

Recent Biblical Archaeology.

BY PROFESSOR A. H. SAYCE, LL.D., OXFORD.

PROFESSOR CRAIG continues his useful work of publishing the cuneiform texts which he has copied in the British Museum, though it is a pity he has followed the pernicious practice of some of the younger Assyriologists in not accompanying them with a translation. Every attempt at translation on the part of a competent scholar, however tentative or imperfect it may be, is a furtherance to the study of Assyriology and an assistance to those who come after us, and the neglect to give one is due either to excess of modesty or deficiency of knowledge. Professor Craig shows himself in his preface to be too sensitive to criticisms of others who probably could not have done the work as well and accurately as himself, and he forgets that no human work can be perfect or infallible. I wish I could impress this truth upon some of my younger colleagues and get them to understand that one of the chief causes of the marvellous progress of Assyriology in its earlier days was the conviction of the older school of Assyriologists that the first duty of the decipherer is to translate his texts.

But I have not yet exhausted the reviewer's privilege of criticism. Professor Craig has given us a number of hitherto unpublished texts relating to the astronomy, or rather the astrology, of ancient Babylonia; and for this we ought to be duly grateful. But it is a selection only, and the selection seems to have been made on no definite lines. In place of texts which have already been published in the *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, or of other texts which are too fragmentary to be of use to students of Babylonian astronomy, he could have found many tablets in the British Museum collection which for various reasons possess a special interest of their own. Among these may be named K. 3764, K. 3558, and K. 3145, which last contains a description of an eclipse in the age of Sargon of Akkad. We may also include among the astronomical texts a very curious document (K. 2884), which resembles in form the so-called *ezib* texts published by

¹ *Astrological-Astronomical Texts copied from the Original Tablets in the British Museum.* By James A. Craig. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1899.

Knudtzon, with the difference that it is an eclipse and not a foreign invasion against which the prayer is directed.

For what Professor Craig has given us, however, our best thanks are due, and it may be hoped that his book will stimulate some Assyriologist to take up again the question of early Babylonian astronomy. So far as I have been able to compare his copies of the texts with those made by myself many years ago, they seem to me to be scrupulously accurate.

I HAVE received another letter from Dr. Belck announcing further discoveries in the ancient land of Ararat more important and startling even than those already made by himself and his companion, Dr. Lehmann. Dr. Lehmann has found two new inscriptions of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser II. at the sources of the Sebeh Su, while, thanks to a process invented by Dr. Belck, nearly the whole of the annals of the Vannic king Argistis I. can now be restored. A bilingual inscription in Assyrian and Vannic, relating not only to warlike operations but also to building, has been discovered, as well as a clay tablet covered with hieroglyphics of the Hittite type. It now turns out that the kingdom of Van was founded by Ispuinis and Menuas, conquerors from the north, the earlier name of the district having been Kumussu, and the language originally spoken in it being different from that of the Vannic inscriptions. Dr. Belck has further ascertained that Urardhu, or Ararat, was the name of a province in the southern part of the Vannic empire, and that Mount Nizir, on which the ark of the Chaldaean Noah rested, lay within its borders. He has even succeeded in tracing the old frontier line between Ararat and Assyria.

MAJOR BROWN² begins by apologizing for venturing upon ground to which Egyptologists and biblical critics might alone be considered to have a claim. But there is no need for his doing so. The Inspector-General of Irrigation in Lower Egypt is one of those English engineers who have

² *The Land of Goshen and the Exodus.* By Major R. H. Brown. London: Stanford, 1899.

come to know the geographical and climatic possibilities of Egypt as no Egyptologist or biblical critic is likely to do, and the questions connected with the Israelitish Exodus are largely dependent on these possibilities. His work on the Fayyûm has shown him to be a careful and scientific observer, endowed with plenty of that common sense in which professional scholars are sometimes deficient; and in the strictly Egyptological part of his new volume he has followed Dr. Naville, the best

and safest of guides. But it is as an engineer, and, above all, as one who has an intimate knowledge of the problems of Egyptian irrigation and the geographical conditions of the Delta, that he claims a hearing. The two maps he gives will be found extremely useful, and based on the latest surveys. He has almost persuaded me to go over to the belief of Dr. Naville and Professor Hull, that in the age of the Exodus the lagoons of the Red Sea extended as far north as Lake Timsah.

The Fools of the Bible.

BY THE REV. W. P. PATERSON, D.D., PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN.

WHETHER it was because of its greater or because of its lesser rarity, the subject of folly commanded more attention in earlier ages than it does among ourselves. Alike by the poet, the moralist, and the philosopher, the theme was felt to be as important as it was attractive. Some set themselves to describe its chief manifestations in man—as in Brandt's *Ship of Fools*, which pithily describes many varieties, and points out the special humiliation or punishment appropriate to each kind. Others speculated as to the purpose which it serves in the world—for instance, Erasmus, who in his *Praise of Folly* ascribed to it many beneficent uses, and undertook to show that in many positions a man may find it to his advantage, and at all events may be the happier, for not being over-wise. And to the Literature of Folly the Bible had already made its large, while more profound and solemn, contributions. For the Bible has to some extent the character of a 'ship of fools'—having on board, and carrying to judgment, human and Divine, the most representative and striking of the members of the family. And certainly if we except the sinner, the saint, and the sufferer, there is no human type which it so closely scrutinizes as the fool, or in which it is so keenly interested.

In the idea of the fool, as it is met with in Scripture, the fundamental element seems to be that he is unable to look after his own interests—that if not his own enemy he is at least his own very inefficient servant and guardian. And when this, the practical outcome of his conduct, is

traced to its source, it is explained by the peculiar working of a mind which does not do justice to facts. His is a mind to which realities are largely imaginations, and imaginations realities. The temple of its building is the fool's paradise. 'The fool walketh in darkness' (Ec 2¹⁴).

Starting now from such general conception, the Bible first gives us a tolerably minute portrait of the fool proper, a weakling in respect of intellect and will. This variety, which is specially prominent in Proverbs, may be cited as Solomon's fool. Next, it was observed that the title might be extended to include wicked men as such, on the ground that they too are guided by the fool's maxims; and from the specially clear perception of this in the Psalter, we may distinguish as the Psalmist's fool the evil-doer. Yet again, it had become clear to the prophetic mind, and was confirmed by our Lord, that godlessness is foolishness; whence we may distinguish as a third type Christ's fool—the irreligious man. These are the classes of fools seriously so-called, and in addition there is in the New Testament an ironical extension of the title to the Christian. This is St. Paul's fool.

1. *Solomon's Fool*.—In analysing the character of the weakling, or Solomon's fool, we find that stress is mainly laid upon four qualities. The first is the essential feature already referred to, which in his case takes the form of *disregard of the three natural blessings of life*. These are health, issuing in long life, a fair portion of this world's goods, and the respect of society; and