THE

PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY

AND

PRINCETON REVIEW.

NEW SERIES, No. 3.—JULY, 1872.

ART. I.—PRIMITIVE GREEK RELIGION.

By TAYLER LEWIS, LL.D., Union College, Schenectady, N. Y.

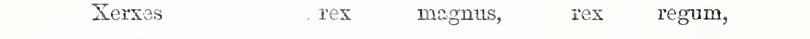
THE earliest traceable link between the Greek Mythology and the primitive Patriarchal Monotheism must be looked for in the grove of Dodona, on the Western coast, afterwards called Epirus. Long before the war of Troy, a Deity was worshipped there of whom Homer seems to speak with awe, as of one belonging to an antiquity transcending the theology of his day, and whose religion carried with it a more hoary sacredness: "O Dodonæan, Pelasgian, Zeus, τηλόθι ναίων —αἰθέρι ναίων—dwelling afar, dwelling on high." It seems to convey the idea of something separate, holy, unapproachable. There were two peculiar features in this very early Dodonæan religion. One was the worship of Zeus alone, as unassociated with any other divinity; the other, the esteemed sacredness of the oak. Both testify to its primitive character. As far as can be known this feeling of regard for the oak never degenerated into an idolatry of its object, although it early became the vehicle and fosterer of a gloomy superstition. It gave character to this primitive oracular seat, and inspired that marked reverence for it which is so evident in the Homeric and the earliest Grecian poetry. It is certain that, from the first, a great impression had been made by something in the history and in the local surroundings of Dodona. The seat of the oracle was, originally, not a temple but a grove. Natural causes here, as well as elsewhere, lent

Art. IV.—ASSYRIAN CUNEIFORM INSCRIPTIONS.*

By Prof. Wm. Henry Green, D.D., Princeton.

Hi – si – ar – si *sarru* *rabu* *sar* *sarri*

Xerxes rex magnus, rex regum,



habal *Da – a – ri – ya – vus* *sarru* *A – ha – ma – an – nis – si – '.*

filius Darii regis Achæmenides.

Xerxes, the great king, the king of kings, the son of Darius the king, the Achæmenid.

Thirty years ago our knowledge of the great Assyrian empire and of its splendid capital was almost a total blank. Vague memories survived of its power and magnificence, but almost nothing whatever was definitely known respecting it. The very names of its long line of monarchs and their once famous deeds, the whole history of the empire, its literature, its art, everything was and had been for ages buried in oblivion. Other cities, which had perished, as Palmyra, Persepolis, and the Egyptian Thebes, had at least left ruins to mark their sites and to attest their former greatness. But of imperial Nineveh not a vestige remained, not even a broken column or a sculptured stone, and the very place on which it stood was matter of conjecture.

The Bible records the names of Pul, Tiglath-Pileser, Shalmaneser and Sargon, and their encroachments upon the territory of Israel; also Sennacherib's invasion and his sudden

---

* Monument de Ninive découvert et décrit par Botta, mesuré et dessiné par Flandin, 5 vols. folio. Paris: 1849–50.

Expedition Scientifique en Mésopotamie exécutée par ordre du gouvernement de 1851 á 1854, publiée par Jules Oppert. 2 vols. 4to. Paris: 1859 and 1863.

Les Ecritures Cunéiformes, Exposé des travaux qui ont préparé la lecture et l'interpretation des Inscriptions de la Perse et de l'Assyrie, par M. Joachim Ménant. Seconde Edition, 8vo. pp. 310. Paris: 1864.

miraculous overthrow, and Jonah's visit to Nineveh, and its timely repentance. A few paragraphs incidentally referring to Assyria occur in classic authors. And that was all.

Nineveh was destroyed six centuries before Christ—while Tarquin the First was king in Rome, a hundred years before Greece was invaded by the Persians, a century and a half before the Greek father of history; and from this time it drops quite out of sight. Xenophon led the famous retreat of the ten thousand directly past its site without apparently suspecting the fact or once mentioning its name.

This was the condition of things and this the state of our knowledge of Assyria, when in 1845 the profound sensation, which all remember, was created in Europe and the West by the announcement that M. Botta, the French consul at Mosul, had discovered traces of the long lost capital. The results of his explorations under the patronage of the French Government, and those which quickly followed of Mr. Layard, aided by the Trustees of the British Museum, are familiar to the public from Mr. Layard's fascinating volumes, as well as from other sources. Palace after palace was uncovered with their decorations and their sculptured slabs, revealing the life and manners of this ancient people—their dress and habitations and implements, their arts of war and peace, the magnificence of their monarchs, the forms of their religion, the style of their architecture, their proficiency in sculpture and drawing. Stores of Assyrian and Babylonish monuments now occupy a conspicuous place in the great museums of Europe, particularly in those of London and Paris; and the forms of Assyrian art and the style of Assyrian life have become as distinct and well known as those of any nation of antiquity.

But in addition to this vast variety of figured representations which tell their own story, and were at once intelligible, multitudes of accompanying or separate inscriptions were also brought to light. These were written in an unknown and complicated character, and the only clue to their contents was what might be conjectured from the figures with which they were connected, or the situation in which they

were found. Their importance was naturally at once suspected, and they were copied with care. Volumes of them have been published; and it was some years ago affirmed that the Assyrian texts then accessible were fully equal in extent to the Old Testament Scriptures.

The Assyrian character has now been deciphered; large numbers of these inscriptions have been read, and their contents spread before the public. A copious grammar has been published by Prof. Ménant, and a dictionary by Norris. On the basis thus furnished, Assyrian and Babylonian history has been reconstructed, lives of monarchs have been traced for 1,500 years; in the case of some of them full accounts are possessed of their reigns:—e. g., of *Assur-bani-pal*, identified with the Asnapper of the book of Ezra, son of Esarhaddon and grandson of Sennacherib, a detailed autobiography of whom has just been published in a large and handsome volume, containing upwards of 300 pages devoted to the original text and an interlineal translation. The headings of the fifteen chapters, into which this life is divided, will give some notion of its extent and minuteness.

They are, i, The introduction, genealogy and accession of the monarch; ii, The first Egyptian war; iii, The second Egyptian war; iv, The siege of Tyre, and affairs of Lydia; v, The conquest of Karbit; vi, The war with Mimni; vii, The war with Urtaki, king of Elam; viii, The war with Te-umman, king of Elam, and the conquest of Gambuli; ix, The revolt of Saul-mugina, brother of Assur-bani-pal; x, The first war with Umman-aldas, king of Elam; xi, The second war with Umman-aldas; xii, The Arabian war; xiii, The final triumph over Elam; xiv, The buildings of Assur-bani-pal; xv, Later notices of his reign, and sketch of the chronology.

Among these various inscriptions there has been found an Assyrian canon, nearly complete year by year, for 250 years, in which the date is noted at which each successive monarch ascends the throne, and some of the principal events of different reigns are recorded. The time to which this belongs seems to be determined by certain eclipses which are mentioned in it, and which have been carefully computed by the

royal astronomers at Paris and Greenwich. On the basis of this, Prof. Oppert, of Paris, published two years ago a biblical chronology from the death of Solomon, to the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, as fixed by Assyrian inscriptions. Jerusalem, Samaria, Damascus, Lebanon, Sarepta, Lachish, Sidon, Ashdod, Askelon, Tyre, Hezekiah, Jehu, and other familiar names of persons and places mentioned in the Bible, are reported to occur upon these monuments; and events are there referred to which have been identified with facts recorded in scriptural history. Apparent or real discrepancies and methods of reconciliation are freely discussed. The importance of these inscriptions to the student of ancient history, and to the student of the Bible, can no longer be overlooked. And it becomes a serious question, What credit is to be attached to these alleged translations? Upon how secure a basis does the affirmation rest, that these inscriptions have been deciphered, and that their contents are now understood? Is this really the case, or are Assyriologists deceiving themselves and us with what is after all no real translation, but a creation of their own fancy?

In the hope of putting together a few facts which may help to answer these questions, we shall here give a brief account of the process of decipherment, and the results which have been reached, so far as the written character and the language are concerned. The investigation before us is purely elementary. We shall not occupy ourselves at present with any inquiry into the contents of the Assyrian inscriptions. We have only to do with the preliminary question, Can they be read, and if so, how?

We come back again to the year 1845, when Nineveh was first restored to the knowledge of European scholars by the successful excavations of Botta. Upon the sculptured walls of its palaces he found multitudes of inscriptions, in a style of writing which embraced, according to Botta's own computation, made at the time, nearly 700 distinct characters, not a word of which could be read, and the language itself was unknown. It was even a matter of dispute among scholars

to which family of tongues the Assyrian language belonged.

Providentially, however, a key had for a long time been preparing, although those who had been engaged upon it had little suspicion of the extensive and important use to which it was to be put. As the Rosetta stone, upon which Ptolemy carved his decree, in three different characters, in parallel columns, first gave the clue to the interpretation of the hieroglyphics and the writing on the papyrus rolls of Egypt, so there were trilingual texts at the service of scholars to open the way to the understanding of this perplexed Assyrian character.

The Persian monarchs, Darius, Xerxes and their successors had carved inscriptions recording their names and ancestry, their deeds, their edicts, and their religious faith, not only upon their palaces and their sepulchres, but on the rocks in various parts of their empire. And particularly at Behistun, the whole mountain side had been smoothed, and a long legend cut of more than a hundred lines, at such an elevation that Major Rawlinson, who was the first to copy it, was only enabled to do so by aid of a telescope. It was out of the reach, therefore, of injury from human hands and any form of damage except the washing of rains, which has unfortunately defaced it to some extent. In these inscriptions, in order to make themselves intelligible to their subjects, the conquerors were obliged to employ and thus perpetuate the language of the conquered. The same mingled populations, which prevail in the East now, existed in the Persian dominions, the Aryan, Turanian and Semitic. And the monarchs, addressing themselves to these several populations, were obliged to make their inscriptions trilingual. They employed, therefore, three columns. Above both the others, or, when they were ranged side by side, before both the others, stood the language of the monarchs themselves, the Persian, which thus held the first place, the place of honor. The column next to this, and consequently the second in order, was occupied by what has been called the Medo-Scythic language, and is supposed to represent the tongue of those Medes who

had not adopted the Persian, but spoke a Scythic or Turanian dialect, kindred to the Turkish, Magyar or Tartar languages. Third and last in this invariable order was what was suspected to be the language of Babylon, then prostrate beneath the power of Persia; and this suspicion was entertained long before the actual discovery of Babylonian and Assyrian inscriptions heightened it into certainty. A brief specimen of this third or Assyrian species of the cuneiform writing is given at the head of this article.

The existence of these trilingual inscriptions had been long known in Europe. The oriental traveller, Peter della Valle, first saw and described them in 1621. The characters are totally unlike any other mode of writing known, and apparently stand in no relation to any existing alphabet. They are uniformly composed of two simple elements, a wedge and an angle; or, as this last is itself composed of two wedges joined at the head, the one element of the whole is the wedge variously arranged and combined so as to form significant characters. When these were analyzed and classified, according to their constituent parts, it appeared that the combinations were different in each of the columns. In the first or Persian column there were between 30 and 40 distinct characters; in the second, or Medo-Scythian, upwards of 100; in the third, or Babylonian, nearly 400. This, taken in conjunction with the different lengths of the several columns, which it was assumed contained identical inscriptions in three languages,—the first being uniformly the longest, and the third the shortest,—led to the conjecture that the first was alphabetic, the second syllabic, and the third ideographic. Although this requires some modification in the case of the last two columns, it is perfectly correct in the case of the first.

Scholars accordingly devoted their first and principal attention to the Persian column, and by a series of steps of the utmost ingenuity, and yet of the most rigorous scientific accuracy, succeeded at last in unravelling the enigma. The narrative of this, the most brilliant literary feat on record, is of great interest, but cannot here be detailed. We merely

state the result :—the alphabet is completely made out ; the inscriptions are read with as much certainty and accuracy as a passage in a Greek or Latin author ; and the language of this first column now has its regular place in comparative grammars of the Indo-European tongues, along with the other dialects of that great family.

Meanwhile no progress whatever had been made toward solving the mystery of the second and third columns ; not a word was made out, and the phonetic value of a single character was not known.

The direction of the writing was ascertained to be from left to right. This was early suspected from the direction of the characters, which all pointed to the right, none in a reverse direction. Next it was found that in the third column the characters were sometimes crowded together toward the right end of the line, so as even occasionally to encroach upon the margin ; whereas on the left the ends of the lines were exactly vertical ; from this it was further inferred, and as is now known correctly, that in this species of writing words were not divided at the end of lines.

Again, when the Persian text came to be understood, it was possible to divide the second and third columns into groups of characters, which corresponded group by group to the several words of the first column. This not only determined, beyond a question, the direction of the writing, but established further, that the last two columns were translations of the first, containing the same text in other languages ; for wherever the same word or the same proper name reappeared in the Persian, there the identical group of characters was found corresponding to it in the Medo-Scythic and the Babylonian. Thus it happened that the meaning of certain groups was known, although it was beyond the power of any one to conjecture what words were represented by them, or what was the phonetic value of even a single character.

It was further ascertained by a comparison of various inscriptions that names of men in the second and third columns were regularly preceded by a vertical wedge, indicative of the

fact; so that these could be readily picked out from any text, even though its contents were unknown. These preliminary facts were ascertained, but this was all. The puzzle of the Assyrian character had hitherto defied the most persistent attempts to unriddle it.

Matters were in this condition when news was brought of Botta's excavations and his astounding discoveries. The prompt identification of the Ninevite inscriptions with those of the third column of the trilingual texts, directed attention renewedly to this intricate character, and satisfied European scholars of the necessity of reducing it as the only means of gaining the mastery of those treasures locked up in these newly-discovered legends.

The attempt, accordingly, was made without delay. In the very same year in which Botta's discoveries first came to light, Löwenstern, a Swedish scholar, attacked the problem. But, as Prof. Ménant justly remarks, "heads of columns commonly fall in the assault, which their valor has rendered successful for others." His paper is of no other value now than as showing the difficulties which embarrassed the very first step, and the hopelessly inextricable perplexities which encompassed the matter. He endeavored to ascertain the value of certain characters by comparing their forms with those in other known alphabets. The result was necessarily unsuccessful, for no graphic relation obtains between the cuneiform systems of writing and any others which are now known.

The only sure point of beginning, as was soon recognized by Löwenstern himself, De Saulcy and others in France, as well as by Rawlinson, Hincks and their coadjutors in Great Britain, was that afforded by the proper names. It was first necessary, by a careful analysis of all accessible texts, to identify the groups corresponding to the various proper names. These, it might be assumed, would have substantially the same sound in any language. The Assyrian pronunciation would not differ materially from that supplied by the Persian column. By a minute and laborious collation of these the endeavor must be made to ascertain the phonetic value of each character to be found in them. And these, thus fixed,

must be applied to reading the remainder of the text. This slow and toilsome process is the necessary foundation for safe and trustworthy results. The more extensive the base of comparison, the more certain will be the conclusions reached. The more frequently the same character is discovered in different names, in which it uniformly preserves the same phonetic value, the more surely is that value determined.

In all the trilingual texts taken together, there are one hundred and fifteen proper names. These are all extant in the Medo-Scythian text, which contains in addition nine names of months, and twenty-three other words, connected with matters of government, which are transcribed from the Persian, and consequently lend their aid in settling the signification of the characters. In the Assyrian column, which has unfortunately been the most damaged by the lapse of ages, nine names of persons, and sixteen names of cities and countries, have been so far effaced as to be no longer legible. This leaves ninety names which are available, containing ninety separate characters. Only a small portion of these, however, were at the disposal of those who led the way in this investigation. The great Behistun monument, though already copied by Major Rawlinson, was not yet published. Its Persian text did not appear till 1847, in the journal of the Royal Asiatic Society. Its Assyrian text was not given to the public for some years later; before this but ten proper names were possessed by those who were engaged in the work of deciphering.

Grotefend, who has the honor of having made the first successful effort toward a solution of the first or Persian species of cuneiform writing, had long since noticed that the group of characters representing the same Persian name in the Assyrian was often reproduced with variations. Thus in the name, Auramazda, applied to the supreme divinity, as written in different places, four different characters were found, answering to the letter *r*. And in the specimen given on a preceding page, the sign of *r* in Hisiarsi, the Assyrian pronunciation of Xerxes, is quite distinct from that in Dariyavus (Darius). This led to the hypothesis of *homophones*, or dis-

tinct characters representative of the same sound. This assumption appeared the more plausible from the analogy of the Egyptian hieroglyphics, where their existence was a recognized fact. The hieroglyphic symbol stood for the initial sound in the name of the object which it represented. And as various objects might be pictured whose names began with the same sound, distinct hieroglyphs were employed having the same phonetic value. This seemed to be further confirmed by the multitude of the characters, which were vastly more numerous than could be demanded by the exigencies of any alphabetic system, actual or supposable. It was impossible to adapt them to any conceivable alphabet, without the assumption that several were of the same signification.

Dr. Hincks of Dublin, however, noticed that these supposed *homophones* are not precisely convertible, but seem to have a determinate law in their employment. Thus the character representing *d* in Darius reappears twice in Dadarses, is the second in Mada (Media), and the last in Auramazda; but a different *d* is found in Diglat (Tigris), and a third in Kundurus. In fact wherever the Persian text places the vowel *a* after *d* the first form of the character is used; where *d* is followed by *i*, the second form; and where it is followed by *u* the third form. And so in regard to other letters; *k* in Cappadocia and Carthage differed from *k* in Kuras (Cyrus). *Ma*, as above in Ahamannissi is the same as in Mada, Magus, Gomata, but differs from *mi* in Mithra and *mu* in Umurga (Amyrgii). He hence inferred that the character is not alphabetic but syllabic, including the vowel as well as the consonant in its signification: and this not as though the character were capable of being decomposed, as in Ethiopic, where the body of the letter represents the consonant, which is slightly modified or has subordinate appendages attached to indicate the accompanying vowel. The character is one and indivisible, and can no more be separated into constituent parts than the Roman letters which we employ. It represents a stage in the history of writing in which the analysis of sounds was still imperfect. Words had been divided

into syllables, but syllables had not yet been resolved into the simple sounds of which they are composed.

There are fifty-four distinct characters, denoting simple articulations of the kind just described, consisting of the vowels *a*, *i*, *u*, either separately noted (as in *a-hamannissi*), or preceded by a single consonant, e. g., *da* (as in *Da-riyavus*), *di*, *du*; *ra*, *ri*, *ru*. In addition to these there are others in which the order of sounds is reversed, and which denote a vowel followed by a consonant. Thus the sign for *ar* in *Hisiarsi* (Xerxes) is found again in the first place in Artaxerxes and Arbela, in the second place in Parthia, Parsa (Persia), and in the third place in Dadarses. So the sign for *an* in *Ahamannissi* reappears in Tritantæchmes, Zazana and Zarangia. This yields a fresh series like *ar*, *ir*, *ur*; *an*, *in*, *un*, amounting in all to thirty-three. The number is smaller than before, because surd and sonant consonants, though distinguished at the beginning of a syllable, are not distinguished at the end; thus *ba* and *pa* are represented by different characters, but there is only one character for *ab* and *ap*, one for *ag* and *ak*, one for *ad* and *at*. A like confusion of these sounds at the end of syllables exists in Turkish and German: comp. *Brod* pronounced *Brot*.

The two series already spoken of constitute together a complete syllabarium of eighty-seven characters. Of these sixty-seven are found in the proper names of the trilingual texts, and their phonetic value is consequently capable of determination from that source. Many of them occur with such frequency and in so many different names that no doubt whatever can remain as to their genuine sound. Thus, of the characters in the specimen text above, *hi* is found in 2 names, *si* (which here occurs three times) is found in 8, *ar* in 13, *da* in 10, *a* in 16, *ri* in 11, *ya* in 7, *ha* in 4, *ma* in 12, *an* in 5.

In combining these articulations, like vowels may go together but not those which are diverse: thus *da-a=da*, *di-i=di*, *du-u=du*; *ma-an=man*, *mi-in=min*, *mu-un=mun*; but we never find *da-i*, or *di-a*, *ma-in* or *mi-an*, unless the sign of hiatus is interposed as in *Hisi'arsi*.

These eighty-seven characters would have been sufficient,

so far as appears, for all the necessities of Assyrian writing; and if this had been limited to these, it would have been a comparatively easy matter to decipher the inscriptions. Another series of characters, however, was employed to represent compound syllables, or those which both begin and end with a consonant sound. These are far more numerous than the preceding and it is much more difficult to determine their true signification. A complete syllabarium of of this kind would require 684 signs; twenty-three of these are found in the proper names of the trilingual inscriptions. A large proportion of the others has been made out by the elaborate comparison of variant texts. The same inscription is often found several times repeated, and, in consequence of the liberty offered to the scribe or engraver by this multitude of characters, the same words may be variously written. A compound syllable, which is in one place represented by a single unknown character, may in others be resolved into its simple elements, which are already known, and thus the meaning of the former be ascertained. Thus the last character in *Dariyavus* was the occasion of much perplexity, until this syllable was found elsewhere written *vu-us;* and in *Ahamannissi, man* is sometimes represented by one character instead of two, and *nis* by two *ni-is* instead of one.

But with the determination of all these syllabic characters, the work of deciphering is still far from being accomplished. Many of the characters are not phonetic but ideographic, representing not sounds or words but objects or ideas. They convey their meaning directly to the eye, like a picture or a symbol, rather than through the medium of the ear. Thus the Arabic numerals, 1, 2, 3, etc., are ideographs. They directly represent the numerical relation which they signify, and in a manner altogether independent of the words by which that relation is expressed. The figure 3 conveys the same idea to an Englishman, a Frenchman and a German, though each would utter a different sound if he were to read it in his own language. The meaning of the ideographs may accordingly be settled irrespective of the language of the inscriptions. The character denoting "king," which occurs

four times in the specimen text above (once followed by the ideographic sign of the plural), is readily singled out as soon as the meaning of the inscription is known; but the Assyrian word represented by it is not so easily ascertained. Grotefend suspected an abbreviation, as generally wherever single characters corresponded to whole words in the Persian column. Luzzatto, who thought the language Sanskritic, read this symbol *nara;* Rawlinson, calling the Hebrew to his aid, read it *melek*. And it was not until a text was found, in which the phonetic equivalents were substituted for this ideograph, that its true pronunciation was discovered to be *sarru*, answering to the Hebrew *sar*, a "prince." And this, we are inclined to suspect, explains the peculiar expression, "king of princes," (*sarim)*, Hos. viii, 10, applied to the Assyrian monarch, which would seem not to be an arbitrary or merely poetic variation of the lordly title "king of kings," but to contain a designed allusion to the native Assyrian word. And a like allusion may be found in the words attributed to Sennacherib, Isa. x. 8, "Are not my princes (*sarai*) altogether kings?" The ideogram for "son," in the above inscription, has also been variously read, though its meaning is perfectly clear; authorities are still divided whether it should be pronounced *pal*, *bal* or *habal*.

The perplexity arising from this use of ideograms is prodigious. The signification of such as occur in the trilingual inscriptions is readily fixed by the Persian translation. And the meanings hence obtained can of course be transferred to other inscriptions in which they are found unaccompanied by a translation. But how shall other ideographs be distinguished? or if known to be such, how shall their meaning be ascertained?

And the puzzle is greatly increased by the fact that the same characters are used both phonetically and ideographically; and these two values are totally distinct and stand in no sort of relation to each other. Thus the symbol for "son" read *habal*, is identical with the sign for *a*, occurring in *Dariyavus* and *Ahamannissi;* and the sign for *an* in this last

word is also the symbol for "God," and is then read *ilu*. Comp. in Hebrew *el* and *eloah*.

The intermingling of ideographic with phonetic symbols in the same text is a familiar fact to the Egyptologist; but it is not encumbered by the same embarrassments as in the Assyrian. The Egyptian hieroglyphic is the delineation of an object, which is for the most part still capable of being recognized. Its phonetic value is in all cases the initial sound of the Coptic name of this object. Its ideographic value is linked with that object by some natural symbol or ready association. The limits left for conjecture are thus greatly narrowed, and there are fixed principles by which the signification is to be determined.

The Assyriologist unfortunately has no such helps to lean upon. It seems, indeed, to be proven that the Assyrian characters have their origin in hieroglyphic emblems. They are not random combinations of wedges and angles, to which meanings have arbitrarily been assigned. But each was originally the representation of some sensible object, although by the graphic modifications of ages they have been so changed that their primary forms can rarely be recognized; just as in the Roman letters which we employ, A has lost its resemblance to the head of an ox, and B to a house, from which they were primarily derived.

A careful comparison of all accessible monuments has led to the distinguishing of several graphic varieties in the characters employed. There are, first, mere variants, slight modifications of form in the same character, such as may occur in the same insciption or in different inscriptions belonging to the same place and time. Secondly, there are local varieties, differences regularly occurring in the style and formation of the same character, according as it is found, for example, in Nineveh or in Babylon. But besides these there are varieties of formation which mark successive epochs. There is an archaic character deviating considerably from that which prevailed at a more recent period. And there is one more ancient still, to which the name of hieratic has been given. This consists of simple lines, the cuneiform or wedge-like

stroke of later times not having yet been assumed. And back of all these is the proper hieroglyphic, some monumental indications of which are still extant in rude figures set in parallel columns with their cuneiform derivatives. The character *ha* in *Ahamannissi* has also the meaning *nun*, a fish, to which in its archaic form it bears a striking similarity, its head, fins and tail being clearly apparent. So *an*, which, as has been said before, is likewise the sign for "God," in its archaic form resembles a beaming star, which was doubtless taken as the symbol of the deity. And the sign for "king" can be traced back to a form which seems intended to represent a bee, the symbol of order and productive power.

But how then does it happen, that the phonetic and the ideographic values of the characters are wholly unrelated, instead of being intimately linked together as in the Egyptian hieroglyphics? For the same reason precisely that the sound of A has no relation to an ox, or B to a house; because the people using the characters are not, as in the case of the Egyptians, the people that invented them. We use an alphabet derived from the Phœnician, and the bond which links the sound of the letter to the object which it was designed to represent, exists in the Phœnician language but is lost in ours.

The fact now under consideration plainly shows that the Assyrians used a character not their own. They must have derived it from some people speaking a different language from themselves. The Anarian character, as the cuneiform writing of the second and third columns is called, in distinction from the Aryan or Persian character of the first column, is known to have been used in several different languages. There is monumental evidence of its having been employed in five. Now, if there shall be found among all these a language, in which the phonetic and ideographic values of the characters uniformly coincide, that, beyond all question, is the tongue spoken by the inventors of this species of writing.

In the scantiness of our information on this subject, it can scarcely be said, perhaps, that a positive conclusion has yet been reached, but there are indications pointing to a proba-

ble solution of a most unexpected and interesting kind. Prof. Oppert has demonstrated the original oneness of the Medo-Scythic and the Assyrian species of writing. Out of 109 characters employed in the former, he has identified 96 with such as are found in the latter, and the differences of form are no greater than in admitted variants of the same species. The phonetic and the ideographic values of the characters are the same in both columns. The sign for *an* is identical in both, and in both is equally the symbol for "God," which in Assyrian is *ilu*, but in Medo-Scythic *anap*, the first syllable of the latter yielding its phonetic value. The same phenomenon is repeated in other cases equally striking, and suggests the inference that the Assyrian writing, which can be traced back to an early period in the history of that empire, was borrowed from a Turanian people, whose language either was the Medo-Scythic, or was closely akin to it. This seems to imply that the Assyrian civilization was preceded by one of Turanian origin; that learning had been cultivated in what has been supposed to be the barbarous north, and that letters were there invented by a people of whose existence we here have a glimpse and a tangible proof, but of whom nothing besides is known. This Medo-Scythic column presents formidable difficulties in point of language, which have not yet been satisfactorily overcome. If the tongue embodied in it shall be successfully restored, or some other can be found that closely resembles it, an aid may be discovered for cuneiform interpretation, as serviceable as the Coptic has been in hieroglyphics; and a light may be shed upon mysteries which can now be but partially illustrated by Turkish, or Magyar or Uralian analogies.

In addition to individual ideograms already spoken of, or those which consist of a single character, there are composite ideograms. These are groups of characters, whose phonetic values are known, and which constantly serve when occurring in the same order to express a given idea; and yet the phonetic transcription of this group yields an entirely different pronunciation from that which was actually given to it. In the trilingual tablets no difficulty whatever is found in making out the great majority of the ninety proper names.

ut the six Babylonish names, Nebuchadnezzar, Nabunaita, (Nabonned), Babylon, Euphrates, Tigris and Susiana are totally irreducible. When meanings obtained elsewhere, and verified in repeated instances, are applied to the group of characters in the Assyrian text corresponding to Nebuchadnezzar in the Persian, they yield *An-pa-sa-du-sis;* it is only on the bricks of Babylon that the name is phonetically spelled *Nabiukudurriusur*. So for Nabunaite we find *An-pa-i*, and for Babylon *Din-tir-ki*. The explanation of this strange phenomenon is, that these characters are not used phonetically but as an ideogram. In the names of these monarchs the first two characters represent the god Nebo (*Nabu* or *Nabiu*), not because a new phonetic value is here attributed to them, as though *an* had also the sound *na*, and *pa* were used for *bu*. But the character whose phonetic value is *an*, is also the symbol of divinity and stands regularly before the names of gods. *Pa* denotes some attribute by which this particular deity is characterized. It has been variously explained as representing a sceptre, or the vial used in anointing; so that the combination is not the name Nebo, but describes the god so called as the divinity which protects the government of kings or presides at their consecration. This is in exact analogy with the hieroglyphic mode of representing different divinities. There stands first the general sign for divinity, a man seated Egyptian fashion; then follows something indicative of the particular god intended, a hawk's head for Osiris, a jackal's for Anubis, an eye, a whip, or the *pschent* with two ostrich feathers, for Osiris.

This emblematic way of writing names, particularly those of the monarchs of Nineveh and Babylon, makes it an almost hopeless task to unravel their true pronunciation, and makes their true identification extremely uncertain. Oppert confesses that it is impossible to read names so written with any confidence, unless they are likewise found in phonetic characters, or are known from Greek or Hebrew writers.

A like perplexity embarrasses the reading of other words. Thus the symbols of the several months are known but not the name of one of them. And there are numerous instances

in almost every inscription in which ideograms are suspected, because the characters, taken phonetically, yield non-Semitic forms or combinations of sound, and these characters are elsewhere replaced in like connections by others which are unmistakably Semitic. Thus, in the specimen above given, the word "great" is read *ra-bu* (Heb. *rab*) by the substitution of an Assyrian word of this sense found in other passages, though the phonetic value of the characters here used is *galu*. In like manner in Xerxes' inscription at Van, "heaven" is spelled *ani* but read *sami* (Heb. *shamayim*); "earth" is spelled *kiti* but read *irtsit* (Heb. *crets*); "men" spelled *un* with the plural sign, but read *nisi* (Heb. *anashim*). These cases are open to doubt, not however as respects the meanings of the words, but solely as to their pronunciation, and as to the nature of the signs by which they are represented. They may be ideograms, that are to be read independently of the sound of their constituent elements; as in the numbers 10 and 12 we read the separate figures one, nought, one, two, but when set in combination we pronounce them ten, twelve. Or they may be what Ménant calls allophones, that is to say, Turanian words employed by those who originally made use of the cuneiform characters, and transferred along with this system of writing to the Assyrians, who retained them as convenient graphic symbols, but constantly substituted for them in reading the proper equivalents in their own language. Or, finally, they may be Turanian words adopted into the Assyrian speech. Thus *etc.*, occurring in an English sentence, may be read "et cætera," or "and so forth;" and A.D., "anno domini," or "in the year of our Lord;" the Latin words which these symbols originally denoted may be retained, or they may be rendered into equivalent English.

Some of the perplexities which beset the path of Assyrian interpretation have been exhibited. But the grand stumbling-block has not yet been adverted to. It is the multiple sense attributed to each character, whether phonetic or ideographic. This is quite distinct from the fact previously noticed, that the same character may have two species of values, being used in different connections as representative

of sound, or as representative of an object or idea. But in addition to the liability of being employed in either of two capacities, its function under each is affirmed to be indeterminate, or at least to vary with the circumstances of its employment.

Rawlinson was the first to announce the startling fact of the existence of polyphones, or the union of different and totally unrelated phonetic values in the same written character. And this seems to be established in a manner quite incontrovertible. The sign denoting *vus* in Dariyavus must be read *sir* in Misir (Egypt); the sign for *nis* in Ahamannissi is also used for *man* in writing this very word; the same symbol is *par* in Parsu (Persia) and Parthia, and *tav* in Gumatav (Gomates).

But the extent to which these multiple values have been assumed by Assyriologists is totally destructive of anything like intelligible writing. Oppert gives the following example in illustration of the facts of polyphony, as he conceives them, and of his theory of their origin. A character intended to represent an open hand (in Scythian *kurpi*, has attached to it the metaphorical signification "to take," in Medo-Scythian *imidu*, also meaning "to possess, to extend," and thus obtains the two phonetic values *kur*, *mat*. The resemblance between these two sounds and other Scythic words gives it four additional significations: *kur* meaning "mountain" and "sun-rise, and *mat* "earth" and "to go." It is now transferred to Assyrian with its two phonetic and seven ideographic values already acquired: to the latter, the fortuitous coincidence of *kur* with the Assyrian word for "furnace," and *mat* with the Assyrian word "to die," adds these two further significations, while the Assyrian terms for its other senses enrich it with three more sounds; so that in the end it stands for any one of five different sounds or nine different ideas. The majority of the characters are held to represent at least two different sounds, many of them three or four, and some even five or six; and to these are to be added their various ideographic senses.

The ambiguity resulting from the different senses attached to the same ideogram is supposed to be resolved in certain

cases by a peculiar expedient termed the phonetic complement; this is a phonetic character taken from the word which the ideogram is intended to represent and added to this latter to indicate its true interpretation. Thus a symbol having the various phonetic values of *ut, tam, par, tas, lih,* may also denote the sea (in Assyrian *tihamti*), or the sun (*samsi*), or the light (*nara*), or sun-rise (*sadu*), or day (*zumu*), or days (*zumi*), or to go out (*atsu*). When this symbol is followed by the syllable *ti*, this is understood to suggest that it is to be read *tihamti*, and means the sea; followed by *si*, it is read *samsi*, and means the sun; followed by *ra*, it is read *nara*, and means the light, and so on for the rest. This may be illustrated by our reading Dwt., pennyweight, and Dth, five hundreth; 8th, eighth, and 8vo., octavo; Xian, Christian, and Xroads, cross-roads.

It is further alleged that complex ideograms may occasionally be distinguished as such by the circumstances that phonetic values attributed to the characters would violate fixed laws of Assyrian orthography, or would result in impossible forms. But beyond these vague and dubious indications there is nothing to fix the value of a character in any given connection; it may have any one of several values supposed to be ascertained elsewhere, or it may have another altogether new. There is no test of the accuracy of an interpretation; there is no check upon the most random and arbitrary guesswork. To the question which of its several phonetic values is to be attributed to a character in any given case, Oppert has no better answer than try them all in succession and take that which does best. It is manifest that the puzzle is not yet entirely solved, while so much guessing remains to be done.

It would be presumptous to undertake to affirm in advance what the Assyrian writing was or what it was not. Any antecedent improbability is, of course, instantly outweighed by any clear evidence deducible from the inscriptions. But we have an undoubted right to assume that, whatever it was, it must have been intelligible. And a first condition of intelligible writing is that the characters must have fixed and de-

terminate values. If these are not absolutely invariable, there must at least be some settled law of their employment. It would be plainly impossible to interpret a page of English written in a character so indeterminate and fluctuating as the Assyrian is supposed to be. And when to this is coupled the consideration, that the language of the inscriptions is totally unknown, and our only hope of recovering it lies in the use of these characters, which range from two to ten or more significations, the impracticability of the task is perfectly apparent. There are more unknown quantities in the equation than it is possible to eliminate.

In speaking thus we do not mean to decry the most brilliant literary feat of modern times, nor to detract from the credit due to the amazing ingenuity and patient toil and varied learning, which have been brought to bear upon the unravelling of these inscriptions, nor to deny that essential progress has been made and important results obtained. A solid and impregnable basis has unquestionably been laid. Much has been accomplished towards a solution of this most complicated problem. Many of the readings are doubtless correct, and will stand the test of all future scrutiny. In others the general sense may remain in spite of minor inaccuracies. But it must be remembered that twenty years have not elapsed since the first successful beginning was made. And when the herculean nature of the task is considered, the marvel is not that the end is not yet reached, but that anything reliable has been done.

We must, however, abide by our conviction that the time has not yet come for reconstructing our knowledge of the East in conformity with the revelations made by the monuments. The results are still too insecure, too much chaff is mingled with the wheat, to justify us in accepting it in the mass; and there is no possibility yet of accurately discriminating the conjectural from the certain, the genuine from the false. We wait, however, in the confident expectation that the remaining mystery of these intricate characters will yet be cleared up; that the march of discovery will in due time rectify all errors, whether of methods or results; that the need-

ed clue will be found, and the right method ascertained of disentangling all remaining complications, and giving to the Assyrian characters that fixedness and accuracy which must belong to a medium of recording thought which was found sufficient for the needs of a great empire through fifteen hundred years.

Art. V.—"THE ORDER OF SALVATION."

By Rev. Robert E. Willson, Havana, N. Y.

The treatise of Diaconus Schröder,* under this title, by its extended references to the various opinions of other times, has brought fresh to the writer's mind the great diversity of conflicting, and consequently, to some extent, erroneous views, which still prevail upon this subject. We will not take space, nor ask attention for the formal statement of these opinions. It may be assumed, that all who take any interest in subjects of this nature are aware of this diversity and discrepancy. And these differences of opinion among good men and teachers in the church, are proof that the subject about which they differ is not generally well understood. We fairly judge, that no statement of it has been so clear and convincing as to command general acceptance. There can, however, be no difference of opinion, as to the question whether greater harmony of views, respecting what is so closely connected with the salvation of mankind, is highly desirable. Great diversity of opinion, in respect to the "Order of Salvation," will naturally confirm the doubting in the suspicion, that the subject of salvation is in some respects unsettled and uncertain. We well remember, that when we became earnestly desirous to learn definitely about the way of salvation, some statements respecting its order were a very serious obstruction. And we now believe that

* Translated by Rev. G. W. Sheldon, in the *American Presbyterian Review*, Jan. and April, 1871.