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against him. And the Lord sent against him bands of the Chaldeans . . . Jehoiakim slept with his fathers and Jehoiachin reigned . . . three months . . . and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign' (2 K 24^{1, 2, 6, 8, 12}). Further, 2 Ch 36^{5-8, 10} says that he reigned eleven years, agreeing in this with 2 K 24¹, and that 'against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and bound him in chains to carry him to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar also carried of the vessels of the house of the Lord to Babylon . . . and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead. . . . And at the return of the year' (when, as 2 S 11¹ says, 'kings go out to battle') 'king Nebuchadnezzar sent and brought him to Babylon.'

The reconciliation of all these statements requires a more lengthy discussion than can be given here, and a searching examination of all the dates given in Jeremiah. This must be reserved for another occasion. Here it will be enough to put the matter in this rough way. Jehoiakim came to the throne about 608; his fourth year was about 605; Nebuchadnezzar succeeded his father about the

same time; Jehoiakim died about 597, and the next spring Jehoiachin was taken to Babylon.

Can the date given in Dn 1¹ for the carrying away of the Temple vessels be explained so as to harmonize naturally with the facts, as above stated, of Jehoiakim's reign? There is good reason to claim that, in the light of what has been previously suggested, we are in a position to give what is at least a conceivable solution of the enigma. All would be straightforward if the writer had before him some record which gave some occurrences in Jehoiakim's reign, and, after, mentioned that he submitted to Nebuchadnezzar and served him three years, then revolted, and *in the third year* (after his submission—or, possibly, his revolt—in the reign) *of Jehoiakim* Nebuchadnezzar came up and carried the Temple vessels away, and in the following spring carried Jehoiachin away. We have seen that this form of expression is found in Babylonian records, and that it offers a solution of a difficulty in regard to Hezekiah's reign. That it does the same here may be claimed to confirm the validity of the explanation in both instances.

The Significance for Old Testament History of a New Tablet.

BY PROFESSOR THE REVEREND A. C. WELCH, D.D., EDINBURGH.

MR. GADD, assistant in the department of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities at the British Museum, has had the singular good fortune to discover a new tablet. And, by order of the Trustees, there has recently been published a volume, in which the discoverer gives a transliteration and translation of the text with notes. The document contains the Babylonian Chronicle between the years 616-609, which are the tenth to the seventeenth years of Nabopolassar, who was the founder of the New-Babylonian or Chaldæan monarchy. It relates the series of campaigns carried out by the Babylonians, allied with the Medes and Scythians, against Assyria, the issue of which was that Nineveh, after a two months' siege, fell never to rise again. The tablet further recounts a last stand of the defeated Assyrians at Harran, which was brought to a speedy end by the Scythians

capturing the new capital. Unfortunately, however, it ends without mention of the battle of Carchemish, where Babylonia, after its conquest of Assyria, met and defeated the Egyptians.

The period, since it contains a turning-point in the history of the Euphrates valley, is of great importance, but has hitherto been very obscure. Our knowledge of it was derived from later documents and from indirect sources of information. This first-hand, contemporary document throws a welcome beam of light into the darkness. Students of the history of the farther East will need to relate its new facts to the accounts of Josephus, Herodotus, and others. Here it is only proposed to point out its significance for Old Testament study.

Certainly, then, the date of the fall of Nineveh has been decided. Hitherto the accepted date has been 606. The great city was actually cap-

tured in 612, six years earlier. It is a natural inference, but no more, that the date of the battle of Carchemish must also be moved back some years. Unfortunately this is not certain, for, as has been said, the tablet breaks off before that decisive battle. It is also now clear that Assyria did not come to a final end with the capture of its capital. Part of the army escaped to Harran, and there Ashur-uballit tried to rally the fragments of the people. His kingdom, however, was short-lived, for the Scythians captured the new capital in 610.

The fact that Assyria managed to survive for two more years after the fall of Nineveh is of interest to students of world-history, but carries little significance for knowledge of the Old Testament conditions. Assyria ceased to count in Palestinian affairs, when Nineveh fell. What is of significance there is the remarkable information that an Egyptian army came to the help of the Assyrians at Harran. In an earlier year, also, 616, Egyptian help enabled Nineveh to beat back a dangerous attack by the Babylonians, when they were advancing up the Tigris. That is to say, in these last critical years of the Assyrian empire, Nineveh and Egypt were allies against Babylonia. Now 2 K 23²⁹, in its account of Josiah's end at Megiddo, states that Pharaoh-Necho was marching against the Assyrians. Josephus, x. 5. 1, on the other hand, names as the enemies of Egypt the Medes and Babylonians. Evidently the new tablet proves Josephus to be in the right. The Pharaoh had taken alarm at this coalition which was overwhelming his ally, or, if Egypt was subject to Assyria, was sending a contingent to the help of his suzerain.

But the new fact of an alliance between Egypt and Assyria, which extended over several years, compels us to reconsider the relations between Pharaoh-Necho and Josiah of Jerusalem. What happened, when the Judæan king was put to death at Megiddo? Was there a battle on that famous road by which the Egyptian army must advance to the Euphrates? If there was, why was Josiah opposing Egypt? Josiah was certainly tributary to Assyria at the time. If then he opposed the Egyptians, he was fighting against an army which was hastening to retrieve the disaster which had befallen his liege lord.

So long as it was believed that Egypt was hostile to Nineveh and that in the battle at Carchemish it was merely seeking its share of spoils in the East,

those who held that a great fight took place at Megiddo maintained that Josiah, in loyalty to his suzerain at Nineveh, flung himself across the path of Pharaoh-Necho in a vain, but gallant, effort to stop the invaders. Now that it has been made clear that Egypt was in alliance with Assyria, this explanation of the attitude of the king and of the whole situation is no longer tenable. Josiah, if he was a loyal tributary, could not be resisting an army which was hurrying to save the remnants of Assyria.

If the events at Megiddo took place between the final ruin of the Assyrians at Harran and the battle at Carchemish, where the Pharaoh tried conclusions with the Babylonians, the new Chronicle reveals a different situation. By the fall of Harran Pharaoh-Necho had been flung back into Syria. Only a contingent of his army, however, may have been involved in the final collapse of the new Assyrian capital. He was not prepared to acknowledge himself beaten and so leave all Syria open to Babylonian influence. Before advancing afresh, he felt it necessary to secure his rear, and especially to make sure that Judah did not rise behind him. Jerusalem was small enough to be negligible in ordinary circumstances. But even the little State of Judah might form an ugly neighbour, if, after a defeat on the Euphrates, an Egyptian army were forced to retire in something like rout along the road of the Philistine plain. The Pharaoh may even have had reason to suspect that Josiah had been tampered with by emissaries from Babylon, as Hezekiah had been tampered with at an earlier date. He summoned Josiah to his presence in the North and had him put to death.

When the situation is thus recognized, it brings the further suggestion as to whether there was ever a battle between Josiah and Necho at Megiddo at all. Was there anything more than a military court-martial and execution? As soon as the Old Testament accounts are examined in the light of the new situation which the tablet has revealed, it becomes significant to notice that in 2 K 23^{29f.} there is no mention of a battle. 'King Josiah went up to meet Pharaoh-Necho, and he slew him at Megiddo when he had seen him.' That hardly reads like the description of a pitched battle between two nations. And what follows only confirms the impression thus gained. For the king's servants quietly bring the body of their dead master back to Jerusalem, and the people of Judah proceed to appoint a successor. This successor,

Jehoahaz, was not found acceptable to the Egyptian king, who removed him also, and set up a nominee of his own, the Jehoiakim who treated Jeremiah so cavalierly. The impression left by the whole account is that the Pharaoh was making sure of the little kingdom at his back, and was able to do it with extreme ease.

It is the Chronicler, in 2 Ch 35^{20ff.}, who is responsible for the view that a battle was fought at Megiddo. Some will be able easily to dispose of his evidence, as of a like unreliable character with all that he relates. Personally I am not able to believe that a man, who wrote a serious history at a time which was not very distantly removed from the period of Josiah, invented a story and put it in circulation. And it is interesting to notice that in v.²¹ he writes in his own way of certain negotiations between Necho and Josiah. That seems to point in the direction of the Pharaoh

having reason to suspect Josiah's loyalty to Assyria and its ally, and of his having made some sincere effort to bring Judah back peaceably. And, as for the account of the fight, which shows such interesting evidence of having been written up on the model of Ahab's final defeat, it may be no more than a somewhat grandiose description of a scuffle which took place between Josiah's escort and the Egyptians, when he met the Pharaoh finally at Megiddo.

But, whatever one may think of Megiddo and the events which took place there, it remains certain that Josiah was not prompted in his action by loyalty to his suzerain at Nineveh. Whether he was defeated at Megiddo in a pitched battle, or was merely executed after a drumhead court-martial, his death was due to the fact that he was not supporting Assyria. For Necho who put him to death was Nineveh's ally.

In the Study.

Virginitus Puerisque.

What a Boy gave God.¹

'And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: for all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.'—Mk 12⁴¹⁻⁴⁴.

WHAT'S your name? Well, you say, I'm really Margaret, and strangers call me that; but Mother says I'm Meg, and the wee ones shout for Peggie, and at school, to tease me, they say, Hallo, Maggie! I see. So Margaret and Maggie and Meg and Peggie all mean the same thing, mean you. Well, in the very same way there are people who call their church a church, but others say theirs is a' chapel, and others 'but mine's a cathedral,' and long ago the Greeks called theirs, a temple. But they all mean the same thing. A temple was just a church where people went to worship God. Not very long

¹ By the Reverend A. J. Gossip, M.A., Aberdeen.

ago—oh yes, it was before you were born—they found an old Greek temple that had been buried underneath the ground for hundreds and hundreds of years. It was a church where long ago people had gone to worship a god whom they called Apollo. And it seems that all the sick folk in the country round about, people like that old body Mother goes to see on Sundays, or that boy who hurt himself at football and has been in bed for weeks and weeks, all that kind of folk were carried up to the temple, and prayed to the god to make them better, and often they were cured.

God, of course, really gives for nothing. He's not like you, who would only give your knife with the three blades if you got an electric torch in exchange. He gives for nothing. He's not like people who won't let you in unless you pay. You remember when that big match was on, and like a silly you had spent your money upon sweets and hadn't enough left to get you in, and you could hear the shouts and cheers and wanted so to see but couldn't, for you had no money, and they were charging at the gates. God's not like that; He gives just as a present, like Father or like Mother. Wouldn't it be dreadful if you had to pay *them*—