THE

MOABITE STONE.

THE SUBSTANCE OF

TWO LECTURES,

BY

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FIFTH EDITION.

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PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

The following memoranda on the Moabite Stone make no pretence to originality. They have been derived from the most trustworthy sources to which the Lecturer had access, and were put together for the purpose of giving, in a small compass, a clear idea of the important and interesting questions which are connected with this most valuable relic of antiquity, and more especially of the points of contact between it and the Bible records.

Whilst retaining the style of lectures, in which they were originally delivered, I have, for the convenience of the reader, divided the subject into sections.

PREFACE TO THIRD EDITION.

Since the first Edition went to press, mention has been made in the newspapers of the discovery of another Moabite Stone. It is as well, however, that the public should be informed that it has been known to the learned for some years, and is comparatively modern. The characters are Nabathaean, and though the battle described on it is said to have taken place in the days of Moses, the inscription itself must have been written many hundred years after the event, so that it possesses little or no weight as evidence. The great value of the record described in the following pages is, that it is a history of events which were contemporaneous with the inscription which narrates them.
PREFACE TO FIFTH EDITION.

The rapid sale of the former Editions seems to indicate the deep interest which is felt by the public in the subject on which these Lectures treat. This Fifth Edition is now issued, with the earnest hope and prayer that it may lead many to a more earnest study of that Sacred Volume, the truth of which has been so wonderfully attested by the Moabite Stone.
THE MOABITE STONE.

INTRODUCTION.

HERE are some subjects which, from their very nature, enable the lecturer to indulge in bursts of eloquence, or in flights of fancy. There are others, again, which, by their very character, are suggestive of those flashes of wit and humour which play, like summer lightning, over the landscape of our thought. But my subject is not one of these. It is neither poetic nor brilliant, and yet, I trust, it will prove neither uninteresting nor unprofitable.

But I give you fair warning that, in order to be so, it will make large demands upon your attention; and that if I make few appeals to your fancy or imagination, it is because the surroundings and the conclusions of my subject are too deep for the one, and too lofty for the other.

It is my hope and trust, however, that before the audience and the lecturer part company, we shall be satisfied (if not with each other, at least) with the fields of thought over which we shall have wandered, and with
those fruits and flowers of contemplation and knowledge which we have gathered by the way.

It may be that some of my hearers have never heard of the Moabite Stone, until they saw it announced as the topic for a public lecture; and that even of those who have, very few know more of it than could be gathered from a brief paragraph in the newspapers. But this very fact, coupled with the importance and interest of the subject, furnished my chief reason for selecting it. It is sufficiently unknown to give it the charm of novelty, whilst, at the same time, it is sufficiently important to give it the zest of an absorbing interest.

The Moabite Stone is the last of those wondrous and silent witnesses, which, in this age of doubt and scepticism, have arisen, as it were, from the sepulchre of ages to bear witness to the truth of Revelation. It comes to us from the depths of the centuries that are past, to add another and a most remarkable testimony to the veracity of the Bible record.

Already the bricks of Babylon and the slabs of Nineveh had come forth from the dark recesses of the past to corroborate the Word of God; but here we have a witness older still—a witness, in presence of which most of the coins, and manuscripts, and inscriptions of antiquity are comparatively young; and yet a witness which speaks with a distinctness, a copiousness, and a particularity, which render it unspeakably valuable, both as a test and an evidence of Scripture truth.

As such, this stone from the long-forgotten land of Moab, with its wonderful inscription, demands a hearing; and calls with impressive and majestic voice upon a
INTRODUCTION.

world too prone to unbelief, to listen with reverence and faith to the Oracles of God.

It was not inappropriate that the honour of discovering this new and important witness for Bible truth, should be reserved for a Christian missionary. "To him that hath shall be given," is a maxim quite as true about the evidences of Christianity as about its graces; and there are other means beside the increments and attestations of spiritual experience, whereby the words of its great Founder are oftentimes fulfilled: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." For this last great addition to our knowledge, no less of antiquity, palæography, and language, than of Christian evidences, we are indebted to the Rev. F. Augustus Klein, one of the Church Missionary Society's labourers in the East.

If to the missionary Krapf we owe the discovery of those snow-clad mountains beneath the burning Equator, which solved the mystery of the Nile; if to the missionary Livingston we are indebted for revealing to us the dark, untrodden depths of the mysterious continent of Africa; if to the missionary Köelle we are under obligation for bringing us into familiar contact with more than a hundred dialects and languages which we never knew before; so to another of those devoted, though often despised, ambassadors of the Cross, we are indebted for bringing to light this most interesting and important record.
I.

MODERN HISTORY OF THE STONE.

R. KLEIN, a Prussian by birth, was travelling, in 1868, from Es-Salt to Kerak, through the land of Moab, a country rarely visited by Europeans in the course of the present century, and consequently almost a terra incognita to us. On his arrival at Dibân, (the ancient Dibon,) a village lying on the east of the Dead Sea, and a little north of the River Arnon, he was informed by a friendly Sheik of the Beni Hamîde (whose camp was in the vicinity) of this stone.

This part of the story is so graphically told by himself, that it will be better to give it in his own words:—

"It was on the 19th August, 1868, that in the course of a journey I undertook to Jebel Ajloon and the Belka, I arrived at Dibân, (the ancient Dibon,) about one hour to the north of the Wâdi Mojeb. (R. Arnon.) For the sake of my friend and protector, Zattam, the son of the famous Fendi-l-Faiz, Sheik of the Beni Sachr, who accompanied me, I was received in a most friendly way by a tribe of the Beni Hamîde, encamped near Dibân.

"Carpets and cushions were spread in the tent of the Sheik, and coffee prepared with all the ceremonial of Bedouin etiquette. Before the operation of preparing
and drinking the coffee had terminated, my friend, Zattam, who was always most anxious to make my tour as pleasant and interesting as possible, had informed me that there was amongst the ruins of Dibân, scarcely ten minutes from our encampment, a most interesting stone, with an ancient inscription on it, which no one had ever been able to decipher, and which he would take me to see.

"As sunset was drawing near I was anxious to be off at once, but Zattam was not to be persuaded to get up from his soft couch, and leave off smoking his narghilee, while I was burning with a desire to see the inscription, which the Sheik of the Ben Hamîde also described to me as one of the wonders of this region, which no Frank had yet seen, and which he now offered to show me, as a mark of honour to his friend Zattam, and to me who was travelling under his protection.

"I, of course, took this for what it was in general meant to be—a Bedouin compliment calculated to bring out a nice Bakshish. Still I afterwards ascertained that his assertion as to no European having before me seen the stone, was perfectly true; none of the distinguished travellers in those parts had ever seen or heard of it, or they would not have shunned trouble or expense to secure this treasure. I am sorry to find I was also the last European who had the privilege of seeing this monument of Hebrew antiquity in its perfect state of preservation, and it is for this reason I think the few observations I am able to offer on the subject may be welcome to those who take an interest in this discovery.

"When I came to the spot where this precious relic
of antiquity was lying on the ground, I was delighted at the sight, and at the same time greatly vexed that I did not come earlier, in order to have an opportunity of copying at least a good part of the inscription, which I might then, under the protection of Zattam, have done without the least molestation. I, however, had time enough to examine the stone and its inscription at leisure, and to copy a few words from several lines at random, chiefly with a view, on my return to Jerusalem, to ascertain the language of the inscription, and prevail on some friends of science to obtain either a complete copy of the inscription, or (still better) the monument itself.

"The stone was lying among the ruins of Dibân, perfectly free and exposed to view, the inscription uppermost. I got four men to turn it round, (it was a basaltic stone, exceedingly heavy,) in order to ascertain whether there was no inscription on the other side, and found that it was perfectly smooth, and without any inscription or other marks.

"What time was left me before sunset I now employed in examining, measuring, and making a correct sketch of the stone, besides endeavouring to collect a perfect alphabet from the inscription."*

According to Mr. Klein, the stone was rounded at both ends, and had thirty-four lines of inscription, about an inch and a half apart; those at the top and bottom of the stone being somewhat shorter than the rest, on account of the narrow breadth in those parts. It was about three and a-half feet high, and about two feet both in

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breadth and thickness. At the time Mr. Klein saw it, the stone was in a most perfect state of preservation, not one single piece being broken off; and it was only from great age, and exposure to the rain and sun, that certain parts, especially the upper and lower lines, had somewhat suffered in legibility. It was a providential arrangement that a stone so hard and durable as basalt should have been chosen for this precious inscription.

And now commences a romance in the modern history of this monument, which is only outmatched by the interest attaching to it in an antiquarian and biblical point of view.

On returning to Jerusalem, Mr. Klein showed his sketch, and the copies he had made of parts of the inscription, to his countryman, Dr. Peterman, of Berlin, who was then acting as Prussian Consul in Palestine.

Dr. Peterman immediately recognized the characters as Phoenician; and being impressed with the importance of the discovery which the good missionary had thus accidentally (shall we not rather say providentially?) made, communicated at once with his government on the subject, and begged to know whether the directors of the Royal Museum at Berlin were inclined to pay 100 napoleons (if necessary) in order to obtain the stone. He soon received a telegraphic reply, empowering him to make the purchase.

Meantime, the matter had been mentioned to Mr. Barclay, of the Jewish Missionary Society, and to Captain Warren, of the Engineers, who had the command of the Palestine Exploration expedition. But with very considerable discretion, knowing, as they did, the cupidity of
the Arabs, these gentlemen resolved to keep the matter a secret, and to allow the Prussian consul to use his best endeavours to secure the valuable relic. Indeed, a special messenger had come from Dibân to inform Captain Warren about the stone, and urge him to purchase it for the Palestine Exploration Society; but though he was urged by many to enter into competition for the prize, and to seize the opportunity of securing it for the British Museum, he very properly declined, and, like a true Englishman, replied—"Whether the stone gets to Berlin, London, or Paris, appears to me to be a small matter, compared with the rescuing of the inscription from oblivion."

A clever young Arab, named Behnam, who had been assisting Mr. Klein as a teacher in the Mission, was despatched to Dibân, with a letter to the Sheik Fendi Fiez, (whose authority is recognized by the Bedouins of that region,) requesting him to aid in obtaining the stone. The messenger carried also with him a quantity of felt for packing the stone, and thus conveying it uninjured to Jerusalem. It was some time before any answer was received, and though the sheik promised to consult with the other chiefs in whose territory the stone lay, it turned out that he soon afterwards started for Damascus without fulfilling his promise, and on his return informed the consul that he could do nothing in the matter.

A second native messenger—Saba Cawar, well known to the Bedouins, was despatched direct to Dibân, and instructed to deal directly with the Arabs for the purchase of the stone. With a view of giving him a personal interest in the matter, Dr. Peteman gave him fifty-three napoleons, three of them being for his personal expenses,
and accompanied by a promise that if he brought the stone to Jerusalem, a further fifty would be given him for his trouble, and no questions asked as to how much he had paid for it.

Unfortunately, however, he came back not only without the stone, but with the information that the Arabs had concealed it. Most probably the indiscretion of these native messengers had awakened the cupidity of the Bedouins. It is a faculty of the race which never sleeps very soundly, and the successive messengers who came to look after the monument, together with the chaffering which Saba Cawar set on foot, made a noise sufficiently loud to render and keep these greedy nomads of the desert, what in western parlance we would call "wide awake."

They had allowed Saba to see the stone, (probably to whet his appetite for purchasing it,) and then told him he could have it for 1000 napoleons, or rather, 100,000 piastres, which would be very little short of the sum of one thousand pounds of our English currency! In order to drive the better bargain, they pretended to believe that if they were deprived of this precious object, a blight would fall upon their crops, and untold calamities come upon their land.

Such a price was, of course, out of the question; so the Prussian consul wrote to Berlin to say that he saw no way left of acquiring the Moabite Stone, except through the intervention of the Turkish government.

This was in March, 1869; and in June a despatch arrived from the Grand Vizer to the Pasha of Jerusalem, directing him to assist Dr. Peterman in procuring the
stone on his own terms. It turned out, however, that the Pasha of Jerusalem had no jurisdiction beyond the Jordan, and could do nothing directly in the matter. It belonged to the Pasha of Nablous, who again (according to rules very like those which regulate the Circumlocution Office at home) could not act except on the permission of the Governor-General of Damascus.

The Pasha of Jerusalem, however, wrote to the Wali of Damascus, requesting his co-operation; and this, together with the despatch from the Grand Vizier, was forwarded to the Prussian consul in Beyrout, to be forwarded to the Governor-General of Damascus. Meantime much time was wasted, and Dr. Peterman had returned home, leaving the matter in the hands of Dr. Meyer, the treasurer.

In October, Saba Cawar made his appearance at the consulate, with the news that the sheik of the Beni Hamidi had offered to let him have the stone for 120 napoleons. Herr Von Alten, the new consul, delivered the money at once to Saba, and the latter was soon at Dibân, and executed a contract in his own name, with the sheiks, who bound themselves to deliver the concealed stone upon payment of the stipulated sum. But there were others to be satisfied; the chief of the Aduans, whose territory lay between Dibân and Jerusalem, partly influenced by jealousy of the Beni Hamidi, but still more by a cupidity similar to theirs, refused to let the stone be transported through his country.

To complete the complications, M. Ganneau, a young attaché of the French consulate, (who had heard of the stone through some of the natives,) impatient, perhaps,
at the delays which attended the Prussian efforts, and instigated by that desire, which is so peculiar to Frenchmen, for advancing, at any cost, the glory of his own nation, came upon the field, and not only endeavoured to get a squeeze of the stone, but actually entered into competition for the purchase of it, and offered a sum equal to £375 for the possession of it.

M. Ganneau had sufficient care of his own bones not to go beyond the Jordan himself, but he despatched an Arab to take the squeeze, and, if possible, to secure the stone. The description of the scene that ensued is beyond measure exciting. Whilst the Arab was engaged with his damp paper in pressing it against the Stone, the jabbering Arabs stood round, one party of them from the mountains, the other from the plains, each asserting its own peculiar interest in the monument, and anxious to turn that interest to the best possible account. The Governor of Nablous had his agents there also, to watch on his own special behalf; and the excitement and gesticulations soon became so frantic on all hands, that it was very plain that neither the stone nor the squeeze of it would easily pass into Frankish hands.

From fierce and exasperating words, the Arabs soon came to fiercer and more angry blows. The unfortunate messenger was jostled and abused; and it was only by springing on his horse that he escaped from a graver fate, carrying off his moist impression, which had been torn to shreds in the mêlée, and bearing a life-long memento of the encounter, in the shape of a severe spear-wound in his leg. It was fortunate, however, that he was able to save the seven fragments of his squeeze; for though torn and
crumpled when they reached M. Ganneau's hands, and
the traces of the inscription almost illegible, they were of
use in determining the position of several lines and words,
when portions of the monument were afterwards obtained.

About this time orders came from Damascus desiring
the Beni Hamîdi to surrender the stone, but this only
added to the exasperation. The Bedouins on the other
side of Jordan had been in conflict during the previous
summer with the Wali of Damascus, and having been
worsted by him, could not repress their hatred, or let
this favourable opportunity for expressing it, pass by un-
employed. Sooner than surrender the stone to the Turkish
Government the Arabs determined to destroy it. Accord-
ingly, they lighted a fire round it, and threw cold water
upon the heated basalt; and having broken it to pieces,
distributed the fragments amongst the different families of
the district. They placed these fractured portions in
their granaries, avowedly, as a kind of charm, in order to
secure blessings on their crops; but, in all probability,
with an underlying impression that if the Franks were so
anxious to buy the stone, it would fetch more money by
being sold in fragments, and that every family in the
tribe would thus come in for its own share of compensa-
tion. Thus did natural vanity upon the part of a French
savant on the one hand, and ignorance, superstition,
and covetousness on the part of the wild Bedouins on
the other, combine to bring about the destruction of the
most remarkable monolith that has ever been discovered.

It is a consolation, however, to know that the means
of preserving and deciphering the chief portions of the
inscription were providentially secured.
MODERN HISTORY OF THE STONE.

As Captain Warren was returning from the Lebanon in November, 1869, he was met on the road by an Adwân, who communicated to him the tidings of the melancholy fate of the stone, and gave him a fragment of it (with some letters inscribed) as a proof that the intelligence which he brought was correct. He at once despatched the Adwân to secure, if possible, impressions of as many of the fragments as could be found, and furnished him with the proper materials for taking the squeezes.

On arriving at Dibon, the Adwân was fortunate enough to ascertain that two considerable fragments of the stone (marked A and B on the sketch) were in the hands of the Bedouins, and he contrived to obtain excellent impressions of them. He was also able to purchase twelve smaller fragments of the stone itself, each having a letter or two upon them.

M. Ganneau had despatched a messenger of his own with similar instructions, and it is remarkable, that his Bedouin returned to Jerusalem on the very same day that Captain Warren’s Adwân arrived. (15th January, 1870.) M. Ganneau’s messenger had succeeded in obtaining a very excellent squeeze of the two large fragments, (A and B,) and by comparing them with those brought by Captain Warren’s messenger, it was fortunately found that the parts which were less perfectly taken in the one impression, were most satisfactory and distinct in the other.

Another very excellent squeeze of portion B was subsequently obtained by Captain Warren; so that if no more had been done, materials had now been obtained
for deciphering a considerable portion of the remarkable inscription.

But M. Ganneau now, in some measure, atoned for his past rashness and vanity, by making vigorous efforts to obtain fragments of the stone itself. He finally succeeded in securing the two large fragments (A and B,) and eighteen smaller ones. Captain Warren, on the other hand, purchased up altogether eighteen fragments; so that only about one-seventh part of the whole is now missing, and we are not without hope that the fragments making up this seventh may yet be discovered and secured. It is to be hoped that the several fragments may be all combined, and placed in some public place of safety and observation. This will probably be the Museum of the Louvre in Paris. We trust, however, that no rash act of Vandalism, such as lately fired that city, may add another to the previous melancholy mishaps which have attached to this the most ancient written record in the world.

Out of the eleven hundred letters, (of which it is calculated the inscription originally consisted,) six hundred and sixty-nine have been secured. This still leaves gaps, sometimes of words, sometimes of letters, some of which can be satisfactorily supplied from the preceding language and obvious sense, and others of which are yet open to doubt.

Twelve of the most eminent antiquarian scholars—German, French, and English—have constructed translations of the record, supplying the lacunae from conjecture; and it is worthy of note that these twelve independent translations agree in all the main points, and
differ but very inconsiderably in those which are open to dispute. We hope the day is not far distant when further discovery and study will present us with an accurate copy of the whole inscription, and a complete translation, even down to the smallest particulars. It is much to be regretted that M. Ganneau has taken no steps to give the public exact transcripts of those portions of the stone which are in his possession. Captain Warren and the Palestine Exploration Society have acted very differently, and photographs from their tracings can be procured (full size for £2 10s., and one-third size for 3s. 6d.) from their publisher, Mr. Edward Stanford, 6 Charing Cross, London.
II.

INSCRIPTION AND TRANSLATION.

I HAVE now to call your attention to the inscription itself; and before dwelling upon some features of it in the original language in which it is written, you will like to read an English translation of it, as given by Dr. Ginsburg, one of the ablest and most accomplished of those scholars who have devoted themselves to the study of it.

The first part of it, as you will perceive, records the wars of Mesha, King of Moab, with Omri, King of Israel, or rather with his successors. (Line 1-21.)

The second part celebrates the public works which this enterprising monarch undertook and accomplished after securing his independence. And as we read this part of it, we shall note many a name of town and city, with which our Bibles have made us familiar, but which have long since perished from the earth. (Line 21-31.)

The third part (line 31-34) records his successful wars against Horonaim, (occupied probably by the Edomites,) which he declares that he undertook at the command of his god, Chemosh, the same who is mentioned in the expressive language of the Old Testament, as “the
abomination of Moab,” that is, the idol deity of the Moabites which the Lord abhorred.

Translation of the Inscription.

“I, Mesha, am son of Chemosh gad, King of Moab, the Dibonite. My father reigned over Moab thirty years, and I reigned after my father. And I erected this stone to Chemosh at Korcha (a Stone of) salvation, for he saved me from all despoilers, and let me see my desire upon all my enemies. Now Omri, king of Israel, he oppressed Moab many days, for Chemosh was angry with his end. His son succeeded him, and he also said, I will oppress Moab, In my days he said, (Let us go.) and I will see my desire on him and his house; and Israel said, I shall destroy it for ever. Now Omri took the land MEDEBA, and (the enemy) occupied it (in his days and in) the days of his son, forty years. And Chemosh (had mercy) on it in my days; and I built Baal Meon, and made therein the ditch, and I (built) Kirjathaim. For the men of Gad dwelled in the land (Ataroth) from of old, and the king of Israel fortified A(atar)oth, and I assaulted the wall and captured it, and killed all the warriors of the wall, for the well-pleasing of Chemosh and Moab; and I removed from it all the spoil and (offered) it before Chemosh in Kirjath; and I placed therein the men of Siran and the men of Mochrath. And Chemosh said to me, Go, take Nebo against Israel (And I) went in the night, and I fought against it from the break of dawn till noon, and I took it, and slew in all seven thousand (men, but I did not kill) the wom-
en (and ma-)idens, for (I) devoted (them) to Ashtar-Chemosh; and I took from it vessels of Jehovah, and offered them before Chemosh. And the king of Israel fortified Jahaz, and occupied it, when he made war against me; and Chemosh drove him out before me, and I took from Moab two hundred men, and all its poor, and placed them in Jahaz, and took it, to annex it to Dibon. I built Korcha, the wall of the forest, and the wall of the city, and I built the gates thereof, and I built the towers thereof, and I built the palace, and I made the prisons for the criminals with the wall. And there was no cistern in the wall in Korcha, and I said to all the people, Make for yourselves every man a cistern in his house. And I dug the ditch for Korcha with the men of Israel. I built Aroer, and I made the road across the Arnon; I built Beth-Bamoth, for it was destroyed; I built Bezer for it was cut down by the armed men of Dibon, for all Dibon was now loyal; and I reigned from Bikran, which I added to my land, and I built Beth-Gamul, and Beth-Diblathaim, and Beth-Baal Meon, and I placed there the poor people of the land. And as to Horonaim, the men of Edom dwelt therein. And Chemosh said to me, Go down, make war against Horonaim, and take it. And I assaulted it, and I took it, for Chemosh restored it in my days. Wherefore I made...year...and I..."
been broken, and parts of it lost. Some of these are easily restored from the nature of the case, but others are only conjectural, and have a greater or smaller amount of probability according to circumstances. It must be remembered that in all cases of lacunae in the inscription, the translation is provisional, and that any arguments built upon such passages must be provisional also.

There is scarcely a line of this interesting record which has not its links either with the geography, the history, or the language of the Bible; and that not only in the way of corroborating the information which we already obtain from that source, but in the way of adding to that knowledge, and by so doing explaining and illustrating many points which hitherto have been perplexing and obscure. Indeed, in this respect the Moabite Stone stands pre-eminent amongst those old monuments, which have risen, as it were, from the grave of ages to bear witness to the truth of the Sacred Record. It is at once a confirmation and a supplement; a witness to attest the truth of what we already know from the Book of Inspiration, and an Interpreter to clear up by its silent, but eloquent testimony, many points which the brevity of the Scriptural Records has left unexplained, but which shed new light and interest upon those Records when once they are perceived.

Before entering on this portion of the subject, it will be necessary to dwell on some preliminary topics connected with the Moabite Stone, which are not only rendered important by distinct considerations, but which require to be treated of, in the first place, in order to the better understanding of its bearings upon, and its testimonies in relation to the Oracles of God.
The first point to be here determined is the date of this interesting relic; and here the opening lines come to our help, and leave no room for reasonable doubt. They record the wars of Mesha, King of Moab, with Omri, King of Israel, and his successors. That this is the same Mesha, whose revolt from the power of Israel, and whose desperate resistance to the united forces of Jehoram, Jehoshaphat, and the King of Edom, are recorded in the 3rd chapter of 2 Kings, is plain, not only from the identity of the name, and from the fact that the Mesha of the stone, like the Mesha of Scripture, was engaged in a life-and-death struggle with Israel; but from the decisive circumstance that the dynasty against which both kings fought was the same, namely, that of Omri. And it is worth noting, as we pass, that this dynasty, which endured during the successive reigns of Omri, Ahab, Ahaziah, and Joram or Jehoram, just lasted altogether about forty-eight years. After Zimri's death there was civil war for four years before Omri was secured in the government. If we add to this the twelve years of Omri's reign, the twenty-two of Ahab's, and the two of Ahaziah's, we have exactly the forty
years, as stated upon the stone:—"Omri took the land, Medeba, and the (enemy) occupied it in his days, and in the days of his son, (or sons,) forty years."*

According to M. Ganneau's rendering, (amended by M. de Vogüe, one of the first Semitic Scholars,) the inscription runs thus:—"Omri was King in Israel, and he oppressed many days. . . . And his son succeeded him, and he, too, said, I will oppress Moab." And then it continues—"In my days, &c.;" from which it would appear that the Mesha of the Scripture was not a contemporary of Omri, but a younger contemporary of Ahab, the son of Omri, and that he was, therefore, identical with that Mesha who, on Ahab's death, raised the standard of revolt and independence in the land of Moab, as is recorded in the 4th and 5th verses of the chapter quoted above; viz., "And Mesha, King of Moab, was a sheep-master, and rendered unto the King of Israel an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams with the wool; and it came to pass when Ahab was dead, that the King of Moab rebelled against the King of Israel."

As Omri was raised to the throne about 929 years before Christ, and this stone was erected by Mesha himself to commemorate his successes against Omri's immediate descendants, we shall not materially err in

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* The following Table gives the length of each reign during the Omri Dynasty:—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>King</th>
<th>Reign Length</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Omri</td>
<td>12 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahab</td>
<td>22 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahaziah</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joram</td>
<td>12 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
adopting, with Dr. Ginsburg, the year 890 before Christ as the approximate date of this Moabitic inscription.

This carries us back at once through nearly 3,000 years, and places us face to face with those ancient times, in which Ahab and Jezebel, Jehosaphat and Jehu, Elijah and Elisha, Naaman the leper, and the Shunamitish widow, form such prominent and memorable characters.

The record, therefore, before us, though brief and meagre, has this vast advantage over historic records contained in ancient uninspired books, that its evidence comes to us directly and at once, and not by a succession of transcriptions, from the very period, the memory of which it perpetuates. We have the identical slab on which the workmen of the old world carved the history of their own times, and from which the eyes of their contemporaries read, thousands of years ago, the record of events of which they themselves had been the witnesses.

Nor is the evidence of this ancient record less valuable, (on the contrary, it is far more so,) because it comes to us not from a Jewish or Israelitish source, but from a Moabitish king, who neither by his religion nor his politics, can be suspected of partiality in the unexpected and unintentional light which he throws upon their ancient records.
AND this notice of its antiquity leads me by an easy step to speak of the language in which it is written, and of the characters in which it is inscribed.

The oldest alphabetic document of any length with which we were acquainted before the discovery of the Moabite Stone, was the inscription on the Sarcophagus of Eshmunazar, (now in Paris,) and which dates 600 years before Christ. But this stone carries us back three centuries before that inscription, and brings us nearer to the fount and origin of our written characters than any other document or monument that has as yet been found. In this respect the Triumphal Stone of the Moabites is peerless, for it presents an alphabet which is at least a century and a-half older than any other epigraphic document containing the same species of writing. We have here, if not the original characters themselves used in writing, the earliest known representations of them, and are thus presented with a subject of most interesting palæographic study.

The characters are what we commonly call Phœnician: the language is almost identical with the ancient Hebrew. Indeed, it is just such a form of it as we might expect
amongst a people living amongst, and influenced by, a nomad race, but who had a common origin and close affinity, as we know that the Jews and Moabites really had—the former being descended from Abraham, and the latter from his nephew, Lot.

It is not a little remarkable, that whilst in the accounts given us in the Bible of the intercourse of the Israelites with other nations, we read of their having to employ interpreters; we never read that in their intercourse with the Moabites (which was very frequent, and often very close) they ever required them. Thus, Joseph in Egypt spake to his brethren by an interpreter; (Gen. xlii. 43;) thus, Eliakim entreats Rabshakeh to speak not in the Jews' language, but in Syriac, because he did not wish the people to understand what was said. (2 Kings, xviii. 26.) Thus, Hezekiah (if we may judge from the marginal rendering, 2 Chron. xxxii. 31) communicated with the Babylonians by interpreters, who understood the languages both of Jerusalem and of Chaldea.

But we have no mention of interpreters on any occasion between the Moabites and the Israelites; and this stone of Dibon now reveals the reason, and testifies that what the Scriptures all through imply was really the case—namely, that both nations spoke the Hebrew tongue, and were perfectly intelligible to each other. This is one of the many collateral proofs which this monument supplies of the truthfulness of the Sacred Volume, and disposes at once of the sceptical objection made to the story of Balaam and Balak, viz., that the difference of their languages precluded the intercourse described.

To the student of the Hebrew Bible this inscription is
THE LANGUAGE.

invaluable, written as it is in a style that is older than two-thirds of the Old Testament, and purer, in the opinion of many, than that of the remaining third, which has been evidently retouched by later redactors.

I cannot here enter into the peculiarities of this Moabitic form of Hebrew, nor would a discussion of the subject be intelligible to the great body of my readers; but as there may be many who probably would like to have some idea of the points upon which it throws light, and to pursue the path of observation thus indicated, perhaps I may devote a few pages to this topic, before pursuing the more popular part of my subject.

1. The question of the division of words, which has hitherto exercised much ingenious criticism, will henceforth receive a different treatment. In the Phœnician language, which, up to the discovery of the Moabite Stone, was considered as the most nearly allied to the Hebrew, few traces of such division were found, and by far the greater number of the ancient inscriptions were without them. Hence it was maintained that the Sacred Books of the Hebrews could have had no regular division of words; and this seemed to be corroborated by the fact, that all the ancient versions exhibit innumerable instances of a different division of words.

But the Moabite Stone sets aside all these objections; for we find on it not only a division of the words from each other by means of points, but a separation of the lines or verses from each other by vertical strokes. (See the Plate at the beginning of the Book.)

Dr. Ginsburg concludes that the Hebrews, who in race and language were almost identical with the Moabites,
would present no exception to their mode of writing; and considers that the Massoretic division of words, which excludes the vowel points because of their modern origin, but includes the verbal division because of its antiquity, is most in accordance with the ancient system exhibited in the Synagogue Scrolls.

2. The next point of interest is the light thrown upon the "scriptio plena," and "defectiva" in the Massoretic text. Before the present vowel points were invented, certain feeble consonants $\aleph$ (Aleph) $\mem$ (He) $\qoph$ (Vau) and $\resh$ (Yod,) technically called "Ehevi," were employed to supply the place of vowels. These "matres lectionis" are more rare in the earlier, and more frequent in the later Books of the Old Testament; and hence it was commonly argued, that whenever they were used to denote a vowel, they were modern introductions of the Scribes and Massorites.

Now the Moabite Stone settles this controversy; for there we find these "matres lectionis" freely used. The $\aleph$ (Aleph) and $\mem$ (He) are used to express the A sound at the end of a word; the $\mem$ (He) is used to express the final O, as is sometimes the case in the Hebrew Bible; $\qoph$ (Vau) is used, just as in the Old Text, to express O and U; and $\resh$ (Yod) is used to express E and I.

"The light, therefore," says Dr. Ginsburg, who enters very fully into the examination of this point, "which the orthography of the Moabite Stone throws upon the orthography of the Massoretic text, is that the vowels were from the remotest antiquity represented in Hebrew by these four consonants which are now used in the
Massoretic text; . . . and, that in this respect the Moabitic dialect fully harmonizes with the Massoretic system, and entirely differs from the Phœnican."

3. Besides, many words which are common to all or most of the Semitic languages, (e.g., the words for father, son, house, land, king, people, day, night, &c.,) we meet upon this stone, with several words and grammatical forms and combinations which are quite peculiar to the Hebrew, and which distinguish it even from those Semitic languages to which it is most closely allied.

Thus, in the use of the Hebrew article—the Hebrew numerals—the epicene pronouns—the forms which mark the gender of nouns—the peculiar use of particles—all these form striking and distinctive parallelisms. Above all, the presence of the verbal prefix, called the "vau conversive," (with the future or imperfect to express the preterite in a continued narration, e.g. "and I built, and I slew, and I made," this, which is found upon every page of the Hebrew Bible, is found in this inscription, and nowhere else.

When we add that the whole vocabulary* of this stone is to be found in the Hebrew Bible, and that certain shades of meaning attaching to different words in this inscription, are real additions to our Hebrew lexicography, the importance of it to the Hebrew grammarian cannot be over-rated. Henceforth the appeal will lie to the Moabite Stone for the elucidation of several forms

* There is only one word in the whole inscription of which the root cannot be found in the Bible, viz., יש鞣, (daybreak.) But Professor Davidson thinks we have something like it in Joel, ii. 2, —“like morning spread upon the mountains.”
and phrases, the exact date of which has been hitherto unknown. Those who would pursue this branch of the subject would do well to read Dr. Ginsburg's admirable monograph, as well as two able articles—one in the *Studien und Kritiken*, (fourth part,) 1871, and another in the *North British Review* for October, 1870. There is also an able article by Professor Davidson on the subject in the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* for February, 1871.
Alphabetic Characters.

1. Hebrew
2. Moabite
3. Phœnician
4. Archaic Greek
5. Later Greek
6. Roman
THE MOABITIC ALPHABET.

THE characters are Phoenician, and the Phoenicians have been esteemed as the inventors of letters. The Greeks say that Cadmus brought them the first alphabet from Phœnicia, and that it consisted of sixteen letters, to which eight more were afterwards added, \(\Theta, \Xi, \Phi, \chi\), by Palamedes, \(\zeta, \eta, \psi, \omicron\), by Simonides. Be that as it may—and we shall have something to say about it presently—it was from this alphabet the Greek, Roman, and almost all our European alphabets are derived; and thus this Moabite Stone puts us in possession of the very forms from which our own letters are derived; and which, twenty-five centuries ago, were common to all the races of Western Asia, from Egypt to the Taurus, from Persia to the Mediterranean, and were used alike in Nineveh and Jerusalem, in Moab and in Cyprus.

First of all, the inscription throws light upon the number of letters contained in the ancient alphabet. If you open your Bible at the 119th Psalm you will find it divided into twenty-two portions, each headed by a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet; and it is interesting
to note that this Psalm, as well as the 31st of Proverbs, which describes "the excellent woman," and a few other passages of Scripture, are written, in the acrostic form, the verses or portions beginning successively with the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

Previous to the discovery of the Moabite Stone this was the only evidence that we possessed as to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet; but this evidence was disputed. Palæographists contended that these passages in the Bible could not have been written at the early date that was assigned to them, and they maintained this position on the ground that several of the letters used in them had not even been invented at the time.

Now, what says our Moabitish witness? It gives us an alphabet which dates back some one thousand years before Christ, and it presents us with the twenty-two letters which we had always claimed on the authority of the old Hebrew Bible. I say the twenty-two, for though in consequence of ד (Teth) not being discovered on it, there are only twenty-one, yet ד (Teth) is not one of those letters about which there was any dispute, and it is quite possible that if the remaining fragments of the stone are discovered, this missing letter will be found. It is evidently wanting in "A(t)aroth" line 11, and it is remarkable that this same letter is accidentally missing in the great Phœnician inscription of Eshmunazar, King of Sidon.

I have sketched (see Plate, p. 33, line 2) the whole of this ancient alphabet from the Moabite stone, placing each letter under its corresponding Hebrew one, and then beneath that I have placed the ordinary Phœnician alpha-
THE MOABITIC ALPHABET.

bet, which is almost identical with the Moabitic one, so that a glance at it will enable even those unacquainted with Hebrew or Phœnician to see how these silent witnesses testify to the antiquity and the claims of the grand old Book, which sciolists and would-be philosophers have ventured to impugn.

It must be borne in mind that the present square Hebrew characters (Plate, p. 33, line 1) are comparatively modern. It is generally held by the best scholars that the older forms were lost during the captivity, and were replaced by the present ones, which bear a strong resemblance to those found in the inscriptions at Palmyra, and which were probably Chaldean in their origin. Some of the Asmonean coins have letters of an older character, and approximating very closely in form to those on the Moabite stone.

But we take another step: not only is the whole Hebrew alphabet represented here by its Moabitic and Phœnician correlatives, but we have nearly the whole Greek alphabet, not merely similar to the Phœnician in shape, but as nearly identical with it as it well can be.

And first let us look at the archaic forms of the Greek alphabet, (as we find them on coins and monuments,) and we shall find these forms repeated with such close resemblance to the Phœnician as to be scarcely distinguishable from them. (See Plate, page 33, line 4.)

I have placed under the old forms of the Greek alphabet the modern ones, only reversing the letters to agree with the Phœnician and Hebrew form of writing, which ran from right to left. (See Plate, page 33, line 5.)

Here, then, we have the Greek alphabet anticipated,
including even the letters Z, H, Θ, Σ, Ζ, and Φ, upon which so much learning and ingenuity (with no small bad feeling to boot) have been expended for generations. Henceforth the claim of the Greeks to the authorship of them is satisfactorily disproved. It is evident that the ancient Semitic alphabet contained twenty-two letters, and that they were taken over bodily by the Greeks, who certainly did not obtain their alphabet prior to the year 1000 B.C.

But to come nearer home, I must give you a table of comparison between some of those ancient forms of letters and our own, which are derived from them. Premising that the latter are reversed to make them correspond with the Phœnician writing, which ran, like the Hebrew, from right to left, you observe how the family likeness of the alphabet has been preserved for well nigh 3000 years, and how the old stone of Dibon, with all the rust of ages on its front, has yet a somewhat familiar appearance to us upon whom the ends of the world are come. It is like an old patriarch of the tribe, who under his shaggy brow and copious beard bears strong lineaments of resemblance to the smooth-faced, smiling infant that lies unconscious in his arms. (See next page.)

The student will also perceive when he comes to compare the F and V of our own alphabet, with their ancient correlative on the accompanying table, that "the digamma question," as Mr. Deutsch has well remarked, "receives a new contribution by the shape of Vau in this Moabitic monument, which is distinctly the Greek Υ —another letter of supposed recent origin."
We are all aware that the earliest efforts at writing in our schools take the form of what are commonly called "pot-hooks and hangers." Now there can be little doubt that if the earliest alphabets did not present pictures
of pot-hooks and hangers, they presented rude pictures of equally common and useful objects connected with domestic and patriarchal life.

To be plain: writing was originally pictorial, and so were the alphabetic letters, and although the modern forms, by change of shape, have lost somewhat of their original characteristics, yet when we go back to the more ancient shapes, we are struck with the resemblances; and we are moreover to bear in mind, that the original names of the letters in Hebrew, and Arabic, are the names of animals, or implements of husbandry, or such like common objects of rural and patriarchal life.

It is worthy of note that the names of the letters in the Irish alphabet are all names of trees—e.g., Ailim, the palm; Beit, the birch, &c.*

In these instances, however, there is no pictorial connection between the trees and the letters for which they stand; and it is evident that the Irish characters are derived from the Roman alphabet. But when you mix with the peasantry in some remote districts, you will find

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* IRISH ALPHABET.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capitals</th>
<th>Irish Names</th>
<th>Derivations</th>
<th>Capitals</th>
<th>Irish Names</th>
<th>Derivations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Ailim</td>
<td>Palm</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Muin</td>
<td>Vine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Beit</td>
<td>Birch</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Nuin</td>
<td>Ash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Coll</td>
<td>Hazel</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>Omh</td>
<td>Broom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Duin</td>
<td>Oak</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Peit</td>
<td>Dwarf-elder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Eada</td>
<td>Aspen</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Ruir</td>
<td>Elder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Feanan</td>
<td>Alder</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Suil</td>
<td>Willow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Font</td>
<td>Ivy</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Teme</td>
<td>Furze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Joda</td>
<td>Yew</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Un</td>
<td>Heath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Ujir</td>
<td>Quicken</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Uat</td>
<td>Whitethorn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
attached to each letter a name denoting some common object resembling it in shape—thus, for example:

A  Cupladh tighe.  Couple of a house.
B  Bogha agus saighead.  Bow and arrow.
C  Crub capail.  Horse’s shoe.
E  Eisdéachd.  Hearing. (Ear.)
G  Gealach.  The moon.
H  Geata.  A gate.
I  Bata.  A stick.
J  Cammaun.  A hurl.
K  Eochair.  A key.
M  Senteach.  An old house.
O  Ugh.  An egg.
Q  Earball Madaidh.  A dog’s tail.
S  Eascu.  An eel.
T  Croiseán.  A crutch.
U  Crub Asail.  Ass’s shoe.

These names, however, are plainly after-thoughts; but when we come to the original alphabets, we shall find that it was otherwise, and that, not only did each letter originally represent some familiar object, but took its shape from it:

(Aleph) means an Ox, and was at first a rude representation of an ox’s head.

(Beth) a House, represented a tent—the primitive house of the patriarchal tribes.

(Gimel) a Camel; bears a close resemblance to the head and neck of that animal.

(Daleth) a Door, was the entrance to the tent: probably the side stroke of Beth was to distinguish it from this.
(He) a Lattice or Window; compare the German Ḫaḫa, a garden window opening on a prospect.

(Vau) a Nail or Peg; probably a representation of one of the pins which fastened the tent.

(Heth) a Field, or enclosed space, to which the letter accurately corresponds.

(Koph) either a Wing, or Hollow of the hand, (Gesenius); the vola of the Romans.

(Lamed) an Ox-goad, pointed at one end, and curved into a handle at the other.

(Mem) Water, a wavy line to indicate the surface of the water when disturbed.

(Samech) a Prop, was probably the picture of the ancient trellis on which they trained their vines.

(Ayin) an Eye, retains its likeness to that organ in most of these early alphabets.

(Tsadde) probably means a Fish-spear, and bore some likeness to that instrument as used in early times.

(Koph) the Hole of an Axe (Gesenius); according to others, the Back of the Head, or the Eye of a Needle (Rawlinson.)

(Shin) means a Tooth, and probably represented a molar with its fangs.

(Tau) a Mark or Brand, would fairly represent the marks by which they distinguished their respective flocks.

It will be observed that these pictorial letters were evidently the invention of a pastoral people, and not of a sea-faring and commercial race, like the Phoenicians;
THE MOABITIC ALPHABET.

all the characters have reference to the rural objects by which the people were surrounded. Had the Phœnicians been the inventors of the alphabet, it would be sure to bear on it evident traces of their mercantile and marine pursuits.

It appears, therefore, that the forms in this Moabite inscription strongly favour the view maintained by Gese- nius, Bunsen, Rawlinson, and others, that the original Phœnician writing was pictorial, resembling in this respect that of the Egyptians and most probably of the Babylonians. By degrees these pictorial letters were simplified by reducing them to forms which could easily be traced without moving the hand from the paper, but in the effort after simplicity much of the original meaning was sacrificed.

It is a curious thing that some of the beautiful little pictorial books which this nineteenth century has invented, in order to wile our children into the art of reading, have returned to this primitive idea, and give pictures of common objects to illustrate or impress the letters of the alphabet. Thus, in "Reading without Tears," we have Mary rolling her hoop to familiarise the eye with O, and Johnny with his hurl to convey the form of J, and a serpent twisting into an unmistakeable S, and a windmill revolving into an unmitigated X, and a pillar-post erecting itself into an undeniable I, and so on. But how little did the compilers imagine that they were bringing us back if not to the world's primitive childhood, at least to a good imitation of its early youth, and adding another illustration to the axiom of Ecclesiastes, "that there is nothing new under the sun."
Have you ever observed the resemblance between the occult characters on our ancient Ogham stones, and the signs used in our telegraph offices? Here, again, in the culminating point of human science, we go back to the cradle of learning:—

*Specimen of Ogham Letters.*

![Specimen of Ogham Letters](image)

NG G M T D H F L B

But to return: it is interesting to look upon these old Moabitic forms, and to reflect that it was in characters such as these, men wrote their thoughts in the days of Ahab and Elijah; that, in looking upon the Moabite stone, we are looking at the very words which their contemporaries saw with their own eyes, and read for their companions!

Nay more, that inasmuch as the evidence goes to prove that the same system of writing prevailed all over Western Asia, we are actually gazing at the characters in which David wrote his Psalms, Solomon his Proverbs, and Samuel his histories; that we have before us the very forms and letters and language in which the grandest parts of the Old Testament were originally penned.

"Further, perhaps," writes an accomplished scholar, "it may be over-bold to go; but a suspicion forces itself upon us that in the characters of which the photographic traces are before us to-day, we see the forms
of the letters in which, 500 years before, the Pentateuch itself was penned."

And if this be so, there is but one step more, and we are left at the very threshold of Heaven; we may be gazing on the very characters and letters which were inscribed upon the tables of stone amidst the thunders of Mount Sinai, by the very finger of God Himself!

With such a thought (so solemn and so overpowering) passing up from possibility to probability in our minds, we gaze in wonder at the ancient Stone of Moab.

* Professor Rawlinson, Contemp. Review., 20th August, 1870.
VI.

HISTORY OF THE MOABITES.

It has been already stated that the land of Moab has been hitherto a "terra incognita." Few Europeans have ever visited, and fewer still can be said to have explored it. A Swiss traveller, named Seetzen, visited it in 1806; a German, named Burchardt, in 1812; and two Englishmen—Captains Irby and Mangles—in 1818. Their accounts, together with a sketch by M. de Sauley, a Frenchman, who was there in 1851, are the only accounts which we possess of a region which, though now barren and deserted, bears evident traces of having once been populous and fertile. The fitful glimpses, however, which these travellers obtained, as they hurried through it under the guidance of suspicious and timorous Arab guides, are enough to prove the wonderful truthfulness of those sublime prophecies, in which Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, and Zephaniah predicted its overthrow and desolation.

The country abounds with vestiges of antiquity. The plains are covered with the ruined sites of towns and temples, palaces and sepulchres. "The ruins of Elealeh, Heshbon, Meon, Medeba, Dibon, Aroer, still subsist," says Buckhardt, "to illustrate the history of the Beni
HISTORY OF THE MOABITES.

Israel." Pillars and monuments exist which prove that successive races overran and conquered the country; that Persians, Greeks, Romans, each in turn, held sway over the regions where the wild Arab now pitches his lonely tent. You may still trace the track of the great Roman roads, and read upon the milestones the numbers inscribed upon them in the days of Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, and Severus.

But, strange to say, until the discovery of the stone which forms the subject of my lecture, no trace had been found of any monument that would connect the land of Moab with the history of Israel, or throw the smallest light upon those glimpses of its history which are presented to us in Old Testament History.

It is to be hoped that the present discovery will lead to others; and I have been informed that an expedition is being organized to visit this remarkable territory, and enter into a thorough investigation of its antiquities and ruins. Meantime, we thankfully accept this first-fruits of discovery, and proceed to compare its testimony with the scattered notices and incidental allusions contained in the Holy Scripture.

This will make it necessary to take a brief review of the position occupied by the Moabites in relation to the children of Israel, from the earliest period of their history. They were sprung, as you will remember, like their neighbours the Ammonites, from the wretched daughters of Lot, the nephew of Abraham, who was the father and founder of the Jewish race. Unhappily, the strife between the herdsmen of these Patriarchs seems to have been perpetuated between their descendants, and the record of their intercourse through many generations
(with a few singular exceptions) seems to have been marked by hostility and conflicts. It would appear that previous to the exodus from Egypt, the Moabites had expelled the Emim, a race of giants, from the country bordering on the east of the Dead Sea, and had possessed themselves of that region as far northwards as the Jabbok. "And the Lord said unto me, Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle: for I will not give thee of their land for a possession; because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot for a possession. The Emims dwelt therein in times past, a people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakims; which also were accounted giants, as the Anakims; but the Moabites call them Emims." (Deut. ii. 9-11.)

At the time of the Exodüs, however, the Amorites had dispossessed the Moabites of a considerable portion of this acquired territory; (Numbers xxi. 23-26;) and hence it was that the Israelites, who were not permitted to invade the territory of their kinsmen, (the Moabites and Ammonites,) smote Sihon, the King of the Amorites, when he refused to let them pass through his border. In this way Israel recovered the land which the Amorites had wrested from the Moabites, "from Arnon even unto Jabbok." (Judges xi. 22.)

Jephtha, (300 years afterwards) in his embassy to the King of Ammon, refers to these victories—victories which he shows were forced on them by the assaults of the Amorites themselves—and he grounds the claims of Israel to their possessions in these regions upon the well-known fact that they had won them by the sword "from Arnon even to Jabbok, and from the wilderness even unto Jordan." The language of the valiant Gileadite
deserves to be remembered, as well for its piety as for its courage:—

"So now the Lord God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites from before His people Israel, and shouldest thou possess it? Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever the Lord our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess; wherefore I have not sinned against thee, but thou doest me wrong to war against me: the Lord, the Judge, be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon." (Judges xi. 22, 23, 27.)

In connexion with the events thus referred to by Moses and Jephtha, there is preserved to us in Numbers xxii. 27-29, the oldest ballad of a national character in the history of the world. In the original it takes a true poetic shape, which is very fairly preserved in our authorized translation:—

"Come into Heshbon,
Let the city of Sihon be built and prepared.
For there is a fire gone out of Heshbon,
A flame from the city of Sihon;
It hath consumed Ar of Moab,
And the lords of the high places of Arnon.
Woe unto thee, Moab!
Thou art undone, O people of Chemosh!
He hath given his sons that escaped,
And his daughters into captivity
Unto Sihon, King of the Amorites.
We have shot at them;
Heshbon is perished, even unto Dibon,
And we have laid them waste even unto Nopha,
Which reacheth unto Medeba."
Hereafter I shall call your attention to the illustrations which this and other passages of Scripture receive, as regards the religion of Moab, from the inscription before us; but at present I would notice two remarkable coincidences, one between the different parts of the Bible narrative, and the other between that narrative and this ancient stone.

1. In the account of Balaam's meeting with Balak, the king of Moab, which took place shortly after the northern part of the Moabitishterritory was conquered, we read that Balak went out to meet Baalam "unto a city," or rather "the city of Moab, which is in the border of Arnon, which is in the utmost coast." (Num. xxii. 36.) This city of Moab, that is, as we take it, the capital of Moab, had been at an earlier period situated in the very heart of the country; but now, in consequence of Arnon having become the northern boundary of Moab by recent conquests, the city which had been in the midst of the country was now standing on "the utmost coast" or boundary of the land. Had the account been written some time previously, this description would not have been correct; but as it stands, it exactly accords with the circumstances of the time to which the record refers.

So far as to the agreement of the Bible with itself; now for its agreement with this Moabitic record:—

2. In the tenth line of the inscription, King Mesha mentions not only that a part of the land which he governed had been for many ages in the possession of the Israelites, but he mentions "the men of Gad," particularly as holding a part of it, and even designates one of the cities, called Ataroth, as having been in their possession from of
old. Now what does the Old Testament Record say upon this point? We turn to the Book of Numbers, and we have an exact account of how the Gadites came to obtain cities in this region, and we find the name of Ataroth standing the very first upon the list:—"The children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spake unto Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation, saying, Ataroth and Dibon, and Jazer and Nimrah, and Heshbon and Elealeh and Shebam, and Nebo and Beon, even the country which the Lord smote before the congregation of Israel, is a land for cattle, and thy servants have cattle, therefore, said they, If we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given to thy servants for a possession, and bring us not over Jordan." (Numbers xxxii. 2-5.) And then the narrative goes on to tell the conditions on which the request was granted, and winds up with these words:—"And the children of Gad built Dibon, (the very place where this stone was found,) and Ataroth, (the very place which this stone declares to have been inhabited of old by the men of Gad,) and Aroer and Atroth, Shophan and Jaazer, and Jogbehah, and Beth-nimrah, and Beth-haran, fenced cities and folds for sheep; and the children of Reuben built Heshbon and Elealeh, and Kirjathaim, and Nebo, and Baalmeon, (their names being changed,) and Shibmah, and gave other names unto the cities which they builded." (ver. 34-38.* See Map of Moab.)

How remarkable that not only the name of Ataroth, but of six or seven other places mentioned in these verses

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* The names printed in italics occur on the Moabite Stone.
should have sprung to light 3000 years after they were carved upon the stone, and that the historic statement from the pen of Moses should be verified to the very letter by the chisel of Mesha's workmen. And all this is rendered more remarkable by the fact, that in the prophecies which Isaiah and Jeremiah uttered in after years concerning the land of Moab, we not only find the names of these cities repeated, but we find the names of six or seven more, which are every one of them especially mentioned upon this lapidary manuscript.

But not only are the names of these cities recorded, but their character is marked: thus Dibon appears as well from the stone as from the Scripture to have ranked high politically, and was, moreover, a chief sanctuary of Chemosh. In Isa. xv. 2, Dibon is described as a "high place;" in Jer. xlviii. 18, she is described as the "daughter that inhabits glory." On the monument it is famed as the birth-place of Mesha, and it was the site chosen by him to erect this triumphal monument.

In Amos. ii. 2, Kiriath and her palaces are mentioned with distinction. On the stone it is mentioned as the shrine to which Mesha carried the trophies of his victory, to present them there before his god.

From Numbers, (xxi. 23,) and from Isaiah, (xv. 4,) we learn that Jahaz was a border city, and in accordance with this fact, we learn from the stone that it was rebuilt and garrisoned by the King of Israel, (lines 18, 19,) doubtless for the protection of his frontier, and its capture by Mesha is recorded as one of his principal exploits.

"How obviously" (remarks Professor Moses Stuart)
"every thing of this kind serves to give confirmation to the authority and credibility of the Sacred Record. Do sceptics undertake to scoff at the Bible, and aver that it is the work of impostors who lived in later ages? Besides asking them what object impostors could have in forging a Book of such high and lofty principles, we may ask, and ask with an assurance that need not fear the danger of being put to the blush, whether impostors of later years could possibly have so managed as to preserve all the localities in the complete order which the Scriptures present? Rare impostors they must indeed have been—men possessed of more knowledge of antiquity than we can well imagine could ever be possessed by such as would condescend to an imposition of such a character. In fact, the thing appears to be morally impossible, if one considers it in the light of antiquity, when so little knowledge of a geographical kind was in existence, and when mistakes respecting countries and places, with which one was not personally familiar, were almost, if not altogether, unavoidable."

"It is not so long ago since one of the first scientific writers on geology published to the world the astounding news, that the Mississippi and Missouri belong to the tropics! Respectable writers in Germany have sometimes placed Cælo-Syria, on the east of the Antilibanus range; or even seemed to transfer the city of Damascus over the mountains, and place it between the two Lebanon ridges in the valley!" (Kitto's Pictorial Bible; Jer. xlviii. 21, &c.)

How is it that the sacred writers make no such mistakes? How is it that they mention places with the
utmost familiarity? How is it that after the lapse of thirty centuries, travellers, ruins, monuments, inscriptions proclaim to the world that those cities were where and what these writers said they were, and thus bear witness to their credibility and truth?

But to return to the history. During the time of the Judges, the Moabites, placing themselves at the head of the Ammonites and Amalekites, crossed the Jordan into the land of Benjamin, and established themselves at Jericho, the city of palm-trees. "And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord: and the Lord strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord. And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek, and went and smote Israel, and possessed the city of palm-trees." (Judges iii. 12, 13.) For eighteen years the Israelites bowed beneath the yoke of Eglon, King of Moab, but were delivered from it by the valour of Ehud, a man of Benjamin, who with his strong left hand slew the Moabish despot, and delivered his country from bondage.

We can scarcely wonder that hostilities of this kind should aggravate the old bitterness between the descendants of Abraham and those of Lot. The foundations of that feud were laid in the unbrotherly treatment which the Israelites received at the hand of the Moabites, when they were escaping from the house of bondage, and in the worse than unbrotherly conduct of Balak, the King of Moab, in hiring Balaam to curse them. It was in consequence of these acts, that by a solemn law of Moses, no Moabite, even to the tenth generation, was to
be allowed admission into the congregations of Israel. "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord for ever; because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor, of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee." (Deut. xxiii. 3, 4.)

It is an interesting thing, however, amidst these records of war and animosity, to come across the touching episode of Ruth. The story of this young Moabitish widow, who renounced her country and her idols to cast in her lot with the people of the Lord, is a bright passage in the dark chapter of national hostilities. Never have the piety and pathos of her language to her mother-in-law been surpassed in any country, or by any age:—

"Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me." (Ruth i. 16, 17.) Her history proves how a loving heart and gentle tongue are stronger than the antipathies of race; and it sheds a surpassing interest around the land of Moab, when we see this Gentile stranger taken from amongst its idolatrous inhabitants, to occupy a distinguished niche in the genealogy of the Redeemer of the world. (S. Matt. i. 5.)

It is worthy of note, that as Naomi found an asylum
in Moab during the famine in Judæa, so in after days, David, during his persecutions, found a home for his father and mother in the same land. (1 Sam. xxii. 3-6.) But these exercises of friendship were exceptional. In the days of Saul hostilities were renewed, (1 Sam. xiv. 47,) and David himself reduced the Moabites to subjection, with accompaniments of severity, which are difficult to explain, except on the conjecture hazarded by some that the King of Moab betrayed the trust reposed in him, and either killed Jesse and his wife, or surrendered them into the hands of Saul. We read that David “smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive; and so the Moabites became David’s servants, and brought gifts.” (2 Sam. viii. 2.)* And these gifts, as we learn from the same chapter, (ver. 11, 12,) went to swell the treasures which he was amassing for the future temple of Jerusalem.

It was, doubtless, during this war, which was one almost of extirpation, that Benaiah, one of David’s three mighty men, performed the prodigies of valour recorded in 2 Sam. xxiii. 20, when “he slew two lion-like men of Moab,” and went “down also and slew a lion in the midst

* Some have thought that this account of David’s treatment of the Moabites is intended not to describe his severity, but his clemency. It is argued that in an age when war was generally carried on to the point of extermination, (as was the case not merely in such wars as Mesha’s, described on the Stone, but even in the wars of Israel, as described by the Book of Judges,) it was an unusual act of clemency to spare a third part of a defeated enemy. (See note in Kitto’s Pictorial Bible, 2 Sam. viii. 2.)
of a pit on a snowy day." (See also 1 Chron. xi. 22.) Probably it was after these victories, and with reference to them, that the 60th Psalm was composed, in which the conqueror is described as using the haughty and contemptuous expression—"Moab is my wash-pot;" implying thereby that the Moabites should be reduced to the most complete vassalage, and obliged to discharge the most menial offices.
VII.

MESHA'S REVOLT.

AFTER the division of the Jewish Empire in the days of Rehoboam, the right of receiving the Moabitish tribute seems to have fallen to the northern kingdom of Israel; and at the accession of Jehoram, the son of Ahab, to the throne, the annual tribute amounted to the enormous impost of 100,000 lambs, and 100,000 rams, with the wool.

It is, doubtless, to this special tribute allusion is made in the opening of the 16th chapter of Isaiah, where the Prophet, when predicting judgments upon Moab, exhorts them saying—“Send ye the lamb to the ruler of the land from Sela to the wilderness;” that is, let the tribute be paid to the king, which formerly you covenanted to pay, and let it be paid from one end of the land to the other. And perhaps there may lie concealed beneath this meaning another and a deeper one, namely, that it was only by acknowledging the Lord Jehovah, the true Ruler of all, and paying their tribute unto Him, they could hope to escape from impending judgments.

In the 3rd chapter of 2 Kings, where this tax is mentioned, it is placed in close connexion with the subse-
quent revolt of the Moabites; and it is here that we come into contact with Mesha, the warrior king, whose exploits are recorded upon this stone. "And Mesha, King of Moab, was a sheep-master, and rendered unto the King of Israel an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with the wool." (2 Kings, iii. 4.)

Now, when we remember that the whole kingdom of Moab did not at the time exceed in extent a moderately-sized county, we can well imagine how oppressive such a tax would be, and how likely to exasperate the people to revolt.

We turn to the monumental stone, and there we read that "Omri, King of Israel, he oppressed Moab many days, for Chemosh was angry with his land. His son (i.e., Ahab) succeeded him, and he also said, I will oppress Moab. In my days he said, Let us go and I will see my desire on him and his house, and Israel said, I will destroy it for ever." (Lines 5, 6, 7.)

What more likely than that the tribute levied by Omri, was increased by Ahab, and that this aggravation of the burden was the cause of the revolt which, having been deferred during the reign of Ahab, broke out immediately after his death: "Then Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab." (2 Kings, i. 1.) By this very simple and natural hypothesis, the Scripture narrative and the monumental record are brought into complete harmony. The one supplements and illustrates the other; the Bible giving us some insight into the causes which led to this war of independence recorded on the monument, and the monument, in its turn, giving us a full account of its issues and results.
The first step in the war seems to be that recorded in 2 Chron. xx, where we read (ver. 1) that the Moabites, aided by the Ammonites and some Edomish tribes, from the neighbourhood of Mount Seir, invaded the kingdom of Judah, and came up by way of Engedi, (ver. 2,) against Jehoshaphat to battle.* You remember how Jehoshaphat commended his cause in prayer to the God of his fathers, and how the Prophet Jahaziel was directed to foretell that victory should crown his standard; but without any effort on the part of his army—"Ye need not to fight in this battle: for the battle is not yours but God's." And you remember how, when on the field of Tekoah, the singers sang, "Praise ye the Lord; for His mercy endureth for ever," intestine conflicts broke out in the allied camp of the enemy, and how the Ammonites, Edomites, and Moabites slew one another with a fierce and infatuated fury. "And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoah: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem.

* Dr. Kitto and Dr. Ginsburg place the date of this expedition after that recorded in 2 Kings iii.; but they do not explain how this view harmonizes with the statement made in 2 Chron. xx. 35, that the alliance between Jehoshaphat and Ahaziah was subsequent to the transactions there recorded. In addition to other reasons for adopting the view taken in the lecture, it may be observed that the invasion of Jehoshaphat's own territory, in the first instance, by the Moabites, supplies a most satisfactory reason for the readiness with which he acceded to the request of Ahaziah's brother and successor, Jehoram, and joined his forces to those of Israel and Edom against their common foe, as recorded in 2 Kings iii.
Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper. And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for His mercy endureth for ever. And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten. For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another. And when Judah came toward the watch-tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped. And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil of them, they found among them in abundance both riches with the dead bodies, and precious jewels, (which they stripped off for themselves,) more than they could carry away: and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much." (2 Chron. xx. 20-25.)

This defeat would naturally keep the Moabites quiet during the remainder of Ahaziah's brief reign; but no sooner did Jehoram succeed him on the throne of Israel, than we find Moab in arms against his authority. In this juncture Jehoram has recourse to King Jehoshaphat for help, saying—"The King of Moab hath rebelled against me; wilt thou go with me against Moab to battle? And he said, I will go up; I am as thou art, my people
This conjunction of the forces of Judah and Israel shows what a formidable foe they esteemed Mesha to be; and it is plain, from Mesha's own testimony, that they had formed no inaccurate estimate of his strength and prowess. Indeed, they resolved to get the additional assistance of the King of Edom, and thus the triple alliance went forth to meet the hosts of Moab.

It is worth noting, moreover, that this portion of the Bible narrative is corroborated by an expression of King Mesha's, which implies that he had more enemies to contend with in this campaign than the single army of Israel. His words are, when speaking of the favour of Chemosh to him in this war:—"He saved me from all despoilers, and let me see my desire upon all my enemies." (Line 4.)

The chapter which records this expedition mentions the strange circumstance, that instead of combining their forces towards the North of the Dead Sea, and marching directly into the Moabite country, which would have been the natural course, they held a council of war, and resolved to pass all the way round by the South of the Dead Sea, through the wilderness of Edom, a long and circuitous route of seven days, which would have ended in the famishing of the entire host, and all the cattle, by thirst, but for the miraculous supply of water procured through the instrumentality of Elisha:—"And he said, Which way shall we go up? And he answered, The way through the wilderness of Edom. So the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah, and the king of Edom: and
they fetched a compass of seven days’ journey: and there was no water for the host, and for the cattle that followed them. And the king of Israel said, Alas! that the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab! But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the Lord, that we may enquire of the Lord by him? And one of the king of Israel’s servants answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah. And Jehoshaphat said, The word of the Lord is with him. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him. And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee? get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother. And the king of Israel said unto him, Nay: for the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab. And Elisha said, As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee. But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him. And he said, Thus saith the Lord, Make this valley full of ditches. For thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts. And this is but a light thing in the sight of the Lord: He will deliver the Moabites also into your hand. And ye shall smite every fenced city, and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and
stop all wells of water, and mar every good piece of land with stones. And it came to pass in the morning, when the meat offering was offered, that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water.” (2 Kings iii. 8-20.)

Various explanations have been given for the apparently unnecessary and dangerous route taken on this occasion by the allied army, but none of them are satisfactory. The Moabite Stone gives us, for the first time, the true solution. It informs us that Mesha had seized upon the strong towns along the northern frontier, and thus, by means of them and of the steep limestone ridges which fortify the banks of the Arnon, had rendered all attack from that quarter utterly impracticable. Here, again, the inscription corroborates the record, whilst it explains it.

In the providence of God, the miraculous supply of water answered another purpose. When the Moabites, at early dawn, saw the ruby sun lighting up the unexpected streams, they thought that it was blood; and imagining that what had befallen themselves in the last expedition had now befallen their foes, and that the confederate hosts had engaged in mutual hostilities, and reddened the earth with each other’s gore, they raised the fierce war-cry of their nation, “Moab to the spoil,” and rushing down into the camp of Israel, encountered an unexpected enemy, and met an utter and entire defeat:—“And when all the Moabites heard that the kings were come up to fight against them, they gathered all that were able to put on armour, and upward, and stood in the border.
And they rose up early in the morning, and the sun shone upon the water, and the Moabites saw the water on the other side as red as blood: and they said, This is blood: the kings are surely slain, and they have smitten one another: now therefore, Moab, to the spoil. And when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites, so that they fled before them: but they went forward smiting the Moabites, even in their country. And they beat down the cities, and on every good piece of land cast every man his stone, and filled it; and they stopped all the wells of water, and felled all the good trees: only in Kir-haraseth left they the stones thereof; howbeit the slingers went about it, and smote it.” (2 Kings iii. 21-25.)

Driven into the stronghold of Kir-haraseth, Mesha made a vigorous but ineffectual effort, at the head of seven hundred warriors, to break through the hosts of the besiegers. And now we come to the most tragic and hitherto inexplicable portion of the Bible story. The King of Moab, failing in this last desperate effort, endeavours to retrieve his ruined fortunes by the immolation of his eldest son as a sacrifice to his god:—“Then he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall. And there was great indignation against Israel: and they departed from him, and returned to their own land.” (2 Kings iii. 27.) You may remember that the Prophet Micah represents Balak, a predecessor of this fanatic king, when dreading an invasion from the same Israelitish foemen, as meditating a like expedient:—“Remember now what Balak, King of Moab, consulted. . . . Shall I give my first-born for
my transgression—the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" (Micah vi. 5-7.)*

But the sequel to Mesha's defeat and desperation, as recorded in the Book of Kings, has always been most unaccountable. The historian adds, "And there was great indignation against Israel: (ver. 27 :) and they departed from him, and returned to their own land." Surely, it was not likely that the war would be abandoned by the Israelites, now that it had come to a successful issue, either from any feeling of commiseration on their part, or in consequence of any moral indignation felt against them on the part of the Moabites, as the causes of this tragical catastrophe.

The story reads at first as if there was no reverse of fortune, and leads the cursory reader to conclude that the Israelites returned triumphantly to Palestine. But the Moabite Stone corrects this misapprehension, and informs us that victory finally crowned the struggles of Mesha, so that Israel had to raise the siege, and ultimately lost its hold upon the conquered territory. It does not tell us, indeed, of the disasters of the previous battle, or of

* Several commentators are of opinion that it was the son of the King of Edom, and not his own, whom Mesha offered up in sacrifice. We think that the natural interpretation of the text leads to a different conclusion; and, moreover, we have no evidence that the kingdom of Edom was at that time hereditary, as we know from the stone the kingdom of Moab to have been. But, in addition to this, the offering up of the son of his enemy would not be deemed so likely to propitiate Chemosh as the sacrifice of his own child; and the testimony of Josephus, who tells us that Mesha offered up his own son, is more likely to represent the historic tradition of the Jewish nation, and to be in accordance with the fact.
the horrid human sacrifice on the walls of Kir-haraseth; that would be too much to expect upon the trophy of victory; nor do the Jewish records preserve the details of the subsequent and successive disasters which befell the Israelites.

Here, as before, the one record supplements the other; here, as before, the stone explains the history; here, as we shall presently show, the history once more corroborates the stone.

The word "indignation," (2 Kings iii. 27,) as read in the light of this new evidence, means a "storm of wrath and indignation," such an outburst of fury amongst the beleagured Moabites as nerved them to prodigies of valour against Israel, and finally led to the evacuation of their country by the enemy, who had almost subdued them. This is evidently the true exposition of the verse:—"There was great indignation against Israel: and they departed from him, and returned to their own land." Thus, this shadowy king, who seems to have been brought to bay when all his cities were destroyed, and all his wells filled, and all his noble trees hewn down, and who seems at first sight to vanish from the page of history in that last act of superstition and despair, when he immolated his own son on the wall of Kir-haraseth, now comes before us, as not only surviving that defeat, but as recovering his lost ground, retrieving his great disasters, achieving the independence of his country, and becoming not only the sovereign ruler, but the great benefactor of his country.
VIII.

MESHA'S VICTORIES AND CHARACTER.

We now turn to the stone, and we find Mesha's own account of the successive acts in this great military drama.

He appears to have crossed the Arnon by the ordinary fords, (see Is. xvi. 2,) and taken possession of the town of Aroer and fortified it. (Line 26.) From Aroer he marched to Dibon, of which town he and his family seem to have been chiefs and natives. (Lines 1, 2.) Here he was probably welcomed by the population, who were loyal to him, (line 28,) and had no difficulty in making himself master of the citadel called Korcha; this he fortified strongly, (21, 22,) built a palace in it, (23,) constructed public reservoirs, and ordered every citizen to make a cistern in his own house. (24.) Besides, he forced the Israelitish population, or the captives he had taken, to construct a moat round the town. (25.) He thus secured, in the southern part of the district, a fortress as a counterpoise to Medeba, in the northern. There is no place called Korcha mentioned in the Old Testament; the prevailing idea amongst antiquarians is that Korcha (mentioned on the stone) was a kind of suburb to Dibon, and stood much in the same relation to it that Zion did.
to Jerusalem. It was at once the citadel and palace of the royal city. Professor Davidson calls it Quorah, or Quorhoh; the word means bare, or bald; perhaps it was originally a bare height, outside the town of Dibon, on which the royal citadel was afterwards built, and he thinks there is an evident allusion to it in Isaiah xv. 2:—“On all their heads shall be baldness, (יַרְחַב, Quorah,) and every beard cut off.” You will observe, too, that the words “shall be” are in italics, and have nothing to correspond with them in the Hebrew original. The idea is not that “there shall be baldness” but that baldness and cutting off the beard, or whiskers, was a characteristic of those Moabitish people against whom this burden of prophecy is denounced.

It is very remarkable that amongst the figures at Ipsambul, we have one or two representatives of Moabites, and they bear the distinctive feature of having the forepart of the head shaved, and the whiskers cut off. Rosellini has given copies of these, and we may notice, moreover, in connexion with them, that there was a very striking peculiarity in the way in which they trimmed their hair, cutting it into sharp corners. Now, it is worth noticing, that Jeremiah again and again alludes to the Moabites as הָעַזְכּוּצֵי פֹּאָה, (Ketzutzai peāh,) which the marginal reading properly renders, “cut off into corners, or having the corners of the hair polled”:—“Edom and Moab, and the children of Ammon, and all the kings of Tyrus, and all the kings of Zidon, and the kings of the isles which are beyond the sea, Dedan, and Tema, and Buz, and all that have the corners of the hair polled.” (Jer. xxv. 21-23. See marginal
reading.) "Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all having the corners of their hair polled, that dwell in the wilderness: for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart." (Jer. ix. 26. See marginal reading.)

Head of Moabite from Ipsambul.

Man of Rabbath from Ipsambul.
If you look at the wood-cut, you will see a head copied from Rosellini, in which we have not only the hair thus remarkably treated, but the whiskers shaven away and the head curiously trimmed. There is also another figure given by Rosellini, from the remains at Ipsambul, which exhibits similar characteristics, and this will throw light upon the prohibition, Leviticus xix. 27, "Ye shall not round the corners of your heads; neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard." (See Kitto's Pict. Bible, Jer. xlviii.)

It would appear that from the citadel of Korcha Mesha undertook expeditions in different directions; in one of these a band of Dibonites captured the town of Bezer, which was one of the cities of refuge. (Line 27; and compare Deut. iv. 43; Joshua xx. 8.) Mesha, however, himself pressed on northward with his forces, and occupied, apparently without difficulty, Kirjathaim and Baal-meon. (9.) The latter place, called also Beth-Baal-meon, or Beth-meon, lay on the stream now called Zarka Main, not far from Beth-diblatham; and Kirjathaim could not have been very remote. (Line 30, and compare Jer. xlviii. 22, 23; Numbers xxxiii. 46.)

"The last-named place was, doubtless, one of those which gladly received the Moabitish conqueror, and from it he probably organized the expedition against Ataroth, a town with a Gadite population, and one of the posts fortified by Ahab. (Line 10.) This place Mesha took by storm: he massacred the inhabitants, plundered the town, and presented the spoils before his god at Kirjath. (Line 11.)

"He re-peopled the town, however, with colonists from
Siran, (probably identical with Sibmah, famous for its vineyards, Numbers xxxii. 38, and Isaiah xvi. 9,) and from another place, called Mochrath, which may probably be the same as Zarath-shahar. (Joshua xiii. 19.)

"Encouraged by his success, he planned a still bolder stroke. Well to the north, near the mountain of the same name, lay the town of Nebo, (Numbers xxxii. 3, 38; xxxiii. 47,) apparently one of the principal seats, in this district, of the worship of Jehovah. (Line 14.) Marching at night, Mesha pounced upon the town at dawn, captured it by mid-day, and treated it as the Israelites had formerly done to Jericho, Ai, Makkedah, and Libnah. (Line 15.) The town was devoted to Ashtar-Chemosh; every living man in it was massacred, the women being spared, but reserved for a more terrible fate; the tabernacle of Jehovah plundered, and the sacred vessels carried off to decorate the temple of Chemosh, at Kerioth or Dibon. (Line 16-18.)

"With such scenes passing under his eyes, well might the Psalmist cry out, Psalm xliv. 22, 'For thy sake are we killed all the day long, we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.'"—North British Review, October, 1870, pages 27, 28.

There can be no doubt that Mesha was a vigorous and valiant soldier; not afraid to meet in battle three kings, all more powerful than himself, and proving more than a match for any one of them single-handed. And as he knew how to fight, so he knew how to turn peace to advantage when fighting was no longer necessary.

It is plain from Mesha's own record, that he was no mere Theodore of Abyssinia—that to vigour and
valour he joined the nobler characteristics of statesmanship, and public spirit, and enlightened patriotism. If in this inscription he appears at one time like an eagle pouncing on his prey, and at another like a lion stalking victoriously through the forest, he appears at another as a great engineer, constructing his ravelins around his citadels, and his roads and viaducts across the rugged passes of the Arnon; or as a sanitary commissioner, constructing gigantic reservoirs, and compelling every man to build a cistern in his own house. Now, we have him engaged in foreign war against his old enemies in Horonaim; now, in building jails for the criminals, providing habitations for the paupers of his own dominion, and furthering projects for colonization. Here, we have his midnight march against Nebo, and his furious onslaught upon Ataroth. Again, we have him repairing the walls of his cities, embellishing the structures of his palaces, and enlarging the boundaries of his preserves. Remains of a Roman road over the Arnon are still extant, and fragments of arches are still standing; but the Romans only imitated here, and probably restored the old road, and rebuilt the bridge, where Mesha had first planned them.

Such a king—acting, moreover, as he did, under the influence of the most intense fanaticism; believing, as he plainly did, that he was commissioned by the god whom he worshipped to accomplish a wondrous destiny—was not likely to succumb easily to reverses, but was sure to take advantage of any favourable circumstances to recover his lost ground.

Now, have we any hints in the Bible that such cir
cumstances took place? Turn to the 8th chapter of 2nd Kings, verse 28, and you will find that shortly after the retreat of the three kings from Kirharasheth, the combined armies of Ahaziah, king of Judah, and of Joram, king of Israel, were engaged in war with Syria, and that Joram was wounded and disabled in that campaign. (Read 2 Kings viii. 28, 29.)

The main forces of Israel and Judah being thus occupied with the Syrians, a very small portion of the army could be spared to garrison the fortified cities which Israel held upon the Arnon and the northern frontier. This would necessarily expose them to the attack of Mesha, and give him a vast advantage in assaulting them; and these are the very cities which the Moabite inscription informs us he succeeded in wresting from the Israelites—namely, Baal-meon, and Kirathaim, and Nebo, (probably close to Mount Nebo,) and Jahaz, and Dibon, and Bezer. (See the Map, page 49.)

But we have another hint. For we learn that the successes of the Syrians under Hazael considerably weakened the Israelites, and this would render them less able to resist Mesha's onslaught. "In those days the Lord began to cut Israel short, and Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel, from Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon; even Gilead and Bashan." (2 Kings x. 32.) Thus we have the blows of Syria falling heaviest upon Israel in the very region where Mesha was pushing his successes; and when we remember that the Syrians and Moabites were allies, and both inveterate against Israel
as a common foe, we can well understand how the victories of the one would further the efforts of the other.*

So far the incidental allusions in the Bible history concur with the positive assertions on the Moabite Stone, that Mesha retrieved his fortunes; but we go a step farther, and we find that what the inscription asserts on this subject receives the fullest corroboration from the sacred records. In 2 Kings xiii. we learn that soon after the death of Elisha, (who lived, remember, in the time of Mesha,) the Moabites had grown so bold that

* Since writing the above, Dr. Salmon, Regius Professor of Divinity, T.C.D., has called my attention to the growth of the Syrian power as plainly implied in the Scripture narrative, and as throwing light on these events. After the disruption of the Hebrew monarchy into the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, the latter was at first the greater power, and that of Judah much weaker; for we find that in the time of Asa, Judah had to hire the Syrians against Israel. (1 Kings xv. 18, 19.) In the time, however, of Jehoshaphat, the alliances between Judah and Israel show that the two kingdoms had been forced into friendly relations by the growth of the Syrian power, for which the two together were scarcely a match. It is plain, also, from the history in 1 Kings xx., that the Syrian pressure on Israel began to be felt in the time of Benhadad, and before the war in which Ahab was killed. Dr. Salmon thinks that it was during this earlier period that all the northern strongholds (above the Arnon) were taken by Mesha, as recorded on the stone, whilst the attention of Israel was otherwise occupied by their campaigns with the Syrians; and that afterwards the Moabites turned to the south, and made the joint invasion of Judah, along with the Edomites, as recorded in 2 Chronicles xx. This alliance was broken up by the Cherem, or religious war, which broke out between them, and which led almost to the annihilation of the Edomites. (ver. 23.) See page 87.
bands of them were in the habit of invading the land at
the beginning of every year, and that it was in the haste of some Israelites to escape from one of these annual raids, they flung the corpse which they were about to bury, into the sepulchre of the prophet. "And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year. And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet." (2 Kings xiii. 20, 21.)

This proves that even at that time Moab was not only able to hold his own beyond the Jordan, but to make incursions across it into Israelitish territory; and from expressions in the Psalms it is evident that these incursions gradually assumed a more formidable character, and eventually became terrific invasions, in which the fierce children of Lot were assisted by all the neighbouring nations. Thus, in Psalm lxxxiii. 4—8, we read:—

"They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance; for they have consulted together with one consent, and are confederate against thee: the tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes; Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines, with the inhabitants of Tyre; Assyrian also is joined with them; they have holpen the children of Lot."

But when we come down about a century later, to the times of Isaiah, we have the most unmistakable evidence that the Moabites had re-established and extended their
kingdom. Thus in the sixteenth and seventeenth chapters, we find that Dibon, Nebo, Medeba, Jahaz, Horonaim, (all of which are mentioned on the stone,) were in the possession of the Moabites, and evidently had been so for some time previous; and, in addition, we find that such had been the successes and achievements of the Moabites since their disasters in the time of Ahaziah, that arrogance and cruelty had become their notorious characteristics:—"We have heard of the pride of Moab; he is very proud: even of his haughtiness; and his pride and his wrath." (Isaiah xvi. 6.)

From all this we gather that the history in the third chapter of 2nd Kings informs us only about the commencement of Mesha's war of independence, whilst the stone of Dibon gives us the history of its successful conclusion; and the corroboration borne by the latter to the scriptural account of the transactions is all the more remarkable, because at first sight they almost seem to be in collision, but on closer investigation prove to be entirely in harmony with one another. It is just one of those cases in which the concurrent testimony of two witnesses is rendered the more manifest by their apparent discrepancy, and where we obtain that best test and evidence of veracity, viz., "substantial truth under circumstantial variety."
We have now to pass on to the light which this stone throws upon the religion of the Moabites. And here again we find the Scripture testimony vindicated at every step. Twelve different times in the inscription is Chemosh alluded to, as the Deity under whose guidance and protection Mesha professes to have accomplished his mighty deeds. Does he engage in war? it is by command of Chemosh; does he suffer reverses? it is Chemosh who is angry; does he win victories? it is Chemosh who is merciful; does he gather spoil? it is to Chemosh it is dedicated; yea, it is to Chemosh his god that he offers the vessels of Jehovah, which he has plundered from the siege of Nebo. (Lines 17, 18.) It is to Chemosh his god that he erects this stone at Korcha, in token that it is he who has saved him "from all his despoilers, and delivered him from all his enemies;" and it is the name of Chemosh his god that, according to the first line of this inscription, was incorporated with that of his own father, who was distinguished by the title of Chemosh-Gad; that is, "Chemosh is the
God of Fortune,” or “There is no other God of Fortune but Chemosh.”

One cannot read this votive tablet without being struck by the thoroughness with which Mesha went in for the worship of his deity, and without expressing the wish that worshippers of the true God were as zealous for His glory.

But we turn to the Sacred Histories. Are their records in harmony on this point with the Moabite Stone?

We have already heard how Jephtha ironically congratulated the Ammonites upon what Chemosh their god “gave them to possess;” and we saw (in Numbers xxi.) that even in those early days the inhabitants of Moab were popularly called (from their chief idol) “the people of Chemosh.” Coming down further in the history, we find (1 Kings xi. 7) that Solomon, in his old age, built “an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that was before Jerusalem;” and when we turn to the first verse of this chapter, we find the source from which this idolatry came in; for there we read that “King Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites,” (they are mentioned first,) “Ammonites, Edomites,” &c.

The worship of Chemosh, thus introduced from Moab into Jerusalem by Solomon, was afterwards abolished by King Josiah, as we read in 2 Kings xxiii. 13, where once more, to express Jehovah’s detestation of it, it is called “the abomination of the Moabites.”

You will have noticed also, in those sublime prophecies of Jeremiah against Moab, contained in his 48th chapter,
how again and again this national idol is held up to contempt and scorn:—

Verse 7.—"Chemosh shall go forth into captivity."
Verse 13.—"Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh."
Verse 46.—"Woe be unto thee, O Moab! the people of Chemosh perisheth."

Thus closely and entirely do the records agree. Thus does the stone of Dibon, after 3,000 years, bear witness that the inspired penmen of the Old Testament were not too severe in their denunciations of this gigantic idolatry.

Can we wonder that Chemosh should be thus denounced, and called "the abomination of the Moabites," when we remember that bloody human sacrifices were offered to him, and that Mesha himself did not hesitate to immolate his own offspring to this sanguinary deity. There can be scarcely a doubt, moreover, that this Chemosh was the same who, in Numbers xxv., is called Baal-peor, in whose licentious worship the children of Israel were induced to join at the instigation of Balaam, and by the abandoned daughters of Moab; and it is remarkable, that in line 17 of the inscription he is called Ashtar-Chemosh—Chemosh meaning the Conqueror, and Ashtar the Producer—a joint name, which implies an androgynous deity; the true original of the Aphrodite mentioned by Aristophanes—the bearded Venus Amathusia, "eadem mas et femina," whose detestable orgies were the burning ignominy of the old world. Viewed in this light the 17th and 18th lines of the inscription, where Mesha says he did "not kill the women and maidens, but devoted them to Ashtar-Chemosh," receive an awful and dark significance. They were not spared in mercy; but reserved
for the most terrible of all imaginable dooms. You may remember how Milton alludes to this in the "Paradise Lost":—

"Chemos, the obscene dread of Moab's sons,  
From Aroer to Nebo, and the wild  
Of southmost Abarim; in Heshbon  
And Horonaim, Sihon's realm, beyond  
The flow'ry Vale of Sibmah, clad with vines:  
And Elealeh to the Asphaltic pool:  
Peor his other name, when he enticed  
Israel in Sittim, on their march from Nile,  
To do him wanton rites which cost them woe."

Book I., 406.

I have sometimes thought that there was something sublimely significant in that solemn description which is given us at the close of Deuteronomy of the death of Moses:—"So Moses, the servant of the Lord, (i.e., of Jehovah,) died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord; and He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor (or Baal-peor,) but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."

(Chap. xxxiv. 5, 6.)

Yes, over against Beth-peor; to bear witness in death, as he had done in life, for that Jehovah whose witness and ambassador he had been! Over against Beth-peor, that his silent, unknown grave might lift an eloquent and warning voice in the ears of the people whom he loved, and in the land of their heathenish corruptors, against the idolatry to which they were, alas! too prone.

Surely if we had nothing else to interest us in the land of Moab, the fact that it was from the top of Pisgah, its noblest height, this mightiest of the prophets looked out
with eye undimmed upon the promised land—that it was here on Nebo, its loftiest mountain, that he died his solitary death—that it was here in the valley over against Beth-peor he found his mysterious sepulchre; I say, if we had nothing else than this to shed interest around the land of Moab, we have enough to enshrine its memory in our hearts. Beautifully has a living poetess of our own land caught up the thought, and exquisitely has she applied it:

"By Nebo's lonely mountain,
On this side Jordan's wave,
In a vale in the land of Moab,
There lies a lonely grave;
And no man knows that sepulchre,
And no man saw it e'er,
For the angels of God upturn'd the sod,
And laid the dead man there.

"Perchance the bald old eagle
On grey Beth-peor's height,
Out of his lonely eyrie
Look'd on the wondrous sight;
Perchance the lion stalking,
Still shuns that hallow'd spot,
For beast and bird have seen and heard
That which man knoweth not.

This was the truest warrior
That ever buckled sword,
This the most gifted poet
That ever breathed a word;
And never earth's philosopher
Traced with his golden pen,
On the deathless page, truths half so sage
As he wrote down for men.

'O lonely grave in Moab's land!
O dark Beth-peor's hill!
Speak to those curious hearts of ours,
And teach them to be still.
God hath His mysteries of grace,
Ways that we cannot tell;
He hides them deep like the hidden sleep
Of him He loved so well."

The name of Jehovah occurs but once upon this ancient stone of Moab, and occurs in strange contrast to that of Chemosh. The latter is mentioned again and again with glory and distinction; the former is only introduced by the heathen monarch in order to cover it with scorn. He
tells us that when he wrested Nebo from the Israelites, he took from it the vessels of Jehovah, and offered them before Chemosh;" (line 18;) and yet that solitary name, standing here upon this ancient monument, and placed, as it were, to disadvantage beside the divinities of the heathen, possesses a wondrous interest. It proves that even then, amidst the gross darkness of the old world, Jehovah was known and recognized by surrounding idolaters as the Lord God of Israel; and that the transjordanic tribes, cut off from immediate intercourse with the central temple at Jerusalem, had not only maintained their faith, but established some special places amongst themselves where religious worship might be cultivated. Jewish tradition has always asserted that, from time immemorial, such sanctuaries for study and adoration existed amongst them wherever they lived. You will remember that when the two tribes and a-half went from Shiloh to take possession of their territory, they built a great altar beyond the Jordan, and when it excited the jealousy of the remaining tribes, (who feared it would culminate in schism and idolatry,) they solemnly repudiated any intention either of separation or apostasy, and explained that this "altar of witness" was only meant as a link between them and their co-religionists in Canaan. (See Joshua xxii.)

Now, from this Moabite Stone, it is evident that the Jewish traditions on the subject are sustained by fact, and that this conduct of the two and a-half tribes did not stand alone, for we see that something even approaching to a ritual, (in which sacred vessels were employed for divine rites,) had, so early as the time of Mesha, estab-
lished itself in places remote from Jerusalem, and probably was that which developed itself into the custom recorded, Acts xv. 21, "Moses hath of old time in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogue every Sabbath day."

The mention of "Jehovah" in the inscription throws light upon another curious circumstance. It is well known that this sacred word, יהוה—the "Tetragrammaton," as it was called—was held so sacred by the Jews of later times, that it was never pronounced except by the High Priest, and that only once a year, on the day of atonement, when he entered into the most holy place; and we read in the Mishna, that all the priests and people in the outer court who heard it had to kneel down, bow, and fall upon their faces, exclaiming, "Blessed be the name of His Glorious Majesty for ever;" and the Mishna further records, "that any layman" who pronounced this incommunicable name "forfeited his life in this world and in the world to come." (Mishna, Sanhedrim vii. 5; x. 1.) That this reverence for the awful name of Jehovah, obtained at a very early period is evident, not only from the the testimony of Philo and Josephus, but from the fact that it is never used in the Septuagint, the Apocrypha, the New Testament, or in the Samaritan version, and that even in the Hebrew Bible this name, יהוה, is uniformly pointed with the vowel signs which belong to אדוני, (Adonai,) another appellation of the Almighty, so as to avoid its utterance.

It has always been a moot-point how or when this pious horror of mentioning Jehovah's name was introduced; some contending that it dated with the earliest history of the Jews, and some going so far as to say that
it was forbidden in the Levitical law by that expression, “He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, (Jehovah,) he shall surely be put to death.” (Levit. xxiv. 16.)

But this forced interpretation does not accord with the fact, which we gather from the Old Testament, viz., that the heathen inhabitants of Canaan seem to have been acquainted with the name of Jehovah from the time of the Exodus. Thus Rahab declares her own conviction to be that of her countrymen:—“I know that Jehovah, hath given you the land. We have heard how Jehovah dried up the waters of the Red Sea for you,” &c. (Joshua ii. 9, 10.) And it is evident, from the Moabite Stone, that, even in the days of Mesha, this august name of the true God was so commonly pronounced by the Hebrews as to be familiar to their heathen neighbours, and commonly regarded by them as the characteristic name of the God of Israel.

The mention, therefore, of Jehovah’s name upon this Stone of Dibon, three thousand years ago, affords another incidental proof of the veracity of the Bible narrative, and helps us to fix the limits of time between which the curious custom of not pronouncing it sprang up. It must have been in the six hundred years that intervened between the days of Elisha and the formation of the Septuagint, in the days of Ptolemy, that is between 880—285, B.C. When we remember the influences to which the Jews were exposed in the interval, and how, amongst the heathen nations of antiquity, there was a reluctance to pronounce the name of certain deities, (as we learn from the Vedas, from Herodotus, and from Plutarch,) we can well understand how the Alexandrian Jews, (who
adopted so many philosophical notions from their Greek neighbours,) would first introduce it into the synagogues, and then into the Septuagint version, and thus eventually transplant the superstitious custom into Palestine itself.
X.

MESHA'S WAR WITH EDOM.

The closing lines on the Moabite Stone (which, unfortunately, are less perfect than the rest) record another war of Mesha, and against a different enemy. The conjectural reading of them by Dr. Ginsburg is:

"And as to Horonaim, (the men of Edom,) dwelt therein, (on the descent from of old,) and Chemosh said to me, Go down, make war against Horonaim, and take (it, and I assaulted it, and took it, for) Chemosh (restored it in my days."

We know both from Isaiah (xv. 5) and Jeremiah xlviii. 5-34) that Horonaim was a Moabish city; and from the way in which it is mentioned in the latter prophet, in connexion with Zoar, it appears to have been in the south, and on the borders of Edom. It is therefore in the highest degree probable that it was the Edomites who had taken possession of this city, and that they had been enabled by the Kings of Israel to capture and retain possession of it, in return for the aid which they had afforded them against the Moabites. No sooner, however, has Mesha broken off the yoke of the sons of Omri, than he resolves to recover this lost possession, and to drive the Edomites from the south of his territory, as
he had already driven the Israelites from the north. There can scarcely be a doubt that the triumphal pillar (when whole) recorded victory in this campaign as well as in the former, and we can well imagine that the fury with which the siege of Horonaim would be prosecuted by Mesha would be intensified by the remembrance that in that terrible day at Kir-haraseth, when, in desperation, he offered up his son upon the wall, the King of Edom had been amongst the beleaguring forces who hemmed him within the city, and was apparently the most relentless in preventing his escape. (2 Kings iii. 26.)

Now, this would throw light upon a curious passage in the Prophet Amos, (ii. 1-3,) where, amongst the special enormities for which Moab was to be overthrown, there is one mentioned which seems to surpass the others in atrocity—"Thus saith the Lord, For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he burned the bones of the King of Edom into lime." The Jewish Targum, (perhaps from the fact that the word, (יִפְסָד, sid.,) for lime means also plaster,) suggests that the King of Moab, to render the insult more marked, burned down the bones of his royal enemy with those of brute animals, and plastered his palace with the lime.

Whether this be so or no, the passage affords another of these remarkable harmonies between the stone of Dibon and the Bible Record, which go to swell the evidence for the truth of the Scriptures.

It will be remembered that Amos was a herdsman of Tekoa. (Amos i. 1.) It is probable that the burning of the bones of the King of Edom into lime, occurred after the furious battle which took place in Tekoah, and in which
the Ammonites and Moabites (as we have seen) slaughtered the Edomites of Mount Seir. Amos may have very well preserved the tradition of this terrible retribution, being a native of the place. The animosities between the Moabites and Edomites (the latter do not appear to have been idolaters) seem to have been of a religious kind, and to have led to the Cherem or religious war, (2 Chron. xx. 23,) in which the loss of the Moabites appears to have been comparatively slight, but the Edomites were severely handled. Dr. Salmon is of opinion that it was in this war the King of Edom was offered as a burnt sacrifice to Chemosh. He thinks it probable that the Edomites then invoked Israelitish help, which would furnish another reason for making the invasion by the south. (2 Kings iii. 8.) The story evidently shows that there were very peculiar animosities between the Moabites and Edomites, and this is corroborated by the stone of Dibon.

We might at first be surprised that the monarchs of Judah and Israel would suffer their old ally, the King of Edom, to be thus subdued by Mesha, without coming to his help; but when we turn to 2 Kings viii. 20, we find that immediately subsequent to the events narrated in 2 Kings iii., the Edomites “revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves,” thus forfeiting any claim which they possessed on the help of their powerful souverain. The King of Edom, who had joined the confederate armies of Jehoshaphat and Jehoram, appears to have been only a Deputy. (See 1 Kings xxii. 47.) The independence of the Edomites seems to have cost its possessors dear, for it rendered them an easy prey to the invasion of Mesha.
XI.

PROPHECIES CONCERNING MOAB.

COULD scarcely close a lecture upon this remarkable subject without adverting briefly to the present state of Moab, as an illustration of the truth of prophecy. We can form some idea, from Mesha's own tablet, as to the former glory and grandeur of the land, and even to this day the country presents, in the multiplicity of its ruins, and in the fertility of the few spots which are kept in culture, the vestiges of a wealth and population which seem to have been proportioned the one to the other. The ruins of Eltealeh, Heshbon, Medeba, Dibon, and Aroer yet exist to testify to the magnificence and glory of this once glorious land; but they stand conspicuous amidst the surrounding solitude and desolation. Here lies a sculptured capital, amidst a heap of nettles; there rises the shattered pillar of some glorious temple from the debris of its ruins. Here are indications of hanging gardens, and noble cisterns, and vast aqueducts, and great altars, and granite doors; but there are none to visit them but the wild beast, and the still wilder Bedouin. Not one of the ancient cities is now tenanted by man; Kerak is the only thing that can be called a town in the whole country, and Seetzen, who visited it in 1806, says, "It can only be called a hamlet,
and the houses have only one floor.” Burchhardt enumerates fifty cities within the boundaries of Moab, but they are shapeless masses of undistinguishable ruins. Medeba is two miles in circumference, but though the houses were built of silex, not one of them remains. The form of fields is visible, and the course of magnificent roads can be traced, but there is no one to cultivate the soil, and no one to travel along the highways. One grain of Heshbon wheat exceeds two of the ordinary sort, and more than double the number of grains grow upon a stalk; but “property there is the creature of power and not of law, and possession forms no security where plunder is the preferable right;” so that barrenness and famine stalk over the land, which might otherwise smile with plenty and fertility. The few inhabitants—wretched, naked, poor—wander about in misery and rags, or drag out a miserable existence amidst the cliffs and caverns, their only regular pursuit being a systematic life of plunder and robbery.

And now, what saith the Scripture in its voice of prophecy—a voice, be it remembered, that uttered its terrible predictions when Moab was on the pinnacle of its glory, and at the height of its security, thus putting its own divine foresight and veracity to the severest test?

I can only enumerate a few of those wondrous and startling utterances which fell successively from the lips of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Micah, and Zephaniah:

“Moab shall howl for Moab; every one shall howl, for the foundations of Kir-hareseth shall ye mourn.”

“I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer the vine of Sibmah; I will water thee with my tears O Heshbon and
THE MOABITE STONE.

Elealeh, for the shouting of thy summer fruits and for thy harvest is fallen. And gladness is taken away and joy out of the plentiful field: and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting." (Isaiah xvi. 7, 9, 10.)

"The glory of Moab shall be contemned, with all that great multitude; and the remnant shall be very small and feeble." (Isaiah xvi. 14.)

"Because thou hast trusted in thy works and in thy treasures, thou shalt also be taken: and Chemosh shall go forth into captivity, with his priests and his princes together." (Jeremiah xlviii. 7.)

"I shall send unto him wanderers that shall cause him to wander. . . . . And Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Beth-el their confidence." (Jer. xlviii. 12, 13.)

"Thou daughter that dost inhabit Dibon, come down from thy glory, and sit in thirst; for the spoiler of Moab shall come upon thee, and he shall destroy thy strongholds. O inhabitant of Aroer, stand in the way and espy; ask him that fleeth, and her that escapeth, What is done?" (Jer. xlviii. 18, 19.)

"O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities, and dwell in the rock, and be like the dove that maketh her nest in the side of the hole's mouth." (Verse 28.)

"They shall howl, saying, How is it broken down! how hath Moab turned the back with shame! so shall Moab be a derision and a dismaying to all them about him." (Verse 39.)

"As I live, saith the Lord of hosts, surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah,
even the breeding of nettles, and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation.” (Zeph. ii. 9.)

“Woe be unto thee O Moab, the people of Chemosh perisheth!” (Jer. xlviii. 46.)

Place side by side with these denunciations the proud boastings of King Mesha, and the haughty chronicles on the Stone of Dibon; and then learn the majesty of that Jehovah, whose name was only graven on that inscription in order to vaunt against it. Behold, how that very monument, which was erected to prove the weakness of Israel's God, survives to bear witness to His strength. See how, after the lapse of centuries, it arises from the dust, an unexpected and unconscious witness to His everlasting truth. Mark how the desolations of the land in which it stands gather round it, as so many impregnable evidences for the truth of prophecy, and speak with trumpet tongues for the veracity of the Bible Record.
AND now to conclude. How many a point, which long had been obscure, this silent witness has cleared up! How many an objection, urged and urged again, has it silenced and confounded for ever! Truth, and the God of truth, could afford to wait, during all these passing centuries, before this new testimony was adduced. And now, in this nineteenth century of doubt and scepticism, when infidelity grows daring, and faith grows dim, this patriarchal Stone of Moab, with the snows of three thousand years upon its head, stands forward to rebuke our unbelief, and to give fresh testimony to the Oracles of God.

It has shed new light upon the history of the past. It has opened up to us new views of language and philology. It has solved some of the most difficult problems and settled some of the most vexed controversies of the learned.

But beside and beyond all this, it has helped us to understand our Bibles better; it has urged us, I trust, to read them with more reverence and attention, and to accept them with a more thorough and entire reliance.

And in doing this, it has (I would humbly hope) quickened our faith, and animated our hope. This Stone
of Dibon, pointing us back over thirty centuries, teaches us to look forward with unflinching confidence to the unknown future that is before us, assured that He "Whose name alone is Jehovah" will fulfil every promise of His word.

Amidst the scathing woes that were denounced on Moab by prophetic lips, there fell one short but pregnant promise of future glory and restoration—"Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab, in the latter days, saith the Lord." (Jer. xlviii. 47.) That promise shall be fulfilled, as surely and completely as any of the denunciations which accompanied it; and it may be that this Stone of Dibon has just now come to light to recall our attention to that forgotten promise, and to prepare us for the fulfilment of it. How, or when, it shall be accomplished we cannot tell; but, in God's own time, Moab shall rise again, to be perhaps the partner of Jerusalem in its future glory, and to be reckoned, not as of old, amongst the enemies, but amongst the friends, as well as the kindred, of the seed of Abraham.
POSTSCRIPT.

The following are the more important passages from Scripture which refer to Moab, its people, cities, wars, religion, and destiny. Those marked with an (*) are explained or corroborated by the inscription on the Moabite Stone, and the lines of the inscription (see p. 21) where such reference exists, are noted.

Genesis xix. 37.
* Numbers xxi. 13-15, 26-29.—Lines 8, 26, 28, 33.
* xxii., xxiii.—Lines 11, 12, 13, 26.
* xxv. 1.—Lines 16, 17.
* xxx. 2-5, 25-38.—Lines 9, 10, 11, 14.

Deuteronomy ii. 9-11., xxxiii., 3-6.
* xxxii. 49.—Line 14.

Judges iii. 12-30.
* xi. 12-28.—Lines 3, 12, 26.
Ruth i. 1-6
1 Samuel xiv. 47.
* xxii., 3, 4.
2 Samuel viii. 2, 11, 12.
* xxiii. 20.

1 Kings xi. 1-8, 33.—Lines 3, 5, 8, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 32, 33.
2 Kings i. 1.—Lines 6, 7, 8.
* iii. 4-27.—Lines 6, 7, 12.
* xiii. 20.
* xxiii. 13.—Lines 3, 5, 8, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 32, 33.
* xxiv. 2.
1 Chronicles xi. 22.
* 2 Chronicles xx. 1-25.—Lines 31, 32.

Psalm lx. 8.
* lxxxiii. 6-12.—Lines 17, 18.
* Isaiah xv.—Lines 8, 14, 20, 28, 31.
* xvi.—Lines, 3, 4, 12, 13, 17, 18, 26.
* xxv. 10-12.—Lines 21, 22, 23.

* xxv. 21.
* xlviii. Lines 3, 10, 12, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 26, 28, 30.
* Ezekiel xxv. 8-11.—Lines 9, 10, 30.

Daniel xi. 41.
Amos ii. 1, 2, compare with 2 Kings iii. 26, 27.
* Micah vi. 5-7.—Lines 16, 17, 18.
* Zephaniah ii. 8-10.—Lines 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17.
St. Matthew i. 5.
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