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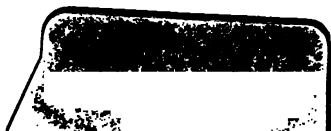
RUINS OF BIBLE LANDS



BY
DR WYLIE



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**RUINS
OF
BIBLE LANDS,
A JOURNEY OVER THE REGION
OF
FULFILLED PROPHECY.**

BY THE REV. J. A. WYLIE, L.L.D.



APPROACH TO MOUNT SINAI.

Glasgow, W. & M'Lean.

RUINS
OF
BIBLE LANDS.

A JOURNEY OVER THE
REGION OF FULFILLED PROPHECY.

BY THE
REV. J. A. WYLIE, LL.D.,
AUTHOR OF "THE PAPACY," "THE MODERN JUDEA."
ETC. ETC.



GLASGOW: W. R. M'PHUN,
BOOKSELLER TO H.R.H. THE PRINCE ALBERT.
1857.

203. cl. 214.

EDINBURGH :
PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND COMPANY,
PAUL'S WORK.

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PREFACE TO NEW EDITION.

IN this Work the Author aims mainly at interesting the young. That he has in some degree succeeded appears from the numerous editions through which it has passed, both in this country and in America. The work has also been translated into Welsh.

What the Author now presents is in some respects a new work rather than a new edition. When the former editions were issued, the explorations on the sites of Nineveh and Babylon were only in their beginnings. The first trench had just been dug, and the first tablets exhumed. Since that time whole palaces have been laid open, and some thousands of

slabs, inscribed with the history of times which reach back to wellnigh the Flood, have been disinterred. The key, too, which unlocks the ancient cuneiform character has been discovered, and, as the consequence, complete lists of Assyrian dynasties have been obtained, and the annals of entire reigns have been read. A multitude of facts have thus been brought to light, which are not only in themselves curious and interesting, but which are of the very highest value, as corroborations of Sacred Writ. The events recorded on these exhumed tablets belong to an era of Assyrian history contemporaneous with that of the kings and prophets of the Old Testament. As was to be expected, the writings on the slabs touch the Bible history in many points; but, in every case, with the most perfect and exact agreement. The stones have spoken; and their testimony is as precise as its veracity is unquestionable. Most incontrovertibly do they attest the Bible as God's Word.

All the more important of these recent dis-

coveries the Author has introduced in this edition. The chapter on Judea he has all but entirely rewritten. In short, the amount of original matter now inserted is such as to double the volume in point of size, and more than double it, the Author flatters himself, in point of information.

RUINS OF BIBLE LANDS.

INTRODUCTION.

It may be thought by some a very bootless undertaking, to attempt the discussion of so extensive a subject within the limits we have prescribed to ourselves. The region of fulfilled prophecy includes so many countries, once fair and flourishing, and so many cities, once great and populous, that to visit them all, and to tell how they have been broken down, as the Word of the Lord foretold, may appear an impossible task in so short a treatise. Materials might be found here to fill many volumes; and how is it possible, in the few pages that follow, to arrange and illustrate these materials so as to give, we do not say a complete view—for that is not at all times either necessary or possible—but a satisfactory view of so important a subject? It is in the details that much of the interest and beauty

of fulfilled prophecy lies; and our present limits do not allow us to enter much into details. But while this is true, still it will be our own fault if our present journey, rapid though it be, be wanting either in interest or profit. By carefully husbanding our time and resources—by taking the most direct road to the country, or city, or locality we are in quest of—by entering into no useless controversies, and no profitless speculations by the way—by laying down the resolution at starting, and rigidly adhering to it, not to go out of our way a foot-breadth to see anything of mere general interest, and which does not bear on the great subject of prophecy—we shall see much in a short time, and far more than may suffice to satisfy us that there is the most complete and perfect accordance, in all respects, between the aspect of these regions and the prophetic pages of the Bible. Here it may be truly affirmed, that he who runs may read. But if any one, from the glimpses we are now to afford him of these countries, seen under the light which the Bible sheds upon them, shall be desirous of going over the ground again more leisurely, we have to remind him that there are other guides to be had on this now much-frequented road, who will take him to any spot which he wishes to visit,—who will remain with him there as long as he pleases, and will answer every question regarding

any mountain, or valley, or ruin in his path which he chooses to put.

That our limits are narrow, then, is no valid objection to the attempt we are now making to bring under the eye at once the whole region of fulfilled prophecy. Do we wish to have our minds impressed with the *circumstantiality* of prophecy—the unerring precision with which it disclosed the future state of nations and countries in their most minute particulars? In that case we must confine our attention to one branch of the subject—we must select one particular nation or country, and minutely and patiently compare its past and present condition with ancient predictions. But if we wish to be able to form some idea of the *extent* and *grandeur* of prophecy, we must do as we are now doing—we must contrive to survey the whole region at once—we must take our stand so as that we shall be able to look from the hoary mounds which stud the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates on the east, to the gigantic ruins which rise beside the Nile on the west, with all the monuments of departed glory and present desolation that lie between.

Suppose, now, that we were to meet one who had never seen the universe, and that we wished to convey to him some idea of the power, wisdom, and goodness of Him who made the universe, how should we proceed? Whether should we take a

plant, for instance, or an insect, and expatiate upon the skill and delicacy with which its structure has been arranged? or, would it not be better to take the universe as a whole, and attempt to convey to him some idea of its vastness and magnificence? No doubt the preferable way would be to unite both plans, did circumstances allow; but if this were impossible, and if we were constrained to make our choice between the flowers of the field and the stars of the firmament—between those parts of creation whose short-lived beauty is only for a day, and those whose glory lasts through all ages—we would certainly give the preference to the latter, as being, at first view, at least, the most impressive and eloquent preachers of the greatness and glory of Him who made all things. Now, we are so situated, in some respects, at present. We have it in our power either to confine our attention to one particular country—in which case we should be able to show that the most minute and incidental circumstances relating to its future state were fully foreseen, and clearly predicted—or we may survey the vast range which prophecy takes in, the numerous nations and countries to which it relates, and the long cycles of time which it embraces; and this, we are satisfied, is the better way for estimating the force of that majestic proof which arises from prophecy to the divinity of the Holy Scriptures.

We have further to remark, that our subject calls us to a quarter of the world which possesses an extraordinary interest, independently of its being the region of fulfilled prophecy. "The parts we speak of," to use the eloquent words of Sandys, the first English traveller who surveyed the East with the eye of sober observation,—“the parts we speak of are the most renowned countries and kingdoms, once the seats of the most glorious and triumphant empires; the theatres of valour and heroical actions; the soils enriched with all earthly felicities; the places where Nature hath produced her wonderful works; where arts and sciences have been invented and perfected; where wisdom, virtue, policy, and civility have been planted—have flourished; and lastly, where God himself did place his own Commonwealth—gave laws and oracles—inspired his prophets—sent angels to converse with men; above all, where the Son of God descended to become man—where he honoured the earth with his beautiful steps—wrought the work of our redemption—triumphed over death, and ascended into-glory.” So illustrious is the region we are now to visit. It is closely connected with all our recollections of the past, and scarcely less so with our hopes of the future. It is pregnant with lessons of wisdom to individuals and nations; but we mean at present to view it only in one light, namely, as the land in

which the Bible was written, and which is covered, to this hour, with solemn monumental evidence of its truth.

We shall begin our journey on the plains of Chaldea, the renowned site of Nineveh and Babylon. Having surveyed the monuments of ruin with which this region abounds, we shall pass westward across those deserts where the sons of Ishmael are still found dwelling. We shall next go down into Egypt, and survey those venerable monuments which lend an air of solemn grandeur to a country which otherwise would be accounted the most desolate and degraded on the face of the earth. Re-crossing the Nile, we shall traverse the deserts of Sinai, and journey eastwards to where the hoary mountains of Edom look over the sands of the wilderness. Thence, journeying north, we shall traverse the once rich, but now desolate, lands of Moab and Ammon. Then, skirting Judea on the north, we shall stretch across to the shore of the Great Sea, where the miserable remains of Tyre, the crowning city, are still to be seen, on a little island, with the Mediterranean chafing its strand, and sending the echoes of its hoarse murmur along the cliffs of Lebanon, by which the fallen city is overshadowed. And last of all, we shall sketch the outline of those prophecies which relate to that land and people which must ever be to us the most interesting of

all the countries and nations of the earth—the land and people of Judea. There will be no time to tarry by the way—to turn out of the high road, and examine the vestiges of the cities which, in former days, illustrated this region by their splendour, and now darken it by their ruins. We must be content to behold from afar, as we pass on, the dark mounds of the fallen Babylon—the desolate palaces of Ammon and Moab—the flowerless plains, the blasted hills, and the prostrate temples of Palestine; and having gone round the territory of prophecy, and seen how vast it is, and how numerous the monuments of the Divine Word with which it is occupied, we shall return more deeply impressed than ever with the righteousness as well as prescience of the Great Ruler among the nations.

CHAPTER I.

Assyria—Nineveh.

"Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh."—GEN. x. 11.

"Nineveh, that great city."—JONAH i. 2.

"Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city, of three days' journey."—JONAH iii. 3.

"Nineveh is of old like a pool of water; yet they shall flee away. Behold, I am against thee, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will burn her chariots in the smoke, and the sword shall devour thy young lions; and I will cut off thy prey from the earth, and the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard. And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazingstock."—NAHUM ii. 8, 13; iii. 6.

"I will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness. This is the rejoicing city, that dwelt carelessly, 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, and wag his head."—ZEPHANIAH ii. 13, 15.

Assyria—Nineveh.

Plain of Shinar—Mesopotamia—Ancient irrigation—Populousness and fertility—Nineveh—Its size and splendour—Prophecy of Nahum—Diodorus Siculus' account of its fall—Fire, flood, and the sword employed in its destruction—Utter disappearance of Nineveh—Present aspect of the site—Visited by Mr Rich—M. Botta—Explorations at Khorsabad—Discovery of a palace—Inscribed tablets—Colossal bulls—Mr Layard—Explorations at Nimrod—Discovery of halls, galleries, sculptures, inscriptions, colossal statues, &c.—Assyrian art—Corroboration of Scripture.



NINEVEH.



BABYLON.

ASSYRIA—NINEVEH.

Now, then, we begin our journey. We are on the Plain of Shinar—those rich level plains, of which the patriarchal family of Noah, descending from the mountains of Armenia, took possession soon after the flood. Here flourished the earliest of the postdiluvian races ; here were founded the first of the postdiluvian kingdoms ; and here, as might be expected, we meet with the most ancient and venerable of those monuments which Providence has left standing on the earth to attest to all who live upon it the truth of his Word. But before speaking of the wrecks with which this plain is covered, let us look at the glory and power of which, in other days, it was the seat and home.

Assyria Proper is bounded on the west by the Tigris. Mesopotamia is the country embraced by the Tigris and Euphrates. But in the mean time we may be allowed to overlook the geographical

divisions of these countries, and to speak of Assyria and Mesopotamia as forming one continuous plain—which in reality is the case. On this plain flourished the early kingdoms of Nineveh and Babylon. The site was well chosen. Perhaps the earth does not contain another plain better adapted, in all respects, for being the seat of a mighty empire. It is defended on the north by a rampart of lofty mountains, whose snow-clad peaks are seen like a line of white clouds hanging in the blue sky, even when the plains which they overlook are languishing under the heats of summer. The upper part of this noble plain is watered by numerous streams, which have their rise in the high grounds of Armenia. Its middle and southern portions are watered by the Tigris and Euphrates. These rivers have their period of annual overflow, somewhat like the Nile. At this day, their waters cover, for many leagues together, the contiguous part of the plain, converting it into swamps; but in former times their streams were confined by embankments; while side canals, with sluices, served at the period of flood to draw off the superfluous waters, and to irrigate the plain; and thus its inhabitants had at their command the means of an almost unlimited fertility. A delicious sky, a fertile soil, and abundance of water covered the plain every where with such richness and beauty, that it looked like the

picture of that celebrated garden which was the crown of the young world, and which, there is every reason to believe, existed somewhere in this very region. The seats of a numerous and industrious population were thickly scattered over its surface, and more especially on the banks of its rivers. The Tigris and Euphrates were embellished with cities whose size and splendour were inferior only to the two renowned capitals—Nineveh and Babylon. In addition to the productive powers of this plain, which were such as to leave its inhabitants nothing to wish for, its situation placed within the reach of its people the delights of the most distant and different regions. The two noble rivers by which this plain is traversed, opened for the inhabitants of Mesopotamia and Assyria a communication with the Indian seas on the one hand, and the mountains of Armenia on the other; so that one living in Babylon might attire his person in the stuffs of India, adorn his dwelling with its gems, or replenish his table with the products of the hilly region on the north. Indeed, a better proof cannot be had of the amazing productiveness and the vast resources of this region, than the power to which Nineveh and Babylon, and the empires of which they were respectively the head, attained, and the rapidity with which they rose to it. They were the first great empires the world

saw; and as they were the greatest examples of power the world had yet seen, so were they also of profligacy. Against them were pointed the earliest denunciations of divine vengeance; and now the pages of history, and the desolate site which they occupied, testify to all how fully and fearfully their doom has been inflicted.

Of Nineveh we shall speak in the first place; because of the two cities she was the first to rise to eminence. Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire, stood on the eastern bank of the Tigris. Its foundations were laid by Asshur, the grandson of Noah. For many centuries afterwards it continued to be a place of small importance; and it was not till it was enlarged by its second founder, Ninus, that it became the first city of the world. The historians of antiquity have transmitted several particulars regarding it, from which some idea may be formed of its greatness. Its figure was oblong. It extended southwards along the bank of the Tigris for about twenty miles, and backwards from the river's brink to the eastern hills. Its walls were a hundred feet in height, and so broad, it is said, that three chariots could run abreast. Fifteen hundred towers, each two hundred feet high, placed at regular intervals along the wall, still farther adorned and strengthened the ramparts of Nineveh. The walls are said to have enclosed a space of sixty miles

in circuit. We are not to suppose, however, that all this ground was covered with buildings; extensive vacant spaces existed, doubtless, inside the walls—as was the case in Babylon, and as is the case in most Oriental towns at this day—occupied as parks, gardens, and pasture-grounds. The city is supposed to have contained about half a million of people. Fertile provinces lay extended on all sides of it, which supplied the inhabitants with every necessary and luxury. Such was Nineveh, the mistress of the early East. She had stood from almost the period of the flood, and her power was still on the increase, when her overthrow and utter desolation were foretold, contrary to all human probability, by the prophets of Israel, and in particular by the prophet Nahum.

The prophecy of Nahum is, in fact, a poem of a regular form. In the opening of it, Jehovah is seen approaching to execute vengeance on Nineveh; and never was so awful an event described with more majestic and terrible imagery: "The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burnt at his presence; yea, the world and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the

rocks are thrown down by him." The hurry and jostle of the preparation for the defence; the rattle of the chariot wheels, the clang of armour, and the shouts and cries of the warriors, as they hasten to the wall to repel the assault of the besiegers—how vividly does the prophet depict it all: "The shield of his mighty men is made red; the valiant men are in scarlet; the chariots shall be with flaming torches in the day of his preparation, and the fir trees shall be terribly shaken. The chariots shall rage in the streets; they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches; they shall run like the lightnings. He shall recount his worthies; they shall stumble in their walk; they shall make haste to the wall." But in vain should they hasten to the wall—in vain should the warriors of Nineveh crowd her ramparts; their ready and resolute valour should not avert the fate of the city. Nineveh was to be assailed by more terrible agents of destruction than the weapons of her besiegers—an overflowing flood—a devouring fire. Such are the enemies with which the prophet threatens her; and against such enemies, how little could the spear or shield of her defenders avail! "With an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof; the fire shall devour thy bars." The city is taken, "there is a multitude of slain, and a great number

of carcasses," and from her smoking ruins the conqueror is seen leading away a long train of captives: "And Huzzab shall be led away captive, she shall be brought up, and her maids shall lead her as with the voice of doves, tabering upon their breasts." We are next shown the empty and desolate site which the city once occupied—the utterly darkened spot once irradiated with the glory of Nineveh: "She is empty, and void, and waste. I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazing-stock. And it shall come to pass that all they that look upon thee shall flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste; who will bemoan her? whence shall I seek comforters for thee?" With what richness and splendour of imagery does Nahum mourn the departed glory of the capital of Assyria: "Thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the stars of heaven; the canker-worm spoileth and fleeth away. Thy crowned are as the locusts, and thy captains as the great grasshoppers, which camp in the hedges in the cold day; but when the sun ariseth they flee away, and the place is not known where they are." And how noble the requiem sounded over the graves of her slain: "Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria; thy nobles shall dwell in the dust; thy people is scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth them." Like a magnificent anthem ending on

the same note on which it had begun, the prophet closes his sublime strains, as he had commenced them, with an acknowledgment of the justice of God in overthrowing so wicked a city: "There is no healing of thy bruise; thy wound is grievous; all that hear the bruit of thee shall clap the hands over thee; for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?" Homer sang the fall of Troy after Troy had fallen. Nahum, with equal boldness and freedom of imagery, and with a much loftier moral sublimity, sang the fall of Nineveh while Nineveh yet stood.

The meagre account of Assyrian affairs which ancient historians have transmitted to us, renders us unable to verify the prophecy of Nahum in some of its minor particulars. Herodotus promised to relate the manner in which Nineveh was taken, but this history either was never written, or is now lost. Diodorus Siculus is the only writer, among those whose works have come down to us, who has spoken particularly of the fall of this city. From him we learn not only that Nineveh was taken, but taken in the very manner that Nahum foretold. There is a little discrepancy among those who have spoken of the closing scene of the Assyrian capital, as to the names of the leading persons concerned in the siege, and the date of some of the transactions; but there is no discrepancy among them as

regards the leading particulars of this event, in all of which there is a singular coincidence between them and the prophet.

Nineveh was besieged by the joint forces of the Medes and Babylonians. The combined host having sat down before the walls, the king of Nineveh, at the head of his army, came forth to fight with the besiegers. He routed them in three successive battles. Elated with his success, and hoping speedily to drive them away, the Assyrian king abandoned himself to sloth, and was intent only on preparing a feast for his army. The besiegers were informed of the intemperance that reigned in the camp; and falling suddenly on the Assyrian host, while in a helpless condition by darkness and drunkenness, they committed a prodigious slaughter upon it. Those who survived were glad to escape with their king within the walls of Nineveh: "*While they be folden together as thorns, and while they are drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry.*"

Instead of trusting to the strong defences within which they had now retired, the besieged, Diodorus informs us, made every preparation for their defence which necessity demanded or prudence could dictate: "*The defence shall be prepared. Draw thee waters for the siege, fortify thy strongholds: go into clay, and tread the mortar; make strong*

the brick-kiln." But the prophet who had foretold that these active measures should be taken, had also foretold that they should be taken to little purpose. The hour of Nineveh was come. The third year of the siege was now running. In this year heavy rains fell out; the Tigris was much swollen; its impetuous current undermined the walls, and the defences of the city fell for the space of twenty furlongs: "*The gates of the rivers shall be opened.*" The king had trusted hitherto in an ancient oracle, which declared that Nineveh should not be taken till the river had become its enemy—an imperfect version, most probably, of Nahum's prophecy which the king had happened to hear. Seeing the oracle fulfilled, the monarch now abandoned himself to despair, and collecting together his wealth and furniture, he erected an immense funeral pile in his palace, and having placed upon it himself, his eunuchs, and his wives, he fired it with his own hand, and the whole was speedily consumed. These fires accomplished the prediction: "*The palace shall be dissolved.*" Meanwhile the troops of the besiegers entered by the wide breach which the river had made in the walls—" *The gates of thy land shall be set wide open unto thine enemies*"—and while the palace was blazing, they attacked and put to the sword the soldiers and people whom they found in the city. These, being

already panic-struck by the terrors of the fire and flood, offered very little resistance: "*The sword shall cut thee off; it shall eat thee up like the canker-worm.*" Immense quantities of silver and gold were found by the conquerors in the ashes of the palace, and in the rubbish of the city: "*Take ye the spoil of silver; take the spoil of gold.*" The sack of the city was now over, and those of its people who survived were led away into a distant captivity. Thus did Nineveh fall as the prophet had foretold. It was very unlikely, indeed, that a city that had existed since the period of the flood, and which reigned over the cities of the earth, should be so speedily and completely destroyed; it was very unlikely that the three agents of destruction pointed out by the prophet—the sword, the fire, and the flood—should combine all at the same time to lay low the Assyrian capital; yet so had Nahum foretold, and so, as Diodorus Siculus relates, did it fall out.

It is now a long time since the events we have just detailed. It cannot be less than twenty-two centuries. During this period Nineveh has lain in ruins. Many a city, after having suffered as great disasters as the capital of Assyria, has risen again with new splendour; but Nahum had said regarding Nineveh: "*He will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time.*" Baby-

lon, though doomed to fall, was yet to fall by slow degrees. A long series of degradations was to separate her meridian splendour from her last and total obscurity. But the proud mistress of the Tigris was to fall at once from the summit of her dominion and glory into the grave of her ruin. Nineveh passed away; and from that day to this she has never lifted up herself to grace with the image of her glory the broad bosom of the Tigris, or to adorn with the magnificence of her towers and battlements the rich plains of Assyria. When the light of history falls on the site of this city, which it sometimes does in the course of centuries, it always presents the very picture which the prophets drew of what it should become while Nineveh was yet "a rejoicing city; dwelling carelessly, and saying in her heart, I am, and there is none besides me." Lucian, who flourished in the second century, says, that no vestige of Nineveh remained, nor could the spot it occupied be easily identified. In the seventh century, its vacant site was the scene of a great battle between Rome and Persia. Thevenot visited it in the very dawn of modern travel. "On the other side of the river," says he, "at the end of the bridge [of boats], begins the place where in ancient times stood the famous city of Nineveh. There is nothing of it now to be seen, but some hillocks." And such to this day is its appearance.

The space once covered by the palaces and gardens of the Assyrian capital, is now "*a desolation, and dry like a wilderness.*" There is some uncertainty, however, regarding the precise spot which this city occupied, so utterly waste and desolate has its site been made. The most probable place is that on the left bank of the Tigris, exactly opposite the modern town of Mosul. Let us visit the spot.

Now we are on the margin of the swift-flowing Tigris. As we gaze on the desolate waters, we think of the splendour which this stream has seen flourish and fade on its banks. Gone are now the frowning battlements, the lofty towers, and the imperial palaces, which in other days graced the river; and now we behold it winding its way amid the graves of cities and empires. Its channel is as full, its floods are as copious, as when they flowed to refresh the palaces of the Assyrian princes; but nothing is mirrored now on its placid wave save the blue vault, or the grassy hillocks which stud its banks, or the mean dwellings of the little town of Mosul, on the farther shore. And is this green and level expanse, which stretches along to the south as far as the eye can reach, and backwards from the river's brink to the eastern hills, which is diversified with innumerable swellings, green, too, like the plain over which they are sprinkled—is this the grave of

the proud capital of Assyria? Are these mounds the sepulchres of her temples and palaces? Yes! this grassy line was once a lofty rampart, from which the warriors of Nineveh looked forth with defiance upon their foes. How are their strongholds fallen! This heap of rubbish, now covered with turf, was once a shrine of the gods of Assyria. How are their altars laid waste, and how are all they confounded who trust in graven images! How low now is she that was once so high! "Where is the dwelling of the lions, and the feeding-place of the young lions, where the lion, even the old lion, walked, and the lion's whelp, and none made them afraid?"

The principal remains of Nineveh, which are found at a little distance from the bank of the Tigris, are comprised in an oblong enclosure which runs parallel with the river for about four miles by two in breadth. It is marked off from the general plain of the city by a grassy embankment. Within this enclosure are two mounds of ruins, lying a little way apart; the one fifty feet, and the other about forty-three feet, above the level of the city's site. On digging into these mounds, they are found to be crossed with walls of masonry and narrow passages. Mr Rich found in them sun-dried bricks, and pieces of the finest kind of pottery covered with cuneiform writing, and other very curious antiques.

There is little doubt that this oblong space, with its two central mounds, is the remains of the palace of the Assyrian kings. The space, which is about eight miles square, is not too large to preclude such an idea. In the grassy mound that forms its confine, we behold the fallen rampart which enclosed the royal buildings and gardens. Let us ascend the ruined heap into which the monarch's palace has now been converted, and from its summit look over the site of Nineveh. Buckingham, who surveyed the ground from the same point, thus describes the prospect: "As far as I could perceive, from our elevated point of view, on the highest summit of Tel Ninoa, there were mounds of ruins, similar to those near us, but less distinctly marked, as far as the eye could reach to the northward; and the plain to the eastward of us, or between the river and the mountains, had a mixture of large brown patches, like heaps of rubbish, seen at intervals, scattered over a cultivated soil." And the same, substantially, is the account of every traveller who has of late visited the spot.

The labours of M. Botta on the site of Nineveh have been rewarded with the richest discoveries, and have tended to strengthen a belief previously entertained, that many new and surprising proofs of the truth of the Bible have yet to be drawn from the ruins of the scriptural cities of the East. M.

Botta was consul for the French at Mosul; and having continually before his eyes the green mounds of the fallen Nineveh, became desirous—as who, in his circumstances, would not?—of ascertaining, by actual inspection, whether these mounds contained any memorials of the grandeur or the arts of the lost city. He commenced operations on a large mass, to which tradition had assigned the honour of being the tomb of Ninus, the founder of the Assyrian Empire. Here he found nought but insignificant fragments of bricks. He next opened a trench in the side of a mound, on the summit of which stands the village of Khorsabad. Before proceeding far, he discovered, to his unspeakable delight, that the mass on which he was engaged was the covering of an ancient Assyrian edifice. The French Government lent its aid, and the excavations of M. Botta were continued, till at last the entire structure, which appears to form only a third of the original building, was laid open. This edifice is one of the most interesting of those that lie entombed on this celebrated site, being, as is supposed, the palace of the Assyrian kings. It is rich in sculptures and inscriptions; and the marvel is, how so noble a monument, which still shone, even though ruined and deserted, with the embellishments of the most exquisite art, could have come to be so completely buried in the earth.

Howsoever it happened, we behold in this the fulfilment of the prophecy: "I will make thy grave."

But Nineveh, in this instance, has returned from her grave; and we may now survey the halls where princes dwelt, and the trophies of an art that was the pride of that age doubtless, as it is worthy of being the admiration of this. Of this palace, the front, the southern façade, and fifteen halls, with their corresponding esplanades, have been cleared. Six bulls of colossal size, as well as figures of men, also colossal, strangling lions in their arms, adorn the front of the edifice. A gateway of vast dimensions admits into the interior; and the two central bulls are so placed as to appear to form the pillars of the grand entrance. These sculptures are of great beauty, and as fresh as if executed yesterday.

On entering the halls of the disinterred palace, we find that the walls are cased with alabaster slabs, and covered with sculptures and inscriptions. Two rows of bass-reliefs run round each chamber, and underneath each row are some twenty lines of writing in the arrow-headed character and Babylonian language. The subjects of the bas-reliefs possess great variety as well as interest. They are taken chiefly from the military art, and, as is supposed, are historical—sieges, naval manoeuvres, triumphs, single combats,—in short, whatever bril-

liant exploit fell out to illustrate the annals of the reigning king, appears to have been immediately transferred to the walls of his palace. The writing underneath, in all likelihood, is a description of the scenes exhibited in the sculptures, and forms, in fact, a portion of the historical records of the kingdom. The inscriptions on the walls of this palace comprise a greater amount of writing in the arrow-headed character, than all the inscriptions of the sort previously discovered, taken together.

Since the explorations of M. Botta at Khorsabad, similar works have been commenced by Mr Layard, on the part of the British Government, on another mound on the same site. In the language of the country, this heap goes by the name of the Mound of Nimrod, and is ten times the size of that which was the scene of M. Botta's labours. It is about eighteen miles from Mosul, but this by no means removes it from the site of the city; and its superior size, and the greater magnificence of its interior decorations, may be regarded as giving it a better claim to be considered as having been a royal residence. Mr Layard opened his trenches on the north-western angle of the mound, and after penetrating to a depth of about fifteen feet, found that he was descending into the interior of a buried palace, built of slabs of marble, and con-

sisting of a labyrinth of chambers, halls, and galleries, the walls of which were covered with bass-reliefs representing men, divinities, lions, military actions, scenes of peace, with explanations underneath in the Babylonian character—all in perfect preservation. The exterior arrangements of this palace are similar to those of the edifice laid open at Khorsabad. Its portals are guarded by winged lions of gigantic size, wearing human heads. In clearing away the rubbish, the enormous head was the first to emerge. The Arab workmen were confounded, believing that the *mighty hunter* himself was rising from his tomb. "Nimrood ! Nimrood !" they shouted in terror ; and, throwing away their implements, fled from the spot. Of the chambers which this edifice contains, the most remarkable is a hall one hundred and fifty feet in length, and thirty in breadth. It is not improbable that this was the audience chamber of the Assyrian kings. Its decorations are in a superb style, and most interesting in character. On its walls the effigies of its formal royal owners are still to be seen. Here they stand, much as the artist left them three thousand years ago, in all the Oriental magnificence of richly embroidered robes and quaintly artificial *coiffure*. Beside them are their steeds. Here, too, are portrayed the scenes in which they took part. We behold them giving

tions. This can be satisfactorily accounted for only by supposing that the palace had on some occasion been taken possession of by a new dynasty, and finding it covered with the graven records of its predecessors, which it was natural the new race should wish to conceal, they reversed the tablets, and began to engrave them anew on the other side with the events of their own history.

Underneath the bricks of which the floor is composed, stone repositories have been discovered, filled with small clay enamelled figures of men and animals, but unaccompanied by any thing to explain them. In another place have been found great rows of earthen vases of a remarkable size, placed on a brick floor, and filled with human bones, similar to those found at Babylon. Both palaces have suffered from fire, for their materials are calcined in many places, and have been plundered before being destroyed; for neither gems, nor any thing of value, not even the small cylinders so numerous in the neighbourhood, have been found in them—a verification, surely, of the prophet's words addressed to the conqueror of Nineveh: "Take ye the spoil of silver, take ye the spoil of gold."

This discovery is of great importance in an archæological point of view. It supplies a link which has hitherto been wanting, and the want of

which has long been felt, between the infancy and the perfection of the arts—between their dawn in Egypt and their noon in Greece. There occur a few brief and incidental allusions to this subject both in the Old Testament and in the writings of the Greek historians ; but these hints are too vague to allow us to draw any certain conclusion as to the state of the arts under the Babylonians and Persians. But this rare discovery, by which we have been put most unexpectedly in possession of a vast number of beautiful specimens from the chisels of the Babylonian and Persian sculptors, promises to make us soon as intimately acquainted with the state of art in the countries in question as we already are with its condition in Egypt and Greece. The intelligent reader will observe how this again sheds light on the Bible. There are not a few points in the scriptural account of Babylon and Nineveh which the sculptures of this subterranean edifice authenticate and verify. Babylon is described in the Bible as a land of graven images—a statement which would lead us to infer, that in the country of Babylonia the arts were universally diffused, and had attained some degree of perfection. There is the most perfect accordance on this point between the pages of the Bible and the walls of this palace. We find mention made, too, of the “pleasant furniture” of Nineveh ; and we

find articles of this description frequently introduced in the bass-reliefs we have described. Moreover, the absence of every thing of value, and the marks of fire still visible on the edifice, make it apparent that it was first plundered and then burnt, as the prophet foretold. Little did the builders of this edifice imagine the singular fortune that awaited it—that it should long outlast the Assyrian monarchy itself; and after being buried for ages in darkness, should be brought forth to the light, to be the marvel of the last ages of the world, and to bear its testimony to matters of infinitely higher moment to man than the magnificence of the art with which it was so profusely decorated—even the supremacy and truth of that God who foretold by his prophets its destruction, and that of the power that flourished in it, ere yet a stone of it had been overthrown.

Such is the latter end of that city which repented in sackcloth and ashes at the preaching of Jonah—which Jehovah at that time spared—but which, returning to her former wickedness, was at last fearfully overthrown. Yet, as if the divine indignation against Nineveh had begun of late to be mitigated, the aspect of her ruins is now of a less gloomy character than that which belongs to the remains of some other large cities. The scene is almost a pleasant and pastoral one. The dust

of Nineveh sleeps beneath a fresh and beautiful turf. On some portions of the plain the plough has been busy for ages; and the ground is covered with crops of grain and cotton, which the nig-gard soil produces only on the alternate years. The rest of the plain is covered with green sward, dotted here and there with patches of tamarisk bushes. Here there is nothing of the scathed and blasted look which the Plain of Chaldea presents, nor are there here those gigantic and hoary mounds, which give such unspeakable sublimity to the site of Babylon. One has to reflect on the long line of monarchs and princes which flourished here—the stately palaces—the delicious gardens—the multitude of men—the wealth, the luxury, the wickedness of which this plain was once the abode, and to contrast it with its utter desertion now, and the deep and perpetual silence that reigns over it, before he can feel the truly sublime character of the scene on which he is gazing.

Still, as we have said, there is, to this hour, some doubt regarding the site of Nineveh; which, however, it is probable will be speedily dispelled by the investigations going on there. If the remains we have described *are* the ruins of Nineveh, *“how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in!”* If these are *not* the ruins of

Nineveh, no man knows where it stood. In either case, how exact has been the fulfilment of the prophecy: "*He will make an utter end of the place thereof!*"



CHAPTER II.

Pinebely—The Cuneiform Writing.

“The light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine. The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle shall be put out with him. . . . Brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation. His roots shall be dried up beneath, and above shall his branch be cut off. His remembrance shall perish from the earth, and he shall have no name in the street. . . . They that come after him shall be astonished at his day, as they that went before were affrighted.”—JOB xviii. 5-20.

Nineveh—The Cuneiform Writing.

Supposed appearance of Ancient Nineveh—Desolation of the site now—Resurrection of Nineveh—Strangeness of the discovery—Its opportuneness—The Cuneiform Writing—History of its discovery—Professor Grotefend begins the investigation—Trilingual inscription at Persepolis—Professor Lassen frames an alphabet—Sir H. Rawlinson deciphers the inscription on Behistun rock—Frames an alphabet which agrees with that of Professor Lassen—Cuneiform *Assyrian* translation mastered—Nineveh yields up her treasures whenever the art of reading the cuneiform writing was found out—Finger of God in the *timing* of these discoveries.

NINEVEH—THE CUNEIFORM WRITING.

SINCE the foregoing chapter was committed to writing, new and marvellous discoveries have rewarded the explorer on the site of Nineveh. We say the "site of Nineveh," for no doubt can now be entertained that this is indeed the spot where stood that once proud and powerful capital. Verily an "utter end" has been made of "the place thereof." The change is so great it transcends the imagination to realise it. Let us go back in fancy three thousand years, and take our stand on the bank of the Tigris. What princely magnificence! what imperial pride! In the far north is the gleaming crest of the snowy Kurdistan: around us is the vast plain, drinking, by its thousand canals, of the waters of the Tigris, and covered throughout with boundless luxuriance, and a countless multitude of cities. This stream at our feet watered Paradise. This city on its further bank is the capital of Assyria. Successive

dynasties and kings have built their palaces here, and now it has attained its utmost dimensions, and is "an exceeding great city." Along the river's course, as far as the eye can reach, runs the long line of its ramparts. The roofs of its edifices fill the vast space betwixt and the eastern hills. On the earth there is not its equal in size, or its rival in splendour. Subjugated provinces and conquered nations have enriched it with their spoils. Massy rampart and embattled tower rise to defend it. Glorious art has embellished it. Crowds throng its gates and highways. On its river are innumerable craft laden with the dainties of distant climes. All nature seems to exist but to nourish this haughty and luxurious city. For Nineveh the Tigris pours its bounteous floods: for Nineveh the plain yields unintermittingly its luxuriant crops. For Nineveh the sun showers his light, and the distant Kurdistan erects his snowy crest. And mark what towers are these that rise so proudly and look so fair through the summer sky. The pile is white as snow, and the sun himself seems to borrow a new brightness as he strikes upon its alabaster façade. Forms of colossal size and mysterious import guard its entrance. Winged lions, sphinxes and human-headed bulls, look down with solemn mien on the awe-struck visitor as

he passes on betwixt their stately rows. This is the palace of the king of Nineveh.

Three thousand years have passed, and what a change! The once glorious Nineveh has vanished as completely as if she never had existed. Gone down to the tomb are tower and rampart and palace, and the whole multitude of her common dwellings; and the Arab, as he wanders over the spot, would never dream that a city had once stood here. The plain is utterly solitary; and the spot which nature in other days seemed to cherish and defend is now utterly abandoned. Man neglects it, and the elements devastate it. The Tigris inundates it with its floods: the rains of winter furrow and seam the mounds with which its surface is roughened. Its canals are filled up, and the sun scorches and burns up the vegetation with which the spring clothes it. Silent, forsaken, and wrapt in funereal gloom, has lain this once gay and populous site through the long long centuries. It was suspected that Nineveh had once stood there: that was all.

But three thousand years of darkness have passed away, and the grave gives up its dead. The curtain rises, and those verities, which were hidden so long, and which were believed to be lost for ever, are disclosed. The crusted earth bursts asunder, and Nineveh returns from her tomb.

The knowledge we have already obtained, and the yet fuller and more accurate information that awaits us, regarding the Assyrian empire, is one of the strangest events of our times. Had we been told of this but a few years ago, we would have asked, if a prophet would rise from the dead, if one of the old Assyrian kings would leave his grave, might this thing be? The Assyrian empire had flourished and passed away ages before the birth of history. Its times were accounted remote even in the days of Greece and Rome, and its history was looked upon as irrecoverably lost. Its language had ceased on the lips of men thousands of years ago. Of its history not a line survived, save a few dim and doubtful notices in the works of the earliest historians, and a few incidental allusions to its affairs in the pages of the Bible. And even though so unlikely an event should happen as that some old Assyrian scroll should turn up, what wiser would we be? There is not on earth a man who could read it. So we reasoned. There appeared to be an impassable gulf between us and all knowledge of Assyrian affairs. And yet, however incredible it looks, here are the annals of Assyria, not doubtfully transmitted through tradition and ill-informed historians, who were glad to supplement with conjecture or fable what was lacking

in fact, but of unquestionable truthfulness and authority, because they have come direct from the Assyrians themselves. We can tell the names of their kings, the wars they waged, the countries they overthrew, the works of peace they achieved, and that with a minuteness of detail and a precision of date which is beyond our reach in the case of nations which stand much nearer to us. How has this happened? It is not a prophet that has risen from the dead, it is Nineveh herself that has returned. "Here," she says, "have I slept these three thousand years, waiting the summons that was to bring me up. The hour is come at last. It is not to tell the story of my own greatness that I now appear. For higher ends have I been summoned from my grave. I come to testify to Jehovah's truth, and bid the nations give heed to His Word. When in Germany men call the Bible a myth: when in France, and Italy, and other countries of Christendom, they deride it as a fable: when the time foretold of old has come, that *faith there is not on the earth*, I can be silent no longer. Here are the marble tablets of my history: I spread them out before the eyes of all: read, and compare them with the Bible, and see whether the prophets spake not truth." So speaks this witness from the dead. The providence that has brought

about an event so marvellous in its own nature, and so fraught with importance to man, simply in the ordinary course, and by ordinary means, is even more remarkable than any miracle would have been. It is worth while spending a few moments on the inquiry how this thing came to pass.

It was not enough that the long-hidden book of Nineveh's history should be exhumed ; it was equally necessary that there should be found those who were able to open and read it. Providence took care that this should be the case. Before a trench had been dug in the Assyrian mounds, or a single graven tablet exhumed, an interpreter was ready to decipher the characters with which these tablets are inscribed. Without this the treasure would have been worthless as the dust from which it was won. The discovery of the art of reading these inscriptions is even more astonishing than the discovery of the inscriptions themselves. The writing is like no other writing in the world : the language has been a dead one ever since the times of the Macedonian conquest. How was it possible to recover it ? It has been recovered ; and it can be read with nearly as great ease as we can read the chronicles of our Anglo-Saxon kings. What a matchless triumph of human ingenuity and labour ! or rather, let us

say, what a marvellous proof of an overruling Providence, which, by a series of happy accidents, as it seemed, led man to the discovery of the key by which the treasure-house of the ancient world has been entered, and the story of Nineveh's glory and power made known to these last ages of the world!

The first pioneer in this path was Professor Grotefend of Göttingen. In 1802 his attention was attracted by the trilingual inscription on the walls of Persepolis. Though that inscription is all in the cuneiform, or wedge-like character, it is written in three different languages, and Professor Grotefend rightly guessed the first kind to be Persian. After much ingenious labour, and a comparison of all the authorities, ancient and modern, he succeeded in determining the three proper names that occur in the inscription to be those of Hystaspes, Darius, and Xerxes. This discovery was worth its cost, for it put the professor in possession of twelve letters of the cuneiform alphabet. Further Professor Grotefend proceeded not. Much yet remained to be done. The work was next taken up by Professor Lassen of Bonn, and prosecuted with a zeal so great and a success so gratifying, that between the years 1836 and 1844 he had framed an all but a complete alphabet of the cuneiform or Babylonian character.

It so happened that about the same time another Oriental scholar, Major (now Colonel Sir Henry) Rawlinson, became bent on unlocking the mystery of the cuneiform inscriptions. Stationed in Kermanshah, in Persia, he was ignorant of the researches in progress in the west. But in 1835 he had copied and begun to interpret the cuneiform inscription at Hamadan, the ancient Ecbatana. In two years thereafter he had given himself to the task of deciphering the most extensive cuneiform inscription in the world, that, namely, on the famous rock of Behistun. It rises almost perpendicularly, and some three hundred feet from the ground it displays an inscription in three different languages, but all in the cuneiform character. Five hundred years before the Christian era this writing had been executed by Darius, who found it necessary, in giving a history of his conquests, to address the various nations over which he reigned in their several languages. Little did he suspect the important end his inscription was destined to serve. It furnished Rawlinson with more than eighty proper names; and these enabled him to form an alphabet of the cuneiform character. His researches were prosecuted independently. Communication with Professor Lassen he had none: yet when his alphabet came to be compared with the profes-

sor's, it differed only in one single character. How plain was it that the art of reading the cuneiform letters had been truly discovered.

This was the first and great step towards reading those tablets, not one of which, however, had yet been drawn forth from the mounds where they had been entombed for more than thirty centuries. The alphabet was known, but the translation had yet to be mastered. The ancient Persian is the root of the Zend: the Zend was had recourse to, and employed as the medium of interpreting the Persian; and by its help, together with much patient and skilful labour, the translation of the cuneiform *Persian* inscription was at last accomplished. But the cuneiform *Assyrian* inscription, which followed the Persian on the same tablet, but repeated the same short history. This now was within reach. A little more time, and a little more labour, and the Assyrian writing also stood revealed. Thus was accomplished one of the brightest triumphs of the kind on record. When achieved, man knew not half its value; nor could he anticipate the brilliant recompence that awaited his assiduity and skill. Patiently had he toiled that he might be able to read a few cuneiform inscriptions scattered throughout the East: but no sooner had he mastered the gift, than, lo! fallen empires and buried cities

placed in his hands their long and carefully hoarded records.

Mr Layard was but 22 years of age when, in 1839, after having wandered through Asia Minor and Syria, "scarcely leaving untrod one spot hallowed by tradition, or unvisited one ruin consecrated by history," he experienced the irresistible desire to penetrate to those regions beyond the Euphrates which for all time to come must be identified with his name. In his first published work he informed us how his wanderings in Asia Minor had been conducted. One adventurous spirit only was his travelling companion. The pair rode unattended; their arms were their sole protection; a valise behind their saddles was their wardrobe; they mixed freely among the people, acquired their language and their habits, and partook gratefully of their hospitality. "No experienced dragoman," he wrote at the time, "measured our distances and appointed our stations. We were honoured with no conversations by pashas, nor did we seek any civilities from governors. We neither drew tears nor curses from villagers by seizing their horses or searching their houses for provisions. Their welcome was sincere; their scanty fare was placed before us, we ate, and came, and went in peace."

In the month of April, 1840, Layard first

caught sight of the ruins of Nineveh, near the city of Mosul,—rude heaps, without form, deposited in a scene as desolate as the remains themselves. He tells us that the huge mounds of Assyria then made a deeper impression upon him, and gave rise to more serious thoughts and more earnest reflection, than the temples of Balbec and the theatres of Ionia. His curiosity was excited, and from that time he formed the design “of thoroughly examining, whenever it might be in his power, these singular remains.”

It is in the *timing* of these two things that the finger of God is seen. There is no necessary connection between them : they might have been separated by ages : yet both came together—in the same year almost. Thousands and thousands had seen the inscriptions on the walls of Persepolis and the rock of Behistun, but beyond the look of idle wonder and fruitless curiosity with which they were regarded, they had elicited no further concern. The Arab of the desert, and the traveller from Europe, century after century, had trodden the mounds of Assyria, but who had thought of exploring them, or dreamed of the rich treasures which they concealed ? How strange the circumstance that at the same time an uncontrollable impulse should seize on Rawlinson to decipher these long-unheeded and

unread inscriptions, and on Layard to explore these long-neglected Ninevite mounds. Nor was the one conscious of the purpose of the other. Layard knew not that a scholar in the East was patiently toiling his way to a knowledge of the Babylonian writing: nor did Rawlinson know that a traveller in the West was unconquerably bent on examining the Assyrian mounds, if haply they might contain (a thing very incredible) some records of the long-lost Nineveh. It was the circumstance of these two discoveries meeting that made either of real value. The faculty of deciphering the cuneiform writing would have remained a brilliant but useless gift, without the Ninevite tablets on which to exercise it; and the Ninevite tablets would have been drawn in vain from their hiding-place without the ability of reading them.

As may readily be imagined, we have not yet obtained the perfect mastery of the Babylonian or cuneiform character; and a few years more of patient labour must elapse before the old world story of these slabs can be fully read. But enough has been deciphered to show that we have the annals of the Assyrian empire in our hands, and that we only wait a more familiar knowledge of the cuneiform character to possess a more detailed history of that early people than we

have of the Greeks and Romans. The facts already gleaned, most interesting and momentous as they are, constitute a history of Assyrian affairs, with some interruptions, from about two thousand years before Christ to the fall of that empire about five centuries before our era. The latter half of the line runs contemporaneously with the Scripture narrative. And as the Assyrian and Jewish affairs were in those ages much mixed up together, the points of contact between the two, as might have been expected, are very numerous; and wherever such contact occurs, the coincidence between the Ninevite monuments and the Scripture record is very striking, and such as incontestably to prove the genuineness and authenticity of the latter.

CHAPTER III.

Hidden—New Discoveries.

"Thou shalt be hid."—NAHUM iii. 11.

**"And the thing that is hid bringeth he forth to light."—
JOS xxviii. 11.**

"And will set thee as a gazing-stock."—NAHUM iii. 6.

Nineveh—New Discoveries.

General list of exhumed tablets, commencing B.C. 2000—Corroborations of the Bible furnished by the tablets in the following particulars, viz.: The distribution of the first races: the topography of the first cities: early mythology: predominance of Assyrian power, &c.—Kouyunjik mound—Palace of Sennacherib—History of Sennacherib on the monuments—Agreement with the Bible account—Siege of Lachish—Payment of tribute by Hezekiah—Sargon, father of Sennacherib—Record of captivity of the Ten Tribes on the monuments—Esarhaddon, son of Sennacherib—Chamber of Records—The king's throne—Concluding reflections.

NINEVEH—NEW DISCOVERIES.

LET us first enumerate the more important of the excavated monuments, in a historic point of view, and which are now, thanks to the indefatigable zeal and the masterly skill of our countryman, Mr AUSTEN HENRY LAYARD, safely deposited in the British Museum. Beginning with the oldest, we have a series of legends, thirty-five in number, from bricks, stone tablets, and cones of clay, pertaining to the primitive Chaldean empire, and dating from about B.C. 2000–1500. Second, we have three cylinders found at Kileh Shirgat, containing the annals of Tiglath Pileser I., dating B.C. 1120. Third, there are the annals of Sardanapalus, B.C. 850, from four independent texts at Nimrud. Next comes a short legend of Pul and Semiramis, B.C. 760, which is inscribed on a statue of the god Nebo. We are in possession, too, of the annals of Sargon, inscribed on the cylinders found in the palace at Khorsabad,

and dating about B.C. 706. The most important of all the monuments hitherto discovered is perhaps that which follows, namely, the annals of Sennacherib, from the famous cylinder of Colonel Tayler, dating B.C. 694. To this cylinder we shall have occasion afterwards to refer. And lastly, among the other Assyrian treasures in the British Museum, there is a cylinder containing a tolerably perfect copy of the annals of Esar-Haddon, the son of Sennacherib, in which mention is made of a further deportation of Israelites by that monarch, and the settlement of Babylonian colonists in their room, explaining, as is believed, the incidental reference in Ezra iv. 2 to the "adversaries" who "came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you : for we seek your God, as ye do ; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esar-Haddon, king of Assur, who brought us up hither." The inscriptions extend over a period of fifteen hundred years, and form a history of the Assyrian empire, reaching, with some breaks, which may yet be supplied, from about the times of its rise to well-nigh its fall.

The corroborations of Scripture on these monuments are numerous. The two strikingly agree, alike in the general outlines of what they record, and in the particular facts. The pio-

ture of primitive times which the disinterred tablets from the Assyrian mounds bring before us is precisely that which the Bible had already made us familiar with. The monuments attest, too, the accuracy of Scripture in the representation it gives of the division of the earth, and the distribution of mankind over it. The inscriptions exhibit the early races inhabiting just where the Bible had placed them—the Assyrians on the great central plains, the Hittites and others by the sea. The very names by which their countries were designated in those early days are the same. Of this, the following instance may suffice. Babylonia is styled, on the monuments, the country of the four rivers, the allusion being doubtless to the Tigris and Euphrates, with their two principal branches. The same general feature does Moses employ to designate and describe the country of Eden, and the position there of the primeval garden. “Assur” and “Nimrod” are names that we have met only in the inspired page; they have a sort of mythological grandeur about them, and we scarce can think of them as men who have walked the earth. We dig up the first edifices built by man, and we find “Assur” and “Nimrod” inscribed upon their foundations. Verily, we say, the Bible is no fable. Scarce less vener-

able are the names of the first cities, Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, and Nineveh, and Rehoboth, and Calah, and Resen. Hitherto we have known nothing of these cities save what we read of them in the Bible, nor did we expect ever to meet their names in any other writing. It awakens strange feelings, then, on turning up the earliest graven monuments, to read these veritable names as names of cities then existing. The inscriptions present a complete tableau of ancient Assyria, by which the name and situation of every town of note mentioned in the Bible can be identified. Most accurate, then, is the Bible in its topography; not less accurate is it in the account it gives of the mythology of those days. Statues of the god Nebo, and of Dagon, and of other "vanities of the Gentiles," have been dug up, all exactly corresponding with what is said of them in Scripture. The inscriptions agree, too, with the Bible in the account they give of the world's then political condition. They authenticate the predominance of the Assyrian power, and the general thralldom in which it held surrounding nations. The cruel expeditions it made into foreign territories, and the frequent captivities, especially of the Jews, in which their wars resulted, all are recorded on the monuments in striking agreement with what

we read in Scripture of the "great king of Assyria," and of his "yoke," so often borne by the other nations, and especially by the Israelites.

When from these more general matters we descend to individual events, we find the coincidences equally striking. We have already referred to the famous mound of Kouyunjik, on the eastern bank of the Tigris, opposite Mosul. Here M. Botta first began his excavations, but, not succeeding as he wished, he removed to Khorsabad, another mound on the same desolate plain, and at Khorsabad he opened the first Assyrian palace perhaps ever beheld by man since the fall of the Assyrian empire. But to Kouyunjik Mr Layard directed his attention, and this mound has since proved the great store-house of Assyrian antiquities. Its monuments are of great and singular interest—rich in the light which they throw on Assyrian history, and in the corroborations which they yield of the Bible's truth. The palace of Kouyunjik is proved to have been built by Sennacherib. His name is cut on the front of the colossal bulls that guarded its entrance. The annals of his reign, occupying eight hundred lines, are written on the walls of the place. The exploits of Sennacherib figure in Scripture more, perhaps, than those of any other Assyrian king. What agreement is there betwixt

the inscriptions at Kouyunjik and the statements of the Bible under this head? The most perfect agreement. Sennacherib began his reign, according to the monuments, by subjugating the Babylonians under their king Merodach Baladan. In his second year he turned his arms against Northern Media, which he subdued and plundered. But it is to the events of his third year that we invite special attention. The inscriptions of Kouyunjik record that now he overran the whole of Syria. Crossing the Euphrates, probably at Carchemish, and, subjugating in his victorious progress the Syrians, which are called by their Biblical name the Hittites, he descended on the sea-coast by the northern spur of Lebanon, and defeated in battle Luliya, king of Sidon. The victory was instantly followed by the submission of all the kings on the coast south to Ascalon. At this point of his progress he sent his general to demand of Hezekiah of Jerusalem the tribute which he had withheld.

While his general was absent on this errand, Sennacherib, as we learn from statements in 2 Kings xviii. and xix., and Isaiah xxxvi. and xxxvii., sat down before Lachish, and began to besiege it. What do the monuments say of this event? In a chamber of the palace of Kouyunjik was discovered a fine series of bas-reliefs, on

which is portrayed the siege of a city of great size and importance. Battering-rams, bowmen, ladders for escalade, and the whole apparatus of war as then conducted, are represented in the picture. Before the city-gates sits the king of the besieging host on a gorgeous throne, while a row of captives is being led into his presence, who humbly crouch before him and sue for pardon. The inscriptions on the bas-reliefs leave no ways doubtful the transaction represented in the sculptures. "Sennacherib," so runs the writing, "the mighty king, king of the country of Assyria, sitting on the throne of judgment before the city of Lachish (Lakhisha). I give permission for its slaughter." Here, therefore, is the actual picture of the siege of Lachish, against which Sennacherib had turned his arms, as we know from the Bible, when he sent his general to threaten Hezekiah with his vengeance for withholding the tribute.

But to resume. The narrative of the expedition against Hezekiah is recorded with graphic detail in the inspired page; it has been recorded also by Sennacherib himself on the marbles at Kouyunjik, and here occurs one of the finest verifications of the Scripture history which the excavated slabs have yet furnished us with. In 2 Kings xviii. 13, 14, we read, "Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of

Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them. And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have offended: return from me: that which thou puttest on me will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold." So far the Bible: turning next to the Kouyunjik tablets we read, "Because Hezekiah, king of Judæa, did not submit to my yoke, forty-six of his strong fenced cities, and innumerable smaller towns which depended on them, I took and plundered; but I left him Jerusalem, his capital city, and some of the inferior towns around it. . . . And because Hezekiah still continued to refuse to pay me homage, I attacked and carried off the whole population, fixed and nomade, which dwelled around Jerusalem, with thirty talents of gold, and eight hundred talents of silver, the accumulated wealth of the nobles of Hezekiah's court, and of their daughters, with the officers of the palace, men slaves and women slaves. I returned to Nineveh." The agreement between these two independent accounts is very striking. Even to the number of the talents of gold paid by Hezekiah as tribute they are the same; and this we must regard as a proof both of the fidelity of Scripture and the strict

accuracy of the Assyrian inscriptions. There is, it must however be noted, a discrepancy in the two accounts as to the amount of silver. Three hundred talents of silver, says the Bible, eight hundred, say the tablets, did Hezekiah give to Sennacherib. A fuller statement of facts would, we doubt not, enable us to see that both are true. It is not impossible that three hundred talents was the sum first "appointed" to Hezekiah, but that Sennacherib made a second demand, and that then Hezekiah, as the Bible informs us, "gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house." "I left to him Jerusalem, his capital city," says Sennacherib. We know that the expedition ended more tragically, and that Sennacherib retired from Jerusalem, compelled to leave to Hezekiah his capital city by the supernatural destruction of his host. It was not to be expected, however, that Sennacherib should record his own overthrow on the walls of his own palace. The impression is of a kind that noways shakes our belief in the inspired narrative.

Let us glance a moment at the father and son of Sennacherib (Scripture personages likewise) as they come into view on the tablets. Sargon, named in the monuments Sargina, was the father of Sennacherib, and the builder of the palace of

Khorsabad, the first, as we have said, to be laid open. In some of the inscriptions, as Rawlinson affirms, he bears the name of Shalmaneser, the title by which he was best known to the Jews. He it was who carried captive the ten tribes, and, if we do not mistake, we find the record of that event on the monuments. On a tablet which unhappily is a good deal mutilated, we read, that in the first year of his reign, Sargon came up against the city of Samaria (styled on the monuments Samarina), and the tribes of Beth Khumri (House of Omri), and carried captive into Assyria 27,280 families, settling in their place colonists brought from Babylon, and appointing prefects to administer the country. In a tablet set up by him, towards the close of his reign, in the palace of the first Sardanapalus at Nimrud, he styles himself the "conqueror of the remote Judea." It can scarce be doubted, therefore, that we have here the authentication of the fact of the captivity of Israel under the hand of the man whom God employed to accomplish it. In the monuments of this king, it is thought we can trace the record of his conquest of Ashdod, alluded to by Isaiah (chap. xx.), and the humiliation of Egypt foretold in the same chapter; for in his seventh year he is represented as receiving tribute from Pirhu (Pharaoh) king of Egypt. The most

ancient known specimen of *transparent glass*, found in a room in the north-west palace of Nimrud, has the name of SARGON engraved upon it.

Sargon was succeeded by his yet more famous son Sennacherib, of whose monuments at Kouyunjik we have already spoken. The merit of identifying his name belongs to Dr Hincks, and this important discovery furnished the first satisfactory clue to the parallelism which has since been traced between the Ninevite records and the Scripture history. He ascended the throne, according to Dr Hincks, in B.C. 703, and when he perished, as the Bible narrates, his son Esar-Haddon succeeded him.

An inscription on the back of the halls in the south-west palace of Nimrud tells us that Esar-Haddon was the builder of that edifice. A cylinder in the British Museum contains a tolerably perfect copy of his annals. Like his father, he was a great warrior ; and the monuments speak of a deportation of Jews which took place under him, from which Mr Layard conjectures that he was the king of which we read in 2 Chron. xxxiii. 2, " Wherefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon ;"

whence, however, on humbling himself, and making supplication before the Lord, he was liberated, and returned to Jerusalem. The son and successor of Esar-Haddon, Asshur-banipal, was the builder of the north palace of Kouyunjik. This palace excels all the others in the richness and beauty of its sculptures. War and the chase are represented on its marbles. The design and treatment of the subjects are more artistic, and the execution is more finished than in any of the other excavated edifices, from which it has been concluded that under this king Assyrian art culminated.

Besides these strictly historic discoveries, a number of miscellaneous objects have been dug up, all of which are interesting, as tending to shed light on Assyrian history and on incidental allusions in the Bible. For instance, at Kouyunjik, Mr Layard penetrated into the "chamber of records," where the royal decrees and the national archives were kept. It was the custom of the Assyrians to write their historical and public documents on tablets and cylinders of baked clay, and of these we have been fortunate to secure not a few specimens. "On a large hexagonal cylinder," says Mr Layard, in his "Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon," "presented by me to the British Museum, are the

chronicles of Esar-Haddon: on a similar cylinder discovered in the mound of Nebi Yunus opposite Mosul, and formerly in the possession of the late Colonel Tayler, are eight years of the annals of Sennacherib; and on a barrel-shaped cylinder, long since placed in the British Museum, and known as Bellino's, we have part of the records of the same king. The importance of such relics will be readily understood. The chambers I am describing appear to have been a depository in the palace of Nineveh for such documents. To the height of a foot or more from the floor, it was entirely filled with them. The cuneiform characters on most of them were singularly sharp and well defined, but so minute, in some instances, as to be almost illegible without a magnifying glass." It was in such a chamber, doubtless, that the decree of Cyrus regarding the return of the captivity, for which Darius commanded that search should be made, was deposited. These tablets and cylinders appear to be covered with records of wars, public documents, lists of gods, sacred days in each month, calendars, and perhaps also astronomical observations, forming, perhaps, the most complete and valuable of all the historic treasures received from antiquity, though demanding years of patient study, and more perfect knowledge than we

yet possess of the cuneiform character, before their complete decipherment can be effected.

Not the least interesting of the relics discovered at Nineveh is the "throne" of its king. Strange, that after so many thousands of years we should look on the very seat which was occupied by the then masters of the world! This relic of an empire that has passed away was found by Mr Layard huddled into a corner of a chamber in the north-west palace of Nimrud. From its being found here, we may infer that it was the chair of state of one of the earlier Assyrian sovereigns. In the chamber beside it lay a promiscuous heap of culinary, or perhaps sacrificial vessels—bowls, cauldrons, cups, vases in bronze—mixed with piles of arms, shields, spears, pick-axes, and saws. The whole mass was green with rust, and the upper layers of dishes moulder into brown dust on the admission of the air. The throne was of wood, cased or overlaid with bronze, elaborately carved and embossed with symbolical figures, and closely resembling in its form and ornaments the throne of Sennacherib seen in the sculptures of the siege of Lachish. The wood had rotted, and was gone; the metal casing fell in pieces at the touch; but fragments have been preserved, and are now in the British Museum. Strange thoughts does the sight of this object

call up. Here is the royal seat—where is the empire? Does it not look like mockery, a throne without a kingdom! Before a single frieze of the Parthenon had been carved, or a stone of the eternal city laid, this chair existed, and now when the Parthenon has grown old, and the eternal city is in ruins, this chair is existing still; and after the darkness of four thousand years it has been brought forth to be the gazing-stock of these later generations of men. Little did the cunning workman who fashioned it, and the powerful king who occupied it, dream of the fate that awaited it.

These palaces of the Assyrian monarchs must have been of rare magnificence. Colossal in size, and grand and solemn rather than beautiful in style, they were fit abodes of those proud and powerful men. Temples were they rather than palaces. The majestic symbols and images of their deities crowded their entrances, and must have struck the visitor with awe, and deepened the impression which the oriental sovereigns ever wished to make on the minds of all who sought their presence, that they were Heaven's vicegerents, and possessed the attributes of divinity. The sublime effect of these palaces may somewhat be conceived of from the account given by Mr Layard of a farewell visit paid to the north-west palace of Nimrud just before

the removal of the bulls and sphinxes that guarded its portal. "We rode," says he, "one cloudless night to the mound to look on them for the last time before they were taken from their old resting-places. The moon was at her full, and as we drew nigh to the edge of the deep wall of earth rising around them, her soft light was creeping over the stern features of the human heads, and driving before it the dark shadows which still clothed the lion forms. One by one the limbs of the gigantic sphinxes emerged from the gloom, until the monsters were unveiled before us. I shall never forget that night, or the emotions which those venerable figures caused within me. A few hours more and they were to stand no longer where they had stood unscathed amidst the wreck of man and his works for ages. It seemed almost sacrilege to tear them from their old haunts to make them a mere wonder-stock to the busy crowd of a new world. They were better suited to the desolation around them; for they had guarded the place in its glory, and it was for them to watch over it in its ruin."

These excavations bring us face to face with the departed empire. We had heard of the fame of Nineveh, but now our eye sees her. It was a true report that had reached us of her greatness, of her pride, of her glory, and no mere exaggeration

or glowing picture of the Orientals. Knowing her height, we can measure the greatness of her fall. How sure and strong the word of Him, who, while Nineveh was yet in her prime, said that He would dig her grave. Verily, her grave has been dug; and how low and loathsome a grave! And long, very long, has Nineveh dwelt in it! And now that she has been called forth from its deep shadows, it is for no purpose of hers, or to resume her old splendour, but, from the dust and humiliation of her overthrow, to bear testimony to the truth of that God whose word she defied, and whose people she oppressed. Little did the world suspect that a double record of the occurrences narrated in the Bible existed. Little did the prophets themselves think that other pens were employed on these events, and that the rock-tablets of Nineveh were receiving them in trust for a far-distant posterity. But Providence took care that both records should be provided. The one Record was sent forth into the world. It was derided, denounced as a fable, treated as a myth, and believed in by only the few. The other was laid up in the bowels of the earth, there to remain in concealment till the time should come when it could speak with effect. The hour came. The crust of earth cracked, opened, and the long-buried witness arose.

CHAPTER IV.

Mesopotamia—Babylon.

"Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans; for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate. . . . Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms. . . . And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it. Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly; that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: but these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection, for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments. . . . Desolation shall come upon thee suddenly."—ISAIAH xlvii. 1-11.

Mesopotamia—Babylon.

Memorials of past fertility—Vestiges of ancient cities—Ancient Babylon—Its size and splendour, according to historians—Isaiah's prediction of its fall—The siege, as described by Herodotus and Xenophon—Exact agreement of the historians with the prophet—Gradual demolition of its ruins—Disappearance from history after fourth century of Christian era—Present appearance of its ruins—Babylon "a dry land"—"Pools of water"—"A possession for the bittern"—"Arabian" does "not pitch tent there"—All these prophecies fulfilled—Supposed site of palace and hanging gardens—The Mujelibé—Tower of Belus—Aspect of its ruins—Lessons.

MESOPOTAMIA—BABYLON.

Now we cross the Tigris, and enter on the patriarchal region of Mesopotamia. Our path lies south, with a just perceptible inclination to the east. Behind us, are the ruins of one great city; before us, those of a greater. The tract over which we are now passing was illustrated in other days by the footsteps of the "mighty hunter," Nimrod, and the tower reaching to heaven, which the sons of men attempted to build. This plain was in early times the theatre of unrivalled glory—the scene of unexampled wickedness; and now it lies before us a wide-spread ruin. It stretches out and out as we go, with scarce a human habitation or a speck of green on its bosom, and with so few landmarks, that the Arab, in traversing it, is often obliged, like the mariner on the deep, to guide himself by the stars. The heart of the stoutest traveller becomes oppressed, as he surveys the boundless extent of dreary and dark wilderness around him, diversified

only by tufts of reedy grass, by dwarf acacia bushes, and heaps of ruins, which swarm with reptiles and ravenous animals. At every step we meet the memorials of the past—the vestiges of the cities, the cultivation, and the men which once flourished here. These grassy mounds, which intersect the plain in long straight lines, are the remains of the ancient canals. By these the waters of the Euphrates were made to irrigate the country; and this, together with its fat alluvial soil, made it in past ages the garden of the East. These black spots which occur ever and anon, and where the soil is evidently unable to nourish a single pile of grass, and where the ground looks as if it had been scorched by fire, are the sites of ancient cities. We meet them at so short distances, and the desert, right and left, is so thickly dotted with them, that we are forced to the conclusion, that the entire plain between the Tigris and Euphrates, was formerly one continuous town. As we go, and still the dark desolate plain spreads out before us, and still the monuments of ruin lie thick around us, the feeling of loneliness with which we are at first impressed, rises at last into awe and reverence, at the power and truth of Him who has so signally punished, so utterly overthrown, this region. “Our ride,” says Frazer, who was now traversing the country between Seleucia and Babylon, “so long as daylight lasted, served

at least to convince us how populous the land must have been in times of old ; for scarcely did we traverse a mile of it without passing over the site of some ancient city, or town, or village. Sometimes we found a whole tract covered with fragments of bricks, pottery, and glass ; and it was remarkable, that all of these sites are utterly bare of vegetation ; so that, even independent of the appearance of debris, we could tell when we were crossing one. Mounds, also, of the same substances were numerous ; but low, and altogether shapeless. Sections of funereal vases and coffins, which we observed protruding from them, marked them as receptacles for the relics of the dead. We likewise crossed a number of old canals—all dry and useless now ; and, in short, no one who has had any experience in these matters, could doubt, from the vestiges so thickly spread over this day's march, that either some immense city had once flourished here, or, what is more probable, that the whole country, from Seleucia to Babylon, had once been covered with the abodes of men, in every various shape and form of city, town, and village."

Now we draw nigh the site of the mighty Babylon. Our approach to this renowned spot is notified to us by the signs of greater desolation visible around us. The earth begins to wear a more scathed and blackened look, the heaps of ruin are

more numerous, and dark-looking and shapeless masses, which, in point of magnitude and height, resemble hills, are seen rising before us at a great distance on the plain. A profound silence reigns throughout the region—not the silence of repose, but of awe and terror, as if nature were conscious that the frown of the Almighty still rests on the spot where his indignation in past ages was poured out to the uttermost. We begin to feel the spirit of the place—to feel as if we had entered the portals of some vast temple consecrated to the vengeance of the Holy One, and where no one ever stood without being constrained to worship—a temple whose floor is the blasted earth on which we are treading; whose walls and roof are the heavens over us, which are as brass; whose altars are the hoary mounds before us; and whose songs are the cries of the doleful creatures by whom it is inhabited. Here is a mass of ruin, shapeless, and towering high above the level of the plain; let us ascend and rest us on its summit. This pile will afford us a prospect of the ruins of Babylon. Who can tell what this mass may have been once? Perhaps the monarch of Babylon dwelt here; or it may be that the gods of Babylon were worshipped here; but whatever it once was, it is now a heap of ruin. Now we are on its summit. Let us open the Prophecy of Isaiah and read. A BIBLE on the site of

Babylon! Who could deny its divinity here! But before comparing what Babylon now is, as exemplified in the scene around us, with the predictions of the prophet, let us look back on what Babylon once was, as described in the page both of inspired and profane history. Before taking a survey of the ghastly relics around us, let us recall the power and magnificence that once flourished on this site.

Between Babylon and Nineveh there is a close resemblance in many particulars. Both were founded in the earliest ages of the world; both gradually rose to a great height of power and grandeur, though Babylon was some centuries later than Nineveh in reaching the summit of her glory; both practised enormous oppression on the surrounding nations, especially on the Jews; both were filled with lewdness, luxury, and idolatry; and both were doomed by Heaven to desolation.

No sooner had Nineveh declined from the rank she long held as queen of the East, than the sovereignty was transferred to Babylon. This city was the equal of Nineveh in size, and its superior in wealth and splendour. The descriptions which ancient historians—Herodotus, Ctesias, Strabo, Diodorus—have left us are so clear and minute, that there is no difficulty in forming a just idea of the glory of Babylon. This city was a perfect square; and each of its four sides being fifteen

miles in length, the space included was fifty miles in circuit. Its broad walls were the wonder of the world while they stood, and have since often been the theme of praise. They were a hundred feet in height, according to the most moderate calculation. They were defended outside by a broad ditch, filled with water; were protected by numerous watch-towers; and contained a hundred gates of solid brass. Each gate opened into a street which ran across, straight as a rule, to a gate in the opposite wall. Thus the area of Babylon was occupied by fifty streets, which crossed each other at right angles, the squares formed by their intersections being covered with gardens, plantations, and pasture-grounds. Through the middle of the mighty city flowed the noble stream of the Euphrates, and added much to the freshness and beauty of the capital. Nigh the river stood the royal palaces, one on this side, and the other on that. Both were worthy of being the residence of the monarch of Babylon; but the western one was of surpassing size and splendour, and its triple rampart was of prodigious strength. Near to this last, and extending along by the river, were the hanging gardens built by Nebuchadnezzar for the delight of his queen. They were supported on arches, and rose tier above tier, till they resembled natural hills, formed into terraces, and planted with the choicest fruits and the

most precious trees. In the middle of one of the divisions—Diodorus says the eastern—of the city rose the Tower of Belus, the under part of which was most probably the same structure which the sons of Noah erected soon after the flood. Whoever ascended this tower saw at his feet the most gorgeous picture which the wealth and labour of man ever created. There, covering the plain in all directions as far as the eye could reach, and reposing proudly beneath the beautiful sky of Chaldea, were the streets and squares, and palaces and gardens, and temples and bulwarks of “the golden city”—“the glory of kingdoms.” Rennell is disposed to think that Babylon, at its height, may have contained one million two hundred thousand inhabitants. Within the city were provisions for twenty years; and if ever there existed on the earth a city warranted to bid defiance to the prediction of its overthrow, Babylon might presume, from the strength of her defences and the number of her defenders, that she was entitled to do so. But all these availed her little when her hour had come.

A hundred and sixty years before an enemy entered her gates, the doom of Babylon was foretold by Isaiah. The style of this prophet, sublime at all times, is peculiarly so when predicting the fate of this city. The same may be said of Jere-

miah, who also foretold the desolation of Babylon. Even this is no mean evidence of the truth of their predictions. The impostor never attains to sublimity; the consciousness of fraud is altogether incompatible with that expansion of the moral and intellectual nature which gives birth to sublimity. The would-be prophet is perpetually haunted by the dread of detection, and is constantly seeking to hide himself in vague generalities and misty ambiguities; he can never irradiate his page with that moral splendour which comes only from truth. How different is it with the two prophets we have named!—how free, noble, and majestic are the strains in which they foretold, long before she fell, the overthrow of that greatest and proudest of cities! The noblest images and metaphors come at their call. Her fall they compare to that of the angels from heaven, seeing the history of nations had then furnished no event which could adequately represent its grandeur and terror: “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!” The obscuration of her glory they liken to the darkening of the lights of the firmament. The earth, which had groaned beneath her weight, they exhibit as rejoicing at her overthrow. They assemble the most doleful and terrible emblems around her grave; and having spread the worm under her power and glory, her princes and nobles, and having breathed a lament

full of the deepest tenderness and pathos over her ruin, they retire, bowing reverently down before the holiness of Him who had overthrown her, leaving Babylon to the dragons of the wilderness, by whom she was henceforth to be inhabited. It is only a small part of the prophecy we can here quote.

“Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there: and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. Thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!”

The conqueror of Babylon was foretold by name; a rare circumstance in prophecy: “Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus.” The forces he was to lead against her were also named: “Go up, O Elam; besiege, O Media.” The time when Babylon was to be overthrown was also fixed: “*It shall come to pass,*” said Jeremiah, “*when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of*

Babylon and that nation, saith the Lord." This prophecy was delivered in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, and seventy years after that date the united hosts of Persia and Media, under Cyrus as their leader, appeared before the walls of Babylon. Cyrus soon became aware that famine would be his most effective weapon of assault; accordingly, he drew a trench around the city, fortified with towers, to prevent the flight of the inhabitants. The prophet had said: "Let none thereof escape." Weary of the delay which this method of strategy imposed, Cyrus employed every art to draw forth the men of Babylon and join battle in the open plain; but, as the prophet had foretold, this they declined: "*The mighty men of Babylon have forborne to fight, they have remained in their strongholds, they have become as women.*" Two years had now been spent before the place, and no progress whatever made in the siege. In the perplexity occasioned by this waste of time, it was suggested that the course of the Euphrates, which flowed through the city, should be turned, and thus the troops would be able, in the dry bed of the river, to march into the city under the walls. This was precisely what the prophet had foretold, although unknown to Cyrus: "*That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers. A drought is upon her waters, and they shall be dried up.*" The task was a Herculean, and almost an

impossible one; for the river was a quarter of a mile broad, and twelve feet deep: yet no sooner was the proposal made, than Cyrus resolved on attempting it. An immense trench was dug, and all was now ready for turning off the waters of the Euphrates from their accustomed channel which led underneath the walls into the city. All was ready, we say, but Cyrus knew that an annual festival, the night of which the Babylonians were accustomed to spend in revelry and wine, was nigh, and he fixed on this night for the execution of his project. The night came—the revels of the feast began—the inhabitants of Babylon were speedily drowned in wine, and buried in sleep; the waters of the Euphrates were turned off—the troops were marched along the dry bed of the river, and without a blow being struck to oppose their entrance, they passed on and stood within those walls which all their strength could never have battered to the ground. Thus the city at last fell an easy prey: “*I will make their feasts,*” said Jehovah by his prophet; “*and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the Lord. I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter. I will make drunken her princes, and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men, and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep.*”

Can any one compare the prophecy with the facts—and to the facts no suspicion can attach; they are given by Herodotus and Xenophon, men who perhaps never saw a copy of the Old Testament—and doubt the inspiration of the prophet? Though any one had been rash enough to hazard a prediction that this great city would be destroyed, who would have ventured to fix the year—to name the conqueror?—who could have pointed to the lands from which the invading armies should come; and especially, who could have hit upon the singular expedient by which the city was taken—an expedient which did not occur to Cyrus himself till after he had spent two years before the place, and tried every other stratagem in vain for taking the city? Although Cyrus had sat down immediately on the capture of the city, and detailed the manner in which it had been taken, he could not have given the particulars more exactly; perhaps not so fully, and certainly not with so much beauty and sublimity, as they were given a century and a half before by Isaiah.

The history of the city, from the time when it was taken by Cyrus, has been in exact accordance with the prophecy respecting it. The night was to overtake Babylon not all at once—it was to sink down by slow degrees. First she declined from the rank of an imperial to that of a subjugated city:

"Sit in the dust; there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans." Next came Darius, who, provoked by her disposition to revolt, greatly reduced the height of her walls, and thus gave a presage of the complete fulfilment of the prophecy, now long since accomplished: *"The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken."* The desecration of her shrines and the demolition in part of her famous temple by Xerxes, fulfilled the prediction: *"I will punish Bel in Babylon."* Then came the attempt to heal her wound, as had been foretold; which, however, could not be healed. Alexander conceived the design of making Babylon the metropolis of his great empire. Ten thousand workmen were already employed in the task of its restoration, when the death of the monarch arrested the progress of the undertaking. After this, the rise of Seleucia on the Tigris, which led to the transportation of the materials of Babylon to the new site, rapidly accelerated its decline. A Parthian general is said, about a century before Christ, to have demolished most of the fabrics which remained. At the beginning of the Christian era it was mostly deserted. In the fourth century, its vast area, which was still enclosed by the remains of its walls, was a hunting ground of wild beasts. Thus did her glories wane, as prophecy foretold; shade gathered after shade, till at last the once mighty Babylon disappeared altogether from

the eyes of men ; and now that modern discovery has lifted up the veil, and allowed us to survey her blackened site and ghastly remains, where shall we find words to describe the scene around us half so forcible and true as those employed long since by the prophet? "Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling place for dragons. Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee."

On the summit of this ruined heap, the page of the prophet open before us, and the ruins of Babylon around us, let us proceed to compare the one with the other. What feature or circumstance of Babylon's desolation has the prophet omitted? Every emblem of terror and devastation on the prophet's page is found to be realized on the gloomy plain around us. In the most minute particulars does the resemblance hold ; so that a painter who had never trodden the blasted wilds of Chaldea, and never climbed the hoary mounds of Babylon, could, simply by studying the prophet, produce a most impressive and truthful picture of Babylon's ruin. Did the prophets foretell that Chaldea should be "a dry land?" Look over that plain. It is crossed, you perceive, by the embankments of its former canals, but these canals are dry—the waters of the Euphrates no longer irrigate its soil; it is a sterile

expanse, here sown with nitre, there blackened by the crumbled remains of the bituminous materials which composed its cities. "This country is so dry and barren," says Rauwolf, "that it cannot be tilled." Did the prophet foretell that Babylon should become "pools of water?"—a prediction apparently inconsistent with the preceding. Look here; the Euphrates at the season of flood overflows its banks, and forms lakes here and there amidst the ruins. These pools, Mignan informs us, are the resort of flocks of bitterns: "I will also make it a possession for the bittern." Was it foretold that the sower should be cut off from Babylon, and him that handleth the sickle in the time of harvest?—a most improbable prediction! Herodotus testifies that this plain of Babylon excelled all the countries he had visited, as a land of corn; the returns being two hundred, and sometimes three hundred-fold; but now no attempt at cultivation is, or could be, made on the site of Babylon, or indeed any where almost on the plain. The ruins of Western Asia abound in flocks and shepherds' tents; but in this particular there was to be a marked difference between Mesopotamia and other ruined countries: *"Neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there: neither shall the shepherds make their fold there."* The ruins by which the country is overspread contain an ingredient unfriendly to vegetation; and

where there is no pasture, there will be no retreat of flocks. A passing caravan may at times be seen, their black tents may dot the desert for a night, and the tinkling bell of the browsing camel agreeably break the silence; but here flocks never depasture; and especially does the Arab avoid, above all things, pitching his tent near the ruins of Babylon, or near any of the ruined sites in its neighbourhood, so great is his horror of the evil spirits by whom he believes these places are haunted. "The solitary habitation of the goatherd," says Mignan, "marks not the forsaken site." In fine, were the palaces of Babylon to become dens of venomous, doleful, and ravenous animals? Such, on the testimony of every traveller, they have now become. Not only is it true of Babylon, but of all the ruins on the Plain of Chaldea, that they abound in cavities and caverns, which are the receptacles of owls, bats, lizards, hyenas, jackals; and occasionally the foot-prints of lions have been seen. The mouths of these dens are strewn with the bones and other relics of sheep, goats, and other larger animals. Thus do the wild beasts of the desert lie there; and their houses are full of doleful creatures; and owls dwell there, and satyrs dance there.

Before taking our leave of Babylon, let us look around, and survey the general aspect of her ruins. Here, truly, is desolation on a great scale. No one

can adequately realize the grandeur of the scene, unless he has been present on the spot. Whole cities have been built from the ruins of Babylon, and yet the mounds in which her glory is entombed look like hills. No one ever stood here without having his mind awed and subdued by the gloomy scenery of the region—so vast as to be sublime—so desolate as to be appalling. Our point of survey is on one of the central mounds, which adjoins the eastern bank of the Euphrates. The plain around is a perfect flat, covered far and near with heaps of ruins. These are of all shapes and sizes. Some are masses of undefined form—others run on in long lines or embankments; some terminate in pinnacles—others are rounded off. But we miss here the green turf which mantles the remains of Nineveh; the ruins of Babylon are covered with the black bituminous debris of the materials which compose them, and have all a gloomy aspect. Of these mounds a few, in different quarters of the plain, tower majestically above the rest, and attract the eye by their stupendous size. It is on one of these that we have taken up our position. It rises seventy feet above the level of the plain, and its huge bulk stretches along for upwards of eight hundred yards. It is a rugged mass of ruins; its surface covered with fragments of bricks and pottery; its sides deeply furrowed by the rain; and cleft and torn, moreover, by the Arabs,

who have dug into its bowels in search of antiquities. It is named the Kasr or palace. The current opinion among those who have visited and examined it is, that of all the mounds on the site of Babylon, this has the best claim to be regarded as the ruins of the great palace of the Chaldean monarchs. It is composed, Mignan tells us, of the finest furnace-dried bricks, all inscribed with unknown characters; and so firmly do they adhere, that it is impossible to detach a single brick from the mass. We may state, on Beauchamp's authority, that alabaster vessels and engraved marbles have been found in it; as also passages, and a chamber with representations of the sun and moon, and other figures, formed of varnished bricks, on its walls. How solemn the thought, that we are walking over the palace of the king of Babylon, and that beneath our feet, now crushed and buried, is the festive hall where the impious Belshazzar assembled his lords and concubines, and where the fingers of a man's hand came forth, and wrote his doom upon the wall!

From two to three hundred yards west of the fallen pile on which we stand is the Euphrates. Mighty changes have happened here since the night that the halls beneath us rung with the revelry of the king and his nobles; but that stream is still the same—the same as when it bore on its bosom the glorious image of the “golden city”—the same as

when the captive Jews sat down and wept beside its waters. Commencing at the palace and running along to the south, by the brink of the river, is a lofty embankment—the reputed site of the hanging gardens; all undecked now by flower, or shrub, or tree. The river has encroached on this mound, and its face slopes abruptly to the stream. Along the river's edge, covered by the water, and at either extremity of the embankment, slabs of granite are found of the exact dimensions with those which ancient authors tell us were employed in the construction of these gardens. At the top of the bank are some urns, which have been laid bare by the action of the water, and which contain human bones. May not some part of these gardens have been used as a place of royal sepulture? From our point of survey two rectilinear mounds are seen traversing the plain. They form a triangle, having the river for their base, and their apex at a distance of upwards of two miles on the plain to the east. They enclose an area of about five miles square, on which are the ruins we have just described, with others of less note. We may be allowed to conjecture, that this mound forms the remains of the triple rampart by which, as is well known, the great western palace and hanging gardens were enclosed.

There is one feature of Babylon's desolation which meets us here of a touching kind. On the

northern front of the Kasr stands a solitary tree, the only one that is to be seen near these remains. It is a species of the tamarisk, and indubitably of great antiquity. Its trunk is strong and gnarled, and crowned with a tuft of thin leaves. These bend over the ruins gracefully, yet mournfully, as if they bewailed the desolation they strive most ineffectually to hide.

Of the other memorials on the plain before us, the most distinguished are the two which we now proceed to notice. On the north, at the distance of two miles, rises an enormous mass of ruin. It is termed by the Arabs Mujelibé—"the overturned." It is one hundred and thirty-nine feet in height; its figure is oblong, and its four sides face exactly the cardinal points. Its sides are deeply furrowed, and its top is an uneven flat, covered with broken bricks, pottery, bitumen, and glass. This mound is composed of mud bricks, baked in the sun, and mixed with straw. They are cemented with clay-mortar, and between every course is a layer of reeds. Whatever this edifice was once, whether the abode of a monarch, or the shrine of an idol, or the dungeon of the captive—and all these several uses have been found for it by some—it is now a den of wild beasts.

Turn we now to the south; here, at the distance of eight miles from where we stand, towering over

the plain, and maintaining a kind of majesty even in its overthrow, is by far the most stupendous and imposing of the ruins of Babylon. First in splendour, we may well believe, when the plain around was a gay spectacle of gardens and palaces—now it is first in ruin. The crowning glory of the golden city—now it is the most awful feature of her desolation. The grandest of her piles—now the most terrific of her ruins. Its golden roof, in other days, was the first to proclaim to the traveller that he was approaching the metropolis of the Chaldean empire—now its dark, and torn, and ruin-stricken top, is the first to tell him that he draws nigh the scene of Babylon's desolation. To the eminence which this fallen pile enjoys, amid the innumerable fabrics which here share its overthrow, not altogether inapplicable are the words of the great poet, descriptive of the "glory obscured" which shone around the form of the arch-apostate even after he had fallen, and the distinction this gave him amid his compeers :—

" He, above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower."

If, among the heaps of ruin on this plain, there be any representative of the tower which the builders erected after the flood, and which subsequently became renowned as the Tower of Belus, being dedi-

cated by the Babylonians to the worship of their god, Bel, most will agree that this mountain has the best title to be regarded as such ; and this honour has, without almost a dissenting voice, been conceded to it by those who have visited and examined it. It is called by the natives the *Birs Nimrood*. In external aspect it does not differ from the other mounds, unless in its greater size. Like them, it is covered with black debris ; its sides, like theirs, are furrowed deeply by the weather. Mignan, in digging into its base, found it to be composed of coarse sun-dried bricks, fastened together by layers of mortar and reed. It appears, however, to have had a casing of fire-dried bricks, cemented by bitumen ; and ancient historians tell us, that of such materials was the Temple of Belus constructed.

There is a surprising agreement between the dimensions of this enormous mound and those of the Tower of Belus, as given by Herodotus and others. Its elevation, which is nearly two hundred feet, is much below that of the tower ; but this we would look for in a fallen pile. The area of its base, however, which is seven hundred and sixty-two yards, is almost exactly the same with that of the tower, only a little larger, the materials having spread in falling. On the summit of this mound rises a tower, composed of the finest kiln-burnt bricks, thirty-seven feet high. Its top is broken

and cleft. The other parts of the summit of the mound are covered with huge masses of brick, tumbled together, and completely vitrified. These masses have evidently been exposed to the action of the fiercest fire; and, in the opinion of those who have examined the site, that fire has acted from above, and been, most probably, lightning—a singular corroboration, as it would seem, of the common tradition that the Temple of Belus was destroyed by fire from heaven. At all events, it is impossible to survey the summit of this enormous pile, and to see it thus scathed by fire—whether kindled by the hand of man or shot against it from heaven it is now impossible with certainty to say—without being reminded of Jeremiah's prophecy: "*I will stretch out my hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain.*"

But though we have said, Here stood the palace, there were the hanging gardens, and yonder rose the Tower of Belus—we are to bear in mind, that all this is to a great degree conjectural. The appearance of the ruins themselves bears out our conclusions; but when we compare the position assigned by ancient historians to the fabrics of which we have supposed the heaps in question to be the remains, we are altogether at fault. The difficulty is removed only in part, by supposing

that the Euphrates has changed its course. No man has succeeded in determining the limits which the city occupied: no trace of its "broad walls" has been found. The precise site of the "mighty Babylon" will, in all likelihood, remain for ever unknown. What stronger proof can we demand that God has swept her with the "besom of destruction?"

What a spot for meditation is this! How solemn the lessons taught us here, did our time only allow of our pondering them at length! This plain, once so rich in men and in cities, and in all earthly felicities—how deserted is it now! This site, once irradiated with the glories of empire, the scene where War first accumulated her spoils, and Superstition first erected her temples—how darkened is it! This is the end of ambition. This is the punishment that awaits pride. Here sleeps the man who made the earth to tremble; and gone down with him into the grave are all his princes and his mighty men. Here sleeps the warrior. His sword, unused, now rusts by his side; and the trumpet's peal falls in vain upon his slumbering ear—he mingles in the battle no more. Here lies the astrologer; and in vain do the same constellations which, in former days, gave splendour to the midnight sky of Chaldea, still shine down upon this plain. These orbs rise and set; but he who so reve-

rently watched them of old, comes not now to gaze on their glory, or to read what their motions portend. He slumbers here, overtaken by a more terrible doom than the worst augury of his horoscope ever foreshadowed. Silent now in the streets of the fallen metropolis are the sound of the chariot wheel, the noise of the viol, and the voice of the bridegroom. On this desolate site Sorrow weeps not, Mirth rejoices not—both are alike mute. Here is the festive hall, mantled by the dust of ruin—but where are the revellers? The wine cup is empty—the shouts have ceased—the lights are darkened. And here, too, is the temple, majestic even in its fall; but no priest, no worshipper is here, and the fire on its altar is long since extinguished. Buried in the same profound repose, to be broken only by the trump of the archangel, here rest, side by side, the monarch and his subjects—the conqueror and the conquered—the prisoner and the man who opened not the house of his prisoners. The dark surface of the plain, like a vast funeral pall, covers all. How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken! How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!

CHAPTER V.

Babylon—New Facts.

"How is Sheshach taken ! and how is the praise of the whole earth surprised ! how is Babylon become an astonishment among the nations ! The sea is come up upon Babylon : she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof. Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby. And I will punish Bel in Babylon ; and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up : and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him ; yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall."—*JER.* li. 41-44.

"It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation ; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there ; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there ; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures ; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces : and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged."—*ISA.* xiii. 20-22.

Babylon—New Facts.

Ruins as seen on the approach to the site—Space covered by them—Mr Layard on the Birs Nimrood—Tunnels opened in “Babel”—New investigations at the Mujelibé—No trace of her walls—Scarce a vestige of her idols—Discrepancy betwixt Daniel and profane historians regarding the fall of Babylon—Discovery of cylinders in Ur of the Chaldees—These cylinders completely reconcile the discrepancy—Mr Loftus’ “Travels and Researches”—Earliest building-ground of the human family—Calneh—Ur of the Chaldees—Cylinders—Chedorlaomer—Erech—Discovery of palace in earliest style of building—Uses served by Babylon.

BABYLON—NEW FACTS.

SINCE the foregoing was written, the plain of Babylonia has been visited by other travellers, and the ruins of Babylon have been more extensively, though not yet thoroughly, explored. One fact of great interest has recently been brought to light, which clears up in the most satisfactory manner a difficulty growing out of the conflicting accounts given by sacred and profane historians of the fall of Babylon, and serves to shew how a seeming error or discrepancy may eventually become the strongest confirmation of truth.

Mr Layard has recently traversed this plain. His narrative is valuable chiefly as containing a more minute, and, in some respects, a more affecting picture of its ruin than any heretofore presented. The predicted overthrow has not been restricted to the city of Babylon—the whole plain has shared in the ruin that overwhelmed the

capital, and now lies a vast, hideous but sublime waste. Approaching Babylon from the north, the first indication of its site is a hill rising huge and dark on the southern edge of the plain. Drawing nearer, its flat table-like top and perpendicular sides, rising abruptly from an alluvial plain, shew it to be the work of man—not a natural elevation. Nearer yet, great embankments, the remains of walls, are seen around it; and growing at last into definite shape, it announces itself as the “Mound of Babel” of travellers. Beyond, lies the city’s site, roughened with long undulating heaps, and mountain-like mounds. Long lines of palms hem in the Euphrates, which is seen winding through the midst of the ancient city. The distant prospect presents a withered flowerless expanse, perfectly flat, unless where fretted by the lofty embankments of ancient canals, or broken by the dark mounds of the ancient ruins. “On all sides,” says Mr Layard, “fragments of glass, marble, pottery, and inscribed brick, are mingled with that peculiar nitrous and blanched soil, which, bred from the remains of ancient habitations, checks or destroys vegetation, and renders the site of Babylon a naked and hideous waste. Owls start from the scanty thickets, and the foul jackall skulks through the furrows. Truly ‘the glory of king-

doms and the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency is as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.' Their houses are full of doleful creatures. Owls dwell there, and satyrs dance there !"

From the great ruin we have mentioned, called by the Arabs "Babel," and the northernmost of the mounds, the yet traceable remains of the city cover a space of three miles to the south, and of two miles and a-half on the east. This area would have formed but a mere speck in the ancient Babylon. Many times this space must have been enclosed within her walls. The city must have extended from the point where we stand, if not from a more northern limit, onward to the Birs Nimrood, a distance of ten miles to the southwest, and perhaps beyond it. What, then, has become of the edifices? Those that remain, in the shape of huge mounds, were evidently its great public buildings, and lie crowded together as if they had stood in the heart of the city. The Babylonians had no access to quarries of alabaster and limestone, which gave durability and splendour to the palaces of Nineveh: their only available building materials were the clay and bitumen of their plain, formed into brick; and the consequence has been, that their common structures, reared of such perishable matters, have perished, and left behind no trace of their former exist-

ence, save the dire sterility which their bituminous particles have inflicted on the plain.

As we have said, Mr Layard attempted a renewed exploration of the ruins; but with no great result. The Birs Nimrood stands on the edge of the vast marsh formed by the waters of the Hindigah Canal and the annual inundations of the Euphrates. It is a vast heap of bricks, slug, and broken pottery. "The dry nitrous earth of the parched plain," says Mr Layard, "driven before the furious south wind, has thrown over the huge mass a thin covering of soil, in which no herb or green thing can find nourishment, or take root. The whole is 235 feet in perpendicular height. Innumerable are the guesses which have been formed of its original form and use. After all that has been written about it, the most probable conjecture still is, that it is the temple of Belus described by Herodotus; and that, as it originally stood, it was a solid tower, consisting of a series of huge steps or terraces. It may have had a temple a-top, for the double purpose of astrology and worship. M. Von Gumpach, in his observations on 2 Kings xx. 8-11, conjectures that the sun-dial of the passage may have been presented to Ahaz by Tiglath Pileser, and may have consisted of a series of steps or terraces, on which an upright

pole cast its shadow. He observes, that the hours were marked by the coincidence of the shadow of the gnomon with the edge of the steps (degrees). Mr Layard gives the same form to the restored Birs Nimrood, and asks, "Could these great structures have been raised for any astronomical purpose?" On all the bricks that have been taken from the Birs Nimrood, the name and titles of Nebuchadnezzar are legibly stamped. This only proves, however, that he may have repaired the edifice; not that he was its original builder.

Tunnels were opened by Mr Layard in "Babel," the most northerly mound, at the bottom of the heap, on a level with the plain. These trenches exposed to view the ancient building, consisting of solid piers, and walls of brick masonry, buried under an enormous mass of loose bricks, earth, and rubbish. He found no remains whatever of sculptured stone or painted alabaster.

In the centre of the existing ruins, on the river's bank, and occupying a spot which must have been nearly in the midst of old Babylon, occurs one of the largest mounds on the site. The Arabs call it the Mujelibé, or the "overturned." A solid mass of masonry, consisting of bricks of a fine yellow colour, and fresh as if put there but yesterday, protrudes above the

debris of brick, tile, and bits of stone, which form the mound. Many of the bricks have a thick coating of enamel or glaze, and retain their original brilliant colouring of red, and yellow, and blue, as, we know, was the manner of the Babylonians to paint the walls of their chambers. Mr Layard tells us that he sought in vain for some clue to the general plan of the building. Almost every brick is stamped with the name of Nebuchadnezzar; and as this ruin is the general quarry of the district, there is scarce a house in Hillah which is not emblazoned over and over with the name of this monarch. If the traveller strikes his foot against a brick on the plain, he finds it has this name impressed upon it. Have we not here evidence of that overweening vanity which is imputed to that monarch in the Bible, and which found its chastisement in the madness in which it issued? Were Nebuchadnezzar to return, he might exclaim in astonishment, as once before in pride—Is this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power and for the honour of my majesty! Are these dark mounds, this blackened waste, all that remains of the glorious city that occupied this plain; which men came from afar to see; and which was the crowning trophy of my power! “*I will cause the arrogancy of*

the proud to cease." Mr Layard spent some time in a search—which almost every traveller has engaged in, though hitherto wholly without success—for the walls of Babylon. Not a trace of them could he find. Considering the enormous extent and size of these ramparts, if ancient history may be trusted, it must surprise us that they have so completely disappeared. "*Cast her up as heaps: destroy her utterly.*" "*Her foundations are fallen, her walls are thrown down.*" "*The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken.*"

Babylon was the "land of graven images," and her inhabitants were "mad upon their idols," and yet scarce a statue or painting of any of their gods remains. A mutilated figure, evidently that of a Babylonian divinity, did Mr Layard dig up in the Mujelibé; but, with this exception, scarce a graven tablet or statue has turned up in all the vast heaps of ruins. "*All the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.*"

We have alluded to a discrepancy betwixt inspired and profane writers on the subject of the fall of Babylon, which has long defied solution. It is in connexion with this difficulty that the most important Chaldean discovery of recent times has taken place; and a solution having been obtained, the difficulty has now been transformed into a striking confirmation of the sacred

narrative. According to Daniel, Belshazzar was king of Babylon when the city was taken ; and the prophet has described the revel which was held in the royal palace on the very night on which the besiegers entered and put the monarch to the sword. But Herodotus and Berosus give a totally different account of the matter. They tell us that Nabonidus was king at the time : that he was not in the city, but in the open country, advancing with an army to raise the siege ; and that being met by a superior force he capitulated, and had an honourable retirement allowed him. There was no reconciling of these two statements ; one of them, it was said, must be wrong. If Nabonidus was king, how could Belshazzar be king ? and if the monarch was without the walls, taking measures for the relief of his capital, how could he be within, rioting with his nobles ? If the historian has spoken truth, the prophet must have spoken error. And here we have two against one ; for both Herodotus and Berosus testify that Nabonidus was king of Babylon when the city was taken by Darius the Mede. But mark what happened. Three years ago two clay cylinders turned up in the ruins of Ur of the Chaldees, and the cuneiform inscription on these cylinders, as translated by Rawlinson, is to this effect—namely, that the eldest son of Nabonidus

was named Bel-sher-ezer, and that he was admitted by his father to a share in the government. The Bel-sher-ezer of the cylinders is undoubtedly the Belshazzar of Daniel. It thus appears that Belshazzar was joint king with his father; and being so, what arrangement so likely to be adopted, when the Medo-Persians advanced to besiege Babylon, as that the one king should remain in the city and conduct the defence, while the other should employ himself in raising an army in the provinces, and fall upon the rear of the Medo-Persians? Thus the discrepancy vanishes. Not only is the difficulty solved—it becomes a proof of a most satisfactory kind, that the Book of Daniel was written from original and independent sources. Had the author been an impostor, and had the book been written, as some have said it was, long after the events predicted in it took place, the author undoubtedly would have followed the most credible authorities within his reach, and so would just have repeated the story of Herodotus and Berosus, and we should have heard nothing of Belshazzar, or his impious feast and miserable end. But living at the time, and living in Babylon itself, and an eye-witness of the feast which ended so tragically, he describes what he saw; and more than two thousand years afterwards, two cylinders of clay, with contemporary

writing upon them, are discovered in the ruins of an ancient Chaldean city, which verify his statement.

The recent appearance of Mr Loftus' "Travels and Researches in Chaldea and Susiana," enables us to supplement this part of our subject with notices of the most recent discoveries in the Lower Mesopotamia. This unquestionably is the oldest region on the earth, having been the building ground of the human family in the age after the flood. Here their traces still remain uneffaced in debris-covered buildings, and writings whose meaning has been wrapt up for ages in the mystery of the cuneiform character. These monuments are rather beyond our proper field, which is that of "Fulfilled Prophecy;" but when we think of the high antiquity with which they stand connected, and the evidence they afford of the truth of Scripture history, we are unable to resist the temptation of turning aside to behold objects so august and venerable.

Let us visit first the ruins of Niffar, about sixty miles to the south-east of Hillah. This, according to Sir Henry Rawlinson, is the Calneh of the Bible. The ruins are found on the line forming the northern boundary of the Chaldea of antiquity. It was the capital, according to

Rawlinson, of the region, and bore the name of Belus, and was the true site of that tower which was begun by those who said, "Go to, let us build us a city, and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven." The ruins of the tower have not been identified. The existing remains on this site are those of the edifices erected by the earliest king of whom the cuneiform inscriptions give us any notice. His name has not yet been deciphered, but his era appears to have been as early as B.C. 2300. The city was called Tel Anu, from the god Anu, the name under which Noah was worshipped by his idolatrous descendants. The Babylon that afterwards arose on the banks of the Euphrates borrowed its name, Rawlinson thinks, from this earlier Babel, and original head of the kingdom of Nimrod. The only objection to the theory that makes Babel and Calneh identical, is, that they are mentioned as two separate and distinct places in the list, in Genesis, of the earliest cities built by man.

We next transport ourselves to a group of ruins on the right bank of the Euphrates, near where it is joined by the Shat-el-Hie, a branch of the Tigris. The ruins are about half-a-mile in diameter. They include, as the most remarkable object, an erection seventy feet high, which is the only example of a Babylonian temple, in tolerable

preservation, not wholly covered up. In form it is a parallelogram, and, like all edifices of true Chaldean origin, one of its corners points due north. It consists of two massive storeys, the lower one twenty-seven feet high, and the upper fourteen. It was in this ruin that the cylinders were found that solved the famous difficulty to which we have referred above, for this site is the "Ur of the Chaldees." The cylinders were found about six feet below the rubbish which covers the top of the edifice, standing one in each corner of the building. Their inscriptions, as read by Sir Henry Rawlinson, disclose to us an antiquity far more remote than any other writing, save the Bible, has yet brought before us. Here are traces of the first migrations of mankind. A branch of the Cuthite family settled here, either in the way of invasion or colonisation, led probably, as the Bible hints, by Nimrod. These cylinders, moreover, have put us in possession of a series of kings from Uruk, B.C. 2230, to Nabonidus, under whom Babylon fell, B.C. 540, and in this list occurs the name of Kudurmapula, the "ravager of Syria," whom Sir Henry identifies with the Chedorlaomer of Scripture. The name Hur occurs on the cylinders, identifying the site with that "Ur of the Chaldees" where the "Lord of glory" appeared unto Abraham, and called him

to leave the "land of his fathers." Proofs are found in these ruins of the idolatry into which the Chaldeans had already sunk, and which necessitated the separation of the chosen seed; for this very building, and similar ones on surrounding sites, were temples dedicated by king Uruk to the moon.

An hundred and twenty miles south-east of Babylon is Warka, which Sir Henry Rawlinson takes to be the Erech of Scripture. The ruins are next in magnitude and importance to those of Babylon. On the summit of the principal edifice the spectator can trace the ancient walls, which appear to have been a huge embankment of earth, some six miles in circumference, and still forty feet high in some places. Far beyond the line of walls extended the city, for the traces of the suburbs are to be seen outside. The enclosed area is occupied with undulating mounds, brown and scorched by the sun, and cleft by innumerable channels and ravines. Mr Loftus laid bare on this site the façade of an ancient building, which was the more interesting, that it gave us for the first time a full view of the exterior of a Babylonian palace, and a correct idea of the style of the earliest builders. It was simple to rudeness. Ornament there was none, save the column, and it appeared in the most primitive form,

without cornice, or capital, or diminution of shaft, and not hewn, but brick-built. On this site, too, traces have been found of that idolatry into which mankind so early and unhappily lapsed.

How impressive to mark how all beings and all societies on earth are wielded by God for his own ends! Babylon, when a flourishing power, was made by God the instrument of chastising the chosen people; and now, when she lies in ruins, she becomes the means of confuting and silencing the gainsayer. Even she is made a labourer in the great work of elevating the species: that mighty void where the earliest kingdoms stood—that vast physical ruin in the midst of the earth has its moral uses. It authenticates on a great scale the Bible's truth: and that is an end a thousand times more important to the ultimate and general good of the world than would the occupancy meanwhile of this fair region with cities and men.

Her ruins are more than classic—they are sacred; and Layard has well described the emotions which cannot but be awakened in the mind of every traveller by a visit to the scene of so many great and solemn events. "Here," says he, "Nebuchadnezzar boasted of the glories of his city, and was punished for his pride. To

these deserted halls were brought the captives of Judea. In them, Daniel, undazzled by the glories around him, remained steadfast to his faith, rose to be a governor among his rulers, and prophesied the downfall of the kingdom. There was held Belshazzar's feast, and was seen the writing upon the wall. Between those crumbling mounds, Cyrus entered the neglected gates. Those massive ruins cover the spot where Alexander died."

CHAPTER VI.

Arabia—The Ishmaelites.

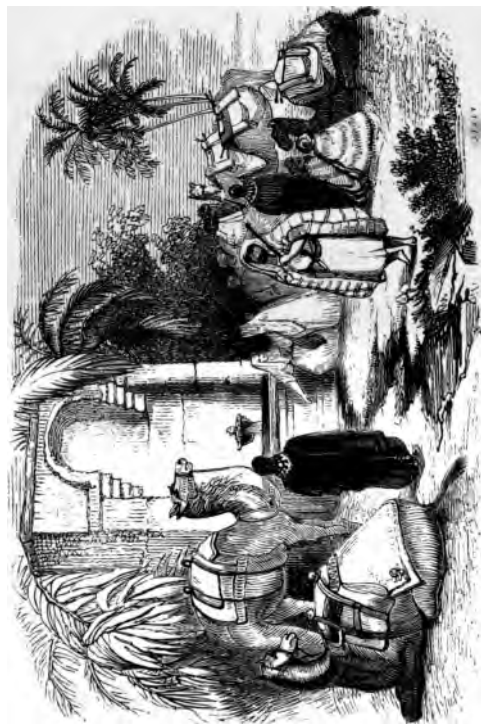
"And also of the son of the bond-woman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed. . . . And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran."—GEN. xxi. 13, 20, 21.

"And the angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. . . . And he will be a wild man his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."—GEN. xvi. 10, 12.

Arabia—The Ishmaelites.

The great wilderness—Arabia the Stony—Arabia the Happy—Arabia the Sandy—Prophecy regarding Ishmael—Numerous ancient nations extinct: the Ishmaelites still exist—"A great nation"—"A wild man"—Still dwells "in the presence of all his brethren"—Day-spring awaiting these children of the desert.





HALT IN THE DESERT.

ARABIA—THE ISHMAELITES.

Now we shall leave the land of Chaldea, with all the glory which its flowerless turf covers, and turn our steps into the desert. We are now on the bosom of the mighty wilderness, which interposes an expanse of naked sands eight hundred miles in breadth, between Babylon and the green banks of the Nile. Here there is no scenery to detain us by its beauty, and no ruins to divert us from the straight course. The country contains only one monument of prophecy, and of that only shall we speak. We mean its people.

Arabia, which we are now traversing, extends from the Euphrates on the east, to the shores of the Red Sea on the west. Its southern boundary, which is about a thousand miles in extent, is washed by the waters of the Indian Ocean. This vast peninsula is commonly divided into three regions: Araby the Stony, which adjoins on the south the lands of Judea and Moab, and consists, as its name

imports, of naked mountains and plains, covered with flints. Araby the Happy, which is a breadth of hilly territory, extending along the shores of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, its fertile soil covered with plantations, pasture-grounds, and corn-fields. It is also rich in various gums and spices; and this has obtained for it the name of the Land of Frankincense. Araby the Sandy, which includes the extensive tract which stretches from the mountains of Edom to the shores of the Persian Gulf. This is a boundless expanse of sand, without shade or verdure, broken at long intervals by a solitary fountain, which creates a little patch of green in the midst of the desert, and nourishes, it may be, a few palm trees, whose shade is not less grateful to the traveller in these burning wastes than are the waters which flow beside them. Such is the land which, from the days of their progenitor, has been the dwelling of the Ishmaelites.

Now, as we pass on, we shall open the Volume of Prophecy, and test the truth of what is foretold in it concerning the venerable people among whom our path lies. Here we find it predicted of Ishmael: "I will make him a great nation. He will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him."—"He shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." It is admitted that the prophecy regards not so much

Ishmael, as the posterity of Ishmael ; and in them are we to look for its accomplishment.

It is now four thousand years since the predictions we have just quoted were given. Since that time how many great changes have come to pass ! The world has been turned upside down. Many nations not then in existence have come into being, have flourished, and gone to their graves. Violence and War have gone round the earth, breaking its kingdoms in pieces, and making an utter end of their inhabitants. Many nations we now search for in vain ; they were flourishing once, but their place at this day is nowhere to be found ; and as we pass over the borders of Arabia, we tremble lest *its* people also should have passed away. The once rich Plain of Babylon, from which we have just come, is now a desert, without an inhabitant ; and after the depopulation of so rich a country, can we expect to find this wilderness peopled ? The warlike nation of the Chaldeans is now extinct ; and surely it is too much to hope that the simple children of the desert shall have maintained their existence ? Yet so did the Word of the Lord foretell ; and his word cannot fall to the ground. Here, on the bosom of the same sands which were trodden by their father Ishmael, are the black tents of the roving tribes of his descendants. How astonishing is this ! Those who were once the masters of the

world have perished ; yet the Ishmaelites are still numerous, and powerful, and independent. What a monument are they of the truth of prophecy !

“ I will make him a great nation.”—The descendants of Ishmael speedily became numerous and powerful. They were not the first, it is true, to people the Arabian peninsula—its original inhabitants were the descendants of Joktan, the son of Heber ; but Ishmael having settled in this part of the world, his posterity soon became, and have ever since continued to be, the most powerful and distinguished branch of the Arabian nation. Their importance as a people may be judged of from the fact that, when the rest of the nations fell before the four great monarchies as they successively arose, the Ishmaelites alone stood erect. And when the last of these monarchies had fallen, the posterity of Ishmael took their turn in founding an empire, which, in point of greatness, rivalled that of Rome. In little more than a hundred years did this remarkable people carry their arms and their religion, their literature and their science, from the banks of the Euphrates to the shores of the Atlantic—from the borders of India to the confines of France. And even at this day, though they have now retired within their native deserts, indelible traces of their former power and influence are found in many of the nations of Europe.

“He will be a wild man.”—There is no other single term which could depict the whole character of the Arab—“a wild man.” A fact so notorious as this stands in need neither of illustration nor proof. The desert, to this day, is his dwelling. He still spurns the restraints of society, and still prefers the sweets of a roving independence, and the precarious supply which plunder or his flocks may yield, to the order, security, and plenty of a settled mode of life. Time has mellowed and greatly altered the character of other nations—has induced on them a gravity and sobriety; but it has not tamed the Ishmaelite; his temper is still as fiery, his habits are as lawless, and his manners as patriarchal, as they were four thousand years ago. There is not a single encampment on the face of the desert we are now traversing, the interior of which does not exhibit, at this day, the same domestic scenes which are so beautifully depicted on the first pages of the Bible. His hand is against every man, and every man’s hand is against him. Even to this day he is not reconciled to his brethren of mankind. They regard him as an outlaw: he holds them in defiance. Where is the traveller who would venture into his deserts without an escort? where is the people with whom he is in alliance? and where is the nation which has not smarted from his violence, and attempted, but failed, to chastise him?

“He shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.”—The precise import of this part of the prophecy is somewhat doubtful. It has commonly been understood as intimating that the Ishmaelitish nation should never be conquered. Granting that this is the sense of the prediction—of which, however we are by no means certain—there can be no doubt as to its fulfilment. The tide of Persian, of Macedonian, of Roman conquest, each in its turn, approached these deserts, but was rolled back from their border. All attempts—and many have been made—to impose upon the free necks of the sons of Ishmael the yoke of foreign dominion, have signally failed. Nothing can be more explicit on this head than the testimony of one whom all will acknowledge to be an unexceptionable witness: “The body of the nation,” says Gibbon, “has escaped the yoke of the most powerful monarchies: the arms of Sesostris and Cyrus, of Pompey and Trajan, could never achieve the conquest of Arabia.” But to us it is not clear that the prophecy refers to the national independence of the Ishmaelites: we are rather disposed to view it—as indeed appears to be most agreeable to the obvious meaning of its terms—as intimating that the inheritance of this people should immediately adjoin, or lie before that of their brethren. In this sense Ishmael himself dwelt in the presence of all his brethren; so did his

immediate descendants ; and so do his posterity at this day. Arabia is occupied by two races—the descendants of Joktan, and the descendants of Ishmael. These tribes are related to each other, being sprung from the same venerable stock—Heber. In the presence of the Khatah tribe, their brethren, do the Ishmaelites still dwell. But doubtless the prophecy implies, if it does not bear as its first meaning, the continued national existence and independence of the posterity of Ishmael. At war with the world, they yet have defied all attempts to root them out of their patrimony. Of the nations in existence when the prophecy was given, we can find only one in addition to the Ishmaelites in existence now, and not one inhabiting the country it then occupied. But after the lapse of four thousand years, we behold the descendants of Ishmael pitching their tents in the same desert, and dwelling in the presence of all their brethren !

But now we draw nigh the border of Egypt, and we leave the wilderness behind us, with its black tents and its patriarchal tribes. Alas ! they who never submitted to the arms of the conqueror have long borne the yoke of superstition. Soon may that yoke be broken ! We have seen the fulfilment of one prophecy : may we soon behold the fulfilment of another : “ They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him. The multitude of camels

shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah ; all they from Sheba shall come : they shall bring gold and incense ; and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee ; the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee ; they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory ! " Bidding adieu, then, to these sands and their benighted children, on whom a blessed day-spring is yet to shine, we go forward to the banks of the Nile—the land from which God brought his Vine, whose boughs shall yet fill the earth.



CHAPTER VII.

Egypt.

"The burden of Egypt. Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it. . . . And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts. And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the rivers shall be wasted and dried up. . . . Surely the princes of Zoan are fools, the counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish: how say ye unto Pharaoh, I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings? Where are they? where are thy wise men? and let them tell thee now, and let them know what the Lord of hosts hath purposed upon Egypt. . . . And the Lord shall smite Egypt: he shall smite and heal it. . . . In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance."—Isa. xix. 1-25.

Egypt.

Enter Egypt—Egypt by moonlight—Day reveals Egypt's desolation—Early eminence of the Egyptians in mathematics, &c.—in architecture—in the useful arts—Their mode of writing history—Prophecy of Egypt's fall—Ruins of Thebes, the No of Scripture—Temple of Karnac—Palace of Sesostris—The Nile—Ruins of Memphis, Joseph's city—Revolutions Egypt has undergone—Ruled over by strangers—Inhabited by a "base" people—Egypt a witness for the Bible.

EGYPT.

WE enter Egypt by the great highway of the open desert. On our left are the blue waters of the Arabian Gulf, and before us is a flat expanse of dreary country. We pass hastily over it, and soon the Nile, with its stripe of verdure on either bank, rises before us. We stand beside its waters, and then do we feel that we are indeed in Egypt—in that land over which the angel spread his dark wings, when the first-born were destroyed. Solemn remembrances come back on the mind. The miracles of Zoan's field revive before us. Ages are forgotten—and we seem to be moving amid the men and the scenes of which, in ages long gone past, this country was the stage.

We arrive, perhaps, a little after noon. The sky is exquisitely clear, and suffused with a glow of rose-coloured light; a gorgeous sun-set succeeds; and next comes a brief but delicious twilight—it is night. The vault above us is bespangled with

stars, which to us appear unusually large and brilliant. The moon comes from behind the Arabian mountains; and as she holds her course through the serene firmament, sheds such a flood of rich and soft radiance on this fallen land as veils its desolation. The bosom of the Nile, its edgings of deep emerald, the groves of date and palm trees, the minarets of the city, the columns and walls of temples, the summits of the pyramids, all tinted and beautified by the moon's resplendent glory, are blended into one picture of soft and majestic loveliness. We imagine for the moment that Egypt has come down to us, her beauty and splendour unimpaired as in the days of the Pharaohs. But soon the illusion is dispelled. The day comes; the sun emerges from the bosom of the desert, and under his faithful light, Egypt appears as it is—a gigantic and awe-inspiring picture of commingled grandeur and desolation, fertility and barrenness. The Nile is seen contending with the neighbouring desert for the possession of his ancient and lovely valley, which every year is obliged to retreat a little before the advancing sands; the fields which were cultivated by the ancient Egyptians are overwhelmed by the wilderness; the cities lie buried beneath a mass of rubbish and sand; the sepulchres of the dead are choked up; and groves of broken columns and roofless walls, covered with paintings, and sculpture,

and hieroglyphics, mark the site of the temples and palaces.

A very cursory survey of the monuments which yet remain in this land, is sufficient to convince us that the glowing descriptions which the historians of antiquity have left us of the power, grandeur, and refinement of the ancient Egyptians, are not in the least overcharged. If not the country in which the sciences and arts were invented, there can be no question that Egypt is the land where they were perfected, and where first they flourished. Many of the abstruser sciences were the object of the ardent study of the Egyptians; and in these they had made great attainments. It was in the Egyptian schools that the sages of other countries gleaned their knowledge of mathematics, astronomy, and medicine. Their style of architecture they carried to the highest excellence of which it was capable; and their public monuments were erected on a scale of size and magnificence which have never been equalled. The ruins of other countries may rival in beauty, or excel in justness and elegance of proportion, those of Egypt; but none make the least approach to them in their stupendous bulk, and solemn grandeur. And as regards its cities, it may be doubted whether Babylon itself greatly exceeded the splendours of Thebes with her "hundred gates." The progress the Egyptians had made in the arts

which tend to embellish life, is testified at this day by the paintings still visible in the "Tombs of the Kings," which are distinguished by their spirit, if not their accuracy, and the brilliancy of their colouring, and by the inimitable grace and beauty which they have given to some of their statues, and the air of majesty communicated to others. In the useful arts they appear to have been very little, if at all, inferior to ourselves. Their chambers were filled with as elegant and luxurious furniture as our own saloons at this day; and their tables testified also to their great knowledge of the culinary art. Moreover, this singular people were the first to compose what we cannot but regard as great literary works. They had produced volumes of history before Herodotus lived, and works of poetry before the age of Homer. These still survive. Where? it may be asked, in astonishment. Their public monuments were inscribed with the reigns of their kings—the history of their country in symbolical writing; and their temples were covered with the most life-like representations of the most celebrated exploits of some of the most distinguished of their princes. The one we cannot but regard as a volume of history, and the other as a poem; and no pages are so graphic as these, and none can be more durable. Here, on the walls of this temple, represented in sculpture, are the

more brilliant of the warlike achievements of Sesostris. Here is the marshalling—the march—the fight—the agony of the dying—the triumph of the return—all told in marble, with a truth, and fire, and splendour worthy of the great father of bards himself. In fine, nowhere else did power, and science, and art, accumulate so many trophies within the same space; and here, accordingly, their memorials are met with in a profusion which overwhelms the imagination of the traveller, and fatigues the powers of the narrator.

Let us muse an hour amid the solemn splendours of Luxor and Carnac. But we must not allow the magnificence of these ruins to so engross us as that we shall forget the object of our visit. What evidence have we here of the truth of prophecy? Let us read and compare.

“Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord God, Howl ye, Woe worth the day! For the day is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen. And the sword shall come upon Egypt, and great pain shall be in Ethiopia, when the slain shall fall in Egypt, and they shall take away her multitude, and her foundation shall be broken down. Thus saith the Lord God, I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of Noph; and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt: and I will put a

fear in the land of Egypt. And I will make Pathros desolate, and I will set fire in Zoan, and will execute judgments in No. And I will pour my fury upon Sin, the strength of Egypt; and I will cut off the multitude of No. And I will set fire in Egypt: Sin shall have great pain, and No shall be rent asunder, and Noph shall have distresses daily. The young men of Aven, and of Phi-beseth shall fall by the sword: and these cities shall go into captivity. At Tehaphnehes also the day shall be darkened, when I shall break there the yokes of Egypt; and the pomp of her strength shall cease in her: as for her, a cloud shall cover her, and her daughters shall go into captivity. Thus will I execute judgment in Egypt, and they shall know that I am the Lord."

The ruins amid which we are at present seated are those of Thebes—the No of the Scriptures, and the earliest capital of Egypt. Its origin is lost in the obscurity of ages. Memphis superseded it as the metropolis of the country, though it never rivalled it in splendour; and even of Memphis, the foundations were laid at a period prior to the dawn of authentic history. So great is the magnificence of these ruins, that every one who has seen them declares that language is utterly unable to convey any adequate idea of them. The ground here is covered with groves of columns of a colossal size,

sphinxes by hundreds, fragments of statues, obelisks, gateways, porticoes, and halls. Here are the remains of four large temples; one of these—the Temple of Carnac—appears to have excelled all the others in point of magnitude and splendour. This temple is universally pronounced to be the greatest ever made by hands. Noble avenues, miles in length, and guarded on both sides by a row of sphinxes, lead up to it from almost every point of the compass. Traversing this approach, we come to the grand entrance, which is formed by two pyramidal moles which ascend to a height of upwards of a hundred feet. Some of these moles (for the edifice has twelve principal entrances) are constructed of granite, and richly covered with beautiful hieroglyphics and sculpture. Passing through the colossal gateway, we find ourselves in a spacious court, once adorned with hundreds of columns, which are now fallen. All round this court runs a pillared portico. In the interior is the main sanctuary. It is an immense hall, one hundred and seventy feet by three hundred and twenty-nine. Its roof is composed of large blocks of granite laid across. It is adorned with clusters of stars, on a green ground. The walls are covered with painted sculpture of a kind suited to the mysterious purposes to which this chamber was devoted. A hundred and thirty-four columns support the roof

Every column is sculptured and painted. The exterior walls exhibit, in sculpture, the wars of Rameses. Around this inner fane rise many inferior temples. Any where else these would be accounted magnificent structures; but here they are overshadowed by the enormous bulk of the principal temple. The field of ruins formed by this single temple is about a mile in diameter. The other three temples, whose remains adjoin those of Carnac, appear to have been of extraordinary dimensions, though inferior to the one we have just described. All agree that they must be seen, before their magnitude can be conceived of, or even credited. It may help to convey to the mind some idea of their size, to state that an Arab village is built on the roof of one of them—the Temple at Edfou.

Egypt was a land of idols; but this appears to have been the high place of her idolatry. How is the prophecy now accomplished upon this land: "*Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt; and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence!*"—"I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease."

Thebes—populous No—was watered by the Nile, somewhat in the manner that Babylon was by the Euphrates; accordingly, the ruins of the city are seen on the west of the river, as well as here

on the east. Let us pass over the stream and spend a few moments in surveying them. Here, too, are the remains of temples. Here is the famous statue of Memnon, which is said to have emitted, at sunrise, melodious sounds, which, from a low and scarcely perceptible murmur, grew by degrees into the loud and clear tones of the trumpet. Here are colossal statues and sphinxes innumerable, half-buried in the soil, which ages have accumulated around them. These have beheld generations rise and fade on the plains of Egypt; they have seen dynasties sink at their feet; on them the day of glory has shone, and now the night of ruin darkens around them; still they wait here, to welcome, with the same look of austere majesty, the stranger who comes from a far land to gaze on them; and here they will remain, no doubt, till the end of time, shedding a dim glory on these plains—the twilight of a day of splendour which has passed away, never more to return. Here, too, separated from the ruins of the city by a range of naked hills, in a low, winding, gloomy valley, shut in by iron rocks, are the “Tombs of the Kings.” They are gorgeous halls, hewn in the heart of the mountain, richly adorned with painting and sculpture, and in point of size and brilliancy, rivalling the halls of living monarchs. In this, the “house of his glory,” lie Pharaoh and his princes.

Retracing our steps over the hills, and returning again to the ruins of the city, one other edifice only shall we direct particular attention to—the Memonium, or Palace of Sesostris. This is the temple we have already alluded to as exhibiting on its walls the battle-scenes of this great king. The portals stand wide open; the royal guards are gone; and we may pass on without challenge into the very presence-chamber of the monarch. But though living guards there are none, we pass between gigantic statues, which line the entrance, with folded arms, and a serene and tranquil look. We enter the halls of the monarch, and beauty and mystery beam upon us from walls and roof. Both are blazoned with symbolical representations—the signs of the zodiac, globes, stars, and other celestial representations. On the northern wall is a representation of Sesostris himself. He is overshadowed by the boughs of the tree of life, and the deities are seen writing his name upon its leaves.

Not only have the Egyptians, by the durable materials which they used in building, and the scale on which their public edifices were constructed, transmitted their temples to us—their very bodies themselves have come down to our day. The art of embalming, as is well known, was universally practised amongst them; and the consequence is, that we may see, at this day, the forms and features

of the very men by whom these mighty fabrics were erected—men who lived four thousand years ago—the kings, the warriors, the sages, and the citizens of Egypt. After a slumber of many ages, their remains are as perfect as when they were newly laid in what were designed to be their last resting-places. But, alas! their bodies have been preserved only to be desecrated. Their tombs have been violated, and now their bones literally “lie scattered about the grave’s mouth;” while by some, the mummies have been carried into lands far distant, and which, when these men lived, and for ages after, were altogether unknown. But the many attractions on this part of our journey make us forget the resolution we made at starting. We return.

The common dwellings of Thebes, formed probably of brick, have utterly perished ages ago. They have left not a vestige, unless the mounds of earth around us can be regarded as such—a distinction to which we think they may lay claim. On these mounds, and especially adjoining the walls of the temples—looking all the meaner from their close proximity to the memorials of such unrivalled magnificence—are the mud huts of the few poor and miserable Arabs who inhabit the site, and who live mainly by digging into mummy pits, and selling the antiquities they discover to strangers. To such a base end has the mighty Thebes—“populous

No"—come: "*I will execute judgments in No*"—" *I will cut off the multitude of No*"—" *No shall be rent asunder.*"

We cannot visit all the places referred to in the prophecy we have quoted—all of which are now destroyed; but there is one other celebrated site which we must visit—Memphis, the Noph of Scripture, and the scene of Joseph's glory.

We embark on the Nile. The noble river, advancing with a slow and majestic pace towards the ocean, carries us on its bosom. The papyrus—a celebrated plant—still fringes the stream; the broad leaf of the lotus, so inseparably connected with all the architecture of this land, swims on the surface—its large, lovely, white blossom finely contrasted with the dark waters of the river. As the current bears us along, we pass, at intervals, mud villages, inhabited by Arabs; groves of dates; and not unfrequently a sycamore, whose deep shadow is welcome indeed under the burning sun of Egypt. We perceive also crops of cotton, and fields of Indian corn, with little canals running off to irrigate the surface; for here the husbandman still waters the ground with his foot. One thing strikes us, and that is the deep rich verdure of the great valley through which the Nile flows—made lovelier, doubtless, by the naked sands on either side of it. But, lo! the pyramids rise before us—those moun-

tains of stone which have excited the astonishment and wonder of all ages. They rise before us veiled in the same mystery as ever—from their sides the clouds seem destined never to break up. Here, adjoining the pyramids, flourished Memphis—Noph—which, after Thebes, became the capital of Egypt. Let us ascend one of the pyramids, and from its summit look over the site of the former metropolis. The ascent is toilsome enough; but the summit once gained, we look far and wide over the surrounding region. On the one side is the desert, arranged in vast steps or waves, and stretching away into Lybia; on the other is the valley of the Nile; itself a river of verdure, as Lindsay terms it, flowing through a vast wilderness. Immediately beneath us is the space once occupied by Memphis. Here were spread forth the dwellings, the palaces, the temples of Noph, interspersed with the groves where her sages taught; here was the prison where Joseph languished, the hall where he interpreted the monarch's dream, and the streets through which he rode in triumph, while they cried before him, "Bow the knee!" But what remains are there here now of the great metropolis that once occupied this site? Thebes, though desolate, can still boast the imperishable remains of her stupendous temples; but here there is nothing but bare sands. Scarce even does a broken column remain to tell that here

stood Memphis: "*Noph shall be waste and desolate without an inhabitant.*"

Pharaoh was "the son of ancient kings;" but it was foretold that his sceptre should pass into the hands of strangers. The Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Saracens, each in their turn have invaded, conquered, and governed this land. It is now more than two thousand years since Egypt was ruled by a native prince: "*There shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt*"—" *The sceptre of Egypt shall depart away.*"

In the seventh century, the Saracens took possession of Egypt. This people have, in every age, shown themselves more fit to conquer than to govern. Their rule oppressed the inhabitants and impoverished the country. To aid them in the task of governing, or rather occupying Egypt, they imported a multitude of slaves from Circassia—the Mamelukes—trained them in military tactics, and formed them into bands, for the purpose of keeping the natives in subjection. These soldiers soon found out their importance; and, rebelling against their masters, usurped the government. This happened in the thirteenth century; and, during the three hundred years following, Egypt was governed by this race of strangers and slaves. The country was next taken possession of by the Turks—strangers, too, like those who preceded them. The

sultan governs Egypt by means of a pacha. The person selected for this office is always one who has made his first appearance in Egypt either as an adventurer or a slave. The late pacha, Mehemet Ali, was a native of Iconium, in Asia Minor. He was a tobacco merchant in his youth; and having been sent into Egypt by the governor of his native town, to assist his son, who was captain of a small troop which he had raised for the service of the sultan, Mehemet raised himself by his services to the distinguished post he ultimately held. Thus has the throne of the Pharaohs, if such it can be called, been occupied for centuries by strangers and slaves. The end these rulers have steadily kept in view has been precisely what might have been expected—to get rich, and that by the most direct means; and these they have found to be extortion and oppression. The capabilities of the country are to a great degree destroyed; agriculture languishes; the arts and sciences are extinct; and the land is now empty, as the prophecy foretold, of all whereof it was once full—a night of sevenfold ignorance and barbarism has overtaken it: “*I will sell the land into the hand of the wicked; and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers.*”

This illustrious land is now the basest of kingdoms. In Egypt there are only two classes—the

conquerors and the vanquished. The former indulge in every crime which can disgrace the character of rulers—selfishness, rapacity, injustice. The latter are sunk into the most deplorable condition. Brutalized by the wars and revolutions which have for centuries surrounded them, exasperated by the injuries to which they are daily subject, stained by every vice, and groaning under every evil, the people of Egypt have fallen to an ineffable depth of wretchedness and meanness. Every traveller who speaks of them, loads them with a profusion of the vilest terms which language supplies. Thevenot terms them “exceedingly wicked, great rogues, cowardly, lazy, hypocrites.” Of the Mamelukes, the military body whom the Turks long employed in the government of the country, Volney says: “Educated in ignorance and superstition, they become ferocious, from habitual murder; perfidious, from cabals; seditious, from riot; base, deceitful, and corrupted by every species of debauchery.” Of the people, Volney says: “We may easily conceive that, in such a country, every thing is correspondent with its wretched government. The peasants are hired labourers, who only get what is barely sufficient to sustain life. Their habitations are mud-walled huts, where they are suffocated with heat and smoke, and often attacked with distempers, arising from uncleanness, damp-

ness, and unwholesome food; and to these physical evils are added continual alarms, the dread of the robberies of the Arabs, and the extortions of the Mamelukes, family quarrels, and all the miseries of constant civil wars.

"This is a faithful picture of all the villages, and no less so of the towns. Even at Cairo, the stranger, on his arrival, is struck with the appearance of universal wretchedness and misery. The crowds thronging the streets, present nothing but filthy rags. Every thing he sees or hears reminds him that he is in the abode of slavery and tyranny. Nothing is spoken of but intestine broils, public misery, pecuniary extortions, bastinadoes, and murders. There is no protection for life or property. Human blood is shed like that of the vilest animals. Justice herself condemns to death without form." "*It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations; for I will diminish them, and they shall no more rule over the nations.*"

Can we not in this discern the righteous retribution of Providence? Egypt was the first to impose a yoke upon the nations; not a yoke of dominion, but of a kind more degrading—a yoke of polytheism and gross idolatry. From her, as from a fountain, flowed all the superstition by which the earth was corrupted; and now, for ages, every people which have become the masters of the world have oppressed

and despised her. But how amazing and inscrutable are the ways of God! As if to atone for the mischief she inflicted on the world in early times, Egypt is now conferring incalculable benefits upon it. Her monuments, inscribed with the history of the most early ages, are beginning to be deciphered; her temples and tombs to be explored; and the first-fruits of a glorious harvest have been reaped, which, when the whole has been gathered in, will make one of the most magnificent offerings ever laid on the altar of Revelation. It was only in the end of the last century that Voltaire affirmed that the Egypt of the Bible was a mistake; since that time, Egypt herself has been disinterred—the Egypt of four thousand years ago—and before this awful preacher from the dead the Infidel stands silent and confounded.



CHAPTER VIII.

Edom.

"I have heard a rumour from the Lord, and an ambassador is sent unto the heathen, saying, Gather ye together, and come against her, and rise up to the battle. For, lo, I will make thee small among the heathen, and despised among men. Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord. Also Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof. As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the Lord, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it."—JER. xlix. 14–18.

"But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness. They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing. And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof; and it shall be an habitation of dragons, and a court for owls. . . . There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow: there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate."—ISA. xxxiv. 11, 12, 13, 15.

Edom.

Marah—Elim—Wilderness of Sin—Horeb and Sinai—Mount Seir—Inheritance of Esau—Early prosperity of Edomites—Their capital, Petra—Greatness of their commerce—Its doom—Land of Edom as seen from top of Mount Seir—Its mountains naked flint—Its plains covered with sand—Its cities ruins—Its commerce extinct—Ruins of Petra—Anticipated resurrection of dead cities—Petra the first to rise—Reflections.



EDOM AND MOUNT HOR.



PETREA.

EDOM.

WE recross the Nile, and, bidding adieu to that land of mystery and wonders in which we have made so brief a sojourn, we strike into the great wilderness that lies on the east of it. We are now treading on the path of the mighty host which God, with an outstretched hand, led out of Egypt. We have gone round the head of the Red Sea, and are journeying south, over a tract alternately sandy and stony. On our left is a chain of naked heights, and on our right are the blue waters of the gulf on the shore of which the Israelites halted and sang their magnificent triumphal ode, over the destruction of Pharaoh and his army. Our path is not all desert ; we alight, at long stages, in some quiet valley, with its springs and palm trees, and its rich verdure, so refreshing to the eyes after the blinding glare of the sands. Even here we meet with *mementoes* of scenes which, though long past, are

never to be forgotten. Here is Howara, the bitter fountain where the Israelites murmured, encompassed with its sand mounds and its date trees ; and here, a little farther to the south, is Wady Gharendel—the Valley of Elim—where the people encamped, still verdant with waters and palm trees.

We go forward, and now, at a great distance, just peering above the sands of the desert, is a little point of rock. It grows taller and bigger at every step, till at length, what but a little before was only a small dark protuberance on the bosom of the plain, towers before us a stupendous mountain of granite. The mass before us, whose surface is of naked rock or bare sands, forms a cluster of peaks or mountains, which rise to a great height above the level of the plain. These are the mountains of Horeb and Sinai. We begin to tread reverently, for the desert around these illustrious piles has the profound calm, and we persuade ourselves something also of the holiness, of a magnificent temple. The poor monks have set down their convent on the back-side of one of these mountains with a little hollow beneath, in which there is scarce standing-room for a few hundred persons. On this summit, they tell us, was the law given, and in the little ravine at its bottom stood the hosts of Israel. It is refreshing to turn from man's narrow concep-

tions to the free majesty of nature. Of the cluster of summits which here tower with such sublimity into the serene firmament over them, we know that Sinai and Horeb are of the number, though we cannot tell to which of these eminences that distinction belongs. But should we select one of these peaks, and say, This is Sinai, we should be disposed to fix on Jebel Musa. It is a tall, majestic mountain, of deep red granite, with broken and furrowed sides. It rises almost perpendicularly about fifteen hundred feet above the plain, and terminates in a conical-shaped top of white granite. In front of the mountain is the plain Er-Rahah ("Valley of Rest"), on which, doubtless, the people assembled. This plain is three miles long, having an average breadth of from six hundred to seven hundred yards. Connected with it are lateral valleys, from which the top of Jebel Musa is visible, and where the people could assemble, provided the accommodation afforded by the plain in front was not sufficient. Still, though we should not be able to fix on the particular mountain, it is something to know that we are now gazing on the scenery of Sinai—on the summits and the valleys which then lay veiled in the darkness, or glowed beneath the lightnings, which attended that awful event—on the plains which rang to the trumpet which waxed louder and louder, and quaked be-

neath the still more awful Voice which proclaimed the law.

But our present destination is not yet reached. We leave the bottom of these mountains, and as their venerable peaks sink behind us, an interminable ocean of sand spreads out in our front. Our course lies to the north-east; and after traversing many a league of wilderness, we hail with joy the rugged peaks of Mount Seir, which now begin to be seen above the desert. Seir, to which we are now approaching, is a chain of mountains, terminating in a crest of romantic peaks, which runs in a straight line across the desert, from a point a little south of the Dead Sea to the head of the Gulf of Akaba, the eastern arm of the Red Sea. This magnificent chain—for though stripped of its ancient fertility, Mount Seir retains to this day a desolate grandeur which well entitles it to be regarded as magnificent—comprises the ancient realm of Edom. His devotion to the chase often led Esau thither in his youth, and there did he ultimately settle; his posterity, in course of time, expelling the Horites—the first inhabitants of these mountains. The Edomites greatly enlarged their domain in after ages; but the mountainous region before us, which is about thirty-six miles in breadth, with part of the eastern plain immediately adjoining, must be viewed as forming strictly their

patrimonial inheritance. In ancient times, the climate of these hills was most salubrious—their dews were abundant; the mountains, up to their spiky pinnacles, were clothed with the olive and the vine; the valleys and the rocky clefts were covered with the richest mould; the mountain-torrents were numerous; and the sun being warm, the produce of these hills was very great. “Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above.” Such were the words in which Isaac, by the Spirit of prophecy, described the future inheritance of Esau and his posterity. The mingled grandeur, beauty, and fertility, which the region of Seir exhibited, while occupied by the Edomites, amply verified the words of Isaac.

Established in this mountainous region—a fit home for a hardy, brave, and industrious people—the posterity of Esau rapidly outstripped in their progress to distinction, their brethren, the descendants of Jacob. While the Israelites, enthralled in Egypt, had neither a country nor a national existence, the Edomites, under the sway of their own princes, and enjoying in their mountain fastnesses the sweets of freedom and peace, were busily engaged in laying the foundations of that greatness as a nation to which they were destined to attain. Their father Esau had been distinguished as a “cun-

ning hunter;" but his posterity were not slow to acquire the knowledge of other pursuits than those in which their ancestor had excelled. They rapidly achieved no mean eminence in arts and in arms, in science and in commerce, and in the wealth, refinement, luxury, and wickedness which extensive and prosperous commerce brings along with it. It was at this era of their nation that numerous and magnificent cities began to rise amid those mountains on whose sides, in early times, their simple progenitors had chased the prey. Of these cities, the most distinguished was Petra, the capital of the nation. This city was the centre of a commerce that ramified as far as India on the east, and Spain on the west; and the importance and splendour of this city were such as befitted the gigantic traffic of which it was the emporium. Its romantic position, and the singular character and beauty of its buildings, excited the admiration, and received the praise, both of Greek and Roman writers. It stood in a little hollow in the very heart of the mountains. To it there was only one way of approach—a frightful chasm of some two miles long, narrow, and overhung by gloomy precipices. Traversing this defile, the visitor emerged on a plain of about two miles in circuit, occupied by dwellings, temples, triumphal arches, a theatre, and numerous tombs. These last added not a little to the beauty of the

city. They were hewn in the mountains which enclosed Petra, they were ornamented with elegant façades, and resembled, though on a much smaller scale, those princely halls which the kings of Egypt prepared for the reception of their bodies. The city, moreover, being much exposed to the reflection of the sun's rays from the mountains that encompassed it, was cooled by artificial fountains and beautified by gardens. Such was Petra—it was the abode of royalty—the home of wisdom—the mart of the world—to replenish which all the climes of the earth sent their treasures: India, her gems; Arabia, her frankincense; Kedar, her lambs; Persia, her robes; Armenia, her horses; Lebanon, her cedars; Tyre, her purple; and Judea, her balm and honey. Against this region, occupied then by a warlike and enterprising people, and covered with towns—for though we have specified only Petra, almost every valley had its city, which shared in the importance and wealth of the capital—against this flourishing region did the prophets pronounce the doom of utter desolation; and we are here to see whether that doom has been inflicted.

We cannot tarry long here, therefore let us select a good point of view, and have the whole country under the eye at once. Here, in the middle of the chain, is a summit which overtops all the rest. Let us ascend it. This is the very mountain on

which Aaron died and was buried. Now we are on its top, and prepared to bring the prophets of Israel to the test of actual facts. But, first, let us think what it was which they foretold regarding this land. They foretold, 1st, That its soil should be utterly wasted; 2d, That its cities should all perish; 3d, That its commerce should be annihilated; 4th, That its people should be cut off. Now, let us begin our survey:—If Edom be at this day a fertile and flourishing region—if her mountains be occupied by men and cities, as of old; then let it be acknowledged that the prophets did not speak by the Spirit of inspiration. But if Edom be a desolation, then let it be confessed that they were inspired. Now, look all around, you see the bare sides of the hills—you see how they offer to the winter's tempest and the summer's sun nothing but naked flint. Observe the rugged crests of the mountains, how they range around us like the waves of a tumultuous sea vexed by the winds. Turn now to the west—look immediately beneath; you observe that broad valley which runs along the foot of the hills; you see how its bosom is entirely covered with sand and flints. Could that valley be cultivated? And yet that valley in former times was, in part at least, clothed with vineyards, and watered by streams from Mount Seir. Hath not Jehovah, as he said, "*stretched out upon it the*

line of confusion and the stones of emptiness?"

Turn now to the east. You perceive, looking over the summits of the mountains, that level plain on the east of them. You can still trace the enclosures of its ancient fields, and the heaps of its former cities. These are the fields to which the Edomite, in days gone by, went forth to sow, and to which in autumn he returned to reap. The southern winds have buried them beneath the sands of the wilderness, and never more, to the end of time, shall they be either sown or reaped. Is not this what the prophets said, "*From generation to generation it shall lie waste?*" Look next, and look narrowly among the mountains, whether any of its cities remain. You may search them all without finding one of them—scarcely will you find even ruins, so completely have they been destroyed: "*I will lay thy cities waste, and thou shalt be desolate.*" Listen next, if perchance we may hear the hum of its busy people. All is silent. Nothing disturbs the stillness, unless, perchance, the eagle's scream, or the wild shout of the Arab as he urges his camel to quicken its pace, and pass on through this desolate country. And in the awful solitude of these hills, it seems as if we still heard the echoes of that voice which cried of old: "*There shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau.*" Of the two brothers who grew up together on the plain of

Beersheba, how different has been the fate of their posterity! yet that fate is in exact accordance with prophecy. We find the descendants of the younger son in every country under heaven; but the descendants of the elder are nowhere to be found. None now claim descent from Esau: "*Esau shall be cut off for ever.*" And as to the trade of this country: had we stood where we now stand eighteen centuries ago, we would have seen lines of camels innumerable, approaching Edom on the east—some with the stuffs of India, others with the spices of Arabia, and others with the ivory and other merchandise of Armenia; while, on the west of Edom, we would have seen them departing with their wares—some to Egypt, some to Greece, some to Italy, and some to more distant lands; but now, how completely has that traffic come to an end! Throughout the whole extent of wilderness now under the eye, you cannot see a single merchant caravan either going or returning from Edom: "*I will cut off from Edom him that passeth out, and him that returneth.*"

Now we shall descend. But stay—what ruins are these immediately beneath us? Look directly down. You see a little plain, with a stream crossing it, and on the plain some heaps of rubbish,—a broken arch, a few prostrate columns; and all around the plain you see a perpendicular wall of

rock formed by the mountains; and you see, moreover, that the rock is hewn into dwellings and tombs—that it is covered with the most magnificent structures, not erected by the hand, but hewn in the mountains by the chisel. What ruins are these? Ah! these are the ruins of Petra, the capital of Edom. In the palaces that stood on that plain dwelt the Edomite while living; and in these tombs in the face of the cliff he reposed when dead. There is not now a single inhabitant on the spot.

We are scarce near enough to see the brambles and creeping plants with which the ruins on the plain beneath us are mantled; but the hootings of the owl come drearily up the mountain, and the eagle's scream is sounding fiercely among the hills. These are now the only tenants on the site of Petra. Every thing we see and hear testifies to the exact and fearful accomplishment of the doom pronounced on this city of old: "Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill! Though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord. Also Edom shall be a desolation; every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof. As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighbour cities thereof,

saith the Lord, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it. And thorns shall come up in their palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof; and it shall be an habitation of dragons, and a court for owls."

Singular indeed is the history of this city, and solemn the lesson which it reads to the Infidel. It teaches him that, though no new miracles are now to be looked for, to attest the truth of revelation, proofs marvellous and manifold are laid up in the earth around him, and are to be brought forth, each at its appointed hour, to shed a new beauty on the pages of the Bible, and to add to the evidence by which its divinity is supported. May not a resurrection, not of dead prophets, but of dead cities, be awaiting the world? Those who spoke these predictions can never return; but may not those against whom they were spoken yet appear before us, to tender their evidence of the complete accomplishment of the predicted doom? Here is Petra brought up from the grave, to preach to the nations of the earth. Here, on her ancient site, standing in sackcloth, is the metropolis of Edom, bearing her testimony to the truth of the prophets. That Petra, and not Isaiah—not the prophet who predicted the doom, but the city on which the doom has fallen—should be summoned from the grave, is surely the more satisfactory kind of evi-

dence, and the more consistent way of dealing with our understandings. It is only in our own day that this witness to the inspiration of the prophets has been raised up. Thirty-six years ago no man knew where Petra had stood. She had passed from the earth more than a thousand years before, and left no trace of her existence, save the brief notices of her former grandeur which are to be found in the pages of Strabo and his contemporaries. Her doom remained inscribed in the scroll of prophecy, but we wanted circumstantial evidence to verify that doom in all its particulars. The Infidel was entitled to ask, Do owls dwell in her palaces? do brambles and nettles come up in her fortresses? But our knowledge did not extend beyond the general fact that Petra had disappeared. But Providence opened to Burckhardt the gates of Mount Seir, and brought Petra forth from the grave in which she had been hid for upwards of a thousand years, with every particular of the predicted doom accomplished upon her. This is but the harbinger of many such discoveries. Already the progress of discovery has brought to light many a novel and surprising proof; but much yet remains to be done. The mounds of Nineveh and Babylon have yet to be explored; and we venture to predict, that, on being so, they shall be found to be vast repositories of facts, preserved by Providence for the

confirmation of those who live in the last age. The ruins of Syria have yet to be more carefully examined; the graven monuments of Egypt to be deciphered—her sculptured temples and painted tombs more closely inspected; and, when this has been done, we shall find ourselves in possession of many a historic document, many a voucher to the truth of the prophets, which, meanwhile, we dream not of, and which will astonish the world, and cover the gainsayer with confusion.



CHAPTER IX.

Moab.

"We have heard of the pride of Moab, (he is very proud,) even of his haughtiness, and his pride, and his wrath: but his lies shall not be so. Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab, every one shall howl: for the foundations of Kir-hareseth shall ye mourn; surely they are stricken. For the fields of Heshbon languish, and the vine of Sibmah: the lords of the heathen have broken down the principal plants thereof; they are come even unto Jazer, they wandered through the wilderness: her branches are stretched out, they are gone over the sea. Therefore I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer the vine of Sibmah: I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon, and Elealeh; for the shouting for thy summer-fruits, and for thy harvest, is fallen. And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting: the treaders shall tread out no wine in their presses; I have made their vintage-shouting to cease."—Isa. xvi. 6-10.

Moab.

Geographical position of Moab—Moab a land of vineyards—A land of cities—Prophecy of Moab's overthrow—Cross the Zered—Vintage of Moab ceased—Her soil unploughed—Her cities ruins—Ruins of Ar, the capital—Stream of Arnon—Plains of Moab—Heshbon—Wanderers.

MOAB.

WE shall now go to Moab; but how lies the country of Moab, as regards Edom? Well, then, turn to the north. You perceive, at the distance of two days' journey—for here the skies are clear, and you can see far—the motionless surface of the Dead Sea, glowing like a molten mirror under the sun's rays, and encompassed all round by a margin of black mountains: that level country on the east of the Dead Sea is the country of Moab. Moab in ancient times was emphatically a land of vineyards; it was also a land of cities. What a goodly prospect did the little hill of Heshbon afford in former days! The traveller who looked from thence counted the cities of the Moabites lying around him, not in scores simply, but in hundreds; each sitting, queen-like, upon its little eminence, encompassed by vineyards and fields of golden grain; while streams intersected the country, like threads of silver woven into the deep verdure of its plains.

Let us hasten forward; perhaps the beauty of Moab may make some amends for the frightful sterility of Edom. Now we are on the banks of the Brook Zered. Here ends the territory of Edom, and here begins that of Moab. Let us sit down on the banks of the stream, and read what the prophets spake concerning this land.

“O vine of Sibmah, I will weep for thee with the weeping of Jazer. The spoiler is fallen upon thy summer fruits and upon thy vintage: and joy and gladness are taken from the plentiful field, and from the land of Moab: and I have caused wine to fail from the winepresses. None shall tread with shouting; their shouting shall be no shouting. Woe unto Nebo! for it is spoiled. Kiriathaim is confounded and taken. Misgab is confounded and dismayed. There shall be no more praise of Moab. The spoiler shall come upon every city, and no city shall escape. Give wings unto Moab that it may flee and get away: for the cities thereof shall be desolate, without any to dwell therein.”

Now we shall close the book, and go forward. We have crossed the stream, and are in the land of Moab. We are in the land of Moab, but where are the vineyards of Moab? where are her harvests, her cities, her people? All are as completely vanished as if they had never been. How evident

is it that the turf beneath our feet has not been disturbed by the plough for ages! How evident is it that in this land men neither sow nor reap—neither build houses nor plant vineyards! The whole country is covered with sward which is green with luxuriant herbage during the winter rains, but brown and parched when the heats of summer set in: and beneath that turf slumbers a soil which, were it cultivated, would yield an hundredfold. We do not mean that this was its productive power of old—it is what it is able still to produce. Small patches are sometimes cultivated in the northern part of this plain; and Burckhardt was assured by an Arab husbandman that sometimes he reaped eightyfold, and sometimes even an hundred or an hundred-and-twentyfold! Well, then, the harvests and the vintage of this land have come to an end. And what has been the fate of her cities? Let their ruins testify. Wherever we go we behold nothing but ruins. Every little eminence had its city of old; every little eminence has its heap of ruins now. Here, on this little mount on the left, you see the ruins of a temple; a gate, with the edifice into which it led gone; two Corinthian columns; and in a plain a little to the west, a stone altar, but without a worshipper. This was once Ar, the capital of Moab; and as the traveller passes it by he casts a glance on these memorials, and re-

members the prediction: "*Ar of Moab is laid waste and brought to silence.*"

From these ruins to the banks of the Arnon is a distance of twenty-five miles. The rich soil exhibits not a trace of cultivation, and is covered every where with ruins. The Bedouins and their flocks have trodden these ruins under foot for ages, and now they are mere heaps of rubbish. A prostrate column or the façade of a fallen temple may yet grace some of these sites; but this is rare. The glory of Moab is now trodden down as straw is trodden down for the dunghill. The palace is gone, and the Arab's tent is pitched where it stood. The citizens of Moab are cut off, and flocks are folded where they dwelt. Now are we on the banks of the Arnon. We descend the steep declivity, pass over the stripe of verdure by which the bottom of the valley is inlaid, and climbing the Roman road which leads up the opposite slope, emerge on the northern bank. We proceed on our way, the path lying as before, over wasted fields and amid ruined cities. Here, on the edge of the precipice which overhangs the Arnon valley, are the ruins of Aroer. Before us are the plains of Moab, which once bore on their bosom the encampment of the Israelites, who rested amid its vineyards and beside its streams after their journey of forty years in the wilderness. We behold it now crossed with dry

torrent beds, and without a single shrub or tree to screen its soil from the rays of a scorching sun. We go forward, the path skirting the base of De-jebel Attarous, which rises on our left—the supposed Pisga of the Scriptures. We pass the ruins of Kiriathim, and Medeba, and Beth-meon, and Elealeh, and at last we ascend the little eminence on which stood, in former days, the beauteous Heshbon. Here, amid the few remaining memorials of Heshbon's splendour, we shall halt and take a last look of Moab. Under our eye is now a vast extent of undulating country, extending to the Jordan on one side and the desert on the other; its soil rivalling, nay, excelling, in fertility, the finest lands in Europe; yet the country is a wilderness. The vines that covered it are perished from its soil; the cities that beautified it have sunk into the earth; its people, too, are extinct; and to complete its calamities, the desert has sent its children forth to perpetuate its desolation. These swarthy bands which you see roaming over it in every direction, and which, refusing to cultivate the soil themselves, will not allow others to do so, are now the only inhabitants of Moab: "*I have broken Moab like a vessel wherein is no pleasure, saith the Lord. Moab is spoiled and gone up out of her cities! They shall cry, saying, How is it broken down!*"

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

CHAPTER X.

Ammon.

"Son of man, set thy face against the Ammonites, and prophesy against them; and say unto the Ammonites, Hear the word of the Lord God; Thus saith the Lord God, Because thou saidst, Aha, against my sanctuary, when it was profaned; and against the land of Israel, when it was desolate; and against the house of Judah, when they went into captivity; behold, therefore I will deliver thee to the men of the east for a possession, and they shall set their palaces in thee, and make their dwellings in thee: they shall eat thy fruit, and they shall drink thy milk. And I will make Rabbah a stable for camels, and the Ammonites a couching-place for flocks; and ye shall know that I am the Lord. For thus saith the Lord God, Because thou hast clapped thine hands, and stamped with the feet, and rejoiced in heart with all thy despite against the land of Israel; behold, therefore I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and will deliver thee for a spoil to the heathen; and I will cut thee off from the people, and I will cause thee to perish out of the countries: I will destroy thee; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord."—EZEK. xxv. 2-7.

Ammon.

Enter Ammon—Haters of the chosen people—Her doom—
Appearance of her landscape—Depastured by Bedouins—The
desolation of Ammon distinguished from that of Chaldea—
State of her ruins—Ruins of Rabbah, the capital, described.

AMMON.

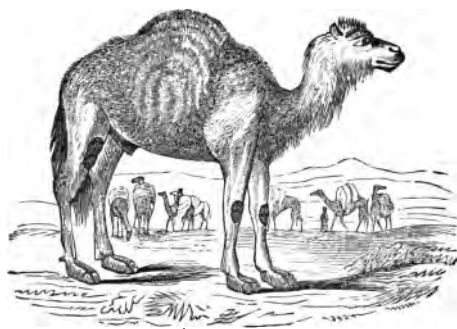
Now let us pass on to Ammon. Our course is due north; and as we go, we catch at times glimpses of the mountain-peaks of Judea, telling us that there, on the west of the Jordan, are scenes of still greater desolation than any on this side of that stream. Our course, we say, is due north; and now we are in Ammon. The Ammonites, like their neighbours, the Moabites, cherished an implacable hatred of the chosen people; and that exposed them to a doom not very dissimilar. The sum of what the prophets foretold regarding this country was, *1st*, That the land of Ammon should be a couching-place for flocks; and, *2d*, That the capital of Ammon (Rabbah) should be a stable for camels. Well, we pass the boundary, and survey the country. It looks as if, at some former period, a gentle wind had put its soil in motion—something like the sea; and while it was rolling on in broad billows, it had been suddenly arrested. Buckingham pronounces it the

best corn land in the world ; but what avail the riches of its soil?—it lies untilled ; and being covered with a rich spontaneous herbage, it has drawn hither countless swarms of Bedouins. Thus as you journey over Ammon, you behold only shepherds, with their flocks. The country has become one wide fold ; every part of it is thus occupied—its ruins, the banks of its streams, the open plain, all are a couching-place for flocks. And here you will note the nice distinction between the prophecy as it relates to Ammon and as it relates to the land of Chaldea. Both, at the time when the prophecy was given, were equally rich and flourishing ; but it was foretold that there should be a distinction between the future desolation of each. Of Ammon, it was said that it should be a land of flocks ; of Chaldea, that the shepherd's tent should not be seen upon it ;—and so is it now. The plain of Babylon is so utterly wasted, that the shepherd's tent is never seen upon it ; but the fields of Ammon are still depastured by flocks.

The ruined sites of Ammon are not quite so numerous as those of Moab ; but they are in a better state of preservation. The cities of the latter country are now mere heaps ; those of the former still exhibit considerable signs of their former importance—the walls of dwellings and temples, theatres, Roman arches, columns, sarcophagi—such are the

memorials still found on the sites of the country we are traversing. We call attention to its capital, because it was said: "I will make Rabbah a stable for camels." Let us take its ruins in our way, and see whether the prophecy has been fulfilled. Traversing, then, the rolling plain, which has a downward slope all the way, we join the highway, or paved road, which leads to the ruins; this is one of those vestiges which Rome has left of her greatness on the countries which, like Ammon, became ultimately subject to her sway. Passing by many an Arabian flock, and not a few ruined sites, we come at length to the valley which contains the ruins of Rabbah. Descending over the brow of the rocky eminence that shuts in the valley on the east, we find ourselves in the Necropolis of Ammon. The valley runs off to the west, and is about two hundred yards in breadth; a stream of clear water runs through it, and it is enclosed all around by low flinty hills, on which stood the ancient fortifications of the city. The principal street ran along by the river; for here are the remains of the public buildings—temples, a large theatre, a portico, and other monuments, which, in point of size and architecture, give one no mean idea of the strength and magnificence of this metropolis. The rest of the valley is covered with the foundations of private dwellings—not one of which remains entire. But how are the ruins of

Rabbah now occupied? Exactly as the prophet foretold. The hollow valley, the stream, and the sheltering walls are strong attractions for the Bedouins. They drive their camels down hither by hundreds, not only to drink, but to be stabled in the ruins. The place, Lord Lindsay informs us, has an intolerable stench, from the bones and carcasses of dead camels that lie rotting in it, and the valley is covered everywhere with their litter. Thus do camels dwell where princes once dwelt: "*I will make Rabbah a stable for camels.*"



CHAPTER XI.

Gilead and Bashan.

"So the Lord our God delivered into our hands Og also, the king of Bashan, and all his people : and we smote him, until none was left to him remaining. And we took all his cities at that time ; there was not a city which we took not from them, threescore cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. All these cities were fenced with high walls, gates, and bars ; besides unwalled towns a great many. . . . All the cities of the plain, and all Gilead, and all Bashan, unto Salchah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan. For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants ; behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron : is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon ? nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man. And this land, which we possessed at that time, from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon, and half mount Gilead, and the cities thereof, gave I unto the Reubenites, and to the Gadites. And the rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, being the kingdom of Og, gave I unto the half-tribe of Manasseh ; all the region of Argob, with all Bashan, which was called the land of giants."—
DEUT. iii. 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 13.

Gilead and Bashan.

Magnificent view—Plains of Hauran—Mount Gilead—Oak forests—Open glades—Luxuriant pastures—Salubrity of climate—BASHAN—Conformation of country—The great Hermon—Ruins of Hauran—Prophecy of revival of hills and valleys of Israel.

GILEAD AND BASHAN.

Now we bid adieu to the City of Waters, and pursue our way over the fertile and level plain which lies on the north of it. The magnificence of the view which here bursts on the sight almost baffles description. The elevation of this tract is great, and beneath us are the vast plains of the Hauran, besprinkled with towns (not one of which, however, is inhabited), and walled in on the north by the snowy peaks of Anti-Libanus. The country has now ceased to be a plain, and become mountainous. This region of wooded hills, and green slopes, and dells into which the mountain torrents descend, on which we now enter, is the ancient Mount Gilead. We are charmed by the variety and beauty of the scenery—these noble forests of oaks and pistachios—these open glades, covered with luxuriant herbage—these valleys, with their cascades and streams—these ruins, which bespeak this region in

former days the seat of opulent towns. We are evidently in a land of amazing natural fertility; for, without the hand of man to deck or culture it, it is beautiful and rich. We feel it to be healthful, too, as well as beautiful. Over head is a clear deep blue sky, and around us is a breezy atmosphere, which tempers the heat of noon. But we must go on our way. We leave this hilly region behind us, and descend on the plains of Bashan. These plains slope gradually down to the Jordan on the west; while on the east, by an easy ascent, they grow into the vast level territory of the Hauran; in front, at the distance of some eighteen miles, they swell into a series of little heights, which rise gradually one above another, till at last they grow into those mighty and snow-clad masses which constitute the Anti-Lebanon mountains. Immediately before us, its top glittering with snow, and its foot murmuring with streams, is the mighty form of Hermon, which, of all the mountains of Palestine, has the best claim to be considered the scene of the Transfiguration. The plain we are now traversing was famous of old for its pastures. We cannot call it barren at this day; but it suffers by contrast with the well wooded and watered region which we have just left: "*Bashan languisheth.*" As we pursue our way over these faded plains, and think of the solitude which reigns now where men and cities

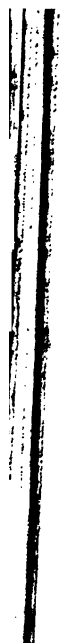
were formerly so abundant, we sigh for the day
when

The virgin's song,
The shepherd's pipe, the bridegroom's evening harp,
May yet be heard, in mingled consonance,
On Gilead's mountains, and on Bashan's plains.

On the east of Bashan are the great plains of the Hauran. One would think, to look at them, that of all the regions on the earth, this is the most populous; so numerous are the towns with which it is covered throughout. But it is rare, indeed, to find dwellers in these cities. Many of them are in ruins, no doubt; but not a few of them are entire as when their inhabitants left them—houses, constructed of enormous blocks, so that no length of time almost would suffice to reduce them to decay—churches with steeples on them—streets and gates. The traveller feels as if it were an unreal or unearthly scene on which he is gazing—this picture of a populous country, but without people. Nothing convinces us more that this region is groaning under the curse, and that this country is an interdicted one to all people on the earth save one. Are there not thousands pent up in the crowded cities of Britain, earning barely a miserable subsistence? and when forced to quit their native shores, they go to seek homes in the woods of the Western World, or on the wilds of the South Sea Islands;

yet here, at our very doors almost, is a country without inhabitants—having cities ready to be occupied—fields ready to be ploughed—soils that would yield a hundredfold, and a climate unrivalled, either in the west or in the south: yet no nation seems willing or able to take possession of it. Surely an invisible barrier has been raised around this country, and till the period of the curse shall expire, it cannot be possessed or cultivated; and even then, only by its ancient people: “Therefore, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord God; Thus saith the Lord God to the mountains and to the hills, to the rivers and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes, and to the cities that are forsaken, which became a prey and derision to the residue of the heathen that are round about; therefore thus saith the Lord God; Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen, and against all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their possession with the joy of all their heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey. Prophecy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say unto the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I have spoken in my jealousy, and in my fury, because ye have borne the shame of the heathen. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, I have lifted up mine hand, surely the heathen that

are about you, they shall bear their shame. But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come. For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown: and I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded: and I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bring fruit: and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginnings: and ye shall know that I am the Lord."



CHAPTER XII.

Tyre.

"The burden of Tyre. Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for it is laid waste, so that there is no house, no entering in: from the land of Chittim it is revealed to them. Be still, ye inhabitants of the isle; thou whom the merchants of Zidon, that pass over the sea, have replenished. And by great waters the seed of Sihor, the harvest of the river, is her revenue; and she is a mart of nations. Be thou ashamed, O Zidon; for the sea hath spoken, even the strength of the sea, saying, I travail not, nor bring forth children, neither do I nourish up young men, nor bring up virgins. . . . Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days? her own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn. Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth? The Lord of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth. Pass through thy land as a river, O daughter of Tarshish: there is no more strength."—Isa. xxiii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10.

Tyre.

Cross the Upper Galilee—Heights overlooking Tyre—Former and present view contrasted—Volney's translation of Ezekiel's prophecy of her fall—Overthrow of old Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar—Rise of new Tyre—Flourishing state—Taken and destroyed by Alexander the Great—Miserable condition at this day—Fulfilment of prophecy—Prophet's hymn of lamentation.





TYRE.



CEDARS OF LEBANON.

TYRE

BUT we linger too long on the east of the Jordan. Now we cross that celebrated stream. Our course lies due west, having on our right the cedar forests and the snowy peaks of Lebanon, and on our left the green swellings of the Upper Galilee. Now we have gained the brow of an eminence which overlooks the Mediterranean: we have been too late by several centuries in arriving here; otherwise we should have seen a sight, as the saying is, worth seeing. From this height we should have looked down upon the walls, the palace roofs, the warehouses, the workshops, and the spacious harbours of Tyre. Here we should have been greeted by the city's hum, the rattle of the chariot wheel, and the anvil of the artisan; and here we should have seen the seas, to their utmost verge, whitened by the sails of her ships—some voyaging westward, others returning with the merchandise of distant lands. But no one who looks from hence at this

day, and surveys the silent shore, and the solitary seas beneath him, could imagine that such a sight as we have now described could ever have been here beheld.

With Ezekiel's magnificent prediction of the fall of Tyre we are all acquainted—we shall give Volney's version of the passage; not because he has succeeded in transfusing more of the spirit and sublimity of the prophet into his translation than our translators have done into theirs—he falls, we apprehend, far beneath them; but because he has substituted the modern names of places for the old Hebrew ones, and has thus thrown great light on the commerce of Tyre—a commerce which more nearly resembles that which Britain is carrying on at this day, than any thing else of the kind which the world has ever seen :—

“ Proud city, that art situate at the entry on the sea! Tyre, who hast said, My borders are in the midst of the seas; attend to the judgments pronounced against thee! Thou hast extended thy commerce to (distant) islands, among the inhabitants of (unknown) coasts. Thou makest ships of fir trees of Sanir (the highest summit of Lebanon); the cedars of Lebanon are masts to thee; the poplars of Bisan, oars. Thy sailors are seated upon the box-wood of Cyprus, inlaid with ivory. Thy sails and streamers are woven with fine flax from Egypt;

thy garments are dyed with blue and purple of Hellas (the Archipelago). Sidon and Arvad send their rowers to thee ; Djabal (Djebila) her skilful ship builders ; thy mathematicians and thy sages guide thy barks ; all the ships of the sea are employed in thy commerce. The Persian, the Lydian, and Egyptian, receive thy wages : thy walls are hung round with their bucklers and their cuirasses. The sons of Arvad line thy parapets ; and thy towers, guarded by the Djimedcans (a Phœnician people), glitter with their brilliant quivers. Every country desires to trade with thee. Tarsus sends to thy markets iron, tin, and lead. Yonia, the country of the Mosques and Teblis, supply thee with slaves and brazen vessels. Armenia sends thee mules, horses, and horsemen. The Arab of Dedan (between Aleppo and Damascus) conveys thy merchandise. Many isles exchange with thee ivory and ebony. The Aramean (the Syrian) brings thee rubies, purple, embroidered work, fine linen, coral, and agate. The children of Israel and Judah sell thee cheese, balm, myrrh, raisins, and oil ; and Damascus furnishes thee wine of Halboun (perhaps Halab, where there are still vines), and fine wool. The Arabs of Oman offer to thy merchants polished iron, cinnamon, and the aromatic reed ; and the Arabians of Dedan bring thee rich carpets. The inhabitants of the Desert, and the sheiks of Kedar,

exchange their lambs and their goats for thy valuable merchandise. The Arabs of Saba and Rama (in the Yemen) enrich thee with aromatics, precious stones, and gold. The inhabitants of Haran, of Kalana (in Mesopotamia), and of Adana (near to Tarsus), the factors of the Arabs of Sheba (near the Dedan), the Assyrians, and the Chaldeans, trade also with thee, and sell thee shawls, garments, artfully embroidered, silver, masts, cordage, and cedars; yea, the boasted vessels of Tarsus are in thy pay. O Tyre! elated with the greatness of thy glory, and the immensity of thy riches, the waves of the sea shall rise up against thee, and the tempest plunge thee to the bottom of the waters. Then shall thy wealth be swallowed up with thee; and with thee in one day shall perish thy commerce, thy merchants and correspondents, thy sailors, pilots, artists, and soldiers, and the numberless people who dwell within thy walls. Thy rowers shall desert thy vessels. Thy pilots shall sit upon the shore, looking mournfully toward the land. The nations whom thou enrichedst, the kings whom thou didst gratify with the abundance of thy merchandise, trembling at thy ruin, shall cry bitterly in despair; they shall cut off their hair; they shall cast ashes on their heads; they shall roll in the dust, and lament over thee, saying, What city shall equal Tyre, that queen of the sea!"

Now we are in circumstances to feel how completely the prediction has been verified. Look down, then. You see this little clump of miserable houses immediately beneath, all huddled together on this low island, which scarcely rises above the surface of the water. This is all that remains of the crowning city. You see that basin for ships on the north, wellnigh choked up with sand. There the fleets of the world were wont to cast anchor. A stranger from a far distant land passed this way not many years ago. He tells, that when he passed by, there was only a single fishing boat in the harbour of Tyre. On the sandy plain which you perceive running up on the north of the town, stood Old Tyre. The army of Nebuchadnezzar lay thirteen years on that plain. Every head was made bald—every shoulder was peeled in the siege; but at last the city was taken.

Before the banners of the Chaldean army were seen on the plain before Tyre, and even before Nebuchadnezzar had projected the expedition, with what beauty had the prophet described the result of the siege! "Thus saith the Lord; Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people. He shall make a fort against thee, and cast a mount against thee, and

lift up a buckler against thee, and he shall set engines of war against thy walls, and with his axes he shall break down thy towers. By reason of the abundance of his horses their dust shall cover thee: thy walls shall shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the wheels, and of the chariots, when he shall enter into thy gates, as men enter into a city wherein is made a breach. And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard."

Old Tyre was now in ruins. The inhabitants had fled to a little island a very short distance from the shore. There they proceeded to erect a new city, which became the heir of the fame and the vast commerce of that which Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed. New Tyre continued to flourish till the times of Alexander; but, as she stood in the way of the scheme of universal conquest which that monarch had formed, her reduction was necessary. In order to bring his engines of war close up to her walls, he found it necessary to construct a mound between the shore and the island on which the city stood. For this purpose he chose the materials which the place most readily offered. These were, the dust, the timber, and the stones of Old Tyre, which had lain here since the period of her destruction by Nebuchadnezzar: "*They shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of*

the water" — "*I will also scrape her dust from her.*"

The arms of the conqueror prevailed, and the queen of the seas sank. She was soon rebuilt; but to suffer new calamities, and to come, in the course of ages, into the miserable state in which we now find her. "When you come to it," says Maundrell, "you find no similitude of that glory for which it was so renowned in ancient times, and which the Prophet Ezekiel describes. On the north side of it, it has an old Turkish ungarrisoned castle; besides which you see nothing here but a mere Babel of broken walls, pillars, vaults, &c., there being not so much as one entire house left. Its present inhabitants are only a few poor wretches, harbouring themselves in the vaults, and subsisting chiefly upon fishing."

Before we quit the eminence where we now stand, and from which we look down on the shadow of Tyre, let us observe how God has here inflicted his threatenings to the very letter. Here is the site of Old Tyre, a sandy plain, with the waves tumbling over it: "*When I shall bring up the deep upon thee, and great waters shall cover thee; I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more: though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord God.*" Adjoining the peninsula on which the miserable village beneath us is seated, you perceive what you take to be dark rocks rising out of the waves; these are very con-

venient for the fishermen, who here spread their nets in order to be dried. These are not rocks ; they are the stones of Tyre tumbled into the sea by her successive destroyers : "*I will make thee like the top of a rock : thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon.*" Who now remembers this great city, whose fall resounded over the seas, and caused this song of lamentation to be heard among its isles—a song which the prophet had prepared beforehand, and taught the kings and cities of the earth to sing, when the mournful event should have come ? We quote part of this hymn of lamentation, and depart : "Thus saith the Lord God to Tyrus ; Shall not the isles shake at the sound of thy fall ? Then all the princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones, and lay away their robes, and put off their brodered garments : they shall clothe themselves with trembling ; they shall sit upon the ground, and shall tremble at every moment, and be astonished at thee. And they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and say to thee, How art thou destroyed, that wast inhabited of seafaring men, the renowned city, which wast strong in the sea, she and her inhabitants, which cause their terror to be on all that haunt it."

CHAPTER XIII.

Judea.

"And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."—GEN. xvii. 8.

"For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land; a land of brooks of water, of fountains, and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil-olive, and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass."—DEUT. viii. 7-9.

"The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations."—NUM. xxiii. 9.

"Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."—DEUT. xxxiii. 28, 29.

Judea.

Land of Israel—Superior to other lands in physical beauty—In moral grandeur—Its desolation now—Doom denounced against it by the prophets—General structure of the country—Position of Palestine with respect to other nations—Walled in all round—On the east and south by deserts to preserve it from the Chaldean and Egyptian idolatries—On the west by the sea as a defence against Rome—Amplly stored with all it needed—Its position central yet secluded—Final ends of this—Journey over the land—Start from Lebanon—Country of Upper Galilee—Lot of Naphtali—Of Asher—Jordan valley—Lake Merom—Saphet—Gennesareth and Lake of Galilee—Return to midland route through Galilee—Cana of Galilee—The Saviour's traces—Position and appearance of Cana—The marriage feast and first miracle.



JUDEA.

Now we turn our face towards a more glorious land than any we have yet traversed—the land of Israel. What is it which other countries glory in in which this land does not far excel them? Is it variety and beauty of scenery? This was the home of beauty. It was garnished by Him who made the earth, with every attribute of grandeur, every form of loveliness—the tall mountain, rising proudly to heaven in its snowy mantle—the little hill on whose humble summit the heavens delighted to pour down their dew—the broad plain, whose bosom

investured with gardens, pastures, and forests, was spread out to heaven—the little dell, which drew its veil of woods and rocks close around it, as if unwilling that its beauty should be seen by the eye of man—the river, which made glad the valleys—the streamlet, which made the ravine vocal with its music—the naked crag—the richly terraced hill—the billowy shore, with its white sails—the waveless lake, with its fringe of olives and vines—its ramparted cities—its palm-embowered homes. But if this land is entitled to claim a superiority above every other on the score of its physical beauty, much more is it entitled to do so on the ground of its moral importance and grandeur. Were other countries the abode of science?—the lamp of revelation burned here. Have other countries laid the world under obligations by the volumes of poetry and philosophy which they produced?—here the Bible was written. Have other countries been the seat of important transactions?—here the work of redemption was wrought; that mighty event which links together the counsels of the past eternity with the glories of the coming one. Have other lands been the abode of sages and wise men?—here prophets lived—here “God manifest in the flesh” sojourned—dwelt beneath its roofs, walked by its shores, preached the gospel in its cities, and prayed upon its mountains. Such is the renown of this land—

a renown which can neither be increased nor diminished by any event which may henceforward take place within it. But why do we linger at a distance?—let us draw nigh. As we approach its border, we can discern no signs of its ancient beauty and importance. The naked peaks of its mountains are before us, their sides marked by the ghastly scars which the hand of Ruin has impressed upon them ; its valleys are open to the eye, but they are lovely no longer. Every where on its plains the mounds of its buried cities are seen rising dimly, darkening still more the aspect of this once happy and beauteous land. The olive mourns ; for the hand that tended it has long been absent. The vine languishes ; for it hears no more the songs of its happy children. The cedar fears to display its stately proportions, as of old, on the sides of Lebanon—its mighty arms bend beneath the doom that presses upon them. Ruin has overwhelmed all things, and sits, as on a throne, on these hoary mountains in stern majesty.

The prophets foretold the desolation of this land ; and with such a fulness of particulars, and variety of metaphors and images, as puts it out of our power to quote their words here. We would refer the reader to the prophets themselves ; and the more he examines and compares, the more will he be satisfied that there is a perfect accordance between

for had anything like a free and general intercourse been kept up between the Israelites and the people of these countries, the consequences would have been in no common degree disastrous. The "holy seed" would have "mingled with the heathen, and learned of them their way." Rome and Greece, on the west, were to be the next great seats of corruption and idolatry; therefore the sea and the mountains were interposed betwixt the Jews and these yet future empires. In the erection of these tremendous barriers and defences, God said most intelligibly, "The people shall dwell alone." They, too, were a defence against the arms of these powers. The exuberant and varied fertility of their land held out a strong temptation to the invader. It was a fertile isle in the midst of an ocean of waste and barrenness. But never were the hostile nations around permitted to cross the desert, or scale the mountains, and violate the security of the land of Israel, save when sin had made the people weak. Transgression it was that unlocked their bars and gates, and gave admission to the foe.

But if to guard against invasion, and the yet greater danger of idolatry, God had placed immense difficulties and impediments in the way of their intercourse with other nations, compensation was made in the all but endless variety in

the productions of their own country. They had no need to seek to other lands, drawn by the love of foreign dainties ; on their own fertile soil grew whatever their souls could desire. Their plains yielded wheat of the finest quality. The produce of their vineyards was of unrivalled excellence. The vine of Judah was the "choice vine." Their rocks poured out oil and honey. Their rivers abounded in fish : the pastures of Bashan in kine : the sheep-walks of Carmel in flocks : the glades flowed with milk and butter. Every tree had they that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The fig, the apple, the citron, the melon, the pomegranate, were among the fruits which grew profusely in their woods and gardens. Wool and silk had they for raiment ; and stones, and timber, and iron, and brass, for building. Thus richly was this land stored. It had all within itself. The people wanted for nothing. No cause had they to envy other nations, and nothing to tempt them to an intercourse which would have imperilled the great and special end for which they had been placed in Palestine. Shut up in moral quarantine, as it were, while idolatry, like a pestilence, raged around them, their predestined dwelling was comfortably and even luxuriously provisioned. "The fountain of Jacob," it was foretold, "shall be upon a land of

corn and wine, also his heavens shall drop down dew."

In the deserts that surrounded Palestine we see, too, a wise provision against the desire of conquest, so universal and so incurable in the early nations. With the exception of the Ammonites and Moabites, whom they ultimately subdued, there were no territories near them of a kind to tempt them to extend their possessions, and so come into dangerous contact with others, and be diverted from the sacred end for which they existed as a people. The great boundaries of their land they could not alter; and it was well they could not, for if they had, Judea would have been dismantled, and become bereft of those fortifications which fitted it to be the sanctuary and stronghold of truth. The great mountain barrier on the north, the ocean on the west, and the ocean-desert on the south and east, said to them most emphatically, "This is the 'chosen land.' These are the limits and munitions within which you are to dwell. Here you are safe; but if you attempt to remove the boundaries which Divine power has set, be assured evil will follow."

But herein lay the striking peculiarity of Palestine, that while thus isolated and cut off from the other nations and kingdoms of the world, it was, nevertheless, in close contiguity with them. The

stage on which alone the Divine purpose could be worked with success, required to combine, in respect of position, conditions apparently incompatible. It required to be at once remote and near at hand; far removed from intercourse with the nations, yet continually before their eyes. And these apparently unattainable ends were most completely attained, by placing it here, in the centre of the world; in the very heart of the world's greatest monarchies, Assyria and Egypt first, then Greece and Rome next, yet walled off from them by nature's strongest barriers. It was central, yet secluded: conspicuous, yet secure. And set here, in the world's centre, begirt by the eternal hills, and the not less eternal desert, rays of light there were that were shot into the darkness of surrounding countries, if haply some in these lands "might seek after God." And so long as Judea continued to be the abode of the truth, its position continued to be thus central; but whenever the truth departed, its position was changed. The chain that bound it to the leading kingdoms of the world was broken, and it fell away to the remotest verge of civilisation. Christianity now took its place, and had a station assigned it at the centre of empire and human progress.

So long as Judea fulfilled its end, it was spe-

cially guarded and cared for. A free and rejoicing people, fearing Jehovah, and fearing no one else, eating every one of his vine, and every one of his fig-tree, and drinking every one the waters of his cistern, occupied the land without carefulness; but when they ceased to be God's witnesses, then the CURSE fell. It fell upon their heavens, and they became rainless; it fell upon their mountains, and they withered; it fell upon their plains, and they became wildernesses; it fell upon their harvests, and they became heaps: upon their vines and olives, and they perished; upon their cities, and they became ruins; upon their people, and they bowed their neck to the conqueror, and were led away captive into distant lands. Let us walk through the land, and mark as we go how the curse hath "devoured the earth."

Behind us is Lebanon. It is still a "goodly mountain:" nearly as much so as when Moses viewed it from beyond the Jordan. Clumps of olives and vine-terraces clothe its lower slopes, from amid which numerous picturesque villages peer out. Plantations of oaks wave on its higher altitudes; above, the rock juts, and the snow gathers. This is the great northern wall of the land; and here, as we have said, we begin our journey. Our way lies for some time amid

the knolls which are profusely scattered at the foot of the mountain. The land is here much greener than we shall find it when we have gone a little further south, for the numerous streams which have their rise in Lebanon rush down from the mountains, and meander over the plain. The scene is pleasant: there is an air of quiet and seclusion all around. The turf is soft beneath the foot; and the country is pleasantly diversified with sprinklings of wild oaks and other trees, patches of corn land, and occasional ruins, perched upon the rocky peaks or on the flat tops of the little hills. As we recede from it, Lebanon, with his white summits, rises more majestically into the sky; while in front, rising above the billowy plain, may be seen the jagged summits of the hills of Naphtali. Planted in this fertile territory, the tribe of Naphtali, according to the patriarch's prediction, grew like a "spreading oak" in Lebanon, and gave "goodly boughs." Westward, where this undulating plain slopes toward the sea, are the "fat" valleys of Asher. Here he "dipped his foot" in the "oil" of his olive-groves. Now the territory is overgrown with thistles, so intolerably rank, that it is with difficulty that the traveller can force his way through them, even on horseback. Once this was a populous region; now the Lord hath

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"removed men far away," and there is "a great forsaking in the midst of the land."

Had our track lain more to the east—down the Jordan valley, for instance—we should have had a walk of a grander and more varied kind. Starting from the great Hermon, white a-top with its snows, and resounding at its base with the murmur of innumerable streams, we should have gone southward along the valley, half meadow, half marsh, lying within its enclosure of low hills, which run right and left along its whole course. The soil is arable, and of finest quality in many places, waving with long grass and very tall thistles, as of old with wheat and olive trees. And had our time permitted to climb the range on the west, and examine its hollows and knolls, we should have found excavated tombs, and remains of dwellings, and occasionally oil-presses, shewing that the olive once flourished here, though now there is not a single specimen of that tree to be met with in the region.

Passing on for about fifteen miles, Lake Hûleh, the "Merom" of the Bible, would have gleamed out before us, with its broad fringe of tall reeds, and a thin sprinkling of wild fruit trees on the plains around it. The shores of this lake saw the muster of Jabin and his confederate kings, with their chariots of iron, to give battle

to Joshua, and here that leader won his crowning victory over the Canaanitish races. The ruins of Jabin's capital, Hazor, as well as those of later cities, such as Dan and Cæsarea Philippi, are still to be found ; the first on the plain north of the lake, and the two last on the lower slopes of Lebanon. On the south of Lake Merom rises, by successive ridges, a pyramidal mountain, on whose cool and breezy top sits the far-seen city of Saphet ; while further to the south are the majestic hills, which stand so still and solemn round the plain of Gennesareth and the lake of Galilee. How sacred the region ! To that calm shore how often have come the blessed feet of the Saviour ! On these noble hills how often has his eye looked ! To their lonely sides, when the night fell, was he wont to retire to pray. On these now ruined sites, amid which the traveller so doubtfully seeks the remains of Chorazin, and Bethsaida, and Capernaum, his mighty works were done, and his gracious words were spoken. The air is still eloquent with the undying echoes of his voice.

But we return to our midland route. We have traversed the undulating plain which spreads out between Lebanon and the hills of Galilee, and seen its general covering to be that of a luxuriant but neglected herbage, with here and

there an Arab village, surrounded by its patch of cultivation. Now climb we the hills. The path is bad, and little travelled. On the summit of the first ridge, stop and look behind. What a fine view of Acre in the north-west, with its noble bay, shut in on the south by the bold headland of Carmel. Now climb we the second ridge. Little table-lands open as we pass on, tilled and covered with corn-fields. Here the mountains are scooped into green basins, and there they are cleft into valleys, which trend to the west, fragrant with wild fennel, and rich, some of them, with olive trees. There are a few villages, but more numerous ruins, and of a kind that indicate the former presence of a larger population, and cities more opulent by far than any that now exist here. Descending the southern slope of the hills we arrive at Căna el-Jelîl, the Cana of Galilee, where our Lord's first miracle was wrought.

Let us halt and survey the place. The footsteps of the Saviour have been here. It is the first point on our present route at which we touch the sphere of his journeyings; for though he has been farther north, even on the skirts of that gleaming mountain on the north-east, the Great Hermon, yet not by this route, but along the plain to Capernaum, and up the valley of

the Jordan to Cæsarea Philippi, on the extreme northern limits of the land to the "lost sheep" of which he was sent. Here, however, we come upon his traces, for here began he to do those mighty works which spread his fame all over that land, and which remain the incontestable proofs of his Divine person and work.

The place is solitary and ruinous. At the bottom of the range which we have just crossed rises a small tell or hill. On the southern slope of that knoll, with the ravine smelling sweetly of fennel and white clover, sweeping past them on the west, and opening into the great plain el-Buttauf, rise a few modern dwellings, in the midst of more numerous ruins, the remains of others which have fallen. The place has seen too many overturnings to permit of any trace of antiquity being still visible on the spot. This is CANA.

It is not with Cana as of old. Its house is desolate. Rarely now there comes the voice of mirth within its dwellings. The hard, naked, silent hills behind it, the equally wasted and silent plain before it, form a perfect picture of wearisome monotony and melancholy. Let us forget the present and call up the past. Let us go back to the night, eighteen centuries ago, of which we read, "There was a marriage in Cana

lee; and the mother of Jesus was there: and th Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage." On their journey hither, what a different picture met the eyes of the Saviour and his disciples, from that which meets the traveller now! Then every crag on these hills had its village; every slope had its plantation of olives; while corn-fields, gardens, and vineyards, clothed in blossoms and filled with fragrance the numerous ravines and valleys. It is towards eve, we shall suppose, and our Lord and his disciples, having come across the plain—a sea of waving corn, with villages and palm groves rising out of it like islands—approach the little hill on which Cana stood. The brief but delicious twilight of an eastern clime is hastening to a close. Thick and fast come the purple shadows among the hills. On the opposite ridge of Samaria, across the plain of Zebulun, the higher villages, struck with the last rays of day, glow like torches. The Saviour, ascending the acclivity, enters the gates, followed by his disciples, and becomes one of the marriage party. His presence brings no cloud upon the scene. He is not austere: on the contrary, his entrance is as a burst of sunshine upon the hearts of the company. He sits down among them, affable, familiar, and serenely joyous. He who heard the

song of the morning stars listens to their mirth, and mingles therewith his own words of wisdom. Their wine is all spent. Who was it that created the vine, and taught the new wine to ripen in the cluster? was it not he who sat at that table? Six water-pots are filled to the brim; the fiat of the God-man goes forth; and the servants draw and bear to the governor of the feast. "Every man," said the governor, having tasted, "at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and when men have well drunk then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him."



CHAPTER XIV.

From Cana to Bethel.

"Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate; and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land. But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil-tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves, so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof."—ISA. vi. 10-13.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that every place shall be, where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings, it shall even be for briers and thorns. With arrows and with bows shall men come thither; because all the land shall become briers and thorns. And on all hills that shall be digged with the mattock, there shall not come thither the fear of briers and thorns: but it shall be for the sending forth of oxen, and for the treading of lesser cattle."—ISA. vii. 23-25.

"So that the generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the Lord hath laid upon it; and that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath; even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger?"—DEUT. xxix. 22-24.

From Cana to Bethel.

The plain el-Buttauf, the possession of Zebulun—Now covered with thorns and thistles—Nazareth hills—Vale of Nazareth—Aspect of Nazareth—The tent pitched for Christ's youth—Uses of this early seclusion—Interest attaching to the vale—The Nebi Said—Magnificent view from its summit—Plain of Esdraelon—Tabor—Mountains of Samaria—Ruins of Samaria—Vale of Shechem—Its great beauty—Jacob's well—Mountains of Ephraim—Awful desolation—Great northern highway—Ruins of Benjamin—Backbone of Palestine—Plain of Jericho—Plain of Sharon—BETHEL—Scene of Abraham's encampment—The land parted betwixt Abraham and Lot—Jacob's stony couch—Scene described—Great road from Bethel to Jericho—Historic events connected with that road—Battle of Ai—Battle of Michmash—Last journey of Elijah.

FROM CANA TO BETHEL.

THE little ruinous Cana looks out upon the plain el-Buttauf, a vast expanse of the richest soil, but totally neglected. The tribe of Zebulun possessed it of old ; and then, doubtless, it was a wide garden of vines, olives, and corn-fields ; now it is a tangled and luxuriant wild of unserviceable plants, of thistles tall of stem, and thorns that overtop the traveller. Nothing is a more common production of the modern Palestine. Wherever the foot wanders or the eye lights, there are thistles and briers. Thistles on its once corn-clad vales ! briers on its once vine-shaded hills ! "Why should I ascend Mount Tabor," said a person who had visited Palestine, to the Deputation from the Church of Scotland,— "why should I ascend Mount Tabor, to see a country of thorns ?" He might have done so, if but to see with his own eyes the fulfilment of the prediction, "*All the land shall become briers and*

thorns. And now go to, I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard : I will lay it waste ; it shall not be pruned nor digged, but there shall come up briers and thorns."

Now cross we the plain of Zebulon. Paths there are none; or if a faint track there be, it is almost blotted out by the tall grass and the taller thorns. "*The highways lie desolate, the way-faring man ceaseth.*" We approach the Nazareth range. The hills rise hard and ridgy, with but few signs of vegetation on their surface, unless small clumps of oaks, and an occasional fig-tree standing companionless and solitary, and shading the bare soil with its broad leaves. In the centre of the range we light upon a large hollow, circular as a cup, with a little white town nestling within it. What vale and town is this? Put off thy shoe from off thy foot. And yet no. There is no holiness in the soil of this vale, though once tenanted by Him who was "holy, harmless, undefiled." This is Nazareth. There is but little beauty in these bare hills; yet He who covers himself with light as with a garment made them his earthly home. In this deep seclusion did Christ pass his youth, and here he "grew in stature and in favour with God and man."

The little town rivets our eyes. We behold

it clinging to the western slope of the rock, as a child to its mother's breast. Small indeed are its pretensions to architectural grace. Its flat roofs are without a dome, a common accompaniment in this land ; and no one imposing feature would it possess to attract the gaze or delay the steps of the traveller, were it not that a tall white minaret and a few dark cypresses shoot up, and impart a touch of oriental beauty to the otherwise featureless town. The chalk of the surrounding hills looks out somewhat disagreeably ; but here and there, on their sides, the fig-tree gives its much-needed shade, and a few olives, old and silvery, linger on the spot. At certain seasons, too, there is a delicious matting of short rich grass in the valley, enlivened with flowers, which, like all of their kind in Palestine, are of the brightest colours.

This tent did God pitch for his Son's humanity. Its seclusion was perfect. In this connexion, it cannot but strike us that Scripture observes a profound silence regarding Christ's youth. It refuses, as it were, to draw aside the rocky screen within which dwelt the Holy Child Jesus. A hundred questions regarding the manner of his youth rush to our lips ; but they are instantly repelled by the decorum of the Bible, which forbids us to break through and gaze. Two facts only

have been communicated to us respecting that portion of the Saviour's life that was passed in this vale—namely, that he worked at the trade of his father Joseph, who was a carpenter, and that he was obedient to his parents. Grand lessons both : *work* is honourable, and *obedience* is a duty. "Honour thy father and thy mother," He himself had proclaimed from Sinai, and now he obeys his own law. But who can doubt that in this solitude, while he neglected no one duty of life, he was preparing by meditation and prayer for his entrance, at the appointed time, upon the public scene! What the wilderness of Midian was to Moses—what the wilds of Ziph and the caves of Engedi were to David—what the deserts of Judea were to the Baptist, where he dwelt "till the day of his shewing unto Israel"—this secluded vale was to the Saviour. Little did the world dream what that vale contained. The kings of the earth knew not that He who made the world was here, in the disguise of a carpenter's son. Little did Cæsar think, when from the Capitol he issued his edicts to all nations, that amidst these mountains of Nazareth a kingdom was silently springing up which should one day overshadow his own. But to other beings what an interest must have centred in this vale! On earth all eyes are turned

to Rome, but in heaven all eyes are turned to the vale of Nazareth. How often have these orbs, in the still night, heard the rustle of wings, as some visitant darted past on his way to the little town among the Nazareth hills. In the pit, too, this vale had not failed to excite an interest. The wonders at the birth of Jesus were not unknown to the spirits of evil. Their eyes had been upon him ever since. As they saw his childhood pass into youth, and his youth into manhood, and still he bore no taint of evil, nor word nor action had betrayed any share in human corruption, their wonder had grown into fear. Often and bodefully had they mused "whereunto this might grow," but without being able to find any solution of the mystery at all satisfactory to the safety of their own power.

We are loathe to leave the spot. But why should we? This vale is as empty now as the sepulchre. He is not here : he is ascended. Yet before we go, let us climb this crest on the west, which rises right over Nazareth, and survey the prospect which opens on this hill-top, the *Nebi-Said*. Christ was a true man. All noble human susceptibilities and emotions dwelt in him. Secluded as was the home of his youth, it was yet placed in the immediate neighbourhood of some of the grandest scenery in the Holy Land. How

often may he have climbed this very summit, and stood here with kindling eye and swelling breast! In the far north, behind a desert-sea of mountains, rises Hermon, with the sun upon its snows, and looking an ever-burning torch. Nearer in the north-east is the dome of Tabor: on the south are the swelling ranges of Samaria: on the west is the goodly Carmel. Below, spread out within these great land-marks, as within eternal walls, reposes the Plain of Esdraelon. Further to the west is seen the broad bosom of the Mediterranean, arrayed in the glad and glorious light of a bridal day.

We descend, and go eastward along the plain we have just named, the Plain of Esdraelon, so celebrated for its extent, for its ancient fertility, and for its historic renown. But what mountain is this in front, directly in our path, which rises like a garland among the hills of Palestine? How proudly does it exalt the symmetry of its form and the green beauty of its summit amid the desolate wastes around it! This is Tabor. At its foot, stretched far and wide, from the gleaming waters of Galilee on the one hand, to the wooded heights which border the Plain of Acre on the other, is the Valley of Esdraelon—a vast expanse of uncultivated fields and ruined cities, deserted and solitary as the desert. “The

cities are wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land is utterly desolate. The Lord has removed men far away, and there is a great forsaking in the midst of the land."

We descend the beauteous Tabor, and, going straight across the plain, we leave on our left the unblessed hills of Gilboa, and strike into the mountains of Samaria. The prospects that open on us amid these hills are softer than we had expected to meet here—green slopes and woods of olives; so that were this region peopled and cultivated, neither of which it is at this day, its beauty and produce would exceed all calculation. Threading the valleys of Samaria for some time in this manner, we come at length to a more open space. We have now before us a circular mount, with fruitful valleys running round it, and these encompassed with not unfruitful hills. The central hill is decorated with a profusion of marble ruins, whose appearance indicates that they once formed part of sumptuous edifices. This mount was the seat of Samaria, the capital of the Ten Tribes. Its foundations are now poured down into the valley, and the "glorious flower" on the head of "the fat valleys" of Israel is faded.

From the site of Samaria a mule-track leads

over a range of barren hills in front. Traversing these mountains, we descend into the Vale of Shechem, which runs between the mountains of Ebal and Gerizim. It is thoroughly irrigated, fertile, and well-cultivated. The town of Shechem, the modern Nabulus, lies along the eastern base of Gerizim, embowered amid gardens of olive, and almond, and pomegranate, and other fruit and flowering trees. In this place a venerable remnant of the Samaritans are still found dwelling. The song of birds comes full and melodious from the groves, ravishing the traveller, to whom such sounds are rare in a land where "the beasts are consumed, *and the birds*; because they said, He shall not see our last end." At the entrance of the valley on the east we come to a well, hewn in the solid rock, and still possessing a depth of seventy-five feet—the same beside which Christ sat, "wearied with his journey," and discoursed with the woman of Samaria of that water whereof he who drinks never more thirsts. Within the gates of this town Christ was kindly welcomed, and the curse which has fallen so heavily on all around would seem to have spared the beauty of this region. We would linger long amid its groves of orange and fig trees, its streams, and its rich cultivation, did our time permit; but we must leave it. Passing

between Ebal and Gerizim, we bid it adieu; and in doing so, we leave behind us the last scene of beauty we are to see in this land.

Here ends the region of Samaria. We pass over the boundary, and enter on the inheritance of Ephraim. At this point begins the more awful desolation of the country. We are now amid towering mountains, and we may journey for miles together without seeing a single atom of soil upon their sides. No language can adequately describe the frightful sterility of this region; every trace of cultivation, every sign of the dwelling of man, has disappeared. Not that there are not a few wretched inhabitants among these hills, but the aspect of the country is so desolate and appalling, that one wonders where even a bird of the heavens, or an animal of any kind, can here find sustenance. The Lord has made the land empty and waste; he has turned it upside down; he has scattered abroad the inhabitants thereof: "*The land shall be utterly emptied and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word.*" But though such is now the aspect of this part of the country, far otherwise was it in former times. When "the mighty tribe of Ephraim" occupied it, it was a magnificent region of hanging gardens. Every mountain then equalled in beauty, and greatly exceeded in

extent, the far-famed gardens of Babylon. Terrace rose above terrace, covered with a profusion of vines and olives, to the cultivation of which this region was peculiarly devoted; and here, to this day, on the sides of the now naked hills, are the remains of the stone walls which formed these terraces. We pursue our way, on a rocky track, amid mountains of brass, the path climbing now over their summit, now winding round their base, now lying along the very edge of frightful precipices, and now descending over rugged rocks.

Journeying on in this manner, we at length emerge from the passes of the Ephraimite hills, and come out upon the culminating ridge or back-bone of the country. Our path lies along on this somewhat narrow table-land of rock. In every age of the Jewish people, this, doubtless, was the great highway from the capital to the north. One can easily imagine the concourse that crowded it in the better days of the country, the multitude of men going and returning continually, when the inhabitants of the plain of Sharon on the one side, and the inhabitants of the plain of Jericho on the other, ascending by the lateral valleys, passed along this route to Samaria, to Galilee, and to Damascus. Rarely now is wayfarer seen upon it; it lies untrodden. Observe the country on either

hand. You see these numerous little conical summits rising up. These formed a goodly and gladsome sight in days of old. Over these heights, far and near, were scattered "the cities" of Benjamin. What a hum of people as the traveller passed along! What a fair sight of terraced vineyards, running up the slopes, and girdling the cities perched upon their summits. But now all has passed away. A deep silence broods over the land. The country has reverted into its original nakedness, and the eye falls only on bare rocky summits, with here and there a miserable Arab village rising upon them, or, it may be, a few scattered stones, and broken foundations, with the moss and lichens of centuries covering them.

But here, in this part of the country, are thickly planted the historic localities of the earlier days of Israel. If bereft of the vine and the olive, these naked peaks wear, in the eye of the Christian, the yet richer clothing which springs from their connexion with the grand events of the Bible. Scarce a summit is there within view on which a sacred light does not rest. Here Abraham has stood, there Joshua has warred; on that stony plain Jacob has slept, on that "high place" Samuel has prayed. In these valleys now coming into sight, David has fed his

flocks and tuned his lyre; and yonder a greater than all kings and prophets has been. Let us indicate a few of these ever-memorable spots.

This great ancient highway—this highway which prophets have trodden, on which “the tribes” have gone up, “the tribes of the Lord unto the testimony of Israel”—lies along, as we have said, a table-land or platform of rock, which forms the culminating ridge or watershed of the country. The land maintains its general level to the distance of some six miles from the path on either side; then it sinks, forms into an immense slope, and finally subsides into the plains east and west of Palestine. Look here on the left. You see how suddenly the land sinks down, and by an abrupt and precipitous slope descends into that deep and chasm-looking plain, along whose arid and blackened bosom you can trace, by its fringe of forest and meadow, the course of a stream to yonder sullen and mysterious lake. This is the plain of Jericho. Full of cities and men once was that plain; now it boasts but one poor Arab village, and, generally speaking, inhabitants it has none, save the chance Bedouin wanderer. Look now on the west: you see what a long gradual swell, furrowed by ravines, leads off to that ample plain which has for its boundary the Mediterranean—the plain of Philistia or Sharon. Of

the valleys that lead down into these plains some are of historic interest. They are unlike in their physical characteristics. On the west they are waving grassy valleys, opening as they run into a fine breadth, and losing themselves, like rivers in ocean, in the great plains below. On the east they are narrower, with sides steep and jagged, and bottoms worn and roughened by winter torrents, but here and there expanding into little dells, with a gray olive as occupant, and a little carpeting of grass, enamelled with wild-flowers.

Let us indicate, as we pass on, a few of the Bible localities which here lie so thick on all sides of us. What name has so sweet a fragrance of hallowed memories as Bethel? Wherever on the face of the earth, amid American forests, or on India's plains, the Christian is permitted converse with his Father, or receives a token of Divine favour, it is from this locality that he borrows a name to designate the spot. He calls it BETH-EL, the House of God. We have now come within twelve miles' distance of Jerusalem: cast your eyes on the right of the track. You perceive, at a few paces' distance, a field of ruins, consisting of broken walls and prostrate columns, to the extent of three or four acres, lying on the eastern slope of a low gray hill. This is the

Bait-in of the Arabs, and the *Beth-el* of the Old Testament. Here, where Jacob anointed the pillar and offered his vow, his idolatrous descendants prostrated themselves before the calf which Jeroboam set up, and *Beth-el* was changed into Beth-aven—the House of God into the House of the Idol: and now, as the prophet foretold, and as these ruins testify, *Bethel has come to nought*. But other objects of even greater interest than these ruins claim our attention in this neighbourhood.

Turn now to the left. You see that hill, two miles or so east of you, rising beyond the low eminences in the foreground, and overtopping them, with an olive grove crowning its broad summit. That hill has witnessed the devotions of the great progenitor of the Jewish nation. It was the scene of Abraham's second encampment after his arrival in the land. "And he removed from thence" (the plain of Moreh near Schechem, the scene of his first encampment) "unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east; and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord." This mount brings another scene of patriarchal history before us, with its lesson that peace and concord between brethren are worth

buying with a great sum. On this hill the two patriarchs, Abraham and Lot, took their stand when they surveyed the country, and parted it betwixt them, the elder, who was the divinely appointed heir of the land, saying magnanimously to the younger, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee; . . . if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." Let us ascend the summit, and, by actual observation, judge of the prospect then presented to the eyes of the patriarchs.

The country would appear then much as it does now; for in that early age the cities that afterwards rose on these heights had not been built, and the olive woods, and vineyards, and other traces of labour and art, which afterwards covered these dells and ravines, did not then exist; yet we know the country had then a more fruitful and cultivated look than it wears now. Its great features, however, must be the same still. Here, then, we take our stand on the skirts of the olive grove, near the summit. The eye ranges far and wide over the land. The background is formed by the lofty mountains of Ephraim. In the east the eye reposes on the jagged heights that overhang the Jordan valley;

and more in the distance is the dark line of the hills of Moab. Between us and these hills, and lying almost immediately beneath us, is the deep abyss-like valley of Jericho. It is as doleful and unhappy a region as one can well behold; with its dark-browed, beetling cliffs on either side, wrapping it in a shroud of cheerless shadows; and its salt-encrusted bosom, on which no plant or flower can find nourishment, and to which no stream comes to break with its murmur the oppressive silence, or freshen with its waters the arid waste. Far otherwise did it appear to Lot. Fairer sight had not greeted his eye since he left the valley of the Nile, from which he had but recently returned. Its pastures were green. Torrents leaped down from the hills, and the waters of the Jordan, conducted over it by little canals, fructified it everywhere. Groves of palm-trees rose upon its bosom; and its bounteous soil yielded the towns that studded it the twin fatal gifts of "fulness of bread and abundance of idleness." The sight fixed the choice of Lot, who departed with his herdsmen and flocks to the left, while Abraham took his way over those low hills and grassy ravines which are seen running off to the west and south. Looking across these hills, in the far distant south, the eye catches a glimpse of the Hebron range.

Somewhere in the immediate neighbourhood of this mount are we to seek for the stony couch of Jacob. "And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran; and he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep." The track of ages lies through the valley on the west of this mountain; and here, beyond all peradventure, was the halting-place of the wanderer. It wears the same character at this day it did then; a rough uneven track, here paved with the bare rock, and there strewn with large stones. But unkindly as it looked, it had ancestral memories which gave it a home-feeling to Jacob. On that hill he knew had stood the tent of his grandfather, and from its summit had oft ascended the sacrifices and prayers of Abraham; he felt the more secure, therefore, in laying himself down beneath its friendly shadows. No consecration hallowed the ground; no aisled roof covered the sleeper, yet there Jacob saw God, and pronounced the spot, when he awoke, "venerable," and "none other but the house of God." "This man was born there." He lies down a solitary wayfarer, he rises from his couch the heir of the land. Might not one be content to

occupy Jacob's couch, however hard, if one might have Jacob's vision? Twice over had the promise of the land been given on this spot; formerly to Abraham, when he and Lot separated, the latter appropriating what appeared the better half; and now to Jacob, when on the eve of leaving it for a distant country. The time of the promise, in both cases, was peculiarly appropriate; and the spot was selected, perhaps, because Bethel being, though not the highest point, the highest tract south of Lebanon, the patriarchs could look far and wide over the country, and see how ample and how good was the land thus gifted to them. This vision became one of the great landmarks in the life and experience of Jacob. He ever looked back upon it with awe and gratitude as the opening of his intercourse with God. Instead of fading as it receded into the past, it rose in a glory that but continued to brighten as years rolled on. And when at last he lay a-dying in Egypt, his thoughts seemed to be all amidst the stony hills of Bethel, and his last touching words were spent in recalling the fair dawning of his spiritual day. "God Almighty met with me at Luz, in the land of Canaan, and blessed me." And to the Christian still what name so dear as "the God of Bethel:"—the pilgrim's God, the God who will be with us to provide for all the

wants, and defend amid all the perils of the way, till we come again to our Father's house in peace.

The pathway, we have said, was the great artery of the country. The tide of population flowing from the capital northward, or returning from Galilee and Samaria to Jerusalem southward, passed through this route. It served as the great highway, not only for the cities of Judah, but likewise for the inhabitants of the great plains on the east and west of the country. These, when they had occasion to journey to the north, ascended the lateral valleys we have already spoken of, and joined the great road that ran along on the high lands of Benjamin. Two routes, in especial, led up from these plains, the one from the Jordan valley, and the other from the maritime plain on the west. These fell into the great northern road near the point at which we have arrived. Some of the great historical events of the country took place on these routes. Before proceeding further on our way, let us spend a little time in searching for these tracks. They will help to illustrate the events with which they stand connected.

We are at Bethel. We know from numerous incidental statements in the historic Scriptures, that the great route by which the population of

day, and the battle passed over unto Bethaven;" which means that the Philistines retired beyond the central ridge towards their own dwellings on the sea-shore, and thus surrendered the hill-country to the Israelites.

Years pass on, and Bethel becomes the seat of the court of Jeroboam, and of the idolatrous worship instituted by him. One day, as Jeroboam stands by the altar to burn incense, there comes "a man of God out of Judah," who cries thus, "O altar, altar! thus saith the Lord, Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee." When we turn to the fulfilment of the prediction, in the reign of Josiah, we read, "And as Josiah turned himself, he espied the sepulchres that were there in the mount (the mountain of Bethel so often referred to), and sent and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned them upon the altar." In the valley leading down from the mountain to the Wâdy Suweinit, are numerous graves hewn in the rock. These, doubtless, are the sepulchres from which Josiah took the bones of the priests to offer them on the very altar at which they had officiated when living, but taking

care not to disturb those of the prophet from Judah, which were left to rest in peace.

This highway comes into view for the last time in connexion with an incident of a different character. Two venerable men, in raiment of camel's hair, and the mantle of the prophet, are seen proceeding along it. They pass on, with solemn step, and countenance erect and sublime. "Who are these?" is the inquiry of every one who meets the mysterious travellers, "and whither do they journey?" These are the master and the disciple. We hear the former say, "Tarry here, I pray you, for the Lord hath sent me to Jericho;" and the latter replies, "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." The two pursue their journey together, till the chariot of fire and the horses of fire meet them, and part them asunder. Elijah goes up by a whirlwind into heaven, and Elisha returns to Bethel along this route, which now disappears from view, though we know it continued long after to be the great thoroughfare from the Plain of Jericho into the interior of the country.



CHAPTER XV.

From Bethel to Jerusalem.

"Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, in mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. God is known in her palaces for a refuge."—PSALM xlviii. 2, 3.

"Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burnt up with fire : and all our pleasant things are laid waste."—ISA. lxiv. 10, 11.

"And many nations shall pass by this city, and they shall say every man to his neighbour, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this great city? Then they shall answer, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord their God, and worshipped other gods, and served them."—JER. xxii. 8, 9.

"Thus saith the Lord God, In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities, I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden ; and the waste, and desolate, and ruined cities, are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen, that are left round about you, shall know that I the Lord build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate : I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it."—EZEK. xxxvi. 33-36.

From Bethel to Jerusalem.

Leave Bethel—Nebi Samwil—Gibeon—Valley of Ajalon—Bethhoron the Upper—Bethhoron the Nether—Battle of the five Amorite kings—Mizpeh—First sight of Jerusalem—Desolate and affecting aspect of the city—Jerusalem undergone seventeen sieges—Climb the Mount of Olives—Peculiarities of its site—Mountainous—Indicative of its special purpose—Diminutive size of site—Adaptation to its end—Jerusalem in the centre of the nation—Valley of Jehoshaphat—Temple wall—Jewish burial-place—Valley of Hinnom—Siloa's brook—Field of blood—Tophet—Water-course of Gihon—Jerusalem built on four hills—The mount of sacrifice—The mount of song—General survey of the country from Olivet—The Jews.



JERUSALEM.

FROM BETHEL TO JERUSALEM.

Now, let us forward. Adieu thou "mountain of Bethel." Long has a false worship profaned thee, but the day draws nigh when the sanctuary of a purer faith, in which the seed of Jacob shall worship Jacob's God, shall be seen rising upon thee. We pass many a conical summit, and sigh to think that where the olive flourished, and the vine yielded its grapes, the eye now meets only the naked rock. After a short journey of about five miles, the lofty conical height of Nebi Samwil rises on our right. This is presumed to be the Gibeon of Scripture; the "great high place" where Solomon's sacrifice was offered. In form it reminds us of the "Mountain of Bethel;" it resembles it, too, in another particular, namely, that it stands at the head of the great pass leading up from the western plain, as the other at the head of the great pass leading up from the eastern. This little

town, which you see clinging to its northern flanks, is el-Jib, or Gibeon.

In the environs of this little town, the ancient seat of the Gibeonites, whose clouted shoes and vessels of mouldy bread imposed so successfully upon the Israelites, there opens a shallow vale, which runs off to the north-west, and is soon lost to the eye amid the low rounded hills of Judah. This is the valley of "Ajalon," famous as the scene of Joshua's victory over the five kings of the Amorites. Let us observe how the nature of the ground exactly agrees with the account given of the battle that once raged along its course. We have not gone far from the little town till we find ourselves climbing a ridge that lies across our path. On the other side of the ridge we come upon a village called Beit-ur-El-Foka, the representative of "Beth-horon the Upper." The valley now contracts into a pass, runs steeply down the slope, and at about fifteen hundred yards is crossed by another ridge, on which stands the village of Beit-ur-El-Tathi, or "Beth-horon the Nether." Beyond this village the valley expands, comes round to the west, and, with a pleasant covering of pastures and corn-fields, sweeps on till it loses itself in the great Plain of Sharon.

Up this valley had come the five kings of the

Amorites with their armies, and encamped at the head of it beside Gibeon. Joshua, to whom the Gibeonites had sent a pressing request for help, hurries up the eastern pass, which we have already described as leading from Jericho and Gilgal, by night, and crossing the table-land from Ai, appears before the Amorite camp as the sun was rising over the hills of Bethel behind him. The battle is gained; the Amorites are discomfited "with a great slaughter at Gibeon," and the Israelites "chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon." They now entered the narrow pass. Here a cloud of fearful blackness, rising from the Mediterranean, and crossing the plain with fearful rapidity, met the fugitives as they struggled in the defile, and "they were more who died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword." It was here that Joshua "said in the sight of Israel, sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon," which towered conspicuously behind him, "and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon," which opened in front into the Plain of Sharon. This victory had a most important bearing on the subjugation of the country. The previous battle of Ai had placed the Plain of Jericho, and the east of Palestine generally, in the power of Joshua. The battle of Beth-horon made him master of the western

plain, and the central hills of Judah, as far as to the desert. The victory of Hazor, which speedily followed, gave him the whole land north to Lebanon. And thus, by three successive and decisive actions, did Joshua conquer the whole country. "*So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses.*"

Now, let us forward to the capital. From this point to Jerusalem is but a short journey of some six miles. We pass Ramah and Gibeah of Saul on the left. We climb the rocky eminence of Scopus, the Mizpeh of Scripture, according to some. We pause on its summit. What gray town is this that rises before us? We see a long lofty wall crossing the plain. Within, rising out of the whitish and ruinous mass of houses, are several minarets and a few domes. On the west is a stony level plain; on the east a trench-like valley, overhanging which is a conical hill, crowned a-top with a mosque, and here and there, on its gray slope, an olive clump. But there is an unreal, an unearthly, a spectre-like air about the city. There is no noise in its streets; there is no coming and going at its gates; its hills and valleys are treeless, and flowerless. There is the stamp of age on all about it: on its buildings, on its rocks, on its hills; on its very olives—on all is the mould of centuries—of long, changeless,

wearisome centuries. What city is this? This is JERUSALEM!

“How doth she sit solitary that was full of people!” Although the prophet had seen her as she now appears, what other exclamation could he have breathed over her? “How is she become as a widow! she that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary! She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks. All her gates are desolate.” Sadder city than Jerusalem is not perhaps on the face of the earth. Nineveh is more utterly forsaken. Babylon is more completely ruined: it is swept with the besom of destruction, as prophecy foretold it should be, and no living thing abides in it now, save the owl and the cormorant. Thebes has gone down to the pit, and sleeps beneath the sands of the desert; and, accordingly, on these once populous and magnificent sites you have utter desolation. But it is a desolation not nearly so affecting as that which meets you in Jerusalem. It is the loneliness and silence of nature that reign over the site of the Assyrian capitals. At Jerusalem it is the desolation of living sorrow and human woe. There is the image of a city: you look for the presence of man; for the trade, the cultivation, the social

RUINS OF BIBLE LANDS.

enjoyments, the life, the activity that spring up around the dwellings of men; but none of these do you find here. These plains are verdureless, these hills are bare, these streets are empty: heaps of rubbish and ruins render them barely passable. A few veiled figures meet you in them, which glide into these withered and ruinous tenements, and disappear. "The Lord hath swallowed up all the habitations of Jacob, and hath not pitied; he hath thrown down in his wrath the strongholds of the daughter of Judah: he hath brought them down to the ground." "The stones of the sanctuary are poured out at the top of every street." "The elders have ceased from the gate, the young men from their music."

Indeed, we are walking above the remains of the former Jerusalem. The city is literally "trodden under foot." Her remains, or what little may be left of them, lie entombed at the depth of forty feet below the present surface. The city has endured seventeen sieges in all; ten of these have happened since the days of Christ; six or seven times has it been rebuilt: it has sunk and risen; sunk and risen again; not one, but many Jerusalems lie below your foot. It were vain, therefore, to seek here for such antiquities as one sees at Rome. Its accumulations of soil

and rubbish have so grown as literally to bury entire edifices from base to roof, which so late as the age of the Saracens were wholly above ground; and though not to obliterate, yet greatly to modify and change the natural features of the place. "Is it a reality," asks the traveller, "or a troubled vision? Can this forlorn town be Jerusalem—the city of which David sang, 'Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King'?"

We pass not within her gates. We cross the plain on the north of the city towards the Mount of Olives, that overhangs it on the east. We soon become aware that this plain must, at a former day, have been built upon. We can trace the foundations of edifices; we see stones lying about that evidently were used in building; and we come on portions of tessellated pavement. In fact the city must have covered this plain formerly, and been enclosed by the ramparts, though now it lies without the modern wall. We traverse the Valley of Jehoshaphat, with its gray rocks and its dry torrent bed, and climbing the sides of the Mount of Olives, we sit down on its summit, and take our last survey of this land.

Immediately below us is the city. Its posi-

tion is a remarkable one on many accounts. First, its elevation is very great. It is surrounded by eminences higher than itself, justifying the description given of it in the Psalms, "the mountains are round about Jerusalem;" but its own site is a mountainous one. It stands at almost the highest point of the elevated tableland that runs lengthwise across the country. One coming from either the eastern or the western plain has a steep and continuous ascent, and he thinks of Jerusalem as occupying "the top of the mountains." It is wellnigh three thousand feet above the level of the Mediterranean. The place was sung of as being the special selection of God, who "refused the tabernacle of Joseph," namely, the Valley of Shechem, where the ark was pitched on the people's first arrival in the land; and "chose not the tribe of Ephraim;" for neither was Shiloh nor Bethel made the permanent seat of the Divine worship; "but chose the tribe of Judah, the Mount Zion which he loved. And he built his sanctuary like *high palaces*, like the earth which he has established for ever." Jerusalem, and especially Zion on which dwelt the ark, was the heart of the nation emphatically; thence their life flowed: it was the centre of the world's hope; and therefore God made "the mountain of his holiness" impregnable.

"For, lo, the kings were assembled, and they passed by together: they saw it, and so they marvelled; they were troubled, and hasted away."

Jerusalem is almost the only capital in either the ancient or the modern world that occupies a mountainous position. All the great capitals of ancient times were situated on plains, on the seashore, or on the banks of a stream communicating with the ocean, and affording facilities of intercourse with the world around. Such was the position of Nineveh, and of Babylon; and such, too, was the position of Thebes, of Rome, and of Athens. And such is the position of the great capitals of modern times. London and Paris occupy basins little raised above sea-level; so do St Petersburg and Vienna. Madrid, and Constantinople, and New-York, are placed on the seashore, or on firths opening into it. Jerusalem alone, of all capital cities, is placed not on plain, nor on river, nor by the sea, but inland, on the summit of the mountains. The site is sufficiently indicative of the purpose God meant that city to serve. Jerusalem was chosen, not for the cultivation of commerce, like Nineveh and Tyre; nor for the cultivation of art and literature, like Athens; nor for the cultivation of war, and the diffusion of civilisation through a

universal empire, like Rome: it was chosen for a holier purpose—even the preservation of the great truth of God's spirituality and unity, and the developement of the idea of the world's redemption through the one Mediator. The Jews were not a nation of merchants and traders, like the Tyrians; nor a nation of sculptors and philosophers, like the Athenians; nor a nation of warriors, like the Romans: they were "a kingdom of priests." And the vocation of the nation was announced in the very site of their capital, the ruling idea in which was isolation and impregnability. Facilities of intercourse with other nations were as sedulously shunned in their case as they were sought after in that of others.

Observe, too, the size of the site of this once renowned city. The rocky platform that gave standing-room to the capital of the Jewish nation is a square of something less than a mile. This is a smallness that may well astonish us. The modern Jerusalem has a compass of about two miles and a half. The ancient Jerusalem, even in its palmiest days, could not have been much greater. On the east it could not have been more extensive, for there it is hemmed in by the steep descent of the Valley of Jehoshaphat; on the south, too, its limits are determined by the Ravine of the Son of Hinnom. On the

north and north-west only could its ancient limits have surpassed its present ones, for there the ground is level. But even granting that the Jerusalem of David and of Solomon covered these little plains, which doubtless to some extent it did, still the city, in point of size, was comparatively insignificant. Jerusalem was small compared with the colossal capitals of pagan empires—Babylon and Rome, for instance. It was small compared with the overgrown capitals of modern times—with London and Paris, for instance. But we just see in this its peculiar adaptation to its special end. Commerce requires, as it creates, a great city; but the radiation of social and intellectual influence is better accomplished by a small and compact city, which Jerusalem was. Its size was favourable to its morality. It had greater community of feeling, and greater unity and combination of action, than it could have possessed had it been larger. In all ages small countries and cities have been employed by Providence for acting on mankind, for there the two conditions requisite for such action, namely, internal soundness and combination of forces, can best be secured.

The site, moreover, was central. The line from Jerusalem northwards to Lebanon was only a little longer than that from Jerusalem south-

wards to the Desert. The trans-Jordanic tribes, and those occupying the shore of the Mediterranean, were about equidistant. Thus Jerusalem was situated nearly in the heart of the nation. This would not have been of much consequence in the chief city of any other people; but in the case of the chosen people it was of great moment. Four times every year must all their males appear before the Lord. This was an admirable arrangement for promoting the unity of the nation; for keeping intelligence circulating, and for conserving religion, inasmuch as it gave every one an opportunity of witnessing the great cardinal rite of the Old Testament worship—the germ of all revealed Truth—the rite of Sacrifice, namely, which could be witnessed nowhere in their land but at Jerusalem; and the central position of the capital facilitated the carrying out of this wise arrangement.

Let us now look at the city. It occupies the same hills with that noble and beauteous capital in which Solomon dwelt, and so far it presents an image of the Jerusalem of other times, though but a faint image, so faint that it may be compared to that which the face of the dead presents of the countenance of the living man. Still it aids the imagination in recalling the picture of the Jerusalem of the Bible. On all sides, save

the north, is Jerusalem encompassed by deep ravines. These are trenches which nature has dug, and they conspire, with the hills which stand around the city, to render it impregnable. This deep cleft at the bottom of the Mount, dividing it from the city, the ramparts of which run along above on the very brow of the steep slope opposite, is the Valley of Jehoshaphat. Its bottom is seamed with a torrent bed, which flows only when the winter rains fall—the Kedron. How many sacred memories gather around that brook! We know whose feet it was that crossed it so oft, seeking the sequestered uplands of Mount Olivet. Look how deep and chasm-like the valley is, as it passes the south-eastern corner of the rocky platform on which the city stands. You perceive the old gray wall that rises on the brow of the steep above; that wall once enclosed Solomon's Temple, for there stood "the holy and beautiful house," rising over the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and fronting the Mount of Olives, on the same area where now is seen the dome of a Turkish mosque. Some of the stones in the wall have lain there ever since: they are of colossal size, being in some instances thirty feet by six. Beyond the torrent bed, on the western slope, sleep the Turkish dead; and here on this side the brook, beneath the shadows of their own

Temple Mount, which stretch across at eve to cover the old brown flags that pave their burial-place, sleep the Hebrew dead. Thus the last races of that people have come to resemble the first, in that they are strangers and sojourners in the land, and have not so much as a foot-breadth of it, save a place in which to bury their dead.

"Closed are the portals of their synagogue,
No Psalms of David now the silence break,
No Rabbi reads the ancient Decalogue
In the grand dialect the prophets spake."

You observe that valley that comes winding down from the west, deep and gorge-like, between the city and that bluff bare hill that overhangs it on the south side, and which joins the Jehoshaphat Vale at the south-east corner of the city wall; that is the Valley of the Son of Hinnom. It rises on the west of the city, runs along the city walls on that side, sweeps round the corner of Mount Zion, and passes on under the southern wall, till it falls into the Kedron Valley that comes down on the east at the point we have indicated. Let us take a stroll along its course to the west, and note as we pass its many historic localities, some true, some fabulous. We turn round the sharp rocky promontory of Ophil, the brow on which stands the south-east corner of the Temple wall, and on our right there opens

a cleft, formed by the termination of the valley that comes down betwixt Akra and Moriah. In the cleft is a pool, fed by a stream of living water which flows out from beneath the Temple. This is none other than

"Siloa's brook, that flow'd
Fast by the oracle of God "

Here, too, is the Pool of Siloam, to which our Lord sent the blind man to wash. The hill that rises above us on the left, forming the southern boundary of the valley, is the Hill of Evil Counsel, so named from the tradition that here stood the country palace of Ananias, the high priest, in which Judas completed his infamous bargain of selling the Just One for thirty pieces of silver. The ancient graves that are here seen mark it out more surely as the "Field of Blood," which was bought with these same thirty pieces of silver "to bury strangers in." We go on our way. The Valley of Hinnom is here narrow, and deep, and gloomy, and brings unpleasant remembrances with it, for here was Tophet. Deep down in this gorge stood the brazen image of Moloch. Often have these cliffs been dyed with the ruddy glow of the fires of the idol; and adown that slope oft has come the Hebrew mother to offer her infant to the god. Idolatry inverts all things, even a mother's love. The Arabs now call the

valley Wâdy Gehenna, or the "Valley of Hell." As we pass onwards we come under the brow of Mount Zion, which here forms the northern side of the valley. Winding round the base of Zion we turn to the north, and emerge on the west of the city, at the opening of the Valley of Hinnom, which is here very shallow.

In the basin or head of the valley was the Fountain of Gihon, of which we read that Heme-kiah "stopped the upper water-course of Gihon, and brought it down on the west to the city of David." We learn from Josephus that an aqueduct conveyed water to the tower of Hippicus, which stood in the western wall of the city; and an aqueduct is likewise spoken of in connexion with the royal palace on Zion. These precautions were taken, doubtless, in case of siege. Recent discoveries of great interest have corroborated these statements. They are thus given by Dr Robinson, in his "Later Biblical Researches in Palestine." "The general correctness of the preceding view," says Dr Robinson, "has been singularly attested by the discovery of an 'immense conduit' beneath the surface of the ground on Zion, brought to light in digging for the foundations of the Anglican church. This edifice occupies apparently a portion of the ancient site of the royal palace; it being not far

from the northern brow of Zion, nor also from Hippicus towards the east. On sinking a shaft, the workmen, at the depth of more than twenty feet, came upon the roof of a vaulted chamber of fine masonry, in perfect repair. Under this they found an 'immense conduit, partly hewn out of the solid rock; and where this was not the case, it was solidly built in even courses, and cemented on the face with a hard coating of cement, about one inch thick, and was covered over with large stones. The direction of this aqueduct was east and west.' Mr Johns, the architect of the church, to whom we are indebted for this account, traced it eastward for more than two hundred feet. In respect to the chamber and aqueduct, he further says, 'There is no doubt on my own mind that they have been used for the purpose of supplying the inhabitants with pure water. This, indeed, is shewn by the cement; as also by there being several apertures at intervals, apparently for drawing up water.' Here, then, is the aqueduct, in all probability, which we know existed in connexion with the royal palace on Zion."

Now, let us take a last look of the city itself—the poor, forlorn, and stricken city, that occupies the site, and bears the name of Jerusalem. There is no point that commands a better view than

that which we now occupy. The hang of the ground on which the city stands is from west to east, a circumstance that throws open its whole interior arrangements to the eye of one stationed on Olivet. Jerusalem stands on four hills, or swellings, of which the two on the south are by much the most famous, as they are the highest. You see them leaning over the Valley of the Son of Hinnom. This next us is Moriah; that one beyond is Mount Zion. They are parted by a depression or low valley that comes down from the western gate, and which, in the days of Josephus, went by the name of the Tyropæon, or Valley of the Cheesemongers. The Tyropæon, too, divides Mount Zion from the third hill, viz., Akra, which is a low rocky ridge, running across the centre of the city on the north of Zion and Moriah. On the north of Akra, again, is the fourth hill, namely Bezetha, which is still lower than Akra, in fact almost a plain. These four hills supported separate and well-known divisions of the city. On Moriah stood the temple; on Zion, the palace of David; on Akra, the main portion of the city; and on Bezetha, the northern suburbs, which, after our Lord's time, were enclosed by the wall. It were bootless to enter on any description of the heavy, unadorned, and ruinous fabrics; the narrow and tangled streets

that make up the town before us. The main interest centres in Moriah and Zion. On Moriah, now desecrated by a Mohammedan temple, the heaven-appointed sign of Redemption for our fallen world continued throughout the ages in the offering of sacrifice. Remission was cried by Heaven's own voice; but remission through the shedding of blood. On that mount the high priest, in his "garments of glory and beauty," has often walked; but there a greater Priest has left his ineffaceable traces, even the Priest after the order of Melchizedek, in whose sublime shadow all the priests of Aaron's line are for ever hidden. Scarce less sacred is the hill on the west, Mount Zion. There were written, and for the first time sung, many of those psalms, whose melody is still heard in every clime of earth in the sanctuaries and dwellings of God's people, and will continue to be heard till time itself shall end. Fitly does the mount of song adjoin the mount of sacrifice; for had there been no cross there would have been no songs on the earth.

Now we look abroad over the wide desolation of Judea. Jerusalem is at our feet. With what accuracy hath Tasso described the position of this city, as respects the surrounding localities!—

" By east, among the dusty valleys, glide
The silver streams of Jordan's crystal flood.

By west, the midland sea, with boundaries tied.
Of sandy shores, where Joppa whilom stood.
By north, Samaria stands; and on that side
The golden calf was rear'd in Bethel wood.
Bethlehem by south, where Christ incarnate was—
A pearl in steel—a diamond set in brass."

On our north is the desolate mountain region which we traversed on our way thither, and of which, therefore, we need not now speak. Behind us, on the east, are the stupendous and naked piles which separate Jerusalem from the Valley of the Jordan. That valley appears but at a little distance; it looks as if it were buried beneath the mountains of Judea on the one hand, and those of Moab on the other. It exhibits no trace of its former cultivation; it is scathed and blackened, and bears on its bosom the ruins of its cities—Jericho and others. On the south it is shut in by the waters of that mysterious lake which covers the Valley of Siddim and the Cities of the Plain, and which is here distinctly visible. On the south is the hilly region which fell to the lot of the tribe of Judah. Here, "binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine, he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes." The region was equally celebrated for its milk as for its wine; and vine-stocks are still found here of such size as to justify the renown this part of the land

enjoyed as a region of vineyards. All the hills and valleys of this extensive tract, south to the hills of Hebron, are covered with the ruins of towns, to an extent which no one could credit who has not actually traversed it. Now, last of all, we turn to the west. Here, one rounded summit rises behind another as far as the eye can look, with patches of cultivation in some of the valleys, and nothing to shade the sides of the hills, save occasionally a wild fig-tree. Beyond these mountains is the Plain of Sharon—a vast garden in former days, a wilderness now. Its face is made up here of sand, there of long grass, and there of swamps, interspersed with a little cultivation—one or two modern towns, half in ruins, and abundance of ancient cities, wholly so. What need of more evidence to shew that the prophecy is fulfilled, “*Your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste*”?

The people, not less than the land of Judea, were the objects of prophecy; and on them, not less than on the country, have these prophecies been fulfilled. We find in Palestine at this day few men, and these are not her ancient inhabitants, but strangers. On the former a sentence of expatriation was long since pronounced; and who is so ignorant as not to know that it has been executed? For eighteen centuries the Jew

has been an exile ; and during that period he has trodden with a weary foot, and with a heart still more weary, every country under heaven, from the islands of Japan in the east to the forests of America in the far-distant west. And wherever we meet a Jew, there we behold a monument of the truth of prophecy: "And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you ; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought : and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other ; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest : but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind : and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee ; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life."

Thus have we gone round the region of Fulfilled Prophecy ; and here we lay aside our pilgrim staff.

CONCLUSION.

LET us now look back on the track over which we have gone. Which of its cities, doomed to fall, now survives? Is it Babylon!—then what mean these desolate mounds on the Plain of Chaldea? Is it the cities of Edom, or of Moab, or of Judea?—then what mean these ruins with which the lands east and west of the Jordan are overspread? Which of these countries, doomed to desolation, is now fertile and flourishing? or which of the nations, concerning which it was said that they should be cut off, remains to this day? The Jews are still a people; but the Edomites, the Moabites, and the Ammonites, have perished. Consider, moreover, that what the prophets pronounced concerning these lands was not simply a sentence of general desolation—they particularized the nature of the ruin of each. Regarding one country, they said that its soil should be destroyed; regarding another, that, retaining all the riches of its soil, it should cease to be cultivated.

Of one city, the prophets foretold that it should be so completely destroyed that its site should not be found ; of another, that it should be tenanted by owls ; of a third, that serpents and wild beasts should lodge in its ruins ; and of a fourth, that it should be a stable for camels. Of one people, it was foretold that they should become exiles ; of another, that they should be cut off for ever. Consider, also, that these predictions were given many ages before their fulfilment ; and that, as regards many of the threatenings of the prophets, they were given when the nations by whom they were to be executed were either very insignificant, or not in existence at all. And consider, last of all, the extreme improbability of what was foretold. Suppose any one were to foretell that a day should come when Europe should cease to be inhabited—when nothing should be seen on the fields of Scotland and England but a few shepherds with their flocks—when a sail should never be seen at the mouth of the Mersey, nor a war steamer in the docks of Plymouth—when there should not be a single inhabitant in the cities of London and Paris—when the soil of France should be so wasted, that a few flocks should be unable to subsist on it—when ruined heaps only should stud the banks of the Rhine—when, in short, all the cities throughout Europe should be abandoned to ruin, and occupied, some in one way, some in

another. This would be deemed a most unlikely event. Any one setting up for a prophet would never be so mad as to risk his reputation by selecting, as the subject of his random prediction, the most unlikely of all unlikely events; and yet the desolation of the countries we have gone over was far more unlikely when it was foretold. Men in that age had had no experience of countries desolated; and even though they had had, they would never have conjectured that such a calamity would ever overtake these countries—the earliest seats of population, and containing, moreover, the finest cities and the richest soils on the surface of the earth. Assuredly, it would have been thought that these would be the last countries to be abandoned; especially when, abandoning them, men had to seek new homes, in lands then covered, as our own was, with swamps and impenetrable forests.

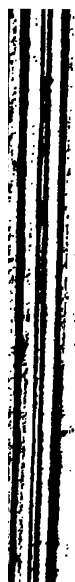
We ask, too, whether the sagacity of a mortal could have foreseen all these changes? The sagacity of a mortal is not able to foresee the changes which may befall himself during his short time on earth; how, then, could he have foreseen all these changes? Just think of what would have been required in order to foretell the fall of but one of those cities that now lie mouldering on the walls of Syria! All the causes which were to operate in the world,

and the manner in which all the beings, living, or yet to live, were to act, between the time when the prediction was given forth and the time when it was to be fulfilled—all, we say, must have been foreseen before the future overthrow of even one of these cities could have been foretold with certainty. No reasoning is needed to convince us that this lies not within the scope of finite sagacity.

But, in the last place, may not all these occurrences, all this singular agreement between prophecies, countless in number, and the facts we have adduced, have been the result of chance? The man who could propose such a solution, must be driven to the last resort. Could chance have formed the steam-engine? What would be thought of the intellect of that man who could believe that the marvellous piece of mechanism we have just named was brought into being by an artisan simply throwing a few iron rods together? But what opinion are we to form of the intellect of the man who could believe—I do not mean merely profess, but seriously believe—that the magnificent scheme of prophecy which the Bible presents, embracing, as it does, the history of the world from the days of Daniel to the end of time, was formed by a few impostors throwing together a number of haphazard predictions? No; there is only one conclusion to which the evidence we have adduced

tends, and to that conclusion it tends inevitably and overwhelmingly, namely, that the Bible is the word of God. And it is utterly useless in any man to cry out for more proofs, or stronger arguments. We state the sober truth, and we state it in the soberest terms, when we say, that the man who will not believe Moses and the prophets, on the evidence we have adduced, would not believe although they should rise from the dead.

THE END.



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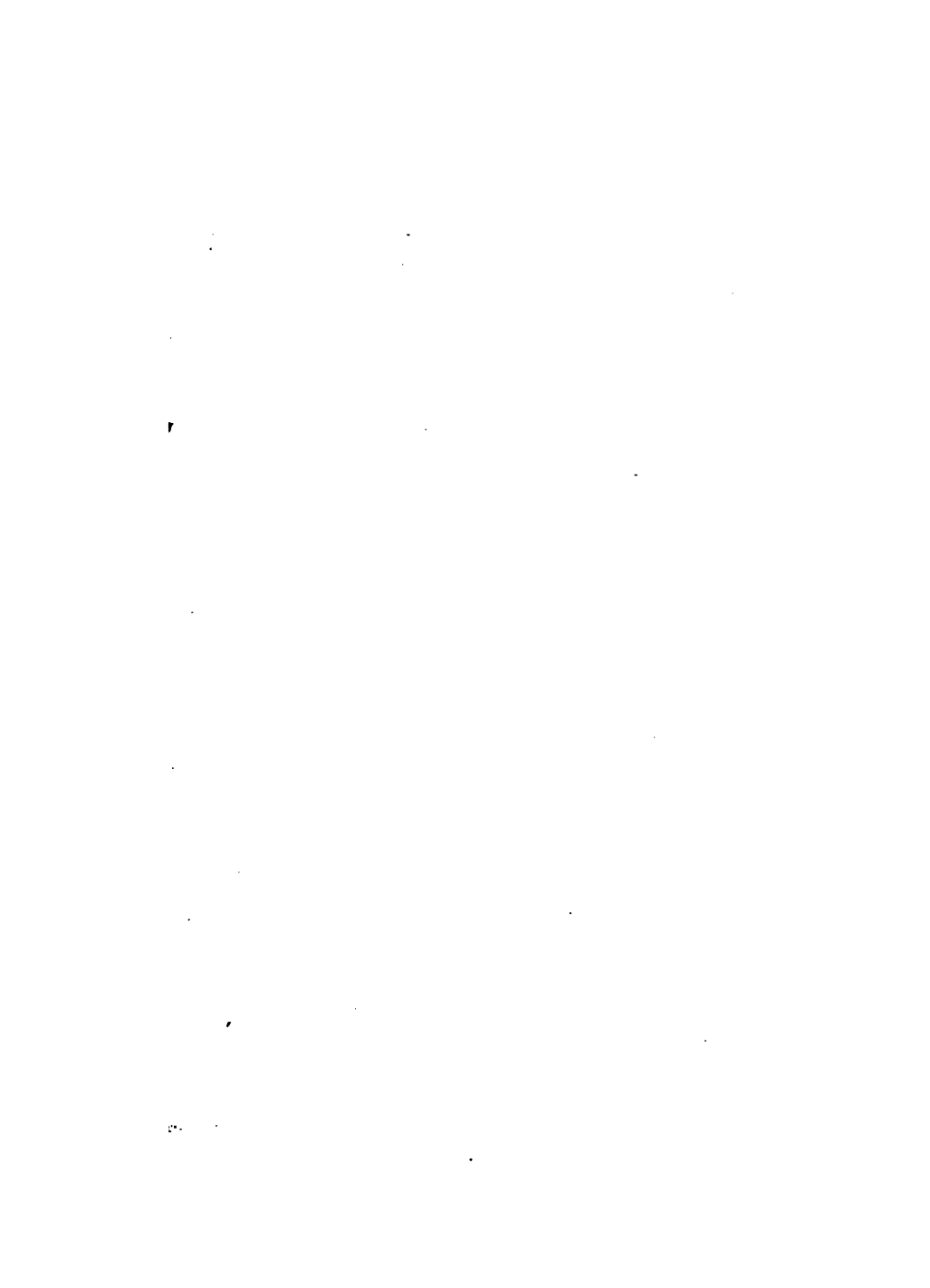
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