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factor. The verdict upon which it rests is inevitable, and the sentence which follows is stamped with hopeless, indisputable finality.[1]

LITERATURE.

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Bradby (E. H.), *Sermons Preached at Haileybury*, 201.
Chafer (L. S.), *True Evangelism*, 154.
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Churchman's Pulpit: Ash Wednesday, v. 261 (E. B. Pusey).
Church Pulpit Year Book, 1912, p. 44.
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[1] T. G. Selby, *The Alienated Crown*, 174.

Recent Biblical and Oriental Archaeology.

BY THE REV. A. H. SAYCE, D.D., LL.D., PROFESSOR OF ASSYRIOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

DR. LANGDON is indefatigable. We have hardly finished digesting his book on *Tammuz and Istar* when a new and elaborate work of his on the early Sumerian texts of Babylonia makes its appearance. This forms the thirty-first volume of the records of the 'Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania,' and contains some interesting and important historical and religious texts from the library of Nippur, which was destroyed in the Abrahamic age (*Historical and Religious Texts from the Temple Library of Nippur*, Munich, 1914). They have been copied by Dr. Langdon partly in America and partly in Constantinople.

The place of honour is naturally given to a Sumerian poem from which we learn that the reign of the famous Naram-Sin lasted only seven years, and that it ended in misfortune, perhaps at the hands of a usurper. As two reigns at least intervened between those of Sargon (3800 B.C.) and of Naram-Sin the statement of Nabonidos that he was the 'son' of Sargon must be understood in the sense of 'descendant.' It would seem that he was the last of Sargon's race. The poem is followed by two 'Lamentations'—the prototype of the Lamentations of Jeremiah—over the destruction of the cities of Kesh and Nippur at the hands of the Kurdish tribes, and at a much later day of Ur by the Elamites. Dr. Langdon is doubtless right in concluding that the first event ushered in the rule of the dynasty of Gutium or Kurdistan, though in giving a list of the kings of the dynasty he has included a prince who lived about a century before its commencement. The Lamentation over the fall of Ur alludes to the capture by the Elamites of the last king of the dynasty of Ur.

Among the other texts edited and translated by Dr. Langdon is an interesting ode on the coronation of King Dungi of Ur (about 2500 B.C.), an early model of what such effusions ought to be. Another interesting text, which is unfortunately only a mere fragment, is the 'Lament of a Sumerian Job,' of which the burden is that 'a man of desolation am I.' It is the earliest prototype of the Biblical book of Job yet discovered, and exemplifies once more how dependent Semitic literature was upon the older culture of Sumer. The Assyriologist may be pardoned if at times he wonders whether there was anything really original in it.

Dr. Langdon concludes his work with translations of some Semitic texts. One of these is a tablet containing part of the Code of Khammurabi specially made for the law-courts of Nippur, and possibly anterior to the standard edition of the Code. Two others are medical texts which, as might be expected, contain more magic than medicine. They are full of curious terms and names of plants and stones which Dr. Langdon has made valorous efforts to identity. The signification of the plant-names, however, must be settled rather by botany than by philology. Personally I am very sceptical as to the success of the attempts made by German scholars in this direction.

Dr. Langdon is one of the best living Sumerian scholars, and his translations of these difficult texts represent the high-water mark of what can be done

with them to-day. In many details the translations will doubtless be corrected and improved by future research, and the obscurities and literary *bêtises* which they seem to exhibit will be cleared away, as has been the case with the Semitic texts of Babylonia. When we remember that even the Semitic scribes of later Babylonia were not always sure about the signification of a Sumerian phrase, the difficulties which beset the best-equipped modern translator can be easily understood.

In the Study.

Fresh Literature for the Pulpit.

WHATEVER other gifts are possessed by the Rev. Archibald Alexander, B.D., he has the gift of effective public speech. His new book *The Glory in the Grey* (Allenson; 3s. 6d.) contains, he says, forty-two *talks* on everyday life and religion. 'Talks' is the right word. It used to be addresses. But the address was never so compact of familiarity and reverence. And, above all, the addresses were never so deftly shot through with illustration. Every talk is lit up with appropriate anecdote or analogy. But we shall choose one that has less illustration than usual, to show what the talk can be as a sketch of character.

Toward.

In the life of Daniel and in that of Lot there is a 'note of direction' which is very significant. Daniel opened his windows *toward* Jerusalem, and Lot pitched his tent *toward* Sodom. In these contrasted directions, the life-stories of the two men are told in brief.

Every character has one supreme direction. There is no gainsaying that, I imagine. We have all many interests in life. There are many directions in which we develop our original holding. We are keen on this, that, or the other thing. But on analysis it must be found that one of these is supreme. When there is a conflict of interests, there are some that we allow to go to the wall.

It was as much Daniel's wish as it would have been yours or mine to keep out of the lions' den and to stand well with the king. But he saw clearly that to follow that direction would be for him to be false to his God. There, then, were two competing motives. He had to elect one to the supreme place. And he had done it when he opened his windows toward Jerusalem in the sight of the whole town.

Lot, likewise, knew what Sodom was. There was the talk of the countryside about Sodom's reputation, and there was a voice of God within his own heart. On the other hand were the man's keen commercial instincts and his love of money. He had to elect one of these directions to be the supreme one. And he had made his choice when he pitched his tent toward Sodom. There is a direction in life which a man makes supreme. It can be what he likes. It may be Daniel's, or Lot's, or countless others besides. But a chief and controlling direction every man must have, every man actually has. The question is—What is it? Toward what?

For it is direction that is the only true and just test of character. That there are other tests we all know, and many of us have winced under them. The matter-of-fact world has its tests for all religious profession. Of course, it is practical. 'Let us see what they do,' it says. And too often it has cause to point its finger in scorn at the doings which it can see. The critic, both without us and within us, asks for facts, and there they are, some of them shameful, dishonouring, damning facts! Now, I do not for one moment seek to underrate the value of that standard. But I want you to know that there is a fairer test than that, Heaven's test. The world asks, 'What does the man do?' But Heaven asks, 'What was he trying to do? What is the main set and purpose of his life?' By a blamable error in navigation the ship may run out of her course, or a tempest may drive her headlong before it. But the question at last comes to be—What port was the captain trying to reach?

It is the easiest thing in the world to pick faults in the life of the Christian man or woman. Peter once denied his Lord with curses. But is there no difference between his cowardice, sad and shameful as it was, and the cold, calculating spite of the Chief Priests who did Jesus to death? Peter's