

**RECORDS OF THE PAST: BEING
ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF
THE ANCIENT MONUMENTS OF
EGYPT AND WESTERN ASIA, VOL.**

I

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Records of the past: being English translations of the ancient monuments of Egypt and western Asia, Vol. I by A. H. Sayce

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A. H. SAYCE

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ANCIENT MONUMENTS OF EGYPT AND
WESTERN ASIA

NEW SERIES

EDITED BY A. H. SAYCE

VOL. I



Multæ terricolis Jnguae, coelestibus una

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P R E F A C E

THE favourable reception accorded to the first series of *Records of the Past*, and the hope more than once expressed since its discontinuance that a similar series would be again started, have led to this second attempt to lay before the public some of the most important documents left us by the civilised nations of the ancient Oriental world. During the ten years that have elapsed since the first series was concluded, Assyrian research may be said to have entered upon a new phase. Expeditions have returned from Babylonia, bringing with them the spoils of ancient libraries, the clay tablets preserved in the British Museum and elsewhere have been copied and examined with increased industry and exactness, and students have been flocking to the new study in Germany and America. The decipherment of the cuneiform inscriptions of Van has opened up a fresh world of language and history, and the geography of Western Asia in the Assyrian epoch has been mapped out in almost all its essential details.

The increase of materials, and more especially of

labourers in the field of research, has made our knowledge of the Assyrian lexicon at once wider and more accurate. Inscriptions which were still obscure ten years ago can now be read with a fair approach to exactness, while many of the translations proposed in the former series of the *Records* can be amended in many respects. Indeed there are certain cases in which the progress of knowledge has shown the tentative renderings of a few years ago to be so faulty, if not misleading, that it has been determined to replace them by revised translations in the series which is now being issued.

The new series will, it is hoped, be found to be an improvement upon its predecessor in certain points. The translations will be provided with fuller introductions and notes, bearing more particularly upon the history, geography, and theology of the texts, and drawing attention to the illustrations they afford of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. The historical inscriptions, moreover, will be published, so far as is possible, in chronological order.

In one point, however, a difference will be noticed between the plan of this second series of *Records* and that of the first. The value of a translation from a language known only to a few scholars depends in large measure upon the confidence with which its precise wording can be accepted. The writer who wishes to make use of a translation from an Egyptian or Assyrian text for historical or controversial purposes ought to know where it is certain, and

where it is only possible, or at most probable. He ought to receive warning of passages or words or readings of doubtful character, and the translator ought to provide proofs of any new renderings he may give. In the present series of volumes, accordingly, doubtful words and expressions will be followed by a note of interrogation, the preceding word being put into italics where necessary: otherwise italics will be used only for the transliteration of proper names or words which cannot at present be translated. The notes will contain a justification of new translations, whether of words hitherto undeciphered or of words to which a different signification has hitherto been attached. The names of individuals will be distinguished from those of deities or localities by being printed in Roman type, whereas the names of deities and localities will be in capitals.

Though exploration and discovery have been carried on actively in Egypt during the last decade, thanks mainly to the Egypt Exploration Fund and the enterprise of Professor Maspero, the results have not been so startling or numerous as those which have attended the progress of the younger study of Assyriology. There is not the same reason for amending the translations, previously published, of Egyptian documents, nor has any large number of historical texts been brought to light. Instead, therefore, of publishing alternately translations from the Assyrian and Egyptian monuments, Assyrian and Egyptian texts will appear in the same volume,

though it will doubtless happen that the Assyrian element will preponderate in some volumes, the Egyptian element in others. Egyptian and Assyrian, of course, will not be exclusively represented ; Phœnicians and Proto-Armenians have left us written monuments, comparatively few though they may be, and the *Records of the Past* would be incomplete without such important inscriptions as that of the Moabite king Mesha or of the Hebrew Pool of Siloam.

In commending the first volume of this new series of *Records* to the approval of the public, the Editor must not forget to say that the enterprise is international, eminent scholars belonging to all nationalities having consented to take part in it, and that if his name appears somewhat too frequently in the present volume, it is a fault which shall not occur again.

A. H. SAYCE.

QUEEN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD,
3d August 1888.