

monarch had dared for eleven long years to dispense altogether with Parliamentary aid and advice. Up to the year 1641 the conduct of the Parliament is warmly to be approved of, but after that date the Houses were not justified in the demands they laid before the King, and in the war that ensued the Parliament was clearly the aggressor. With respect to the faction that pursued Charles to death, but one opinion can now be formed. It was no friend to public liberty, for never under the most arbitrary monarch were the people of England subject to a more rigid tyranny; neither did it compose the majority of the nation, which at least latterly, had recovered its reverence for the Royal power. But it is ever so in revolutions. A few violent men take the lead—their noise and activity seem to multiply their numbers, and the great body of the people, either indolent or pusillanimous, are led in triumph at the chariot wheels of a paltry faction.

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### Review.

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THE progress of interpreting inscriptions on the Egyptian, Assyrian, and other cognate Semitic monuments, has made such rapid progress within the last half-century, and has so important a bearing on Biblical literature and archæology, as to have necessitated the formation of such an institution as the Biblical Archæological Society, which has now been in existence during the chief part of the present decade; Dr. Birch's address as President of the Society having been delivered on the 21st of March, 1871. Hitherto our knowledge of the nations surrounding the land of Canaan has been derived from the records of Holy Scripture and the early Greek historians who have handed down such portions as entered into relation with their own particular subject. Now, by means of the excavations which have brought to light a buried world, we are enabled to ascend into the remotest times of antiquity, and to examine the identical monuments which were erected in the days of Cheops and Uruk—i.e. within two centuries of the dispersion of mankind after their failure to build the Tower of Babel. And it is with no little satisfaction that the Biblical student is enabled to find, not only so many confirmations of the truth of the Scripture record respecting the Creation and the Fall, the Noachian Deluge, the building of Babel, the story of the Exodus, and the punishment of the Houses of Israel and Judah, but also of the harmony between the chronology of those nations, Assyria and Egypt, and that which is revealed to us in the infallible word of God. So that what Champollion wrote fifty years ago in allusion to the sceptics of his day has been amply verified by the further discoveries of our cuneiform and Egyptological scholars. "They will find in this work," said he, "an absolute reply to their calumnies, since I have proved that no Egyptian monument is really older than the year 2000 B.C. This certainly is very high antiquity, but it presents nothing contradictory to the sacred histories, and I venture to affirm that it establishes them on all points; for it is in fact, by adopting the chronology and the succession of kings given by the Egyptian monuments, that the history of Egypt accords with the sacred writings." ("Ancient Egypt," p. 56.) The recently discovered tablet at Abydos of the

reign of Seti I., B.C. 1450, seems to show that the Shera monument in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, which is indisputably the oldest proof of man's existence on earth, may be dated a century earlier than that named by Champollion; but this only tends to confirm the assertion, which recent discoveries in Egypt and Assyria enable us to make, that there is no nation on earth possessing authentic documents to show a higher antiquity than the Scripture date for the Flood, which, according to the Hebrew computation, may be placed in the twenty-fifth century before the Christian era.

The Biblical Archæological Society has done its work admirably by the publication of its "Transactions," which have enabled the outer world to see not only the truth of the late Dr. Arnold's remark—"These Egyptian discoveries are likely to become one of the greatest wonders of the age," but also to learn the strong confirmation which the imperishable monuments of the East afford to the truth of Holy Scripture. Our limits prevent us from attempting to show this at any length: and we must confine ourselves in the present paper to noticing the last two volumes published by the Society, and even those we are obliged to notice in a most cursory manner.

Volume V. opens with a very remarkable paper, by W. H. F. Talbot, on an inscribed Chaldean tablet, entitled "The Fight between Bel and the Dragon, and the Flaming Sword which turned every way." This is one of the most striking narratives of Babylonian mythology, which describes the chief Creator of all things, Bel, arming himself for the contest with the Dragon, the personification of all evil. And the most curious weapon in Bel's armoury was the *Flaming Sword which turned every way*—"to the south, to the north, to the east, and to the west, so that none could escape from it," which so plainly resembles the sword of the Cherubim in Genesis which turned every way to keep the Tree of Life, that, as Mr. Talbot justly observes, "the same celestial weapon must surely be intended here." Mr. Boscawen contributes another paper of great value, entitled "The Legend of the Tower of Babel." The tablet on which this legend is inscribed was discovered by the late George Smith, who gives a full translation of it in his "Chaldean Account of Genesis." The legend records the building of an immense tower by the Accadians, or early Babylonians, which appears to have offended the gods, who first manifested their anger by throwing down "in the night all that was built in the day." The builders continued their work in spite of these interruptions, until at length they were punished by being scattered abroad, their speech confounded, and the tower destroyed. There can be little doubt but that we have in this Chaldean legend a traditionary account of what happened on the "plain of Shinar" within a century after the time when Noah came forth from the Ark.

M. Chabas' notice of an Egyptian stèle in the Turin Museum, affords a pleasing memorial of the sentiments entertained by a pious youth of the age probably of Rameses, commonly called "the Great," and within two centuries after the Israelites had quitted Egypt. It is a record of one *Beka*, deceased, who is supposed to speak from his tomb in these words, but of which we can only quote the following fragment:—"I was just, true, and free from all malice, *having placed God in my heart*, and having been taught to know His will. . . . My sincerity, goodness, and affection was cordially manifested towards my father and mother; and never was I betrayed into manifesting the slightest disrespect towards them from my earliest youth"—an admirable lesson to many of our English youths in the present day. Another stèle from the land of Ham, now in the Louvre, which has been translated by M. Maspero, and fully six centuries older than the one just mentioned, and which the late learned Egyp-

tologist, Vicomte de Rougè, pronounced "one of the masterpieces of Egyptian sculpture," will afford us some idea of the knowledge which the ancient Egyptians had respecting religion. The stele was erected in honour of a certain *Iritisen*, who lived in the reign of Mentuhotep, a king of the eleventh dynasty, a little before, or about the time of, Abraham's visit to Egypt. After an acknowledgment of "his true servant, who is in the inmost recess of his heart, and makes his pleasure all the day long, the devout Ra-Mentuotep, king of Egypt, unto the great god, Iritisen;" the inscription continues—"I know the *mystery of the divine Word*, the ordinances of the religious feasts, every rite with which they are endowed; I never strayed from them; I indeed am an artist skilled in his art, a man exceeding all men in his learning. Lo! there is no man excels by it but I alone, and my eldest legitimate son. God has decreed him to be most excellent in that way, and I have seen the perfections of his hands in his work as chief artist in every kind of precious stones, from gold and silver, even to ivory and ebony!" Although there is in this inscription a specimen of amphibiology, as Maspero points out, in which "Egyptian writers" delighted to indulge, it is clear that Iritisen's eldest legitimate son was as skilful a manufacturer of gold and silver, ivory and ebony idols, as the most accomplished Papal engraver of the present day.

In the sixth and last published volume of the "Transactions" we have a valuable paper on the "Babylonian Dated Tablets and the Canon of Ptolemy," by Mr. Boscawen, giving an interesting account of a great banking firm, "Egibi and Co.," the founder of which lived in the latter part of the reign of Sennacherib. It is necessary, however, to mention that Professor Oppert disputes Mr. Boscawen's conclusion of "Egibi and Son" being a Babylonian banking firm. He considers that the cuneiform records, on which Mr. Boscawen founds his opinion, show that it was not a financial but juridical firm; that Egibi was a tribal, not a personal name; and that the word rendered "witnesses" to supposed deposit notes, really meant "assessors." The great value of this paper, together with the lengthy discussion which took place on its being read before the Society, consists in the proof it affords to the correctness and accuracy of the Book of Daniel, and especially to the difficulties connected with the prophet's mention of Darius, the Mede, the son of Ahasuerus. The late Mr. Bosanquet, to whose liberality the Biblical Archæological Society is almost indebted for its existence, contended, for many years, that the Darius thus mentioned by Daniel was the same as Darius the Persian, the son of Hystaspes; and so strongly did he cling to his delusion, that he affirmed, contrary to the opinion of every scholar, whether cuneiform or otherwise, that the Egibi tablets supported his opinion in every respect. If any who are interested in this subject will turn to p. 273 of vol. vi., they will see how clearly M. Oppert, the first French cuneiform scholar of the day, has pointed out Mr. Bosanquet's fallacy. "For a long time," he says, "I have abandoned my first idea, contradicted even by the Book of Daniel, of identifying Darius, the Mede, with Darius I. of Persia. Mr. Bosanquet has ventured to assert that from B.C. 578 to 506 there were no traces of Darius' rule at Babylon. The contrary is the case, as we know at least fifty tablets dated from this period. . . . We have not to write history suited to our own theories, but history as yielded to us by the authors, whose writings are completely and splendidly corroborated by contemporaneous documents. All this quite arbitrary destruction of history and chronology appears to have originated in a desire to obtain for the capture of Babylon under Belshazzar the date of 493 B.C., 490 years or 70 weeks before the Nativity." Had Mr. Bosanquet been a Hebrew scholar he would not have been misled in the way he appears to

have been by the imperfect rendering of Daniel v. 31, where the authorised version reads—"Darius, the Median, took the kingdom," in place of Darius, the Median, "received the kingdom" from another, as it should have been translated, that other being Cyrus, the Persian, who captured Babylon, and appointed his relative, Darius, the Median, to rule over the city and kingdom, in accordance with the prophecies which foretold that Babylon would fall before the combined forces of "the Medes and Persians." An interesting plate of the Behistan Rock accompanies the discussion. Darius Hystaspes, the king of Persia, is represented as trampling on the body of one of his prisoners, while a body of captives with ropes round their necks, and their hands tied behind their backs, are standing before the king. Each one but the last bears an inscription over his head, describing him as a rebel, who falsely assumed the name of king of one of the many provinces which owned the sway of Persia. The face of each of these prisoners is wretched in the extreme. But our interest is confined to the last one, who appears, in every respect, differing from the others. He wears a high-peaked cap, exactly like that worn by the Jewish priests, and his countenance, judging from the two copies of the Behistan Rock possessed by the writer, is of a very pronounced Hebrew type. He is not described as a rebel, but the trilingual inscription above his head merely records these words:—

"THIS IS ISKUNKA THE CHIEF OF THE SAXONS."<sup>1</sup>

The Greek savant D. Perides' "Notes on Cypriote Palæography" are interesting so far as they throw light on any confirmation of the truth of the Bible. And it is not a little remarkable that at the very time that Cyprus has become virtually a portion of the British empire, so much has been gathered from the antiquities of that island, the scene of the Apostle Paul's earliest mission to the heathen world. We have now before us one of the most gorgeous pictures from an Egyptian tomb of the age of Moses, where the offerings of four different nations are made to the mighty Pharaoh, who was reigning in the seventeenth century B.C., one of them being from the inhabitants of the isle of Cyprus. A thousand years later, when Assur-bani-pul, king of Assyria, son of the Scripture Esarhaddon, was on his march to punish the Egyptians who had rebelled against his authority, after he had captured Thebes, the capital of the greatest monarchy of the ancient world, no less than ten petty kings or chieftains from Cyprus are represented as paying homage to the then powerful king of Assyria.

Such are some of the many important discoveries which have been made by Egyptological, cuneiform, and other Oriental scholars within the last half-century, which have thrown such a flood of light upon the historical portions of the Old Testament, and for the knowledge of which Biblical students are not a little indebted to the admirable series of papers published in the Transactions of the Biblical Archaeological Society.

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<sup>1</sup> The date of the Behistan Rock is fixed by Sir Henry Rawlinson at B.C. 516; and this inscription is the earliest instance known to history of the name of "Saxon."

*In the present Number we are compelled to defer some*

REVIEWS, AND THE SHORT NOTICES,

*And to omit any remarks on the Month.*