

## VI.

## JERASH TEXTS.

HAVING had occasion to refer again to the longest of the texts in hexameter at Jerash (P. E. F. *Quarterly Statement*, 1870, September), it appears to me that the writer refers not to a slaughter house, but to the Pagan temple, beside which the church rose.

As churches were not built before the reign of Constantine (at least not such buildings as that at Jerash), the text is probably not older than the 4th century. I did not see this longer text, but copied the shorter one, also in hexameter, concerning a wrestler named Theodorus, whose body is in earth, and his soul in the wide heaven. The forms of the letters on this latter agree with the Greek cross in giving a date not earlier than 330 A.D. I attach a hexameter translation of the longer text in support of my view as to its meaning.

Wonder and awe together the passer by have encountered  
 Clouds of error are gone and now in place of the darkness  
 Which was aforetime here the Grace of God is around me.  
 And when the sound of the groans of the four-footed victims is  
 silenced

Formerly falling here—and dire was the stench that arose :  
 So that the way faring man must stop his nostrils in passing  
 Yea and strive to escape the evil smell on the breezes.  
 Now on the sweet-smelling plain the wandering travellers journey  
 Lifting up as they go the palm of the right to their faces  
 Making the honoured sign of the cross as a deed that is holy.

And if you further would ask this also that you may know it  
 Æneas<sup>1</sup> to me has given this excellent glory  
 Æneas the all-wise priest well instructed in worship.

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## VII.

## THE TELL AMARNA TABLETS.

THE recent find of Babylonian Cuneiform tablets between Memphis and Thebes, in Egypt, appears likely to be important in reference to Palestine. The date is believed to be about 1430 B.C., which, according to Usher's "Chronology," would represent the time of Joshua, but perhaps more probably preceded the Hebrew conquest of Palestine. It is not our oldest monumental information, since we have much information about Palestine in the days of Thothmes III, a century and a half earlier, but it is a century

<sup>1</sup> Æneas is a name which occurs in Palestine in the time of Herod as that of a Nabathean ruler in Petra.

before Rameses II. From these tablets it appears that the kings of Mesopotamia were allied to those of Egypt; that trading and political relations existed; that royal intermarriages occurred; that the art work of the East was prized in Egypt; and probably that the Semitic race had occupied Northern Syria, mingling with the Hittite population. We have a notice of Tyre nearly a century earlier than those previously obtained from Egyptian documents; and Cuneiform tablets were sent, we see, to Egypt, though it does not seem certain that the script was there readable, since ambassadors accompanied the letters, who may alone have been able to read them, just as British official letters are not always in the language or character of the recipients, or understood by them.

The city Tunep (*Tennib*) is mentioned in connection with the Hittites, and Tunep appears as a Hittite city in later Egyptian records. Towns called *Gimti* (? Gimzo), near Ashdod, *Kilti*, and *Rabbah*, are mentioned; and *Zumurimma* (cf. Zemarites צמר Gen. x, 18, the Simyra of Strabo, xvi, and Zemaraim, Josh. xviii, 22), and *Sardit* (perhaps Sardis): the *Serru*, "at the entrance of the land of Egypt," recall the Shasu tribe called *Saaru*, whose name has been connected with Mount Seir. The city *Abes* recalls

*Abes* (Josh. xix, 20, אבץ now probably البيضاء *el Beida*, on the north edge of the Plain of Esdraelon); *Asi* (or Cyprus ?) is also mentioned, and *Tsumura* (Simyra); also the land *Akharra*, "the west" (or Phœnicia).

One of these letters appears to have been sealed in Egypt on arrival with a royal seal. The city *Tsurri* (perhaps Tyre) occurs with *Ziduna*, or Sidon. The land of the *Khatti* or Hittites is also noticed. One letter comes from the king of part of Mesopotamia, east of the Hittite country. This king, who says that his father was at peace with Egypt, asks for an Egyptian princess for his nephew, and sends presents of gold jars, gold plates, and precious stones. In this letter an early notice of the Assyrians as allies is found.

The king of another country, not yet well fixed, but clearly with Semitic rulers, and probably Mesopotamian, sends his ambassador with a letter and with five bronze vessels. These seem not to have been at that time manufactured in Egypt. The *Kharu*, more than a century before brought such vessels as tribute to Egypt. Trees are also sent; and Thothmes III took trees from Syria as part of his spoils. This monarch also asks the King of Egypt not to make any treaty with the King of the Hittites, or with the King of Shinar. This is an interesting political note, in presence of the fact that Rameses II and his predecessor, as we know from Egyptian records, actually allied themselves with the Hittite Princes.

When we remember how the merchants from Midian took Joseph to Egypt in one of their ordinary trading journeys, these further revelations of the early civilisation of Palestine become highly interesting; and the period appears to be intermediate between the two dates (1600 B.C. and 1340 B.C.) to which our information was formerly confined, when only Egyptian records were known. The existence of a Semitic race in

Phœnicia itself, with rulers from the East, seems to be indicated ; thus confirming the traditional view as to the derivation of the Semitic Phœnicians from Chaldea. We hear nothing of the Hebrews, for they were as yet not a power in Palestine, but we hear perhaps of the "Sons of Seir," who were organised under a king when Israel came from Egypt to Edom.

There are other tablets of this series still to be read, which may give us other interesting notes as to Palestine. The find is one of the most important yet made in connection with the monumental history of Syria.

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### VIII.

#### RECENT NOTES ON THE HITTITES.

THE recently-published Proceedings, Biblical Archæological Society, contain papers in which some useful notes on the Hittites appear. We should not reproach the author (Rev. C. J. Ball) for his conversion from the belief that the Hittites were Semitic, and in many respects he appears to have profited by recent publications. Armenian, on which he in great measure relies, is not a safe guide, since it is known to be a very mixed language, with a large Turanian vocabulary. Questions of etymology are generally very vexed, but while regarding the Hittites and other tribes as Aryan, he has come to see that some of their names are comparable with Etruscan and other Turanian words. That he does not acknowledge the prior publication of these facts by the Palestine Exploration Fund is of little importance, in view of the furtherance of truth by the acceptance of their work. That he is right in regarding some of the tribes encountered at a late period by the Assyrians as Aryan will probably prove to be the case. This does not touch the question of the Hittite nationality a thousand years earlier. It is to be regretted, however, that he has not treated of words of *known* meaning, such as have been enumerated in the last number of the P. E. F. *Quarterly Statement*.

At the British Association at Bath Prof. Sayce allowed that it was now the general opinion that the Hittites were Mongolic. Dr. Isaac Taylor has published his belief in this view, and I believe I might mention two other authorities who consent. Mr. Ball, however, has not called attention to the existence of some of the words he notices (such as Tarku and Sar) in Turkic and Mongolic dialects. He compares *Tutamū* with Homer's Pelasgian Teutamus ("Iliad," ii, 843), but assumes the Pelasgi to have been Aryans. He discovers the survival of the Hittite name Saplel in a Syriac account of an Armenian King Sapul (as Halevy has previously noted), which is very interesting, but not a safe indication of Aryan origin for the name. He compares Tarku with the Etruscan name Tarcho ("Æn." viii, 506, 603), and Lara with the Etruscan Lar, in both of which remarks he is preceded by my papers in the *Quarterly*