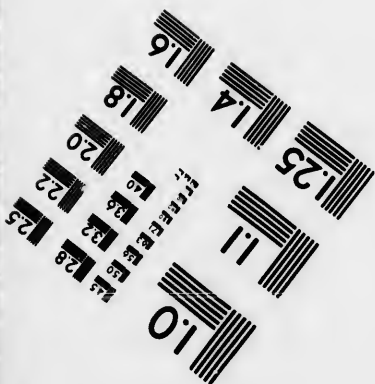
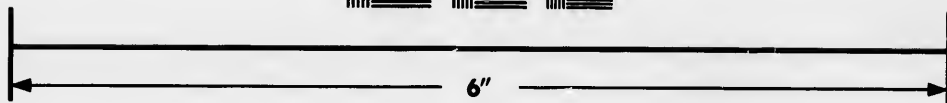
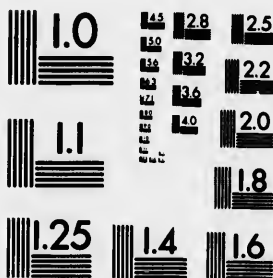


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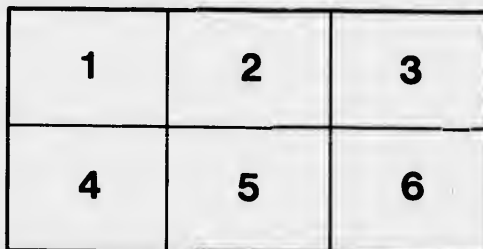
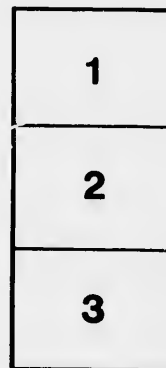
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THE TESTIMONY

OF

NINEVEH

TO THE

VERACITY OF THE BIBLE.

BY THE REV. M. HARVEY,

MINISTER OF THE FREE CHURCH,

St. John's, Newfoundland.

"The discoveries of Nineveh are the greatest conquests ever wrung from oblivion. No diver ever ventured down into those rank, silent waters, and brought back such a goodly jewel. Of Nineveh we know not where it had stood, and only that it had existed. For centuries the Tigris and Euphrates had poured down from the Armenian mountains, flowing on through the desert plains of Mesopotamia, but uttering no dirge for departed greatness; and the Arabs, who pitched their black tents beside the shapeless mound of Khorsabad, talked of the deeds of the prophet Nimrod, unconscious that they sat beside his buried palaces."—*Athenæum*.

St. John's, Newfoundland,

Thomas McConnan.

1854.

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THESE P

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P R E F A C E .

It is remarkable that as the Bible grows older it is every day becoming a better understood and attested book. Every year is adding to our stores of information regarding its phraseology and allusions, and bringing to light fresh corroborations of its history. Strange and unexpected commentators start up to throw light upon an obscure passage—to remove a difficulty—to testify with striking effect to its veracity. This is especially true of our own day, when events seem hurrying on, “in multitudes—in multitudes to the valley of decision;” as though some great crisis of our world’s destiny were approaching. Transactions that formerly were the products of centuries, are now compressed into a few years or even days. Within a very brief period, how many extinct nations and buried cities have been called up from their graves into “the valley of vision,” that they might bear witness to the truth of God’s word! Egypt, with her monuments and hieroglyphics, has heard and obeyed the divine summons. Petra, Tyre, Babylon, Thebes, flinging off the crust of ages, and shaking themselves from the dust, have stood forth in grim array. And last and most important of all, ancient Nineveh lifts her head, hoary with age; while tidings have recently reached us, which, if true, intimate that the remains of Sodom and Gomorrah have not been, as commonly supposed, buried in the waters of the Dead Sea, but have at length been discovered, and are now awaiting examination.

Little did the Ninevites imagine, when constructing these monuments of their own pride and greatness, that the records of their battles and triumphs would, one day, furnish illustrations and elucidations of the sacred books of a nation whom they despised and trampled on. The sacred writers recorded their facts and narratives in the pages of the Bible—the Assyrians, mean time, were executing their own representations in marble, and their inscriptions, in the wedge-shaped characters, along their walls; and now in this nineteenth century, the written

history and the marble tablets are confronted ; and the result is another addition to the mighty mass of evidence already accumulated in support of the Bible. Thus wonderfully does God make human designs subservient to the accomplishment of his own lofty purposes. And thus, as the Bible increases in age, it also increases in strength.

The following pages contain, in a condensed form, and with some additions, the most important portions of a course of lectures on "the Ruins of Nineveh as illustrative of scripture." Having been written for a popular audience, it was necessary to avoid minute details, and to seize on the more important and striking outlines of the subject. This circumstance, combined with the brevity necessary in reducing them within the compass of these pages, will account for the form in which they are presented. The object aimed at is simply to point out such of the discoveries, among the ruins of Nineveh, as elucidate or corroborate scripture.

St. John's, Newfoundland, }
21st November, 1854. }

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CHAPTER II.

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APPENDIX.—

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

No event of modern times has excited a deeper interest, all over the civilized world, than the exhumation of the remains of the great Nineveh, the capital of the oldest empire of the globe. It is very wonderful to think that now, in the museums of London and Paris, are deposited fragments of the wreck of a great city that was founded in the third or fourth century after the deluge, and existed till the year 606 before Christ—in all some fifteen centuries. These remains, however, are not merely objects of wonder on account of their vast antiquity; they possess intrinsic value. The geologist is able, from the various strata and organic remains embedded beneath the surface of the earth, to weave a wondrous tale regarding the condition of our planet ages before man's creation. He finds a whole history accurately written in the rocky archives beneath our feet. He can read off the biography of extinct races. He can decipher the records of the rise, decline and fall of dynasties that now exist only in petrified fragments. He can describe, as accurately as if he had been an eye-witness, the convulsive throes through which old earth has passed. The discovery of the ruins of Nineveh affords an opportunity for constructing a new and not less interesting chapter in human geology. These "organic remains" of the old city are of priceless value. They contain the history of a great people who have long ago been swept up among the dust of the past, and buried deep in the primary strata of time's deposits. And just as the geologist is able, from some petrified fragment or mouldering bone, to reconstruct the whole animal, as it once existed, and describe its form, habits and condition; so, from these dust-covered sculptures and hoary palaces, the genius of the nineteenth century will be able to reconstruct Nineveh—to make the Assyrians live and breathe before us—to comprehend the intellectual and

moral life of the people—to deduce their manners, arts, ideas, laws, history and religion. Once those huge mounds on the banks of the Euphrates and Tigris are thoroughly explored, there can be no doubt but we shall know the Assyrians almost as well as we now know the Egyptians, the Greeks and the Romans. A long-missing chapter will thus be added to the history of the human race. Previous to these discoveries almost nothing was known with certainty regarding the great Assyrian empire. Nineveh was almost a myth—its history a half-fabulous fragment. The boundaries of knowledge will thus be enlarged, so far as the past is concerned; and the mists that envelope the commencement of man's career on earth will be, at least partly dispersed.

Every addition to our knowledge of man and his works should be eagerly welcomed by us. Nothing human should ever be regarded with indifference. These ruins, therefore, have for us the profoundest interest. They are the memorials of one great and numerous branch of the human family. They contain the history in stone of what our *brothers* did and thought and suffered so many ages since; for they were our brothers—those Assyrians whose forms are portrayed in these sculptures—our brothers by blood,—with human hearts beating in their bosoms, with the same passions, hopes and fears—the same drama of existence in which they had a part to enact—the same duties and destinies. And, then, did they not help to make the world what it is, and us what we are? They were pioneers in the great march of civilization. They battled with rude nature and sent down the spoils to us. They aided in smoothing the surface of earth, removing the curse of barrenness and rendering the planet habitable. Like a forlorn hope, they filled up the trench with their prostrate bodies; and over these, others have marched on to victory. Or, like back-woodsmen, they have felled the forest and drained the marsh, and subdued the wilderness for us, and then departed onward. In fact these ruins make it clear that many of those arts and discoveries which we reckon self-derived, were struck out ages ago by this very people. They were acquainted with the manufacture of glass—with the principle of the arch in architecture—the use of the pulley—the speaking-trumpet; and were able to construct palaces and canals that fill us moderns with astonishment. These remains tell us also that Grecian art was but the perfection of what the Assyrians began. Their performance was the rudiments: the Greek borrowed and completed. A great and noble people

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truly were these primeval men—inventive, creative, progressive; genuine workers in the universe; gigantic earth and men-conquerors: and could we trace out the roots of many things that are now beautifying and blessing our own life we should find them deep in this Assyrian stratum. The present age is a growth from all preceding ages and bound by ties to them all. This rocky chapter in human history records a story of absorbing interest. These Nineveh remains are truly “sermons in stones”—great sermons, telling a wondrous tale of human endeavours, struggles, achievements and victories;—telling us how man, when an outcast from Eden, helpless and hopeless seemingly, by toil, by patient thought and the unconquerable force of the spirit within him, grappled with his difficulties, and gradually fashioned a home for himself in what appeared an inhospitable wilderness. And they tell us too that mankind is one great whole, and that we are linked to the earliest generations of men. But for them we should not now possess our railways, our printing-presses, our Menai-bridges and steam-driven ocean-rangers. They laid the foundation: we build the superstructure. For was not the first man that smelted sand into glass, in point of fact, laying the foundation of the Crystal Palace on the banks of the Thames? And this lens of rock-crystal which Layard has picked up among the rubbish of Nineveh, is it not the organic filament of Roscoe’s telescope, by which we are plumbing the depths of space and reading the laws of the universe? Can we not discover a connecting link between old Tubalcain, the first man who struck the spark from the glowing metal and beat it into a tool, and the mechanics who forged the huge tube of iron through which the railway train rushes over an arm of the sea or across the mighty St. Lawrence. In fact, Birmingham, with its roaring furnaces and clanging hammers, is joined to the ante-diluvian world. The present is just the surface-growth from the whole buried past: and similarly we are connected with the whole future; and with our manufactures, arts and literatures, we shall be entombed, in order that coming ages may take root, and draw nourishment from a richer and deeper soil; and that over our remains, as we over those of Nineveh, they may accomplish greater things than have yet been. In us the two eternities—the past and future—meet and mingle. So wondrously has God bound all his creatures together. It is such considerations as these that give dignity and worth to researches among the mouldering remains of antiquity.

And then what grave reflections rise in the mind as we moralize over the ruins of the old city! We look back into the long burial-aisles of the past, and see how man and his works have all been swallowed up and forgotten,—how one generation appears, toils on for a time, dies and is entombed; while a new one treads upon its ashes, to be buried in its turn; and the thought arises with oppressive force, “what shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue”! Here a great people rose, mighty in strength, making the earth quake beneath their tread; for 1300 years they were masters of the world; but the rushing tide of time swept them away; not a vestige remains but these marble slabs; and of all that they did we are so utterly ignorant that a few pages of universal history tell the whole tale of the great Assyrian Empire. Utter darkness has rushed down over the whole. They had their statesmen, warriors, heroes, poets, philosophers—their Hamplens, Miltons, Luthers doubtless; but of them we shall never hear “at all, for ever”—Shall we, with all our civilization, literature and art, be one day as completely entombed and forgotten;—our history abridged into a few pages, and some antiquarian searching among our ruins, as we are doing now among those of Nineveh? Who can tell? We fondly hope for permanency—for immortality. To the Ninevites it must have seemed an impossibility that their proud race should ever bite the dust. So thought the graceful Greek and the haughty Roman—so think we. But if change be the law of God’s universe, shall it be arrested now? The scheme of the world is very wide; and our noble Anglo-Saxon race, brave though they be, are scarcely destined to work out the whole majestic plan. They will be the world’s civilizers till their appointed work is done. Let the skeleton remains of Nineveh teach us the folly of national as well as personal vanity.

But though to the antiquarian and philosopher these ruins are deeply interesting, yet to the eye of the christian they possess a higher importance. When these unlooked for and startling discoveries were first announced, the question with those who had at heart the cause of christianity, was, what bearing have they on the volume of revelation? Do they confirm or contradict the statements of the Bible? Do they furnish new armour for or against infidelity? Or, if there be nothing positive on either side, do they throw any new light on the meaning of the sacred page—do they make its allusions clearer or illustrate its prophecies? Though such questions were asked without any trembling anxiety as to the result, still it is

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most gratifying to find that, in a christian point of view, the ruins of Nineveh possess an interest beyond the hopes of the most sanguine. Some of the most marvellous confirmations of the historical and prophetic parts of scripture have been dug out of the ruins of this buried city; and some of the most valuable comments in stone, upon the sacred page, have been furnished from the same dust. These ruins, therefore, do really connect themselves, most closely, with the living christianity of our churches, homes and hearts. And the testimony they bear is truly of the most extraordinary character. That the records of a city and empire, buried before the last book of the Old Testament was written, and utterly lost sight of for two thousand years, should be dug out of their grave, and furnish the most remarkable corroborations of the Bible, surpasses the conceptions of the wildest imagination. Nineveh and the Bible were contemporaries—grew up, as it were, side by side; each kept its own records—the one in a written book, the other in stone tablets. Nineveh is entombed, and, twenty centuries afterwards, raised to confront the Bible. Were the book a cunningly devised fable, these sculptures would give it the lie. But so far from that, they but add to the accumulating testimony which all research into the past, all the discoveries of science and all the advances of true philosophy are furnishing to the truth of revelation. And, besides, it is very striking to find that these discoveries come to light just at a time when such progress has been in the study of languages, in a philosophic sense, that the skilful ingenuity of scholars can decipher the inscriptions of a language utterly unknown before; and when the appliances of modern science can preserve and restore these precious fragments and diffuse a knowledge of them over the world. Had they been discovered at an earlier period, they would, in all probability, have been allowed to crumble into dust without any notice, or with but a superficial examination. In their grave, however, they have been safely kept till the proper moment; and are then transferred to two nations most deeply interested in their investigation, and best equipped for the task. Can we, in view of all these circumstances, hesitate to say “truly this is the finger of God.”

It is no less remarkable that these remains supply to us the very thing we most needed for a clearer understanding of scripture. It is singular that not the smallest fragment of any Jewish monument is known to be in existence. Ancient Jerusalem has been utterly swept away; so that not a column,

sculpture or relic remains to tell us what it was. Of all that the Jews did in Palestine we possess not a remnant—no ruins of Solomon's temple or of his house of Lebanon—nothing of their architecture or monuments to illustrate their manners or explain the allusions of their writers. We have the whole sacred literature of the Jews; but the want of such remains has long been felt. Now, however, it would seem that this want is about to be supplied to a very great extent. The remains of Nineveh will fill the gap. In manners, arts and modes of life, the Assyrians resembled the Jews more nearly than any other nation. Their ideas and civilization were strikingly alike. Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, came from Ur of the Chaldees, in the land of Assyria; so that they had a common ancestry. The intercourse between the two countries was close and long-continued. Hence it comes that these remains of Assyria are so valuable in illustrating the literature of the Jews. Besides, two of the sacred writers were brought into immediate contact with Assyrian civilization. Daniel lived and wrote in Babylon, and Ezekiel in the neighbourhood of Nineveh; while Jonah trod the streets of the great city. All these circumstances concur in investing the ruins of Nineveh with a profound degree of interest in the eyes of the christian.

The object of these pages is not to attempt any account of the discoveries among the ruins of Nineveh, but simply to notice such of them as appear to illustrate or corroborate scripture. Very full and accurate accounts of these discoveries are now within the reach of all; but if we can present, in a condensed form, the testimony of Nineveh to the veracity of the Bible, it may help to confirm the faith of some, to scatter the doubts of others, and to strengthen our confidence in God's word as "the lamp to our feet and the light to our path."

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CHAPTER II.

HISTORY OF NINEVEH.

In order to sketch the story of old Nineveh, we must transport ourselves, in imagination, to oriental climes—to the glowing east—

"The land of the cedar and vine,
Where the flowers ever blossom, the beams ever shine,
Where the light wings of Zephyr, opprest with perfume,
Wax faint o'er the gardens of Gul in their bloom;
Where the citron and olive are fairest of fruit,
And the voice of the nightingale never is mute;
Where the tints of the earth and the hues of the sky,
In colour though varied, in beauty may vie:
And the purple of ocean is deepest in dye:
Where the virgins are soft as the roses they twine,
And all, save the spirit of man, is divine:
'Tis the land of the east—'tis the clime of the sun."

Taking up a map of Asia, and glancing at the northern shore of the Persian Gulf, we find two of the most magnificent rivers of the world here discharging their waters into the ocean, in a united stream. Tracking this current northward for a little, we find the point where the two streams have formed a junction; and following the eastern branch, named the Tigris, upwards, we find its origin in the high lands of Armenia, more than 1100 miles from the point of confluence. On the eastern bank of this river, 400 miles from the sea, stood the city of Nineveh. Following the western branch, called the Euphrates, we find it after a much longer course, because more circuitous, originating in the same table-land of Armenia, not far from the head-springs of the Tigris. On the Euphrates, but much nearer to the ocean than Nineveh, stood the city of Babylon. An immense region is drained by these two rivers. Between them they enclose a great plain, stretching from the Armenian mountain-range to the Persian Gulf—naturally one of the most rich and fertile portions of the world. On the one hand they drain the immense slope that commences on the north-east, from the high table-land of Persia; and on the other the declivity of the great

Syrian desert and the northern districts of Arabia. The country enclosed between these rivers, and stretching along their banks, has been known by the names of Shinar, Chaldea, Babylonia, Mesopotamia and Assyria. This region has been the scene of the greatest transactions on which the sun has ever looked down. It was the cradle of our race. Somewhere within its bounds must have been the garden of Eden; its bright skies of blue must have over-canopied our first parents; its balmy airs fanned the brow of our common mother. And there in the north, Ararat, grandest of mountains, rears its head covered with everlasting snow; and from some one of its lower ranges Noah stepped forth from the ark, and looked down over a world from which the waters of the deluge were but ebbing away. Slowly and timidly his descendants crept down and occupied the fertile plains of the Tigris and Euphrates. Here they reared the tower of Babel, that they might thus centralize themselves, and avoid doing what God meant them to do—to spread over the world and cultivate its remotest regions. But their language was confounded, and they were forced to emigrate from the sunny plains of Shinar, and colonize the unoccupied wastes. Centuries afterwards, the Jews were dragged back here in bondage; and the Ten Tribes mourned by these streams for the land of their fathers; and their brethren hung their harps on the willows of Babylon. Here the prophet Ezekiel saw his gorgeous visions; and Daniel beheld, in panoramic view, the great empires of the world rising and setting; and here too Jonah preached. On these plains the struggle for the mastery of the world has again and again occurred. Hence marched huge armies for the conquest of the world;—hence Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar led their warriors against Judea and Egypt. Later still the world-subduing Alexander of Macedon met, with his steel-glad Greeks, the hosts of Persia, won the battle of Arbela, and with it the empire of the world. And here is the Zab, one of the tributaries of the Tigris, into which Darius plunged on his flying steed, the Macedonian in hot pursuit behind, soon to be overtaken by the greater conqueror's death. In Babylon Alexander drew his last breath. And let us not forget that from the same river Zab, at an earlier period, began the world-renowned retreat of the Ten Thousand Greeks, whose heroism will be remembered till the end of time. This region, then, has been the scene of the most important events of world-history. Now, the wandering Arab gallops over parched plains and grass grown ruins. But can we not, in imagination,

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people them again; can we not see the tide of human life that here, for centuries, roared along; and hear the din of those huge cities—Nineveh and Babylon;—and picture their crowded streets and glittering palaces and rattling war-chariots? We can see the gayly-clad horsemen and footmen marching on “in battle’s magnificently stern array”; and the triumphant return, with the long train of captives and the rich spoil. Where are they now? Conquerors and conquered have mingled their dust; desolation enwraps all; stillness—death! From a far off isle of the sea—the name of which was unknown to the Ninevites—a curious traveller comes; and searching among the dust of the great city, he picks up a few slabs that once covered the walls of the monarch’s palace, and tries to tell us something of the extinct race; just as a Buckland constructs a history of the great Saurian race, that were once the monarchs of our planet, from the stony tablets beneath our feet.

If we want information regarding the founding of Nineveh we must go to the oldest book—the Bible. In Gen. X Ch. 8, the sacred writer, speaking of the genealogy of the sons of Ham, says, “and Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one in the earth; he was a mighty hunter before the Lord; wherefore it is said even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the plain of Shinar. Out of that land went forth Asshur”; or as it should be translated, and as the margin renders it, “he” (that is Nimrod) “went out into Assyria and builded Nineveh and the city of Rehoboth and Calah, the same is a great city.” We gather from this brief historic fragment, that, in the age after the flood, Nimrod, a great-grandson of Noah, a man distinguished by prowess, strength and energy, acquired, in virtue of his superior endowments, an ascendancy over his fellows; became a sort of chieftain or King; ruled his generation, as superior natures always do: conquered his weaker neighbours; and laid the foundation of the first monarchy by founding Babel—afterwards Babylon—and a number of other cities; and that then, pushing northward, he entered Asshur, or Assyria, and built Nineveh, subduing the Shemites, who under Asshur, son of Shem, had settled in this territory. This Nimrod, first of Kings after the deluge, is called “a mighty hunter.” In days when the wild beasts disputed with man for the sovereignty of earth, it was a matter of some consequence to be a brave and efficient hunter; and the greatest man would then be the most successful slayer of beasts.

His fellows, for whom he fought the lion or wolf, or slew the wild boar or deer, would do reverence to him as superior to themselves—would obey his word, as that of a higher nature—would range themselves under his command, and feel themselves safe when his stalwart arm led the attack. Knowing that a brave man led them on, where he marched they would follow. Everywhere does man recognize and bow down before true nobleness—before what he believes to be higher and better than himself. And this Nimrod attained to the dignity of “King,” in the original significance of the word, because he was the “canning” or able man of his generation. Quick of eye and strong of arm, he gathered followers around him—fought with savage beast or the untamed forest—conquered the dark powers of nature—cleared a space for action, and brought order out of confusion. A truly great man was this Nimrod, whose deeds are telling on the world even yet; for did he not lay the foundation of what we call “the state” in these days? Under him the old patriarchal, family-rule, merged into the wider one of nation; the tribe became citizens. When we talk of his building Babylon and Nineveh, however, we are not to fancy that these rude men were able to construct a city of palaces and temples, such as ages afterwards they became. Most probably, a few clay huts, with a prickly fence to keep off the wild beasts and robbers, formed the beginning of these great cities. Did not Rome begin with a dozen of mud hovels, raised by a few brigands on the Palatine hill? Nineteen centuries ago, the site of what we now call London, was the camping ground of a host of painted warriors, known to us as the ancient Britons. Even so, the gorgeous Babylon and Nineveh grew up from these primitive settlements of Nimrod. Posterity remembered and honoured the founder. Among the ruins that have been explored, the gigantic figure of a man has been found, sculptured in bold relief, representing him in the act of strangling a young lion which he presses against his breast. It is believed that this represents “the mighty hunter”—the founder of the Assyrian monarchy.

The Bible thus gives us the only authentic information regarding the founding of Nineveh and its twin-sister, Babylon; but of their after history there is no mention for more than a thousand years. A great empire we know grew up, and extended its conquests far and wide, and was mistress of the world; but its history for more than a thousand years is an absolute blank. Mention is made in the history of Abraham of

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one "Amraphel King of Shinar"; most probably an Assyrian viceroy or general; and then comes this huge gap of ten centuries. The next mention of Nineveh, in the Bible, occurs in the book of the prophet Jonah, who flourished about 860 years before Christ, or about 250 years before the destruction of Nineveh.

Jonah was the earliest of the prophets whose books have been embodied in the canon of scripture. It is not improbable that he was a pupil of the prophet Elisha, and commenced his career soon after his master's course had terminated. In his remarkable narrative, Nineveh bursts upon us at once, in the very height of its greatness and splendour. It would seem, at this time, to have been a place well known to the Jews. The commercial intercourse between the two nations was probably close; and the inscriptions on the Nineveh remains make it certain that the imperial arm of Assyria had, even before the days of Jonah, reached Judea; and that the Jews were tributaries to the mistress of the east. By the divine command Jonah was sent to Nineveh to pronounce its doom. He found it, we are told, "an exceeding great city of three days' journey," or 60 miles. It is evident, both from the necessities of the case, and other considerations, that we are to understand it to have been 60 miles in circumference, and thus its diameter would be 20 miles. This, however, is an immense area, such as no city of modern times covers. London, by far the most populous city of the world, is but 24 miles in circumference, and 8 miles in diameter. The eastern mode of building a city entirely removes the apparent difficulty of the case. The easterns were not in the habit of piling story upon story, as we do. To the present day, their houses are but one story in height, for the most part, and consequently spread over a large space. Neither did they join house to house, but commonly left a wide interval between their dwellings, which was planted with trees, or used as gardens. Thus, in case of siege, they could pasture flocks and raise grain for the supply of the population within the city wall. We can thus readily understand how Nineveh covered such a wide area. The book of Jonah farther informs us that its population comprised "six-score thousand persons who could not discern between their right hand and their left"—that is, 120,000 of the whole were children, who usually form a fifth of the inhabitants. We thus obtain 600,000 as the entire population of Nineveh. London, at this moment, contains four times that number, huddled together in less than half the space of ground on which Nineveh stood.

The discoveries of Layard confirm, in a most remarkable manner, the scripture account of its extent. The excavator of Nineveh finds four great mounds, each covering the remains of a palace, so placed that, if connected together, a space almost exactly equal to that ascribed to Nineveh, in the book of Jonah, would be enclosed within such boundaries. Still farther: we find an ancient historian, Diodorus Siculus, corroborating all this in a memorable manner. He tells us that in circumference the city was "three days' journey," or 60 miles, and "one day's journey in diameter." Such strange and unlooked-for witnesses are raised up to testify to the truth of revelation.

That quoenly city must have presented a gorgeous spectacle to the eyes of Jonah as he entered its gates, bearing "the burden of the Lord." There were its armed soldiers, guarding the battlements—its gay throngs, crowding the streets, intent on gain or pleasure—the war-chariots, drawn by prancing steeds, bounding over the pavement—the gorgeous temple-palaces, elevated on their lofty platforms—wealth and luxury on all hands—wickedness and pleasure walking abroad. And, doubtless, the eyes of the prophet would rest, in some astonishment, on those colossal images of winged, compound animals that guarded the gates. Strange to think that those human-headed bulls and lions, now adorning the halls of the British Museum, looked, with their stony gaze, upon the prophet Jonah—

"Staring right on with calm, eternal eyes."

What a different race now gazes on them, and how different the scene that surrounds them amid the roar of mighty London! The voice of the prophet awes that giddy throng. He is sent for by the King himself—entered, doubtless, one of the palaces that are now explored; and saw those very sculptures we now behold—those figures of gods, kings and priests—those battle and hunting scenes, then gorgeously coloured, and forming a spectacle of unequalled splendour. The stern spirit of the prophet might have been awed for a moment by all these evidences of power; but he felt himself greater than all these; and rising to his full dignity, he wavered not in delivering God's message, even in the monarch's presence. How mighty the divine word that bowed that vast, proud city, and at once brought it to fasting and sackcloth! Their repentance was genuine; and when God repented of the evil that he said he would do unto them, and he did it not."

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The entire subjugation of Judea to Assyria appears to have proceeded rapidly after this date. In the year B. C. 769, we find Pul, an Assyrian King, invading Judea, during the reign of Menahem. The name of this Jewish monarch, Layard informs us, has been found in the Nineveh inscriptions, among those Kings represented as tributaries to Assyria. Next we find Ahaz, King of Judah, imploring help from Tiglath Pileser, the successor of Pul, against Pekah, King of Israel, and Rezin, King of Syria, who had combined to dethrone the Jewish monarch. The assistance asked from Assyria was granted, but proved, in the end, disastrous; for the application discovered the weakness of the Jewish state, and excited the ambitious designs of their treacherous allies. Accordingly, Shalmaneser, the successor of Tiglath Pileser, invaded the Kingdom of Israel, and after a campaign of three years, imprisoned their King, and carried captive the Ten Tribes, and placed them in Halah and Habor, two cities on the river Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. He also planted some of his own subjects in Samaria, in the room of the captives; and these, mingling with the small remnant of the Israelites that remained, formed the Samaritans, of whom we hear in the New Testament. But of the Ten Tribes we hear no more; they are still reckoned lost; and all attempts to identify any people as their descendants have hitherto failed.

The next King of Assyria was Sennacherib. Hezekiah, King of Judah, declined any longer to be a tributary of the great monarch; and Sennacherib advanced to reduce him to submission. With the details of this campaign all are familiar; the narrative is too striking to be forgotten. In one night the angel of the Lord smote 185,000 of his army before the walls of Jerusalem—

“Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn hath blown,
That host, on the morrow, lay withered and strown.”

We shall find, in due time, a most wonderful testimony to the truth of the scripture narrative of Sennacherib's invasion, among the sculptures lately discovered. He was murdered by two of his sons, and succeeded by another son, Eserhaddon, one of whose generals carried Manasseh captive to Babylon. After this time, we find no more mention of Assyria in the pages of canonical scripture; but the apocryphal book of Judith mentions

Nabuchodonosor as King of Nineveh, under whom the empire rose to an unparalleled pitch of greatness; but after his reign it began rapidly to decline towards its fall.

The last hour of the proud city, whose doom God's prophets had pronounced, at length arrived. The nations that she had so long trampled upon, at last determined to rise against their cruel tyrant. And now was heard the mustering of the hosts against the great Nineveh; nearer and nearer rolled the din of war; her walls are beleaguered; and chariots and thunder-bearing steeds and a countless host beset her on all sides. The shouts of battle ascend to heaven; and in those proud halls there are pale cheeks, and beating hearts, and tremblings of despair. But may not Nineveh laugh the foe to scorn?—are not her huge walls impregnable? For two years the siege goes on, and no impression is made. But hark! what strange gurgling sound suddenly catches the ear! The river is "become their enemy"; and, rapidly rising, saps their massive walls of clay. All the gods of Assyria are frantically implored to save, but in vain. The waters advance inexorably; and with a crash, their huge ramparts tumble into the waves, and they are at the mercy of the foe. For had not an inspired prophet, long before, pronounced her doom in these words? "With an overflowing flood shall he make an utter end of the place thereof. The gates of the river shall be opened and the palace dissolved. Nineveh of old is like a pool of water." Thus did the prophet Nahum read her destiny; and never was prophecy more accurately fulfilled. An extraordinary rise of the Tigris, caused by the melting of the snows in Armenia, opened, in this way, a path for the combined armies of the Medes and Babylonians. The King, to whom tradition gives the name of Sardanapalus, seeing that all was lost, retired to his palace, gathered his treasures and wives around him, fired the huge pile, and perished in the flames. "The fire shall devour thy Laces" said the prophet; and Layard 2,400 years after, excavating among the ruins, declares that he every where found evidence that fire had consumed the roofs of the palaces; and that these, falling in, calcined, in many places, the gypsum slabs that lined the walls, and reduced them to lime. Thus, in smoke and flame, the imperial city sank to rise no more. The event occurred B. C. 606—nearly 200 years before Herodotus, the oldest of Greek historians, began to write. At this time Rome was a mere village; Draco was giving laws to Athens; and Homer was but some 400 years in his grave. Thus when the smoke of Nineveh ascended to heaven, history had

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As ages rolled on, and one eastern empire after another tumbled into ruins, Nineveh was utterly forgotten; its very name perished, and the site of it was unknown, or only survived in vague tradition. Xenophon, 400 years before Christ, led the Ten Thousand Greeks over the plain where it stood. He heard of a ruined city called Larissa, and saw the huge earthen mound under which Nineveh lay buried, but he heard nothing of the great city; so that 200 years after its destruction people living on the spot knew not that it had ever existed. The tide of life ebbed away from the banks of the Tigris, and the plains became parched and deserted. Years rolled on—the wild Arab people, roused into life and fervour by their prophet Mahomet, became a nation of warriors, and spread their conquests far and wide. The valley of the Euphrates and Tigris fell under their sway; and in modern times we find a Turkish town, named Mosul, standing on the western bank of the Tigris, directly opposite the site of ancient Nineveh. A hundred years ago, Neibuhr, a German traveller, traversed this region, and was the first to call the attention of the modern world to the huge mounds and ruins that marked the sites of Babylon and Nineveh. In the year 1820, an English traveller, named Rich, explored these remains slightly, and brought home with him a few inscribed bricks. Still no suspicion of the buried treasures was awakened. On the top of one of the mounds was a tomb, which the Mahomedans described as that of the prophet Jonah, and was regarded by them as a sacred spot. However foolish and unfounded such a tradition might be, it led men to associate the spot with the name of the city in which the prophet had preached; and thus, as Jonah saved Nineveh of old from destruction, his name, in this 19th century, rescued the remains from oblivion, by leading to a search in the proper quarter. Eleven years ago a Frenchman named Botta, went as consul to Mosul, and was induced to commence excavations in one of the great mounds opposite that city. He has the honour of being the first to bring to light the precious treasures buried beneath these heaps of earth. Previous to this, an English traveller, named Layard, had examined these mounds, and formed the design, in his own mind, of exploring them. He had communicated his thoughts to Botta and encouraged him to proceed; and shortly after the Frenchman's success, he commenced operations in another mound named Nimroud; and his success was great

and immediate. These two men, whose names will be immortalized henceforth in connexion with Nineveh, wrought with a degree of skill and perseverance that has commanded the applause of the world; and under them the exhumation of Nineveh has been accomplished to a great extent. No man could have been better qualified for such a task than our English Layard. Uniting in happy combination the powers of thought and action—the habits of the scholar and the man of the world, he has given us three charming volumes, descriptive of his researches, which furnish another illustration of the old saying that “fact is often stranger than fiction.”

Thus we see that when Nineveh was entombed in her own ashes,—swathed in her burial-ropes of sand,—the strange drama was not then ended; the last act remained; and after an interval of 2,400 years, the curtain is raised and all that remains of Nineveh is exhibited to our gaze. The skeleton-form presents itself—some fragments of bone as it were—to tell us how great the trunk to which they originally belonged. These fragments from the wreck of Nineveh enable us to form some conception of her greatness—of the genius and civilization of her inhabitants. They tell us how life presented itself to these men of the olden time—with what kind of eye they looked at this great universe—what to them seemed the purpose of existence—how and what they worshipped, and in what shape society moulded itself in its infancy. We can discover from these remains which the diving-bell of the antiquarian has brought up, in what form and drapery these old Assyrians walked the earth; and how they told upon the world and its destinies. These sculptured stones are really the representatives of human thoughts and feelings. Here are genuine “foot-prints on the sands of time.” Here are veritable indentations caused by the strokes of labour. Our toiling brothers, in sweat and dust, struck these blows within the walls of the great workshop where we too are getting our stroke of work done. How difficult to realize the immense antiquity of these fragments, or to grasp fully the thought that since they were buried twenty-four centuries have flitted over the earth; and that since the first erection of some of them more than three thousand years have rolled past! What changes have been witnessed in that immense space of time! What joys and woes have heaved the great heart of humanity! “The Roman Empire has begun and ended.” The Goth and vandal too have walked off into the dark death-realms. At the time of Nineveh’s interment, Britain, the future home of the

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Anglo Saxon race, whose dominions were to be far wider in sweep than those of Assyria, was covered with forests and swamps: her iron and coal beds sleeping, undisturbed, side by side—wild cattle roaming through her valleys, fearless of man—no smoke from tall chimneys darkening the air—perhaps not even the blue vapour from some naked savage's hut. But away there, in the far east, preparation was making for the birth-hour of the present. A great empire sinks into ruins; but a higher growth springs up over its remains, now that its work is done. In due time rises Britain with her colonies and commerce, her Indian Empire in the east, and America, her great off-shoot in the west—her arts, literature and religion. Thus ever does death pass into life—

“From the dark and troubled surges
Of the roaring sea of time,
Evermore a world emerges
Solemn, beautiful, sublime.”

And now is dug up the wreck of this old world—linking us to Assyria—linking us with Noah and Adam—bridging over the time-gulfs of the past. Here are the halls where our brothers walked—where they worked and prayed! Where are now the fingers that sculptured these fragments—where the millions that trod these pavements!

“Oblivion's pall alike is spread
O'er slave and lordly tomb,
The sad, the gay, the old, the young,
The warrior's strength and beauty's glow,
Resolved to that from which they sprung,
Compose the dust below.”

CHAPTER III.

NATURE OF THE RUINS AND MODE OF THEIR PRESERVATION.

In order to get an idea of these discoveries and the mode of their preservation, we must picture in our minds enormous mounds of earth standing isolated on a plain. Selecting one of these mounds, we find its dimensions as follows:—length nearly 1000 feet: breadth 983:—height 40 to 50 feet. Upon this artificially constructed mass of earth the excavators set to work—sinking shafts into the interior, and driving tunnels through it in various directions. Very soon they struck on walls panelled with slabs of gypsum, elaborately sculptured; and found themselves exploring chambers, halls and courts of vast dimensions. As the accumulated rubbish of centuries is cleared away, they discover that they are tenants of a palace under ground; and are surrounded by evidences of grandeur and magnificence that fill them with astonishment. They find that it is the basement-story of an Assyrian palace they are excavating, which, with its contents, is still in a wonderfully perfect state of preservation. The upper portion of the walls, they discover has fallen in; and, having been built of sun-dried bricks, has returned to earth, and completely encased the lower portions of the building, and thus most effectually secured their preservation. They also find that this palace was originally erected on a platform 30 feet high, formed of sundried bricks, and cased, on the outside, with stone, in order to render it capable of sustaining the super-incumbent mass. This at once explains the nature of the immense earthen mound. On its summit, brightly glancing in gay colours, and adorned outside with rich sculptures, stood the gorgeous palace, rising story upon story. The platform served to give it a commanding position when in existence; and, being formed of perishable materials, furnished a soft and secure bed in which its ruins were safely entombed. Eagerly the explorers drive on their operations; and they are delighted to find the inside of the walls, to the height of ten feet from the floor, completely cased with thin slabs of gypsum, a kind of stone that abounds in the neighbourhood; and covered with sculptures and inscrip-

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tions in the language of the Assyrians. These panellings of their palaces reveal all that we can learn of this ancient race. Fortunately for us they were in the habit of writing their history along the walls of their national edifices; and thus they have left pictures of themselves, in stone tablets, to enlighten us. Here are records of their exploits in war and in the chase. These sculptures contain representations of their warriors, in full equipments, attacking a city—scaling the walls, shooting their arrows or plying their battering rams. Then the King, on his throne, receives the captives and the plunder; and all the frightful details of barbaric warfare are represented. We can tell, from these remains, of what kind were their war chariots, their bows, spears, swords and shields. Their mode of building these great works is also discoverable; and thus we learn their knowledge of the mechanical arts. Here too are represented their gods and religious ceremonies. Some glimpses into their social habits are afforded, and some indications of their domestic life. And then those strange looking arrow-headed characters that cover the walls, contain the records of the extinct race; and under the skilful treatment of a Hincks and a Rawlinson, they are compelled to tell their tale, and help us to comprehend the sculptures. Thus these relics show us some of the first steps of man in his career of industry and labour. Here is a tide-mark telling us where the waves of progress once broke on the strand. The great ocean-swell has advanced far beyond it now; but once it had come “hitherto and no farther.” The Ninevites were once to the world, what the English, French and Americans now are. They led the van. All that was then greatest, noblest and most beautiful in art, industry and civilization, had their centre and source in Assyria. These are indications of what were once man’s noblest achievements.

The magnificence of the Assyrian palaces may be conceived of, to some extent, from the representation, in Layard’s third volume, of the façade and grand entrance of Sennacherib’s palace, which he was fortunate enough to discover during his second visit. By means of what remains of this entrance, and by hints derived from the sculptures on the walls, a complete restoration of it has been effected, so that we have now a representation of Sennacherib’s palace as it stood when he resided within. The lofty platform on which it stood was ascended by a broad flight of steps, and a wide terrace stretched along, in front of the entrance, which was no less than 180 feet in extent. Guarding the several portals were three groups of colossal,

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human-headed bulls, each twenty feet long, and nearly twenty feet in height—in all ten in number; and six human figures of gigantic proportions, representing Nimrod strangling the lion, were distributed between these groups. The outside wall was encased with gypsum slabs to the height of fifteen or twenty feet; and these were elaborately sculptured with historical scenes, recording the great battles and victories of the monarch's reign. Above these rose the upper stories of the palace; the whole being painted in gay colours, and presenting an appearance of grandeur and magnificence with which it would be difficult to find any thing in modern times to compare. This appears to have been the principal entrance to the royal abode; but in addition to this, there were two others but little inferior in grandeur, guarded in the same manner, and affording admission to other parts of the immense structure. In the interior three large halls, 200 feet in length and forty or fifty in breadth, were discovered, on the walls of which the records of the empire were sculptured. The whole of the other apartments were grouped around these three principal halls. Parallel with them, on each side, were narrower chambers; these opened into others still smaller; and these in turn led to others having no outlet. Some idea of the extent of the structure may be formed from the following paragraph, in which Layard sums up what he had done in excavating Sennacherib's palace. "In this magnificent edifice I had opened no less than 71 halls, chambers and passages, whose walls, almost without an exception, were panelled with slabs of sculptured alabaster. By a rough calculation, about 9,880 feet, or nearly two miles of bas-reliefs, with 27 portals, formed by colossal winged bulls, and lion-sphinxes, were uncovered in that part of the building explored during my researches. Only a part of the palace was explored, and much still remains under ground of this enormous structure. The greatest length of the excavations was about 720 feet: the greatest breadth about 600 feet. The pavement of the chambers was from 20 to 35 feet below the surface of the mound."

A question arises as to the mode of lighting these apartments. At first Layard thought the palaces were but one story in height; and in his first work on Nineveh, he supposes that square openings in the roof admitted the light. In his new work, however, he informs us that he was mistaken in this conjecture; and that it is rendered certain by later discoveries that the palaces had more stories than one. Consequently light must have been admitted elsewhere than by the roof or ceiling.

Layard explains who has furnished his suggestions. His suggestions were formed by admitting a fringed ceiling, the curtains drawn up by the sun; the sculptured figures, and this theory could reach the secure cool beams.

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Layard expresses his concurrence with the theory of Ferguson, who has furnished such a fine restoration of these buildings. His suggestion is that the solid wall of the palace terminated a few feet above the sculptures, and that the upper portion of it was formed of wooden pillars, with openings between them admitting a free circulation of light and air. Upon these pillars the ceiling rested, as well as the upper stories. An awning and curtains drawn over these side openings would ward off the rays of the sun; and thus a beautiful and softened light would fall on the sculptures. Many of the inner chambers, however, even on this theory, must have been artificially lighted, as few rays could reach them. In the hot climate of the east, in order to secure coolness, it is necessary almost to exclude the sun's beams.

We are astonished at the very high knowledge of art indicated by the sculptures. No one would for a moment dream of comparing them with the productions of Grecian art, which in delineations of forms of beauty, may be said to have reached perfection; still, the best judges assign to the Assyrian sculptures a high place. True, indeed, many things indicate that it was but the infancy of art—the rudimentary efforts of an ignorant people, reminding us occasionally of the attempts of children; still it discovers a most exact study of nature and great attention to fidelity of form. Still farther—we clearly discern many striking resemblances to the productions of the Grecian chisel, and proof incontrovertible that Greece borrowed from Assyria—carrying on to perfection what she had begun. The German historian Niebuhr, one of the most competent judges, remarks that "there was no Grecian art till after the Persian war; but afterwards it advanced with rapid strides." So that the Greeks got their first hints from the Persians, who were but poor imitators of their predecessors, the Assyrians. So far as we know the Assyrians first taught mankind to awaken the marble into life.

In a knowledge of the decorative arts the Assyrians surpassed all the nations of antiquity. We find from the sculptures that they used arm-chairs and stools, and ate, like ourselves, off tables; and that their tables and chairs were richly ornamented like our own, with lions' feet and the heads of various animals. Their cups and vases were equal in shape to anything yet produced. They were acquainted with glass and the various kinds of enamels; and with the art of varnishing pottery and covering it with paintings, by means of coloured enamels. They were

also workers in metals of various kinds ; and a bronze lion has been found, proving their acquaintance with the art of casting. A curious series of sculptures has recently been discovered, representing in its various stages, the whole process of raising to its place one of the human-headed bulls. Cables, wedges, pulleys and immense levers are employed ; and a superintendent stands on the mass, giving his orders to the workmen through a speaking-trumpet. Numerous gems and cylinders that have been found, prove the Assyrians to have been skilful engravers on stone. Their palaces testify to their skill in architecture ; and the remains of their canals, and other great works for irrigation, astonish even those acquainted with modern engineering. Quantities of bronze caldrons, bells, dishes, plates and bowls, of elegant design, have been brought to light. Thus advanced in all the arts of life were the men of twelve hundred years before Christ.

It is very remarkable that among all the ruins yet explored, no trace of an Assyrian tomb has been discovered ; nor, in any of the sculptures, do we discover a funeral procession, or any ceremony connected with the interment of the dead. " We are thus" says Layard " quite unable to say how they disposed of their dead ;—whether they burned them and scattered their ashes to the winds—or exposed them till nothing remained but the bleached bones. In this respect they contrast strikingly with the ancient Egyptians, who bestowed such care upon the remains of humanity that we have in our museums at present bodies that must have been embalmed 3000 years ago ; and on almost every temple wall of Egypt are portrayed ceremonies observed after death and even the events of a future state." But there are no embalmed Assyrians—no " statues of flesh—immortal of the dead," to awaken our sympathies as having once had human hearts beating " beneath their leathern breasts," and " in lusty life," as having traversed these halls in the days of their glory. Not a bone, or urn holding human dust, has turned up ; and stranger still, these marble pictures represent no funeral rite or tomb. Did these proud Assyrians avoid all allusion to death—did they ignore the King of Terrors—did they get rid of every remnant of humanity hastily, so soon as the vital spark had fled, lest the monuments of the dead should disturb the pleasures of the living ? Or, like one of the Kings of France, did they affect to believe there was no death ? If so, it was but the poor resource of the ostrich that hides its head in the sand, when hard pressed by the hunters, and would fain

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forget that its body is not hidden. All their pomp and pride could not shield them from the sweep of death's all-subduing arm. To each of them, in some shape or other, the pale messenger came: and whether they were warring or hunting—palace-building or acting the courtier in the halls of Kings—whether ruling an empire, or tugging as poor captives at the lever or oar, it mattered not; the wan shadow came and inexorably beckoned them away. A day too is coming that will discover the resting-place of their dust—a day when "all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and shall come forth."

Here, then, was the earthly stage of these millions—here are their records telling us, in a dim way, what they made of this great universe; and how the mystery of existence unfolded itself to their eyes. As we gaze upon those huge guardians of their palaces, with their grave majestic countenances, we conjure up the scenes on which they have looked.

"The days of old return.—I breathe the air
Of the young world; I see her giant sons,
Like to a gorgeous pageant in the sky
Of summer's evening—cloud on fiery cloud
Thronging up-heaved: before me rise the walls
Of the Titanic city,—brazen gates,
Towers, temples, palaces enormous piled;—
Imperial Nineveh, the earthly queen,
In all her golden pomp, I see her now—
Her swarming streets—her splendid festivals—
Her sprightly damsels to the timbril's sound
Airily bounding, and their anklet's chime;
Her lusty sons, like summer-morning gay—
Her warriors stern—her rich-robed rulers grave,
I hear the music of her banquetings;
I hear the laugh, the whisper and the sigh!"

The poet's picture is true. Men and women, with human hearts beating in their bosoms, have inhabited these walls. The shouts of revelry—the song of victory—the voice of soft, sweet music, and the wail of woe and despair have re-echoed through these palace-halls. Warriors with stately step have been here—their hearts high-swelling with triumph—the welcome shout of the multitude ringing in their ears; and the poor condemned captive has looked out here for the light of a last morning, and, with tremulous heart, thought of absent wife and child. Be-

tween these stony guardians have marched the fettered Israelites, dragged away from home and fatherland; and as slaves may have helped to rear these walls. The haughty Sennacherib, too, after his awful defeat, trod the same entrance, to fall soon after by the hands of his own sons. The children of Israel are a living race to-day; their oppressors, centuries ago, have utterly perished!

THE RELIGION

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CHAPTER IV.

THE RELIGIOUS SYSTEM OF THE ASSYRIANS AS ILLUSTRATIVE OF SCRIPTURE.

The various religious systems we collectively name Paganism present a strange and puzzling problem. How can we account for such a faith, or conceive of the rise of such a belief?—Whence the multitude of gods that crowded the heaven of heathenism? Did cunning men sit down and deliberately invent these tales to impose on dark superstitious credulity? or is it all the product of mad fanaticism—a fever-dream, confused and meaningless? We cannot quite adopt either of these ways of explaining that mysterious system of thought. What men invent and propagate, conscious of its falsehood, seldom obtains any permanent hold upon human belief. Had cunning priests agreed together to frame a false system of religion, its duration would have been very brief. Unless a religious system be, to some extent, an expression of the faith and modes of belief already existing in the minds of men,—unless it embody their actual thoughts, it cannot obtain currency, or draw votaries after it. And of this much we may feel assured—that once men did, with their whole hearts, believe in this very Paganism that to us seems so strange and revolting;—once it was, to living men, a solution of the mystery of existence—an explanation of the great, encompassing universe, that to ourselves is still so full of wonder. Having fallen from the knowledge of the true God, men actually did form such beliefs regarding themselves and their relation to the unseen and eternal; thus demonstrating the insufficiency of reason when unaided by revelation. The Bible declares that man was originally gifted with a knowledge of the true God; and that all idolatry is a fall from the pure and spiritual worship of this Being—a worshipping of “the creature instead of the Creator.” The corruption, however, was gradual; men did not at once sink into the grossness of idol or beast worship; but, step by step, they went down into the abyss. The Nineveh marbles confirm and illustrate most strikingly the Bible’s account of man’s gradual degeneracy.

There is abundant evidence in these sculptures to prove that the older forms of worship and systems of faith were comparatively pure. The earliest religion, of which any traces remain, was Sabeanism or the worship of the heavenly bodies, and this was probably the first decline from the spiritual idea of God. The testimony of history is uniform in pointing to the Mesopotamian plains as the place where this religious system originated. Here, owing to the clearness of the atmosphere, the brilliancy and beauty of the stars far exceed our conceptions; and the night is even lovelier than day. These primitive men gazed at their gorgeous firmament blazing with the glittering stars shining down upon them with diamond brightness—"like eyes looking on them from the mysterious deeps of eternity," and revealing something of the inner splendours; they marked their mysterious notions and their connections with the seasons; and their wonder grew into a kind of worship. And at length they said these shall be to us symbols or types of the majesty and greatness of the Lord of All, and let us do reverence to them as such. But mark the danger of setting up any visible object—even such as "the host of heaven" in all their beauty—as symbols through which to adore the Creator. That first false step led on to errors more gross and degrading. The Creator was forgotten, and the visible object alone was worshipped. Star-worship rapidly degenerated into fire-worship; and flames, a thing of man's creation, from its resemblance to the luminaries of the sky, was made a symbol of deity. Here was a step lower—from the stars to the fire on the altar. The earlier monuments of Nineveh contain evidences of the practice of star-worship; some of later date discover traces of fire-worship.

A visible symbol having once been introduced, the corrupt heart of man rapidly advanced in degeneracy. The next step was the deification of mortal men. How this arose it is difficult if not impossible for us, at this distance of time, to explain. The case of Dagon, the fish-god, whose name occurs in the Old Testament, and whose image we find among the Nineveh sculptures, may help us in obtaining a slight glimpse into the matter. The tradition ran that he rose out of the Persian Gulf, and was the first to teach men the rudiments of the arts and sciences. Let us suppose now that, at some period or other, a warlike chieftain, from some isle of the ocean where the light of civilization had dawned previously, sailed, with his followers up the Euphrates. He subdues but also instructs the savage people; teaches them to build and to cultivate the soil; elevates and

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enlightens them, to some extent; perhaps gives them the letters of the cuneiform alphabet. The rude people are grateful; for the soul of man welcomes light. They rise into glowing admiration of their benefactor who has changed their night into morning bright and beautiful; and make his word their life's-guidance. He dies; and then their admiration transcends all bounds and grows into adoration. Great while living, he becomes manifold greater when dead. It is marvellous how a thing grows in the human imagination, when love and worship are there to encourage it, and vague tradition is the only medium of transmitting information regarding it. The hero who served his fellows, by hand or brain, when on earth, rises into a god after death. Thus Dagon, the sea-King, his real history being lost, becomes Dagon—the fish-god; has statues erected to his memory, and is devoutly worshipped. We can thus see the possibility of such a thing growing up, without supposing it to be the result of madness or conscious lying. It is altogether a human process, supposing man to grope his way unguided by a revelation. Thus too, may these Assyrians have formed for themselves a supreme deity whom they named "Asshur." One of Nimrod's lieutenants was so named; a strong forest-feller, or beast-tamer, or men-conqueror;—and he too was consecrated by death as a deity. We can thus conceive of Paganism growing up, the knowledge of the one true God being obscured or lost; and we can account for it, in a dim way, without supposing all who have gone before us to have been mere knaves or madmen.

It is very evident that, with such gods to worship, the people must sink into gross immorality. The inevitable tendency of all genuine worship is to assimilate the worshipper to the character of the being worshipped. Tell us the gods a nation worships and, without enchantment, we will be able to tell you the moral condition of the people. If the object of adoration be imperfect, weak, impure or cruel, the worshipper will resemble his god in these respects; he cannot rise higher than the being he adores. Idolatry, therefore, in all its forms, was debasing, corrupting and ruinous—dishonouring to God and destructive to man. The divine curse rests upon it; and it is doomed to be rooted from the earth.

We find several of the Assyrian idols mentioned by name in scripture. The question arises whether the discoveries among the ruins of Nineveh corroborate the Bible's representations of their worship. Isaiah informs us (37 ch., 38 v.) that Senna-

cherib was slain while worshipping in the temple of his god Nisroch. Now in all languages belonging to the same family as the Hebrew, the word "Nisrk" means an eagle, and the syllable "Och" is intensive; so that the word "Nisroch" means "the great eagle." One of the first objects discovered at Nineveh was a conspicuous idol, having a human figure with the head of an eagle; and Layard immediately and justly concluded that here he had found Sennacherib's god Nisroch. In confirmation of this he cites a fragment of one of the oracles of Zoroaster, which declares that "God is he who has the head of a hawk." There can be no reasonable doubt that this eagle-headed and winged idol is the Nisroch of the Bible. The probability is that this deity was a personification of the sun, the eagle in most of the ancient systems being a symbol of the sun; and thus its introduction was a corruption of pure Sabeanism. However this may be, we have here a striking testimony to the truth of the scriptural representation.

Another sacred emblem of frequent occurrence among the sculptures is a winged figure in a circle. "Sometimes the figure is human and holds a bow relaxed in one hand, and a sword or dagger in the other; at other times the human form and circle are dropped, and there is seen merely a winged globe or disk." This is the only object that the King is represented as worshipping. It hovers over him in battle, and attends his triumphal return. Layard concludes that this was the type of the supreme god of the Assyrians, by whatever name he was worshipped. In his first work he conjectured it to be the representation of Baal; but in his more recent volume we are told that the inscriptions which have been deciphered render it more probable that Asshur was their supreme deity; and that he is always typified by the winged figure in the circle. Ezekiel, who lived and prophesied by the river Chebar, (now called Khabour) not far from Nineveh, and whose eyes must have been familiar with the Assyrian palaces and idols, describes, in the first chapter of his prophecies, his vision of the four living creatures, and adds that "by them was at it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel." The figures of "the living creatures," as we shall soon see, were suggested by certain forms on the Assyrian monuments; and "the wheel within a wheel" may have been drawn from this winged figure in the circle—the type of Assyria's supreme deity.

We find again and again, throughout the Old Testament, the children of Israel accused of worshipping "groves" when they

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fell into idolatry. The exact meaning of the term has long been involved in obscurity. That it cannot mean a group of trees is evident from the way in which the word is used in many passages. Thus we read in 2 Kings 17 Ch. 10 v. "And they set them up images and groves in every high hill and under every green tree." And in 2 Kings, 21 Ch. 7 v. Manassch is said to have set "a graven imago of the grove that he had made in the house"—that is in Solomon's temple. Clearly, then, what is called in our authorized version "a grove" cannot be a group of trees, but must be some small object. In confirmation of this, in 2 Kings 23 Ch. 6 v.—Josiah is said to have brought the grove itself *out of the temple*, and burnt it at the brook Kedron, "and stamped it small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of Israel." An emblem or idol therefore must be referred to. Now the sculptures of Nineveh seem to cast light on this obscurity. Before every worshipper almost, is placed a sacred emblem in the form of a tree, adorned with flowers, but not resembling any known vegetable production; and enclosed in a kind of shrine. This tree, along with the winged figure in the circle, an object of adoration; and at once suggests "the grove" or symbolic tree which, when the Israelites fell into the idolatrous practices of their neighbours, they are accused of worshipping. It is believed that this sacred tree was the emblem of the Assyrian goddess "Ashtaroth," or "the Queen of Heaven" as she is called in scripture—known also by the names of Astarte, Mylitta, or the Assyrian Venus. She was also known as Beltis, as being the female form of the great divinity Baal. Her worship was most widely observed; and was impure and degrading in the extreme. Hence the grove worship, we find, was most severely denounced by the prophets of God.

"It is not likely" says Layard "that the winged human-headed lions and bulls that kept the gates of the Assyrian palaces were objects of direct adoration. They were types of the union of great physical and intellectual power; and as such, may have awed and instructed the rude minds of those who for many ages passed before them." Destitute of any divine revelation, they looked for a type of spiritual power, and not inappropriately chose the human head—of strength, and they took the body of the lion or bull—of ubiquity, and found it in the wings of the bird; and thus these gigantic compound creatures may have been originated. Ezekiel, who was one of the Assyrian captives, and beheld these palace-temples in all their splendour.

in typifying certain divine attributes, naturally draws his figures from objects with which he was familiar. In the first chapter of his prophecies he tells us, that he saw in his vision four living creatures, who had four faces, four wings, and the hands of a man under their wings, on their four sides. Their faces were those of a man, a lion, an ox and an eagle; precisely those we find among the Assyrian monuments. Here then we have another curious illustration of the prophetic language; and an indirect confirmation of the accuracy of the sacred writers.

In the first book of Samuel, 5th Chapter, we find a reference to one of the gods worshipped by the Philistines under the name Dagon. The ark of God having been taken by the Philistines, they set it up in triumph in the temple of Dagon, at Ashdod. In the morning, however, they found Dagon prostrate on the earth before the ark—struck down by an unseen hand. Supposing that it was merely the result of accident, they set him again on his pedestal; but “on the morrow” we read, “behold Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord; and the head of Dagon, and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him.” The margin supplies a more correct rendering of the Hebrew:—“only the fishy part of Dagon remained.” The best scripturo commentators had long since conjectured, from the incidents recorded here, and from the testimony of history, that the image of Dagon was a kind of merman—the upper part human with a fishy extremity. The word “Dag” in Hebrew signifies fish; and it is a well established fact that the neighbouring Phœnicians had an idol of this shape. It is very striking to find the Nineveh sculptures furnishing a comment upon this passage which at once removed doubt; and shows that the worship of Dagon was practised also on the banks of the Tigris. In the ruins of Sennacherib’s palace Layard found bas-reliefs of the fish-god. “The head of a fish” he says in describing the sculpture, “formed a mitre above that of the man; while its scaly back and fan-like tail fell as a cloak behind, leaving the human feet and limbs exposed.” An old tradition, preserved by Berossus, states that a being called Oannes, or the sacred man-fish, issued at one time from the Erythrean sea, and instructed the Chaldeans in all wisdom, in the sciences and fine arts; and was afterwards worshipped as a god. We have already seen how, in all probability, the mythical tale of a god rising out of the waves, having a fish’s extremities united to a human head, was woven out of the fact of the con-

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quest of Chaldea, at some remote period, by a civilized people who came in ships to the mouth of the Euphrates. The worship of Dagon extended over Mesopotamia, Syria and among the cities of the Mediterranean. It was one of his temples that the giant arms of Samson dragged down in his death. Rawlinson has discovered the name Dagon among the Nineveh inscriptions; so that the matter is put beyond a doubt. When we find such confirmations of the minute accuracy of the sacred historians thus starting up from the most unexpected quarters, we cannot but feel satisfied that the God of the Bible is thus bearing testimony to his own word, in the discoveries which his Providence is bringing about.

One other singular figure, found by Layard among the sculptures recently explored, deserves notice, from its possible connexion with some popular ideas still current among ourselves. At one of the palace doorways the explorer discovered a monster "whose head, of fanciful and hideous form, had long pointed ears and extended jaws armed with huge teeth. Its body was covered with feathers—its fore-feet were those of a lion—its hind-legs ended in the talons of an eagle—and it had spreading wings and the tail of a bird." "Behind this strange image was a winged man, whose dress consisted of an upper garment, with a skirt of skin or fur—an under robe fringed with tassels, and the sacred horned-hat. A long sword was suspended from his shoulders by an embossed belt. He grasped in each hand an object in the form of a double trident, resembling the thunderbolt of the Greek Jove, which he was in the attitude of hurling against the monster, who turned furiously towards him"—Layard is of opinion that the group represents the bad spirit driven out by the good deity. In many of the old systems of religion the idea comes out prominently, of the co-existence of a principle of evil and darkness with the principle of good and light—that the one contended with the other for supremacy—that for a time the principle of evil got the mastery, but only to be defeated and destroyed in the end. The idea appears most distinctly in the religious system of the Persians who worshipped Ormuzd, the source of light and good, and Ahriman, the author of evil. We can readily see, in all this, a corruption and distortion of the scriptural account of the origin of evil; and also of the divine promise of a Deliverer who would one day destroy the works of the devil and extinguish the reign of sin. Fondly has the poor heart of humanity, in all times, clung to this divine hope; and in a thousand distorted forms does it manifest itself, even amid

the monstrosities of paganism ; thus proving that Christ is indeed "the desire of all nations"—even of those who never heard his name, but whose aching hearts have longed for the great deliverer who was to restore paradise and wipe the tear from every eye. Here, then, on this marble slab, we have this idea dimly bodied forth, in strange guise :—the evil of the world is not eternal—is not omnipotent—it is doomed to destruction ; for against it contends the undying, all-powerful principle of good. The hideous monster, evil, flies smitten and discomfitted. It is a world-wide, everlasting truth. It is also worthy of remark, that in this Assyrian representation of the principle of evil, we can trace the origin of those no less frightful forms in which superstition, in every age, has clothed the Evil One. Some fibre of truth they all had ; otherwise they could have got no hold upon the earnest mind of man. Evil is hideous, frightful, injurious, said our brothers of the olden time ; and therefore they embodied it in their most revolting forms. Good is lovely and divine ; and they robbed it in beauty and endowed it with courage and strength. Thus they expressed their ideas of the infinite difference between good and evil. Let us not despise the thinkings of those who had no light from God's revelation.

It would appear, from several passages of scripture, that the Assyrians were in the habit of destroying the idols of other nations whom they conquered, and forcing them to adopt their own gods and worship. This was very unusual among the nations of antiquity ; for as each nation was supposed to have its own local deities, whom it was considered best to worship, they were generally left by the conquerors at perfect liberty to practice their own religious rites. The Assyrians, however, are represented in the Bible as quite intolerant regarding all other modes of worship, and all other gods. With their dominion they imposed their worship on the conquered. We have a proof of this in Isaiah 37th Ch. 18th v. where Hezekiah in his prayer for deliverance says, "for of a truth Lord the Kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations and their countries ; and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone." And again in Isaiah 46th Ch. 1st verse, there is a vivid picture of the destruction of the Babylonian idols and of their being borne into captivity on beasts of burden as mere ordinary luggage. "Bel boweth down—Nebo stoopeth. Their idols are laid upon the beasts and the cattle. They stoop, they bow down together, they are a burden to the weary beast." Now the Nineveh sculptures

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supply a curious comment on this as well as on the 6th and 7th verses of the same chapter,—showing how sternly truthful are the sacred writers, in the most minute delineations. Several of these sculptures represent the Assyrians bearing off in triumph the images of the gods of the conquered nations. In the language of Isaiah “they go into captivity,” and are set up as trophies of victory, or utterly destroyed. In confirmation of all this, the inscriptions on the black basaltic obelisk discovered by Layard have been deciphered, and are found to contain records of an Assyrian King, contemporary with Jehu, King of Israel. The following is an extract from the account of his military exploits:—“And Ahuni, son of Hateni, with his gods and chief priests, I brought away to my country of Assyria.” “The cities of this region, which did not acknowledge the god Asshur, I brought under subjection.” There is much more to the same purpose, all showing that the Assyrians propagated their religion by the sword, and established the worship of their own idols wherever they came. The Nineveh remains confirm, most exactly, the scriptural representations.

It is of some importance then that we know what these heathen deities, mentioned in the Bible, actually were ; and what shape they took in the minds of their worshippers. We thus read the sacred page with a clearer eye ; and find in it a fresher meaning. We find, moreover, a most convincing corroboration of the Bible’s account of man’s original state. The infidel tells us that men began with the lowest savage state—began little better than brutes, and passed through various stages of development. The Bible tells us that God made man upright, and with a knowledge of himself ; and that he fell and wandered farther and farther from God. Hence the need of a Redeemer and a redemption. Every fresh discovery is adding fresh confirmation of the scriptural account ; and testifying to the high position man originally held and to his gradual corruption. The mouldering ruins of Nineveh proclaim the same truth.

CHAPTER V.

HISTORICAL CORROBORATIONS OF SCRIPTURE.

The learned, metaphysical Berkely has told us, in words now familiar to every one, and which, when he uttered them we feel to have been a kind of prophecy, that

“ Westward the course of empire takes its way,
The four first acts already past ;
The fifth shall close the drama with the day,—
Time's noblest offspring is the last.”

The sceptre of the world has been steadily, though slowly, moving from the east towards the west. Once the east was the centre of life and action ; the west, meantime, being in a state of the rudest barbarism, or covered with the primeval forest or swamp. From the glowing, sun-scorched plains of the east, fierce, steel-clad warriors rushed to the conquest of the world. Great empires, magnificent cities, gorgeous palaces and temples, huge pyramids and all the results of art and industry first arose in the east. But over it slowly moved “decay's effacing finger.” The Assyrian monarchy, reared on the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates, gave way to the Persian ; which, in its turn, fell before the thunders of the Macedonian conqueror. Then the sceptre passed westward ; and Greece, with its ardent genius, and its clime the very home of beauty, became mistress of the world, to fall before the iron arm of imperial Rome. But even Roman greatness must submit to the doom of all earthly things ; and before the fierce tribes nourished in the forests of the north, her unwieldy bulk was crushed ; and the star of empire, moving westward, now stands over the nations of Europe whose territories abut on the great Atlantic ocean. And now, on this side the Atlantic, we see the huge continent of America—with its yet unwrought coal fields and immense mineral treasures, its energetic Anglo-Saxon population, rapidly growing into greatness, and destined one day to play an important part in the transactions of our planet. When Nineveh was rejoicing in her glory and strength, the wolf and wild boar

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had possession of the banks of the Thames; the forests of the New World were unviolated by the hand of man. Now the east is a desert—the west is full of glowing life and energy. Is it destined that the east shall be again quickened into life, and become, once more, the scene of stirring events? Shall the west give back to the east what she received from her—her ideas, civilization, and religion? Shall those sandy plains, once so fertile, and producing food for so many myriads, ever again wave with the golden harvest? Shall the skill and science of the west ever turn eastward, and re-construct there a nobler civilization than of old? Shall railway-trains, with Nineveh and Babylon as stations, dash along the banks of these ancient rivers, binding India to the west? Late events seem to indicate that such a result is highly probable. There is no curse on that lovely land but the curse of a false degrading religion, which invariably produces a miserable apathetic race. Let a purer faith be imparted and the east may again rise into greatness. All at once, a great and growing interest in the east begins to stir the western nations. It is at this moment the battle-field, on which the destinies of the civilized world are to be decided. The boom of cannon and the rattle of musketry are startling the ancient silences, and rousing the stagnant eastern nations from their sleep of centuries. These down-trodden millions see before them the children of the west, decisivo in action, glittering in all the pomp and circumstance of modern warfare; and who can tell the revolution of ideas that may be the result? We have a higher hope still;—that the faith of the west will make way in the east. In India and China idolatry is tottering to its fall, and christianity is making rapid progress. All over Turkey christian missionaries are at work; and the crescent is waning before the cross. Thus the west is sending back the rushing tide of life to the seats of the earliest empires of the world. And just at this crisis come those startling discoveries among the ruins of Nineveh; deepening and extending the interests of all christian nations in the glowing orient. The discovery of Nineveh has already been the means of adding immensely to our acquaintance with the condition of eastern nations. And when we find that every fresh discovery supplies most valuable elucidations and corroborations of the Bible, will not this increase the impulse that is directing us eastward? It may be that God's time of mercy to that land has at length arrived.

* See Appendix No. II.

The first historical corroboration of scripture, from the ruins of Nineveh that claims our attention is unquestionably one of the most valuable and extraordinary that has ever come to light. The 18th chapter of the second book of Kings contains a full record of the campaign against Judea, carried on by the Assyrian monarch Sennacherib, which terminated in the destruction of his army. The account commences at the 14th verse, and informs us that, Sennacherib came up against all the fenced cities of Judah and took them. Hezekiah, King of Judah, sent to the King of Assyria, to Lachish, saying "I have offended, return from me; that which thou puttest upon me I will bear. And the King of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah, King of Judah, 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold." Thus the sacred historian records the successes of the Assyrian King, Sennacherib, after his return home to Nineveh, made a record in stone of the same events. Upon the great winged bulls that guarded the grand entrance of his palace, he sculptured an account of his triumphs in Judea. His magnificent abode was consumed by fire; but, in the wonderful providence of God, these records have been preserved; and now, two thousand years after, come to light. The scholarship of the nineteenth century sits down to decipher them; and finds, among others, the following words:—"Hezekiah, King of Judah" writes the Assyrian monarch, "who had not submitted to my authority, 46 of his principal cities and fortresses, and villages depending on them of which I took no account, I captured, and carried away their spoil. I shut up himself within Jerusalem his capital city. I took from Hezekiah the treasure he had collected in Jerusalem, 30 talents of gold, and 800 talents of silver, the treasures of his palace." Observe the extraordinary coincidence of these accounts. The sacred historian states that Sennacherib took all the fenced cities of Judah; so says the Assyrian King himself. The sacred writer declares that Hezekiah paid him as tribute 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold;—Sennacherib records that he received 30 talents of gold and 800 talents of silver. The amount of gold is the same precisely in both accounts; but there is a difference in the amount of silver. Layard conjectures with great probability, that the sacred writer gives the actual amount of *money* paid; but as Hezekiah was hard pressed, he was forced to take all the silver he could find, both in the house of the Lord and his own house; and Sennacherib's statement of 800 talents includes the whole value of the precious metal received. The coincidences, however,

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But this is not all. On the walls of Sennacherib's palace, we have found sculptured a representation of the siege and capture of some important city. Warriors, horsemen and charioteers in vast numbers surround the ramparts;—mounds are cast up, and battering-rams are thundering against the walls. Part of the city is taken, and the Assyrian warriors are seen impaling some of their prisoners; while in another place, a line of captives marches out into the King's presence, who, gorgeously arrayed, receives them seated upon his throne. Above the head of the King is found the following inscription:—"Sennacherib, the mighty King, King of the country of Assyria, sitting on the throne of judgment before the city of Lachish—I give permission for its slaughter." Here then is an actual picture of the capture of Lachish, one of the cities of Judea, from which, the account already referred to, informs us Sennacherib sent to Jerusalem to demand tribute from Hezekiah. The captives on the sculptures also present the unmistakable Jewish physiognomy. Thus, then, this independent testimony is borne to the truth of the Bible's statement that Sennacherib captured Lachish, and had possession of it when he sent his summons to Jerusalem. No one could have imagined that Sennacherib should be thus represented up as a commentator on scripture, and made to stand forth as a witness for the truth of the Bible! We may justly regard this as one of the most extraordinary and valuable testimonies ever brought to light. The Bible informs us that in the course of the campaign, notwithstanding these successes, Sennacherib's army was miraculously destroyed. Of course we find no reference to this among the Nineveh sculptures. No nation records its reverses or defeats—only its victories. Thus we find Sennacherib acting.

When we consider how frequently the Assyrians invaded Judea, and carried the inhabitants captives, and how long the land was tributary to the Assyrians before the final overthrow, we might expect to find among the Nineveh sculptures frequent references to the exploits of their Kings in Judea; for of all people, the proud and arrogant Ninevites seem to have been the most fond of commemorating their victories in marble monuments. We have some other instances, scarcely less striking than the foregoing of this tendency. In 2 Kings 15th Ch. 19th v. we read—"and Pul the King of Assyria came against the land; and Menahem, (King of Israel) gave Pul a thousand talents of

silver that his hand might be with him, to confirm the Kingdom in his hand." One of the bas-reliefs, dug up by Layard, presents a line of chariots bearing tribute to one of the Assyrian Kings. Dr. Hincks, one of the illustrious scholars who have distinguished themselves by deciphering the inscriptions of Nineveh, has found underneath this sculpture, the name Menahem, amongst those of other monarchs paying tribute to Assyria's King. Thus we obtain another remarkable corroboration of scripture.

None of the Nineveh remains has attracted greater attention than the small obelisk of black marble, discovered at Nimroud and now placed in the British museum. Its height is but a foot six inches; and each side is charged with four compartments of rude sculptures, underneath which are inscriptions, descriptive of the sculptures. Two different nations are here represented as bringing tribute to the monarch of Assyria. There is strong ground for believing one of these nations to be the Israelites from the Kingdom of Samaria. The King is represented receiving them surrounded by his great officers of state and the ambassador of the subject nation prostrates himself before the monarch. The tribute-bearers are then introduced displaying their respective burdens, which seem to consist of baskets of fruit, bars of metal or precious wood, leathern bottles of honey, oil and piles of money. We have seen already that Hezekiah and Hoshea were tributaries to Assyria; but long before their day, in the reign of Jehu, the Assyrians had conquered the provinces beyond Jordan, and most probably exacted tribute from the remainder. In confirmation of this Rawlinson and Hincks have both detected the name of Jehu among the inscriptions on this black obelisk; and a statement to the effect that the tribute represented is his. The name of Hazael, King of Syria, a contemporary of Jehu, and also the name of Ithobaal, King of Sidon, another contemporary, have been deciphered on the same marble. Here, then, on this obelisk, we have a picture of King Jehu's servants bearing his tribute to the Assyrian King. The Ten Tribes have disappeared, but here we have the rude likeness of some of their members. And here also we have another confirmation of the Bible's representations regarding the relation in which Judea stood to Assyria.

Among the most important of Layard's recent discoveries is that of the "Chamber of Records"—or an apartment containing a vast number of tablets of baked clay, covered with inscriptions in the cuneiform character. These contain the

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decrees of the Kings and the records of the empire; and the chamber in which they are found corresponds to "the house of the rolls," mentioned Ezra VI—1 v. as having been searched for the decree of Cyrus concerning the building of Jerusalem. Layard tells us that he found this chamber, to the height of more than a foot from the floor, entirely filled with these tablets—some being entire, but the greater number broken into fragments, and the writing being exceedingly sharp and well defined. The characters must have been formed by a delicate instrument, before the clay was hardened in the fire. When deciphered, there can be little doubt that revelations of great value will be obtained. Strange to think that now, in the British Museum, lie the decrees, records, or in modern phrase, "state-papers," of the earliest empire of the world. We may derive from them, in the mean time, an illustration of the fourth chapter of Ezekiel's prophecies. Here we find the prophet ordered to instruct the people by means of an elaborate symbolic action; and for this purpose he is commanded to "portray Jerusalem upon a tile"; and to carry on, by symbolic procedure, all the operations of a protracted siege, with its accompanying privations. The command "to portray Jerusalem upon a tile" has had hitherto but a vague meaning attached to it. But when we take into account that Ezekiel was one of the earliest captives carried into Assyria, and that he prophesied by the Chebar, one of the Mesopotamian rivers, and was consequently familiar with the customs of the people, we can see that to "portray" a city upon a tile, or clay-tablet, such as these now discovered, must have been to him quite a familiar mode of representation. These clay-tablets, covered with figures and letters, make it plain that this was the usual Assyrian mode of recording events or representing objects. To "portray Jerusalem," therefore, the prophet would, in accordance with the usages of the Assyrians, figure the city so as to be recognizable by the exiles by marking some peculiar feature of it, or some of its more remarkable buildings, upon the soft clay-tablet which would be afterwards hardened in the fire. Thus, as our knowledge enlarges, the meaning of the sacred page becomes clearer, and its obscurities brighten into confirmatory evidences. The prophetic words and symbolic actions, which, at first sight, appear strange and incomprehensible, and of which infidelity has often endeavoured to take advantage, appear, when viewed in the new light cast upon them, both natural, and to the people of that age, striking and instructive.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MILITARY USAGES OF THE ASSYRIANS AS ILLUSTRATIVE OF SCRIPTURE.

Nothing appears more saddening in examining the history of the early ages, than the records we every where meet of fierce and savage war. These Nineveh sculptures are for the most part occupied with scenes of barbaric warfare. Such are the earliest pictures we find of our race.

“Lo! unveiled

The scene of those stern ages! What is there!

A boundless sea of blood, and the wild air

Moans with the crimson surges that entomb

Cities and bannered armies.”

Let us beware, however, of a too hasty condemnation of those who have lived before us. All progress of mankind implies the decline of war; but how slow has been that decline! As yet we have only obtained a mitigation of its horrors,—a mingling of humanity and mercy with destruction; but the day is seemingly far distant when the sword shall become the ploughshare. It is not yet forty years since the smoke of Waterloo darkened the heavens; and now the flame of war is rekindled in the heart of Europe, and may enwrap the world.

While we deplore the horrors and deprecate the advent of war, let us not overlook, at the same time, how, out of the evil, Providence has evolved a higher good. This scourge of the world, rightly viewed, is found to have an element of good pervading and underlying it; as indeed, in a certain sense, all evils have. It has, in many cases, if not in all, been overruled, so as to work out some benefit to the world. There can be no doubt, for example, that man's physical nature has been strengthened and developed by war. The will, too, has been called into energetic action; and the inventive faculties tasked to provide offensive and defensive weapons. The art of fortification evoked mechanical genius; and when peace came round, the mental faculties, thus awakened into life, produced roads,

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bridges, spinning and weaving machines, railways and steam-boats; and in this way the arts of destruction were made to produce something to comfort and bless mankind. Still more—the very sufferings and horrors of war called forth pity, tenderness and benevolence towards the sufferers. It is beyond doubt that generosity, honour, chivalrous feeling, a scorn of the mean and base—all these nobler feelings, did actually spring up in the practice of warfare; and these very feelings, in the end, are those that put an end to war; so that in fact war is self-destructive.

“ Misery brought in love,—in passions’ strife
 Man gave his heart to mercy, pleading long,
 And sought out gentle deeds to gladden life.”

Thus living, human action, is never wholly bad. A benign Providence has arranged it so that whatever is evil in it perishes; whatever is good lives and produces fruit. The wrath of man is made to praise God. Consider one of these ancient nations, such as the Assyrians, whose trade was war and conquest—the result after all was not wholly evil. If they conquered their weaker neighbours, they also taught them their arts and virtues, and imparted their civilization. Plutarch successfully shows that the conquering march of Alexander over the east was a real benefit. It bore the arts, ideas and civilization of polished Greece into the sluggish and barbarous nations of Asia. It introduced the sacredness of marriage among them; built seventy cities; established humane laws and united hostile nations under one government. So also, when the crusaders hung themselves on Asia in fierce conflict, they returned embued, to some extent, with the learning and science of the east, which proved the germs of our modern civilization. The wars which followed the French Revolution acted as an electric shock all over the world; broke the slumber of ages, and gave an impulse to thought which will be felt for centuries. In point of fact, therefore, war may be fairly ranked among the agents of civilization. It is a rude instrument; but so is the thunder-storm that purifies the atmosphere. Still, war is an evidence of barbarism; and civilization is its foe. Whatever evokes mind renders brute-force unnecessary. Imposing as are the armies and fleets of the world, an idea created them and an idea can unmake them. Let men’s ideas be changed, and the cannon may become street-posts. The religion of love will one day bring about the age when “the nations shall learn war no more.”

Throughout the Old Testament, frequent references occur to the horsemen and chariots of the Assyrians. From the terms in which the sacred writers speak of these, we learn, if their representations be correct, that the Assyrians supported a magnificent cavalry force, and also employed war-chariots very largely. Indeed Assyria is spoken of as remarkable for its beautiful breed of horses, just as Arabia now is; and to the Jews their cavalry was an object of the greatest terror. Having little or no force of this kind themselves, the sight of the Assyrian horsemen would impress the Hebrews the more; and the Assyrians, on the other hand, despised them and held them in contempt from this very deficiency. We learn this from the bitter taunt of Rabshakeh, when his master Sennacherib sent him to demand submission of Hezekiah:—"Now therefore give pledges I pray thee to my master, the King of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses, if thou be able, on thy part to put riders upon them." That the Jews considered the Assyrians remarkable for their cavalry, we also learn from Hosea 14th Ch. 3rd v.: "Asshur (Assyria) shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses." The prophet Habbakkuk is still more emphatic. Speaking of the Chaldeans he says (I Ch. 8 v.) "their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and more fierce than the evening wolves; and their horsemen shall spread themselves and come up from far, and shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat." The prophet Ezekiel, who from his residence in Mesopotamia was most familiar with their appearance, speaks (23rd Ch. 6th v.) of the "Assyrians clothed in blue, captains and rulers, all of them desirable young men, horsemen riding upon horses." Such, then, is the picture drawn in the Bible of the Assyrians. Let us see whether their own portraiture in the Nineveh sculptures, confirm or contradict the scriptural representation. Nothing strikes us more, in examining the sculptures, than the great number of mounted cavalry that appear to compose their armies. So numerous are they that, judging from these alone, we should come to the conclusion that their main dependence was upon this branch of the service. Not only so, but in the judgment of Layard "the horse of the sculptures is well formed and apparently of noble blood." He declares that no one could look at the horses of the early Assyrians without being convinced that they are drawn from the finest models. The head is small and well shaped—the nostrils large and high—the neck arched—the body long and the legs slender and sinewy. In fact here is a striking comment on the

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prophetic representations, proving them to have been drawn from actual observation, and to be true to the very letter. In regard to their armour, Nahum (III Ch. 3 v.) says, "the horsemen lifted up both the bright sword and the glittering spear." In accordance with this the sculptures represent them armed either with the sword and bow, or with the sword and long spear. The rider is seated on the naked back of the animal; but at a later period, a kind of pad appears to have been used. Stirrups were unknown till comparatively modern times. We would consider the bow a very awkward weapon for a warrior on horseback, in as much as it required the use of both his hands. The Assyrians, we find, obviated the difficulty by having a second horseman who, in battle, rode by the side of the archer and guided his steed. There is one curious sculpture representing archers, in their flight on horseback, shooting arrows backward against the pursuing enemy; as we find the Parthians, long afterwards, were accustomed to do, and were, on this account regarded, even by the Romans, as formidable foes. Perhaps this may serve to throw a little light on Isaiah, 7th Ch. 18 v. "And it shall come to pass, in that day, that the Lord shall hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt; and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria." The armies of Egypt and Assyria are here compared to swarms of these insects, with reference to their immense numbers and the pungency of their stings. To "hiss" for them is to call for them; as bee-keepers in the east are accustomed to summon them from their hives by the sound of a whistle. It is probable the bee was made the emblem of Assyria in reference to this practice of shooting their arrows backward—the resemblance of an arrow to the sting of a bee, in such case, being obvious. The chariots of the Assyrians were constructed of wood; and each was capable of containing two or three persons. "To each side were fastened two quivers containing arrows, a small crooked bow, a javelin and a battle-axe." "The harness and trappings of the chariot horses were extremely rich and elegant. All the details of the harness were elaborately ornamented; while embroidered cloths were frequently thrown over the backs of the horses and almost covered the body from the ears to the tail." The prophet Ezekiel refers to these (27th Ch. 20th v.) when he says "Dedan was thy merchant in precious clothes for chariots." These representations, then, are exceedingly valuable, as enabling us to form some adequate conceptions of the Assyrian forces which invaded Israel and Judah; and to which we

find such frequent references in the pages of the Old Testament. Every fresh discovery shows how rigidly correct were all these references.

We find, in the prophetic books, several references to the Assyrian mode of conducting the siege of a fortress or city. One of the most minute of these references occurs in Isaiah 37th Ch. 33rd v. The threats of Sennacherib had alarmed Hezekiah; and in order to allay his fears the prophet is sent to him with this message: "Thus saith the Lord, he shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it." A similar description occurs in Ezekiel 4th Ch. 2nd v, "Lay siege against it, and build a fort against it, and cast a mount against it; set the camp also against it, and set battering rams against it round about." These passages are descriptive of the Assyrian method of laying siege to a city; and though we had all some general conception of their meaning before, yet they acquire an additional interest after we examine the Nineveh sculptures, and find pictorial representations of these operations, according exactly with the accounts of the Bible. It is very wonderful to find the walls of Sennacherib's palace furnishing, in our day, illustrations of the prophet's words, in reference to his intended siege of Jerusalem. In ancient times, all fortresses were placed either on natural or artificial eminences. The first step, therefore, in attacking a fortified place, was to construct an inclined plane, formed of earth, stones and trees, reaching to the summit of the eminence on which it stood. The besiegers were then able to drag their ponderous battering-rams and other military engines, up this inclined way, to the foot of the walls; and also to escalate the walls. The Nineveh marbles represent this process; and show us the besiegers pushing their engines up the artificially constructed bank. It is to this operation Isaiah refers, when he speaks of "casting a bank against the city"—or as Ezekiel has it, "casting a mount;"—constructing a causeway to reach the foot of the walls. The battering-rams were mounted on either four or six wheels; and, in some cases, were joined to moveable towers which held armed men, and rose to a level with the turrets of the besieged city. In other cases these towers were unconnected with the battering-rams, and were built of wood—being either moveable or stationary. From their summits archers discharged their arrows against the besieged. To this the prophet alludes when he speaks of "building a fort against the city." Two warriors are usually seen occupying

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the artificial tower; one shoots his arrows, the other holds up a shield for the protection of his companion. How exact the illustration of the prophet's words we obtain hence! "he shall not shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields." These archers kept harassing such of the enemy as ventured to show themselves on the walls and towers; and under this protection the storming party advanced and scaled the walls or fired the gates. All the incidents of such a siege are represented again and again in the sculptures. Warriors are seen falling from the towers or lying dead; women appear on the walls tearing their hair and imploring mercy; while outside the walls prisoners are impaled to strike terror into the besieged.

There are frequent references throughout the historical and prophetic parts of the Old Testament to the condition of the Jews, when, having been subdued by the Assyrians or Babylonians, they were led away captive. We learn from the scriptural account, that the constant policy of this conquering nation was, to remove the people whom they overcame to their own land. This appears to us a singular mode of procedure; but it is not difficult to account for it. Owing to the immense extent of their empire, they found it very troublesome and expensive to keep the more distant provinces in subjection, or to subdue them when they revolted. Hence, when they subdued such a distant country as Judea, their obvious policy was to weaken it, so as to render revolt impossible. This they effected by carrying off the flower of the population—the nobility, priests and men of influence and station—to Assyria, leaving only the poorer classes to till the soil. They thus destroyed the nationality of the people. The poor who remained, being without leaders or men of influence to direct them, would be likely to remain in quiet subjection. Still farther—the same process strengthened themselves, by drawing to their seat of power the most distinguished statesmen, generals, warriors and priests, as well as the skilled artisans of the conquered nations. Hence the repeated "carrying away," of which we read in the Old Testament. Those who were thus led away into captivity were not kept prisoners, or even held as slaves; but were rather a kind of free colonists, permitted to pursue their occupations in the land to which they were brought, though forbidden to return to their fatherland. In such circumstances the Jews often did not find their condition unpleasant; and after a time became attached to the land of their captivity. We have a proof of

this in the fact that when, by the decree of Cyrus, they were permitted to return, there was a general indisposition to leave, and the most influential part of the nation preferred to remain. Still, to the generation who had been removed from the land of their fathers, even such captivity must have been bitter. Those born in captivity would feel it less irksome; but the poor captive who remembered Zion, would mourn sadly when he thought that for him there was no return. We all know how strong is the love of fatherland in the human breast.

“Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!”

And how often does it happen, after years of exile, that a passionate longing will seize upon the wanderer to look once more upon the loved land of his birth; and among the scenes of his boyhood he will grow young again, and feel comforted by the thought that he will sleep with his fathers. In the breast of the Jew, especially, this feeling burned intensely. His was the “land of promise”—the birth-place of the coming Messiah—the spot where their “holy and beautiful house” stood—its very dust was sacred. To be torn from it was misery indeed. To them the prophet’s words had a peculiarly mournful meaning:—“Weep not for the dead, neither mourn for him; but weep sore for him that goeth away; for he shall return no more, nor see his native country.”

The Nineveh sculptures furnish most touching illustrations of all this; and are, at the same time, most strikingly confirmatory of the scriptural representations. Whatever may have been the condition of the captives, when finally settled in the land of their conquerors, their march thither, driven by brutal soldiers— young and old—women and children—under a burning eastern sun, must have been dreadful in the extreme. Layard describes, in his recent work, a series of sculptures representing the captives on the march, which forcibly realizes all this. “The captives, bearing skins, probably containing water and flour to nourish them during a long and harassing march, were fettered in pairs and urged on by their guards. The women were partly on foot, and partly with their children on mules, or in carts drawn by oxen. Mothers were represented holding the waterskins for their young ones to quench their thirst; whilst in some instances fathers had placed their weary children on their shoulders, for they were marching during the heat of a Mesopota-

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mian summer. Thus were driven the inhabitants of Samaria through the desert to Halah and Habor by the river of Gozan and the cities of the Medes; and we may see, in these bas-reliefs, a picture of the hardships and sufferings to which the captive people of Israel were exposed, when their cities fell into the hand of the Assyrian King, and the inhabitants were sent to colonize the distant provinces of his empire." How strikingly accordant these representations of the Nineveh sculptures with those from sacred writ!

But though the captives thus carried off were comparatively well treated, we learn, from the sculptures, that a frightful doom awaited others who, perhaps, were peculiarly dangerous or had rendered themselves specially obnoxious. While the great body of the people were thus led away, other prisoners were put to death by the most cruel tortures; and the Assyrians have left a record of their own savage barbarities on these marbles. Layard gives a plate containing a copy of one of these sculptures, in which he states that the captives have the marked Jewish countenance; and he considers that in all probability they represent Jews, who, after being carried captive, had revolted and are here suffering the penalty. Some are flayed alive; the brains of others are beaten out by an iron mace; the tongues of some are wrenched out of their mouths; and the bleeding heads of the slain are tied round the necks of the living. An inscription underneath declares them to have spoken blasphemies against the Great God Asshur; and two of the words used are almost purely Hebrew; so that here, in all probability, are the captive Jews undergoing tortures for their attachment to the religion of their fathers, and for refusing to worship the Assyrian idols. In another sculpture the King himself is represented thrusting out the eyes of a captive with a spear; and holding in his hands a cord which is inserted into the lips and nostrils of two other prisoners. This recalls to mind and illustrates the cruelty of Nebuchadnezzar to King Zedekiah, when he first murdered his sons before his eyes, and then tore out his eyes, so that this horrible sight might be his last. It also gives new force to the figurative denunciation pronounced against Sennacherib:—"therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and will turn thee back by the way which thou camest." Assyrian prisoners are seen dragged before the King by a rope fastened to rings passed through the lips and nose. Thus, even compared with other eastern nations, the Assyrians by their own showing, were

pre-eminent for cold-blooded cruelty. How accurately all this corresponds with Jeremiah's picture of them—Chap. 6, 23 v. :—
 “They shall lay hold on bow and spear; they *are cruel and have no mercy*; their voice roareth like the sea; and they ride upon horses; set in array, as men of war, against thee O daughter of Zion.”

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CHAPTER VII.

ASSYRIAN COSTUMES, DECORATIONS, ARCHITECTURE, &c. AS ILLUSTRATIVE OF SCRIPTURE.

Nothing is more calculated to give us a vivid idea of human progress, than an examination of the sculptures referred to in the close of last chapter, representing the cruelties practised by the Assyrians. These savage barbarities, from which we turn away with shivering horror, were matters of national glory in Nineveh. How greatly our race has advanced in moral feeling, when, among all civilized nations, cruelty, in any form, to an enemy, is regarded as a mark of barbarism, and cold-blooded cruelty is considered infamous! Who would prefer to have been born in the age of Nineveh, rather than the present? Let those who are inclined to think badly of the present time, and to fancy that the human race are degenerating, fix on any preceding age in which existence would have been more desirable. Would any of us like to have been an inhabitant of Imperial Rome, where, such was the taste for blood, that man butchered man, as a means of affording popular amusement? Would any of us choose to have been alive when the mad crusades were deluging the earth with blood? or to have lived during the wars of The Roses in England? or in the days of persecution, when ears were cut off and noses slit, and flesh branded and burned for holding an opinion sanctioned by conscience? Had any preceding age a tithe of our advantages and social comforts? The peasant of to-day has more conveniences than the monarch of a former day. Patriarchal, apostolic or mediaeval times were all poor compared with ours. Did not the Crystal Palace, among other wonders, contain the Bible printed in 148 different languages—a noble monument of British piety,—making the glad tidings intelligible to many millions of the human family. Before we despise the present age, let us ponder the caution of Solomon:—"Say not thou what is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost inquire wisely concerning this."

Still we have no right to look contemptuously on the past, or to regard all who have lived before us as barbarous savages or madmen. Let us rather endeavour to understand the past, and to look at it with a tolerant, genial and sympathising regard. All that God has permitted to exist in former days is the possession of the present; and is sacred as warning or example—as something to be shunned, or admired and imitated. If it has served no other purpose, at least it has laid a foundation on which what is better and purer has been built. No thoughtful, earnest man will despise or scorn the past. Human hands wrought at its construction—human joys beautified it—a brother's toils and struggles reared its monuments, and a brother's tears have rendered it sacred. Look at it, therefore, kindly and lovingly—with a charitable eye towards its failings and sins; but not with bitter contempt or shallow self-conceited scorn. That buried past, on whose mouldering remains you gaze, has entombed your benefactors who suffered and wrought for you—though you know not even their names. Every spot of it is therefore hallowed ground. Earth's great ones have laid themselves down here for their long sleep—tread lightly upon their ashes! Put while we look reverentially and kindly on the past, let us not cherish a mere blind, superstitious veneration, so as to be in slavish subjection to it, or so as to undervalue the present. While we guard against the destructive spirit, let us ever cherish the progressive spirit. Whatever the past may have been, the future has something greater to be developed; for as Galileo said of old "the world moves"—the tide of human action is flowing, not ebbing; the golden age is before us, not behind us.

"Not enjoyment and not sorrow
Is our destined end or way;
But to act that each to-morrow
Finds us farther than to-day.

"Trust no future, how'er pleasant!—
Let the dead past bury its dead!—
Act—act in the living present!
Heart within and God o'er-head!"

We are not to go back to the past for our ideals of greatness; but, with a noble faith in God and man, to press onward. The great lesson of the past is not doubt or despair, but godlike hope and trust.

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" Evermore the worlds are fading,
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 To refute our weak up-braiding,
 To throw brightness on the gloom.

" Ever the imperfect passes
 But the perfect ever grows,
 Forests sink to drear morasses
 Fairer landscapes to disclose.

" In the infinite creation
 Lies no dead unmeaning fact ;
 But eternal revelation—
 Deity in endless act.

" Life that works and pauses never,
 Death that passes into life,
 Rest that follows motion ever,
 Peace that ever follows strife."

When we gaze on these Assyrian monuments, and see them to be, almost all, records of violence, tyranny, cruelty and blood, we are inclined to turn away in shuddering horror. But it is cheering and hopeful to find, even in these dark ages, that seemed to be "of night's black arch the keystone," some little streaks of light—some tints of a coming dawn—some touches of pity, goodness and faith, shining cheerily in the midst of the murky blackness. Is it not wonderful to find, at a time when men seem to have been given over to wickedness or brute-force, that emblem raised of which we have already spoken, representing an embodiment of the principle of evil, all hideous and vile, as vanquished and driven out by another being, beautiful and lovely, the embodiment of intelligence and goodness? How this may have spoken to the faith and hope of our Assyrian brothers! What a gleam of light—like a solitary star at the midnight hour—it may have shed upon their path! It indicated hope in a brighter and purer future, when love and goodness would shine out triumphant. It was a sort of scripture promise—perhaps the Assyrian rendering of that very promise which cheered God's saints from the days of Adam;—"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." To ourselves it is still full of meaning; and we trust the day may never come when we can look on this Assyrian representation of the winged and radiant angel overthrowing and

driving out the brute-fiend, without a glow of faith in the perpetual supremacy and final triumph of good over evil—now that the “seed of the woman”—the Great Deliverer has come. And then, too, consider these winged human-headed bulls—emblems of intellectual and physical power—with their grave, majestic countenances, indicating no mean apprehension of mental force and moral beauty. Do they not intimate a perception of the omnipotence of mind over matter, and of the value of strength when guided by thought. Is not the steam-engine, in our own day, an embodiment of the same idea—might guided by mind—destined to subdue the world before it? These ancient men had glimpses of the profoundest moral truths; and felt that to them too was put the question, “wilt thou take part with the powers of darkness or of light—wilt thou side with the evil or with the good?” Let us not despise them.

One would like to know what was the personal appearance of these Assyrians, and in what kind of dress they trod the earth. All this we can learn from the sculptures. We see them here in their war-dresses, court-dresses and working-dresses, and at their banquets, pledging one another in the wine-cups. A procession of musicians, in full costume, marches out to greet the conquerors; just as we read of the women of Israel going out “with singing and dancing, and instruments of music, to meet David and Saul returning from the slaughter of the Philistines.” We find on the bas-reliefs representations of the harp with ten-strings (probably a kind of dulcimer)—of the tabor and pipe, so often referred to in scripture as being used on such occasions. The women appear singing and clapping their hands to the measure. Some of them wear their hair in long ringlets—some plaited or braided—and others have it confined in a net. Little do our modern ladies, who dress their hair after the same fashions, imagine what old customs they are following. The prophet Isaiah speaks of “caps of net-work,” among the articles of dress of the Jewish women. Most probably, in these matters, Assyria set the fashions, as Paris and London now do; the Jews imitated their more refined and aristocratic neighbours, and thus the thing has floated down to us. Human nature is the same to-day as three thousand years since.

In the 23rd Chapter of Ezekiel’s prophecies we have a number of very minute and striking allusions to the dress and ornaments of the Assyrians. In the 12th verse they are thus described:—“She doted on the Assyrians, her neighbours, captains and rulers clothed most gorgeously, horsemen riding

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upon horses,—all of them desirable young men".—And in the 15th verse it is added—"girdled with girdles upon their loins, exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads—all of them princes to look upon." This prophet was familiar with the personal appearance of the Assyrians, and represents them here as "princes to look upon," "desirable young men;"—that is impressive in aspect and deportment, and handsome in person. The Nineveh sculptures correspond exactly to the prophet's descriptions. The men we find portrayed along the palace walls are evidently a warlike race, possessed of great physical strength, born for dominion; and having a noble and striking mein. Besides, the prophet tells us they were "clothed most gorgeously," and wore "dyed attire." Nothing could exceed the splendour and costliness of the garments represented in the sculptures. There is a profusion of ornament on their dresses, and yet there is nothing to offend the most refined taste—nothing out of place or suggesting the idea of tawdriness. Their robes are at once graceful and favourable to the freest movements of the body. Their dresses, weapons and utensils might be studied with advantage at the present day as models, so far as ornamentation is concerned. In the 14th verse of the same chapter the prophet speaks of "men portrayed upon the walls—the images of the Chaldeans portrayed with vermilion." This passage receives a very striking confirmation and illustration from the fact, disclosed by recent discoveries, that these sculptures round the walls of the Assyrian palaces were not left, as ours, uncoloured, and thus presenting a dull gray tint, but were gorgeously and variously coloured, in order to heighten their effect. The colours red, blue and black are traceable on many parts of the sculptures, and even on the bricks; but time or fire has, for the most part, effaced the colours. Layard tells us that the Assyrian red was very brilliant; and in one of the palaces approaches vermilion. How accurate the prophet's account—"men portrayed upon the wall with vermilion!" He farther speaks of their having "dyed attire upon their heads." It is remarkable that almost all eastern nations wore no head-coverings. The Jews, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans were accustomed to go bare-headed for the most part. The Bible, however, represents the Assyrians as an exception, and speaks of their highly ornamented head-dresses. The figures in the sculptures correspond to this precisely, having very beautiful and richly ornamented coverings on the head.

A very interesting chapter in Layard's recent work is devoted to a description of bronze objects found in one chamber. These consist of caldrons, bowls, bells, rings, cups and dishes; besides some iron instruments, ivory remains and buttons, in mother of pearl, scattered among them. The bronze bells have iron tongues and were probably attached to the necks of the horses—Zechariah, 14th Ch. 20th v. speaks of the "bells of the horses," and the sculptures represent them as fastened to the collars of the horses, for the purpose, doubtless, of warning the passengers of their approach. Curious enough, that now in the British Museum are little bells that 2400 years ago hung at the collar of an Assyrian horse, and warned the Ninevites to clear the way. The bronze cups and dishes are of elegant design, tastefully ornamented and some of them embossed and engraven. Layard remarks that the tin employed in making the bronze was probably brought from Phoenicia, the great trading nation of those days; and the Phoenicians procured it on the shores of the Atlantic; so that it may have been exported 3,000 years ago from the mines of Cornwall. How singular! A Cornish mine furnishes tin; a Phoenician merchant buys it—sends it across Syria to Nineveh—there it enters into the composition of a vessel, and after being buried more than two thousand years, returns to Britain as a precious relic! These bronze vessels were considered of great value in ancient times; and were carried off as the most precious part of the spoil. So that, as Layard remarks, it is not impossible some of these vessels, found in Sennacherib's palace, were brought by him from some of the towns around Jerusalem, or from Samaria by Shalmaneser, who inhabited the same palace. Along with these interesting relics were found two entire glass bowls, having on them the name of Sargon, an Assyrian King who reigned B. C. 700. Here, too, was found the lens of rock-crystal, already referred to, with opposite convex and plane faces. "It is the oldest specimen of a burning and magnifying glass, while the others are the most ancient specimens of transparent glass known to be in existence."

We come now to the last scriptural illustration; and this has reference to Solomon's temple. It is impossible, from the description given in the Old Testament, to form a correct conception of the plan and appearance of the great temple erected by Solomon. The difficulty arises, in part, from our not being acquainted with the exact meaning of the Hebrew architectural terms; and partly from the difficulty experienced, in ordinary

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cases, of restoring any building from mere description. The discoveries at Nineveh promise to do away with this hitherto insuperable difficulty. Not a fragment of any of the great edifices of the Jews remains to aid us in comprehending the Bible's descriptions; but now are brought to light the ruins of Nineveh's palaces, which, in architectural arrangements, are found to bear the closest resemblance to those we find described in the Old Testament. Thus the fragments from Nineveh will help us to understand the records relating to Solomon's Temple and palaces; while the Biblical account will aid us in comprehending and restoring the Assyrian temple-palaces. By the mutual light thus afforded, there can be little doubt, once the subject is carefully and completely investigated, that a complete and accurate restoration of the principal buildings of both the Jews and Assyrians will be furnished; and thus a clearer light will be cast upon the pages of revelation and its difficulties will be lessened. In his new work Layard furnishes a few suggestive hints which we shall now endeavour to present in a condensed form. In I Kings, 6th Ch. we are told that Solomon's Temple was 60 cubits long—20 cubits broad, and 30 cubits high. The Jewish cubit was a foot and a half; so that the temple was 90 feet long—30 feet broad and 45 feet high. The dimensions were thus very much smaller than an Assyrian temple-palace. Solomon's own palace, however, was considerably larger, and approached more nearly, in its proportions, to those of the Kings of Nineveh; for it was 100 cubits long—50 broad and 30 high. The chambers of the Jewish temple were exceedingly small—the largest being but $10\frac{1}{2}$ feet in breadth. The greater number of the chambers in the Assyrian palaces are also very narrow compared with their length, in order that the beams may be supported without the use of pillars. It is probable that the same cause produced the same arrangement in Solomon's temple—pillars for supporting the beams not having come into use. In the second chapter we mentioned that various chambers were grouped around a large central hall, with which they communicated. Such too appears to have been the plan followed in Solomon's Temple—the smaller rooms are described as built round a large central chamber called "the oracle," which was 20 cubits square—smaller far than the Nineveh halls. Within this oracle we are told were two cherubim of olive wood, ten cubits high, with wings, each five cubits long. The best Biblical commentators tell us that the cherubim were certain symbolical figures, uniting the human head with the body of an

ox or lion and the wings of an eagle. "Their wings" it is added, "touched one another in the midst of the house." So, in like manner, in the Assyrian halls stood the winged, human-headed bulls, with wings meeting in the centre. Their dimensions too were nearly alike—10 cubits being 15 feet. The doors too were farther told were carved with cherubim and palm-trees and open flowers—corresponding with those of the Assyrian palaces. There was this important difference, however,—no visible object of worship—nothing to be bowed down to or adored, was permitted in the temple of Jehovah, who amid Sinai's awful thunders said "thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image." Josephus, describing one of Solomon's palaces says—"Solomon built some of these houses with stones of 10 cubits—and wainscotted the walls with other stones that were sawed. The arrangement of the curious workmanship of these stones was in three rows; but the fourth was pre-eminent for the beauty of its sculpture, for on it were represented trees and all sorts of plants." Such, precisely, we have seen, was the mode pursued in building the Nineveh palaces. Moreover, Solomon's temple was seven years in building; and from the inscriptions it appears Sennacherib's was about the same time in building his great palace. The ceiling roof and beams of the temple were of cedar from Lebanon. Layard dug up fragments of the same precious wood; and some of the inscriptions declare that the King employed men to cut wood in mount Lebanon; so that Solomon and Sennacherib got their wood-materials in the same spot. One more coincidence may be mentioned;—in Solomon's temple was a brazen sea supported by twelve oxen. Layard found two bronze caldrons, each six feet in diameter and two feet in depth, which, he says, reminded him of Solomon's brazen sea; and in the sculptures he found represented large metal caldrons supported on brazen oxen. So close are the resemblances already discovered; and doubtless fresh coincidences will be daily coming to light.

The discoveries at Nineveh that have any important bearing on the illustration or corroboration of scripture, have now been briefly passed in review. It would be difficult to over-estimate their value as casting additional and clearer light upon the sacred page, and as affording corroborative testimony, of the most unexceptionable and convincing character, to the truth of revelation; and thus adding a fresh buttress to the bulwarks of our faith, and leaving the gainsayer still more palpably "without excuse." Should we not lift our hearts in devout gratitude

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to God, in whose wonder-working Providence these remains have been preserved and brought to light! Though but imperfectly explored, and though the interpretation of the inscriptions is yet in its infancy, we have seen how valuable are the results. We may justly expect far more important discoveries soon from the labours of that noble society, organised and now in operation, for the purpose of exploring the Mesopotamian ruins. (See Appendix No. I.)

Who can predict what may be the ultimate destiny of these remains? Entombed for twenty four centuries, they are at length raised, borne across the ocean and become the possession of two nations that had no existence till centuries after their burial. Doubtless they are in safe keeping at present—that of England and France; and will be preserved by them faithfully as a portion of their most precious public possessions. But they are in safer hands still. Literature has taken charge of them—art has multiplied plates and fac-similes of them—the New Crystal Palace has its “Assyrian Court”—and eloquent pens have described them. They are now the possession of the civilized world—embodied in its literature and history; and though accident may destroy the originals—though the English and French should disappear as completely as the Jebusites and Perizzites,—though a tide of northern barbarians should again over-run Europe and extinguish its civilization, yet, thanks to the printing-press, Nineveh can never again be forgotten or entombed. The discoveries now form a chapter in human history, and are the possession of the race—a subject for the study of unborn generations.

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APPENDIX.

No. I.

THE following letter, which has appeared in the public prints since the preceding pages were written, will show how just are our expectations of important discoveries in the Mesopotamian plains, and how rapidly they are likely to be realized :—

“I hasten to communicate a discovery which I have recently made in Babylonian history, and which is of the utmost importance for Scriptural illustration.

“Mr. J. Taylor, who has been employed during the winter in conducting the British museum excavations in Southern Chaldæa under my superintendence, has lately disinterred a number of clay cylinders, in the ruins of Um-Geer, (the ancient Ur of the Chaldees, and near the modern Arab capital of Soek-ess-Shookh on the Euphrates.) Two of these cylinders have already reached me, and I have found them to contain a memorial of the works executed by Nabonidus (the last king of Babylon), in Southern Chaldæa. They describe among other things the restoration of temples, originally built by the Chaldean monarchs, at least 1000 years previously, and further notice the re-opening of canals dug by Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar. The most important fact, however, which they disclose, is, that the eldest son of Nabonidus was named Bel-shar-azar, and that he was admitted by his father to a share in the government. This name is undoubtedly the Belsazzar of Daniel, and thus furnishes us with a key to the explanation of the great historical problem which hitherto defied solution. We can now understand how Belsazzar, as joint king with his father, may have been governor of Babylon, when the city was attacked by the combined forces of the Medes and Persians, and may have perished in the assault which followed; while Nabonidus, leading a force to the relief of the place, was defeated, and obliged to take refuge in the neighbouring town of Borsippa (or Birs-i-Nimrud); capitulating, after a short resistance, and being subsequently assigned, according to Berossus, an honourable retirement in Carmania. By the discovery, indeed, of the name of Bel-shar-azar, as appertaining to the son of Nabonidus, we are, for the first time, enabled to reconcile authentic history (such as it is related by Herodotus and Berossus, and not as we find it in the romance of Xenophon or the fables of Ctesias), with the inspired record of Daniel, which forms one of the bulwarks of our religion.

“In conclusion, I have only to state that, as excavations are being now actively pursued in Chaldæa, upon both banks of the Euphrates, by Mr.

Loftus, at Sonkerch and Warks, on account of the Assyrian Fund Society, and by Mr. Taylor, at Um-Qeer, Abu Shahroin, and Nawaweis, on account of the British Museum, there is every reason to expect that, during the present season, materials will be collected that shall enable us to classify the kings of the Chaldaean dynasty, from B.C. 1976 to B.C. 1418, with as much certainty as has been attained in the classification of the Assyrian kings from B.C. 1273 to B.C. 625, and that we shall thus have an historical tableau of Western Asia ascending up to the twentieth century B.C., or anterior to the Exodus of Abraham from Chaldaea, far more determinate and continuous than has been obtained for the sister kingdom of Egypt from a comparison of the hieroglyphic records with the thirty dynasties of Manetho. I am only awaiting the result of the labours of Mr. Loftus and Mr. Taylor, to proceed to England with the fruits of the last two years' researches in Assyria and Babylonia, and I thus hope to arrive in London by the end of April or beginning of May.—H. C. RAWLINSON."

"ASSYRIAN RESEARCHES AND DISCOVERIES.—From an account of Assyrian researches and discoveries in the last annual report of the Royal Asiatic Society, made by Colonel Rawlinson, we learn that the most recent, as well as the most important discovery, in an historical and geographical point of view, is that of another obelisk, in the south-east corner of the great mound of Nimrud, and erected by Shamasphul, the son of Shalambara, or Shalamchara, who raised the similar and well-known obelisk in the British Museum. The Colonel states that he has been down the river to Bassorah, whence he has shipped off several cases to the British Museum and Crystal Palace, by the Acbar steam-frigate, which was sent up from Bombay for that purpose. A further very curious discovery made by Colonel Rawlinson is, that the employment of the Babylonian cuneiform writing was continued down at least so low as the time of the Macedonian dominion in Asia, the commencement of the third century B.C."

No. II.

In the opinion of Layard a more direct and speedy route to India will soon be found indispensable; and he considers that it must be sought by the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates, where railways and steam navigation can be advantageously combined. A glance at the map shows that a line through the Mediterranean to a port of Syria—on through Mesopotamia to the Persian Gulf, and across the Indian Ocean to Bombay, marks the most direct route that can be desired. Thus it is not impossible that the Mesopotamian plains may again become the medium of communication between the east and the west; and commerce return, once more, to its old highways. "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun." These

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barren wastes may bloom again. The christian enterprize of the west may make the eastern desert "rejoice and blossom like the rose."

"I think I hear

The sound of that advancing multitude
Which soon shall fill these deserts. From the ground
Comes up the laugh of children, the soft voice
Of maidens, and the sweet and solemn hymn
Of Sabbath-worshippers. The low of herds
Blends with the rustling of the heavy grain
Over the dark-brown furrows."

No. III.

The following letter, which Layard introduces at the close of his recent volume, is interesting for many reasons. It was written, he informs us, to a friend of his by a Turkish Cadi, in reply to some inquiries as to the commerce, population and remains of antiquity of an ancient city, in which dwelt the head of the law.

"My Illustrious Friend and Joy of my Liver!

"The thing you ask of me is both difficult and useless. Although I have passed all my days in this place, I have neither counted the houses nor have I inquired into the number of the inhabitants; and as to what one person loads on his mules and the other stows away in the bottom of his ship, that is no business of mine. But above all, as to the previous history of this city, God only knows the amount of dirt and confusion that the infidels may have eaten before the coming of the sword of Islam. It were unprofitable for us to inquire into it.

"Oh my soul! Oh my lamb! seek not after the things which concern thee not. Thou camest unto us and we welcomed thee: go in peace.

"Of a truth thou hast spoken many words; and there is no harm done, for the speaker is one and the listener is another. After the fashion of thy people thou hast wandered from one place to another, until thou art happy and content in none. We (praise be to God) were born here and never desire to quit it. Is it possible then that the idea of a general intercourse between mankind should make any impression on our understandings? God forbid!

Listen Oh my Son! There is no wisdom equal unto the belief in God. He created the world, and shall we liken ourselves unto him in seeking to penetrate into the mysteries of his creation? Shall we say, behold this star spinneth round that star, and this other star with a tail goeth and cometh in so many years! Let it go! He from whose hand it came will guide and direct it.

"But thou wilt say unto me, stand aside Oh man for I am more learned than thou art, and have seen more things. If thou thinkest that thou art in this respect better than I am thou art welcome. I praise God that I

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seek not that which I require not. Thou art learned in the things I care not for; and as for that which thou hast seen, I defile it. Will much knowledge create thee a double belly, or wilt thou seek Paradise with thine eyes?

"Oh my friend! if thou wilt be happy, say there is no God but God! Do no evil, and thus wilt thou fear neither man nor death; for surely thine hour will come!

The meek in spirit (EL FAKIR)

IMAUM ALI ZADE."

While we smile at this epistle, so truly oriental in spirit, and at the lofty, complacent scorn with which the writer looks down upon the strivings of us restless, unenjoying Europeans, with our ceaseless cravings after knowledge and toilings for wealth—"defiling" the whole—let us also mark and admire the spirit of childlike piety that runs throughout—mingled though it be with self-satisfied ignorance; and let us, too, ponder the closing words. The apathetic eastern spirit, that is more inclined to contemplate and enjoy than produce, is not to be commended; and yet, in an age like this, of excessive and often phrenzied struggle and toil, that crush man's nobler faculties and mar his happiness, it were well if we could lay hold of a little oriental wisdom to temper our passion for accumulation. "The Gospel of leisure" requires to be preached, no less than "the Gospel of work."

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"He must, indeed, be possessed of little emotion who can rise from the perusal of the pamphlet before us without a deeper reverence for the Bible, and a longing desire to become more conversant than ever with the precious truths it unfolds to our view."—*Halifax Witness*.

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