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I. LITERARY.

MAJOR JAMES MORTON*

Was a native of Prince Edward County, Virginia, where he spent the greater part of his very long life. He died at the age of ninety-two, at High Hill in Cumberland County, the family seat of his son, Dr. William S. Morton. He was one of a family of eighteen children—twelve sons and six daughters.

*The following sketch of Major James Morton, of Willington, was written by my Father during his later years, while he lived with me in Jonesborough, N. C. (I being at that time pastor of Buffalo and Ephronia churches in Moore county, N. C.), about 1880, and published in the *Central Presbyterian* in two or three numbers. I had so often when a student in the Seminary heard "Aunt Rice" (Mrs. Anne S. Rice, widow of Rev. Dr. John Holt Rice) and Mrs. Wharey with whom I boarded (a lady of singular simplicity and sincerity of character and of pure and lovely piety) speak of their Father, Major Morton. And when during those last sweet and precious years of my Father's life, he spoke of the old hero, of Dr. Rice, of John Randolph of Roanoke, of William B. Giles, of Dr. Alexander, and his Father Rev. Drury Lacy (him of the "silver fist and silver voice"), of Dr. Moses Hoge, of Benjamin F. Stanton, and the evangelist Rev. Asabel Nettleton, and others, I begged him that he would commit some of these reminiscences to paper. This is the only one that he prepared, and I have copied it carefully from his manuscript, spelling and all. So many who read it in the *Central* more than ten years ago have asked me to furnish it again to the press, where it might appear in some form more likely to be preserved, that I send it to the UNION SEMINARY MAGAZINE. Major Morton's connection with the Hill, and with Rev. Dr. Rice, the founder of the Seminary, and his deep personal interest in the Seminary and daily prayer for it, make it eminently appropriate.

W. S. L.

ECHOES OF BIBLE HISTORY.

PROF. W. W. MOORE.

IN view of the enormous number of ancient inscriptions found in Egyptian tombs and temples, and the still greater number found on the walls of Assyrian palaces and the tablets of Assyrian libraries, it seems strange that so few ancient inscriptions should have been brought to light in Palestine. It is not surprising, indeed, that so few works of *art* are found there. For a narrow and foolish interpretation of the second commandment extinguished art in Judea thousands of years ago. Has it ever struck the reader as strange that the Jewish race, which has produced so many illustrious soldiers, statesmen, financiers, philosophers, poets and musicians, has never produced a great painter or a great sculptor? Why is it that the genius of the Jew, which has achieved for him easy pre-eminence in every other sphere, has been absolutely unproductive in the realm of the imitative arts? The explanation is that it was paralyzed by the Pharisaic interpretation above referred to. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth." (Ex. xx:4.) We know that this must be qualified by what follows—"Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them"—these images were not to be made *as objects of worship*. But the Jewish teachers interpreted verse 4, without reference to what follows, as a prohibition of all painting and sculpture, and that too in face of the facts that by the divine command Cherubim were placed over the mercy seat in the Tabernacle, pomegranates were made for the High Priest's robe, a serpent of brass was made by Moses, twelve oxen supported Solomon's molten sea, and fourteen lions surrounded his throne of ivory and gold. Thus it was that a perverse and ridiculous adherence to the *letter* of scripture shut out this marvellously gifted race from all cultivation of the plastic arts, as a similar interdict in the Quran has done for all the followers of Muhammed. Happy had it been for us if that were the only evil result of such literalism in the interpretation of Scripture!

But, while this explains in part the failure of modern explorers to find any *statues* in Palestine of Jewish origin, why should there not be lapidary *inscriptions*? And why should they not be as numerous in proportion to the size and population of the country as in Egypt or Assyria? One answer is that neither of those countries has been so constantly the scene of war and other violent changes as Palestine, and in neither of them have relics of antiquity been so completely shattered or so frequently and effectually buried. Jerusalem, for instance, which has been twenty-seven times besieged and time after time "laid on heaps" by conquering armies, is really a series of ruins lying one upon another like strata, the present city being the eighth of the name. The Roman pavements of the time of Christ lie forty feet below the present surface. And this brings us to the second reply that we make to the question as to why more inscriptions are not found in Palestine. They are too far down in the ground. Until recently—until within the last two years indeed—there has been no systematic excavation of historic sites. The work undertaken by the Palestine Exploration Fund at Tel-el-Hesi, the ancient Lachish, has already yielded rich results (which we hope to describe in our next number), and we may reasonably expect that other discoveries of equal or even greater interest will be reported from time to time. But, before we consider these subterranean treasures of the Holy Land, let us endeavor to get a clear idea of the inscriptions already found on the surface by happy accident, so to speak, rather than by systematic search. The first, the longest, and the most important of these, the Triumphal Tablet of Mesha, king of Moab, is the oldest extant inscription in Hebrew, carrying us back to the days of Elijah, 900 years before Christ, and supplementing the Biblical history in the most interesting manner.

THE MOABITE STONE.

I. *Discovery, Transcription, Destruction, and Approximate Restoration.*—On the 19th day of August, 1868, the Rev. F. Klein, a German missionary (of the Anglican church) at Jerusalem, while making a journey through Moab, a country very rarely visited by Europeans, found, half buried in the ground, within the old city walls of Dibon, a stone of black basalt, rounded at the top and bottom, containing an inscription of thirty-four lines in a language almost identical with Biblical

Hebrew. The block was about four feet high, two feet wide, and fourteen and one-half inches thick. Mr. Klein, though not appreciating the inestimable value of his find, copied a few words, compiled an alphabet, and inaugurated an attempt to secure the monument for the museum at Berlin. This effort was apparently on the eve of success, as the Arab owners and Turkish pashas had agreed to hand the stone over to the Prussian Government for \$400, when the petty national jealousy of different European scholars, which we saw illustrated in the case of the Rosetta Stone, again asserted itself, and this time with disastrous consequences. M. Clermont-Ganneau, of the French Consulate at Jerusalem, sent agents to take squeezes of the inscription, and, if possible, even to obtain the stone, offering as much as \$1,875 for it. This aroused both the cupidity and superstition of the Arab sheikhs, who fell to fighting for the possession of this golden charm. The Turkish Governor of Nablus also tried to seize the prize, and the Arabs rather than lose it built a fire under it, then poured cold water over it, and so broke it to pieces, distributing the fragments among their families as a protection to their crops. Most of these fragments, however, were subsequently recovered by M. Clermont-Ganneau, patched together, and sent to the Museum of the Louvre in Paris.

II. *Translation, Contents, and Date of the Inscription.*—The record may be divided into three parts determined by the subject matter :

- (1), The wars of Mesha against the Omri dynasty of Israel.
- (2), The public works erected by Mesha.
- (3), The wars of Mesha against the Edomites.

We will accordingly divide our translation into three paragraphs, and we will print in italics certain statements which we wish the reader to notice particularly.

“I am Mesha, the 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 Kirkha, a (stone of) salvation, for he saved me from all despoilers, and made me see my desire upon all my enemies. *Omri was King over Israel, and he afflicted Moab many days, because Chemosh was angry with his land. And his son succeeded him; and he also said, I will afflict Moab. In my days (Chemosh) said, (Let us go) and I will see my desire on him and his house, and I will destroy Israel with an everlasting destruction. Now Omri took the land of Medeba, and (the enemy) occupied it in (his days and in) the days of his son, forty years. And Chemosh (restored) it in my days. And I fortified Beal-Meon, and made therein the reservoir, and I fortified*

Kiriathaim. And the men of Gad dwelt in the land of Ataroth from of old, and the King of Israel fortified for himself Ataroth, and I assaulted the city and captured it, and killed all the warriors of the city 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 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 women and maidens, for I devoted them to Ashtar-Chemosh; and I took from it the vessels of YAHWEH [i. e. Jehovah], and offered them before Chemosh. *And the King of Israel fortified Jahaz and occupied it, when he made war against me. But Chemosh drove him out before me; and I took of Moab two-hundred men, even all its chiefs, and I led them up against Jahaz and took it to annex it to Dibon.*

I built Kirkha, the wall of the forest, and the wall of the mound, and I built the gates thereof, and I built the towers thereof, and I built the palace, and I made the two reservoirs for water in the midst of the city. And there was no cistern in the midst of the city at Kirkha. And I said to all the people, Make for yourselves, every man, a cistern in his house. And I dug the aqueduct for Kirkha with the help of captive men of Israel. I built Aroer and I made the road across the Arnon. I built Beth-Bamoth, for it was pulled down. I built Bezer, for it was in ruins. And the chiefs of Dibon were fifty, for all Dibon was obedient to me. And I reigned over an hundred [chiefs] in the cities which I added to the land. And I built Mehedeia and Beth-Diblathaim and Beth-Baal-Meon; and I placed there the sheep-grazers of the land.

And as to Horonaim (the men of Edom) dwelt therein (from of old). And Chemosh said unto me, Go down, fight against Horonaim and take it. And I went down * * * and Chemosh restored it in my days.'

The remaining lines of the inscription are hopelessly mutilated and cannot be read. Moreover, the words which we have placed in parentheses are so much injured on the tablet that they cannot be made out with certainty. But, with these slight exceptions, the record is intact, and the statements are intelligible and full of interest.

The first division, with its references to Omri and his successors, shows that Mesha set up this triumphal pillar about 890 years before Christ.

III. *Interest and value of the Moabite Stone.*—(1). *Its linguistic and critical importance.* It will be seen from the statement with which the last paragraph closed that Mesha's inscription is nearly three thousand years old. What this means to the student of Hebrew palaeography can best be understood by considering along with it another fact, viz: that the oldest Hebrew *manuscript* in existence reaches back to only the tenth century of the *Christian era*, and is therefore not quite one

thousand years old. Every Bible student feels a pang of disappointment when this fact first comes to his knowledge. He has heard in regard to the New Testament that there are Greek manuscripts in existence which were written very soon after the days of the Apostles, and when you tell him that the date of the earliest Old Testament manuscript still extant is 916 A. D., a little before the time of William the Conqueror, he asks in amazement—Is it possible “that of the early Old Testament books, written more than 3,000 years ago, we have not a single copy 1,000 years old; or, in other words, that the earliest Old Testament manuscript in existence is as far from the time of the original writers as would be a New Testament manuscript written to-day”? It is even so. There are no manuscripts of the Old Testament that can be named in point of antiquity with the great uncial manuscripts of the New.

More than that, when we look into a Hebrew Bible now, or when we examine one of those oldest manuscripts of the tenth century, the characters which meet our view are not the same in form as those which were used by the original writers of Scripture. If we would see the kind of Hebrew letters used by Moses and the prophets, and engraved by the finger of God on the two tables at Sinai, we must look at the Moabite Stone—or the Siloam Inscription, of which we shall have something to say in our next number.

It was indeed supposed at one time that a manuscript had been found which was written in the Ancient Characters and which could therefore boast the same hoary antiquity as the Moabite Stone. “In the August of 1883, an immense sensation was caused in the learned world by the announcement of a most wonderful ‘find’ of ancient Hebrew manuscripts in Palestine, ‘the great climax,’ it was called, ‘of Biblical discovery.’”

It consisted of fifteen leather slips, black with age as it would seem, and impregnated with the faint odour of funeral spices. They presented to the casual observer only the appearance of a plain surface, but on touching them with a brush dipped in spirits of wine, the strange old writing became visible—forty columns of Deuteronomy in the ancient Hebrew characters, just like those on the Moabite Stone, and apparently dating from about the eighth or ninth century before Christ.

These precious documents were brought to the British Mu-

seum by a Mr. Shapira, a dealer in old manuscripts, who had already procured through the Arabs many literary curiosities, and he estimated the value of this new-found treasure at one million pounds sterling [about \$5,000,000!]. A council of the greatest experts in the kingdom assembled to investigate the matter, and Biblical scholars almost held their breath awaiting the momentous decision, the importance of which was vastly augmented by recent controversies as to the date, composition, and authorship of the Pentateuch. . . . On Tuesday, August 21st, the decision was announced in a leading paragraph of the *Times*. The particulars of the investigation are extremely interesting, but the result only concerns us here. The Shapira bubble had burst! The much-talked of manuscript of the days of Jehosephat was found to have been written in the days of Victoria, one of the cleverest literary swindles perhaps ever recorded. Thus ended the Shapira 'discovery.' Since that time nobody ventures to speak of the possibility of manuscripts yet existing in the ancient Hebrew writing."* But in the venerable characters of the Moabite Stone we see the very forms used by the sacred writers of three thousand years ago.

Another point of some interest in regard to the writing is the division of words. It is well known that in most ancient documents words were written continuously, without any separation to show where one word ended and another began. According to this method, the opening words of the Gospel of John, *In the beginning was the word*, would be written thus:

INTHEBEGINNINGWASTHEWORD.

Starting with this fact, Eichhorn, one of the greatest of German critics, collected a number of phenomena from the Old Testament which he said demonstrated beyond controversy that the sacred books of the Hebrews "could not have had a regular division of words." But Mesha's inscription shattered Eichhorn's theory from pinnacle to foundation stone. For, not only are the words divided by dots, but the verses also are separated from each other by vertical strokes. We have here a fine illustration of the precariousness of purely subjective theories and critical inferences—an illustration which is all the more valuable because absolutely devoid of dogmatic complexion. As the point is merely orthographical and therefore doc-

*J. Paterson Smyth.

trinally indifferent, theological prepossessions do not enter. Eichhorn's theory did not favor either conservatism or radicalism. And it looked irresistible. But it was wrong. The phenomena in the extant Hebrew scriptures which formed the basis of his theory did not belong to the original autographs but only to later copies.

This is not the only theory which has been exploded by this ancient epigraph. It is well known to many readers of the English Bible that certain portions of the poetical books of scripture (Psalms xxv., xxxiv., xxxvii., cxi., cxii., cxix., cxlv.; Prov. xxxi:10-31; Lam. i-iv.) are in the original Hebrew of alphabetic structure, *i. e.* each clause, or verse or stanza begins with a different letter of the alphabet. This cannot easily be shown in a translation; but in the cxix. Psalm, which is at once the longest, the most elaborate and the most familiar instance of alphabetism, the English versions have indicated it approximately by placing a different Hebrew letter at the head of each stanza of eight verses. Thus the caption of the first stanza is א ALEPH. This means that every one of these eight verses in the original begins with the Hebrew letter א which is the first letter in the alphabet. The caption of the second stanza is ב BETH, meaning that each of the eight verses from 9 to 16 begins with the second letter of the alphabet. And so on. The reader will please observe that there are twenty-two such stanzas in Ps. cxix. There are twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Now certain critics have alleged that these artificial compositions, characterized by the alphabetic structure, must be of late origin and could not have been written before the Babylonian captivity, because "the original Semitic alphabet contained only sixteen letters" and the six additional characters came into use at a much later period of Hebrew history. In other words, it was maintained that because these alphabetic scriptures use all twenty-two letters, the editors of the Psalter were certainly wrong in ascribing some of these alphabetic psalms to David, (in whose time only sixteen letters were known,) and it was confidently affirmed that the real date of these psalms could not be earlier than about 400 B. C., five or six centuries after the time of David. This view was powerfully confirmed by a statement of Pliny in regard to Cadmus, the man who according to the Greek myth brought the letters of the alphabet from Phœnicia to Greece. Cadmus was in fact not a person at all, but merely

a personification representing the East, Cadmus (*Kadmos*) being the Greek way of spelling ק א ד מ the Hebrew and Phœnician word for East. It was just a poetic way of saying that Greece learned letters from the East, and, as a matter of fact, the Greek, the Latin, the English, and all the other European alphabets are derived from the same Oriental prototype. Now Pliny says that the alphabet brought by Cadmus from Phœnicia consisted originally of 16 letters. This seemed to be conclusive against the early origin of the alphabetic psalms which show 22 letters in the same order as now. Such was the argument. But it has been completely upset by the Moabite Stone, for here we have an *alphabet of twenty-two letters reaching clean back to the time of David*, for of course Mesha did not *invent* these characters at the time when he chiselled his immortal inscription. That is inconceivable. The characters must have been in general use long before. It is therefore certain that this alphabet was known and used in the time of David, who lived only one century before the time of Mesha. In other words it was *not* impossible for David to have written alphabetic Psalms with twenty-two letters.

Other points of palæographic interest in connection with this venerable monument, such as the light it throws on the original forms of the Greek alphabet, the demonstration it affords that the weak consonants (א ה ו ר) were used from remote antiquity to represent the fuller vowel sounds, the resemblance of its grammatical forms to those of the Biblical Hebrew, and the identity of its syntax with that of the scriptures—must be passed over without discussion. We proceed to matters of more general interest.

(2). Its *theological* importance. Here we shall confine ourselves to a single point, viz. the mention of the divine name י א ה ו ה (Jehovah.) The Hebrew form of this great name is יהוה a word of four letters. It is therefore called the *Tetragrammaton*. Everybody knows that in the English Bible the word "Lord" is printed in two different ways; and that when it is printed in the common type (Lord) it represents a Hebrew word (Adonai) that means Lord, but when printed in small capital letters (LORD), it represents an entirely different word (Jehovah) that does not mean Lord at all. Compare Is. vi:11 and Is. vi:12. The result of this substitution has been the almost total exclusion of this name (Jehovah) from the Bible. "Jehovah" occurs about *seven thousand* times in the

Hebrew, but in our authorized version it occurs only *seven* times, and in three of these cases it is in composition, as Jehovah—jireh (Gen. xxii:14.) In the revised version "Jehovah" occurs with much greater frequency, but its occurrences even there are extremely rare as compared with the original. The American Revision Company thought that this change of "LORD" back to "Jehovah" should be universal, and in their Appendix, where they give the renderings which they preferred to those of the British Company, their first remark is "Substitute the Divine name 'Jehovah' wherever it occurs in the Hebrew text for 'the LORD'". There are many reasons why it seemed to them important to do this. In the first place, the two words "Adonai" and "Jehovah" do not mean the same thing and therefore ought not to be translated by the same word. "Adonai" means *Lord* and conveys the ideas of authority and power. "Jehovah" conveys the ideas of unchangeableness and faithfulness. The French version renders it by *L'Eternel*; and this comes nearer to expressing its meaning than any other modern version. "Jehovah" was the *covenant* name of God and set forth his unchangeable and everlasting relation to His people. It is His distinctive, incommunicable name. Other names of God are applied to the gods of the heathen also, but this one never. It belongs alone to the God of Israel. Being his chosen and characteristic name it ought to have been preserved and not pushed out by another and less significant appellation. In the second place, the retention of "Jehovah" would have been a safe-guard against errors in doctrine. The poet Coleridge, who was an accomplished Hebrew scholar and a keen observer, says that if this name had been preserved "Socinianism (Unitarianism) would have been scarcely possible in England." We need not pause to show why this is so. In the third place, God explicitly commanded that it should be preserved in Ex. iii:15 where he calls himself "Jehovah" and says, "This is my name and this is my memorial *forever*."

But perhaps some reader is wondering why "Jehovah" was *not* preserved, if all that we have said is true. And it is high time that we should answer that question. This covenant name of God was cast out of the Bible on account of what Calvin calls "a foul superstition of the Jews." They professed so much reverence for the Tetragrammaton that they forbade the pronunciation of the sacred name altogether. We are told in

the Talmud that it was "allowed only in the priestly benediction in the Temple, that when the High Priest on the Great Day of Atonement uttered this incommunicable name, in confessing the sins of the nation over the national sacrifice, '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 ever!' and that *any layman who pronounced it forfeited his life both in this world and in the world to come.*" Therefore they substituted the word "Adonai" for יהוה wherever it occurred, and to this day in Jewish synagogues *Adonai* is pronounced in its stead. Moreover, the first great translation of the scriptures into Greek, known as the Septuagint version, was made by Greek-speaking *Jews* in the third century before Christ. They cherished this same superstitious dread of the name *Yahweh* (Jehovah) and therefore instead of transferring or even translating it, they translated *Adonai* by the word *Kurios*, meaning *Lord*. The vulgate Latin version followed their example and used *Dominus*. And hence "LORD" in the English version. But *when* did this superstitious horror of pronouncing the Tetragrammaton originate among the Jews? Their tradition says that it dates from the time of Moses, and they have tried to find some scriptural support for this view. The only passage, however, that they could twist to their use is Lev. XXIV: 16—"And he that blasphemeth the name of Jehovah, he shall surely be put to death." Accordingly the Jews who made the Septuagint version have rendered this verse thus: "And he that *pronounceth* the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death." But the very story in connection with which that law was promulgated shows that the reference is not to pronunciation but to blasphemy. Besides we have already seen that God commanded Moses to pronounce the name "Jehovah" and told him that He wished this to be His name in common use among his people to all generations. But the Moabite Stone has settled the question by showing that as late as B. C. 900 "the name Jehovah was commonly pronounced by the Israelites, and that from its being so generally used by the Hebrews, the heathen took it as the characteristic name of the Jewish national Deity." So that the two limits of the period between which the Tetragrammaton ceased to be pronounced are about B. C. 900—300, the reign of Mesha on the one hand and the making of the Septuagint version on the other. We may rest

assured that those who expelled the covenant name of God from His own Bible in direct violation of His command to retain it belonged to an age of dead formalism and hypocrisy, when superstition could easily masquerade in the guise of reverence, and when the commandments of men were taught for the doctrines of God.

We have now seen when the name "Jehovah" was put out of the Bible—some time after B. C. 890. It is a more practical question when it will be put into the Bible again. When the Revised version was published in 1885, the American Company, in view of the moral right of the British Company to the copyright, agreed not to issue any edition of their own for fourteen years from the date of publication and to throw the whole weight of their influence meanwhile in favor of the English editions. This contract expires in 1899. And it is not probable that "Jehovah" will be replaced throughout the Old Testament in any version until that time—at least any version that can be commended to the public by any influential body of scholars. But in 1899, the surviving members of the American Company will no doubt publish an authoritative edition in which the most significant name of God will be restored to its rightful prominence.

It may occur to some one to ask why the New Testament writers did not restore it in those passages which they quoted from the Old Testament. The answer is two-fold. First, they uniformly made their quotations from the Septuagint translation, which was the people's Bible, and in which "Lord"—(*Kurios*) had already been substituted for "Jehovah." They were not *making* or *revising* a version, but simply *quoting* one. Secondly, if they had restored the Tetragrammaton and pronounced it in making these quotations to Jews, they would have been stoned to death for blasphemy and thus the purpose of God in their ministry would have been defeated. They refrained then from using the name "Jehovah" for the same reason that led our Lord to withdraw from Judea and prosecute the greater part of His ministry in Gallilee, viz: that He might escape the violence of the Jews and not be cut off before His time to the thwarting of the Divine purpose in His personal ministry. But of course this reason for abstaining from the use of that name no longer exists. Therefore the British Revisers have no such excuse for refusing to follow Calvin and the American Company in restoring it to the position in scrip-

ture to which God assigned it and from which it was banished by Jewish superstition.

(3.) Its *historical* importance. The statements of Mesha's monolith supplement and corroborate the Biblical references to Moab in a very interesting manner, especially the brief but vivid narrative in the 3rd chapter of 2nd Kings. In 2nd Sam. VII: 2, we are told that David subjugated the Moabites and made them tributary; and, as there is no reference in Scripture to a subsequent revolt until the time of Mesha, it was supposed that they continued to pay tribute to Israel during the whole of the intervening period. But the Moabite Stone tells us that they were re-subjugated by Omri, implying that after David's day they had regained their liberty, perhaps through the favor of Solomon who married Moabite wives and erected a temple to the Moabite God, Chemosh, on the Mount of Olives. At any rate they were reconquered by Omri, and the chief object of Mesha's Inscription is to declare that *he* threw off the yoke this time, and drove Israel away and secured the final independence of Moab. The story in 2nd Kings III: 4-6, is this: Mesha, King of Moab, was rich in cattle, and paid annually to the King of Israel the enormous tribute of 100,000 lambs and 100,000 rams, with the wool. But at the death of Ahab and the accession of Ahaziah he rebelled. During Ahaziah's short reign of two years no steps were taken to reclaim this lucrative vassal. But when Jehoram became King, he determined to reduce Mesha again to subjection. Now there are at least four questions in connection with this bit of history which are not answered in the Biblical record and which are answered by the Moabite Stone:

(a.) What was the special occasion of Mesha's revolt? The Stone tells us that it was provoked by Ahab's aggravation of the oppression of Moab. Dr. Ginsburg suggests that it was Ahab who increased the annual tribute of cattle to the prodigious number mentioned in the Bible.

(b.) Was Mesha's revolt suddenly effected, by a kind of *coup de main*, as such things usually are, or was it gradually done? His own record shows us that he did not surprise the Jewish garrison in Moab all at once, but that he took the places which the Jews had fortified one by one.

(c.) What use did the Moabites make of their two years of independence? The Tablet tells us that they employed it in rebuilding and refortifying the strongholds from which they

had driven out the Israelites. And this brings us to the fourth question—

(d). Did Jehoram make an attempt single-handed to reconquer Moab from the North before he organized the allied invasion from the South which is described in the rest of 2nd Kings III? The Stone says he did, and implies that at the battle of Jahaz the King took the field in person, but Moab was too strong for him and he was compelled to withdraw. Then followed the joint campaign of Jehoram and Jehoshaphat which is described in 2nd Kings III: 6-27, and the historical setting of which is thus given by a graphic and pleasing writer :

“Joram of Samaria easily secured the help of Judah in the further prosecution of the war with Mesha. To make victory certain, a levy of all the available fighting men of Israel was made; and the vassal King of Edom was required by Jehoshaphat to join the expedition with his forces. Marching South to Jerusalem, Joram was joined by the foot and horse of Judah—for cavalry and chariots had been permanently in use since the days of Solomon—and the united armies advanced towards Moab, by the Southern route, to meet the contingent from Edom, and to pass along the edge of its territory round the South end of the Dead Sea. Seven days of painful and slow stages had brought them apparently to the Wady el Ahas, the Brook Zered of the wilderness life, marking the boundary between Edom and Moab. Usually retaining some water, even in the heat of summer, it was now dry, and the army and its cattle were alike suffering greatly from thirst. Meanwhile, Mesha had gathered all the strength of Moab, from the youngest able to bear the sword girdle, and was close at hand. In this extremity the confederates were saved by the prophetic counsels of Elisha, who had accompanied Joram of Samaria, and was consulted by Jehoshaphat. By his directions a number of pits were dug in the bottom of the Wady (i. e. valley) where they found themselves, to catch and retain the water which, he told them, would presently rush down from the highlands of Moab; though they should neither see wind nor rain, the storm breaking at too great a distance. Nor were they disappointed, for through the night the prediction was fulfilled.

Mesha and all the fighting power of Moab had, meanwhile, advanced to their boundary, and lay encamped, ready to repel the invasion, probably on the outer slopes of the hills which run along the South of Moab, overlooking the waste to the East. Watching here during the night, they were astir with the first light. But when the sun rose suddenly, as it does in the East, with hardly any twilight, its level beams, red with the morning mists, revealed no enemy, but shone with a blood-red glare on the line of pools in the Wady (valley), dug on the preceding evening. No water having existed there before, the appearance was inexplicable, except on the supposition that the confederates had quarrelled, and had destroyed each other, as they themselves had done in their own invasion of Judah—[2 Chron. XX: 23]. The pools must be the blood of the slain; the sur-

vivors had fled, and the deserted camp invited pillage. The cry rose therefore, "Moab to the spoil!" and the host in tumultuous confusion, each eager only to outstrip the other and gain most booty, rushed from the heights. A few moments and their mistake flashed on them but too vividly. Instead of empty tents, they found a vigorous army ready to assail them. Helpless as sheep, they could only turn and flee; their swift-footed enemies pressing remorselessly behind. All power of resistance in the field was swept away. On rolled the flood of invasion, carrying ruin and death far and near. According to the barbarous custom of antiquity, town after town, open or fortified, was levelled with the ground; the rich farms and vineyards buried under showers of stones, every soldier, as he passed, helping the desolation; all the wells and cisterns, the fountains of life in a hot country, filled up, and every fruit or timber tree cut down. "The land was as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness." Nothing escaped.

A last despairing stand was made at Kir-haraseth, now known as Kerak, a town almost impregnable by its position. * * * This last stronghold the confederates now invested, with the intention of destroying it by famine, since they could not hope to take it by direct attack. Meanwhile, the amphitheatre of heights around enabled them to harass it by a constant fire of stones from the Benjamite slingers, and perhaps from the catapults which came into general use in sieges, under Uziah. Unable at last to endure this persistent annoyance, Mesha resolved on a desperate sally at the head of a forlorn hope of 700 swordsmen. The point chosen was that beleaguered by the Edomites, the specially hated foes of Moab, but the attempt to break through was defeated, and the King had to retire again into his citadel. It seemed as if Chemosh had deserted him, and was wroth, for some cause, with Moab. One hope of propitiating him and regaining his favour remained. * * * He would offer up, as a human sacrifice, his first-born son, the heir apparent to the throne, and thus make the most terrible atonement which a country could offer to appease its offended god. Acting on this dreadful resolution, the King, and his son, were seen by the besiegers to mount the wall, attended by the priests of Chemosh. To the horror of all who lined the surrounding hills, with the city lying in full view below, an altar was now raised, and the lad handed over to the priests, by whom he was openly put to death, and then offered as a burnt sacrifice, to win, if possible, the heart of the god, from whom not even such an offering had been withheld. The awful tragedy, indeed, accomplished its end, but by a means Mesha could not have foreseen, and with which Chemosh had nothing to do. The sight filled the besieging army with horror. Such sacrifices, in the opinion of the Hebrews, polluted a land and laid it under a curse of blood. (Psalm CVI: 37-42). They would no longer stay in it, but would rather give up all they had won. To remain might bring on them the wrath which must speedily break forth for a deed so appalling. The camp therefore was broken up, and Mesha left unsubdued. But such a deliverance, effected apparently by the death of the Prince, however clearly understood in Israel, might readily confirm Moab in its cruel idolatry.*

*Cunningham Geikie.

Such is the story of Mesha. And such is the stone supplement of the second book of Kings, a supplement contemporary with the events, giving Moab's version of the war with Israel, and filling a number of lacunae in the Biblical narrative, as well as corroborating its statements in the most striking manner.

