make? Perhaps there is. The whole affair is a question of probability. On the one hand, the metrical theory may be a delusion, and the Greek and Syriac versions may have conspired to deceive us. On the other hand, the Hebrew recension may be corrupt. The same interpolator whom we detected in the act of substituting מְנֻאָה for שׁוֹמֵה may have banished the Chaldaic adverb from the verse. When the metrical law had been forgotten, words of this sort would easily drop out.

The other Aramaism which "ought to appear, but does not," is of less importance; for it was rightly pointed out by Prof. Noeldeke that the word כִּפֵּן occurs in the Hebrew of Job, and that therefore I was not justified in claiming it for my thesis. The Hebrew (Schechter, 18*a*) by omitting an "and" restores the metre, so that the thesis gains something from it; and since the form כִּפֵּן accounts for both the Greek and Syriac renderings, I am inclined to think it was the word employed by Ben-Sira, the word רַע which appears in the text being the remains of a variant inserted by some one who preferred the more strictly Hebrew synonym.

D. S. MARGOLIOUTH.

THE DERIVATION OF PURIM.

RENAN, in his *Histoire du Peuple d'Israel*, following P. de Lagarde, derives Purim from the Persian. The Jews, according to this view, adopted the Farwardîgân Festival, discarding its religious peculiarities, and celebrated it in the twelfth month as a purely secular festival. They called it in Aramaic *Pourdai*, and in Hebrew *Fourdim*: the latter, whether by errors in transcription or some process of phonetic decay, became Purim.

Zimmern, in Stade's *Zeitschrift* for 1891, sought a derivation from the Assyrian *puḫru*. At the same time he derived the festival from the Babylonian New Year Feast.

He suggested the identity of Mordechai with Marduk, the head of the Babylonian pantheon, and regarded the Book of Esther as a romantic development of the old theme of Marduk and Tiamat, or Bel and the Dragon.

Halévy, in the *Revue des Études Juives* for 1887, ably combatted the derivation from the Persian proposed by Lagarde, and decided for a meaning "lot." Oppert, in the same Review for 1894, however, strongly supports a Persian influence, and enumerates a long list of the proper names which he considers Persian. He also gives as the derivation of Purim the Persian *pura*. What the original meaning of this *pura* may be, he does not show; but merely remarks that the Book of Esther establishes its meaning as "lot." Oppert argues throughout that the Book of Esther has a real historical foundation. Whatever we may think of the origin of the feast itself — whether Persian or native Babylonian, it seems to me that Zimmern and Halévy are correct in protesting against the Persian etymology. The Jews may well have kept up a feast in which they had long shared at the New Year in Babylon, and could do so without reproach, as it was the Feast of Accessions, the event from which the tenure of office dated for all the magistrates of the State. That they had the additional reasons given in the Book of Esther, need not come into question here.

Now this suggests a much simpler derivation for Purim than any mentioned above. The Assyrian word *puru* probably means "term of office," "turn," in German *mal*, in French *fois*. This has just been made plain by Peiser in the fourth volume of the *Keilschriftliche Bibliothek*, page 107. Two private contracts exist in the British Museum, dated in the eponymy of Beldânan (Rm. 2. 19, and K. 378). At the end of the date in each case are added the words "ina šanê purišu." They are therefore dated in the eponymy of Bêldânan "in his second *puru*." Now

Bêldânan was eponym B.C. 744, and again B.C. 734. Each time he was, as also on these two tablets, prefect of Kalaḥ. It seems certain that this note must mean that the date was B.C. 734, when he was prefect and eponym the second time. Peiser, therefore, renders "ina šanê purišu" by "in seiner zweiten Amtszeit." As he further shows, this new word *puru* and its rendering make clear an obscure point in the inscription of Shalmaneser II.

Now as the eponyms and all other magistrates, not excluding the king himself, entered upon their offices at the New Year, it seems reasonable to conclude that while on its religious side the Feast was called Farwardîgân by the Persians, Zagmuku, or Akitu by the Babylonians, Gula Feast in Nineveh, on its civil side it was the Feast of the Puru, or Accession Day for all officials. If so, the name could be well adopted, as it was secular in its view, and had no inseparable connexion with heathen rites.

Whether this Assyrian *puru* had anything to do with "lots" I cannot pretend to decide. At least the eponyms could not have been chosen by lot in the earlier days, for they followed a regular cycle of towns or offices. In the latter days of the Assyrian empire this cycle seems to have completely fallen into abeyance; and no fixed order of sequence is discoverable. Whether at Babylon under the native empire lots played any part in the selection of officers of the State, I am not aware. Whether, indeed, the Persians borrowed the name Purim and gave it a turn of their own, I do not know. The derivations hitherto proposed are as speculative as mine, and they are not very successful as philological attempts. This derivation leaves untouched, as it seems to me, the questions as to the historical value of the Book of Esther. Neither the Persian *pura*, which may not exist, nor the Assyrian *puḫru*, "assembly," seems equally likely. For Zimmern seems

conscious of the difficulty in the disappearance of the rough gutteral *ḥ*: further it is a far cry from "assembly" to "lots."

In any case my derivation is Semitic, and it involves no long descent in meaning from *puru*, "turn," "time," "term of office," to a good sense for Purim, nor even to a meaning "lot" for that word.

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SOME RECENT OLD TESTAMENT LITERATURE.

THE publication of the Revised Version of the Apocrypha[1] completes the work of the revisers. Most of the more important books were translated by committees of the New Testament Company, but 1 and 2 Esdras, the additions to Esther, Baruch, the Song of the Three Children, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, and the Prayer of Manasses were undertaken by a committee of the Old Testament Company. The text is for the most part that of A.V., but in 2 Esdras use has been made of Professor Bensly's reconstruction of the text, and vii. 36–105, the Latin text of which was discovered by him, and published in 1875, has been included in the translation. As regards form, Ecclesiasticus, Wisdom, and the poems in Tobit and Judith have been printed according to the parallelism of sense in the originals—an arrangement which makes these passages much more intelligible and readable. The changes in the translation—as far as we have been able to examine them—give the sense of the original not only more accurately, but also more vividly, than the A.V. It is to be hoped that this publication will powerfully stimulate the growing interest in the Apocrypha. Many of the books possess great intrinsic interest and literary merit; the Maccabees

[1] The Apocrypha, being the version set forth A.D. 1611, compared with the most ancient authorities and revised A.D. 1894. Oxford University Press, 1895.