

RECENT EGYPTIAN AND ASSYRIAN
LITERATURE.

- I. *Das Aegyptische Todtenbuch der XVIII. bis XX. Dynastie, aus verschiedenen Urkunden zusammengestellt und herausgegeben von Edouard Naville.* Erster Band, Text und Vignetten; zweiter Band, Varianten. Berlin, folio, 1886.
- II. *Catenæ in Evangelia Eegyptiacæ quæ supersunt.* Lagarde. Göttingen, 1886.
- III. *Les Actes des Martyrs de L'Egypte.* Texte Copte et traduction Française par Henri Hyvernat. Vol. i. pts. 1-3. Paris, 1886.

I. FROM the earliest days of the true decipherment of the Egyptian hieroglyphs, the greatest interest has been aroused in the minds of Egyptologists by the large collection of chapters, called the "Book of the Dead," selections from which are found inscribed on tombs, coffins, and papyri, from the earliest to the latest days of the Egyptian Empire. In Egyptian this collection is called *per em hrw*, or "coming forth by day:" other translations of this title, such as "coming forth in" or "as the day," have been suggested, but the first makes the best sense, and is now generally adopted. The date of the composition of the work is unknown, but it must be very remote; for as far back as the XIth Dynasty, or about 2200 B.C., certain chapters bear evidence that the scribes who wrote them did not understand the passages which they wrote, and hence made nonsense of them. This would happen in various ways: the meaning and the traditional interpretation of the chapters might have been forgotten; the scribe might have been, and frequently was, wilfully careless; or he might have written from dictation, and have confused the signs, etc.

The first printed edition of the Book of the Dead was published in 1842, by the late Richard Lepsius,¹ from a hieroglyphic papyrus in Turin, which contains 165 chapters, and is the longest known. Notwithstanding its length and the large number of chapters which it contains, it yet lacks several which are found in the various papyri distributed throughout Europe; some of these being the oldest of them all. This faulty text remained untranslated until 1857, when the late Dr. Birch published a literal translation of it in the fifth volume of Bunsen's "Egypt's Place in

¹ *Das Todtenbuch der Aegypter nach dem Hieroglyphischen Papyrus in Turin.*, Leipzig, 1842.

Universal History." This translation, though literal, is in many places quite unintelligible to the ordinary reader, because it has been made from a corrupt text, and because all the allusions which the writer or writers of this wonderful mythological book expected the reader to know and understand, are not familiar to us. One of the greatest difficulties in translating the Book of the Dead is caused by the variant readings, which have generally been taken into the text wholesale; though in some papyri attempts have been made to choose a good and correct reading.

The Book of the Dead remained in this unsatisfactory condition until 1874, when, at the Congress of Orientalists held in London, Dr. Lepsius proposed to Mr. Renouf that he should make a critical collation of the best copies of the Book of the Dead, in order to restore the text to its original condition at the period of the XIXth Dynasty. Owing to the lack of the necessary leisure, Mr. Renouf was obliged to decline what would have been to him a most congenial and fitting task, and M. Edouard Naville was the next eminent scholar to whom this important work was offered by Dr. Lepsius. For the carrying out of his labour of love, M. Naville visited London, Dublin, Paris, Marseilles, Leyden, Rome, Florence, Naples, Turin, Berlin, Hanover, Cairo, and other places, and collated about eighty-six hieroglyphic papyri, twenty-six of which belong to the British Museum. The result is that he has collected thousands of variant readings, and that the number of chapters has risen from 165 to 186. The latter, with their variant vignettes, have been most carefully and beautifully drawn from the different papyri, and printed in a handsome folio of 212 leaves. In the second volume, of 448 pages, M. Naville has arranged the variants in columns: the first contains generally the text of the papyrus of Neb-seni, in the British Museum, and the others give the different readings from the manuscripts of Paris, Leyden, Berlin, and elsewhere. Now for the first time it is possible for a good translation of the Book of the Dead to be made; all the chapters, and their variant readings and vignettes have been gathered together, and conveniently arranged, from the best papyri of the best period of the Egyptian Empire, that is from about 1700 to 1100 B.C. We hope that so able a scholar as Mr. Renouf will not leave the want of a translation long unsupplied; for the interest in the Book of the Dead is growing every day.

M. Naville has done his work ably and well, and it is impossible

to praise too highly the industry and learning shown in the performance of his tedious and laborious task. Unlike many books, it is quite impossible to do justice to its merits in article, notice, or review; it is a book which must be used well by the Egyptian student before he can really appreciate the great advantage of having a trustworthy collection of eighty-six papyri at his side for immediate reference. M. Naville has laid all Egyptologists under an immense debt of gratitude for his, from now and henceforth, standard work on the Book of the Dead; and the Prussian Government in affording important pecuniary assistance in the publishing of this work, has given another substantial proof of the interest which that enlightened body takes in the welfare of the science of Egyptology.

II. In *Catenæ in Evangelia Aegyptiacæ* Dr. Paul de Lagarde has edited the Coptic text of the extracts from the four Gospels, with a patristic catena attached to each, which are found in a large and fine MS. belonging to Lord Zouche. This MS. was brought from the Coptic monastery of Souriani, on the Natron Lakes, to the west of the village of Jerraneh on the Nile, in 1838, and was written in the year of the Martyrs 605 = A.D. 889. The leaves of the MS. had been bound up without much regard to sequence or order, but Dr. Lagarde, after great patience and labour, has succeeded in publishing the continuous text, carefully marking the punctuation, and dividing the words and sentences. The extracts from St. Matthew, with their patristic catenæ, occupy nearly one-third of the work; and the commentators are for the most part Chrysostom, Cyril, Severus, and Titus, though Eusebius, Epiphanius Gregory, Gregory Thaumaturgus, and others, are at times quoted. The passages chosen for interpretation are generally taken from the parables and miracles of Christ, and the collections of the opinions from the works of the early Fathers of the Church which are quoted are exceedingly interesting, both for their own value and their appearance in a Coptic dress. Dr. Lagarde's work is a very important and valuable addition to the comparatively small library of printed Coptic books which exists; and the complete set of references to the New Testament and the Fathers is a very welcome help in using it.

III. We welcome most heartily the appearance of the first three parts of Dr. H. Hyvernat's work, entitled *Les Actes des Martyrs de L'Égypte*. St. Mark's teaching in Egypt was followed by the

greatest success, and by the result that thousands upon thousands of people in Lower Egypt embraced Christianity, and devoted themselves to an ascetic life; monasteries and convents for the devout of both sexes sprang up, not by tens but by hundreds. In addition to these, recluses and anchorites established themselves wherever an empty cave or hole in the rock could be found in which to shelter themselves from the bitter frosts of the Egyptian night. Their food consisted, as we know from the narrative of Paphnouti, of wild berries, and their drink was water; for dress they frequently had nothing but their long, tangled hair. In spite of the hard life they led, their numbers increased and multiplied until the savage onslaught made upon them by Diocletian, A.D. 304-5. The Nitrian desert, to the south of Alexandria, was peopled by five thousand anchorites; and the island of Tabenne was occupied by Pachomius and fourteen hundred of his followers. In Oxyrinchus alone it was computed that there were ten thousand females and twenty thousand males of the monastic profession; and Rufinus¹ says that there were as many monks in the desert as there were people in the cities. Since Egypt possessed this immense number of Christian enthusiasts, it is no wonder that the "noble army of martyrs" was so largely recruited from this superstitious country. The barbarity with which the persecution of these wretched creatures was carried out by the minions of Diocletian, and the fanatical obstinacy of the Egyptian converts, tended to make the struggle long and bloody. The histories of the martyrdoms of the saints were written down with the greatest care, and preserved as the most valuable of the archives of the convents. As they are not mere miraculous accounts of sufferings, but have bits of historical information and biography scattered among them, it is a great wonder that they have been so long left uncollected and nearly unknown; moreover, they are exceedingly valuable for the geographical information which they contain. Dr. Hyvernat has begun to publish the Coptic text of the Martyrdoms from the MSS. in the Vatican and the Borgian Museum. The paragraphs are left as they are in the original MSS.; and he gives a good running translation in French at the foot of each page, together with his emendations. On page 41 we notice a misprint, *les torturât* for *le torturât*. The first three parts—all which have appeared up to the present—contain the

¹ *Vite Patrum*, chap. 7.

martyrdoms of Saints Eusebius, the son of Basilides, Macarius of Antioch, Apater and Érai, the son and daughter of Basilides, Pisoura, Piroon, Athom, John, Simeon, Apa Ari, and Macrobinus. There is some monotony in reading these martyrdoms, for in many cases the construction of the narrative is exactly the same, and the same phrases are used over and over again. After the first torturing, Christ appears to His suffering saint and heals his wounds, telling him to be of good cheer, that he shall die one, two, three or four times (as in the case of St. George of Cappadocia) and that eventually He will come and take him up to heaven in His chariot. The account of the tortures is most horrible and frequently very difficult to translate. Dr. Hyvernat has, so far, done this very carefully and well; and we hope that he will include in the second volume of his work a chapter on the instruments of torture used by the Roman governors upon the unhappy Egyptians. Such a chapter was made by Georgi in his *De Miraculis Sancti Coluthi*, but that could now be very much improved and enlarged. The remarkable efficacy of the martyrs' shrines for healing diseases is insisted on with great pertinacity; and the accounts of the cures wrought are truly wonderful. We marvel not that Dr. Hyvernat prefaces his work with: "Le but de cette publication est, avant tout, philologique. . . . A plus forte raison ne veux-je pas sembler approuver des discours peu orthodoxes ou fanatiques, que les interpolateurs ont mis, parfois, dans la bouche des martyrs."

Dr. Hyvernat's labour is long and arduous, but very important, for these martyrdoms contain facts found nowhere else. When complete it will form a valuable supplement to the *Acta Sanctorum* of the Bollandists, and we await with eagerness the end of the work which he has so well begun.

I. *Assyrische Lesestücke nebst Paradigmen, Schrifttafel und kleinem Wörterbuch, von Friedrich Delitzsch. Dritte Auflage. Leipzig, 1885.*

II. *Alphabetisches Verzeichniss der assyrischen und akkadischen Wörter der Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia, vol. ii., von J. N. Strassmaier. Leipzig, 1886.*

I. Assyrian students and others who remember the first edition of Dr. Delitzsch's *Lesestücke* will, at the sight of this new and

third edition, see that the author has endeavoured to improve that faulty and incomplete work, with some success. The first edition was little more than a selection from easy, and for the most part already published texts, with a very meagre syllabary, and was prepared for beginners who were supposed to be ignorant alike of Assyrian and every other Semitic dialect. The new edition has a higher aim, and announces itself as a complete "guide to the perplexed" in matters Assyrian. The first few pages of the book contain lists of pronouns, adverbs, and prepositions taken from the lists given in the works of Oppert, Schrader, and Sayce, on Assyrian grammar; the verb-scheme which follows these is based entirely upon that laid down by Dr. Oppert in 1868, in his *Éléments de la Grammaire Assyrienne*. After these come two pages of transcribed Assyrian, containing the account of Sennacherib's attack upon Jerusalem, published by Smith and Sayce in 1878. The translation of this extract is important, since it shows that in spite of the "Bestrebungen der Assyriologen Schulen des Continents während der letzten Jahren," most of the difficulties which puzzled Oppert, Rawlinson, Smith, and Sayce, remain still to be cleared up. Following always the arrangement of the syllabary with phonetic values in Sayce's Grammar, Dr. Delitzsch devotes the next thirty-five pages to this important elementary matter. He has added in some cases the archaic and cursive Babylonian forms of the Assyrian signs; the former he has made out by the transcript of the Nebuchadnezzar text published by Rawlinson and Norris, and the latter he has borrowed, without acknowledgment, from the sign-list published by Mr. Pinches. Next in order Dr. Delitzsch gives copies of the most important two and three column syllabaries, based upon the texts published by Rawlinson, Norris, and Smith; these are followed by copies of the fragments of the "Creation" and "Deluge" tablets, which were translated by Smith in his *Chaldean Genesis*. It would be tedious to enumerate all the extracts given from the texts published by the Trustees of the British Museum, so we pass to the copy of an interesting document which Dr. Delitzsch has named *Ein Heirathscontract*. As he does not give the British Museum catalogue number, nor refer to any publication in which a copy of this tablet has appeared, we are driven to the unavoidable conclusion that Dr. Delitzsch does not know how to copy Babylonian, or even to read it when it has been copied for him. The following

explanations will make our meaning plain. The interesting little document of which Dr. Delitzsch professes to give a copy, is a clay tablet $2\frac{3}{4}$ in. long by $2\frac{1}{5}$, and is dated on the 13th day of Têbeth, in the 34th year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. It relates how a certain Ziria promised to give seven manehs of silver and three slaves, etc. as a dowry to his daughter Ina-e-sagili-ramat on the day of her marriage with Iddina-Marduk. The tablet contains twenty-six lines of writing, parts of some of which go round the edge; these last have proved a stumbling-block to the learned editor of the *Lesestücke*. At the end of the second line of his copy, where the name Nur-Sin comes, Dr. Delitzsch has represented a piece broken, but there is neither a character wanting nor a piece broken; he has only failed to read the sign for the moon-god Sin. Had he known anything of the contract tablets he could never have imagined that *Nur* by itself, was a name; and had he only consulted the Appendix to Strassmaier's *Alphabetisches Verzeichniss* which he himself edited, he would have found on page 50 about thirty-eight places enumerated in which the name *Nur-Sin* occurs. In the eighth line Dr. Delitzsch makes *i-shak* to be the last two characters of this line on the tablet; here again he has made an egregious blunder, having left out *ka-nu*, the last two signs of the verbal form *i-shak-ka-nu*. This is a serious mistake, for it shows (1) that he did not recognise a verbal form of frequent occurrence in the contract tablets; (2) that he did not know what he was copying. We are anxious to know how he would explain this blunder to the "Assyriologen Schule" in Leipzig. On the *reverse* of the tablet, line 2, he makes the last sign to be partially obliterated; this is incorrect, for it is one of the clearest upon the tablet. On the *reverse*, line 4, he encloses one half of the last sign *kar* in a square bracket, as if it were wanting on the tablet, but it is not; and the sign *ir*, which is the phonetic complement of the previous sign, showing that the two together are to be read *edir*, he omits altogether. On the *reverse*, line 8, the word for scribe, *dup-sarvu*, is represented as being on the flat surface of the tablet: this also is incorrect, for the last sign is written round upon the edge.¹ In the second edition of the *Lesestücke*,

¹ We have verified all these statements upon a cast of the tablet made by Mr. Ready, of the British Museum. It appears only too plain to us that Dr. Delitzsch has plagiarised, and has made his copy from a lithographic sketch of the inscription published in the *British Archaeological Journal* for 1880, pp.

Dr. Delitzsch announced on the last page that his book was without mistakes ("Schreibfehler vacat"), while there were several mistakes in copying on page 80 alone; as there are so many in this one short text which we have quoted, we are glad to see that this piece of arrogance is not repeated.

II. For many years past it has been felt by Semitic scholars in general and students of Assyrian in particular, that an Assyrian vocabulary was absolutely necessary if that language was to be more generally studied. Every student was obliged to collect words for himself upon slips, and to try and make out their meaning; but every one who had not the British Museum collection of tablets always at hand soon found that it was quite impossible to make anything like a good word-list, for new tablets with new words upon them were being continually acquired by that institution. Since the personal jealousies of Assyriologists rendered co-operation in the matter of a dictionary impossible, it became clear that some one scholar would be obliged to devote many years to the preparation of an Assyrian vocabulary, for a dictionary is not possible for many a year yet. As the appearance of Dr. Strassmaier's "Verzeichniss" marks an era in the history of Assyrian lexicography—inasmuch as all future dictionaries must be based upon this work—a few remarks upon what has been done in this branch of Assyrian will not be out of place here. The first scholar who gave himself up to the task of making a vocabulary was Edwin Norris. His qualifications for the work were excellent, for he had a thorough knowledge of the cuneiform tablets, and with Sir Henry Rawlinson he copied and prepared for publication the texts contained in the first two volumes of that immortal work the *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*. In addition to this, he was a good general linguist, and had a really practical knowledge of Hebrew, with which language modern Assyriologists have but slight acquaintance. After some years of work he brought out three parts of his *Assyrian Dictionary*, which unhappily he never lived to complete. His plan was to collect all the Assyrian signs the phonetic values of which began with a certain letter, and to place them at the

398-404. Here the copyist only gave a view of the *obverse* and *reverse*, not a *copy*, of the tablet; if the curious reader will take the trouble to compare Dr. Delitzsch's copy with this sketch, he will see that he has even imitated the conventional manner of drawing the signs employed there by the copyist.

head of words beginning with those same signs. He gave the various ways of spelling in Assyrian each word quoted, and the cognate form in Hebrew, Aramaic, or Arabic by the side, followed by three or four extracts in cuneiform type with transliteration and translation, showing the use of the word. He frequently added short notes and extracts from the native bilingual syllabaries, which materially assist in understanding the text, and when he was in doubt as to the meaning of a word he usually gave the opinion of Oppert or Hincks. As a whole, and for the time at which it was written, this *Dictionary* is truly marvellous, and the day that saw the death of this great but modest Assyrian scholar was an unlucky one for Assyriology. For technical skill in copying and sagacity in the decipherment and reading of almost illegible inscriptions, there may arise Assyriologists as great as Edwin Norris, but none greater.

After Norris's death nothing more was done towards making an Assyrian vocabulary until 1878, when Dr. Friedrich Delitzsch visited England with the avowed and announced purpose of making one. Up to the present this intention has never been carried out, although the work has been announced as being "in the press" year after year; and, if we except the eleven pages of vocabulary in his *Lesestücke*, and the contributions to the works of his pupils, students have not been able to benefit by any of Dr. Delitzsch's labours on lexicography. It is but fair to say why he has not fulfilled his promise: in the first place his duties chain him to Leipzig for a large portion of the year, and his visits to the British Museum have been too brief to enable him to copy one-hundredth part of the unpublished fragments there. The Leipzig Assyriologists without tablets are like astronomers without telescopes. Hitherto Dr. Delitzsch has devoted himself entirely to the collation of Assyrian texts which have been published for many years; now, every one knows that it is much easier to collate and perhaps to correct a sign here and there in Rawlinson's text, than to copy a tablet for the first time for oneself. Of late years Mr. Rassam has brought home from Babylonia a huge mass of tablets and fragments in the Babylonian character which are exceedingly difficult to make out, but these are most valuable for lexicographical purposes on account of the syllabaries and the lists of words which they contain. In the copying of Babylonian inscriptions Dr. Delitzsch has had little

practice; this is proved by the many mistakes he has made in copying the one small text published on page 125 of his *Lesestücke*, and by the fact that a most valuable fragment of the fourth Creation tablet, written in Babylonian, lay before him for weeks at the British Museum unrecognised. Moreover, not to go too much into details, the list of countries published in his *Sprache der Kossäer* was corrected in many important places from the private copy of an English student. We mention this because Dr. Delitzsch has omitted to do so. That Dr. Delitzsch cannot give anything like a complete list of Assyrian words in his *Wörterbuch* from the materials which he now has, may be easily seen by examining Bezold's last work, where it is painfully evident how few unpublished texts he has copied. Apart from the lack of technical skill in copying, Dr. Delitzsch has shown, by the writings of himself and of his pupils, that he lacks a practical acquaintance with the common Semitic dialects of Hebrew, Syriac and Chaldee. But what Dr. Oppert has said of Dr. Haupt "dass Herr Haupt von der Aussprache einer lebenden semitischen Sprache nicht die geringste Kenntniss hat zeigt er fast auf jeder Seite,"¹ is really more applicable to Dr. Delitzsch than to Dr. Haupt. He has studied the various Semitic dictionaries, and has drawn conclusions from them, but the absurdity of many of them may be seen by referring to the comparisons with other Semitic languages given on page 67 of Dr. Strassmaier's *Verzeichniss*; as Dr. Delitzsch edited this work he is responsible for them. As we have now shown why Dr. Delitzsch has not published his Assyrian *Wörterbuch*, let us proceed to the consideration of the last contribution to the lexicography of this language. Dr. Strassmaier has avoided the mistake made by Norris and Delitzsch, by modestly calling his work a *Verzeichniss*, not a dictionary. This "list" contains 9,072 words together with a glossary of 1,586 words and names, which occur in the copies of the Liverpool collection of contract tablets which he published in the Transactions of the Oriental Congress held in Leyden in 1883. Several passages are quoted from the cuneiform inscriptions where each word occurs, so that it is now possible to try if a meaning proposed suits more than one context and makes sense. We have picked out at random the reference to a number of passages and have verified them and found them correct, yet one must not be surprised i

¹ See *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen*, 17th December, 1879.

some clerical errors should be found in a book containing some sixty thousand quotations! Dr. Strassmaier has corrected many errors in previously published texts, but he leaves the reader to find this out. To the scholar and the advanced cuneiform student this book will be invaluable, but it has, in our opinion, one defect; the meanings of the words are not given. Dr. Strassmaier is quite right in not forcing meanings into words, or making guesses at them, but it would have been such a boon if he had put meanings to all the words which occur in the historical and other more important inscriptions, and would have wonderfully helped the beginner. As it is, this defect can easily be remedied; if Dr. Strassmaier will only set to work and compile a small vocabulary of 1,000 or 1,500 words, he will earn the gratitude of all present and future Assyrian students. As he has all the materials at hand for this work we think he should lose no time in doing it. The eleven hundred and forty-four pages which compose Dr. Strassmaier's *Verzeichniss* have been lithographed from his own clear and very distinct handwriting; we heartily congratulate him on the conclusion of this great and important work. The most unsatisfactory portion of the book is the preface; as Dr. Delitzsch and Dr. Haupt are the editors of the work, we feel compelled to call them to account for some unpardonable omissions. That the *Verzeichniss* is based upon the work of Edwin Norris is clear to every one, yet we look through the preface in vain for any mention of this scholar's work. The sin which cries aloud in its pages is the want of common honesty in acknowledging the labours of the English and French Assyriologists. In the first paragraph we read "Seit den grundlegenden Arbeiten von Sir Henry Rawlinson and Jules Oppert haben die fortgesetzten Ausgrabungen in Mesopotamien unsere Kenntnisse stetig erweitert und geordnet, neue Fragen wurden angeregt, alte Vermutungen bezweifelt und beseitigt, andere wieder bestätigt, und auf die immer eindringendere philologische Genauigkeit in detail Fragen waren die Bestrebungen der Assyriologen Schulen des Continents während der letzter Jahre gerichtet." Why is it that the names of Hincks, Schrader, Norris, Smith and Sayce are omitted from this one-sided description of the progress of Assyriology? Surely Dr. Delitzsch cannot imagine that he and the few young men to whom he has taught the rudiments of Assyrian are the only people who have advanced our knowledge of this language? He

is not even the author of the best Assyriological work that has appeared on the Continent, for that has been done by Drs. Oppert and Schrader, whose works and conclusions Dr. Delitzsch has freely used without acknowledgment. He is a diligent gleaner from other people's works, but he lacks the technical skill required for copying, and has not sufficient knowledge of the Semitic languages to enable him to play the part he has chosen for himself. In support of this last statement we will give one typical instance. There appeared at Leipzig, in 1876, a German translation of Smith's *Chaldean Genesis*, with "Erläuterungen und fortgesetzten Forschungen," by Friedrich Delitzsch. On page 76 we find Smith's translation,¹ "which is eaten by the stomach," rendered by "so gegessen wird vom Magen." The two Assyrian words which are thus rendered are *a-kil kar-si*, and are to be translated by *calumniator* or *slanderer*: they are the Assyrian form of the very common name for Satan in Aramaic, אֲכִיל קַרְסִי. With Smith's rendering we have no fault to find, because, knowing neither Hebrew nor Syriac, he could not be expected to translate the passage correctly. Dr. Delitzsch, however, professes to be acquainted with Semitic languages, and yet he perpetuates this blunder, and does not see that the German, as well as the English, is utter nonsense, such as no Assyrian ever inscribed upon clay; for Assyrians knew perfectly well that it is the *mouth* that eats, and not the *belly*. Moreover, *akil karsa* means "the eater of a piece (of flesh)," the last word אֲכִיל having nothing whatever to do with the word for *belly*, קַרְסִי (common to Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic, as well as Assyrian), with which the learned German Assyriologist has confounded it. It was many years before Dr. Delitzsch understood that Assyrian was akin to the Aramaic dialects; many of his conclusions laid down in his *Assyrische Studien* are now proved to be quite wrong; he could never have written his *Wo lag das Paradies* unless Rawlinson had first published his papers on Assyrian geography, and Schrader his *Keilinschriften und Geschichtsforschung*, and Oppert his *Expédition en Mésopotamie*; nearly all his published texts are based upon the *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, by Rawlinson assisted by Norris and Smith; and the scheme of Assyrian grammar given in his *Lesestücke*, pp. ix.-xi., is founded upon Oppert's *Eléments de la Grammaire Assyrienne* (a second edition

¹ *Chaldean Genesis*, 1st Ed., page 78.

of which appeared in Paris in 1868), although given without any acknowledgment of that work. We might increase these instances, but we forbear. E.

BREVIA.

On Hebrews ix. 16, 17.—I venture to suggest that perhaps a consideration of the legal ideas of the time when the Epistle to the Hebrews was written, may help to explain this difficult passage. The idea of a will was derived by the Jews from the Romans, and they probably associated with it the various ideas which had grown up around the Roman will. Let us see what these were. The origin of the ordinary form of a Roman will, was the old testament *per æs et libram*, by which the father of the family (generally when on his death bed) sold his whole family and estate to some friend in whom he had confidence (called the *heres*), on trust to carry out his wishes (an obligation which apparently was not originally legally enforceable, though afterwards it was recognised by law). This form was still kept up, though probably at the time when the Epistle was written, the *familiæ emptor* was not generally the same person as the *heres*. Still the *familiæ emptor* represented the *heres*, and served to keep the theoretical nature of the transaction before all parties concerned, and the *heres* was looked upon not merely as a distributor of goods, but as the purchaser and master of the family. It is therefore suggested that the argument is somewhat as follows. By the first *διαθήκη* the Hebrews were purchased and became the bondsmen of the Law (an idea already rendered familiar to them by Exod. xv. 16 and Ps. lxxiv. 2) ; but by a new *διαθήκη* our Lord purchased them with His blood (Acts xx. 28), as the *heres* or *familiæ emptor* purchased the inheritance, and having thus purchased the inheritance of the Law, became the new master of the bondsmen of the Law, and the mediator, or executor of a new dispensation. But inasmuch as the right of the *heres* can only come into operation after the death of the testator (the Law), it is evident that, if the new dispensation has begun, the Law is dead and is no longer their master. In fact, the line of argument seems similar to that in Rom. vii. 1-4.

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