroy ;

1. For the *title*, see note on 23, 1.

— *Jehovah* : for the probable idea of the prophet, see the introductory

note. The troubles about to be foretold proceed from Jehovah, both because He is the great ruler of the world, and because the danger contemplated in this case came from the direction of Judah, where was the centre of the Divine presence on earth. — *swift cloud* : or, *light cloud* : for the expression, comp. Ps. 18, 10, seq.; 104, 3. — *idols of Egypt* : they tremble at the advent of Him whom they recognise as mightier than themselves. We need not suppose that Isaiah attributed real life or thought to the Egyptian Deities. He expresses himself simply with poetical licence. Comp. Jer. 50, 2.

For the Theological System and Animal Worship of the Egyptians, see Kenrick, *Anc. Eg.* ch. xxi; xxiii. — *shall melt* : this is the first verb in the sentence in which the tense is *future*. Here, as in other cases, where there may be apparent roughness of expression, or inconsistency in the use of the

tenses, it arises from the translation adhering closely to the original forms.

2. *stir up* : perhaps, *arm*. —

Egypt against Egypt : in this and similar expressions we have a direct allusion to the divided state of the country, which has been more fully set forth in the introductory note.

— “Egypt appears on the stage of history from the beginning as an Empire formed out of the Upper and Lower country. The country itself is generally called ‘the two countries.’ The title of their kings down to the latest period ran thus — ‘Lord of Upper and Lower Egypt’” (Bunsen, *Egypt’s place*, i. p. 73). The Hebrew name of Egypt, we may add, is dual in form, and expressive, therefore, of the same fact.

3. *spirit of Egypt shall fail* : probably, the far-famed Egyptian wisdom shall be of no avail. Comp. 31, 2; 1 Kings 4, 30; Acts 7, 20. In their perplexity they shall seek for guidance from objects really powerless to direct them. See note on 8, 19.

And they shall seek unto the idols, and to the soothsayers,
And to the spirit-charmers and to the wizards.

4. I will deliver Egypt into the hand of a cruel lord,
And a strong king shall rule over them,
Saith the Lord, Jehovah of Hosts.

5. And the waters shall fail from the sea,
And the stream shall dry up and be dry;

6. The streams shall become putrid,
The canals of Egypt shall become feeble and dry up,
Reed and rush shall wither.

7. The pastures by the River, by the edge of the River,
And all the corn-land of the River shall be dry;
It shall be blasted and be no more.

4. *cruel lord*: the adjective is singular, though the noun is plural; hence the latter may be understood as the same word is in Gen. 39, 2, seq., not of a succession or plurality of lords, as some have thought, but of one only. This is confirmed by the next phrase, *strong king*: by which, according to the introductory note, the Assyrian king Sargon must be meant. The words have been variously interpreted, of the Ethiopian Sabaco; of the Egyptian Sethos; and, as we have noticed, by Gesenius, of Psammitichus. The Septuagint translators probably referred them to the Ptolemies.

5. Physical calamities, which are also the instruments of the Divine anger, shall not be wanting in the midst of the political confusion and distress. First and greatest of all, the Nile shall fail to rise to its accustomed height, certain forerunner of famine and its dreadful consequences. — *sea*: this word was applied to any large collection of water, as the lake of Galilee; it is

sometimes also used of a large river; here, doubtless, the Nile is meant. Comp. 18, 2; Nah. 3, 8. Perhaps what is now in the prophet's view is the overflowing of the Nile.—Dr. Robinson (Bib. Res., i, p. 542) observes that the Nile is still often called *El Bahr*, the sea, by the Egyptians. — *stream*: sometimes, *river*; may here mean the usual stream of the Nile.

6. *streams*: *canals*: probably both words denote the artificial canals made for irrigation. These, as the water fails, become stagnant and loathsome. The word *canals* might be rendered *Niles*, or *Nile-canals*, as it is the plural of the Egyptian term for the great river. Comp. 23, 3.

7. The whole land, proverbially well-watered and fertile, shall become a desert. Comp. Gen. 13, 10; Deut. 11, 10. — *pastures*: see Crit. Note. — *edge of the River*: although so near the water, they shall not escape. The extensive marsh-districts of Lower Egypt, producing a

8. The fishers also shall mourn,
 And all that cast a hook into the River shall lament,
 They that spread the net upon the face of the waters shall
 languish ;
9. They that work the fine flax shall be confounded,
 And they that weave the white-cloth.
10. Her pillars also shall be struck down ;
 All who work for hire shall be sad in soul.
11. Truly the princes of Zoan are fools,
 The wise counsellors of Pharaoh — their counsel is become
 brutish !

How say ye unto Pharaoh, A son of the wise am I,
 A son of ancient kings ?

luxuriant herbage, afforded excellent
 pasturage.

8. Another distressing consequence of the failure of water. Various writers speak of the abundance of fish in the Nile. From this source employment and profit were derived by large numbers of the people. Comp. Num. 11, 5.

9. Flax was grown in both Upper and Lower Egypt, and was an important object of cultivation. The processes of its manufacture, from the plucking to spinning and weaving, are represented in paintings found in the Egyptian tombs. The *linen* of Egypt was celebrated for its fineness. Comp. Ex. 9, 31; Ezek. 27, 7; Prov. 7, 16. For the productions and arts referred to in this passage, see Kenrick, *Anc. Eg.*, i, ch. ix, x, xii.

10. All classes shall suffer. — *pillars*: the nobles or rulers; comp. Ps. 11, 3; Is. 3, 1, for similar expressions. The phrase *corner-stone*, v. 13, is parallel.

11. *Zoan*: Tanis, on the eastern bank of the Tanitic arm of the Nile.

Considerable remains are still to be seen where it was probably situated, at a place now called San. It was an ancient and important town, and well known to the Hebrews, being one of the Egyptian cities nearest to Palestine. Num. 13, 22; Ps. 78, 12, 43. It was now, perhaps, the chief city of Sethos—unless that distinction should rather be attributed to Memphis. Its princes, or nobles, the counsellors of this monarch, have no advice or help amidst these dire calamities. What the value, then, of their boasted wisdom, or their ancient descent? — *kings*: the priestly caste was the highest in the land, and the king was chosen either from it, or from the warrior caste. In the latter case he was admitted into the sacred order. Hence the priests might be regarded as sons of kings, as the kings might be said to be their sons. The priests came next in rank and honours to the monarch, and were his constant attendants and counsellors. Kenrick, *Anc. Eg.*, ii, ch. xxiv.

12. Where are they, then, thy wise men ? .
 And let them declare now to thee, and make known,
 What Jehovah of Hosts hath decreed concerning Egypt.
13. The princes of Zoan have become foolish,
 The princes of Noph are deceived ;
 And they that are the corner-stone of her castes have caused
 Egypt to err.
14. Jehovah hath mingled in the midst of her
 A spirit of perversity ;
 And they have caused Egypt to err in every deed thereof,
 Like the staggering of a drunken-man in his vomit.
15. Neither is there any deed of Egypt
 Which head or tail, palm-branch or reed, may do.
16. In that day shall Egypt be like women,
 And fear and tremble at the shaking of the hand of Jehovah
 of Hosts,
 Which he shaketh against it.

12. *declare* : they pretended to be able to foretell the future. See Crit. Note.

13. *Noph* : sometimes *Moph* (Hos. 9, 6), Memphis, the principal city of Lower Egypt, on the western bank of the Nile, and next in importance to Thebes. It lay not far from the great pyramids, and was in ruins even in the time of Strabo. Vast mounds, which mark its site, may still be seen. Kenrick, Anc. Eg., i, ch. vi. It has been conjectured that the military caste was here the ruling power. They, too, are deceived : perhaps deeming themselves secure from the Assyrian attack. — *corner-stone* : the two chief or ruling castes, the priests and the warriors. See note on v. 10; also 28, 16. — *to err* : bringing the nation into a state of anarchy and civil war.

14. Folly so extraordinary must

spring from an extraordinary cause. It is *Jehovah* that has caused it. — *mingled* : as though he had prepared for them a strongly intoxicating draught. See note on 5, 22. This *spirit of perversity* : thus administered to them shall make the rulers incapable of directing themselves, or others; or even reduce them to the last and most revolting condition of the drunken man — the image of total helplessness.

15. *deed* : they can do nothing effectual to release themselves from this state. — *head or tail* : i. e. prince or people, the lofty palm, or the humble reed. Comp. 9, 14-15; 10, 33-4.

16. *In that day* : perhaps referring to the commencement of the chapter, particularly v. 4. When the invader comes they shall be incapable of resistance in their perplexity and helplessness. — *shaking of the hand* :

17. And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt,
 Every-one who calleth it to mind shall be afraid,
 Because of the counsel of Jehovah of Hosts,
 Which he hath determined concerning it.

18. In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt
 Speak the language of Canaan
 And swear to Jehovah of Hosts ;
 One shall be called the City of defence.

i.e. by means of the invading forces.
 Comp. 10, 5-32.

17. *Judah*: the tributary and ally of the Assyrian king, and therefore equally an object of fear to Egypt. See introductory note. Were there Jewish soldiers in the Assyrian army ? Comp. 2 Kings 23, 29, where Josiah takes the field, evidently as the ally of Assyria against Egypt.

18-22. Suffering shall be followed by repentance. The prophet anticipates that the Egyptians, struck with fear at the greatness of Jehovah, the author of their calamities, will be brought to acknowledge and to worship him. Comp. note on 23, 18.

18. *five cities*: the numeral may here, perhaps, be used in the indefinite sense of *some*, or *several*. Among the instances appealed to in support of this meaning, the most to be depended on are Gen. 43, 34; Is. 17, 6; 30, 17; 1 Sam. 21, 2. Some refer the expression to five definite cities, viz., Heliopolis, Leontopolis, Migdol, Daphne, and Memphis.—*language of Canaan*: perhaps this expression ought not to be too strictly taken. It may only mean that, along with the knowledge of Jehovah, shall be introduced the

use of the sacred language in which the Divine revelations have been made and are preserved. Or is it that the Jews living in these cities shall be very numerous? — *swear to*: *i.e.* as subjects, taking an oath of allegiance, or religious service. *City of defence*: *i.e.* city defended by Jehovah; under his special protection, as the chief of the Egyptian cities, thus resembling Jerusalem. This meaning is best suited to the context, which speaks of reconciliation and deliverance. It is obtained by a very slight change in the original. At the time of the captivity and afterwards great numbers of Jews settled in Egypt, where they enjoyed considerable privileges under the Ptolemies. It is observable, however, that these settlers rather adopted the Greek language spoken around them, than introduced their own among the Egyptians. The Hebrew Scriptures were also translated into Greek by the Jews of Egypt. Our common version has *city of destruction*; which may mean *city doomed to destruction*. This translation represents the reading now found in most Hebrew MSS. and printed editions;—a reading which is certainly ancient, and which was understood by the Palestinian Jews

19. In that day there shall be an altar to Jehovah in the midst of the land of Egypt,
And a pillar at the border thereof to Jehovah.
20. And it shall be for a sign and for a testimony
To Jehovah of Hosts in the land of Egypt ;
For they shall cry unto Jehovah because of oppressors,
And he shall send to them a saviour and a defender,
And he shall deliver them.
21. And Jehovah shall be made known to Egypt,
And Egypt shall know Jehovah in that day ;
They shall also serve him with sacrifices and offerings,
And vow vows to Jehovah and perform them.
22. Thus doth Jehovah smite Egypt, smiting and healing ;
And they shall return unto Jehovah,
And he shall be intreated of them and heal them.

of the time of Christ and subsequently to refer to Leontopolis, in Lower Egypt. In this city, about the year 180 B.C., a temple was erected by the Egyptian Jews, which was looked upon by the former as a rival of the temple at Jerusalem, and regarded with feelings of great animosity. Hence, again, the Palestinians have been accused of changing the original Hebrew word, so as to make the passage yield the hostile sense. It is probable that they *preferred* the reading giving this sense, and were the means of preserving it, but an alteration of the text is more likely to have been made by their adversaries. It is not probable that the prophet had any definite city in his mind at all ; but that he used the word simply as a symbolical epithet of one of the cities that should be converted to Jehovah. See Crit Note.

19. *an altar* : for sacrifice. — *a pillar* : as a monument to commemorate Jehovah's might, and his

dealings with them. Perhaps the two words should be understood as collectives. Isaiah does not contemplate the erection of a *temple* in Egypt. Such a great central point shall be only at Jerusalem, and thither the people of all lands shall come with sacrifices and offerings : but yet, after the manner of the old patriarchal times, they shall worship also in various places within their own land. — *border* : that is, of Egypt and Judah, proclaiming their conversion to both countries.

20. *a sign* : for their contemporaries. — *a testimony* : to their descendants. — *For they shall cry* : not, as heretofore, to their idol deities, but to Jehovah. Otherwise, *a sign and a testimony that they cried*, &c. So Gesenius, making the expression refer only to what is *past*.

22. *return* : used here even of the heathen, as if they had voluntarily, by their sins and idolatries, departed from their natural Lord and God.

23. In that day there shall be a highway from Egypt to Assyria,
 So that Assyria may come into Egypt,
 And Egypt into Assyria,
 And Egypt shall serve with Assyria.
24. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with
 Assyria,
 A blessing in the midst of the earth,
25. Which Jehovah of Hosts hath blessed, saying,

Here we have some approach to the comprehensive spirit of the Gospel. The same remark may indeed be made of the whole of these concluding verses (18-25), in which we may easily recognise in the Hebrew prophet the forerunner of him who best taught the universality of the Divine providence and love.

23. *highway*: commercial intercourse between Egypt and the East is known to have taken place in the most ancient times. It is alluded to in the Old Testament, Gen. 37, 25; 1 Kings 10, 28; comp. Ezek. ch. 27. The prophet states that these friendly dealings between the Assyrians and Egyptians shall be continued, and strengthened by a higher principle of union; the two nations shall serve Jehovah together. So the words *serve with* should be understood; not, as some, both ancient and modern, authorities have taken them, *the Egyptians shall serve the Assyrians*; which the context hardly allows.

24. *Israel*: the three nations shall be thns united by their common religion and worship.

25. *which*: perhaps, *with which*. vv. 24, 25 may be thus connected;—these nations shall be a blessing in the midst of the earth, which Jehovah hath uttered, saying, &c. The three nations shall be a common object of

blessing to Jehovah. See Crit. Note.
 —— *my people*: *my inheritance*: words not used elsewhere, except of Israel; here applied to Egypt and Assyria to express the equality of their participation in the favour of Jehovah.

Several commentators have disputed the authenticity of the latter part of this prophecy (vv. 16-25). Gesenius is doubtful in particular respecting vv. 18-20; thinking that they may have been interpolated in the time of Jeremiah, and by the party opposed to that prophet, or some member of it, who wished to make the flight of the Jews into Egypt, which Jeremiah resisted (Jer. ch. 42-43), appear to have the sanction of Isaiah. The deliverance spoken of, v. 20, and the city of defence, v. 18, may, in this view, be referred to the escape of the fugitives. This may explain also the statement as to the Hebrew language in Egypt, in v. 18. The great difficulty in admitting the verses mentioned seems to Gesenius to lie in the definiteness of the prophecy. But if the explanation above given be a correct one, that objection loses much of its force; as is, in substance, admitted by Gesenius himself, while stating the difficulties which he feels respecting the passage. On the

Blessed be my people, Egypt,
And the work of my hands, Assyria,
And mine inheritance, Israel.

other hand, the *language* of the latter part of the chapter is allowed to afford no ground for denying that it proceeds from the pen of Isaiah. And, again, it is not easy to see of what use or value such an interpolation could be to the adversaries of Jeremiah; for the passage

clearly speaks of a deliverance to be wrought in Egypt for *Egyptians*, and not for Jewish fugitives. Jeremiah's enemies were also, most probably, not men to think it necessary, for the justification of their flight to Egypt, to be able to appeal to Isaiah, or any other prophet.

§ 11. CHAP. XX.

Symbolical prophecy of the defeat of the Egyptians and Ethiopians by the Assyrians.

WE meet with a general called Tartan under Sennacherib, 2 Kings xviii, 17. If, with Gesenius and other commentators, we take the word Tartan as a title, and not a proper name, the same individual may or may not be meant in the former and in the present passage. Assuming the Tartan of Sargon to be the *same* with the Tartan of Sennacherib, we must suppose that that general, after the death of Sargon, continued under his successor in the command of an Assyrian army. We know nothing further respecting him. Nor, of the expedition to Egypt alluded to in this, as in the preceding chapter, have we, as yet, any direct information, beyond what is found in these two passages. It may be hoped that further knowledge of the Assyrian inscriptions will supply the void. At present we can only combine conjecturally such few data as we possess, and construct with them the merest historical outline. For this end sufficient has perhaps already been said in the Introduction to Ch. xix. The prophet, it is evident, does not, in the present chapter, anticipate any good result for either Egypt or Ethiopia. These two powers, *i.e.* one or more of the contemporary Pharaohs and the Ethiopian king, had probably now united to repel the Assyrians; and it is to be observed that it is not here *Judah* that Isaiah warns against this alliance, but the inhabitants of the *coast* (v. 6), the Philistines, and perhaps the Phœnicians. This is altogether in harmony with what we

have said respecting Judah being at this time in fact leagued with Assyria, and an object of terror to Egypt, rather than, as afterwards, a suppliant for its aid.

The tone of the present passage in reference to the Ethiopians, separates it widely from ch. xviii. The latter, we shall find, belongs to the time of Sennacherib's invasion, some years later, when Isaiah could speak decidedly of the destruction of the Assyrian army. The discomfiture which here he foretells for Ethiopia, he there as positively assigns to the Assyrians. This difference is sufficient to justify us in ascribing the two prophecies to two periods very distinct from each other in their political features. And two such periods we find — first, in the reign of Sargon, between 722 and 715 b.c., during which an invasion of Egypt was accomplished, successful, probably, on the whole, though not attended by any lasting results, in consequence, perhaps, of the speedy death of the monarch*; and, secondly, in the reign of Sennacherib, his son and successor, in which, while pursuing a similar end, the Assyrian army was destroyed.

1. **I**N the year that Tartan came to Ashdod, when Sargon, king of Assyria, sent him, and fought against Ashdod and

1. Ashdod: a Philistine city near the south-west coast of Palestine, towards the frontier of Egypt; known to Greek and Roman writers under the name of Azotus. Acts 8, 40. It was a very strong place, and important from its position, and is therefore besieged and taken by the Assyrians, as a necessary preliminary

to their invasion of Egypt. Herodotus relates that Psammitichus besieged it for twenty-nine years, before he took it. This great strength has been attributed to the fortifications now built by the Assyrians. Kendrick, Egypt of Herod., p. 202. The Philistines, we may infer, were allies of the Egyptians. Comp. v. 6.

* On the possible connection of No-Ammon with Sargon's invasion, see the note on Nahum iii, 8.

2. took it; at that time spake Jehovah by Isaiah, son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from upon thy loins, and put off thy sandal from upon thy foot; and he did so, going
 3. uncovered and bare-foot. And Jehovah said, As my servant Isaiah goeth uncovered and bare-foot, three years a sign and an

As Sargon is said to have *sent* Tartan, it may be supposed that the monarch either remained behind, engaged perhaps with the Phœnician cities, or that he led the main body of his forces more directly into Egypt out of Judah.

2. *sackcloth*: the loose upper, or outer, garment of coarse dark hair-cloth, worn by mourners (2 Sam. 3, 31), and often by the prophets instead of the ordinary outer garment of linen or woollen. Comp. Matt. 3, 24. It was little more than a large square piece of cloth, wrapped round the person and fastened at the waist by a girdle. The same rough material was sometimes worn next the skin (2 Kings 6, 30), but as this is mentioned apparently as something unusual, probably the common practice was to wear the sackcloth garment over the under-dress, the more closely fitting tunic or frock. Hence we find that the words used to express putting on or off the sackcloth are the verbs to gird and to loosen, the same which are used of any other loose, external article of dress, as *e. g.* the sword.

— *uncovered*: the English version has the word *naked*, which is unfortunate, as not correctly representing the action of Isaiah. He merely put off the outer sackcloth, doubtless retaining still the tunic. Comp. 1 Sam. 19, 24; Amos 2, 16; John 21, 7; where most probably the same act of uncovering is denoted. If the original word has

sometimes the sense of our *naked* (as Job 1, 21; Eccles. 5, 14), this sense seems rather to be imparted by the context, than to be inherent in the word itself.

3. *three years*: the English version represents the action as continuing all this time. But this can hardly be the sense, because it implies that the words of Jehovah in v. 3 followed those of v. 2 after so long an interval. It is better to connect “three years” with the *following*, rather than with the preceding words. The meaning thus arising is that the prophet performed the symbolical action once only, viz., at the time of the announcement, and that it then became “three years a sign;” *i. e.* a sign standing for three years, and to be then fulfilled. We have here the only instance of an action properly symbolical performed by Isaiah; although he gives his children symbolical names, in several instances. See ch. 7, 14; 8, 3. With later prophets, as Jeremiah and Ezekiel, this mode of announcement became very common. See Jer. 13; Ez. 12. It seems rather to mark the decay of the prophetic inspiration. Whether the action was really performed in the present and in other instances, or is merely *spoken of* as performed for the sake of illustration, has been doubted. If the latter be the correct view, its three years’ duration would present no difficulty, and perhaps this is the better explanation.— *sign*: sig-

4. omen upon Egypt and Ethiopia ; so shall the king of Assyria lead away the captives of Egypt and the exiles of Ethiopia, young men and aged, uncovered and bare-foot, and with naked
5. back, a disgrace to Egypt. And they shall be dismayed and put to shame, because of Ethiopia their expectation, and
6. because of Egypt their glory. And the inhabitant of this coast shall say in that day, Behold such is our expectation whither we had fled for help, to be delivered from the king of Assyria, and how shall we escape ?

nificant of the disgrace announced.
—*an omen* : as conveying a threat referring to the future So the original word may perhaps best be rendered, in this connection. Comp. 8, 18.—*upon* : perhaps, *against*.

4. *naked back* : treated with the utmost indignity. It is stated that captives are so represented upon the Egyptian monuments.

5. *they* : i. e. the Philistine allies of Egypt and Ethiopia who have trusted to the protection of the latter.
—*expectation* : *glory* : or *boast*; the alliance with Egypt was accomplished; that with Ethiopia had not

perhaps been made, but was sought, and hoped for; hence the words may correspond very exactly to the real position of affairs. Comp. 30, 7.

6. *this coast* : Philistia, and perhaps Phœnicia; the original word denotes sometimes an island, any maritime country, or even a district lying along a river. Comp. 23, 2; 11, 11; Ps. 72, 10.—*how shall we escape* : if the powerful Egypt is to be thus reduced, how shall *we*, the small and insignificant people of Philistia, escape ?

§ 12. CHAP. XXIX.

Prophecy of the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrian army, and of its deliverance.—Rebuke of the unfaithful and disobedient, and announcement of a great moral change.

WE now come to a series of prophecies which may, with the utmost probability, be referred to the time of the great invasion under Sennacherib. Having already (Gen. Introd., § 4) noticed the position of that event in the Jewish history of Isaiah's time, we have little to add here on the same subject. Hezekiah appears to have continued for some years the tribute begun by his father Ahaz. On, or soon after, the accession of Sennacherib, he "rebelled against the king of Assyria and served him not" (2 Kings xviii, 7). He thus exposed himself to the attack of that monarch, who accordingly, in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, "came up against all the fenced cities of Judah and took them" (*ib.*, v. 13). Sennacherib was probably on his way to Egypt, which appears to have recovered from the blow struck by his father Sargon; and to have formed alliances both with Ethiopia and with Judah. (Comp. 2 Kings xviii, 21–24; xix, 7). It was, we may conjecture, the prospect of the powerful support of the Ethiopian and Egyptian kings, that led Hezekiah to refuse longer to pay the tribute. On his way, therefore, to meet the greater powers, Sennacherib passes through Judah, intending most probably to take possession of Jerusalem, and either hold it to protect his return, or to treat it as his father had treated Samaria. On this occasion we read that Hezekiah, terrified at the approach of the invader, sent ambassadors to meet him, offering submission and the payment

of whatever tribute might be demanded (2 Kings xviii, 14–16). Sennacherib accepted this offer, so far as to exact a large sum of money; but yet pursued his purpose of obtaining possession of Jerusalem in addition (v. 17). The Assyrians, however, never did occupy the Jewish capital. Its natural strength, which so long defied the Romans, together with the assurances of the prophet, emboldened Hezekiah to refuse to surrender it, and the Assyrian king was so far baffled.

We find the expectation of a siege very clearly expressed in the chapter before us. It does not appear, however, that this actually took place, further than is implied in the approach of a part of the Assyrian army under Rabshakeh; although siege operations, of which no account has been preserved, may certainly then have been begun. Sennacherib appears to have been diverted from his immediate object by hearing of the preparations of his Egyptian and Ethiopian enemies to oppose him (2 Kings xix, 9), and to have thought it better to pursue his main design, and leave Jerusalem for the present unsubdued. This he did not do, however, without another attempt to gain possession of the city by threats (*ib.*, v. 9, seq.), which were as unavailing as before. The light thrown on these transactions by the recently deciphered inscriptions may be seen in our Gen. Introd., § 4.

In the preceding remarks we have passed beyond the date to which the composition of the present section should be assigned. It is somewhat earlier than the actual time of the invasion. It may be referred to the preceding year (714); and from the allusion to the feasts in v. 1, we may infer that it was written about the season of the Passover. The prophet anticipates that the inroad will take place within a year of the time when he wrote—an expectation which was fulfilled.

For more on the events of the invasion see *infra*, § 17, which contains the historical supplement of Isaiah relating to this subject.

1. WOE to Ariel, Ariel,
The city where David dwelt !
Add yet another year,
Let the feasts go round,
2. Then will I distress Ariel,
And there shall be sighing and moaning,
And it shall be to me like Ariel.
3. I will encamp against thee round-about,
And press upon thee with the mound,
And raise siege-towers against thee.
4. Then shalt thou be brought low,

1. Jerusalem is addressed as *Ariel* : which means, either *hearth of God*, *i. e.* place where the altar fire burns (comp. 31, 9); or else *lion of God*, *i. e.* strong, invincible city, protected by God. Interpreters are, as usual, much divided between the two meanings. The allusion to the word in the next verse would seem to decide the question. — *add* : *year* : literally, *add a year to a year*; which may be taken to mean, add another year to the one just closed. So the next expression, Let the feasts of another year come round, and then expect the Assyrians. The Jewish year commenced with the Passover; and if the prophet wrote this at that point of time, he expected the invasion early in the following year, according to the interpretation of the phrase just stated. The words may, however, be no more than a poetical expression for an indefinite length of time.

2. *I*: *i. e.* Jehovah. — *sighing* : or, preserving the paronomasia, *groaning and moaning*. — *like Ariel*:

i. e. like a hearth where burning takes place, a scene of devastation by fire ; I shall lament as for a city so laid waste. According to this interpretation the words convey a *threat* : according to the other, they contain a *promise* ; viz., the city shall be for me as a strong, unconquered city. The former is preferable, on account of the next verse, which continues the threat ; whereas the promise of deliverance does not come till v. 5. — *to me* : must be the prophet himself.

3. *I*: again Jehovah speaks. — *mound* : literally something set up, perhaps the artificial bank or slope, sometimes formed for reaching the top of high walls ; comp. Is. 37, 33; Ezek. 17, 17 ; otherwise a *station*, *i. e.* of warriors for the siege. — *siege-towers* : so Deut. 20, 20, rendered “bulwarks.” These words again find illustration in some of the Ninevah sculptures. Comp. Layard, Nin. & Rem., ii, pp. 367-8 ; and see Is. 23, 13.

4. Jerusalem shall be as a captive prostrate on the ground, in

From the earth shalt thou speak,
 And low from the dust shall thy speech be,
 And thy voice from the earth, like a spirit-charmer's;
 Even from the dust shall thy speech whisper.

5. Yet the multitude of thy strange-enemies shall be as fine dust,
 And like chaff that passeth away the multitude of the terrible;
 And it shall happen in a moment, suddenly.
6. From Jehovah of Hosts shalt thou be visited,
 With thunder, and with earthquake, and a great noise,
 Whirlwind and tempest and a flame of devouring fire.
7. And they shall be like a dream, a vision of the night,
 The multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel,
 And all who war against her, and her fortress, and besiege her.
8. And it shall be as when the hungry man dreameth,
 And, behold, he eateth,
 But he awaketh and his soul is empty ;
 And as when the thirsty man dreameth,
 And, behold, he drinketh,
 But he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint,
 And his soul is Thirsty ;
 So shall the multitude of all the nations be,
 That fight against mount Zion.

the deepest humiliation and distress. Her voice shall rise feeble and mournful, appearing to come from beneath the earth, like that of a *spirit-charmer*, or necromancer. See note on 8, 19. Gesenius thinks that the *spirit* itself is here meant. The context does not require this; and we may as well avoid ascribing to the prophet what implies a belief, which he probably did not hold, in the actual existence of such beings, and in the reality of the necromancer's art. —— *whisper* : or *chirp*, as in 8, 19.

5. Yet in this extremity help shall come and their enemies shall be scattered.

6. Isaiah appears to have formed a very definite conception of the mode in which the destruction of the besiegers should be wrought: or ought we rather to regard the statement as only the poetical amplification of the thought previously expressed, as in v. 8 ? The prophet's confidence in the safety of the city is clear and immovable.

8. *it shall be* : equally sudden, and with as great disappointment of their expectation of obtaining what they are so eager for, viz., the capture of Jerusalem. —— *soul* : the Hebrew often uses this word, where we should say only *appetite*, or simply *he*, or *he himself*.

9. Hesitate, and be amazed !
 Shew yourselves blinded, and be blind !
 They are drunken, but not with wine ;
 They stagger, but not with strong-drink.
10. For Jehovah hath poured upon you a spirit of slumber,
 And hath closed your eyes, the prophets ;
 And your heads, the seers, he hath covered ;
11. And the whole vision is to you like the words of a sealed book,
 Which they give to one that is learned, saying,
 Read this, I pray thee ; and he saith,
 I am not able, because it is sealed :
12. And the book is given to one that is not learned, saying,
 Read this, I pray thee ; and he saith, I am not learned.

9. Isaiah addresses now his own people ; who, as we may suppose him to conceive, come towards him in amazement at his declaration, and unable to believe him. Their disbelief may relate both to the threatened danger, and to the deliverance ; in short, to the prophet's whole announcement.—*Hesitate*: look on in irresolution and incredulity : perhaps *stare at one another* would best express the original.—The second imperative is probably a threat. So in the next line. Comp. note on 8, 9; and see Crit. Note.—*drunken* : i. e. with fear and astonishment ; as we sometimes say, “paralysed with fear.” The same people are addressed by the prophet, though the pronouns (*ye—they*) change. He first speaks *to* them, and then *of* them. As they are incredulous, blind, insensible to the prophetic warnings, they shall be amazed, blinded, stupified with terror, when the time comes.

10. Further explains the preceding. As the prophecy is addressed not particularly to prophets, or seers, but the whole people, it has

been thought that the words *prophets*, and *seers*, may, in each case, be an old explanatory gloss which has crept into the text. There is, however, no external evidence against them.—*For* : Jehovah has for the time given them up to their own hardness of heart.—*covered* : the orientals cover the head and face to sleep ; so that this expression is parallel with the preceding line.

11-12. The result. Any extraordinary occurrence, physical or moral, of which the immediate cause might not be evident, would be ascribed by a Hebrew mind to God as its author. Hence even such an insensate condition of the nation as that contemplated by Isaiah must have been caused, or permitted, by Him. So St. Paul sometimes speaks of the unbelief of the Jews in his time. Rom. 11, 7-8; 25; 31-32 ; comp. Zech. 14, 13. This verse and the following give a further description of the obstinate insensibility of all classes of the people.—*book* : or *writing*. — *it is sealed* : an absurd reason, and no sufficient exculpation. — *learned* : i. e. ac-

13. Therefore saith the Lord,
 Because that this people draw near with their mouth
 And honour me with their lips,
 But have removed their heart far from me,
 And their fear of me is a precept taught of men,
14. Therefore, behold, I will again act marvellously among this people,
 Marvellously, and wonderfully !
 And the wisdom of their wise men shall perish,
 And the discernment of their discerning men shall be hid.
15. Woe unto them that hide deeply their counsel from Jehovah,
 Whose works are in darkness,
 And who say, Who seeth us and who knoweth us !
16. Ah, your perverseness !
 Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay ?
 That the work should say to him who made it,
 He hath not made me,
 Or the thing formed say to him that formed it,
 He hath not understood ?
17. Is there not yet a very little while,

quainted with writing ; the *learned* will not read, for an absurd reason (as he might break the seal); the *unlearned* is not able; and thus no one receives the warning, and all remain spiritually dead.

13. *taught of men* : not heartfelt, or earnest, but done by rule, as prescribed by men; external and ceremonial.

14. Probably a threat ; I will inflict fresh calamities more strange and severe than those of former times, amidst which their wise men shall be unable to advise or help them.

15. It may be that we have here an allusion to the plan of seeking

assistance from Egypt, which is more directly mentioned in the next chapter. This course was probably urged upon the King by his nobles, and in opposition to the advice of the prophet : it may, therefore, have been kept as far as possible a secret, both that Isaiah might not defeat it by his opposition, and that the Assyrians might not be informed of it.

16. The prophet illustrates their perverse conduct by the figure of the potter and the clay; so 45, 9 ; 64, 8 : shall they, the mere clay in the hands of the workman, resist, or act independently of, Jehovah their maker ?

17-18. A great revolution, pro-

And Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful-field,
And the fruitful-field shall be esteemed as a forest?

18. In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book,
And out of obscurity and darkness the eyes of the blind shall
see.
19. The afflicted shall increase their joy in Jehovah,
And the needy among men shall exult in the Holy-One of
Israel,
20. Because the terrible ceaseth, and the scorner is destroyed,
And all that watch for iniquity are cut off,
21. Who mislead a man in his cause,
And for him that pleadeth in the gate lay snares,
And turn aside the just through falsehood.
22. Therefore thus saith Jehovah to the house of Jacob,
He who redeemed Abraham,
Not now shall Jacob be put to shame,
Neither shall his face now grow pale;
23. For when he seeth his children the work of mine hands in the
midst of him,

bably moral, shall be the ultimate consequence of the ensuing events; as great as if Lebanon with its forests became a *fruitful-field*, literally a *Carmel*. See note on 10, 18; and comp. 32, 15. The phrase, which occurs several times, may be proverbial. In that day the very blind and deaf shall understand the words of the book, or writing, *i.e.*, the moral and spiritual condition of the now unawakened people shall be entirely changed. Comp. v. 11.

19. The oppressed and the poorest shall rejoice in Him who has been their protector.—*among men*: *i.e.* the neediest man.

20. *terrible*: *scorner*: perhaps only epithets of the powerful and oppressive nobles.—*watch*: who not only commit iniquity, but so far find

delight in it, as even to watch eagerly for it.

21. Further designation of the same; they pervert justice by violence or fraud — *mislead*: this might be rendered, either *make a man sin in a cause*; *i.e.* by procuring false testimony, or bribing the judge to decide unjustly; or else, *condemn a man in a cause*, *i.e.* unjustly condemn.—*gate*: *i.e.* before the judge; the *gate* of an oriental city being the *forum*, where trials took place, markets were held, &c. See Ruth 4, 11; Prov 31, 23.

22. After the great revolution referred to, v. 17, Jehovah shall be gracious to them; they shall not be ashamed of their own conduct, or afraid of punishment.

23. *children*: When the depopu-

They shall sanctify my name,
And sanctify the Holy-One of Jacob,
And fear the God of Israel.

24. They also that erred in spirit shall gain discernment,
And the rebellious shall receive instruction.

lated city has again recovered its numbers, and the days of renewed happiness and peace have arrived, then shall they truly fear and

worship God, having, through chastisement, gained discernment and instruction.

§ 13. CHAP. XXX—XXXII.

THE contents of the present section sufficiently show that it belongs to the same period of the history as the last. It was probably written somewhat later than ch. xxix; for, if we are right in supposing v. 15 in that chapter to be an allusion to the alliance with Egypt, it would appear, from the character of the allusion, that the prophet, when writing that verse, had not, as yet, the full or positive knowledge of what was proposed by the rulers which appears in the present section. Thus ch. xxix will belong to an early stage of the negotiations with Egypt, while, in the chapters now before us, we see the transaction far advanced. Jewish ambassadors are already on their way to Egypt;—see xxx, 2–6; xxxi, 1. If, then, ch. xxix belongs to about the time of the Passover of the year 714, we may ascribe the present section to a rather later period of the same year;—yet not much later, because the prophet still speaks (xxxii, 10) of some delay, which is to intervene before the actual arrival of the invading enemy. We may on the whole, therefore, suitably refer the composition of this section to the *summer* of the year 714,—a date with which the allusion to the fruit-gathering and the vintage (xxxii, 10) very well agrees, as does the position of these chapters between xxix and xxxiii.

The section may be conveniently subdivided into three portions, each of which forms a tolerably distinct and self-consistent whole; viz. (a) ch. xxx; (b) ch. xxxi–xxxii, 8; (c) xxxii, 9–20.

The last of these passages alone seems here to require any

special notice. It is remarkable as being addressed more particularly to the women of Jerusalem, who, probably, troubling themselves little about the political signs of the times, were living, many of them, their usual life of frivolity and self-indulgence. Comp. ch. iii, 16–23, and the remarkable picture which Isaiah there gives of the manners and dress of the “daughters of Zion.” In the present passage, the prophet forcibly reminds his countrywomen of what most nearly touched each of them that happened to be the mistress of a household, or the mother of a family ; viz., the failure of food through the devastation of the land by the Assyrians, and the consequent impossibility of either cultivating the ground or gathering its produce. Knobel conjectures that this portion of the prophecy may have been occasioned by some concourse of Jewish women to the temple at some festive season ; but of this we can know nothing certain.

§ 13 (a). — The prophet denounces the alliance with Egypt, and reproves the prevailing inclination to war, and distrust of Jehovah.

CII.

XXX.

1. **W**OE to the rebellious children, saith Jehovah ;
To take counsel, but not from me,
And to make a treaty, but not by my spirit,
That they may add sin to sin !
2. Who are going down to Egypt,

1. *To take* : is explanatory of the previous *rebellious*, defining more exactly the manner of the latter.—*make a treaty*: literally, *to pour out a libation*; alluding to the sacrificial ceremony, by which a covenant or treaty was ratified. Comp.

Ex. 24, 8 ; Zech. 9, 11.—*that they may* : the consequence again spoken of as the *intention*; meaning, so as to add.

2. *going* : the participle present, indicating that the messengers are already on the way.—*Egypt* : for

And have not asked of my mouth,
To become strong by the strength of Pharaoh,
And to take refuge in the shadow of Egypt !

3. But the strength of Pharaoh shall be your shame,
And the taking-refuge in the shadow of Egypt your disgrace :
4. For his princes are at Zoan,
And his messengers reach unto Hanes.
5. Every-one shall be ashamed of a people that doth not profit
them,
Which serveth not for help, nor to profit,
But for shame, and also for reproach.

6. The prophecy of the beasts of the south : —

the historical circumstances see the introductory notes to §§ 10, 11; also Gen. Introd., § 4.

3. The prophet constantly speaks of Egypt as unable to resist the Assyrian power. Weak through internal dissensions, alliance with it will only bring disappointment and injury.

4. *his*: *Zoan*: may mean that the ambassadors of Judah have already arrived at Zoan (see 19, 11), on their errand to Pharaoh. — *Hanes*: probably Heracleopolis, in Egyptian *Hnes*, or *Ehnes*, which again may have been the *Anysis* of Herodotus (2, 137). It was situated on the west of the Nile, and may, as well as Zoan, have been the seat of a reigning sovereign. Hence the Jewish ambassadors came to Hanes also to seek for help. Such is in substance the explanation given by Gesenius, and followed by some later interpreters. Its correctness has been disputed, chiefly on the ground that *his* cannot refer either to Judah or Hezekiah, neither of whom have been mentioned in the prophecy. Ewald refers the pronoun

to *Pharaoh*, which, grammatically, is easy. According to this we may translate: *Though his princes are at Zoan, &c.*; i.e. though his dominions form a great and powerful country, extending from Zoan to Hanes. Knobel, also referring the pronoun to Pharaoh, understands the former clause thus: For his princes, of the warrior caste, refuse to assist the king of Egypt, in his wish to aid Judah; they remain quietly at Zoan, and make no effort to collect the necessary troops. The latter clause, by a slight change of reading, the same author renders: *His messengers will exert themselves in vain*; i.e. the messengers of Pharaoh to the rebellious warriors will fail to persuade them to act. See Crit. Note. On the whole, little stress need be laid on the abrupt introduction of the pronoun *his*, which is not unparalleled. See 8, 21. As the verse stands in the text, it is explanatory of the preceding verses. Hezekiah's princes are at Zoan and Hanes, or will soon be so, and hence the prophet's warning.

6. *prophecy*: *south*: a title, per-

Through a land of distress and trouble,
 Whence *come* the lioness and the lion,
 The viper and the flying serpent,
 They carry upon the backs of asses their wealth,
 And on the bunches of camels their treasures,
 To a people which will not profit them !

7. For Egypt is vanity, and to no purpose will they help ;
 Wherefore I name it, Arrogance that sitteth still.

8. Now go, and write it upon a tablet before them,
 And inscribe it in a book ;
 That it may be for an after-day,

haps, to what follows, such as we have 23, 1. If so the words may be from the hand of the collector of the prophecies, and seem to be wrongly placed here; for the passage stands in such close connection with the preceding 5 vv. that any division here is hardly admissible. If the words be not a mere *title*, they may be rendered : *As to the burden of the beasts of the south*; i.e. which the beasts carry going southward to Egypt, alluding to the presents carried by the Jewish ambassadors.—*land of distress*: the desert region between Palestine and Egypt, destitute of water and abounding in dangerous animals. Comp. Deut. 8, 15; Jer. 2, 6. The folly of applying to Egypt is what is still uppermost in the prophet's mind. It is seen in the fact that such dangers are incurred as are here mentioned, without any useful result.—*wealth* : *treasures* : the presents sent to Pharaoh and his princes. Comp. 1 Kings 15, 19.

7. *Arrogance* : the original is *Rahab*, probably representing an Egyptian name of similar form and

sound. It appears to have been used as a poetical appellation of Egypt, and occurs also Ps. 87, 4; 89, 10; Is. 51, 9. The Hebrew writers, adopting the Egyptian term, seem to have attached to it the meaning derived from their own language. *Arrogance*, or perhaps *boastfulness*, is thus the particular idea intended to be suggested in the present connection. Egypt may boast and promise, the prophet intimates, but will do nothing effective. So the Egyptians allowed their ally, the king of Israel, to be destroyed. The Assyrian general expresses a similar estimate of the value of their assistance. Is. 36, 9.

8. It is the prophet that receives this command to give a durable form to his announcement, that its truth may be seen hereafter when the thing has come to pass.—*tablet* : perhaps some brief inscription on this is meant, as the epithet given to Egypt in v. 7; while in the *book* or *book-roll*, the prophecy itself at length was to be written. Comp. 8, 1-16. Or the two lines may only express the same thing, the repe-

For a testimony for ever.

9. For a rebellious people is this,
Lying children,
Children who would not hear the law of Jehovah ;
10. Who say to the seers, See not,
And to the prophets, Prophecy not to us right-things,
Speak unto us smooth-things,
Prophecy deceits ;
11. Depart from the way, turn aside from the path,
Make the Holy-One of Israel to cease from before us.
12. Wherefore thus saith the Holy-One of Israel,
Because ye have refused this word,
And trust in oppression and perverseness,
And lean upon it ;
13. Therefore shall this iniquity be to you

tition being due to the parallelism.
— *testimony*: a very slight change in the punctuation of the Hebrew gives this meaning, which is expressed by some of the ancient versions. See Crit. Note.

9. *For*: assigns the reason for the command just given to the prophet. Our English version renders *That*, &c., making what follows the *substance* of what was inscribed. The prophet says that the wickedness and obstinacy of his nation have rendered necessary the course which he feels himself directed to take.
— *law*: they violate the first precept of their Law, by their faithlessness to Jehovah manifested in seeking aid from Egypt.

10. *See not*: i.e. see not as you do, announcing only misfortune.
— *deceits*: or falsehoods; promises of success which will not be fulfilled. So very much with the intermediate *right-things*: and *smooth-things*: Isaiah puts these requests into the

mouths of the faithless people, as though spoken by them. He evidently means by this form of expression to characterise their conduct as being what such requests would well express.

11. *the way*: i.e. the way hitherto pursued by true prophets, exhorting to obedience and trust; reminding their people of Jehovah. Or else *way* may simply mean religion, or religious obedience. Comp. the New Testament expression, Acts 19, 9; 23.

12. *this word*: probably the prophet's exhortation to faithful reliance on Jehovah.— *oppression*: may allude to the means by which the valuable gifts sent to Egypt were obtained; or to the oppressive efforts, and exactions among the people, to put the country into a state of defence against the Assyrians.— *perverseness*: their policy, so contrary to the will of Jehovah.

13. The edifice of their policy

Like a broken-part ready to fall,
Swelling out in a lofty wall,
Whose breaking cometh suddenly, in a moment.

14. And he shall break it like the breaking of a potter's vessel,
Dashing *it* in pieces, he shall not spare ;
So that there shall not be found among its fragments
A piece to take up fire from the hearth,
Or to lift water from the pit.
15. For thus saith the Lord, Jehovah, the Holy-One of Israel,
In returning and rest shall ye be saved,
In quietness and in confidence shall be your might,
And ye would not.
16. But ye said, No, for on horses will we flee,
Wherefore ye shall flee !
And on a swift-horse will we ride,
Wherefore swift shall your pursuers be !
17. One thousand *shall flee* at the rebuke of one ;
At the rebuke of five ye shall flee
Until ye are left
Like a signal-staff on the top of the mountain,
And like a banner upon the hill.

shall fall down and overwhelm them.
Their alliance with Egypt will only have the effect of bringing the Assyrians more surely upon them, without really securing the wished for aid.

14. *he shall break* : *i. e.* the enemy shall destroy the wall; or the verb may be used impersonally ; so with the next verb. For the figure, comp. Ps. 62, 3. — *Dashing* : literally *dashed*; meaning the potter's vessel.

15. *returning* : *i. e.* turning back and *resting*, or ceasing, from their warlike preparations, and their application to Egypt, and by quiet trust in Jehovah: by these means would they certainly save themselves from much of the impending calamity. See note on v. 3.

16. *on horses* : with our own and the Egyptian cavalry will we resist the Assyrians. — *shall flee* : as fugitives before the enemy. See note on 31, 1.

17. The completeness of their defeat is here expressed : even at the *rebuke*, or cry, of *one* Assyrian a thousand shall flee ; and at the cry of *five*, so utterly shall they be dispersed that two shall not be left together, but each shall be so separated from his companions that he shall be as solitary as a signal-staff, or a banner (comp. 5, 26), standing alone on a monntain top. To insert *ten thousand*—thus : At the cry of five, ten thousand shall flee — as some interpreters do, seems altogether unnecessary, and very arbitrary.

18. Yet, therefore, will Jehovah wait to be gracious to you,
And therefore will he rise up to pity you ;
For a God of justice is Jehovah,
Blessed are all they that wait for him !
19. For, O people in Zion, that dwellest in Jerusalem,
Thou shalt not weep continually ;
He will be very gracious to thee at the voice of thy cry,
When he heareth it, he will answer thee.
20. And the Lord will give you bread in adversity,
And water in affliction ;
Nor shall thy teachers any more hide themselves,
But thine eyes shall behold thy teachers.
21. And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying,
This is the way, walk ye in it,
When ye turn to the right,
And when ye turn to the left.
22. Then shalt thou treat as unclean thy graven-image covered
with silver,
And the golden plating of your molten-image ;
Thou shalt cast them away as an unclean-thing,
Thou shalt say to it, Begone.
23. Then will he give rain for thy seed,

Deut. 32, 30; Lev. 26, 8, afford but slight grounds for such a change. So, however, Bp. Lowth and Gesenius.

18. Yet in this extremity will Jehovah be merciful and spare those who will call upon him. — *therefore* : or *on this account*; i.e. because of the distress spoken of in the previous verses. This having been endured and led the people to repentance, will also arouse the pity of Jehovah. — *wait* : giving them time to repent.

20. *bread in adversity* : bread, or food, in the siege, it may be, sufficient to save them from perishing by famine. So the next clause. Our

English version, by inserting *though*, materially alters the sense. — *thy teachers* : after the repentance and reformation of the people, the prophets shall no more be neglected or persecuted by their rulers and forced to hide themselves, but shall show themselves openly and be received with reverence.

21. They shall also hearken to the voice of direction or warning uttered behind them to guide them into the right way.

22. Idolatrous objects and practices shall be abandoned.

23. This renewed fidelity shall be rewarded by physical prosperity of various kinds. — *rain* : the *early*

With which thou shalt sow the ground ;
 And bread, the produce of the ground,
 And it shall be rich and nourishing ;
 Thy cattle shall feed in that day in a large pasture.

24. The oxen and the asses that till the ground shall eat salted provender,
 Which hath been winnowed with the fan and with the winnowing.
 25. And there shall be upon every high mountain,
 And every lofty hill,
 Channels, streams of water,
 In the day of great slaughter, when the towers fall.
 26. The light of the moon also shall be as the light of the sun,
 And the light of the sun shall be sevenfold,
 As the light of seven days,
 In the day when Jehovah bindeth up the wound of his people,
 And healeth the blow with which he hath smitten them.
 27. Behold, the name of Jehovah cometh from afar,

rain, which fell soon after the seed was sown, in October and November. The *latter rain* came in the following spring, previously to the ripening of the corn. Both were essential to an abundant harvest.

24. Even the cattle shall share this felicity, being fed with grain mixed with salt; food which could only be given to them in the most plentiful seasons. Asses were employed in agriculture, as well as oxen. (Deut. 22, 10; Ex. 23, 12.)

25. The very mountains and hills, otherwise barren and desolate, shall be well-watered and fruitful. — *in the day, &c.*: perhaps referring to the same overthrow of the disobedient Jewish rulers and people, as is predicted in v. 16; when, or after, this has taken place shall come the more happy time. Lowth, followed

by Gesenius and others, understands the overthrow of Sennacherib to be meant; and, by *towers*, the great men, or commanders of the Assyrian army.

26. The heavenly bodies shall partake of the restored glory of God's people, shining with greater splendour than ever before. — *as the light of seven days*: these words are very probably interpolated, and may have originated in a gloss written in the margin. They are not found in the Septuagint, and injure the parallelism. — *bindeth up the wound*: the suffering people is conceived of under the image of a wounded man. So Is. 1, 5. — *blow*: *i.e.* the effects of it.

27. Jehovah is poetically represented as coming first like an approaching storm, ready to break

His anger burneth, and heavy is the uprising-cloud ;
 His lips are full of indignation,
 And his tongue like a devouring fire.

28. His spirit, like an overwhelming torrent,
 Shall reach unto the midst of the neck ;
 To shake nations in the winnowing-fan of destruction,
 And *to be as a bridle leading astray on the jaws of peoples.*

29. Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a solemn-feast is
 kept,

And gladness of heart, as when one cometh with the flute
 To the mount of Jehovah, to the rock of Israel.

30. And Jehovah shall make *them* hear the majesty of his voice,
 And the stroke of his arm he shall show,
 With hot anger, and a flame of devouring fire,
 The scattering-blast, and rain, and hail.

over the Assyrian host, and then under other figures, each significant of the destruction now more distinctly contemplated. Comp. vv. 30-31. —— *name of Jehovah*: perhaps only a poetical expression for Jehovah himself. —— *uprising-cloud*: the English version has here *burden*, without much meaning. The word expresses a *lifting up*; which may be understood here as the *uplifting of himself*, as the gathering cloud of the tempest, gradually rising till it bursts. The inconsistency of the figures in this and the next verse is obvious, but is not, as we have already noticed, uncommon in the prophet's style. See note on 28, 18.

28. *neck*: the image of extreme danger. Comp. 8, 8. The figurative language following evidently describes the destruction and dispersion which await the invading army. —— *a bridle*: not to guide, but the reverse. —— *nations*: *peoples*:

the various races incorporated in the great Assyrian army, as in 5, 26.

29. *Ye*: at the destruction of their enemies and for their own deliverance Israel shall sing songs of joy and thanksgiving, as in the night of the Passover, that feast which celebrated an equal deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Such is most probably the allusion. —— *with the flute*: referring to those who came up at the sacred seasons to Jerusalem, usually with some accompaniment of music and singing. Comp. Ezra 2, 65; Ps. 122, 1-4.

30. The joyful singing of the preceding verse recalls the terrible thought of Jehovah's voice; perhaps the thunder of the storm before alluded to (v. 27), and here more fully depicted. —— *stroke*: the unseen power by which the enemy will be struck down, or the lightning *flame* of the next line, the instrument of the divine wrath.

31. For at the voice of Jehovah shall Assyria be dismayed ;
With the rod he shall smite.
32. And every passing-over of the appointed Rod,
Which Jehovah maketh to descend upon him,
Shall be with timbrels and with harps ;
And with the shock of battles shall he fight against them.
33. For Tophet hath already been ordained,
It is also prepared for the king ;
He hath made deep and wide its circuit,
Fire and wood hath he provided abundantly,
The breath of Jehovah like a torrent of brimstone doth kindle it.

Ch. § 13 (b).—The folly of trusting in Egypt.—Happier times shall follow
the calamities of the invasion.

XXXI.

1. **W**OE to them that go down to Egypt for help,
And rely upon horses,
And trust in chariots, because they are many,

31. *he shall smite*: *i. e.* Jehovah.
Comp. v. 32. — *rod*: the same
means of destruction, under a dif-
ferent figure.

32. *passing-over*: *i. e.* over the
host of the enemy: or else, *wherever
the appointed rod passeth*. — *with
timbrels*: *i. e.* shall have this joyful
accompaniment on the part of the
rescued people. — *shock of battles*:
literally, *battles of shaking*, *i. e.*
battles which shake. The meaning
may be, with repeated strokes of the
arm, raised to beat down the enemy,
again and again.

33. *Tophet*: *i. e.* abomination; a
place so called in the valley of Hin-
nom, near Jerusalem, where human
sacrifices had often been offered to
Moloch; hence an unclean abomin-
able place, fitting site for the funeral
pyre of the heathen Assyrians and
their king. Comp. 2 Kings 23, 10;
Jer. 7, 31. In later times, under

the name of Ge Hinnom or Gehenna (*i. e.* valley of Hin.), it was made the
receptacle of the various refuse of
the city, to consume which fires
were kept constantly burning.
Hence the origin of some figurative
expressions in the New Testament;
e. g. Matt. 5, 22 — “Gehenna of fire”
— Eng. version “hell fire.” Mark
9, 43-4. Perhaps we should render,
a Tophet; and the meaning may be,
that on a mound, as on an altar, the
bodies should be consumed, as
though in sacrifice. — *He hath
made*: or, impersonally, *one hath
made*, *i. e.* *it is made*. The Hebrews
did not burn, but buried, their dead;
that the Assyrians are to be differ-
ently treated, expresses the wretched
ignominious end to which they are
to be brought.

Ch. xxxi, 1. *horses*: *chariots*: the
chief strength of the Egyptian armies
lay in these. In their level and fertile

And in horsemen, because they are very numerous,
But look not unto the Holy-One of Israel,
Neither seek Jehovah !

2. Yet He also is wise, and will bring evil,
And will not take back his words ;
But will arise against the house of evil-doers,
And against the help of them that work iniquity.
3. For Egypt is man and not God,
And their horses are flesh and not spirit ;
Jehovah shall stretch forth his hand,
And the helper shall stumble,
And he that is helped shall fall,
And they shall all perish together.
4. For thus hath Jehovah spoken unto me,

country horses could easily be used and maintained. Comp. Ex. 14, 9; 15, 19; 1 Kings 10, 26-28. Greek writers also speak of the great numbers of the Egyptian horses and chariots. In the more hilly country of Palestine they were not so numerous, nor so readily available; but the Jews showed themselves at times eager to obtain this kind of force, and were now the more so probably from their knowledge of the constitution of the Assyrian armies. Chariots of two wheels, drawn by two horses, and carrying one warrior besides the charioteer are represented on the Egyptian monuments. On the Assyrian sculptures we see them sometimes with three horses, and three men; they were often very richly carved and ornamented. Kenrick, Eg., i, pp. 195, seq., 224, seq.; Layard, Nin. & Rem., ii, p. 349, seq.

2. *He also*: *i.e.* as well as the much-famed Egyptian priests; and not only so, but he can execute what his wisdom suggests: he takes

not back his words, but lets them work out the end designed. — *house of evil-doers*: probably the Jewish rulers, many of whom are destined to fall in the coming war; — *house*, perhaps in the sense of *race*, or *body*. — *help*: must refer to the Egyptians, whom probably the prophet thinks of as a wicked and idolatrous people.

3. Egypt is feeble, and unable to do anything in opposition to the Divine will, with all her horses and chariots. The prophet seems here to anticipate some effort by the Egyptians to resist the Assyrians in the field, although in the previous chapter he does not expect even so much from them. But it will be useless; helper and helped shall fall together.

4. *For*: this word must be connected less with what *immediately* precedes, than with the more distant declaration of v. 2; or, at least, it must be explained by the main thought of the prophecy, viz., that it is needless and useless to go to

As the lion growleth, and the young-lion, over his prey,
 When a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him,
 At their voice he is not dismayed,
 Nor by their tumult disheartened ;
 Thus shall Jehovah of Hosts come down
 To fight over mount Zion, and over her hill.

5. Like birds hovering,
 So will Jehovah of Hosts protect Jerusalem,
 He shall protect and deliver, spare and rescue.

6. Return unto him against whom ye have deeply rebelled,
 O children of Israel.
 7. For in that day shall a man cast away
 His idols of silver, and idols of gold,
 Which your own hands have made — your sin.
 8. Then Assyria shall fall by a sword of one not man,
 And a sword of one not Man shall devour him ;
 . He shall flee before the sword,

Egypt for help. It is so, because Jehovah has promised himself to protect Jerusalem. Bp. Lowth cites a passage from Homer (Il., 12, 299), which is strikingly similar to this figure of the lion fearless over his prey. Such comparisons, drawn from wild animals, are, as we might expect, frequent in Hebrew poetry. They are freely used even in reference to Jehovah; serving, in truth, as a natural medium of clear and forcible expression to the prophet in addressing his people. The essential thought is simply that Jehovah shall defend the nation fearlessly and successfully.

5. The same remarks are applicable to this verse. The sense is not completely expressed, but is yet plain enough;—As birds hover over their young on the nest, to protect them from harm, so shall Jehovah protect

the holy city. The comparison of v. 4 is expressive of Jehovah's might and fearlessness; that of v. 5 more of his affection towards his people. The figure of the latter verse is similar to the one in Deut. 32, 11; Matt. 23, 37.—*spare*: implies that it is in reality Jehovah who, by the Assyrians, threatens Jerusalem: but he will not let the punishment altogether destroy them.

6. The previous thought of the power and love of Jehovah suggests the exhortation to return to him.—*ye*: Heb. *they*; or else, *against whom the children of Israel have, &c.*

7. *For in that day*: in the day of trial it will be found that the idols have no power to help, and will be cast away.

8. *not man*: *i. e.* of God. — *not Man*: the more general term might be rendered *not human*. — *young-*

And his young-men shall be for tribute.

9. Through terror shall he pass over his rock,
And his captains shall be dismayed at the banner,
Saith Jehovah, whose light is in Zion,
And whose fire is in Jerusalem.

CH.
XXXII.

1. Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness,
And princes shall rule with justice ;
2. And they shall each be as a hiding-place from the wind,
And a covert from the tempest,
As channels of water in a dry-place,
As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.
3. The eyes of them that see shall not be dim,
And the ears of them that hear shall attend ;
4. The heart also of the rash shall gain knowledge,
And the tongue of stammerers hasten to speak plainly.
5. No more shall the fool be called noble,

men : the flower, as it were, of the Assyrian army. — *tribute* : meaning that the captives taken shall be made to pay a kind of tribute of personal service; *i.e.* they shall become slaves. Comp. Deut. 20, 11; Josh. 9, 21.

9. *over his rock* : shall not stop to take refuge amidst his rocks, or any other place of security near at hand; but, in his terror, flee beyond them. Comp. Judges 20, 47; Jer. 48, 28. — *banner* : *i.e.* of the pursuing Jews. — *light* : *fire* : those of the altar; meaning, Jehovah who is worshipped in Jerusalem.

Ch. xxxii, 1. Happier times of moral and religious purity shall succeed to the defeat of the enemies of Jehovah and his people. The change shall extend to various classes, from the king downwards. Perhaps we should understand Hezekiah to be the king meant by the prophet. But most probably his statement is more

general. We may paraphrase his words ; — In those coming days of righteousness, king and princes shall rule justly, and show kindness to the poor.

2. *hiding-place* : *i.e.* a shelter to those who seek their aid. — *water* : again the image of what is most refreshing and grateful. The princes shall be as water and the coolest shade, in the midst of a thirsty desert, — expressive of whatever is most delightful to the traveller in the East.

3-4. Evidently to be understood in a moral sense.

4. *rash* : literally, the *hasty*; *i.e.* regardless of the claims of religion and duty. — *stammerers* : may allude to those who actually mocked at the law, or at the prophet in his warnings, as in 28, 14, 22; comp. 29, 20. — *hasten* : be ready, or eager.

5. In the better times juster ideas of right and wrong conduct shall be

- Nor the fraudulent be said to be generous ;
6. For the fool speaketh foolishness,
And his heart worketh iniquity,
To work impiety, and to utter error against Jehovah,
To empty the soul of the hungry, and cause the drink of the
thirsty to fail.
 7. And *as to* the fraudulent, his instruments are evil,
He deviseth craftily,
To destroy the poor by words of falsehood,
Even when the needy pleadeth a just-cause.
 8. But the noble deviseth noble-things,
And he by noble-things shall stand.

Ch.
XXXII. § 13 (c).—Warning addressed to the women of Jerusalem.

9. **Y**E careless women, arise and hear my voice,
Ye confident daughters, give ear unto my speech !
10. One year more, the confident shall be troubled ;
For the vintage shall fail,
The fruit-gathering shall not come.

formed—men shall be named according to their true character, without flattery. — *fool*: in the religious sense, as in Ps. 14, 1; 74, 18. The religious, impious, man, whatever his rank, shall not be esteemed noble.
Comp. v. 6.

6. *For* : to be referred to the first line of v. 5; as the following verse (7) to the second line. The impious man acteth far otherwise than to deserve the epithet of noble.— *soul*: see note on 29, 8.

7. This verse is parallel to the last. See preceding note. The *fraudulent* using deceit and force against the poor, to deprive him of his right, is little entitled to be termed *generous*. The prophet has evidently in his view corrupt oppressive rulers.

8. The contrast ; — *shall stand* : perhaps the meaning is, *he upon noble things shall stand firm*; i. e. shall be steadfast in carrying out the noble purposes which he devises.

10. *one year more* : literally, *days upon a year* ; i. e. in the days following the close of the present year; or, in the ensuing year. The phrase is thus nearly parallel to that in 29, 1. It must be confessed that the words are indefinite and, therefore, doubtful ; but it is evident that Isaiah, throughout this three-fold prophecy, is expecting the speedy approach of the Assyrians, and we may, therefore, very properly understand this expression in the limited sense now given to it. — *vintage* : *fruit-gathering* : as the wheat harvest is omitted, it has been suggested that

11. Tremble, ye careless ; be troubled ye confident ;
 Strip, and make you bare,
 Gird *sackcloth* upon your loins ;
12. Smiting upon your breasts for the pleasant fields,
 For the fruit-bearing vine.
13. Upon the ground of my people thorns and briars shall come up,
 Even upon all the houses of joy of the rejoicing city.
14. For the palace shall be forsaken,
 The tumult of the city shall be made desolate,
 Ophel and the watch-tower shall be for dens for ever,
 A joy of wild-asses, a pasture of flocks :

the prophet was looking for the arrival of the Assyrians in the summer or autumn of the ensuing year. The wheat harvest would, at that season, have been secured, and is therefore not mentioned, but the later fruitage and vintage would be endangered by the approach of the enemy. If we may venture to found the inference on the phrase “one year more,” it will follow that this prophecy must have been delivered in the summer of 714 B. C., a year, that is, before the anticipated arrival of the enemy.

11. *strip* : take off your gay clothing, and put on the garments of mourning, the coarse sackcloth. See note on 20, 2.

12. *smiting upon your breasts* : the sign of the bitterest lamentation. Comp. Nahum 2, 7.

13. *thorns* : *briars* : the land shall lie uncultivated.—*all the houses of joy* : it is not necessary to suppose that Isaiah here means that the whole city shall be destroyed ; he may perhaps only refer to houses with their gardens in the immediate neighbourhood of Jerusalem ; — country houses have been supposed,

the frequent scenes of festivity and luxury.

14. *palace* : may be taken in a collective sense, and be only another form of expression for the statement of the preceding verse. — *tumult* : i. e. the city, full of tumult, shall become desolate ; many of its inhabitants being slain, or carried off, and silence reigning where once was the proud and noisy multitude. —

Ophel : meaning a *mound* or *hill*, but probably used here as the proper name of the southern portion of the mount of the temple. Manasseh built a wall round it and fortified it. (2 Chron. 33, 14.) The want of the article affords little objection, in the poetic style of the Old Testament, to this explanation. Mr. Stanley appears, however, to be doubtful on this point. Sin. & Pal., p. 498.

— *tower* : may be the same which is mentioned in connection with Ophel, Neh. 3, 26-7. These out-lying portions of the city shall be destroyed by the Assyrians, and the ground shall become the resort of wild animals, and the pasture of flocks. — *for ever* : to be taken in the limited sense of the next verse ;

15. Until a spirit be poured upon us from on high,
And the wilderness become a fruitful-field,
And the fruitful-field be esteemed a forest.
16. Then shall justice dwell in the wilderness,
And righteousness abide in the fruitful-field;
17. And the work of righteousness shall be peace,
And the effect of righteousness quietness and trust for ever.
18. My people shall dwell in an abode of peace,
And in secure habitations, and in tranquil resting-places;
19. But the hail-storm shall bring down the forest,
And the city shall be greatly humbled.
20. Blessed are ye who sow beside all waters,
Who send forth the foot of the ox and the ass.

—“until,” &c. This is no uncommon use of the words in Scripture. Comp. Ps. 21, 4. The phrase implies that the change next spoken of will occupy some time in its accomplishment.

15. *Until a spirit*: i. e. until a great spiritual revolution has taken place. For the next figure, see 10, 18.

16–18. *Then*: the prophet’s mind now looks onward to the happier time to come, his previous allusion leading him to give a fuller description of the great change in the same figurative language. The meaning is simply that in Judah, throughout the whole land, righteousness and its results shall be found.

19. This verse—of the first part of which it is hardly possible to give a close translation—may be understood of the destruction of the Assyrian host. While Judah is ultimately saved, the enemy shall fall

like the leaves of a forest under a storm of hail. Comp. 10, 33; 30, 30, for parallel expressions. Interpreters differ as to what is meant by *the city*: according to Bp. Lowth and Gesenius it is Nineveh, which from the connection seems the most likely; while Ewald and Knobel understand Jerusalem. See Crit. Note.

20. Blessed are ye who, living at a distance from these scenes of battle and desolation, pursue your peaceful agricultural labours, untroubled by the presence of an enemy.

The Assyrians, it would appear, were chiefly concerned in this expedition to gain possession of the fortified cities of Judea, including Jerusalem. Hence many parts of the open country were probably left undisturbed by them.—*foot*: put for the animal itself, of which the foot is the organ of motion.

§ 14. CHAP. XVII, 12—XVIII, 6.

Sudden destruction of a great army in Judea, and announcement of the event to the ambassadors of the Ethiopians.

THE first three verses of this section have been regarded as a mere fragment, unconnected with what follows them, as well as with the preceding prophecy. The best recent Commentators, however, attach these verses to ch. xviii, as they are here placed. The greater completeness of the whole section as it thus stands, in comparison with the fragmentary and unintelligible character of either piece taken separately, is manifest. The conception of the prophet probably is that a multitudinous host has arrived among the hills of Judea ; and that at the rebuke of Jehovah it is about to be utterly destroyed (ch. xvii, 12–14). This event he announces (ch. xviii) to the ambassadors of the Ethiopians, now in Jerusalem, calling on them to take the news to their own nation, and invoking, moreover, all the inhabitants of the world to be witnesses of the catastrophe (v. 3). The unity of the section is thus apparent ; ch. xviii proclaiming the overthrow of the army of whose presence we are informed in the preceding verses.

The turn which our English version gives to ch. xviii, making it declare that God “will destroy the Ethiopians,” appears to be an entire misunderstanding of the prophet’s intention. This interpretation, which has had few modern advocates, is founded on a wrong conception of the meaning of the particle *Ho*, at the beginning. That word, though often to be rendered *Woe*, as in xxxi, 1, yet does not always introduce

a *threat*, or *denunciation*; but is also sometimes expressive of *grief*, as 1 Kings xiii, 30; or it is, again, a mere particle of *appeal*, or *exhortation*, calling attention to some statement following, as Is. lv, 1; Zech. ii, 6 (Heb. 10). Hence the passage before us may properly be taken as directed *to*, not *against*, the Ethiopians; and it simply calls upon them to hear what the prophet has to announce, respecting the destruction of their enemies.

The application of ch. xvii, 12–14 to the Assyrian invasion under Sennacherib, which is admitted by Bishop Lowth, must, of course, be extended also to ch. xviii. This view of the passage is much more probable than that which refers it to the Syro-Israelitish invasion. The army of these comparatively small powers could hardly have been spoken of by the prophet as “many peoples,” or their noise as that of “nations,” resounding “like the noise of mighty waters;” nor would their hasty retreat from Judea have been alluded to in the terms of xviii, 3–6, which evidently contemplates some great and terrible overthrow of a numerous host.

The present section, then, belongs to a time when the Ethiopians were seeking to strengthen themselves against the Assyrian attack by an alliance with Hezekiah. The same motives which led the latter to ask aid from Egypt, as in the preceding section, would lead him to receive willingly any such proposal from the more southern power. We have already seen (introd. to ch. xix) that the Ethiopians were at this time a powerful nation, and probably held a large part of Egypt in subjection. As to the difference of feeling towards them which distinguishes the present section from ch. xx, we have observed (introd. to ch. xx) that that difference makes it necessary to refer the two passages to separate periods in the connected history of Assyria and Ethiopia. The earlier passage, which anticipates the discomfiture of the *Ethiopians*, and distinctly implies the futility of any reliance upon their aid, belongs to the time of Sargon’s

comparatively successful invasion. The later passage, now before us, which calls upon the messengers to return to their country with the news of the Assyrian overthrow, and as distinctly implies a friendly feeling on the part of the prophet and his nation towards Ethiopia, may best be referred to the time, some years afterwards, when Tirhaka took up arms to resist Sennacherib's threatened attack, and when Egypt, Ethiopia, and Judah, were probably leagued together, and equally interested in the defeat of the common enemy. This later period can be no other than that which is indicated in Is. xxxvii, 9, where we see the Ethiopian king actually under arms to meet the Assyrians. The year of the great invasion, 713 B.C., may therefore be regarded as that of the composition of the present prophecy. It may have been written in the immediate prospect of the approach of the invaders, or in their very presence ; — a supposition which is favoured by the animated character of the description with which the passage opens.

CH.
XVII.

12. **H**O, a sound of many peoples !
They resound like the resounding of seas,
And the noise of Peoples rageth like the noise of mighty
waters ;
13. Like the noise of many waters the Peoples rage :
But He rebuketh them and they flee afar,

12. The prophet has in his view the multitude of the Assyrian army, either now assembled upon the hills of Judah, or soon to be so. — *many peoples* : see note on 5, 26.

13. *He rebuketh* : the verb in the original is without any nominative expressed, and may be used, as in other such cases, impersonally. What

must have been really in the writer's thought, however, as the great Author of the coming destruction, is evident enough. Our common version inserts the word *God*, but the form in the text is nearer to the original. — *they flee* : *are driven* : the present tense is here better than the future, as the occurrence is con-

And are driven as the chaff of the mountains before the wind,
And as the stubble before the whirlwind.

14. At the time of evening, and behold terror !

Before the morning he is no more.

This is the portion of them that spoil us,
And the lot of them that plunder us.

CH.

XVIII.

1. Ho, land of the winged bark,
Which borderest the rivers of Cush !

ceived of as actually passing ; it is also closer to the original. — *chaff*: *mountains* : driven by the more violent wind of the exposed hill side; image of the complete and helpless dispersion of the Assyrian armies.

14. *evening* : *morning* : sudden and rapid in its execution, and, therefore, the more terrible to contemplate. For the expression, comp. Ps. 90, 6.

Ch. xviii, 1. The prophet now addresses the Ethiopian messengers, and calls upon the inhabitants of the world to see and hear what Jehovah has done. — *winged bark* : this rendering, which is defended by Ewald, well suits the context, and has certainly the merit of being very poetical. It has the support of the Septuagint and the Chaldee versions ; neither of which, however, it must be confessed, represents correctly the general meaning of the verse. The allusion may be to the swift vessels of papyrus, with their wing-like sails, again mentioned in the next verse. See Crit. Note for other renderings.

borderest : i. e. which liest along, or alongside. Crit. Note. — *rivers of Cush* : by Cush in this connection is doubtless meant Ethiopia, over which Tirhaka at this time reigned.

By the *land* bordering (or *beyond*; so Ges.) the rivers of Ethiopia, can hardly be meant, however, the latter region simply, but rather some portion of it remarkable for its rivers. We find such a portion in what is called in later times, from its situation between the Nile and the Astaboras, the *Island of Meroe*. This was a very important province of the Ethiopian dominions. It was distinguished in the earliest times for its commerce and wealth, and it contained, perhaps, now the chief seat of the Ethiopian Government. Hence, probably, Isaiah's special address to it, as the representative of the whole empire. The *rivers* will be those just named, with their tributaries. Meroe appears to be denoted in other places by the word *Seba*, which, as well as Meroe, is expressive of its well watered position. Is. 43, 3; 45, 14; Ps. 72, 10. The kingdom of Queen Candace (Acts 8, 27) probably consisted, in great part, of this so-called island region. Considerable remains of ancient temples and other buildings have been met with in these parts, and the site of the chief city identified. The name of Tirhaka has also been found on the inscriptions. Kenrick, Anc. Eg., i, 10-16.

2. Which sendest forth messengers on the sea,
 In vessels of reed on the face of the waters ;
 Go, ye swift Messengers, to a nation tall and comely,
 To a people terrible from its beginning and hitherto,
 A people very mighty and victorious,
 Whose land streams divide.
3. All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth,
 When he lifteth the banner *on* the mountains, ye shall see,
 When he bloweth the trumpet, ye shall hear.
4. For thus saith Jehovah unto me,
 I will be quiet, I will look on in my dwelling-place,
 At the time of bright heat, in the sun,
 At the time of the dew cloud, in the heat of harvest ;
5. But before the harvest, when the bud is perfected,
 And the flower shall become the ripening grape,

2. *messengers*: *i. e.* those sent to Jerusalem, who would travel easily and rapidly down the Nile, here termed a *sea*, in the light *vessels of reed*: *i. e.* of papyrus, used both in Egypt and Ethiopia. Some would refer the word *sea* to the Red Sea; but comp. Is. 19, 5.—*Go*: the prophet calls on them to take the great tidings back with them to Ethiopia.—*tall and comely*: Herodotus (3, 20; 114) speaks of the Ethiopians as the “largest and handsomest of all men;” Isaiah (45, 14) alludes to their stature. So other ancient authors, as well as modern travellers. See Crit. Note.—*terrible*: *mighty*: *victorious*: ancient authors, as we have noticed before, speak of Tirhaka as a great conqueror, and of his subjects as a mighty and unconquered nation.—*streams divide*: in allusion to the branches of the Nile and its tributaries.

3. *When he lifteth*: Jehovah is meant. The expression is figurative

and simply means, *When the proper time arrives*, or, *when Jehovah gives the signal*. So the next line.

4. *quiet*: *look on*: *i. e.*, wait for a while, and allow the plans of the enemy to approach maturity. The *duration*, perhaps also the *season*, of the delay may be meant by the following obscure and difficult words; the summer months being intended by *the time of bright heat*: if so, *in the sun*, will denote the *daytime*; and *time of the dew cloud* the *night*. The whole thus states that Jehovah will wait quietly, day and night, through the hot season, while the vines are growing and giving the promise of an abundant vintage. The real meaning veiled under these terms comes out in the next two verses.—*harvest*: perhaps here in its ordinary sense of the corn harvest; but in the next verse, *the vintage*; so 16, 9. Comp. Jer. 48, 32.

5. The rendering given is as close and literal as possible. The mean-

He shall cut off the shoots with pruning-knives,
And the branches he shall take away and scatter.

6. They shall be left together to the birds of the mountains,
And to the beasts of the earth ;
The birds shall pass the summer upon them,
And all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them.
7. At that time shall a present be brought to Jehovah of Hosts,
From a people tall and comely,
And from a people terrible from its beginning and hitherto,
A nation very mighty and victorious,
Whose land streams divide,
Unto the place of the name of Jehovah of Hosts, mount Zion.

ing seems clear and self-consistent. The prophet in his previous words, describing the summer season, and also in the present verse, has really in his mind the Assyrian host, with its ambitious designs. The latter are especially meant by the growing vine, which is not to be allowed to ripen its fruit, but is to be cut down and scattered upon the mountains. The invaders shall not be permitted to succeed beyond a certain point. The figures are a little intermingled, but no confusion or obscurity results.

6. *birds : beasts* : in these expressions we see what is really meant by the *shoots* and *branches* of the previous verse. Not only shall the invasion be baffled, but the Assyrian soldiers shall be slain, and their bodies become the food of wild

animals. This food shall be so abundant as to last through the whole year, summer and winter.

7. The event shall so strike the Ethiopians with wonder and awe that they shall send gifts to Jerusalem, in acknowledgment of its great Cause. The repetition of the epithets is probably to mark the honour rendered to Jehovah. His glorious deeds are acknowledged even by so famous and mighty a nation. The terms of respect and praise in which the prophet speaks of the Ethiopians are remarkable, and harmonise with all that we know of the reputation of that people in ancient times. See Kefrick's Egypt, ii, pp. 365-6. Comp. Notes on 19, 22; 23, 18. For an actual example of what is here anticipated, see Acts 8, 27.

§ 15. CHAP. XXII, 1—14.

Anticipated siege of Jerusalem. — Alarm of the people and preparations for defence. — Reproof of their distrust of Jehovah.

THE contents of the present section sufficiently indicate the period to which its composition belongs. The prophet represents the city as filled with tumult, and its inhabitants as gone up to the housetops, doubtless to look forth towards the adjacent hills and valleys. We know not the cause of this excitement. It may have been occasioned by the approach to Jerusalem of part of Sennacherib's army under Rabshakeh (2 Kings xviii, 17); or by fugitives from a distance coming in crowds towards the capital for safety, as the Assyrians drew nearer. In either case the description must belong to the year of the invasion. The general tone of the section, and particularly vv. 6-7, favour the former supposition, and lead us to think that the invaders were very near. There is, in the original, an alternation of tenses, from preterite to future, and *vice versa*, with an apparent intermingling of historical statement with prophetic anticipation, which makes it difficult to give a clear, self-consistent translation of the passage, and may account for the fact that some interpreters regard it as throughout a prophecy, while others take it as referring almost entirely to past events. The latter view is not supported by sufficient evidence. We know of no historical fact by which vv. 2-3, for example, can be explained, as referring to what had already occurred, when the prophet uttered or wrote the passage; nor would it be allowable on the ground of those verses, to *assume* that Hezekiah sent against the Assyrians an

army which fled without coming to an engagement, a fact which could hardly have dropped so entirely out of the recorded history of the period.¹ The translation here given, is based on the supposition that the section is descriptive, partly of present realities, and partly of the future. The mingled joy and tumult of the people, the preparations for defence, the reckless feasting, probably of some of the ruling class, may be taken to represent what Isaiah actually saw as he spoke or wrote; while much of the remainder of the piece, though apparently equally real and present to his mind, may be understood to express what was shortly to come to pass. The use of the preterite tense may arise here, as in other cases, from the certainty or confidence of the prophet's anticipation.

We may, perhaps, venture upon a more definite explanation, by connecting the passage with 2 Kings xviii, 14–16. We there read that Hezekiah offered to renew the payment of tribute, and that Sennacherib accepted the offer. Under what influences the Jewish king may have consented so far to yield, we do not know; but at all events a large part of the people of Jerusalem would be glad to have peace, and the promise of personal safety, on any terms. Hence perhaps the rejoicing, and feasting, in celebration of the treaty. The exultation was not to last long, however; for soon a portion of the Assyrian army under Rabshakeh, would come to demand an entire surrender. From the latter cause may have sprung the alarm and the preparations for resistance. Isaiah, to whom such an ignoble peace would be little welcome, rebukes the feasters in the midst of their exultation, at the same time announcing the presence of the Assyrian troops, and pointing out the uselessness of defensive measures, in the absence of true religious trust. He combines his notice of the rejoicing with his reference to the danger and alarm, as though all existed at the same moment. Perhaps they did so; but it may also be that

¹ Such, however, is the supposition of Ewald, Geschichte, iii, p. 331.

the joy at the supposed peace was the earlier in the order of time, and was rudely interrupted by the sudden appearance of the hostile force, demanding harder terms. The prophet does not care to discriminate exactly between the different periods, but blends all together, past, present, and future, in one graphic and animated picture, difficult, indeed, for us, of these latter days, to understand, but still evidently full of truth and power.

The remainder of the chapter, relating to the fall of Shebna, is the only instance in Isaiah's writings of a prophecy directed against an individual. It probably belongs to the same period of time as the part here translated. Shebna may have been obnoxious to Isaiah, either because he was a leading minister of the irreligious policy which Isaiah opposed, or because he had been the means of bringing about the temporary submission of Hezekiah to Sennacherib. As the portion relating to him is so purely personal, and does not immediately concern the Assyrians, it may be dismissed without further notice.

1. THE prophecy of the valley of vision.

TWhat aileth thee now,
That thou art wholly gone up to the housetops ?

1. The title, as in other cases, is most probably from the pen of some collector or copyist of Isaiah's writings. The expression is taken from v. 5, and means valley of prophetic vision, or prophecy.—*valley*: may perhaps denote the city of Jerusalem, especially that part of it which lay between mounts Zion and Aera. Or, shall we suppose some neighbouring valley to be meant, whither

Isaiah often resorted to meditate on his prophecies and receive his divine inspiration, and which, therefore, was to him pre-eminently a “valley of vision ?”—*thee*: Jerusalem is addressed, or rather the personified population of that city. In their alarm, or curiosity, they have ascended the flat roofs of their houses to look forth on the Assyrian forces. See introductory note. The form

2. Thou that wert full of noise,
A tumultuous city, a rejoicing city !
Thy slain are not slain by the sword,
Nor are they dead in battle.
3. All thy leaders flee together,
By the bowmen are they taken ;
All of thine that are found are taken together,
Who fled afar.
4. Wherefore I say, Look away from me,
I will weep bitterly;
Press not near to comfort me,
For the desolation of the daughter of my people ;
5. For a day of trouble, of treading-down, and of perplexity,
Hath the Lord, Jehovah of Hosts, in the valley of vision.

of the question implies censure of the spirit and conduct of the people.

Comp. 3, 15; 22, 16.

2. *wert full*: the original is without the verb. It is doubtful whether we should supply *wert* or *art*; as the latter is somewhat inconsistent with the alarm prevailing at the moment of the prophet's address. The alarm and excitement of some, with the joy of others, may, however, be at once present to his thoughts. — *rejoicing* : we have anticipated the explanation of this word in the introductory note. It may be referred to the feelings of people and rulers at the reconciliation with Sennacherib recently effected ; or, possibly, again, it may have arisen from the security supposed to be given by the alliance with Egypt. In either case the prophet would not share it. — *not slain with the sword* : this somewhat abrupt declaration may best be understood of the famine and pestilence that will be caused by the siege. Or the expression may be connected

with the destruction of the Assyrians, 37, 36, and with the sickness of Hezekiah, 38, 1. The same disease, perhaps the plague, will cause many in the city to perish. For a similar threat see 5, 25; and for the expression, Lam. 4, 9.

3. Some shall attempt to make their escape, but shall be overtaken and made captive. — *bowmen* : literally, the *bow*, put for those who use it. So Is. 13, 18. The bowmen and the slingers were the light troops of ancient armies ; and to them, therefore, it fell to pursue and capture fugitives. Comp. 2 Kings 25, 4-5.

4. Comp. Micah 1, 8-9; the prophet will weep and mourn while others rejoice and feast, as he looks forward to the devastation of his country.

5. *trouble* : *perplexity* : caused by the enemy, but proceeding from Jehovah, the highest cause. — *valley of vision* : see note on v. 1. This valley will be especially a great scene of devastation. Hence it has

- They break down the wall,
And the cry *riseth* to the mount ;
 6. And Elam beareth the quiver,
With chariots of men *and* horsemen,
And Kir uncovereth the shield.
 7. Thy choicest valleys shall be full of chariots,
And the horsemen shall array themselves against the gate ;
 8. And he shall remove the covering of Judah.

Then shalt thou look, in that day, to the armour of the house of the forest,

been suggested, connecting this verse with 32, 13, seq., that the valley must have been in the immediate neighbourhood of Ophel.

They break: the prophet passes on to describe an actual attack of the besiegers.—*The cry riseth*: the cry either of the enemy making the assault, or of the inhabitants of the valley calling to mount Zion, the abode of Jehovah, for help. So, Josephus says, “on the night of the assault of Jerusalem by the Roman armies,” the hills “echoed back the screams of the inhabitants of the captured city, and the victorious shouts of the soldiers of Titus.” Stanley, Sin. & P., p. 175. Crit. Note.

6. Some of the nations constituting the Assyrian army are now named. *Elam*: mentioned in 11, 11, may denote, in an indefinite general sense, the country extending eastward from the lower Tigris, and corresponding to what was afterwards called Persia. In later times Elam appears as a province of the Persian empire. Ez. 4, 9.—*quiver*: *chariots*: archers are represented on the marbles both in chariots and on horseback. Nin. & Rem., ii, p. 349, seq. See Crit. Note.—*Kir*: ano-

ther subject people, thought to be from the region about the river Kur between the Caspian and the Black Sea. Others have placed Kir in Southern Media. Medes and Persians were celebrated as archers. See 13, 18; Jer. 49, 35. They are said to have been excelled only by the Ethiopians.—*uncovereth*: i. e., preparing for the fight, they take off the leatheren cover used to protect the shield during the march. Bowmen and shield-carriers may be intended to express the two classes of light and heavy-armed infantry, and along with chariots and horsemen make up the entire host.

7. *valleys*: they lie on the east, north, and south; that of Hinnom, the widest and greenest, on the south. Stanley, Sin. & P., p. 172. —*array themselves*: probably meaning that they will take their stand in troops extending towards the gates, ready to rush in when an entrance has been forced.

8. *remove the covering*: either from their eyes, that they may see clearly their dangerous position, and their inability to resist; or else from the person of the state, so as to expose it disgracefully, as a captive. Comp. 47, 3, and Nahum 3, 5.—*in that*

9. And ye shall see the breaches of the city of David, that they are many,
 And collect the waters of the lower pool ;
 10. The houses of Jerusalem ye shall number,
 And pull down the houses to fortify the wall.
 11. Ye shall also make a reservoir between the two walls,
 For the waters of the old pool ;
 But look not to him who doeth it,
 Nor see him who hath prepared it from afar.

day : the constant use of this phrase to denote future time makes it necessary to take this part of the chapter as prophetic, or, at least, as not descriptive of anything *past*. The verb is also in the future tense. The prophet's mind, we may infer, passes on to the preparations mentioned, which he expects will soon be commenced. Yet the actions spoken of are so *specific* that his statement may have been suggested by what he saw even then begun, as well as by what he knew had been done on a former occasion. In the Syro-Israelitish invasion similar measures must have been taken. See note on 7, 3.—*house of the forest*: comp. 1 Kings 7, 2, where Solomon is stated to have built a “house of the forest of Lebanon,” which from 1 Kings 10, 16-17, appears to have been a depository for armour. See also Neh. 3, 19. The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall therefore now look to this for means of defence.

9. *city of David* : the upper city on Zion. 2 Sam. 5, 7; 1 Kings 8, 1. It was surrounded by a separate wall of its own; but even in this shall breaches be seen.—*lower pool* : comp. v. 11.

10. They number the houses to see what may be spared to afford materials for increasing the height of the walls, strengthening them against the siege mounds and battering-rams of the besiegers, and repairing breaches. Jeremiah (32, 24; 33, 4) refers to the mounds of the Chaldeans and their effects. Comp. 2 Chron. 32, 5. See note on 29, 3, and 23, 13.

11. *old pool* : there were two reservoirs on the south-west of Jerusalem; the *upper*, probably meant here by “old pool,” and mentioned also Is. 7, 3; and the *lower* alluded to in v. 9, and not elsewhere named. The latter lay nearer to Jerusalem in the valley of Hinnom, according to Dr. Robinson. Bib. Res., i, p. 483-4. Mr. Stanley (Sin. & Pal., p. 514) makes the *upper* and the *old* two different reservoirs. It is hardly possible now to gain any clear idea of these preparations, or to say what exactly is meant by the “two walls.” For some illustration see 2 Kings 20, 20 and 2 Chron. 32, 3-5. The latter represents Hezekiah as stopping the fountains to prevent the Assyrians from obtaining water. —*doeth it* : with all their efforts they do not look to Him who has

12. Therefore shall the Lord, Jehovah of Hosts, call in that day
To weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding
with sackcloth.
13. But behold, joy and gladness,
Slaying oxen and killing sheep,
Eating flesh and drinking wine !
 Let us eat and drink,
 For to-morrow we shall die !
14. Therefore hath Jehovah of Hosts revealed it in my ears,
Assuredly this iniquity shall not be forgiven you,
Until ye die, saith the Lord, Jehovah of Hosts.

brought the danger upon them, and planned it even from a distant time, — Him who can most readily remove it.

12. The summons to mourning usually proceeded from the priests; Joel 1, 14; now it shall come from Jehovah, and shall consist in the presence of their terrible enemy. — *baldness*: the head was shorn as a sign of lamentation.

13. From his onward look into the future, the prophet returns to what he has just seen, or now sees,

around him. He still blends together, however, present and future, and probably means that the same wild and impious spirit will even “in that day” prevail. Perhaps in very desperation, or in reckless reliance on the assistance of Egypt and Ethiopia, some will persist in their festivities, even with destruction before their eyes. Comp. 5, 11-12, for a similar picture. The last two lines of the verse may be the prophet’s bitterly ironical exclamation, put into the mouth of the feasters.

§ 16. CHAP. XXXIII.

Renewed denunciation of the invading enemy, and anticipation of better times.

THE present chapter can scarcely belong to any other period but that of the invasion under Sennacherib. The Assyrians appear to be clearly alluded to in v. 19; they have overrun and despoiled the land (vv. 1, 8, 9); and the prophet is evidently full of anxiety as to the result of their operations (v. 2). He still seems to regard a siege of Jerusalem as impending (v. 18). Messengers, it would appear, had been sent to the Assyrians (v. 7), to ask for peace, as we must infer, but in vain. Many of these allusions are extremely obscure, and can only be conjecturally explained. But one thing appears clear, and that is that the prophet's confidence in the Divine protection is still strong; and that he still looks forward to the discomfiture of the invader (vv. 10-12). But along with this he also expects some terrible judgment by which the "sinners in Zion" shall be punished (v. 14). Perhaps the pestilence had already broken out within the city (v. 24); and this Isaiah may have looked upon as the appointed scourge of Jehovah, which, while sparing the righteous remnant, shall yet accomplish its great work of destruction upon the invading host, and at the same time sweep away many of the irreligious rulers and people of Jerusalem.

These various circumstances not only point to the period of the Assyrian invasion as that of the composition of the passage, but show us that when it was written events had

made considerable progress towards their final issue. The section, therefore, appears to require to be placed last among the prophecies of Isaiah relating to Sennacherib's overthrow; and we may conclude that it belongs to the autumn of the year 713, when the Assyrian forces were still ravaging the country.

1. **W**OE to thee that spoilest, though thou wast not spoiled,
And dealest treacherously, though they dealt not treacherously with thee!
When thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled,
When thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall
deal treacherously with thee.
2. O Jehovah, be gracious to us, we wait for thee ;
Be thou their arm every morning,
Our salvation also in time of trouble.
3. At the noise of the tumult the peoples flee,

1. *wast not spoiled*: the devastation of the country is undeserved and without excuse. Therefore the punishment of the oppressor shall be the more severe. — *cease to spoil*: *i. e.* completed their work, done their very worst: then will their own turn come; for Jehovah must appear to save his people, no other help being left. This verse thus immediately suggests the next, in which Jehovah is addressed by name.

2. The prophet reveals his fear and anxiety, at the same time that he expresses his trust. Indeed some measure of the former is a necessary

condition of any perfect form of the latter. He speaks for his people. This explains the word *their*: *i. e.* the people's; the prophet separating himself in thought for a moment from those for whom he speaks, but immediately returning to his natural position in the word *our*. — *every morning*: each successive day while the danger lasts.

3. The conception is evidently that of the approach of Jehovah to overthrow his enemies. He comes as an advancing storm, before which the peoples flee. The tense may again simply express the certainty of the anticipation. — *tumult*: that

- When thou liftest thyself up the nations are scattered.
4. And your spoil shall be gathered, as the locust gathereth,
They shall run upon it, as the Locust runneth.
 5. Exalted is Jehovah, for he dwelleth on high ;
He filleth Zion with judgment and righteousness.
 6. Therefore is he the security of thy times,
Abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge ;
The fear of Jehovah, that is his treasure.

7. Behold, their valiant-ones cry without,
The messengers of peace weep bitterly ;
8. The highways lie waste, the traveller ceaseth ;
He breaketh the covenant, he despiseth the cities,
He maketh man of no account.

of the raging tempest ; fit image of the presence of Jehovah to overwhelm and scatter his enemies.—*peoples* : *nations* : the Assyrian hosts. Comp. 29, 6; 30, 27, seq.

4. *your spoil* : the invaders are meant. They shall flee, leaving what they possess behind them as the booty of the people of Jerusalem, who shall run eagerly to collect it.

5. Thns Jehovah shows himself exalted above his enemies, and also a God of righteousness, for he has punished the evil deeds of the oppressor. He also restores righteousness to Zion, by the trials which that city has undergone.

6. The same idea repeated.—*thy times* : the nation is meant. Or else, as some have thought, the king Hezekiah. So in the words *his treasure*. If the latter be referred to the king, there may be an allusion to the gifts sent to Sennacherib. These are gone, but a more abundant treasure is still left, even Jehovah.

7. From his vision of the future glory Isaiah returns to the disastrous present.—*valiant-ones* : the same as the *messengers* in the next line. Comp. 2 Kings 18, 14. Hezekiah had sent messengers, no doubt persons of rank, as indicated by the honourable title *valiant-ones*, with presents and the offer of submission. They return with lamentations, having effected little. Their gifts have been accepted, but they have probably themselves been dismissed with threats, while the devastation of the country is continued, so that (v. 8-9) no one ventures to traverse it, or to cultivate the ground.

8. *breaketh* : may refer to Sennacherib's taking the tribute presents, but yet continuing his hostile operations.—*despiseth* : either insults and injures their inhabitants, who fall into the hands of the Assyrian troops ; or else, makes light of them as strong-holds, and easily captures them.

9. The land mourneth, it languisheth,
 Lebanon is put to shame, it withereth away,
 Sharon is like the desert,
 And Bashan and Carmel shake off their leaves.
10. Now will I arise, saith Jehovah,
 Now will I be exalted, now will I lift myself up ;
11. Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble,
 Your own spirit, as a fire, shall devour you ;
12. And the peoples shall be like burning lime,
 As thorns cut off they shall be burnt up with fire.
13. Hear, ye who are far off, what I have done,
 And learn, ye who are near, my might :
14. The sinners in Zion are afraid,
 Trembling hath seized the profane ;
 Who among us shall abide in devouring fire ?
 Who among us shall abide in everlasting burnings ?
15. He that walketh righteously,
 And speaketh uprightly ;
 He that refuseth the gain of oppressions,
 That shaketh his hands from taking a bribe,

9. *Lebanon : Sharon, &c. : the whole land, in its most beautiful and fruitful regions, feels the injuries inflicted, stands mourning, desolate, and bare, before the destroyer; images powerfully descriptive of the condition of the country at the period.*

10. But the sight shall arouse the protector of the nation ; now at length the enemy has gone sufficiently far.

11. Their further plans against Jerusalem shall not succeed. Their own ambition shall bring destruction upon them ; for Jehovah cannot allow his holy city to be taken and finally ruined ; he must interfere to prevent this.

12. Comp. 30, 33. Perhaps their

corpses shall be consumed with fire as an abominable thing.

13. The prophet speaks of the judgment as something done ; i.e. he transfers himself in thought to the time of its accomplishment.

14. And not only distant nations, but the sinful in Jerusalem, seeing the dreadful power of Jehovah, shall fear the judgment which they have themselves deserved ; and shall exclaim, Who among us too shall escape ? We cannot be sure whether or not the prophet has the pestilence in his view, as the immediate object of their fear.

15. The answer shows us that Isaiah is here again thinking of oppressive judges, and other powerful

- That shutteth his ear, not to hear of blood,
And closeth his eyes, not to look on evil ;
16. He shall dwell on high,
The summits of rocks shall be his refuge,
His bread shall be given, his water shall be secure.
17. Thine eyes shall behold the king in his beauty,
They shall see the land in its distant-parts.
18. Thy heart shall meditate on the terror,
Where is he that counted ?
Where is he that weighed ?
Where is he that counted the towers ?
19. The fierce people thou shalt not see,
A people of obscure speech, that thou canst not hear,
That stammereth with the tongue, unintelligibly.

and wealthy persons. Comp. 29, 20; 32, 1.

16. *bread: water*: perhaps in allusion to the expected siege. He shall be supported and saved amidst its deprivations.

17. The transition here is similar to what we have had in 30, 20, and 32, 1. From the deliverance from present dangers the prophet passes on to speak of the happy time more remote, when Jerusalem shall be secure from her enemies. The people of Jerusalem are addressed. They shall see their king *in his glory*: not as now, humbled and in sackcloth. Comp. 37, 1.—*distant parts*: not being confined within the narrow space of the besieged city, but free to pass where they will.

18. *terror*: *i. e.* which is past; the time of the threatened siege. The next lines are evidently questions put into the mouths of the delivered people, and expressive of their surprise at the deliverance.—*numbered*: *weighed*: may be referred either to the receivers of the tribute

payments; or else to the scribes who kept an account of the spoil and captives taken. Comp. Layard, Nin. & Rem., ii. pp. 375–7. He gives a representation of “a pair of scales for weighing the spoil.” Otherwise, the word *numbered* might be rendered *prescribed*; *i. e.* fixed, or estimated, the amount of tribute to be paid; while the *weighing* only may refer to its reception. So the words have been usually explained.—*counted the towers*: the leaders of the Assyrian armies, reconnoitring the city and its defences.

19. The Assyrians are meant. *obscure*: we may wonder, if the Assyrians were a Semitic people, that the prophet could have used such an expression in speaking of them. There were, however, doubtless considerable dialectical differences between the Hebrews and the people on the banks of the Upper Tigris. The Assyrian armies also included men of non-Semitic races, as the Medes, the men of Kir, and perhaps the Elamites. At the same

20. Look upon Zion, the city of our assembling ;
 Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a tranquil dwelling-place,
 A tent which shall not be removed ;
 They shall not pull up its stakes for ever,
 Neither shall any of its cords be broken.
21. But there *shall* Jehovah *be* glorious to us,
 A place of streams and broad Rivers ;
 Therein shall go no galley with oars,
 Neither shall gallant ship pass over it.
22. For Jehovah *is* our judge, Jehovah *is* our lawgiver,
 Jehovah *is* our king ; he shall save us.
23. Thy cords hang loose,

time the Assyrian leaders could speak Hebrew well enough. See note on 36, 11, and comp. 28, 11. — *hear* : in the sense of *understand*. So Gen. 11, 7; 42, 23.

20. The prophet now speaks of the security of Jerusalem, comparing it to a tent that shall not be moved. — *assembling* : *i. e.* where we meet together, at the solemn feasts (30, 29), as prescribed in the Law. — *removed* : what is in the writer's mind is probably the thought of the threatened captivity of the people. They shall not be carried off by their enemies. See 36, 17. — *stakes* : those, *i. e.* to which, driven firmly into the ground, the *cords* of a tent were fastened.

21. Jehovah, their all-sufficient protector, shall serve instead of water defences like those of Nineveh, No Ammon, and other great cities. — *Rivers* : as before, Is. 19, 6-8. Retaining the metaphor, the prophet adds that upon these protecting waters no hostile vessel shall ever sail — so we must understand his words ; — but Jehovah

shall show himself their glorious defender, invincible to all. — *A place* : perhaps, rather, *in place of*. — *gallant* : for the want of a better word we retain the rendering of the common version. It is the word which is translated *glorious* in the first line. Perhaps the meaning in the second case is *strong, mighty*. Ships of war are meant.

Layard, Nin. & Rem., ii, pp. 129, 380, seq., mentions several kinds of vessels of which figures are found on the Assyrian marbles. He speaks of some with masts and sails as well as oars ; and of others impelled by rowers only ; and gives a bas-relief from Koyunjik, representing a fortified city and its surrounding water, with a boat and raft on the latter. Here, as elsewhere, the marbles in the British Museum afford the best illustration.

23. Continuing the allegory of v. 21, the prophet now addresses the hostile ship that has ventured to come to attack Jerusalem. — *Thy cords* : the Assyrians are really contemplated ; their attempt

They hold not firm the place of their mast,
They spread not the banner.

Then shall the prey of the spoil be divided abundantly,
The lame shall seize the Spoil;

24. And no inhabitant shall say, I am sick;
As to the people that dwelleth there, its iniquity is pardoned.

to reach the city so surrounded by the Divine protection shall end in their own defeat. — *banner*: the cords are not sufficient, or strong enough, even to hold upright a staff for the vessel's flag. Some would render the word by *sail*. — *then*: when Assyria's weakness and discomfiture have been thus displayed, the exulting people of Jerusalem shall go forth to seize the spoil. Even the lame shall not stay behind. We have here a repetition of the prophecy of v. 4; and Isaiah

evidently blends together, in some degree, thoughts and allusions, drawn directly from the actual present, with his ideal picture of the future.

24. No inhabitant of Jerusalem shall be disabled by sickness, as now; the allusion being to the commencing pestilence, which was so soon to become the instrument of the Divine purpose upon the invaders. We do not know that it prevailed to any great extent within the city.

§ 17. CHAP. XXXVI — XXXVII.

Narrative of the invasion of Judah by Sennacherib.—Hezekiah's consternation.—The confidence of Isaiah, and his prophecy of the failure of the Assyrians.

THE two chapters forming the present section are part of the historical appendix which closes the first great division of Isaiah, and which was evidently added to render more complete and intelligible such of its contents as belong more particularly to the later period of the prophet's ministry. There is a similar addition to Jeremiah (ch. lii), illustrative of a portion of that book. Comp. 2 Kings xxv. The appendix to Isaiah consists of the four chapters xxxvi–xxxix; and is found also, with the exception of Hezekiah's "writing" (xxxviii, 9), in 2 Kings xviii, 13–xx, 19. As it is only with the first two chapters of this appendix that we are here concerned, the remainder of the passage will be left without further notice.

The section before us occurs almost word for word in the book of Kings — with, however, one considerable addition (2 Kings xviii, 14–18). Exclusive of the latter, the slight verbal differences which exist are such as to show that, while the narrative of the Kings is, on the whole, critically more complete than the other, yet that neither text, as it now stands, can be the original. Nor is it likely that either was derived from the other; because each contains something which the parallel text has not, and each has points in which it is superior to the other. The conclusion must, therefore, be that both texts are drawn, with but slight changes, from a common source. Such, on purely critical grounds, is the

judgment of De Wette, Ewald, and Knobel¹ — and it appears to be a perfectly sound judgment. Into the minuter details of the question we need not here enter, as it has but a subordinate interest in connection with our present object. It is, perhaps, enough to observe that these chapters are, most probably, like those in the Kings, somewhat abridged from a longer narrative of which we have no further knowledge ; and that there is no positive evidence to show that either of the abbreviated texts, or the original from which they were derived, proceeded from Isaiah himself. There is, indeed, one prominent fact, which is inconsistent with such a supposition. That is the notice of Sennacherib's death (xxxvii, 38), an event which could hardly have taken place in the prophet's lifetime. This monarch lived more than twenty years after his invasion of Judah (Gen. Introd., § 4) ; and was not slain, therefore, before the year 693. The way, moreover, in which his assassination is mentioned indicates that the writer was looking back, as he wrote, through a considerable interval, lying between himself and the event, and embracing a portion, at least, of the reign of Esarhaddon. How long an interval, we need not stop to inquire ; but even if it were a space of only a few years, this is enough to prove that one who began to prophesy before the death of Uzziah cannot have been the writer. Introd. to Isaiah, *supra*, § 1. There are also a few words in the passage, which, so far as an inference can be drawn from them, support this conclusion. These will be noticed as they occur.

The substance of the two chapters is given in a condensed form in 2 Chron. xxxii. From this passage, v. 32, it would appear that the Chronicler had before him, and made his abstract from, the text of the Kings ; and that by the words “in the prophetic-vision of Isaiah in the book of the Kings,” he simply intended to designate this part of the

¹ De W., Einl. A. T., § 212 ; the same conclusion, Old Test. in Ewald, Geschichte, iii, p. 337 ; Horne's Introd. to Script., ii, p. Knob., *in loc.* Dr. Davidson adopts 848.

2 Kings¹, adapting his mode of reference to the fact that Isaiah's prophecy of deliverance is contained in that book.

There is one remarkable difference between the text of Kings and that of Isaiah, which it may be as well to notice in this place. We allude to the words "*that night*," in 2 Kings xix, 35, but wanting in Isaiah xxxvii, 36. The best explanation, perhaps, is that, before these words, in the original narrative which both the Kings and Isaiah have abridged, there stood some statement in close connection with them, and of which they were a part. The abbreviator in Isaiah has omitted *all*, including these words; the other has wrongly retained them. They are in direct opposition to Isaiah's own limitation of time, xxxvii, 30, where we see that he expected a considerable interval to elapse before the retreat of the Assyrians.

It may also be conveniently noticed here that the sacred historian does not tell us *where* the great disaster (xxxvii, 36) took place. The account of Herodotus refers us to Egypt. The destruction of the straps and bowstrings of the Assyrians by a swarm of field-mice occurred, as he says, near Pelusium. Gen. Introd., § 4. Nor is there anything in the Hebrew representation to prevent us from thinking, accordingly, that the scene of the event may have been on the borders of Egypt. Yet, while we perceive that the Egyptian, equally with the Hebrew account, recognised the extraordinary nature of the deliverance, it is still very difficult to reconcile what Herodotus says with the narrative before us. Mice are sometimes produced in vast numbers, particularly in Egypt; and possibly some accident of the kind stated happened to an advanced body of the Assyrians; while the main army under the king, still within the borders of Palestine, perhaps before Libnah (xxxvii, 8), suffered the greater visitation, and both occur-

¹ For a similar mode of citation see Mark 12, 26, "in the bush;" so Rom. 11, 2, "in Elias." Comp. *sup.*, p. 72.

rences combined to render the retreat inevitable. Josephus¹ endeavours to combine the Scriptural account with that of Herodotus by supposing that an army was left under Rabshakeh near Jerusalem, and that the pestilence fell upon this; while Sennacherib, having retired from Egypt, on hearing of Tirhaka's advance, then united his forces with the remnant of Rabshakeh's, and returned to his own land. On the other hand, Mr. Kenrick observes:—“The mouse was an emblem of destruction, and it may be that the [Egyptian] narrative of the defeat of Sennacherib's army owed its specific form to this circumstance. The Jewish account is more faithful than the Egyptian, inasmuch as it notices the rumour of Tirhaka's expedition, while the Egyptian makes the cause of the Assyrians' retreat wholly supernatural. Pestilence and panic appear to have combined in bringing it about.”² We have no certain means of fully harmonising the accounts. As we might expect, no allusion is found on the Assyrian marbles to the discomfiture of the invaders. On the contrary, had we no other account than theirs, we must have supposed that Sennacherib was entirely successful in all his expeditions. Yet he nowhere boasts of having taken Jerusalem.³

CII.

XXXVI.

1. **A**ND it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah that Sennacherib came up against all the fortified cities

1. *fourteenth year*: the *third* of Sennacherib, about 713 b. c. But see Note on the Chronology, *supra*,

p. 63. The chief facts of the invasion, and the light thrown on the Biblical narrative by the Assyrian

¹ *Antiq.*, x. 1, 4. 5.

² *Ancient Egypt*, ii, p. 374. Comp. the same author's *Egypt of Herodotus*, pp. 181-2.

³ *Rawlinson, Outlines*, p. xxxv; *Layard, Nin. & Bab.*, p. 144.

2. of Judah and took them. And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem unto king Hezekiah with a great army: and he stood by the conduit of the upper
 3. pool in the way of the fuller's field. Then came forth unto him Eliakim, Hilkiah's son, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, Asaph's son, the recorder.
 4. And Rabshakeh said unto them, Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What trust is
 5. this wherein thou trustest? Thou speakest only a vain word; saying, Counsel and might for war: now in whom dost thou

monuments, have been noticed in the Gen. Introd., § 4. Sennacherib's ultimate and great object was no doubt Egypt, with which country Hezekiah had formed an alliance. Hence the great body of the Assyrian army advanced towards the Egyptian frontier with the king, and did not approach Jerusalem. The offer of submission and the tribute payment sent by Hezekiah (2 Kings 18, 14–16) did not induce the invaders to forego their attempt to gain possession of Jerusalem.

2. *Lachish*: the site is not exactly known, but it was in Judah (Josh. 10, 3), and a strong place (2 Chron. 11, 5–9; Jer. 34, 7). If it were near *Libnah* (37, 8) it lay considerably to the south-west of Jerusalem. Mr. Layard (Nin. & Bab., pp. 148–152) thinks that the siege and capture of Lachish are represented on a series of bas-reliefs from Koyunjik, now in the British Museum. The name *Lachish* is found on one of the slabs in an inscription over a figure of Sennacherib seated on his throne. The city was a place of great extent and strength. The various operations of the siege are graphically por-

trayed on these marbles. — *Rab-shakeh*: this is properly a name of office, meaning, chief cup-bearer, but is used here as a personal name. The Assyrian force coming from the south-west would approach Jerusalem on the side of the upper pool. See note on 7, 3.

3. *Eliakim*: comp. 22, 20: he had now apparently succeeded to the office held by *Shebna*, who (22, 15) had been “over the household.” Hence the prophecy of Isaiah against Shebna had already been in part fulfilled. Eliakim is now the chief minister of the king, and Shebna is a *scribe*, or writer; *i. e.* a kind of secretary. — *recorder*: literally, one who causes to remember, a reminder, or remembrancer; whose duty perhaps it was to keep the king informed of all important matters, and also to act as annalist of the kingdom.

4. *great king*: see 10, 8. — *trust*: *i. e.* ground of trust. Hezekiah had endeavoured to fortify Jerusalem (2 Chron. 32, 2–8), as well as to gain assistance from Egypt and Ethiopia.

5. *Thou speakest*: so the parallel place. See Crit. Note. — *vain*

6. trust, that thou hast rebelled against me? Behold, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, in Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him. But if thou say to me, In Jehovah, our God, we trust, *is it* not he whose high-places and altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and to Jerusalem, Before this altar ye shall bow down? Now, therefore, give a pledge, I pray thee, to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them. Then how canst thou turn back the face of one captain, of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust in Egypt for chariots and for horsemen. But now have I come up without Jehovah against this land to destroy it? Jehovah hath said unto me, Go up against this land and destroy it.
11. Then said Eliakim, and Shebna, and Joah, unto Rabshakeh, Speak, we pray thee, unto thy servants in the Aramean-lan-

word: Heb., word of the lips; *i.e.* insincere, not expressive of any real feeling.

6. The Assyrians are well informed of the understanding with Egypt; or they accuse the Hebrews on suspicion, notwithstanding Hezekiah's offer of submission

7. The Assyrians have heard of Hezekiah's endeavours for religious reform (2 Kings 18, 4-6); but seem erroneously to have thought them directed *against* the worship of Jehovah. They mean, therefore, that Hezekiah cannot expect help from the God whose altars he has overthrown.

8. If, however, the Jewish king trusts in his army, Rabshakeh boastfully reminds him of the great superiority of the Assyrians in cavalry. Comp. 5, 28, note. — *give a pledge*: implying that Hezekiah has not so many horsemen in

his kingdom. The Jews were deficient in this "arm," and sought to obtain what they wanted from Egypt. Comp. 31, 1.

10. An allusion has been supposed here to Isaiah's own predictions of the punishment of the national sins of the Hebrews, at the hands of the Assyrians. It does not appear how the latter could be acquainted with the prophet's declarations; nor is it very likely that they were so. The words *Jehovah hath sent me*, &c., may, therefore, express only Rabshakeh's inference from the previous successes of the Assyrians, or they may be a mere boast.

11. The Jewish rulers are afraid that what is said may terrify the people. They beg Rabshakeh now, therefore, to speak in the *Aramean*, the language of the region north and east of Palestine. It must have been understood by the Assyrian

- guage, for we understand it, and speak not unto us in the Jewish-language, in the ears of the people that are upon the wall. But Rabshakeh said, Hath my master sent me unto thy master and unto thee to speak these words? and not to the men that sit upon the wall to eat their own dung and drink their own water with you?
13. And Rabshakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the Jewish-language, and said, Hear ye the words of the great king, the king of Assyria. Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you; for he will not be able to deliver you. 15. Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in Jehovah, saying Jehovah will surely deliver us; this city shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Harken not to Hezekiah, for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make peace with me and come forth unto me; and eat ye every-man of his vine and every-man of his fig-tree, and drink ye every-man of the waters of his cistern; until I come and take you to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and

chiefs, as it belonged to the same family as their own language, and was nearly related to the Hebrew also, although, as it would seem, not intelligible to the common people. Comp. 2 Kings 5, 5–7. Rabshakeh must have been speaking in Hebrew, called here *Jehudith*, or *Jewish-language*: a term which shows that this account was not written until a time when *Judah*, the one remaining kingdom of the Hebrews, had survived the destruction of Samaria long enough to have given its own name to the language. This implies a considerable interval.

12. Rabshakeh wishes the men to hear, in the hope probably of terrifying them into submission.—*that sit upon*: the garrison may be meant.—*to eat, &c.*: the *result* spoken of as the *intention*. Their holding the place against Sen-

nacherib will cause them to undergo the worst extremities of a siege; to eat and drink things the most repulsive. The words are such as to increase the alarm of the people. The meaning is clear from 2 Chron. 32, 11.

16–17. *peace*: Heb., blessing; so called perhaps from the mutual congratulations with which peace was ratified.—*come forth*: surrender the city, and then remain quietly in possession of your country till my return from Egypt, when I will lead you away to a pleasant and fruitful land. It was the recognised policy of the conqueror to weaken the conquered races by transferring them to new districts. Rabshakeh tries to make the prospect of this as little grievous as possible to the subjects of Hezekiah.

18. vineyards. Lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, Jehovah will deliver us, Have, *then*, the gods of the nations delivered each 19. his land from the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? and have they delivered Samaria out of my 20. hand? Who, among all the gods of these lands, have delivered their land out of my hand, that Jehovah should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?
21. And they were silent, and answered him not a word; for 22. that was the king's command, saying, Answer him not. Then came Eliakim, Hilkiah's son, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, Asaph's son, the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent; and they told him the words of Rabshakeh.

CH.

XXXVII.

1. And it came to pass, when the king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and 2. went into the house of Jehovah. And he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, unto Isaiah, the prophet, 3. the son of Amoz. And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, A day of distress, and of rebuke, and of reviling is this day; for the children are come to the birth and there is not

18. *Lest*: the passage is elliptical; and equivalent to, *Lest*, &c., *I ask you*, Have the Gods, &c. Or *lest* might be rendered *Let not*.

19. *Hamath*: *Arpad*: see note on 10, 9. *Sepharvaim*: probably a town on the Euphrates, called by the Greeks Sipphara. Shalmaneser sent colonists from this place into Samaria. 2 Kings 17, 24.

20. How much less shall the God of so small a state as Judah deliver his people. In this question the Assyrian contradicts his own assertion (v. 10) that he had come up with the permission of Jehovah.

21. *not a word*: to avoid irritating

the Assyrians, and in the hope that Sennacherib would be content with the submission already made, if not exasperated by active resistance.

22. *clothes rent*: *i. e.*, with the outer garment rent at the breast, the expression of grief and dismay. Gen. 37, 29; 2 Sam. 3, 31.

Ch. xxxvii. 1. *sackcloth*: see 20, 2.

2. We see from this verse the importance of the position occupied at this time by Isaiah, as the prophet of Jehovah. The messengers sent to him are some of the chief persons of the court and of the priesthood.

3. *the children*: probably a proverbial expression; meaning here

4. strength to bring forth. Perchance Jehovah thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria, his master, hath sent to reproach the living God, and will punish *him* for the words which Jehovah thy God hath heard: wherefore offer
 5. thou a prayer for the remnant which is left. So the servants of the king Hezekiah came unto Isaiah.
 6. And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say unto your master, Thus saith Jehovah, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, wherewith the Servants of the king of Assyria
 7. have blasphemed me. Behold I will put in him a spirit, and he shall hear a report, and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.
 8. And Rabshakeh returned and found the king of Assyria fighting against Libnah; for he had heard that he had departed

that the state is in a position of extreme danger, and without strength to help itself.

4. They wish Isaiah to intercede with Jehovah for their deliverance. —*remnant*: the people of Judah and Jerusalem, who have thus far escaped the Assyrians.

5. This verse would better have stood immediately after v. 2. But the same historian hastens, in vv. 3-4, to tell us what the messengers were to say, and so leaves it out.

6. *Servants*: the Heb. implies *youthfulness* (boy, lad, young man); and, as compared with the same word in v. 5, probably involves something of contempt on the part of the speaker.

7. *a spirit*: comp. 28, 6. Meaning, so influence his judgment, when he hears the report that he shall return. —*report*: either of the destruction of the great body of his army, or of the advance of Tirhaka. The latter, supposing that the destroying pestilence had already

made some progress among the Assyrians, would be sufficient to make Sennacherib decide for a retreat. —

fall by the sword: the prophet foresees that his failure will endanger his throne and life. As his assassination did not take place for many years afterwards, and as this historical account, as we have it, must have been written still later, we cannot be sure to what extent the prophecy may owe the very definite form in which it now appears simply to the way in which the historian conceived of what had been said by Isaiah. The prophet's announcements are usually of a more general kind. Comp. vv. 29, 34, and ch. 30, 33, where nothing is said of the murder of Sennacherib.

8. *Libnah*: according to Mr. Stanley (Sinai & Palest., pp. 207, 258) this was the *Blanche-garde* of the Crusaders,—a supposition to which the meaning of the name—*whiteness*—corresponds. Jerome and Eusebius place it more to the south,

9. from Lachish. And he heard concerning Tirhaka king of Ethiopia, saying, He is come forth to make war with thee.
 10. And he again sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, Thus shall ye say to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not
 11. be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly; and thou, shalt thou be delivered?
 12. Have the gods of the nations which my fathers have destroyed delivered them?—Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the
 13. children of Eden in Telassar? Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivah?
 14. And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house
 15. of Jehovah, and spread it before Jehovah. And Hezekiah

in the district of Eleutheropolis. It was in Judah (Josh. 15, 42; comp. Josh. 10, 29–32). Sennacherib had captured Lachish. See note on 36, 2.

9. *Tirhaka*: see Introd. to §§ 10, 14. This powerful ruler was now in possession of Upper Egypt and Thebes. Ethiopian influence was probably paramount also in Lower Egypt, one, at least, of the Pharaohs being allied with Hezekiah and the Ethiopians. See Introd. to § 13. How near to Sennacherib Tirhaka may now have been does not appear; but his approach makes the former still more anxious to get possession of so strong a place as Jerusalem. Hence (v. 10) the renewed demand of surrender. — *again sent*: following the text of Kings, which is here decidedly preferable.

12. *Gozan*: in Mesopotamia, on the Chabour, 2 Kings 17, 6; 18, 11. — *Haran*: more to the west; the Carræ of Greek and Roman writers,

and celebrated for the defeat of Crassus by the Parthians. — *Rezeph*: further west; in Syria. — *Eden*: *Telassar*: both are uncertain. Probably some tribe is meant who had their chief place in Telassar. The latter has been placed in Syria, and in Babylonia; Knobel would identify *Eden* with a considerable and ancient village called *Adana*, or *Adna*, to the north of Bagdad. This is but a conjecture. For Telassar Mr. Layard suggests Tel Afer, some distance westward of Mosul. (Nin. & Rem., i, p. 313). The word *Tel* (*hill, or mound*) is frequent in modern Arabic names of places in Palestine, as well as in those of Assyria and Babylonia.

13. See note on 36, 19. — *Hena*: *Ivah*: places, or districts, probably in Babylonia; or Ivah may have been a Phœnician city.

14-15. Hezekiah knows that there is a greater power, than even that of the king of Assyria.

16. prayed unto Jehovah, saying, O Jehovah of Hosts, God of Israel, who art seated above the cherubim, Thou alone art God of all the kingdoms of the earth ! Thou hast made the heavens
 17. and the earth ! Incline thine ear, O Jehovah, and hear; open thine eyes, O Jehovah, and see ; and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which he hath sent to reproach the living God.
 18. Truly, O Jehovah, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all
 19. nations and their land ; and have given their gods to the fire,
 20. for they were not gods, but the work of the hands of man,
 wood and stone, and they have destroyed them. Now, therefore, O Jehovah, our God, save us from his hand ; that all the kingdoms of the earth may know, that thou alone art Jehovah.

16. *cherubim*: it is not clear, as is commonly assumed, that the “four living creatures” in the vision of Ezekiel, 1, 5, seq., or the cherubim elsewhere mentioned by him (ch. 10; 41), were the ordinary cherubim. They may have been the mere creation of the prophet’s fancy. If so, we can only refer to such places as Ex. 25, 18, seq., 1 Kings 6, 23, seq., for a general idea of the form of these imaginary beings. It appears that they were of colossal size and strength. They were winged, and had a human face, and also hands. They guarded the approach to Eden (Gen. 3, 24); and they support the throne of Jehovah as he moves through the heavens (Ps. 18, 10). Their figures overshadow and guard the mercy-seat in the Holy place, and there, above their outspread wings, Jehovah was conceived to be enthroned, invisible to mortal eyes. Hence the expression in the text. Comp. Ps 80, 1; 2 Sam. 4, 4. The same conception is found under different forms among the ancient heathen nations; as in the *griffin* of the Greeks, Persians, and Assyrians

(Layard, Nin. & Rem., ii, p. 459). The etymology and meaning of the word are obscure. Very probably the root is not Semitic. More in Knobel, *in loc.*, and in Ges., Thes., pp. 710-11.

Thou alone: the original is emphatic; *Thou art he who alone*, implying the nothingness of the gods of the nations : in contradiction to Sennacherib, who had classed Jehovah with the heathen deities.

18. *all nations*: Heb., all lands and their land. The text in Kings has *nations*, which seems required. If we retain *lands*, the meaning will be that the Assyrians have laid waste all lands and their own also, in part; referring to their conquest of cities within their own borders, which seems hardly admissible.

20. *Jehovah*: is used here much in the general sense of *God*—another mark, it is suggested, of the comparative lateness of this section. However, Gesenius would take Jehovah as the *subject* of the sentence, thus:—that thou Jehovah alone art he who doeth all that the Assyrian arrogateth to himself.

21. And Isaiah, the son of Amoz, sent unto Hezekiah, saying,
Thus saith Jehovah, God of Israel, unto whom thou hast
22. prayed concerning Sennacherib, king of Assyria, This is the
word which Jehovah hath spoken against him,
The virgin daughter of Zion despiseth thee, she scorneth
thee,
The daughter of Jerusalem shaketh her head at thee.
23. Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed ?
Against whom hast thou lifted up thy voice,
And raised thine eyes on high ?
Against the Holy-One of Israel !
24. By thy servants hast thou reproached the Lord, and said,
By the multitude of my chariots have I ascended the height
of the mountains,
The recesses of Lebanon,
And I will cut down its lofty cedars, its choicest fir-trees,
. And I will go to its extreme height, its thickest forest.

22. The change from the Hebrew prose style to that of poetry is here very distinctly marked. The desirableness of attending to the parallelism, in the division of the sentences, is evident.

virgin daughter: honourable terms; the former implying that the city is impregnable: for the latter, see note on 23, 10. Zion is here personified as a female. So nations and cities, frequently and in various relations. Comp. Nah. 3, 5; Is. 1, 8. — *shaketh her head*: the sign of contempt; Ps. 22, 7; Matt. 27, 39. The gesture was, probably, a kind of repeated or continued nod. So Zeph. 2, 15, of the *hand*.

23. The interrogative form implies the enormity of the crime. — *on high*: *i. e.* arrogantly.

24. *height of the mountains*: this and the rest of the verse may be understood figuratively, and will ex-

press the ambitious designs and victorious progress of Sennacherib. There is no reason to understand the words of any literal passage of Lebanon, nor by *cedars* and *fir-trees* the chief men of Judah. Of the cedars of Lebanon Mr. Stanley writes:—“ In ancient times the sides of that mountain were covered with them. Now they are only found in one small hollow on its north-western slope.” (Sin. & Pal., p. 140.) They were not trees of Palestine, but limited to Lebanon.—*fir-trees*: by some rendered *cypresses*; but the foliage of Lebanon is that of the *pine*. (Stan., *ib.*) So also Dr. Robinson. (Heb. & Eng. Lex., p. 157, ed. 1856.)—*thickest forest*: Heb., forest of its Carmel. See note on Is. 10, 18. The addition of *carmel* expresses here abundance, luxuriance of growth.

25. I have digged and drunk water,
And will dry up with the sole of my feet all the Rivers of
Egypt.
26. Hast thou not heard afar ?
That I have done it from ancient times, and prepared it ?
Now have I brought it to pass,
That thou shouldest lay waste fortified cities into ruinous
heaps.
27. And their inhabitants are of small strength,
They are terrified and confounded ;
They are *as* the herbage of the field,
And the green grass, the Grass of the housetops,
And *as* a cornfield before it be grown up.
28. Thus thy sitting-down, thy going-forth, and thy coming-in,
I know,
And thy raging against me.

25. He has met no impediments to hinder his march; but has found water, that prime necessary of an army, wherever he has digged for it in the great deserts. The parallel text has *strange waters*: *i.e.* waters belonging to others, who have not been able to resist the spoiler. The verbs might be rendered as *present's*, and understood of Sennacherib's looking onward to his future career. So with the next; even the Nile and all the canals of Egypt (*Is. 19, 6–8*) cannot impede him. So Claudian makes Alaric say:—"Subsidere nostris Sub pedibus montes; arescere vidimus amnes; — Fregi Alpes, galeisque Padum victricibus hausit." (Lowth, *in loc.*)

26. The prophet's reply. It is only by Jehovah's permission, as his instrument, that he has done all this. Comp. 10, 5, 15; 22, 11. Jehovah from of old had devised it all, for his own purposes. The words might be differently divided:—Hast thou

not heard that I have long ago ordained this, from ancient times have prepared it ? For the meaning, as given above, comp. 33, 13; 45, 6, 21; 48, 5.

27. *herbage* : *grass*: easily crushed, or soon withered before a hot sun, the image of frailty; Ps. 37, 2; Is. 40, 6: that of the *housetops*, having little nutriment, perishes the soonest; Ps. 129, 6.

cornfield : *i. e.* with the young and tender corn in it. Otherwise, as *blighted-corn before the stalk*; *i. e.* blighted before it has grown up to have a stalk. See 2 Kings 19, 26.

28. *sitting-down* : referring perhaps, not to the king's personal actions, but to his expedition against Judah and Egypt: his remaining at home, his marching forth with his army, his entering into Judah, and his proud defiance and rage against Jehovah, were all known, foreseen, and permitted by Jehovah.

29. Because thy raging against me, and thine arrogance,
 Have come up into mine ears,
 Therefore have I put my hook in thy nose,
 And my bridle in thy lips,
 And I will turn thee back in the way by which thou hast
 come.
30. And this shall be the sign to thee : —
 Eat this year what groweth of itself,
 And in the second year what springeth of the same ;
 And in the third year sow ye and reap,
 And plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

29. *I have put* : the preterite tense, but used here, as in other places, to express the *certainty* of what is about to occur. — *hook* : treating the king of Assyria as a wild beast, and leading him back captured to his own country. Comp. Job 41, 1-2. There may, however, be here a reference to a practice mentioned by Layard : — “ In a bas-relief from Khorsabad, captives are led before the king by a rope fastened to rings passed through the lip and nose.” Nin. & Rem., ii, 376.

30. *the sign* : a visible sign derived from the actual position of affairs, and to be realised only after some interval, as in 7, 10-16. The land is to be freed from the Assyrians at the close of two seasons. *This year*, they shall not be able to sow the ground, doubtless from the presence of the enemy. At the ensuing harvest, therefore, they will reap only *what groweth of itself* (*saphiach*). This would be all within one year, reckoning, as was sometimes done, from autumn to autumn, i. e. from October to October (Ex. 23, 16; 34, 22). They would be able to reap the saphiach, Isaiah anticipates, because by the time it is

ripe the invading armies will have gone against Egypt. But further, the *second year*, i. e. a year hence, for some reason not stated, they will again be unable to sow; and the following harvest they will once more have only *what springeth of the same* (*shachis*). The year after, however, i. e. the *third year*, the land will be free, and they may sow and reap. The inability to cultivate may have been limited to the parts actually traversed or occupied by the Assyrians. Yet the prophet evidently intends to predict a period of scarcity (see 32, 10), to be followed (v. 31) by one of plenty and prosperity for those who have survived the visitation. Comp. 33, 14-16. The conjoined Sabbatical and Jubilee years (Levit. 25, 2-11) have been thought to afford the means of reconciling the *speedy* departure of the Assyrians (v. 36) with the postponement of cultivation for more than two years. Such an explanation is at best very uncertain; and it seems better to admit that Isaiah did not here contemplate an immediate deliverance. See note on v. 36.

31. And the escaped of the house of Judah, that are left,
Shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward ;
32. For from Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant,
And the escaped from mount Zion :
The zeal of Jehovah of Hosts shall do this.
33. Wherefore thus saith Jehovah concerning the king of Assyria,
He shall not come into this city,
Nor shoot an arrow there,
Nor come before it with the shield,
Nor cast up a mound against it.
34. In the way by which he hath come shall he return,
And unto this city shall he not come, Saith Jehovah.
35. Thus will I defend this city to save it,
For my own sake, and for the sake of David, my servant.
36. And the angel of Jehovah went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and eighty and five thousand : and when they arose early in the morning, behold they were
37. all dead corpses. And Sennacherib, king of Assyria, departed
38. and went, and returned, and dwelt in Nineveh. And it came to pass that he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his

33. Enlightened by the course of events, the prophet now sees that there will not be any proper siege of Jerusalem. Comp. 29, 3–8.

35. *own sake* : comp. 48, 11. — *David* : this regard for the memory of the great king of Israel appears in other places. See 9, 7; 11, 1.

36. The parallel text represents the destruction as *immediate*, “that night.” It could not have been so if we may rely on v. 30. The latter part of our present verse certainly implies that some great portion of the calamity occurred in the night, in a single night ; but not necessarily “that night.” See introductory note.

angel : the sacred author’s conception of the mode in which the loss was caused. See Acts 12, 23,

for a similar idea of the cause of the disease of which, as we know from Josephus (*Antiq.*, xix, 8, 2), Herod died. The suddenness and extraordinary nature of the event is what struck the writer’s mind, and what he expresses by the words used. Probably it was an outbreak of the plague, which may also have been the cause of the sickness of Hezekiah. Comp. note on 33, 24.

37. *dwelt in Nineveh* : for twenty years, or more, after this time.

38. *worshipping* : probably unarmed and unattended. On some of the sculptures the king may be seen, engaged in religious rites. —

Nisroch : it had long ago been suggested that this word is from *nisr*, or *neser*, a form of *nesher*, which in the Semitic dialects means *an eagle*.

god, and Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword. And they escaped to the land of Ararat ; and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.

To nisr the termination -och gives the meaning *great*, or *gigantic*; hence, again, the inference as to the size and form of this god. (Gesenius, Thes., p. 892.) The eagle-headed human figure which so often occurs on the sculptures is doubtless the deity to which the name belongs. Mr. Layard inclines to the opinion that this deity is the same as Asshur, the chief god of the Assyrians. (Nin. & Bab., p. 637.) The conjectures as to the meaning of this word, on the assumption that it is

not Semitic, are now superseded. (Gesen., *ib.*)

Of the two sons of Sennacherib we know nothing more. Berossus names Sennacherib's murderer *Ardumusanus*; and a different account, again, is given by Abydenus—or rather implied in what he says. There is evident confusion as to the names.

land of Ararat: Armenia. For Esarhaddon and his reign, see Gen. Introd., § 5.

THE PROPHET NAHUM.

§ 1. HIS DATE.—THE OBJECT AND SPIRIT OF HIS PROPHECY.

THIS prophet is not mentioned anywhere in the Old Testament, except in the title of his own prophecy. Nothing, therefore, can be stated concerning his personal history but what is founded on the merest conjecture, beyond the fact that he was an “Elkoshite.” Even the meaning of this term has been matter of discussion; and it has been questioned whether it be intended to represent Nahum as the son of a certain Elkosh, or as the inhabitant of some place so called. The latter is by far the more probable, if we may judge from the mode in which the parentage of a man is, in such titles, usually indicated:—see Is. i, 1; Jer. i, 1, and similar instances.

Taking the word *Elkoshite*, then, to denote the place of the birth or residence of Nahum, a further question has been raised as to where this place was; whether in Palestine, or in Assyria. An ancient tradition preserved by Jerome makes it a village or small town of Galilee. This Father, who was well acquainted with Palestine, in the Preface to his Commentary on Nahum, speaks of Elkosh as existing to his time. He says that it was then a small village, with hardly any remains of ancient buildings, but yet well known to the Jews; and that it was pointed out to him by his guide. The substance of the same statement is repeated by other Fathers. It appears to be a mere fancy, however, to identify Elkosh with Capernaum, on account of the termination of the latter name, as though

Capernaum signified *town of Nahum*. Nor has the supposition that Capernaum, again, derived its name from the prophet having at some time resided there any better foundation.

A very different account has been given by various writers, from Eichhorn downwards, who have held that the place referred to in the word Elkoshite is a certain *Alkush* or *Alkosh*, a village still existing, and lying about ten miles to the north of Mosul. Mr. Layard, who seems inclined to accept the tradition which places *here* the tomb of the prophet, informs us that Alkosh is now a considerable Christian village. "The tomb," he observes, "is a simple plaster box, covered with green cloth, and standing at the upper end of a large chamber. On the walls of the room are slips of paper, upon which are written, in distorted Hebrew characters, religious exhortations, and the dates and particulars of the visits of various Jewish families." The house containing the tomb is a modern building. There are no inscriptions, nor fragments of any antiquity about the place; and I am not aware in what the tradition originated, or how long it has attached to the village of Alkosh." The place is held in great reverence by Mohammedans and Christians, "but especially by Jews, who keep the building in repair, and flock here in great numbers at certain seasons of the year."¹

To account for the supposed residence and burial of Nahum at this place, it has been conjectured that he or his parents may have been among the exiles carried off from the kingdom of Israel at the time of its destruction by the Assyrians in the sixth year of Hezekiah (2 Kings xviii, 10-11). It is needless to observe that there is little or nothing in the prophecy itself to support such a conjecture. The allusions which occur do not reveal any special or intimate acquaintance, on the part of the writer, either with Nineveh or with the neighbouring country. On the contrary, those allusions, although

¹ Layard, Nin. & Rem., i, p. 233.

expressed in the strongest poetical language, as, for example, ch. ii, 4-6; iii, 2-3, are of that general kind, which any Palestinian Jew, possessed of ordinary information about the Assyrians and their famous city, might very well have written. On the other hand, the names in chap. i, 4, tend to show that the prophet was familiar with Palestine, and, therefore, probably dwelt there. There is no evidence, again, that Israelites were ever carried away into that part of the Assyrian dominions in which the modern Alkosh is situated. Thus it seems most probable that the tradition, placing the tomb of Nahum at the Assyrian Alkosh, rests on nothing more substantial than the similarity of that name to the old Hebrew term Elkoshite.

In writing thus, it is proper to notice that the high authority of Ewald may be adduced for the supposition that Nahum lived and wrote his prophecy in Assyria, in the neighbourhood of Nineveh, and in the very midst of the dangers that were threatening that city. Ewald finds, both in the allusions and in the language of the book, satisfactory evidence to this effect. The specific reasons which he assigns, so far as they can be distinctly presented, are as follows. The prophecy is wholly concerned about Nineveh, and notices Palestine, or the kingdom of Judah, only in the most cursory manner, *e. g.* i, 13-ii, 3. In other words, there is nothing to indicate positively that Nahum wrote in Judea, while the expression in i, 15, as compared with Isaiah lii, 7, is such as to show that he wrote at a distance from Jerusalem and Judah. It will, however, probably be granted, that the passages thus appealed to afford very slight grounds for the conclusion stated; and that it depends entirely on the taste and inclination of the reader, whether they be taken in the one sense or the other. But, we are further told, Nahum shows an acquaintance with Assyrian objects, such as is possessed by no other prophet; his descriptions are so vivid as to prove that he had himself seen everything, and that he took the liveliest interest in the fortunes of Nineveh. The same argument might be employed, and with

greater force, to prove that Isaiah, ch. xix, was written in Egypt. It can have no force whatever to one who may think that a poetical mind, of so high an order as that of Nahum, would naturally give us vivid descriptions and strong outbursts of feeling, when engaged on such a theme, and wherever the prophet might happen to be residing. When, however, the same author refers to the *language* of the book, and finds in it reasons for deciding that the writer lived in Assyria, we have certainly more definite and tangible, if not more conclusive, proof offered to us for the opinion in question. But here, again, the facts available will hardly bear the weight which is put upon them. The instances brought forward are the following : (1) The word *Huzzab* in ii, 7, is taken by Ewald to be an Assyrian word, and the name of the Assyrian queen. But it may be very differently explained ; and, with at least equal probability, may be regarded as pure Hebrew, as will be seen in the note on the passage. (2) The same remark applies to one, at least, of the other two alleged Assyrian words, occurring in iii, 17 ; viz., the word rendered *princes* ; English version *crowned*. (3) In regard to the other (*governors* ; or, perhaps, *satraps* ; Eng. vers. *captains*), as it is used by Jeremiah (li, 27), it seems no more to prove that Nahum must have lived in Assyria because he employs it, than it shows that Jeremiah did so. The fact appears to be that, even assuming both words to be of Assyrian origin, they might easily, from the intercourse between Palestine and Assyria, in the eighth and seventh centuries B. C., have come to be known to any Hebrew writer of Nahum's time ; and they would naturally be used by one writing on such a subject as that of this prophecy.

We may conclude, therefore, that there is really no good reason for considering the prophet Nahum as other than a Jew, who lived and wrote in his own country.

As to the age in which he lived, the most different opinions have been held. He has been made one of the earliest and almost the latest of the prophets, seeing that there have not

been wanting writers who have placed him further back than Ahaz, and later than Ezekiel. This fact may serve, at least, to show us that the evidence relating to the point is not very full, or very decisive. And yet it would seem to be as complete as could reasonably be expected. The place which Nahum holds in the collection of the Minor prophets, probably indicates the chronological position which the ancient editors or arrangers of that collection assigned to him. They have placed him between Micah, who prophesied in the time of Hezekiah, and Habakkuk, who probably lived in Josiah's reign. Doubtless they were right in placing him within these limits, which, however, it will be observed, enclose a somewhat long interval. When, precisely, within it, he *wrote*, must, at least, still be a question; nor can much stress be laid on an argument for settling the point urged by Otto Strauss.¹ This is founded on the alleged citation, or imitation, by Nahum of certain expressions in the writings of prophets who preceded him, especially Isaiah. The value of such evidence may be judged of by the comparison of Isaiah x, 27 with Nah. i, 13; Is. xiii, 16 with Nah. iii, 10. In these, and similar cases referred to, the expression used by the two prophets is one that might readily occur to any imaginative writer; or which might even be taken by both from the common stock of the language, rather than borrowed by either from the other. The same is true of certain expressions in Jeremiah which have, in the same way, been brought forward, to prove that Nahum ought not to be placed lower, in point of time, than that prophet. Examples are, Jer. x, 19 and Nah. iii, 19; Jer. xiii, 22–26 and Nah. iii, 5; Jer. xxx, 8 and Nah. i, 13.

A similar use has been made of a few supposed allusions in the prophecy to historical events; as, *e.g.*, to the expedition of Sennacherib, Nah. i, 9, 12; to the death of that king, i, 14; to the message of Rabshakeh, ii, 13. Of these only i, 14 can be

¹ Nahumi de Nino Vaticinium, pp. xv-xvi.

admitted to have much value ; but this is, very probably, as supposed by Ewald, a reference to the murder of Sennacherib, related in Isaiah xxxvii, 38. Accepting it as such, it gives us little help in fixing the date of the composition of Nahum, as we can infer from the allusion only that the writing containing it is *later* than the event alluded to ; how much later we still do not know.

It may, however, with some reason be alleged that when the book was written the Assyrian power must have been still unbroken ; Nah. i, 12 ; ii, 12-13 ; iii, 15-17. But this was probably the case for a considerable time after the death of Sennacherib. Esarhaddon, his son and successor, reigned for many years, and was an able ruler. That Nah. i, 13, however, contains any allusion to the captivity of Manasseh in Babylon (2 Chron. xxxiii, 11) is more than can be confidently affirmed ; and, on the other hand, even the reference to the attack on No-Ammon, Nah. iii, 8-10, although in itself perfectly clear and definite, does not help us much, because we cannot be certain when that event took place ; and again, even supposing that we knew this, what is to inform us how many years after the event the words alluding to it were written ?

The opinion of Ewald on the present question has been indirectly stated, in our notice of his conclusion as to where Nahum lived. Holding that the prophet wrote in Assyria, and that the strength and vividness of his language show him to have been in the very midst of the movements of the Median armies, on their approach to besiege Nineveh, of course he refers the composition of the piece to the time of the event of which it speaks. The prophet's sure anticipation of the downfall of Nineveh sprang thus, in short, from the actual occurrence before his eyes of events which would inevitably lead to the catastrophe. Thus the book is not earlier than about 635 b. c., when the attack of the Medes under Phraortes took place. Hitzig¹ places its composition later still, viz., at the time of the

¹ Klein. Proph., pp. 231-2.

first attack upon Nineveh by Cyaxares, the son of Phraortes. If, however, we abandon the supposition of the work having been composed in Assyria, an earlier date will appear the more probable. For, so late as 635–30 B. C., the Assyrians were hardly any longer formidable to the Jews; while the expression Nah. i, 13–15, appears to indicate that Judah was not yet free, or had not long been free, from their attacks. The expressions referred to suit well the latter part of the reign of Manasseh, subsequent to his captivity and restoration to his kingdom, according to the statement of the Chronicles before noticed. The invasion which resulted in Manasseh's deportation must have occurred before the Assyrian power had greatly declined, and probably belongs to the time of Esarhaddon. We cannot, therefore, be far wrong if we make Nahum a contemporary of the Jewish king just named, who reigned from about 696 to 641 B. C.; and assume as the date of the book some point of time before the middle of the seventh century B. C., not long subsequent to an inroad of the Assyrians into Palestine under Esarhaddon. In support of this date it may also be observed that the prophet does not *name* the enemies by whom Nineveh is to be destroyed;—as he would hardly have failed to do, had he been writing so late as Ewald and Hitzig suppose, or in the very midst of the movement of the hostile forces.

A still earlier date has been thought more suitable by both Winer and De Wette,¹ who suppose that the prophecy may have been suggested by, and written soon after, the defeat of Sennacherib's invasion. If, however, Nah. i, 13 be, as we have supposed, a reference to the death of Sennacherib, the book cannot have been composed for many years after that invasion, for, as we have before stated, Sennacherib reigned more than twenty years after his return from Palestine.

¹ Winer, Realwb., Art. Nahum; De W., Einl. A. T., § 240.

The leading object of this prophecy is well represented, or symbolised, by the prophet's name; — the suitable appellation of a messenger either of *Consolation*, or of *Vengeance*; the word *Nahum* being derived from a verb which is used in both the corresponding senses, the former of the two being the more frequent. And the book is evidently one, equally of consolation and of vengeance; — of consolation for the prophet's own people, of vengeance for their enemies. Accordingly, we find that in the first chapter the two themes alternate: “Jehovah taketh vengeance on his adversaries,” but He is also “slow to anger;” — “His wrath is poured out like fire,” but yet He is good, and “a stronghold in the day of affliction” to “them that trust in him.” Soon, however, the writer is wholly absorbed in his great theme, the approaching destruction of the Assyrian capital, and the remainder of the book is, in effect, a description, clothed in the strongest language, of the retribution which is soon to overtake the ancient oppressors of Israel and Judah. The prophecy is remarkable, among the Old Testament writings of its kind, for the unity of aim and subject which pervades it, as well as for the variety and force of phrase and image with which the writer presents his leading thoughts to his readers. We need not here seek further to point out this power of expression, as it is exemplified in almost every verse of the second and third chapters.

The essential impulse in which the prophetic denunciation originated, is clearly, in a large degree, moral and religious in its character. It is Jehovah still, the ever-present Ruler and Judge of the world, that brings all to pass; not, however, of His mere arbitrary will, but in consequence of the iniquities of the heathen city and its people. The dwelling place of lions, as it was; of lions that tore in pieces and strangled and filled their dens with prey; the city of blood, that was full of treachery and violence; the artful and ambitious state, the mistress of enchantments, that oppressed and enslaved the nations; it could not finally escape the just judgment of God.

In such expressions the character of the Assyrian rulers and of their policy is indicated with no small power, and with evident truth; and we at once feel, as we read, that a fabric so built up not upon any foundation of wisdom or justice, but upon mere brute force and violence, had, of necessity, even within itself the elements of its own destruction. This the prophet, in his earnest looking forward into the future and his immovable faith in the avenging God, most clearly sees; and this conviction of his, in its particular reference to Nineveh, he has embodied for all time in this short prophecy. The book may, therefore, be read as a genuine utterance of the prophetic inspiration—not merely for its historical significance, as a portion of the evidence relating to the downfall of the Assyrian empire; nor merely for the combined strength and beauty of the composition; but also, and chiefly, as the outpouring of a pious and trustful spirit, expressing, in the mode occasioned by the circumstances of the day, its own deep conviction of the terrible consequences of injustice and sin, and the inevitable certainty of the Divine retributions.

§ 2. CHAP. I, 1—14.

Alternately contemplating Assyria and Judah, the prophet speaks of the might and vengeance of Jehovah to the one, and of his mercy and goodness to the other.—He gradually approaches his principal theme—the deliverance of his own people by the destruction of the power of the Assyrians, and the overthrow of their idols.

1. **T**H E prophecy of Nineveh. The book of the prophetic-vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.
2. A jealous God and one that taketh vengeance is Jehovah,
Jehovah taketh vengeance and is wrathful ;
Jehovah taketh vengeance on his adversaries,
And he reserveth *it* for his enemies.
3. Jehovah is slow to anger, and great in power,
And will by no means leave unpunished ;
Jehovah — his way is in the whirlwind and in the storm,
And the clouds are the dust of his feet.

1. *prophecy*: Eng. version, *burden*; see note on Is. 23, 1.

2. The prophet begins with an allusion to those Divine attributes which will, in his conception, be especially manifested by the overthrow of the Assyrians. — *jealous*: as suffering no rival. So Ex. 20, 5; but here, perhaps, rather *zealous*, full of earnestness in what he does, so as not to do it imperfectly. Comp. Num. 25, 11, 13; 1 Kings 19, 10, in which cases, however, we have the *verb*.

3. *slow*: *i. e.* Jehovah is indeed slow to take vengeance, and bears long even with the wicked ; yet he

will not let them ultimately escape. Comp. Ex. 34, 6; Joel 2, 3, and other places in which the same sentiment is expressed. Otherwise, slow to anger towards his own people.

— *and great*: or rather, *but great*; *i. e.* his long-suffering does not arise from want of power. — *whirlwind*: *clouds*: in these expressions,

and in vv. 4-5, the prophet illustrates the greatness of the Divine power by alluding to its effects, as seen in the most wonderful phenomena of nature,—the whirlwind, the stormy sea, the earthquake, the dried-up rivers, the hills and plains, with their vegetation parched and wasted

4. He rebuketh the sea and drieth it up,
And all the rivers he maketh dry ;
Bashan languisheth, and Carmel,
And the verdure of Lebanon languisheth.
5. The mountains shake because of him,
And the hills melt,
And the earth heaveth before him,
Yea, the world and all that dwell therein.
6. Before his indignation who shall stand ?
Who shall abide in the heat of his anger ?
His wrath is poured out like fire,
And the rocks are thrown down by him.
7. Good is Jehovah, a stronghold in the day of affliction,
And he knoweth them that trust in him.
8. But with overwhelming flood will he destroy her place,
And darkness shall pursue his enemies.
9. What will ye devise against Jehovah ?

for want of moisture. The Divine presence, and particularly the Divine anger, are often depicted in such terms. Ps. 28, 7, seq.; Is. 19, 5-7.

4. *Bashan* : the fertile pastoral region to the eastward of Galilee, famous for its oaks and its cattle, as Carmel for its cornfields and vineyards, and Lebanon for its forests. Comp. Is. 33, 9.

5. *heaveth* : see Crit. Note.

6. *poured out* : for the expression, comp. Jer. 7, 20; meaning, it shall consume and destroy, far and wide.

7. Thus far the prophet, having spoken in general terms of the irresistibleness of the Divine power and anger, has prepared the way for his more special object, and proceeds to apply what he has said in its bearing, first on the consolation of his own people, next and chiefly, on the punishment of their enemies. The

contrast adds to the force of each representation. — *knoweth* : perhaps, in the sense of *careth for, protects*; or, more simply, *recognises*, so as to save them in the midst of the coming calamities. Hos. 13, 5; Amos 3, 2. The words may also convey a *threat* to those Jews who worshipped false gods.

8. *flood* : the frequent image of great misery, as Ps. 32, 5; 42, 8.

— *her place* : this can hardly refer to anything but Nineveh, which, though not mentioned by name, the prophet must have in his mind. The city is personified and spoken of as a Queen, apart from the place where she lives, — “her place,” therefore, is Nineveh itself. — *darkness* : otherwise, he shall pursue his enemies *into darkness*; or, *with darkness*.

9. Having reached the main object of his prophecy, Nineveh, Nahum now abruptly addresses the As-

Utterly will he destroy !

Not the second-time shall the affliction arise.

10. Though they be as thorns folded together, and steeped as in their own wine,
They shall be consumed like dry stubble, completely.
11. From thee hath come forth one devising evil against Jehovah,
Planning wickedness.
12. Thus saith Jehovah, Although they be entire, and so many,

syrians ; asking them what they can do to defend themselves against such an adversary as Jehovah, powerful as they may have been against all other enemies.—*not the second-time*: one visitation only shall be sufficient, leaving nothing more to be destroyed. Such is the simplest explanation of the verse. It may be interpreted, however, as though addressed to the *Jews*—thus : What think ye concerning Jehovah ? What do ye expect that he will do ? Not a second time shall they conquer your land, and lead your people into captivity, as they have done before ; in the case either of the invasion of Sennacherib, or of the destruction of the kingdom of Samaria.

10. The figure in the mind of Nahum was apparently that of a mass of thorns tangled together, dangerous to handle or to touch, and soaking with wet, so as not to burn readily. He means the Assyrians, however; and so does not consistently hold fast his figure ; but speaks of “*their wine*” as that with which the thorns are soaking — alluding, doubtless, to the drunken revelries of the Assyrian banquets. *Thorns* are elsewhere the image of what is hostile and dangerous ; Ezek. 28, 24 ; Micah, 7, 4. Diodorus Siculus (O. Strauss, p. 32) mentions

that it was while the Assyrians were at a great banquet, and overcome with wine, that their enemies broke into the city. This cannot, however, be what is here particularly in the prophet’s view. The same remark may be made of an illustration of the word *flood*, in v. 8, sometimes brought from Diodorus, who states that the enemy were enabled to enter Nineveh in consequence of the river having “overflowed its banks, deluged a part of the city, and overturned twenty stadia of the wall.” (Abp. Newcome, *in loc.*)

11. *From thee* : *i. e.* from Nineveh. Otherwise, *From thee, O Judah, hath departed he* that devised evil ; *i. e.*, Judah is now delivered from her invaders. The words have been understood also of the withdrawal of Assyrian garrisons from Judah. The first is the most probable.—*wickedness* : the original is *belial*, often rendered in the English version as a proper name, as 1 Sam. 25, 25, with doubtful correctness. The word is, however, the original form of the later Belial (*Βελιαλ* or *Βελιαρ*) found in the New Testament as a name of Satan. (2 Cor. 6, 15.) It here refers to the Assyrian plans against the Jews, from the earliest times and downwards, not particularly to the threats of Rabshakeh.

12. *entire* : or *complete* ; *i. e.*, in

- Even thus shall they be cut down, and pass away ;
 Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more ;
13. But now will I break his yoke from upon thee,
 And thy bonds will I burst asunder.
14. Jehovah hath given command concerning thee,
 That thy name shall no more be sown ;
 From the house of thy gods will I cut off graven-image and
 molten-image ;
 I will make thy grave, for thou art vile.

their numbers and power. In the height of their dominion and pride they shall be destroyed.—*thee*: must here be Judah. The Hebrew poets not unfrequently use the pronoun in this abrupt way, without expressly stating who or what is meant. So in v. 8, *supra*. Comp. 3, 9; Is. 8, 21. The affliction of Jndah by the Assyrian invasions shall now cease. Some think the words addressed to the Assyrians, in the sense of v. 9; rendering, I will so afflict thee that I shall not need to do it again. Crit. Note.

13. This verse is evidently addressed to Judah. Comp. Is. 10, 27.

14. *name : sown*: the Assyrian king is addressed; his name and race are to become extinct.—*house of thy god*: comp. Is. 37, 38, to which there is probably here an allusion. We have seen (Gen. Introd., § 1) that the great pyramid at Nimroud is thought by Mr. Fergusson to have been rather a temple than a tomb. There exist also at Nimroud the remains of two smaller temples which contained statues of the gods (Layard, Nin. & Bab., p. 653). Mr. Layard suggests that the great palaces partook of a saered character, or were, in short,

temples, as well as palaees. (Nin. & Rem., p. 267). Many religious symbols, as well as figures of the Assyrian gods cut in the slabs, have been found, and may be seen in the British Museum. Altars, probably for fire-worship, have also been met with. (Ib., pp. 467-9.) On the general subjeet of the religion of the Assyrians, ch. vii of the same work (Part ii) is highly interesting, and in connection more particularly with the passage before us, the engraving at p. 451 in that chapter, representing Assyrian idols carried in procession.—*cut off*: destroy the Assyrian gods, as the Assyrians themselves have treated others. Comp. 2 Kings 19, 17. On a slab found at Khorsabad occurs the representation of three men cutting a statue to pieces, probably the statue of an idol deity, but it is not quite certain. Bonomi's Nineveh, p. 163. —*art vile*: we might render, *thou art light*; i. e., in weight; morally too light; “weighed in the balances and found wanting,” Dan. 5, 27; Job 31, 6. We retain the common translation, not being snre that any change proposed would be an improvement. Gesenius would render, “*thou art become small*,” i. e. thy power is broken.

§ 3. CHAP. I, 15 — II, 13.

Contrasting the happier lot of his own people with the fate that awaits Nineveh, the prophet announces to the former the approach of the messenger with the tidings of the overthrow of the Assyrians. — He describes the advance of the besieging forces, the preparations for defence, the capture and final destruction of the den of lions.

15. BEHOLD upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth
good tidings,
That publisheth peace !
O Judah, keep thy solemn-feasts, perform thy vows,
For not again shall the wicked-one pass through thee,
He is utterly cut off.

15. In the Hebrew text this verse is assigned to ch. 2. This seems the better arrangement; because a contrast is probably intended between the messenger of peace with joyful tidings for Jerusalem, and the Median army coming up to the attack of Nineveh. This contrast is greatly obscured in the English division of the chapters.

mountains: upon or over which one coming to Jerusalem from Assyria might be conceived to pass. The hills skirting Jerusalem on the east (the mount of Olives) may be intended, or even the more distant mountains of Moab, which are visible from Jerusalem. Comp. Stanley, Sin. & Pal., p. 167.

O Judah: these and the following words are probably the news which

the messenger brings, what he proclaims. Released from the enemy, they may keep their festivals without fear or interruption, as well as in thanksgiving for their deliverance. Comp. Is. 52, 7, for nearly the same words. It may be a question whether either prophet borrowed from the other; as the expression is really equivalent to little more than this, Behold the news is brought to Judea, in the two cases. When we remember how foot-messengers, or runners, were employed in those days to carry such news, we may see that the same exclamation might readily occur to two writers independently of each other. — *the wicked-one*: literally, *belial*; i. e. the Assyrian king, or army, as before, ch. 1, 11.

CH. II.

1. He that breaketh in pieces is come up before thy face ;
Guard the defences, watch the way,
Gird up the loins, increase strength greatly ;
2. For Jehovah restorcth the excellency of Jacob,
As the excellency of Israel ;
For plunderers have plundered them,
And destroyed their branches.
3. The shield of his warriors is made red,
His mighty men are in crimson ;

1. Addressed to Nineveh:—Take every precaution, for it is no common enemy that is approaching, but Jehovah himself, through his instruments, the Medes and Babylonians.—*breaketh in pieces*: see Jer. 51, 20, where a slightly different form of the same word (English version “hammer”) is used of Nebuchadnezzar. It was the Medo-Babylonian army under Cyaxares and Nabopolassar by which the prophet’s words were fulfilled. (Gen. Introd., § 5.) —*way*: by which the enemy will attack, so as to be ready to meet them.

2. The destruction of Nineveh prepares the way for the restoration of Judah.—*Jacob*: *Israel*: either, Jehovah restores both the kingdoms, Israel and Judah; or, perhaps, as the name Jacob was the earlier and more common name of the patriarch, and Israel the more honourable one, given to him by the angel, and commemorative of the blessing which he gained when he prevailed in his petition; so now Jehovah will restore the excellency of Jacob (the whole people that is), so that it shall recall or rival the glory obtained by the ancestor of the nation on that occasion. See Gen. 32, 24–9; 35,

9–12. For this use of *Jacob*, see Is. 44, 1–2. Crit. Note.

3. The appearance of the besiegers and the commencement of the attack.—*shields*: these are represented on the sculptures of different shapes and sizes; some large enough to cover the entire person. (Nin. & Rem., ii, p. 345.) Shields of bronze have been found at Nimroud. (Nin. & Bab., pp. 193–4.) Does this material account for the epithet *red*? Perhaps it is best explained by a reference to the sun’s rays reflected from shields of copper, or covered with that metal. Some think they were stained red, and that the colour is mentioned symbolically, to express the Divine wrath of which the soldiers were the instruments. So with the word *crimson*: which may denote the actual colour of the outer garments of the Median soldiers. The Medes appear from Xenophon and Jul. Pollux to have been fond of this colour. (O. Strauss, p. 59.)

The Assyrian soldiers wore either coats of mail, scales or plates of which have been found at Nimroud; or tunics of felt or leather. Layard, Nin. & Rem., ii, pp. 335–6.

With the glitter of iron-weapons *come* the chariots,
 In the day of His preparation,
 And the spears are brandished.

4. In the streets shall the chariots rage,
 They shall run to and fro in the broad-places ;
 Their appearance *is* like torches ;
 Like the lightnings shall they run.
5. He shall remember his nobles ;
 They shall stumble in their march,
 They shall hasten to the wall,
 And the covering-machine *shall be* prepared.
6. The gates of the streams are opened,
 And the palace is flooded.

glitter of iron-weapons : referring to the appearance of the various ornaments of the chariots in their rapid motion, and of the arms and dress of the warriors. Some would understand the word (iron-weapons) of blades fixed to the wheels. The Medes and Babylonians may have had chariots so appointed, but on the Assyrian monuments no traces of such chariots have been found. The common rendering arises from a change of reading for which there is no authority. Crit. Note. Many beautiful representations of chariots occur on the sculptures, as well as in Mr. Layard's two works. — *His*: Jehovah's; comp. Is. 13, 3; and note, Is. 5, 28.

4. Still the movement of the besieging army ; though some would refer both this and the preceding verse to the alarm of the Assyrians, and their preparations for defence. — *streets* : *broad-places* : those either of Nineveh, or of the out-lying suburbs, which probably contained many large open spaces, and even much cultivated ground.

(Gen. Introd., § 6.) — *Their appearance* : that of the broad-places; so the Hebrew. They are bright with the rapidly moving chariots and armour, flashing in the sun. Crit. Note.

5. The Assyrian preparations for defence. — *He* : the Assyrian king. — *remember* : either, *rely on* them, in thought, that is; or *summon them* to the defence : but vainly so, for they shall stumble as they come to the fight, through fear and feebleness; or else, through mingled eagerness and fear, as they hurry to the walls. — *covering-machine* : may be explained either of some defensive contrivance set up by the Ninevites, which seems the easiest ; or of the large tower-like machines brought up by the assailants to enable them to attack the men on the walls from under cover, and with various missiles. Such machines are described by Layard, Nin. & Rem., ii, pp. 367-71. Comp. Ezek. 4, 2.

6. *gates* : sluices, to fill the moats and surround the city. — *flooded* : more commonly, *melted* (ch. 1, 5); as, however, the passage evidently

7. But it is determined;

She is uncovered, she is led up,

With her maidens, sighing as with the voice of doves,

Smiting upon their breasts.

8. Though Nineveh *was* as a pool of water from days of old,

Yet they flee away :

Stand, stand ! but none turneth back.

9. Seize the silver, seize the gold,

There is no end to the store,

The abundance of every precious thing.

speaks of the defence of Nineveh by means of its streams and moats, the word may here have the sense given. Perhaps the rendering may be justified by a reference to Amos 9, 13, “all the hills shall melt,” *i. e.* overflow, or be flooded, with wine. Some understand the words of a literal dissolving of the brick-built terrace on which the palace stood, and of the walls. But the raised terraces, or platforms, were very solid, and faced with stone. Layard, Nin. & Bab., ch. xxvi. Others take the words to express the fear felt within the palace.

7. *determined*: Jehovah has decreed the fall of Nineveh, and defence is vain. Our English version renders the word as a proper name, *Huzzab*; but nothing is known of any such person, the supposed Queen of Nineveh. This rendering is, however, adopted by Ewald. It seems unnecessary either to depart from the usual meaning of the word, or to take it as a proper name. See Crit. Note.

She : Nineveh personified, the Queen among nations ; she is treated with ignominy and led up into captivity. Comp. ch. 3, 5.—
voice of doves : the image of help-

lessness, as well as of strong though suppressed grief, bursting out at times into the louder lamentation expressed by beating the breast.

8. Though Nineveh has been possessed of water-defences such that the country around could be turned into a pool, yet the inhabitants cannot maintain themselves within her, but have to flee away before the enemy. — “Stand, stand,” the prophet exclaims at the sight; but no one turns back. Some take the word *water* as figuratively expressive of the wealth and populousness of Nineveh. Comp. Jer. 51, 13; Rev. 17, 15. These now flee away, leaving a desolate city. Crit. Note.

9. *store* : which the Assyrians had themselves accumulated by the plunder of the subject nations. Many small articles of value have been found among the ruins of Nineveh, but nothing of gold or silver. Doubtless the palaces were plundered before they were set on fire. Layard, Nin. & Rem., ii, pp. 415–20; Nin. & Bab., ch. viii. Mr. L. enumerates bronze castings inlaid with gold, among the things discovered ; also glass and alabaster vases, ivory carvings, gems, and seals.

10. She is empty, and desolate, and wasted,
 The heart melteth and the knees smite together,
 There is pain in all loins,
 And the faces of them all grow pale.
11. Where is the dwelling of lions,
 And the feeding-place of young-lions,
 Whither the lion went, the Lioness, the lion's whelp,
 And none made them afraid? —
12. The lion tearing in pieces for his whelps,
 And strangling for his Lionesses;
 And he filled his dens with prey,
 And his dwellings with ravin.
13. Behold, I am against thee, saith Jehovah of Hosts,
 And I will burn her chariots in smoke,
 And thy young-lions the sword shall devour;
 And I will cut off thy prey from the earth,
 And the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard.

10. More literally, this verse reads:—

“Emptiness and desolation and wasted,
 And heart melted, and smiting of knees,
 And pain in all loins,
 And the faces of them all grow pale.”

The words in the first line are of very similar meaning, form, and sound in the original, and are brought together probably to heighten the force of the expression. So Is. 29, 2; Zeph. 1, 15. The omission of the verb is frequent in the latter part of Nahum. Comp. 3, 2.—Crit. Note.

grow pale: See Crit. Note.

11. The cruel and powerful Assyrian warriors of various ranks are evidently meant. The lion is a frequent subject of sculpture, as may be seen in the British Museum. It appears sometimes winged, and sometimes with the head of a man. There may be an allusion to this in these verses.

13. *Hosts*: see note on Is. 5, 16.

— *her*: as before, Nineveh's. —
in smoke: or *into smoke*; *i. e.* entirely.

messengers: conveying the king's commands, or exacting tribute from the conquered nations; such also as Rabshakeh, Is. 36, 2.

§ 4. CHAP. III.

The devastation and ignominy of Nineveh completed.—Destruction of her strong places.—Dispersion of her people.

1. WOE to the city of blood !
All of it *is* full of treachery and violence,
Its prey ceaseth not !
2. The noise of the whip, and the noise of the rattling of the wheel !
And the rushing horse, and the bounding chariot !
3. The horseman advancing,
And the glitter of the sword, and the flash of the spear ;
There is a multitude of slain,
And abundance of corpses, and no end of the bodies,
They stumble among their bodies !

1. *of blood*: *i.e.* shed by the Assyrians. Some would refer the verse to the state of Nineveh, after the Medes enter; full of blood, and violence, and having prey enough now, if never before. If this be the meaning there is a bitter irony in the words. On the whole, the verse is rather descriptive of what Nineveh has been in her conduct to others.

— *ceaseth not*: Crit. Note.

2-3. There is no verb in these verses, except *stumble* at the end. The word *Hark*, at the beginning, would perhaps best bring out the meaning. — *horse*: *i.e.* in the chariots. The cavalry are mentioned in the next verse.

3. *advancing*: Heb., making to ascend, or *bringing up*: *i.e.* urging on his horse. Such seems the simplest rendering, but interpreters differ much. The common English version is hardly admissible. See Crit. Note. — *glitter*: *flash*: Heb., flame of the sword and flash of the spear. If the rendering of this verse in the text seem harsh, it is at least close to the original, and preserves the rapidity and variety of the latter. — *They*: *i.e.*, the enemy, among the Assyrian slain. The best illustration of the passage may be found in one of the battle pieces in the British Museum. Every sentence of the description has its cor-

4. Because of the multitude of the harlotries of the harlot,
The well-favoured, the mistress of enchantments,
That sold nations by her harlotries,
And peoples by her enchantments —
5. Behold, I am against thee, saith Jehovah of Hosts,
And I will uncover thy skirts upon thy face,
And show the nations thy nakedness,
And kingdoms thy shame.
6. I will cast upon thee abominable-things,
And dishonour thee, and make thee as a gazing-stock.
7. And it shall come to pass, that all that see thee shall flee from
thee,
And shall say, Nineveh is laid waste,
Who shall pity her ?
Whence shall I seek comforters for thee ?
8. Art thou better than No Ammon,

responding object, or objects, in the sculpture, with this difference, however, that in the latter the Assyrians are the conquerors.

4. *harlotries* : referring to her ambitious designs upon other nations, and her conquests:—as when Tiglath Pileser came to aid Ahaz, and made him tributary. Nineveh is compared to a beautiful sorceress.

— *enchantments* : the same as harlotries ; implying, probably, also, that the Assyrians were idolaters, and not worshippers of Jehovah. The expressions may also include a reference to the trading transactions of the Assyrians. See note on Is. 23, 13.— *sold nations* : some would understand this of the Assyrians literally selling captives to other nations ; comp. Joel 3, 2-3. But there is no evidence that the Assyrians did this. They retained their prisoners themselves:—meaning, therefore, conquered and oppressed.

5-6. She shall undergo the most

ignominious punishment; being unveiled—the greatest of insults—and otherwise disgracefully treated. See Is. 47, 2-3.

8. *No Ammon* : Egyptian words meaning, the *portion or possession of Ammon*, the supreme deity of the Egyptians, compared by the Greeks to their own Jupiter. The city meant here, it is now agreed by interpreters, was Thebes in Upper Egypt, a celebrated seat of the worship of Ammon. Some great Egyptian city must be referred to, to compare with Nineveh. The same city is mentioned in Jer. 46, 25; Ezek. 30, 14-16. In the time of these prophets No must have recovered from the effects of the attack referred to by Nahum, judging from the terms in which they speak of it. *What* the particular event was, which Nahum mentions, we have not the means of deciding. The verse has been explained of an invasion of Egypt by the Assyrians,

- That is situate among the Rivers,
 With waters round-about her,
 Whose defence was the flood,
 Whose wall was of the flood?
9. Cush was her strength and Egypt,
 Nor was there any end *to it*;
 Phut and Lubim were thy help.
10. Even she became an exile,
 She hath gone into captivity,
 Her children also were dashed in pieces at the head of all the
 streets,
 And for her honourable-men they cast lots,
 And all her great-men were bound with chains.

under Shalmaneser, under Sargon, under Sennacherib; of an invasion of Upper Egypt and capture of Thebes by the Ethiopians, which is improbable, as Cush is the *helper* of No (v. 9); of the irruption of the Scythians (Gen. Introd., § 5); of the Carthaginians; and, finally, it has been understood as a prophecy of the future destruction of Thebes, fulfilled in the time of the Persian Cambyses. The last has little probability, as Nahum seems clearly to refer to something already past. The passage may be best referred to the invasion of Egypt by Sargon (comp. Is. ch. 18 & ch. 20 with the introductory notes). In these passages we see the Ethiopians and Egyptians allied with the Jews against the Assyrians, and Isaiah evidently expecting the defeat of the former. Nor is it any objection to this explanation that Nahum does not here *say* that the Assyrians had been the conquerors of No Ammon. His immediate object would rather lead him to leave that fact unnoticed.

Rivers: see, as before, Is. 19, 6-8.

There may be also an allusion to channels into which the Nile here divides. Thebes lay on both sides of the river.—*flood*: literally, *sea*; meaning the waters of the Nile. Comp. Is. 19, 5. The annual inundation may have surrounded the city. For an account of the magnificent remains of Thebes the reader is referred to Kenrick's Egypt, i. ch. vii.

9. *Cush*: Ethiopia. It is to be inferred from this that the attack on No Ammon did not proceed from the Ethiopians, as some have supposed. More probably they were at this time in possession of Upper Egypt.—*Phut*: Gen. 10, 6; Ezek. 27, 10; perhaps Nubia; *Lubim*: the people of Libya, which extended along the Mediterranean westward of Egypt. Some make *Phut* only another name for Libya. So Jer. 46, 2; Ezek. 30, 5; 38, 5.—*thy*: addressed to No. See note on 1, 12.

10. *captivity*: the cruel treatment of captives is represented on the marbles. Comp. Gen. Introd., § 1.

11. Thou also shalt become drunk,
 Thou shalt be hidden,
 Thou also shalt seek protection from the enemy,
12. All thy fortified-places *are as* fig-trees with early-fruit,
 If they be shaken, then they fall into the mouth of the eater;
13. Behold thy people are women in the midst of thee;
 To thine enemies the gates of thy land shall be opened wide;
 Fire shall devour thy bars.
14. Draw thee waters for the siege!
 Repair thy fortified-places,
 Go into the clay, and tread the Clay,
 Repair the brick-kiln:
15. There shall the fire devour thee,
 The sword shall cut thee off,

11. *drunk*: made to drink of the cup of the wrath of Jehovah, a frequent figure. Comp. Is. 51, 17, 21; Jer. 25, 15.—*hidden*: in the sense of *covered over* and forgotten, and not easily found—a prediction remarkably verified in the state in which the actual ruins of Nineveh have been found buried.—*enemy*: ask for help against the Medes from nations who have been the enemies, or the conquered subjects, of the now humbled Assyrians.

12. *fortified-places*: those defending the borders of Central Assyria, perhaps; or the approaches to the Capital. See v. 13.—*fig-trees*: expressive of the rapidity and ease with which the conquest will be made. Comp. Is. 28, 4.

13. *women*: so Isaiah 19, 16.—*gates*: *land*: the fortified entrances to the district of Nineveh. See Gen. Introd., § 6.—*Fire*: this may be well illustrated by two

plates which Bonomi gives from Botta representing Assyrians setting fire to the gates of a city. Bon., Nin., pp. 194, 197.

14. The prophet again abruptly and with strong irony calls on Nineveh to defend and strengthen herself.—*waters*: for drinking, most probably; and not for defence, in the works round the city.—*clay*: was brought in baskets to a convenient place to be worked with the feet, and so fitted for being made into bricks. These were either baked in the sun, or in some kind of kiln. The word rendered *brick-kiln* might merely mean the place where the bricks were made; but the allusion to fire in the next verse justifies the rendering given.—*clay*: *Clay*: different words, but most probably only names of the same material, in different stages of preparation.

15. *There*: in the midst of their preparations.—*it*: fire and sword

It shall devour thee like the locust :
 Make thyself many as the locust,
 Make thyself many as the Locust !

16. Thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the stars of heaven,
 The locust despoileth them, and fleeth away !
17. Thy princes are like the Locust,
 And thy governors like swarms,
 Which alight upon the hedges in a cold day ;
 The sun ariseth, and they pass away,
 And the place where they were is not known.
18. Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria

together are probably in the writer's thoughts. — *locust*: the frequent image of rapacity, as well as of great numbers. Some would take the word in the sense of an accusative; meaning, they shall destroy thee as men do the locust; *i.e.*, in great numbers.—*Locust*: the Hebrew has no less than ten different names for this destructive insect. It is not possible to find corresponding words in English; nor, indeed, to distinguish certainly the different species denoted by each name. See the art. *Locust* in Kitto's Cyclopaedia.

16. Comp. Ezek. 27, 23-4. The favourable situation of Nineveh for commerce has been mentioned in the Gen. Introd., § 6. On the Arts and Manufactures of the Assyrians Mr. Layard gives us much interesting information. Nin. & Rem., ii, pt. ii, ch. iii, iv, vi.—*locust*: the figure of the preceding verse is repeated: it now means, however, not the Assyrians, but the conquering Medes. They shall despoil the Assyrian traders of their wealth.—*fleeth away*: the words have little application to the conquerors; but

are added only to complete the description, and perhaps also to suggest the idea of the rapidity and completeness with which the spoliation will be effected.

17. The figure is now again applied to the Assyrians, expressing a different sense; viz., the rapid destruction of their Princes and Governors. Cold deprives the locust of the power of flying; during the night, therefore, or at the commencement of the cold season, they alight, but when warmed by the sun are soon gone. So suddenly shall the Assyrian swarms pass away, and leave no trace behind.

princes: literally *crowned-ones*; probably alluding to the tiara, or head-dress, worn both by the king, and by his officers and nobles. Layard, Nin. & Rem., ii, pp. 320, 327.—*governors*: probably an Assyrian word, *Tiphsar*, in which at least the syllable *sar* is Semitic. It is found, also, Jer. 51, 27; meaning, *a satrap*, or military governor of a province.

18. A new figure. The shepherds slumber, and the flock is scattered and lost.

Thy nobles rest ;

Thy people are scattered upon the mountains,
And no one gathereth them.

19. There is no healing for thy bruise,
Thy wound is deadly ;
All who hear the report of thee shall clap their hands against
thee,
For upon whom hath not thy evil-doing passed continually ?

rest : *i. e.* do nothing, are inactive; or, perhaps, *lie dead*. Some suppose an allusion here to the anticipated defection of the allied or subject princes and peoples from the Assyrians. More simply, the verse expresses, in figurative terms, the powerlessness of the Assyrians to defend themselves.

The whole of this chapter, and especially the latter part, is a noble description, in highly poetical language, of the completeness of the ruin which is to fall on the Assyrian state, and of the futility of all attempts to escape the just retribution due to past wickedness.

THE PROPHET JONAH.

THE BOOK CONCERNING HIM, ITS AGE AND DESIGN.

THE only historical notice which remains to us respecting Jonah is found in 2 Kings xiv, 23–27. From this we learn that he lived in the reign of the second Jeroboam, king of Israel, in the latter half of the ninth century B.C.; and that he uttered prophecies which were fulfilled relating to the restoration of certain territories beyond the Jordan, from the Syrians to their former possessors the Israelites. From the same passage it appears that Jonah belonged to Gath-hepher, a place in the northern district of Palestine, named after the tribe of Zebulon (Josh. xix, 10–13).

Of the existence and prophetic activity of Jonah, there can thus be no reasonable doubt; but no written prophecy of his has been preserved; — unless, indeed, we admit the success of the ingenious attempt which has been made to show that Is. ch. xv, xvi, proceeded originally from his pen, and were only *adopted* by Isaiah from their suitableness to the circumstances of the Moabites in his own day.¹

¹ The supposition receives support (1) from the two verses which close this section of Isaiah; (2) from the repetition of so much of the passage in Jeremiah, ch. 48; (3) from the peculiar spirit and style of the prophecy. Gesenius (*Jesaias, in loc.*), followed by Ewald and other

recent commentators, adopts the theory of the earlier existence of these chapters, without, however, going so far as to say, with Hitzig, that they proceed from Jonah, of which, indeed, no satisfactory evidence can be given.

As to the tradition which places the tomb of Jonah on the mound opposite to Mosul, and named after him Nebbi Junus (prophet Jonah), it is hardly necessary to observe that no reliance can be placed upon it. Mr. Layard remarks that it "probably originated in the spot having been once occupied by a Christian church or convent dedicated to the prophet." (Nin. and Rem., Introd. p. xxii; comp. Nin. and Bab., p. 596). A much more ancient tradition, of the time of Jerome, placed the tomb in Jonah's native village of Gath-hepher, which, as Jerome tells us, still existed in his day, and was a place of no large size a few miles from Sepphoris.

The book of Jonah, purporting, as it would seem, to be a narrative of incidents in the prophet's life, appears, at first sight, designed to give us some of the information respecting him, which we vainly look for in the historical books of Scripture. Here, however, it should be observed, that the writer nowhere *identifies* himself with the prophet. On the contrary he rather carefully keeps himself distinct, speaking of Jonah always in the third person, and not suggesting by a single word, or implication, that he ever thought of being regarded as, at the same time, both writer and subject of the narrative. The book is evidently, therefore, a book of Jonah, only inasmuch as it is concerning him. A little consideration may serve, also, to correct the impression that the work has for its proper object, or that it professes, to give us historical information respecting the prophet's life. On reading to the close we see that it has originated in something else than the mere desire, or impulse, which such an object implies. We discern an evident didactic purpose in the author's plan; and see, in short, that the narrative has what may be termed a *moral*, distinctly brought out, as the great aim of the composition. Having attained its end, the presentation of the truth which the writer wished thus to set forth, the work then terminates, as abruptly as it begins; leaving the reader in entire ignorance equally of Jonah's future and of his preceding history; not

caring even to say whether he returned to his own country, or whether he continued in Nineveh and died there. This indifference to the prophet's fate is clearly opposed to the supposition that the work was intended to be read simply as a contribution to the history of his life ; and strongly favours the conclusion that it was written to convey, through the medium of the incidents related, the particular truth, or principle, which the author wished to impress upon his readers.

This conclusion, as to the proper object of the composition, receives support from other considerations. Instruction, and prophecy, or, in general terms, the effort to convey moral impressions, through the medium of parable, allegory, fable, and other forms of fiction, became common and acceptable among the later Hebrews. We have traces of the tendency to this at an early period, and in several of the Old Testament writers ; as, for example, in Isaiah's parable of the vineyard ; in the form of some of Hosea's prophecies ; and in passages of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. See *Jer. xiii, 1-11* ; *Ezek. xxxvii*. As the prophetic and poetical inspiration became weaker, and gradually ceased, the recourse to such artificial forms of composition would seem to have become more frequent. Such, at least, is a rough general statement of the facts of the case ; though there are doubtless exceptions to the rule. If we compare Ezekiel and Jeremiah with Isaiah and the earlier prophets, we find the remark essentially true ; while yet it must be admitted that Malachi, with greater poverty of language and of thought, has less of the tendency in question than the much earlier Hosea. We do not, however, see the full development of this tendency, until we come to the Apocryphal Books of the Old Testament ; in some of which, as, for example, *Tobit*, it has degenerated into a mere spirit of story-telling, without any very clear or definite moral purpose. The book of *Jonah* is the only one in the Old Testament collection in which this form of composition is consistently adhered to throughout. It is distinguished, at the same time,

from later works of similar kind, by the religious truth for the expression of which it was most probably composed.

What is here referred to, is best seen at the close of the fourth chapter ; where the writer shows us so forcibly the thought that must have been in his mind from the commencement of the work ; viz., the thought that God is a Being of impartial mercy, and that even heathen nations may share, with the Israelites, in the Divine love and forgiveness. With this great and leading idea of the book, it is probable that one or two kindred convictions, working in the author's mind and more or less clearly expressed, ought to be associated. The first of these is that a man cannot withdraw himself from the Divine presence, or evade the execution of the Divine command. Jonah, in attempting to do this, fleeing to the uttermost parts of the earth, is effectually overtaken in his flight and brought back to the performance of his duty. A second thought, more closely akin to the principal idea of the book, may be that when a man, conscious of his guilt, quietly resigns himself to his merited punishment, Jehovah will accept his penitence and save him from destruction. This is exemplified partly in the case of Jonah himself, partly in that of the Ninevites. The same merciful disposition, as well as Jehovah's superiority over the idol deities, is perhaps intended to be illustrated in the preservation of the heathen sailors. In vain do they cry to their own gods. These cannot hear them ; but Jehovah can ; and His might in their deliverance the heathen themselves acknowledge, by the sacrifices and vows which they offer Him. The forgiveness of the Ninevites, in the third chapter, shows, perhaps, clearly enough the intention of the writer to set forth the Divine forbearance ; but this is most strongly brought out in the last chapter, by means of the contrast between the displeasure of Jonah, at the non-fulfilment of his prediction, and the persistence of Jehovah in his determination to spare the sinful city. Jonah in his anger may even be intended to represent the hard and intolerant feeling of his

countrymen towards the heathen ; or, if we seek for a more special application, the writer may have in his mind the animosity of the Jews towards the Samaritans, after the return from the Babylonian captivity. So much as is implied in either of these suppositions, is not, however, *expressed* ; but, if intended, is left to be inferred by the reader ; and very possibly it may be to this reserve of the author that we owe the preservation of the book, and its insertion in the Canon.

It is observed by Ewald that the narrative might properly have stopped at the close of ch. iii,—the main position, the willingness of Jehovah to spare the penitent of all nations, having been sufficiently illustrated in the three different cases of the sailors, the Ninevites, and the prophet himself. This is perhaps true ; and yet, without the fourth chapter, a very important part of the writer's object would have been left but imperfectly attained. Not that this chapter is added, as the same author thinks, to show that the true ground of the Divine forbearance is in Jehovah himself, in His love towards man ; but, rather, that through the opposition which springs up between the unwillingness of Jonah and the willingness of God to spare the city, the reader is brought clearly to see that the latter is *right*. This main point is illustrated with no inconsiderable power and skill. There is not, indeed, any strong, or direct, rebuke of the prophet's narrowness, expressed throughout the passage. At first it is only suggested, in gentle terms, “Doest thou well to be angry ?” And then, when this appeal is of no avail, the more complete demonstration is given, Jonah's sense of right being aroused by means of the trial which is inflicted on his self-love. Grieving for the loss of what was of so little value, and only concerned his own personal comfort, he is taught to feel that God also may rightly care for and pity the thousands of his creatures who would necessarily perish, in the destruction of so great a city as Nineveh. Hence the slightest regard for the innocent and helpless renders forbearance towards the guilty a necessity ;

and it cannot be denied that to spare, and not to destroy, is what is most in harmony with the infinite wisdom and mercy.

It seems impossible to determine what may have led the writer of this book to set forth the truth which he illustrates, in immediate connection with the prophet Jonah. There may have been some incident in the life of the latter, preserved in the traditions of the people, which he took up and worked upon, but which is no longer elsewhere traceable. Living, as Jonah did, in the northern part of the kingdom of Israel—the part of the country exposed to the earliest inroads of the Assyrians—it is in itself very probable that at some time in his life he stood in some peculiar relation to that conquering people, whose power had begun to be felt long before his time, by both Israel and Syria. (See Gen. Introd., § 1.) In this respect Jonah's position towards the Assyrians may have had some resemblance to that of Elisha and Elijah towards the Syrians. We have no means of determining more precisely what the former was; nor, consequently, can we say why the author chose Jonah as the subject of his work rather than any other of the older prophets—Gad, Nathan, Elijah, Elisha. That he had in his mind either the Greek story of Andromeda and Perseus, or that of Hercules and Hesione, as some writers have supposed¹, seems extremely improbable. These stories, indeed, or some modification of them, may easily have been known to the Phoenicians, and even among the Hebrews; but there is so little of resemblance between them and the contents and spirit of the book of Jonah, that there is really no ground for the supposition that they can in any way have originated or influenced the latter. It gives little support to the opposite view, that in the neighbourhood of Joppa lay certain rocks, pointed out, in Jerome's time, as those to which Andromeda was bound, when exposed to the sea monster. The fact bears simply the appearance of an accidental coincidence.

¹ Rosenmüller, In Jonam Proleg., vi.; Winer, Realwb., Art. Jonas.

On the other hand, the defence of the historical character of the book, as attempted by some writers, on the grounds set forth by Keil, and repeated by Dr. Davidson¹, is, as acknowledged by the latter, beset with difficulties. Upon these we need not enlarge, for they lie upon the surface of the narrative, and cannot fail to strike the intelligent reader. The conclusion of the last-named author as to the character of the book of Jonah does not differ greatly from that which has been stated in the foregoing remarks:—“These and other circumstances,” he writes, “would incline us to believe that, though Jonah existed as a prophet, had a miraculous deliverance from danger, &c. &c., that, in short, although the book contains real history as its basis, yet that the groundwork has been embellished by a writer who lived considerably after the prophet. How far the history is parabolic, and how far real, it is now impossible to determine. We believe that Jonah was a real person and a prophet.”²

The only point remaining to be noticed is the *time* at which the book of Jonah was written. Its position in the collection of the Minor prophets indicates that the collectors placed it not lower than the time of Isaiah and Hezekiah. This is, most probably, a good deal too early. So far as any inference can be drawn from the character of the language, it ought to be regarded as one of the later books of the Old Testament. Such, it is sufficient here to state, is the opinion of Gesenius, Ewald, De Wette, and Hitzig³, whose joint decision on such a point ought to be accepted as final. The last-named author, indeed, fixes on so late a date as the time of the Maccabees, the second century B.C., and believes the work to be of Egyptian origin. There is nothing to justify this extreme view; and the judgment of Ewald, who refers the book to the fifth

¹ Keil, Einl. ins A. T., § 91; Davidson, in Horne's Introd. to Scriptures, vol. ii, pp. 956-7.

² *Ibid.*, p. 959.

³ Ges. Heb. Grammatik, § 2, 5; Ewald, Proph. Bücher, ii, p. 559; De Wette, Einl. A. T., § 237; Hitzig, Klein. Proph., Jona, § 6.

century B.C., has much more probability. So late as the Maccabees the writer could not have failed to exhibit clear traces of the mixed dialect of the period. The fact is that the language of Jonah is really very pure; insomuch that recent authorities have not been wanting who think the book a product of the eighth or ninth century B.C., and indeed from the hand of the prophet Jonah himself!¹

The manner in which Nineveh is mentioned (i, 2; iii, 3) affords perhaps some ground for an argument. In the phrase, "Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city," the *was* may be explained, it is true, by the fact that the writer takes his stand at a point of time subsequent to that of which he is writing, and naturally uses the past tense in looking back to Jonah's presence in Nineveh. Besides, it may also be urged, the Hebrew has no form of the substantive verb by which the present *is* could be more nearly expressed. Hence, the author may really have meant to say, "Nineveh is a great city." The more common usage of the language, however, would, in this latter case, lead us to expect the omission of the verbal copula.² On the whole, it appears most probable that in the two expressions referred to, especially in the second, the sacred writer separated himself decidedly from Nineveh, as from an object of contemplation lying far away from himself and his readers—an object not *familiar* to them, even in thought, as a great and actual reality of their own day. Hence, judging from these expressions alone, without regard to other considerations, it would probably be correct to conclude that the work was composed *after* the destruction of Nineveh, even at a time when that city had long ceased to be the capital of a powerful and aggressive empire—when, therefore, it seemed natural to the author to remind his readers that it once *was* a place of extraordinary magnitude.

¹ So Keil, Einl., § 92, following Note, on the language of the book Hävernick and others. See Crit. of Jonah.

² Ges., Gram., § 141.

On account of Matt. xii, 39-41 (Luke xi, 29-32), Jonah has been often spoken of as a *type* of Christ. It would be truer to regard him, at least in his own actions, as a *contrast*, or *antithesis*, to Christ. The prophet's disobedience, and attempted flight from the Divine presence, have nothing in common with the conduct of one whose meat and drink it was to do the will of his Heavenly Father. Yet the leading thought and design of the book may well be acknowledged as, in some degree, anticipating and preparing the way for Christ's own lessons respecting Him that "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." The book is thus, in truth, a sufficiently remarkable product of the age from which it descends; and, with all its extraordinary features, it is as worthy of its position in the Old Testament, as any other, perhaps, of the smaller books in the collection.

CHAP. I.

Jonah, being sent to Nineveh, flees to Tarshish. — A tempest arising, he is thrown into the sea, and swallowed by a great fish.

1. **N**OW the word of Jehovah came unto Jonah the son of 2. Amittai, saying, “Arise, go to Nineveh, the great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness hath come up before 3. me. But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish, from the presence of Jehovah; and he went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; and he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of Jehovah.

1. *Now*: Hebrew, *And*. This mode of commencing a narrative is not uncommon. See 1 Sam. 1, 1; Est. 1, 1; Ezr. 1, 1. It is not, therefore, necessary to consider this book as a portion of some larger work, as some have done.

Jonah: see 2 Kings 14, 25, and Introd. to the book, *sup.*, p. 251.

2. *the great city*: on the extent of Nineveh it is sufficient here to refer to Gen. Introd., § 6.—*against it*: perhaps rather *to it*; *i.e.* to the Ninevites, personally present. Comp. 3, 2.—*before me*: the expression implies the enormity of the wickedness. Comp. Gen. 4, 10; 18, 21.

3. As to the cause of Jonah's disobedience, see note on 4, 3.—*Tarshish*: the opposite direction; a city lying in the remote west, while Nineveh lay far away in the east.

There may be implied an allusion to the thought that Jehovah is peculiarly present in his own land, and that, by leaving the latter, that presence might be left behind also. The writer soon shows us how vain is such an idea. Comp. Ps. 139, 7–9. On *Tarshish*, see note on Is. 23, 1.

—*Joppa*: mentioned as a port in the time of Solomon, 2 Chron. 2, 15, and still existing in the modern Jaffa. It was probably a Phœnician port, and became Jewish in the time of the Maccabees. The propriety of the words *went down*, as used of the journey to the coast, may be noticed here. Similar instances are frequent, both in the Old and New Testament. With the Hebrews, going to sea was also a *going down*; comp. Ps. 107, 23; Is. 42, 10. So here, *went down into it*.

4. But Jehovah sent forth a great wind upon the sea, and there was a great tempest in the sea, so that the ship was in
 5. danger of being wrecked. Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every-man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them ; but Jonah went down into the innermost-part of the vessel, and lay down
 6. and slept. And the shipmaster drew near unto him and said to him, What meanest thou, O sleeper ? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.
 7. And they said every-man to his fellow, Come and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us.
 8. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us ? What is thine occupation ? and whence comest thou ? what is thy country ? and of what people art thou ?
 9. And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew, and I fear Jehovah, God of the heavens, who hath made the sea and the dry-land.

4. *was in danger* : literally, thought, reckoned, *i.e.* expected to be ; meaning that the sailors did so.

5. The author intends to represent the men as Phœnicians. They were idolaters, and had each his own god. Comp. vv. 9-10. Their fear and their prayers are something like what might be found on board a Greek or Turkish ship at the present day, in the same circumstances.—*lighten it of them* : otherwise, lighten (the weight) *from upon them*; *i.e.* themselves — which has the same meaning. So 1 Kings 12, 10.

went down : there is no reason for translating, with the common version, *was gone down*, &c. We may suppose that when the storm began, he went below, perhaps from fear, or for safety from the waves, and fell asleep. Or there may be a contrast between the alarm of the sailors and the indifference of Jonah.

6. *if so be that God* : otherwise,

that *the god* ; *i.e.* the one meant by *thy God*.

7. They superstitiously think that the tempest has come upon them from the guilt of some of their number, and will find out who it is by casting lots.

8. *for whose cause* : as the lot has pointed out Jonah, this question seems needless, and there is some, though not sufficient, authority for omitting it. The difficulty would be avoided by rendering, *for what cause*. See Crit. Note. — *occupation* : rather, *errand* ; the business on which he is now travelling; is it such as to bring this calamity on them? or is the latter connected in some way with the land and people to which he belongs ?

9. *I fear Jehovah* : this perhaps implies only that he is a worshipper of Jehovah ; — not that he is innocent of any crime which can have called forth the tempest, nor that he

10. Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this?—for the men knew that he *was* fleeing from the presence of Jehovah; for he told them.
11. Then said they unto him, What shall we do to thee, that the sea may become calm for us?—for the sea grew more and more tempestuous. And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea, and the sea shall become calm for you; for I know that because of me this great tempest is upon you. Nevertheless the men rowed hard to return to the dry-land; but they could not; for the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them. And they cried unto Jehovah, and said, We beseech thee, O Jehovah, let us not perish, we pray thee, for the life of this man, and lay not upon us innocent blood, for thou, O Jehovah, hast done as it hath pleased thee.
15. And they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea; 16. and the sea ceased from its raging. And the men feared Jehovah exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice to Jehovah, and vowed vows.
17. And Jehovah appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah;

is fleeing from Jehovah through fear. The next words describe Jehovah as the one true God. The men, then, being further told (v. 10) that Jonah is fleeing from this great God of heaven and earth, are struck with fear, and recognise in his conduct the cause of their dangerous position.

10. *Why hast thou done this*: or, *What is this that thou hast done!* an exclamation of astonishment.

11. They ask this question, because Jonah himself must best know how his God may be appeased.

22. He acknowledges, what has already been implied, that he must in some way be sacrificed; and offers to bear the full punishment of his disobedience.

13. The men do not readily sacrifice Jonah. The next verse shows the same thing. The tolerant and

kindly feeling of the author towards the heathen is visible here, as in the general scope of the whole book.

14. *let us not perish*: let us not perish, because we now sacrifice this man. — *and lay not*, &c.: let us not be punished as though in him we had shed innocent blood. —

pleased thee: referring perhaps to the indication of Jonah by the lot. Jehovah, the all-powerful, had the decision in his hands, and has done as seemed good to him. They but obey his will, as it is made known to them.

16. They sacrificed at once; and vowed to offer further sacrifices hereafter, on landing, in acknowledgement of their deliverance, as was usual with the ancients.

17. It is vain to inquire of what kind the fish was, as the sacred

and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

writer gives us no means of judging beyond the word *great*. Supposing him to have intended the narrative to be taken in an historical sense, he may have conceived that a fish was miraculously created for the occasion; but this does not certainly appear.

Abp. Newcome's remark is:—"We have but an imperfect acquaintance with the natural history of fishes. However, it is a well attested fact, that sharks grow to a size capable of swallowing and containing a man.' — Min. Proph., *in loc.*

CHAP. II.

The prayer of Jonah and his deliverance.

1. **T**HEN Jonah prayed unto Jehovah his God, out of the fish's belly, and said :
2. I cried from my distress unto Jehovah,
And he hath answered me ;
From the midst of the grave I cried for help,
Thou hast heard my voice,
3. Though thou didst cast me into the deep, in the heart of the seas,
And the flood surrounded me ;
All thy billows and thy waves passed over me.
4. Then I said, I am driven out from before thine eyes,
How shall I again look towards thy holy temple ?
5. The waters compassed me about, even to the soul,

1. The prayer appears to be composed, in part, of sentences from various Psalms, references to which will be found in the margin of the English Bible.

out of: some would take to mean *outside of*; *i. e.* after his release from the fish. But this is contrary to v. 10, if not to the general tenor of the prayer, even supposing that the Hebrew allowed such a rendering, which it hardly does.

2. *distress*: *i. e.* in the ship, when about to be thrown into the sea.—
answered me: by appointing that he should be swallowed by the fish.

The same words occur in Ps. 120, 1;

only the preposition before *distress* being different in the original.

grave: the same as the *distress* of v. 2. So in Ps. 30, 3.

3. *heart*: so Ex. 15, 14; Ezek. 27, 25; *i. q. deep*.—*billows*: more literally, *all thy breakers and thy waves*. Comp. Ps. 42, 8.

4. *How*: see Crit. Note.

5. *soul*: or *life*; expressive of the utmost danger. So Ps. 69, 1.—

Sea-weed: this line is parallel in sense with the one preceding, and the one following it; he sank so deep that the sea-weed growing at the bottom clung to his head.

- The deep surrounded me,
Sea-weed was wrapped about my head ;
6. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains,
The earth — her bars were about me for ever :
Yet hast thou brought up my life from the pit, O Jehovah, my
God !
7. When my soul fainted within me,
I remembered Jehovah,
And my prayer came unto thee,
Unto thy holy temple.
8. They who reverence empty vanities forsake their own mercy !
9. But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of praise,
That which I have vowed will I perform,
Deliverance *belongeth* to Jehovah.
10. And Jehovah commanded the fish, and it vomited out Jonah
upon the dry-land.

6. *bottoms* : literally, *terminations* or *extremities* ; where the mountains terminate in the hidden depths of the sea ; as far down as their tops are high. For the same idea, see Ps. 18, 7, 15. — *her bars* : he felt as though about

to be imprisoned in the abyss for ever.

8. *empty vanities* : idol deities, powerless to save. Comp. Ps. 31, 6.
— *mercy* : *i.e.* Jehovah, the only source of deliverance. For the expression, see Ps. 144, 2.

CHAP. III.

Jonah's second mission to Nineveh ; and the repentance of the Ninevites.

1. **A**ND the word of Jehovah came unto Jonah a second-time,
2. saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, the great city, and
3. cry unto it the cry that I bid thee. And Jonah arose and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of Jehovah. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey.
4. And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried and said, Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown.
5. And the men of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a

3. *exceeding great city* : so the English version. The original is, a great city to God, or, for God; *i.e.* in his sight, or estimation; even for God it was a great city. The same use of the word *God* to express pre-eminence of some kind is found elsewhere; so Ps. 36, 6, we have *mountains of God*; Ps. 80, 10, *cedars of God*; and similarly, Gen. 10, 9. Comp. 31, 9.

three days' journey : literally, a going of three days; perhaps only meaning that it would require three days to go through the various streets and open places. If so, the expression gives us little information respecting the actual size of Nineveh. The most obvious and simple interpretation would be to understand the words of the *length* of the city, and Jonah, in v. 4, as going one

third of the distance through. But as this would make Nineveh a place of enormous and incredible size, reckoning the day's journey at about twenty miles, most interpreters have understood the *circuit* to be meant. Adopting this, it is necessary to take the day's journey of v. 4 in the sense of a journey up and down, from one spot to another, not straight on; otherwise Jonah must have reached the opposite boundary of Nineveh before he uttered his warning. But see Gen. Introd., § 6, on the extent of the Assyrian capital. All, perhaps, that we ought to infer from the present passage, is that the writer of Jonah conceived of Nineveh as a place of immense extent, surpassing all other cities.

5. *believed God* : *i.e.* believed the message sent by God, and sought to

fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to
6. the least of them. And the matter came to the king of Nineveh,
and he arose from his throne, and put off his robe from upon
7. him, and put on sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused
it to be proclaimed and published in Nineveh, by decree of
the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast,
herd nor flock, taste anything ; let them not feed nor drink
8. water ; and let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and
let them cry mightily unto God ; and let them turn every-one
from his evil way, and from the violence which is in their
9. hands. Who knoweth if God will turn and repent, and turn
from the heat of his anger, that we perish not ?

10. And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil
way ; and God repented of the evil which he had said that he
would do to them, and did it not.

propitiate him. — *sackcloth* : for
this see note on Is. 20, 2; and for
the action, 1 Kings 20, 31-2; 21, 27;
Joel 1, 13.

6. *in ashes* : expressive of the utmost
humiliation. Comp. Job 2, 8;
Ezek. 27, 30.

7. *proclaimed* : literally, *he caused
to cry and said*. The fasting would
last all day till evening. 2 Sam. 1,
12.

8. *man and beast* : the latter as a
sign of the deepest mourning. The
animals would be made to fast, and
left without their usual trappings,
perhaps covered with others suitable

to mourning. "Plutarch says that,
when the Persian General Masistias
was slain, the horses and mules of
the Persians were shorn as well as
themselves." — Abp. Newcome. So
Herod. 9, 24.

9. Comp. Joel 2, 14. The expression
is equivalent to Perhaps he
will turn, or to a *hope* that he will.

10. *repented* : So Ex. 32, 14 —
the language of human action and
feeling, applied here, as often in the
Scriptures, to describe and explain
what *man* sees outwardly, or con-
ceives to be true, of the Divine
counsels and actions.

CHAP. IV.

Jonah's anger and the rebuke thereof.

1. **B**UT it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and his anger was
2. kindled. And he prayed unto Jehovah and said, I beseech thee, O Jehovah, was not this my saying while I was yet in my own country? Wherefore I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that thou art a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and of great kindness, and repen-test thee
3. of the evil. And now, O Jehovah, take, I pray thee, my life
4. from me; for it is better for me to die than to live. And Jehovah said, Doest thou well to be angry?
5. And Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east-side of the city, and made for himself there a booth, and sat under it in the shade, until he saw what would become of the city.
6. And Jehovah God appointed a gourd, and it grew up over Jonah, to be a shade over his head, and to deliver him from his evil. And Jonah rejoiced exceedingly because of the

1-2. Jonah had proclaimed an unconditional destruction of Nineveh. He is angry that what he had announced should not come to pass, and that he himself should appear as a false prophet. The apprehension of this result led him, at first, to disobey the divine command. The latter part of v. 2 is a repetition of Joel 2, 13, or of Exod. 34, 6. It has also been suggested that in the safety of the Ninevites Jonah foresaw the continued oppression, or the destruction, of his own people.

4. *Doest thou well*: see Crit. Note.

5. *booth*: or *hut*, of branches and leaves.

6. *gourd*: the original is *Kikaion*. The plant intended is thought to be the Palma Christi, the *Kiki*, or *Cici*, of Greek and Latin writers—a shady, though not a quickly growing plant, which attains a considerable size, and is easily destroyed by insects. Kitto's Cyclopaedia, art. Kikayon. — *his evil*: either the great heat of the sun; or, more probably, the *anger* which filled his mind. It was to be the means of showing him the folly of the latter.

7. gourd. But God appointed a worm when the morning dawned
8. the next-day, and it smote the gourd, and it withered. And it
came to pass, when the sun rose, that God appointed a scorching
east-wind, and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, and he
was faint, and asked within himself to die, and said, It is
better for me to die than to live.

9. And God said unto Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for
the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto
10. death. And Jehovah said, Thou hast had pity on the gourd
for which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow;
11. which came up in a night, and perished in a night: and I,
shall not I have pity on Nineveh, the great city, wherein are
more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern be-
tween their right-hand and their left-hand; and much cattle?

8. *scorching*: otherwise, *sultry*; see
Crit. Note.

east-wind: this, coming over the
desert, is in Judea a hot, drying
wind. Rich says of it that it "is hot,
stormy, and singularly relaxing and
dispiriting."—Narr., ii, p. 35.

10-11. The main lesson of the
book. Jonah has had pity on a
thing of but little value; much
more must Jehovah have pity on
those whom he has made, sinful as
they are, when they repent before
him; especially when, as in the case
of Nineveh, he would destroy, along
with the wicked, so many thousands

of innocent children. We have
here, differently expressed, the same
thought, respecting the justice and
mercy of God, which is embodied in
the narrative of Gen. 18, 23-33.
See Introd. to Jonah, at the close.

sixscore thousand persons: if
young children of not more than
three or four years are meant, the
whole population must have been
about 600,000. Comp. Layard, Nin.
& Rem., ii, p. 243. But little stress
can be laid upon the statement in
determining the population, or size,
of Nineveh. See Gen. Introd., § 6.

THE PROPHETS

ZEPHANIAH AND EZEKIEL.

§ 1. INTRODUCTORY.

IN the sections from Isaiah, we have seen the Assyrian empire at the height of its power; an object of terror to surrounding nations; and the appointed instrument by which Jehovah will chastise and lead back to Himself his sinful people Israel. In Nahum, we see the same empire no longer formidable; it has become a theme of scornful and exulting denunciation; it is unable to defend itself from its enemies, and is very near its downfall. In the two short sections of Zephaniah and Ezekiel, in which alone those prophets speak of Nineveh or Assyria, the great drama is seen to have reached its close. The mighty empire is no more, or is on the point of dissolution; it is referred to only to be held up as a warning to other great powers, such as the Egyptian, which might attempt to subdue and tyrannise over their weaker neighbours.

This progressive change, in the tone of the prophecies respecting the Assyrians, of course indicates considerable differences in the chronological position of the writers. Zephaniah and Ezekiel evidently wrote later than Nahum, and much later than Isaiah. Of the two, Zephaniah is the earlier; his expressions being such as, combined with other considerations, make it probable that the overthrow of the empire had not actually taken place when he wrote, although the catastrophe may have been in progress.

The introduction to the book (i, 1) tells us only that Zephaniah lived in the days of Josiah, king of Judah. This king met with his death at the battle of Megiddo about 609 B. C., after a reign of thirty-one years. (2 Kings xxii, 1; xxiii, 29-30.) Hence the interval in which Zephaniah lived (640-609) includes, and nearly coincides with, that eventful period which saw the Medes under Phraortes begin their first attacks on the Assyrians, and finally under Cyaxares, after the delay occasioned by the inroad of the Scythians, succeed in capturing and destroying Ninevah. If we may judge from the severe terms in which Zephaniah speaks of the idolatry prevailing among the people of Jerusalem (i, 4-6; iii, 4), the prophecy must have been written before the religious reformation which Josiah effected in his eighteenth year, on the discovery of the Book of the Law. (2 Kings xxii, xxiii.) The eighteenth of Josiah was about 621 B. C.; and, if Zephaniah wrote this prophecy a few years previously, its date cannot be far from that of the capture of Nineveh by the united Medes and Babylonians, supposing the latter to have taken place, as some chronologists think, about 625 B. C. (See Gen. Int., § 5.) The fact that Zephaniah thus lived in the midst of the great political events which terminated in that result, corresponds well to the strong and decided terms in which he speaks of the approaching desolation of the Assyrian capital. He sees that the sure, though long-delayed, retribution is coming at length upon the oppressors of mankind, and that the announcements of earlier prophets must now at last be fulfilled.

It is a question upon which interpreters are not agreed, to what people Zephaniah alludes (ch. i-ii), as the instruments of Jehovah's judgments upon the idolatrous Israelites and upon neighbouring nations. By some it is maintained that the Scythians are meant; by others, that it must have been the victorious Chaldaeans, who had just succeeded in destroying the Assyrian supremacy. We need not here dwell upon the point; and will only add that it is not clear that the Scythians

had not lost their predominance, or, at least, ceased to be objects of fear to the people of Palestine, before Zephaniah wrote. If so, the enemies of whom he speaks must be the Chaldaean.s. The same remark is equally applicable to the allusions which are made by Jeremiah to a terrible destroyer from the north, and which have also been supposed to refer to the Scythians. (See Gen. Int., § 5.)

The prophet Ezekiel was later than Zephaniah by some years; later, that is, in his exercise of the prophetic office; for he may have been his contemporary, though somewhat his junior—as he was also a contemporary of the prophet Jeremiah. No one of the three, we need hardly add, mentions either of the others in his extant writings. The opening of the book of Ezekiel informs us that he began to prophesy in the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity, which would be about 595-4 B. C. (2 Kings xxiv.) In the same place (i, 1) Ezekiel speaks of the year in which he began to prophesy as being also “the thirtieth year.” It cannot, with certainty, be determined, from what point of time this last is reckoned. The expression has been taken to signify (1) the prophet's own age; (2) the time that had elapsed since the discovery of the Book of the Law in the reign of Josiah, as before mentioned; and (3) the thirtieth year since the commencement of the reign of the Chaldaean monarch, Nabopolassar. The prophet, living in the midst of the Chaldaean empire, would conform, it is urged, to the usage which probably prevailed among those around him. There is no evidence to this effect, beyond a few cases in which time is computed in a similar way; as, for example, Nehemiah i, 1; ii, 1; but, on the whole, this explanation is as probable as either of the others.¹

Ezekiel was probably among the captives who, as stated in

¹ If the Chaldaean empire commenced with the independence of Nabopolassar, in 625 B. C., as some have reckoned, the thirtieth year

from this would be 595 B. C., *i. e.* the 5th of Jehoiachin, as before stated. But no great stress can be laid on the coincidence.

2 Kings xxiv, were carried off by the Babylonians along with Jehoiachin. He was placed on the banks of the river Chebar (Chaboras or Chabour), evidently in the midst of a colony of his own people. Here he lived for many years, was married, and had a house (Ezek. iii, 24; viii, 1; xxiv, 18). He discloses very little of his own personal history, but mentions the death of his wife (xxiv, 16–18), an event which he makes a *sign* to his countrymen of the approaching loss of their capital, “the desire of their eyes” (vv. 21–24). Jerusalem was taken and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, about seven years after Ezekiel began to prophesy (xxxiii, 21). He lived for sixteen years, or more, after this event, and was altogether at least twenty-seven years in captivity (xxix, 17). Of his later history nothing certain is known. It is evident that he enjoyed considerable influence among his fellow captives, whose elders come from time to time to consult him (xiv, 1; xx, 1); but yet he had to encounter also false prophets and moral and religious insensibility among his people (xiii, xiv).

The earlier prophecies of Ezekiel are much occupied with the impending punishment of his nation, and the destruction of Jerusalem (ch. i–xxiv); his latest (ch. xxxvi–xlviii) chiefly with his anticipations and hopes for the restoration of that city, and the rebuilding of the temple. Those which come between these two divisions relate to foreign powers, and express the prophet’s foresight of the vengeance which is eventually to fall upon neighbouring nations, the ancient enemies of Israel. The passage here translated belongs to the second division of the book. It is addressed, with several similar pieces, to the Egyptians, who, in the person of their Pharaoh, are called upon to take warning from the fate of the once all-powerful Assyrian monarch.

The style of this prophet is manifestly inferior to that of Isaiah. It is more prosaic, and the poetical parallelism, in many places, almost entirely disappears. With but little of the

variety and abundance of natural and beautiful images, which Isaiah exhibits, Ezekiel, on the contrary, gives us many of a rough and forbidding, or highly artificial character (*e. g.*, ch. iv). He is not, however, without some very fine passages ; as in the chapter (xxxvii) containing the vision of the dry bones, and the latter half of ch. xviii (vv. 19–31), which in justness of sentiment, in pathos, and even in rythmical harmony, is one of the noblest passages in the prophetical books. He often repeats his words and phrases in a manner which shows his want, either of ideas, or else, at times, of the power of varied expression ; as, for instance, in parts of the passage which is here translated. Altogether, the literary style of Ezekiel, like that of his older contemporary, Jeremiah, is such as we might expect to find in the declining period of Hebrew poetry and prophecy. Yet, let us add, there is no decline in the prophetic conception of what is right and true in the sight of God, or in the earnestness with which this is held up for the guidance, the reproof, the encouragement of the prophet's countrymen. There is certainly more of the merely formal Levitical spirit ; but still Jehovah is distinctly proclaimed as the One Sovereign Lord of the world, who will execute justice upon the guilty, while yet He manifests His mercy towards the penitent. Ezekiel can see this as clearly as Isaiah ; nor does he fail, from time to time, to denounce, in the boldest terms, the wickedness of his people and their rulers, or to point out to them the punishment which will inevitably overtake them in consequence of their sins. And thus does he, too, still speak to our later days, and still proclaim the Righteous Judge of all the earth, whose ways are equal, but who hath “no pleasure in the death of him that dieth.” One, therefore, who will receive the prophet's exhortations with sincere and open mind, may still extract nutriment for his spiritual life, even from the singular language and imagery in which he

often clothes his thoughts ; and may thus best learn to understand why it is that the words of ancient Hebrew bards, and prophets, and lawgivers, have been preserved for the perusal of so many successive generations of mankind, and still hold their place among the great influences that move the world !

§ 2. ZEPH. CHAP. II, 13—15.

Nineveh, the rejoicing city, a place of desolation.

13. **A**ND he shall stretch forth his hand against the north,
And shall destroy Assyria,
And shall make Nineveh a desolation,
Dry like the desert.
14. And flocks shall lie down in the midst of her,
All the beasts, in troops ;
Both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge upon her lintels,

13. *he* : Jehovah, as may be learnt from the preceding verses. — *north* : *i. e.* Assyria ; because the forces of that empire invaded Palestine from the northward, avoiding the direct march through the great eastern desert, which was not practicable for a large army. — *dry* : want of *water* being, to an eastern mind, the strongest image of desolation, as well as the direct cause of it. See note on Is. 12, 3.

14. *flocks* : not, perhaps, of sheep, because the place is a mere desert ; but of wild animals, such as frequent ruinous and desolate localities. So in the word *beasts*. — *in troops* : literally, *a nation* ; *i. e.* a crowd, collected together. The allusion may be to gregarious animals, like the jackal. So Joel (1, 6; 2, 2) calls the locusts a *nation* and a *people*.

cormorant : *bittern* : we retain the English rendering, as at least more poetical, and perhaps as correct as *the*

pelican and *hedgehog*, which find favour with recent authorities. The *cormorant* is a species of pelican, and frequents both the sea-coast and inland waters. The *bittern* is a kind of heron, living among wooded swamps and reedy marshes. Both these birds are found in Asia. As to the *hedgehog*, this animal does not roost on the capitals of columns, standing or fallen, nor does it sing, or cry aloud. The original word is found elsewhere only Is. 14, 23 and 34, 11 ; in neither of which places is it more likely to be meant than here ; for the animal avoids water. Aquatic birds would find suitable abodes among the waters round Nineveh. See Gen. Introd., § 6 ; and the article Kippod, in Dr. Kitto's Cyclop. of Bib. Lit. — *lintels* : or, perhaps, the ornamental tops or capitals of columns, overthrown and lying in the dust. According to Mr. Layard (Nin. & Bab., pp. 649-50), no actual

*Their voice shall resound in the windows ;
Ruin shall be within her thresholds,
For the cedar-work hath he laid bare.*

15. This is the rejoicing city, that dwelt securely,
That said in her heart, *I am,*
And there is none besides me ;
How is she become a desolation,
A place for beasts to lie down in !
Every-one that passeth by her shall hiss,
Shall wag his hand.

remains of columns have been found in the ruins. But they cannot have been unknown to the Assyrians, as they are represented on sculptures of Khorsabad and Koyunjik (Nin. & Rem., ii, pp. 273-4). They were probably of wood.—*resound*: literally, *sing*; the cry or scream of the birds, or some of the other animals, is meant.

Ruin : or, *desolation*; literally, *dryness*; see note on v. 13. We might, perhaps, with De Wette, render *rubbish*.—*within*: or, more exactly, *on*; instead of the foot of living men, there shall be upon the threshold only the desolate remains of the ruined buildings. See Crit. Note.

cedar-work : the finely carved cedar work of the inner apartments has been exposed to view by the violence of the enemy. Mr. Layard found cedar wood at Nimroud which still retained its fragrance. The Assyrians obtained it most probably in the forests of Lebanon. Layard observes, “The greater part of the rubbish in which the ruin was buried,

consisted of charcoal of the same wood. It is likely that the whole superstructure, as well as the roof and floor of the building, like those of the temple and palace of Solomon, were of this precious material.” (Nin. & Bab., p. 357.) — *hath he laid bare* : *i. e.* the enemy; comp. Ps. 74, 6-7; Is. 23, 13, note. If the roofs and columns of cedar were thrown down, or fell burnt to the ground, the *débris* would form the *ruin*, or rubbish, of the preceding line. Hence, also, the *For* at the beginning of the present line.

15. *rejoicing* : so Is. 23, 7; 32, 13. The phrase is used of the noisy tumultuous joy of *men*; strange contrast to this the now desolate city, the abode of wild beasts!—*A place for* : literally, *a lurking-place for the wild-beast*.

hiss : *wag his hand* : actions expressive of scornful exultation and amazement. Comp. Jer. 18, 6; 19, 8. For passages parallel to this short piece of Zephaniah, see Is. 13, 21-3; 34, 11-15.

§ 3. EZEK. CHAP. XXXI.

Under the image of a lofty and beautiful cedar, cut down and scattered over the earth, the prophet describes the overthrow of the Assyrian empire, and holds it up as a warning to the king of Egypt.

1. **A**ND it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the third month, on the first day of the month, that the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying,
2. Son of man, say unto Pharaoh king of Egypt,
And unto his multitude,
Unto whom art thou like in thy greatness?
3. Behold, Assyria was a Cedar on Lebanon,
With beautiful branches and over-shadowing foliage,
And lofty of stature ;
And his top was among the thick-boughs.
4. The waters made him great, the deep made him high,
Their streams went round-about their plantation,

1. *eleventh year* : *i. e.*, of the prophet's captivity, on the banks of the river Chebar, or Chabour. See introductory note.

2. *multitude* : alluding perhaps to the populousness of Egypt.

3. *Assyria* : the overthrow of this power may have taken place about thirty-six years before. Some would understand by the original word *Asshur*, in this place, only a particular *kind* of cedar, not Assyria. So Ewald. But the whole strain of the passage is inconsistent with this interpretation; see especially vv. 6, 10-11. The question would seem

to be abundantly decided by the words, "For his wickedness I have driven him out," v. 11. — *his*: properly the *cedar's*; but as by this is really meant the personified Assyrian power, or perhaps the Assyrian king, the expression is sufficiently correct. So in the following verses. See Crit. Note.

4. *waters* : meaning probably the great Assyrian river, the Tigris, and also the Euphrates. — *Their* : literally, *her*; *i. e.* the *deep's*. So in *their plantation* : which latter word appears to mean here either the cedar itself, or the spot on which

- And sent forth their channels unto all the trees of the field.
5. Wherefore his stature was loftier than all the trees of the field,
His shoots multiplied, and his boughs became long,
Because of abundant waters, when he shot forth.
6. In his Branches all the fowls of the heavens made their nests,
Beneath his boughs all the beasts of the field brought forth,
And in his shade dwelt all great nations.
7. Thus was he beautiful in his greatness,
In the length of his waving-branches ;
For his root was by abundant waters.
8. The cedars concealed him not in the garden of God,
The fir-trees were not like unto his Branches,
And the plane-trees were not as his boughs,
Nor was any tree in the garden of God like unto him in his beauty.
9. I made him beautiful in the multitude of his waving-branches,
So that all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God,
envied him.
10. Wherefore thus saith the Lord, Jehovah,
Because thou art lofty in stature,

it grew.—*all the trees*: so abundant were the waters that they served to nourish all other trees in the neighbourhood.

5-9. Evidently intended to express the might and grandeur of the empire. No other kingdom or power could equal it. The repetitions express the idea with greater fulness and emphasis.

8. No other cedar could hide him by over-growing him ; no other power could conquer him.—*garden of God*: the expression is equivalent to a kind of superlative ; meaning, the best watered and most fruitful garden.

9. *Eden* : equivalent in meaning to *garden of God*. Comp. Ezek.

28, 13 ; Gen. 2, 8-9 ; and see note on Jonah 3, 3.

10. Some think that the prophet now turns to address Pharaoh. It is better to suppose Assyria to be still in his mind, though mixed up, in some measure, with the idea of Egypt, which he threatens with a similar fate.

In this and the two following verses the tense is, in form, sometimes future, sometimes past, but this could not be fully exhibited in the translation. In the words *thou art lofty*, we may conceive Ezekiel to take his stand, in thought, at a point of time past, when Assyria was still in the height of its power, and to address it as *present*; in the follow-

- And he hath shot up his top among the thick-boughs,
 And his heart hath been lifted up in his loftiness,
11. Therefore will I deliver him into the hand of the mighty-one
 of the nations,
 He shall deal hardly with him ;
 For his wickedness I have driven him out.
12. And strangers, the terrible-ones of the nations, shall cut him
 down, and cast him away ;
 Upon the mountains and in the valleys have his waving-
 branches fallen,
 And his boughs shall be broken in all the water-channels of
 the earth,
 And all the peoples of the earth shall go down from his shade,
 and shall cast him away.
13. Upon his ruin shall all the fowls of the heavens dwell,
 And on his boughs are all the beasts of the field ;
14. In order that none of the trees of the waters may be lofty
 in their stature,
 Nor shoot up their top among the thick-boughs,

ing verbs he is looking forward from that point of time to successive events yet to come; and, therefore, not without a certain propriety, speaks of them in future tenses. But the preterite still renews, because what he is contemplating is really past. — *thou : he* : i. e. Assyria, in both cases.

11. *mighty-one* : we might perhaps render *god of the nations* ; meaning Nebuchadnezzar (or his father Nabopolassar). It is the same word which is used as one of the titles, or epithets, of the Messiah, in Isaiah 9, 5. The Chaldaean monarch was a kind of god upon earth, to the nations over whom he ruled.

12. The prophet seems now to pass, unconsciously, from stating what Jehovah declares, to a descrip-

tion, as from himself, of the results and accompaniments of the punishment of Assyrian pride. So through several verses. — *strangers* : the Chaldaeans and their allies. See Ezek. 30, 12. — *cast him away* : scatter the leaves and branches of the once stately tree over the face of the earth. — *peoples* : his allies and the subject nations have all deserted him.

13. *fowls : beasts* : introduced perhaps merely to complete the description of the condition of the fallen tree, and conveying no definite allusion.

14. That other powers, like Egypt, may not imitate him in his pride and tyranny. — *of the waters* : trees that have abundance of water, and therefore grow strongly and luxuriantly.

Nor any that drink water stand by them in their loftiness ;
 For all of them are delivered to death, unto the lower earth,
 Amidst the children of men,
 Unto them that go down to the pit.

15. Thus saith the Lord, Jehovah,
 In the day when he went down to the grave,
 I made to lament, I covered for him the deep,
 I withheld its streams, and the abundant waters were stayed ;
 I made Lebanon mourn for him,
 And all the trees of the field fainted for him.
16. At the sound of his fall I made the nations shake,
 When I brought him down to the grave,
 With them that go down to the pit :
 Thus were comforted, in the lower earth,
 All the trees of Eden, the choicer and best of Lebanon,
 All that drink water.
17. They also have gone down with him to the grave,
 Unto them that be slain by the sword,
 That were his arm, that dwelt in his shade,
 Amidst the nations.
18. Unto whom art thou then like,
 In glory and in greatness, among the trees of Eden ?

— *delivered to death* : the kings and princes of the earth are evidently meant. They shall all die and descend into the tomb like common men.

15. *went down* : others would render *shall go down* ; and refer the verse to Egypt or Pharaoh, which does not appear to suit what precedes so well. The Egyptian king is not directly introduced until v. 18. Comp. note on v. 10. The original is an infinitive form, without any proper mark of time.—The rest of the verse is intended to express the greatness of the overthrow. Even

the inanimate objects of nature were moved by the spectacle of so vast a ruin. — *lament* : *covered* : both are preterites; the other verbs in the verse being futures, except the last.

16. *comforted* : those whom he had subdued found consolation in his fall. Comp. Is. 14, 15.

17. *slain* : an evident intermingling of figures ; arising from the fact that the prophet really means by the stately cedar the Assyrian king and his armies.

18. *uncircumcised* : among the most impious and despised.

Thus shalt thou be brought down, with the trees of Eden,
Unto the lower earth ;
Amidst the uncircumcised shalt thou lie,
With them that be slain by the sword.

This is Pharaoh and all his multitude,
Saith the Lord, Jehovah ! .

CRITICAL NOTES.



ISAIAH.

vii, 14.—הַעֲלִמָה—Gesenius (Commentar, *in loc.* and Thesaurus, *in verb.*) maintains that the word **עֲלִמָה** denotes simply *maturity* of age or growth, and may be used of any young woman, married or not; and that the Hebrews have a different word, **בְּתִינְלָה**, to convey the sense given in our English version. In regard to the former word, however, the instances adducible from the Scriptural usage¹ do not appear conclusively to settle the question. Yet, since as regards the proper force of **בְּתִינְלָה** there is clear evidence, and as we know that this word was nevertheless used (Joel 1, 8) to mean a young married woman, it is not unreasonable to conclude that the other, even if really corresponding to *πάρθενος*, may occasionally have been so employed also. It follows that the rendering, *young woman*, or *young wife*, adopted by some translators, may be the right one. Gesenius remarks that the prefixed article makes the word really equivalent to the form **עֲלֵמָתִי** *i. e.* “my wife;” and that the prophet’s wife must, therefore, be meant. That, however, is by no means certain; the article only denoting some definite person, known at the time to those present, whether the prophet’s wife or not.

We add other translations:—

GESENIUS : “Siehe, die Jungfrau wird schwanger werden.”

EWALD : “Sieh die Jungfrau wird empfangen.”

HITZIG : “Siehe das junge Weib ist schwanger.”

vii, 15.—לְדֹעַתְך literally, *to his knowing*; *i. e.* *in order that he may know*. Such is the most usual force of the preposition before the infinitive; and this, following the common version, we have retained in the translation

¹ Gen. 24, 43; Ex. 2, 8; Prov. 30, 19; Ps. 68, 26; Cant. 1, 3; 1 Chron. 15, 20; Ps. 46, 1; Cant. 6, 8.

given in the text. The rendering of Bishop Lowth (followed by Ewald and Hitzig) is, however, quite admissible : “*when* he shall know ;” while that of Gesenius is hardly to be justified by any parallel instance : “*until* he knows.” Ewald agrees with Gesenius in taking the child’s eating milk and honey to express a period of *deprivation*, which he will experience along with the rest of his nation.

vii, 20.—**בְּעַבְרֵי נָהָר** literally, *by the lands beyond (or alongside) the stream*; i. e. by means of their inhabitants, Assyrians and Egyptians. **נָהָר** may refer here to both Euphrates and Nile (see v. 18), though Gesenius would limit it to the former.

We have adopted substantially the rendering of the Com. Vers.; so also Bishop Lowth. A different turn may be given to the expression. Thus:—

GESENIUS : “mit dem, jenseit des Stromes gedungenen, Messer.”

EWALD : “durch ein Scheermesser das jenseit des Stromes gedingt.”

So Hitzig.

NOYES follows Gesenius : “with a razor hired beyond the river.”

viii, 1.—**לִמְהֹר שֶׁלְלַת בָּז**—The exact rendering is doubtful. Knobel observes : “Der Spruch . . . lautet : *Eilend Beute jagend Raub*, d. i. schnell sind Beute und Raub und werden bald da sein. Man nehme **מָהָר** als Adj. verb. wie Zeph. 1, 14 und **שֶׁלְלַת** als Partic. Das **לִ** ist, wie aus dem Fehlen desselben v. 3 erhellet, ein blosses Inscriptions Lamed (Ez. 37, 16 ; Jer. 48, 1 ; 49, 1. 7. 23. 28).” Gesenius and Ewald, again, give each his own account of the name. Its general meaning and suitability here are quite plain. The LXX in v. 3 render, *ταχέως σκύλευσον*, *δέξεως προνομεύσον* : Vulg. (v. 1), *Velociter spolia detrahe, cito prædare*. The **לִ** we have rendered *concerning*; so Is. 5, 1.

viii, 20.—In this verse we have followed Knobel, taking the **אֲלֵמָן** as interrogative. It has been variously understood. Thus :—

GESENIUS :

“wenn es nicht also spricht
so geht ihm keine Morgenröthe auf.”

EWALD : “ja also wird der sagen, der keine Morgenröthe hat.”

So, very much, Hitzig, De Wette, Drechsler, and others.

Bishop Lowth : “If they will not speak according to this word, in which there is no obscurity ; every one of them shall pass,” &c.

NOYES, again, after Gesenius : " If they speak not according to this, For them no bright morning shall arise."

ix, 3.—Eng. ver., "and not increased the joy;" rendering the נִלְעָד as a negative, and contradicting the latter half of the verse. The particle must evidently be read נַעֲד ; so many MSS., and the Syr. and Chald. See also Is. 49, 5 ; 63, 9. If the negative be retained, we may render with Hitzig: "Deren Freude du geschränkt die freuen sich vor dir ;" i. e. they whose joy thou hadst not increased (or, hadst diminished) now rejoice: which is a paraphrase rather than a translation.

xxiii, 3.—By understanding the *relative*, as in the preceding verse, and as must so often be done in Hebrew poetry, we might render this verse thus: "And whose revenue (or, produce), by the wide waters, is the grain of the Nile, the harvest of the River ;" i. e. the produce of Phoenicia, not grown by herself, but coming by sea, is the grain of Egypt. Knobel goes a little further, and remarks: "Die Angabe dass Phönicien seine Erndte auf grossen Wassern, d. i. auf dem Meere habe, ist änigmatisch-witzig, aber richtig, sofern die Phönicer nur durch Ueberschiffung des Meeres in Besitz von Aegyptens Getreide kamen."

Noyes's "The seed of the Nile with her wide waters," seems to miss the sense altogether.

xxiii, 18.—Ewald changes *Chaldaeans* into Phoenicians, and renders: "Sieh das Land der Kananiter—dies Volk ist nicht mehr, Assur hat es zur Wüste gemacht." He thinks that פֵשֶׁרִים is the mistake of some copier for קְנֻעַנִים. That the change is needless appears, perhaps, sufficiently from the translation and accompanying notes, here given. That it is not even admissible is, we think, proved by Knobel: "die Worte; *sieh das Land, dieses Volk* führen deutlich etwas Neues ein ; יִסְרַר gründen kann nicht von zerstörender Thäthigkeit stehen ; הַקִּים kommt nicht vom Erbauen der Häuser vor, sondern nur vom Anfrichten von Personen, Säulen, Steinen, Belagerungsmaschinen, Altären, Zelten, Hütten, u. a. ; עֹזֶר aufregen kann nicht *aufbauen* sein ; die Erbauung der tyrischen Gartenhäuser und Paläste wird unpassend erwähnt u. a. m."

xxviii, 16.—בְּצִיּוֹן—If we have here what is termed the Beth essentiae, as seems very probable, the rendering should be, "Behold I have made

Zion," &c., *i. e.*, Jerusalem itself is the firmly-laid foundation, the unassailable place of refuge. It shall not be taken by the Assyrians, but remain still the corner-stone of the state.

x, 18.—**בְּמַסֵּם נָסֵם**—Eng. vers., “as when a standard-bearer fainteth;” taking the meaning of the participle from the root *to lift up*, from which נָסֵם a signal, or standard (Is. 5, 26). It seems better with Gesenius to derive from נָסֵם *i. q.* מַסֵּם and there is probably a paronomasia. Lowth deserts the Heb. for the Septuagint, “as when one fleeth out of the fire,” quite unnecessarily, and with no improvement to the sense ; to say nothing of the fact that the implied original (**בְּמַאֲשָׁט נָסֵם**) can hardly be accepted as Hebrew.

xi, 15.—*dried up*: for we may read **הַחֲרִיב** following the Chal., and (perhaps) the Sept. and Vulg. If the present reading be retained, we may render *cursed*, or *destroyed*, with the same general sense.

xii, 2.—**יְהִי יָהֻנָה**—The second word is probably only a gloss, explanatory of the shorter form. It is wanting in the parallel, Ex. 15, 2; also in the ancient versions, and in many MSS. The expression is hardly to be found elsewhere, for in Is. 26, 4 it is equally suspicious.

xix, 12.—**יְדֻעֵי** *let them know*: so Eng. vers. Ges.: “dass man’s erfahre ;” Hitz.: “dass sie erforschen.” Lowth’s change into **יְזֹקִיעֵן** has the support of the Sept. and Vulg., and, as best suiting the parallelism, has been adopted in the text.

xix, 18.—For the common text (**עיר הסהר**) we have adopted **עיר ההרים** which is found in a few MSS. and editions, and in the Complutensian Sept. (*Axepès*). This reading is ancient, as it is expressed by Symmachus and the Vulgate, and appears in the Chaldee. The meaning must be considered doubtful. According to Sym., Vulg., Chal., it is *City of the Sun*; and Heliopolis is intended. So, among recent interpreters, Hitzig and Umbreit. According to another derivation the meaning is *City of defence*, or of *protection*; so Gesenius (Com., *in loc.*), followed by Maurer, Ewald, and others. Other explanations of the word have been given, on which we need not dwell.

Bishop Lowth and Noyes both render *City of the Sun*. The common LXX reading is Ἀσεδέκ, *City of Righteousness*; but there are good reasons for thinking that the text has here been changed by the Alexandrine Jews, in the interest of the city in which their own temple was built.

xix, 25.—The masc. suffix in בָּרוּךְוּ may be referred to the preceding אַרְצֵן by which, however, the *people* must be understood. The רָשִׁים Knobel would refer to בָּרוּךְהָ thus: “a blessing in the midst of the land [with] which Jeh. hath blessed it [them].” It is more easily connected with אַרְצֵן. So Hitzig: “Ein Segen in mitten des Landes, welches J. d. Schaaren segnet.”

xxix, 9.—“hesitate,” the nearest rendering we can find for חֲתַמְמָה. The word implies *standing still* in stupefied amazement. Fürst’s explanation of the root מִתָּה is, “*verb.* (enjus solummodo duplicata forma trita est) negare, recusare, cunetari, morari.” (Vet. Tⁱ Concordantiae.) The full meaning can only be gathered from the places in which the form occurs. Comp. Gen. 19, 16; 43, 10. Hitzig renders, “Starrt euch nur an;” Bishop Lowth, “They are struck with amazement;” Noyes, “Delay now.”

xxx, 4.—Knobel’s change of חָנָם יִגְעַג into חָנָם יִגְעַג has the support of the LXX (*μάτην κοπιάσουσιν*). The sense is good, “They exert, or weary, themselves in vain.” But the change can hardly be said to be necessary, as may be seen in the translation and note.

xxx, 8.—For עַד we may read עַד after the Chal., Syr., and Vulg., and with a better sense. So Lowth, Ges., Knob., Ewald. The phrase עַד עַד עַזְלָם does not elsewhere occur.

xxxii, 12.—סְפִירִים though mase., may be taken to refer to the *women*, this latter word being somewhat distant from the participle. (Ges. Grammatik, § 144, Anm. 1.) In regard to עַל שְׁרִים Ges., in his *Thesaurus*, reverses the judgment of his Commentary, and takes the words, after the LXX and Vulgate, as meaning “upon the breasts.” So Maurer, Ewald, Knobel. Noyes somewhat dilutes the sense by turning the words from a direct call to the women to beat their breasts in lamentation, into a general statement, “There shall be mourning for the *fertile grounds*.” So the

earlier version of Gesenius : "Um das Fruchgefilde jammert man ;" taking שָׁרִים in the sense of *ubertas telluris*. In support of the translation in the text, see Nah. 2, 8.

xxxii, 19. — It may be well, in illustration of this difficult verse, to give some other renderings :—

LOWTH : "But the hail shall fall, and the forest be brought down, And the city shall be laid level with the plain."

GESENIUS : "Aber unter Hagelsturm stürzet der Wald, in Niedrigkeit sinkt (der Feinde) Stadt."

NOYES : "But the hail shall fall, and the forest be brought low, And the city be laid level with the ground."

HITZIG : "Aber Hagelschlag schlägt in den stürzenden Wald, Und zu Boden tief beugt sich die Stadt."

Literally rendered, the words are: "But it shall hail with (or in) coming-down of the forest, and with (or in) lowness shall the city be low ;" i. e., The hail-storm (Jehovah's destroying agent) shall be accompanied by the falling of the forest-leaves (the Assyrians), and the city shall be brought very low, or greatly humbled. Comp. the figures of 10, 33 ; 30, 30.

xviii, 1. — אָנֹן צְלָצֵל בְּנֵפִים — Of the many renderings of these words we may mention the following :—

LXX. Οὐαὶ γῆς πλοίων πτέρυγες.

LOWTH : "Ho, to the land of the winged cymbal."

GESENIUS : "Ha ! du Land mit schwirrenden (Heeres-) Flügeln."

NOYES : "Ho ! thou land of rustling wings."

EWALD : "O Land geflügelter Käume."

Lowth follows the Vulg. (cymbalo alarum), and supposes *Egypt* to be addressed ; but it is evidently Ethiopia ; and most probably the Hebrew prophet knew nothing of the form of the cymbal used in that country. Even if he did, it is little likely that he should have derived the appellation by which he addresses the country from so trifling an object.

The rendering of Gesenius is founded on the common meaning of צְלָצֵל a clanging, ringing, rattling sound. He thinks that the allusion is to the rattling arms of the Ethiopian soldiers, בְּנֵפִים being put for armies. (Comp. Is. 8, 8.) The phrase is thus equivalent to, Ho, land full of the rattling of armies ; the armies, i. e., of Tirhaka, advancing to meet the Assyrians. The sense is good, and not inappropriate.

Ewald's translation has the LXX (and the Chal.) in its favour ; but it

must be confessed that neither gives well the sense of the whole verse. We have followed Ewald, on account both of v. 2, and of the word "rivers" in the following line; and because, as Ewald shows, such a rendering of נַעֲלָץ finds support in the Arabic and Æthiopic.

The Eng. vers., "shadowing," is derived from נַעֲלָץ i. q. נַעֲלָם to be dark, or shady.

Dissatisfied with the various interpretations which he enumerates, Knobel would render, Land of the shadow of both sides; or, Land of the double shadow; and supports this explanation by the following very ingenious comment: "Es bleibt also kaum etwas übrig, als נַעֲלָם als Seite (s. z. 30, 20; Vgl. 11, 12; Ez. 7, 2) und נַעֲלָץ mit Aquil. Syr. als Schatten zu nehmen. Also: *Land des Schattens der beiden Seiten*. Dabei ist aber nicht zu denken an den Schatten der beiden Bergketten Aegyptens (*Saad. Abulw. Grot. Vitr. Dath.*), sondern daran, dass in den Tropenländern die Gegenstände je nach der Jahreszeit ihren Schatten bald nach Norden bald nach Süden werfen (*Vogt, Aurivill. Kocher, Eichh.*), wonach die Bewohner jener Gegenden ἀμφίσκιοι, zweischattig hiessen (*Strabo*, 2, p. 133). Dies passt als geographische Merkwürdigkeit gut zum 2 Gliede. Als bemerkenswerth wird die Lage von Meroë *sub sidere Cancri, sub axe Cancri*. Virg. Ecl. 10, 68; Lucan. Phars. 4, 333; und die Eigenthümlichkeit des Schattens auch im übrigen Alterthume hervorgehoben, z. B. von Plinius H. N. 2, 75: *in Meroë bis anno absumi umbras*, von Lucan. 10, 300: *solique vagari concessum per utrosque polos*, v. 305: *æstatem nulla sibi mitigat umbra*, und v. 237: *donce umbras extendat Meroë*. אַלְאָל בְּנֵפִים für אַל יְרִים zu sagen, legte dem Verf. die übliche Formel Ps. 17, 8; 36, 8; 57, 2; 63, 8; nahe, und die Frequentativform *Geschatte*, sonst nicht weiter vom Schatten vorkommend, steht, weil der Schatten in Meroë ein mehrfacher ist."

xviii, 2. — "tall and comely," מַמְשֶׁךְ וּמֹרֶט — מַשְׁךְ to draw, draw out, may easily be understood here of the personal appearance of the Ethiopians, in the sense given in the text. Comp. Is. 45, 14, where the Sabaeans (Ethiopians) are termed *men of extension*, i. e. "men of stature," as the Eng. vers. translates. The second word is more doubtful, and has been very variously rendered. מֹרֶט is to polish, make smooth, sharpen: hence the meanings *bald, naked, sharp, i. e. fierce*. The epithet may refer to the smooth and glossy skins of the Ethiopians, and the two words may, therefore, be supposed to correspond to the μέγιστοι καὶ κάλλιστοι ἀνθρώπων πάντων of

Herodotus. This seems at least as likely an explanation as any other, and suits the context well. We subjoin other renderings :—

LOWTH : “A people stretched out in length and smoothed ;”—referring the phrase to the physical features of *Egypt*, a country very long, narrow, and level.

GESENIUS (Thesaurus, p. 820): “*populus durus* (*al. longus*) *et glaber*, i. e. *nudus*.”

NOYES : “A nation extended and fierce.”

HITZIG : “hochgewachsenen und glänzenden Volke.”

FÜRST (Concordantiae, p. 659): “*populus ornatus et dignitate præstans*.”

xxii, 5.—מִקְרָלֶךְ — This partip. might be taken in apposition with יֹם thus: Jehovah hath a day . . . which shall dig down (undermine) the wall. It is better to consider Jehov. as the nom., however; and still better to take the part. impersonally, as in the text: They dig down the wall. Knobel would derive from קָרַר in the sense of בָּרַר and would render: They surround the wall. But as קָרַר is nowhere else found in this sense, it seems hardly necessary, or allowable, so to explain it here.

HITZIG : “Einen Tag . . . hält . . . Jahve . . . Der zertrümmert die Wand ” . . .

EWALD : “Einen Tag . . . von Entmauerung der Mauer” . . .

GESENIUS : “man zertrümmert die Mauer.”

xxii, 6.—אֲרָם — Bishop Lowth would change this into אַרְםָן and renders: “With chariots cometh the Syrian, and with horsemen.” The correction is an easy one, and gives a good sense. Syrians may at this time have formed part of the Assyrian army. We have followed Gesenius in the text, and made no alteration.

HITZIG : “Mit Wagen, *Fussfolk*, Reitern.”

םְגֻּרָּם is not found elsewhere thus used.

EWALD : “Und Aelam trug den Köcher in einem Zuge reisiger Männer.”

xxxvi, 5.—Read מִרְתָּחָה as in 2 Kings. We have taken the next words as what Rabshakeh attributes to Hezekiah : “Thou (Hez.) speakest only a vain word ;” i. e. when Hez. says, “Counsel and might for war.” So Knobel ; and this seems simpler than the usual supposition of a parenthesis;

as in Gesenius: "du sprichst (aber es ist nur ein leeres Wort): Rath und Kraft zum Kriege."

NAHUM.

i, 5. — heaveth, נִשְׁתַּחֲוֵת literally, *lifteth*, i. e. *itself*. Some understand קָוֶל and would render *crieth out*. The parallelism requires the former. The *burned* of the Eng. vers. is derived from the Jewish Commentators, and has no sufficient authority. Comp. Ps. 89, 9.

i, 12. — עֹזֶר אֶמְשָׁלִים — EWALD: "wenn sie einst vollzählig und so viele, und doch so abgemäht wurden und er verschwand: so werde ich dich demüthigen ohne dich zu demüthigen noch einmal." עֹבֶר "und er verschwand," he applies to the murderer of Sennacherib; observing that this king was slain soon after his invasion. This interpretation is not, however, admissible, now that we know that he was not slain *soon*, but very long afterwards. We have preferred, in the text, to understand the first part of the verse of the present, or approaching, punishment of the Assyrians, and the latter part of the deliverance of Judah from their yoke, as is suggested by the commencement of v. 13. The singular עֹבֶר may be used, because the prophet has still in his mind the conception of the Assyrians and their allies as a unity, one great power, perhaps personified, as in the previous verse.

ii, 2. — שָׁב restorēth. So Gesenius, giving to this form the force of Hiphil,—to turn back, bring back, *restore*. So Ps. 85, 5; Num. 10, 26; and perhaps several instances in which the Keri directs that the Hiphil be substituted for the Kal form. O. Strauss, however, renders: *revertitur Dominus ad decus Iacobi tanquam decus Israelis*, with much the same resulting sense.

EWALD: "Denn Jahve stellt Jakobs Hoheit so wie die Israels her."

ii, 3. — פְּלִדָּת iron-weapons; changed by some into לְפִירִים torches. So Eng. vers., but unnecessarily. GESENIUS (Thes., p. 1104): *in igne ferramentorum sunt currus*. EWALD: "in funkeln dem Feuer die Wagen."

ii, 4. — — the suffix must refer to the preceding רְחַבּוֹת : thus, — *cursitant in plateis; adspectus earum instar facum*, which can hardly be imitated in English. Or is it that Nahum, losing sight of both *men* and *chariots*, has in his thought, for the moment, only the rapid movement and glitter of the whole scene, and hence uses the *feminine* form ? (See Gesen. Grammatik, § 105, 3. d. & 4. c.)

ii, 7. — *it is determined*; as the Hophal of נִצָּב So Gesenius (Thes., p. 903), preferring at the same time to derive from אֲבָבָב diffluere, and connecting the words with the preceding verse; thus: *palatium dissolvetur et diffluet*. The Eng. version, taking the word as the name of the Queen of Nineveh, has the support of Ewald, who observes: “Dass . . . bloss die Königin, nicht der König genannt wird, stimmt zu dem Griechischen Sagen wonach die Königinnen in Nineveh meist wichtiger waren als die Könige.” . . . This explanation is not borne out by what we know of Assyrian history, properly so called. Hitzig’s rendering as from חָצֵב *the lizard*¹, the image of the Assyrian power, is too fanciful. For the word נִצָּב see Gen. 28, 12; Dan. 2, 45; and, for a similar expression, Gen. 41, 32.

ii, 9. — *(מִזְהֹוֹא מִיְמֵי הַיָּם)* (comp. Is. 18, 2,) literally, *from the days she [has been]* ; i. e. ever since she has existed. It is thus unnecessary with A. B. P. Newcome to change into Et Nineveh, aquæ ipsius, &c.; or, “And the waters of Nineveh are as a pool of water,” — with little meaning or suitableness. EWALD: “Wohl ist Nineveh wie ein Wasserteich seitdem es ist.” He adds: “Nineveh ist seit ihren uralten Tagen wie ein unerschöpflicher Wasserteich an Volksmenge, es fluthet und wogt alles darin vor Menschenmasse: und doch fliehen sie sämmtlich unaufhaltsam.”

ii, 10. — *בָּקָה וְמִבָּקָה וְמִבָּלְקָה* — there is an evident paronomasia. The last word we have rendered as a participle, after Gesenius. It may, however, be a noun; so Ewald, and O. Strauss, who render: “Oede und Verödung und Verheerung;” “Vacuitas et evacuatio et exinanitio.”

קְפָצָן פָּרָור — Comp. Joel 2, 6. The noun probably denotes the warm

¹ Proph. Bücher, p. 332; but comp. Kl. Proph., p. 223, where he translates “es ist bestimmt.”

red *glow* of the countenance; hence some render: "all faces gather a flush," i. e. of anxiety or pain. But the verb may also mean *gather up*, i. e. to take away, or withdraw. Here, again, we have, *All faces withdraw their glow*, or flush; i. e. *grow pale*. On the whole this seems the preferable meaning. The absence of the suffix from פָּאַרְוֹר affords little objection, in a poetical composition, to this explanation.

EWALD : "aller Gesicht hat Röthe gesammelt."

O. STRAUSS : "facies omnium eorum corripiunt ruborem."

For a parallel expression see Joel 3, 15 (Eng. vers.).

iii, 1. — נִשְׁתַּחֲוֵת on account of the gender, נִשְׁתַּחֲוֵה is probably the nominative; and if so the verb must be used in the intransitive sense; as the Hiph. form frequently is. Ges., however (Thes., p. 779), renders *recedere fecit*, i. e. *dimisit*.

EWALD : "ohne dass wiche der Raub."

O. STRAUSS : "non desinit rapina."

iii, 3. — הַלְעֵמָן — Hitzig would take this in the sense of Kal; following the ἀναστίνωτος of the LXX, and the *ascendentis* of the Vulgate. It does not appear, however, that the Hiphil of this verb is ever used in the intransitive sense; and therefore the real resolution of the phrase is to be obtained by understanding after הַלְעֵמָן either the *horse*, or the *arms* for the battle—more probably the former. The explanation of Gesenius seems trivial:—"eques ascendere facit equum (der Reuter lässt steigen; bäumt das Ross)" (Thes., in הַלְעֵמָן). This is not mended by the addition of Dr. Robinson, "i. e. showing off his horse, by causing him to rear and prance!" (Heb. and Eng. Lex. 5th ed.) Ewald suggests that the word is a military expression, denoting readiness for the fight: "הַלְעֵמָן scheint als kriegerischer Ausdruck das Aufheben der Waffen, das sich zum Kampfe bereit halten, zu bedeuten; daher auch gleich das Blinken der entblössten Waffen folgt." He renders "ansturmender Reiter."

The Vulgate translation is here remarkably terse and literal:—

"Vox flagelli, et vox impetus rotæ,
Et equi frementis, et quadrigæ ferventis,
Et equitis ascendentis;
Et micantis gladii et fulgurantis hastæ."

JONAH.

On the language of Jonah. — The argument from the occurrence of a few words in a composition to the age in which it was written, is often, in the case of the Old Testament books, fallacious enough. More particularly is it so when, as sometimes happens, the peculiarity of form lies in the *punctuation* only. In the case of Jonah, the following words are all that can be adduced as of any importance : רְבָּי 1, 6 ; in the later sense of *master*, or *chief* (from which Rabbi) : הַעֲבֵּר 3, 6 ; in the sense of *put away*, or *put off* : וַיִּטְמֹן 2, 1 ; 3, 6, &c.; as used in Jonah only in books known to be late : טָעֵם 3, 7 ; in the Chaldee signification of *decree* : רְבָּוֹ 4, 11 ; another Chaldee form : עַשְׂתָּה 1, 6, only once besides, Jeremiah 5, 28 ; more common, in itself or its derivatives, in the Chaldee : סְפִינָה 1, 5, not elsewhere in O. T.; but found in Syriac and Arabic. Of these little weight can be attached to וַיַּחַנֵּן ; and, as to the others, who shall say precisely when they were first used in the later significations or forms, so as to decide that the work containing them cannot be older than this or that age ?

i, 8. — The first part of the question is wanting in the Vat. MS. of the Septuagint, in two Heb. MSS. of Kennicott, and in the Soncino ed. (Hitzig, *in loco*.) We may perhaps render, *For what cause*; so Abp. Newcome. In a few places, מַיִּ is used in the sense of *what*; Gen. 33, 8; 1 Sam. 18, 18; Mich. 1, 5; but even in these places there is more or less of reference to the idea of a *person* implied in the expression. In the form בָּאַפְּרַ לְמַיִּ, or נְשָׁלְמַיִּ, we have, however, a double question; *for what to whom*, as sometimes in Greek; so that in vv. 7-8, the full meaning may really be *on account of what deed and to whom done*. The proposal to point thus: Tell us, we pray thee for whose cause this evil is upon us — What is thine occupation, &c., as though *whose* could refer to *thee*, is inadmissible; for the words *we pray thee* represent only the particle נִגְ.

ii, 4. — The change of נִגְ into אַנְ for אַיְךְ is an easy one, and seems to give a preferable sense.

iv, 4.— *Doest thou well*: so the הַהִיאָב may properly be rendered. Thus

Symmachus, ἀρα δικαίως ἐλυπήθης. The LXX, Chal., and Syr., however, render rather differently, Art thou exceedingly displeased (or angry)? The former suits the design of the book, and the spirit of the passage better, and is quite justifiable by the Heb. idiom. Ges. Thes., in יְלָב. Hitzig renders, “Bist du billig so böse?” and De Wette, “Ist dein Zorn wohl gut?” Comp. Deut. 18, 17.

iv, 8. — *scorching*: supported by the Sept. συγκαίων, and the Vulg. *urens*, as well as indirectly by the Syriac, which does not translate the word, because, perhaps, it was sufficiently expressed in the קָרִים. This was a strong and hot wind, not *still* or *sultry*, as the words might be translated. The former rendering is equally near to the proper signification of the root חַרֵשׁ

ZEPHANIAH.

ii, 16. — חֶרְבָּ — The LXX and Vulgate render as if they had read עֲרָב the *raven*. But it is not necessary to follow them, as the present reading gives a sufficiently good sense.

SEPT.: κόρακες ἐν τοῖς πυλῶσιν αὐτῆς.

VULG.: “corvus in superliminari.”

DE WETTE: “Schutt liegt auf der Schwelle.”

EWALD: “Krähe auf der Schwelle zerhackt zerknackt” — the last two words being his rendering of the original אֲרֹזָה עֲרָה

EZEKIEL.

xxxii, 3. — הַגָּה אֲשֶׁר אָרוּ בְּלִבְנָן — Ewald renders: “Da ist der höchste Cedernbaum im Libanon;” this being the answer (he thinks) to the question of the preceding line. He observes, “אֲשֶׁר v. 3, muss eine

bestimmte Art Cedar, nämlich die höchste ihrer Art, seyn, da gewöhnliche Cedern nach v. 8 nicht bis an diese reichten ; das Wort ist also dasselbe wie 27, 6, steht aber hier in *st. c.* zu **כֶּרֶת**" (Propheten d. A. B., ii, pp. 327-8). The interpretation has not the merit of novelty (see Rosenmüller, *in loc.*); and against it may be placed the consideration urged in our note on the verse, together with the authority (1) of the Vulgate :—“Ecce, Assur quasi cedrus in Libano ;”—(2) of the Sept.: *ἴδοι Ἀσσυρίαν πεπάρισσος ἐν τῷ Αἰεώνῳ*: to say nothing of other ancient authorities, and the great preponderance of testimony on the same side among the moderns.

DECIPHERMENT OF THE CUNEIFORM INSCRIPTIONS.

THE following extracts from the last “Annual Report of the Royal Asiatic Society” (May, 1857) will help to show the present position of this interesting work :—

“The printing of the Inscriptions on the Assyrian and Babylonian Monuments, which was mentioned in the Report of last year, is steadily advancing. The ‘Annals of Sennacherib,’ those of Tiglath Pileser I., the extensive historical tablets of Sardanapalus, and the monument of Shamas Phul in the hieratic character, are printed. Various short legends of the Biblical Pul, the Nebi Yunus inscription of Sennacherib, that upon the cylinder of Neriglissor in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge, that of Esar Haddon from the cylinder in the British Museum, collated with fragments in the same collection, and the inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar and Nabonit, are all traced, and several of them are only waiting for trifling corrections to be also printed off. Many smaller monuments are in progress. The greater part of the ‘Comparative Alphabets, Grammars, and Vocabularies,’ and several of the mythological lists, have been copied from the clay tablets, and will be traced on the stone when the monuments now in progress shall be completed.

“The transliteration in Roman characters, and interlineary translation, by Sir Henry Rawlinson, will be printed simultaneously with the original inscriptions ; this will be done at Sir Henry’s own cost. A freer version of the same will form part of the Society’s Journal ; but the hope held out

by the Government of pecuniary assistance in this part of the work has not yet been followed by any result."

* * * * *

"At a recent Meeting of the Society, it was stated that Dr. Hincks, Dr. Oppert, Mr. Fox Talbot, and Sir Henry Rawlinson, had independently prepared versions of one and the same Inscription—that of Tiglath Pileser I., dated in the twelfth century before Christ ; each version to be sent sealed to this Society, in order to be subsequently submitted to a Committee, who would compare the results of the labours of four gentlemen pursued without communication with each other. The versions of Dr. Hincks and Dr. Oppert were incomplete ; the former gentleman did not receive a copy of the Inscription until the 26th of April, too late for going through the whole of so long a document ; and Dr. Oppert worked upon a copy made by himself from an imperfect original, whereas the lithographed copy in the hands of the other decipherers was prepared from a collation of four cylinders.

"The gentlemen who consented to meet on the occasion were, the Very Rev. the Dean of St. Paul's, the Rev. Dr. Whewell, Mr. Grote, and Sir Gardner Wilkinson ; but before the close of the meeting, Dr. Whewell was compelled, by a previous engagement, to leave. The President¹ of the Society, who was a member of the Committee, had been obliged to leave town previously to its assembling.

"The seals affixed by the gentlemen who sent their versions were broken by the Secretary of the Society in the presence of the Committee, who thereupon proceeded to compare the several versions. Each Member taking a version in his hand, the four read successively out of each version the same paragraph of the inscription, section by section, in order more readily to decide upon their agreement or disagreement. They separated without making any formal Report upon the matter, but have promised to furnish such Report after further consideration.

"[The President here stated to the meeting that he had been unable to be present at the opening of the versions, being engaged at Oxford, but that the papers having been sent to him on the day before the meeting, he had found time to go through the versions of Sir H. Rawlinson and Mr. Talbot, and to compare them paragraph by paragraph ; he had also looked into the translations of Dr. Hincks and Dr. Oppert, but he had not had time to give them the same precise examination. This he should do without delay ;

¹ [Professor Wilson.]

in the meantime he had made himself sufficiently acquainted with the several translations to be satisfied that there was a very close agreement with regard to the value of the characters, so that the powers of the alphabet, if it might be so termed, in which the inscription is written, may be regarded as satisfactorily determined, whatever slight and unfrequent modification may be hereafter found necessary. It was somewhat different with respect to the words, the meanings of very many of which were differently expressed ; yet at the same time, although individual terms were variously rendered, there was a remarkable concurrence as to the general meaning of each paragraph, showing that the translators were agreed as to the sense of a great proportion of the words and the construction of the sentences ; upon the whole, therefore, it appeared to him that a very considerable proportion of the vocabulary had been determined, and it might be confidently anticipated that the ability and perseverance which had accomplished so much, would, eventually, leave little to be questioned.]"—An. Rep. of Roy. As. Soc., 1857, pp. viii—x.

CORRIGENDA.

Page 156, note v. 5, omit "sometimes, *river*."

" . . . note v. 7, " "*pastures*: see Crit. Note."

" 191, for " § 14. CHAP. XVII, 12—XVIII, 6," read " § 14. CHAP. XVII, 12—XVIII, 7.

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