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Isaiah xxi. 1-10 reëxamined.

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OPINIONS so various that they cannot all be true are still held concerning this brief poem, whose fine dramatic content is so wrapped in obscurities of form as to attract and to baffle successive generations of expositors.

The point which naturally comes first in order is the determination, so far as possible, of the passage to be explained.

I. TEXT AND TRANSLATION.

Ginsburg's edition of the Hebrew Bible, 1894, gives no important change from the ordinary reading and pointing. I would not cling to the Massoretic text when it gives an impossible or a manifestly improper sense; it is not a fetish to be worshipped when it can be obviously corrected. But how often it is forgotten that the same ingenuity of invention should first be expended in attempting a rational account of the text that now is, that has been handed down for unknown centuries, and that always has the presumption in its favor! Even Duhm insists on this, as in the passage before us (21^b). "Several critics have found that the consonants may be differently combined; e.g. (Buhl) עֲמֻדָה מְצִפָּה or עֲמֻדָה הַמְצִפָּה (Stade). . . . Both scholars seem to me to have given an example of how not to emend. Although the present text may be faulty, at any rate we must first attempt to understand it, and even let a real difficulty remain in it, rather than travesty it into the modern and trivial."

The value of the Septuagint as an aid to sober restoration of the text cannot be denied, but it can be over-estimated. My own conviction, gained about fifteen years ago, after comparing the entire Hebrew Bible, verse by verse, with the LXX renderings, has never been altered; namely, that the translators have shown such a capacity for misunderstanding their originals that we need to exclude this

source of error with the utmost care, before concluding in any case that their text differed from our own. The section before us may be regarded as a typical one; the list which follows presents all the deviations, in Swete's edition of the Septuagint, from a fairly faithful translation of the Massoretic text, minute changes being disregarded.

Verse 1. ׀, om.; כַּוְּסוּת, *καταιγίς*; אָבָה, *έρχομένη*; אָרְבֵּי, *φοβερόν* (sc. *δραμα*, vs.²).

Verse 2. עָלַי, *ἐπ' ἐμοί*; וְגֵרֵי כְּנָז, *καὶ οἱ πρέσβεις τῶν Περσῶν*; vac., *ἐπ' ἐμὲ ἔρχονται*; אֲנִי הִשְׁתַּחֲוִי אֶל הַיָּם, *νῦν στενάζω καὶ παρακαλέσω ἑμαυτόν*.

Verse 3. חָלְסוּ, *ἔκλυσις*; וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוִי, *ἠδίκησα*; נִבְרָה לְתִי, *ἐσπούδασα*.

Verse 4. אֲנִי הִשְׁתַּחֲוִי אֶל הַיָּם, (καὶ) ἡ ἀνομία με βαπτίζει; לִי, *ἡ ψυχὴ μου* (subj. of) *ἐφέστηκεν*.

Verse 5. תִּשְׁמַע הַיָּם, om.

Verse 6. vac., *σεαυτῷ*; יָדָה אֲנִי, *ἰδὼς ἀνάγγελον*.

Verse 7. אָבָה, *εἶδον*; וְהִקְשִׁיב, *ἀκρόασαι*.

Verse 8. וְהִקְשִׁיב, *καὶ κάλεσον Οὐρέαν*; אֲנִי, *Κύριος εἶπεν*; תִּלֹּחַ, *τὴν σύκτα*.

Verse 9. אָבָה, om.; vac., *καὶ τὰ χειροποίητα αὐτῆς*.

Verse 10. vac., *ἀκούσατε*; וְהִקְשִׁיב, *οἱ καταλελιμμένοι καὶ οἱ ὀδυνώμανοι*; vac., *ἀκούσατε*; אֲנִי, [subject of clause]; וְהִגִּידוּ, *ἀναγγέλειεν*; לָכֵן, *ἡμῖν*.

When the whole list is carefully studied, it is plain that the lack of agreement is generally due to carelessness. It must be conceded that the LXX should not be blamed for not translating **עָלַי הַיָּם** (vs.²); for no one since their day has been able to give a satisfactory account of that phrase. The same charitable construction, and for the same reason, should be put upon the omission of **יָם** in the title. But when it is proposed to alter the next word into **כְּסוּפָה** to agree with the LXX, I answer that the latter, if original, would never have been changed to the plural, while the reverse change is easy. The two cases that follow are minor instances of the translation of words rather than thoughts. The same thing runs to an amusing extreme in

Verse 2. Here **עָלַי** (imv. **עָלֵה**) is supposed to come from **עַל**, and as Delilah cried "Philistines upon thee," the prophet is made to exclaim, "Upon me are the Elamites." The confusion next of Medes with Persians is a small matter, but **וְגֵרֵי** (imv. **צֹוּר**) is taken for the plural noun **וְגֵרֵי**, *καὶ οἱ πρέσβεις*. To complete the sentence, these ambassadors also "come upon me." The last word in the verse was apparently taken for the Hithp. of **שׁוּב** (Duhm).

Dr. Paul Ruben, one of whose conjectures Professor Cheyne favored in this JOURNAL for 1895, has since published *Critical Remarks upon Some Passages of the Old Testament* (London, 1896). His method

is to re-translate into Hebrew the Septuagint of each passage considered, and, by comparing this with MT., to deduce a text accounting for both. The result in the verse before us (Is. 21²) is as follows :

G	{	ἐπ' ἐμὲ ἔρχονται· σὺν στενάξει καὶ παρακάλεσω ἐμαυτόν. : לִי יָבֹאוּ עִמָּהּ אֲנִי וְאֶתְנַחֵם
M (transposed),		כָּל הַשְּׂבִיתִי אֶתְנַחֵהּ
R	{	כָּל הַשְּׂבִיתִי אֶתְנַחֵהּ "Destroy, annihilate, O Ecbatana!"

Ruben refers to Schrader (*KAT*², p. 378), but neither there nor elsewhere do I find this form אֶתְנַחֵהּ in place of the usual אֶתְנַחֵם. The Greek phrase at the beginning of the selection simply repeats, for grammar's sake, as already mentioned, the error ἐπ' ἐμοί.

Verse 3. Ἐκλυσις is rare in the LXX, but as it elsewhere represents only יָגוֹן and רַפְיוֹן (once each), neither of which resembles חֲלֵהְלֵה, there is no reason to suppose that the Hebrew here was different. Ἡδίκησα, in its disregard of sense, is an important witness to our present text; ἐσπούδασα is the common word in LXX for בָּדָה.

Verse 4. What suggested βαπτίζει to the translator is a mystery. Just below, נָפֵשׁ is read for נֶשֶׁף, and made the subject of שָׁם in defiance of אֵת, while חֶשְׁקִי is left out of the account. The phenomena of this verse may well be recalled when we are tempted to give undue value to the LXX version.

The one blunder which seems to point to a different text is in vs.⁸, "and summon Uriah to the guard." In spite of many attempts, there has been no success in interpreting אֶרְיֵה. Duhm conjectures רָאָה, א being a doublet from יִקְרָא. Possibly Οὐρείαν points to an original וְרָאָה, "And he cried, Now behold, Lord," etc. However, as all things are possible, the LXX may have read אֶרְיֵה with MT., and pointed it אֶרְיֵה (cf. 8²). The last example in the above list seems to be the familiar itacism ἡμῖν for ὑμῖν. The others call for no further remark, except a reference to Buhl's theory (*ZATW.* 1888, pp. 157-164), which does not bear on my present purpose.

Let us return to the title, which, of course, stands outside the prophecy proper. It has always been a *crux interpretum*. מִשְׁא מִבְּרֵי־יָם, "oracle of the wilderness of the sea"; a dark oracle, indeed! The old Protestant commentators took refuge in a mystical sense; the wilderness of the sea is Babylon, *i.e.* Rome, *i.e.* the

papacy; for the woman in the Apocalypse was in the wilderness and sat on the waters. Most moderns strike out ים with the LXX, and read simply מְדַבֵּר מִשָּׂא. But, as we have seen, the LXX here is a precarious guide both in omissions and additions. Analogy may give us more light.

There are ten prophecies in the Book of Isaiah, which are distinctly headed מִשָּׂא, with an addition giving the name of the oracle. Five of these are perfectly clear, being simple names of countries. The other five are more or less enigmatical, as follows:

21¹ מִשָּׂא מְדַבְּרִים

21¹¹ מִשָּׂא דְיִמְדָּה

21¹⁸ מִשָּׂא בְעָרֵב

22¹ מִשָּׂא גַּיָּא הַזֵּה

30⁶ מִשָּׂא בְּהֵמַת הַנֶּגֶב

The third of these, as even Vitringa saw, suggests the hand of an editor; for it is not the oracle of Arabia, or concerning Arabia, but *in* Arabia, which gives no good sense. But the oracle itself begins with the words בְּיַעַר בְּעָרֵב. This ב, then, bewrayeth the editor, who plainly means, Oracle containing the word בְּעָרֵב. No sensible prophet would have prefixed such a title. Critical emendation of the text is no recent affair; for Vitringa, two hundred years ago, went on to observe that the title in 22¹ points simply to the phrase *valley of vision* in 22⁵; and that, by parity of reasoning here, מִשָּׂא מְדַבֵּר would be an editor's way of saying, Oracle containing the word מְדַבֵּר. As to the ים that follows, he suggested, without adopting it, the theory that it might be the last two letters of an original מְדַבְּרִים, referring to Ez. 20³⁵ מְדַבְּרֵי הָעַמִּים, which he interpreted to mean Babylon. Upon further study Vitringa gave up all these amendments and returned to the traditional text. מִשָּׂא מְדַבֵּר does not mean "oracle containing the word מְדַבֵּר," he then said; for an editor would have written the exact form in the text, מְדַבְּרֵי, corresponding to בְּעָרֵב.

I do not accept this objection, and I hold that the great scholar's first thought was better than his second thought. The title of 22¹ does not mean the oracle whose subject is the valley of vision; that phrase is merely subordinate, and if the editor had copied it with Chinese fidelity, he must have written מִשָּׂא בְּנֵיא הַזֵּה, whereas the ב is omitted, like the מן in our passage. In all three cases, the reference is incidental, and either more or less precise as the editor pleases. Take the last case, 30⁶: "Oracle, beasts of the southland." This, too, is not the subject of the oracle, but an incidental reference;

not now to a word, or even a phrase, but to a subordinate topic ; it is just as clearly editorial as the others. One more case remains, 21¹¹ : "Oracle, Dumah." After all that has been written to elucidate this word Dumah, I can only express my conviction that the word means just what it means in the Psalms, silence, with a play, no doubt, on the word Edom. I think the incidental reference is to the watchman's refusal to give any satisfaction to his anxious questioner. "It will be morning ; it will be night. You may ask if you choose ; you may come again ;" — that is all he says. It results that to all five of these *massa* passages titles are prefixed on a common plan, and that in the case before us the title must be מִשְׁאֵל מִדְּבָר, not יָם, מְדַבֵּר or עַמִּים or anything of the sort.¹

It may throw some light on the text of our passage if we examine next its metrical form. One needs to proceed with utmost caution, for in nothing are the theories of present-day biblical scholars more at variance than in the matter of Hebrew metres. An agreement as to elementary structure must be reached before there can be harmony in the higher divisions of the subject. It is useless to deny the existence in some compositions of true rhythm, not only of parallelism, but of what is properly called metre, with uniform accents and a good degree of regularity ; although the Hebrews carried the principle of variety in rhythm much farther than our tastes would sanction. The statement may be verbally true, but certainly the implication is wrong, when Driver's *Introduction* (even in the last edition, 1897, p. 362) asserts that "the poetical instincts of the Hebrews appear to have been satisfied by the adoption of lines of *approximately* the same length." Although metre = measure, the measurement does not necessarily pertain to syllables any more than to letters. The mechanical counting of syllables, which Bickell takes for a test, and which Driver has in mind here, would make sad work of some of Tennyson's spirited songs. Any one with a musical ear feels at once that Jonah 2³⁰ is poetry, perfect after its kind :

קָרָאתִי מַצְרָה לִי אֶל יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁמָעֵנִי

and that 2³⁰ is poetry of another kind, giving a different metrical impression :

מִבְּטֶן שְׂאוּל שְׁוֹעֵתִי שָׁמַעְתָּ קוֹלִי :

¹ One or two commentators have suggested that the יָם may be the plural ending of מְדַבֵּרִים, but this word, though exceedingly frequent, is never found in the plural, and the suggestion has not met with favor.

Yet Bickell, by counting the syllables, brings both under the same law (*Carm. Vet. Test.*, p. 211).³ The latter half of the above verse is a good specimen of Budde's *Qind* rhythm, characteristic of the structure of Lamentations, and of the Ode in Is. 14 (*JOURNAL*, 1896, pp. 20-25). But the poem before us is even simpler in structure; for the most part it scans easily with two beats to the line. The third verse, e.g.:

קָתַנִּי חִלְקָה	עֲלִיבֵן קִלְאוּ
כָּצִירֵי יוֹלָדָה	צִירִים אֲחֻזֵּי
נִבְהַלְתִּי מִרְאוֹת :	נִשְׁרִחֵי מִשְׁמַע

Verse² has the same movement, up to the last measure :

הָגַד לִי	חֲזוֹת קָשָׁה
הַשׁוֹדֵד שׁוֹדֵד	הַבְּתוֹד בְּתוֹד
צִירֵי קוֹד	עַל עֵילָם
	כֹּל אֲנַחְתָּה הַשְּׁבַתִּי :

By rule the word 'besiege' would have been *šuri*; it is the force of the rhythm that changes it to *šurt*. A fine example of the same thing occurs in the Song of Deborah, where the play on her name is introduced :

עוֹרֵי עוֹרֵי הַבְּנוֹהַ | עוֹרֵי עוֹרֵי דְבִרֵי שִׁדַּי

Compare Is. 51⁹.

It is a coincidence, at least, that the very point in Is. 21² where the metre wavers marks an uncertainty in the sense. In the first place, *אֲנַחְתָּה* is an unexampled form; in the second place, the meaning seems at variance with what follows; in the third place, as we have seen, the LXX has a very peculiar text. Leaving this for the present, let us gain a wider induction.

After the prose statement at the beginning of vs.⁶ (the familiar formula *כִּי כֹה אָמַר אֱלֹהֵי אֲדָנָי*), we strike a rhythm containing three beats to the line :

לֵךְ הַסֵּמֶד הַמִּצְפָּה | אֲשֶׁר יֵרָאֶה יֵרֵד :

The fall of Babylon (vs.⁹) is in a verse combining three beats with two :

הַיְהוּדָה כָּא רֶכֶב אִישׁ | אָמַר קְרָשִׁים

³ As lately as 1894, Bickell criticised Duhm for not counting the syllables in Is. 33. ("Beiträge zur sem. Metrik," *SBWA*. cxxxi. 11.)

then, after the two prose words, וַיֵּץ וַיֹּאמֶר .

וַעֲלֵה נַעֲלָה בְּבֵל | וְקִלְמָסִי אֶלְהֵה | שֶׁבֶר לְאַרְזִי :

One more line of three beats is at the end of vs.⁷:

וְהִקְשִׁיב קֶשֶׁב רַב־קֶשֶׁב :

Aside from these few exceptions, which no more prove variety of authorship than the same phenomenon in English poetry, the Massa is written from beginning to end in regular verse of two beats. Reverting to the close of vs.², it is important to see how the present text is at variance with the context. This was pointed out by Kleinert in 1877 (*St. und Krit.*, p. 174), and has been best stated by Duhm (1892): "It is very questionable whether the last three words in vs.² are correct. אַנְחָתָה might be אֲנַחְתָּה with the feminine suffix, but the suffix would have nothing to refer to; or אֲנַחְתָּה, with doubled feminine ending. But the contents are out of harmony with the connection. For if Jahve will make an end of the sighing (Israel's, or, in general, that of those oppressed by Babylon), how can the prophet 'on that account' be seized with convulsions and with horror (vs.^{3f}), and call the announcement a hard vision? A word of comfort for Israel is in place at vs.¹⁰, but here only a threat; their joy or their pride should be made to cease. A fitting sense can hardly be obtained without considerable alteration." He does not notice Kleinert's conjecture אֲנַחְתָּה ('alle will ich hinabführen'), which would be plausible if it did not oppose the manifest connection of thought.

I conceive that it would not be especially violent to change

כל־אֲנַחְתָּה־הַשְּׁבִיתִי

to

כל־אֵיבֹתֶיךָ־הַשְּׁבִיתִי = קֵל אֵיב אֶתְּהַשְּׁבִית

and then the clause would read: "Go up, Elam; besiege, Media; every foe thou shalt quell." A command and a promise of like tenor occur frequently: "Go up; for Jahve shall deliver it into the king's hand" (1 Ki. 22⁶). "Go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into thy hand" (1 S. 23⁴). To the form there is a perfect parallel in Ps. 8³: "that thou mightest still the enemy," לְהַשְׁבִּית אֹיִב. This last word is often written defectively, as above. For the emphatic אֶתְּהַשְּׁבִית compare the double אֲנַחְתָּה, vs.².

It may be added that this emendation would bring the verse into harmony with the prevailing rhythm.

Now if we attempt to begin the poem with **בְּסוּפוֹת**, we perceive at once that something has fallen out before it. An occasional measure of three beats makes a pleasing variety, but to start off in this way would produce the same unbalanced effect as to end Mk. 16 with *ἐφοβούντο γάρ*.

We need some parallel here for **בָּא**, 'it comes,' the mysterious It (cf. 17^{13c}: He checks It; It is not), the judgment of the prophet's vision. May not this troublesome **יָם** be a relic of some verb like **הִמָּם**, suggesting an irresistible force? I venture on a daring conjecture; that the text is right as it stands; that this **יָם** is not the sea, but the regular perfect tense of the lost verb assumed by many lexicographers as the origin of that noun; **יָמַם**, 'to rage, to roar.' Whatever verb of the sort we place here, it avoids that awkward gerundial construction **לְהִלָּוֶה**; we no longer have to say, 'like whirlwinds in the South in passing through'; we have a simple infinitive of purpose; 'It rages like whirlwinds in the South to pass through; It comes from the desert, from a terrible land.'

As to the translation of the passage, the Revised Version is generally accurate, but the margin is mainly preferable to the text. In vs.², **הַגֵּר** agrees not with **הַזֹּוֹת** (fem.), but with the dread It. I believe, with Duham, that vs.³, end, should not be translated negatively, but thus: "I writhe at hearing it, I am dismayed at seeing it." Cf. Ec. 1⁸. To say, with most recent commentators, that he cannot see, is to deny the vision itself. The subject of **שִׁבְרָה**, vs.⁹, I take to be impersonal, 'one shattered'; *i.e.* the news is that the idols are shattered. The American Appendix to R.V. gives in vs.⁴, "my heart fluttereth," which is better than either 'wandereth' or 'panteth.'

We are now ready to examine the text and translation in metrical form:

מִשָּׁא מִדְבָּר			
מִתְּנֵי חִלְהֵלָה		עֲלֵבֵנוּ מִלֹּאֵי 3	בְּנוֹבֵב לְחִלְהֵלָה יָם בְּסוּפוֹת 1
בְּצִדֵי יִלְהָה		צָרִים אֲחֻזֵי	מֵאֲרָץ טִרְחָה : מִדְבָּר בָּא
נִבְהִלְתִּי מִרְאוֹת :		נִעַרְתִּי מִשֹּׁמֵעַ	הַגֵּר לִי 2 חַזוֹת קָשָׁה
שִׁלְצוֹת בְּשִׁתְּחֵנִי		מִשָּׂה לְבָבִי 4	וְהַשֹּׁדֵד שֹׁדֵד הַבּוֹגֵד בְּגֵד
שָׁם לִי לְחַרְדָּה :		אֵת נִשְׁפָּה חֲשִׁקִי	צִוִּי מְדִי עַלִי שִׁלָּם
			: אֶתְהַ תְּשִׁבִית קַל אֵיב
אֶכֹּל שִׁתָּה		צָמָה הַצְּמִית : אֶכֹּל שִׁתָּה	שִׁדֵּד הַשִּׁלְחָן 5 קִדְמוֹ הַשָּׂרִים
		: מִשְׁחֵי מִנֵּן :	

		6	בִּי זֶה אָמַר אֱלֹהֵי אֲדָמָה
	לֵךְ הַטֶּמֶד הַמַּצְפָּה		אֲשֶׁר יִרְאֶה יְגִיד :
	וְיִרְאֶה רֶכֶב	7	אָמַר פְּרָשִׁים
	רֶכֶב הַמִּדְבָּר		רֶכֶב נָקַל
	וְהַקְשִׁיב קֹשֶׁב רַב־קֹשֶׁב :		
	וְיִקְרָא וִירְאֶה	8	עַל מַצְפֵּה אֲדָמָה
	אֲנֹכִי טֹמֵד		תִּמְדֵי זִמָּם
	וְעַל מַשְׁמֵרֵי		אֲנֹכִי מָבֵן קַל הַלִּילֹחַ :
	וְהַיְהוּדָה בָּא רֶכֶב אִישׁ	9	אָמַר פְּרָשִׁים
	וַיִּשְׁמַע וַיֹּאמֶר		
	נִשְׁלָה נִשְׁלָה בְּבָל		וְקַל־מִסְלֵי אֱלֹהֵיהָ שֹׁעַר לְאֲרָם :
	מִדְשָׁתִי וַיִּבְרָרְנִי	10	
	אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַעְתִּי		מֵאֵת יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
	אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל		הַגִּידְתִּי לָכֶם :

Oracle : The Desert.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | It rages like storms
From the desert It comes, | in the South to pass through;
from a terrible land. |
| 2 | As a grievous sight
The robber robs
Go up, Elam,
Every foeman | It is shown to me : —
and the spoiler spoils.
besiege, Madai,
shalt thou subdue. |
| 3 | For this my loins
Throes have seized me
I writhe at the hearing, | with pangs are filled;
as of one that travails;
I quake at the sight, |
| 4 | My heart flutters,
My longed-for twilight | horror affrights me,
It changes to dread. |
| 5 | Preparing the table — spreading the rugs — eating, drinking : —
Rise, ye princes, | anoint the shield. |
| 6 | For thus said the Lord to me : —
Go, do thou set thee a watchman, | what he sees he will tell. |
| 7 | And he saw a troop,
A troop of asses,
Then he listened — listening — long listening. | horsemen in pairs,
a troop of camels. |
| 8 | And he cried : Now behold,
I myself do stand,
Yea, in my ward, I myself am set,
And lo ! here a troop coming on, | on the watch-tower, O Lord,
ever by day,
night after night !
horsemen in pairs ! |

Then he answered and said :

{	Bábylon is fálleen, fálleen, And all the ímages of her góds	are shattered to éarth.
10	O thou my bruised one, Whatever I heard Israel's God,	son of my threshing-floor ! from Jahve Sebaoth, have I told unto you.

II. INTERPRETATION.

Not to dwell upon minor varieties (as represented by Hofmann or Winckler), there have been three general groups, according as it is held : (*a*) that the prophet Isaiah foretells the capture of Babylon by Cyrus ; or (*b*) that the same event is depicted by a writer in Cyrus's time ; or (*c*) that the prophet Isaiah describes the capture of Babylon in his own time.

All agree to find as the main subject of the poem the siege and fall of Babylon. After long and earnest study of the passage, I have come to believe that this is not the principal, but a subordinate topic. The first of the above views has been almost universally abandoned. Its justification was an assumed interpretation of Is. 13 and 14, with which this Massa was thought to be in harmony. Certain vivid details in our passage formed a stock illustration of the minute accuracy of Isaiah's predictions ; e.g. the breaking of images (vs.¹⁰) was a witness to Cyrus's monotheism. Again, Herodotus and Xenophon relate that Babylon was surprised by Cyrus while its inhabitants were indulging in a night revel. So 21⁸, as commonly rendered, describes it. "They prepare the table, they set the watch, they eat, they drink ;" (then the alarm rings out) : "rise up, ye princes, anoint the shield." But this whole theory ceased to be plausible with the discovery of the cylinder inscriptions of both Cyrus and Nabuna'id. Babylon was not taken in a night revel ; it was taken without fighting ; the inhabitants of the city opened its gates to Cyrus. The latter was no iconoclast, and whether or not he restored the temple treasures to Jerusalem, he was careful to restore the idols to other cities. In general, the tone of our passage is far too vivid, the interest is too personal and pressing, to be referred to a mere prediction of some distant event.

The second hypothesis is the prevailing one at the present day. About the time when Deutero-Isaiah was encouraging the captive Israelites, by reason of Cyrus's conquests at a distance, to hope for deliverance, the prophet of 21¹⁻¹⁰ broke out into this rhapsodical

vision of a coming host, before whom Babylon was to fall, and by whom the threshed and bruised people of Jahve were to be freed.

It seems fatal to this hypothesis that the emotions in the breast of the prophet in view of the impending catastrophe are those of profound sympathy and poignant distress instead of triumph. The first test to apply to any theory is the historical situation. If no theory gives an easy and natural response to that test, we may have to fall back upon this one; but no element in the problem must be warped out of its natural construction. The unnaturalness of this explanation is evidenced by the constant efforts of different writers to overcome the difficulty. And yet few seem to have perceived that every form of the theory shatters against יָצַח of vs.³ Reuss (*Das Alte Test.*, ii. 458) remarks on vs.³: "The approach of the conqueror is the sign of Israel's release." He then gets rid of יָצַח by the heroic method of dropping it altogether from his version, and changing it to *aber* in his note. We do well to remember what Oppert has just reminded us of (*PSBA.*, January, 1898), that the first business of a historian is to be faithful to his text. I cannot but think that Cheyne, for example, speaks from his nineteenth century consciousness, instead of throwing himself back to the sixth century B.C., when he suggests (*Introd.*, p. 125) that "when the promised boon began to draw near, those to whom it was offered might humanely shrink from its terrible cost in human lives. . . . As a man, he [the prophet] is distressed at the terrors of the storming of 'Israel's second native city' (Ewald); as a servant of Yahwè, he loyally accepts the divine fiat."

The third theory is Kleinert's (*St. u. Krit.*, 1877, p. 174 ff.), adopted by G. A. Smith, and also temporarily by Cheyne and Driver, although since abandoned by both. According to Kleinert, the siege of Babylon was an Assyrian siege in Isaiah's own time, namely, that by Sargon in 710. Merodach-Baladan had seized the throne; had been speaking treason against Assyria with other nations, persuading them to cast off their allegiance. Hezekiah had shown a most practical interest in this scheme by disclosing his temple treasures, as who should say: 'Behold what a valuable ally is here!' Sargon's swift capture of Babylon, however, struck a fatal blow at the alliance, and was accordingly bewailed by Jerusalem. Under these circumstances Isaiah gave forth this oracle.

Now this is ingenious, but radically defective. It is not Hezekiah but the prophet with whom we have to do. Isaiah consistently and uniformly deprecated all foreign entanglements, charging his country-

men to stand square to every wind, and look to Jahve alone for deliverance from all perils. On the very occasion cited, he sternly rebuked Hezekiah for intriguing with Merodach-Baladan, and threatened his house with exile to Babylon. Was this the man to bow down like a bulrush when the heathen city with its heathen gods was overthrown?

Professor Driver asserts that the prophet betrays by his accents and tone that the message is one which does not fall readily from his lips. But do not accents and tone depend largely on the reader? He may render the announcement, if he chooses, with tears in his voice: "Fallen, fallen is Babylon."³ Or, on the other hand, he may read our passage exultantly:

נִשְׁלְתָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ כְּבָבֵל; her gods are shattered to the ground; she has threshed us, but she herself shall be threshed; this is my message from Jahve; הֲלֵלוּ יְיָ.

In view of the valid objections to all three of the interpretations considered, we may well subject the passage to fresh scrutiny.

The ten verses fall into two parts, of equal length but unequal character. Both are highly wrought, compressed, and vivid; but in the second part the imagination comes more into play. The prophet is bidden to station a watchman; the report of this sentinel follows. It is commonly and properly held that the watchman (after the analogy of Habakkuk and Zephaniah) is none other than the prophetic consciousness of the seer himself. Into the interesting psychological and religious questions involved, respecting the nature of the prophetic ecstasy, I cannot enter. (Cf. Duhm *in loco*; on the other side, Giesebrecht, *Berufsbegabung*, 1897, S. 55-58.) It does not seem to be generally observed that the second part is divisible into two sections, separated by a long interval of time. At the end of vs.⁷ the watchman is said to have listened, listening, long listening. Here I must digress to examine the rendering which makes vs.⁷ a condition followed by a conclusion; 'if (or when) he sees, then he shall listen.' The Revised Version adopts it, putting the common translation in the margin. Either is possible grammatically. The idea of beginning the verse with a condition started, I believe, with Ewald; it was almost immediately adopted by Drechsler, and these have been followed by many, not all, recent authors. Buhl has argued quite extensively for this explanation in his monograph on our passage

³ A friend tells me that Dr. Channing was wont to repeat the frequent phrase in Mt. 23 with a melancholy cadence: "Wō-o unto you, Scribes and Pharisees!"

(*ZATW.*, 1888, p. 157-164), but Stade (*ibid.* p. 165), who agrees with his chief positions, differs at this point, claiming that vs.⁷ tells what the prophet saw, vs.⁹ what he heard. That vs.⁷ expresses a condition, seems, indeed, very improbable, in view of the connection of thought. "Go, set a watchman;" not, "let him declare what he sees," not וַיִּבֶן but וַיִּבֶן ; "what he sees he will declare"; the watchman can be trusted; he is not to be told what to see. Or even, with Duhm, "he shall declare what he sees"; he shall fix his will upon the vision, so as to have it clearly in mind and tell it when the ecstasy is past. But how very flat to put in all the directions about horses, asses, and camels, and then tell him if he should see them to listen. There is no genuine vision, then; it is all the work of the mesmerizer. (Cf. Giesebrecht, as above.)

Dillmann says that on the common view we should expect וַיִּבֶן , but there is no strict consecution between vs.⁶ and ⁷ unless you beg the question by assuming the conditional construction. Duhm admits that this last is rather logical than grammatical.

In vs.⁶ the watchman begins to expostulate: "Now, behold, Lord." He goes on to protest that he stands on guard by day *continually*, and is at his post *all the nights*. This is clearly appropriate, as the symbolical way of marking the lapse of an indefinite period between the visions of vs.⁷ and vs.⁹.⁴ In vs.⁷ the watchman had already seen something, but though he has listened, listened, and listened, all the days and nights since, he has heard nothing. In vs.¹⁰ he has heard something, and heard it from Jahve Sebaoth, and he announces it to the oppressed people; the announcement is נִפְלְאָה בְּבָל . It is the Lord, then, who "answers" in vs.⁹, even as it is the Lord to whom the watchman had appealed in vs.⁸. Dropping the figure of the watchman, the vision shows us an army; then a lapse of time of unknown extent; then an army again, with the Divine declaration of the oppressor's fall, which the prophet repeats to the down-trodden people. The not uncommon interpretation, that the interval gives time for the army of Cyrus to take the city and come out again into view becomes unnatural in view of these days and nights of expectation.

If now we can find a fair and reasonable interpretation of the first

⁴ Hofmann (*Schriftbeweis* ², ii. 2, p. 549 ff.) treats of Is. 21¹⁻¹⁰. I quote from the closing paragraph. "Although it may therefore require a long time—thus this symbolical action is to be understood—before the destruction of Babylon, ordained of old in the counsel of God, is accomplished, accomplished nevertheless it will be."

part of the prophecy, it is no obstacle to its reception if the final catastrophe refers to another matter; nor will it be an insuperable obstacle, if our passage connects at either end with the context in which it has been handed down from antiquity.

I believe that the siege in our passage is the siege of Jerusalem; that the enemy is Assyria; that the prophet's distress is caused by the ravages of the foe upon his own country; that the prophet is Isaiah himself; and that the historical situation is the familiar one of ch. 1 and 10, 14²⁴⁻²⁷, 17¹²⁻¹⁴, and especially of 22¹⁻¹⁴.

For the first point I cannot claim absolute novelty. Four centuries ago, Don Isaac Abrabanel maintained in his work on the Prophets that our passage referred to the siege of Jerusalem by *Nebuchadnezzar*. Vitringa holds him up to scorn; and it must be owned that the difficulties of the position were evaded rather than met by Abrabanel.

"All sighing I make to cease" he explained to mean that mere sighing would yield to the loud lamentations of vs.⁸! "Fallen is Babylon" meant that Babylon had fallen upon Jerusalem! "Cognosce *תְּהֵאֱבָדֵיאוּ* Interpretis," says Vitringa. And yet Vitringa himself, to a certain extent, broke with the interpretation prevalent then and now. He held that although vs.²⁰ and all following, referred to Cyrus's attack upon Babylon, the whirlwind from the desert (vs.¹⁻²⁰) predicted Nebuchadnezzar's expedition against Jerusalem, which was then to be avenged by the Persians. He acutely objected to the common interpretation that it is precluded by the title *מַדְבָּר* which (all agreed) meant Babylon. "Does it seem sufficiently in harmony with the elegance of our prophet to introduce the enemy as coming from the desert to destroy the desert? I trow not."

In our own day, the feeling that the vision has a Palestinian color has induced Duhm to remark: "That which rushes on like cyclones comes from Babylon, but passes over the wilderness to the seer; hence the wilderness is the one between Babylon and the prophet's position north of the Negeb. . . . From the Palestinian simile we may infer that the author lived in Palestine."

Cheyne will not admit so much, but he reaches the same goal by a more circuitous route. "It is true that the seer speaks as if at a distance from Babylon. But this again is to be explained by the ecstatic phenomena. It is as if a spiritual force had lifted him up like Ezekiel (Ez. 8³) and brought him to Jerusalem" (*Introd.*, p. 125).

Objections to the claim of Isaiah's authorship spring into the mind at once, but let us first give the theory the justice of a fair statement.

By a happy accident, some editions of the Revised Version present ch. 21 and 22 in parallel columns. One may pass back and forth repeatedly from one to the other in reading, and the hearer would never suspect, unless he had given special study to the matter, that he was not listening to a continuous narration.

- 21^{2a} A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer dealeth
 22^a treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth. Therefore said I, Look away from me, I will weep bitterly; labor not to comfort me, for the spoiling of the
 21³⁻⁴ daughter of my people. Therefore are my loins filled with anguish; pangs have taken hold upon me as the pangs of a woman in travail; I am pained so that I cannot hear; I am dismayed so that I cannot see. My heart panteth, horror hath affrighted me; the twilight that I desired hath been
 22⁵⁻⁶ turned into trembling for me. For it is a day of discomfiture, and of treading down, and of perplexity, from the Lord, the Lord of hosts, in the valley of vision; a breaking down of the walls, and a crying to the mountains. And Elam bare the quiver, with chariots of men and horsemen; and Kir
 21^{2b} uncovered the shield. Go up, O Elam; besiege, O Media; all the sighing
 22⁷ thereof have I made to cease. And it came to pass that thy choicest valleys were full of chariots, and the horsemen set themselves in array at
 21⁶⁻⁷ the gate. For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman; let him declare what he seeth. And he saw chariots, horsemen in pairs, a chariot of asses, a chariot of camels; and he hearkened diligently with
 22¹²⁻¹³ much heed. And in that day did the Lord, the Lord of hosts, call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth; and behold, joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine; let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die. They
 21⁵ prepare the table, they set the watch, they eat, they drink; rise up, ye
 22¹⁴ princes, anoint the shield. And the Lord of hosts revealed himself in mine ears; Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts.

This last verse has no parallel in ch. 21. For the revellers of ch. 22 there was no word of comfort, but only stern threatening; there was no word of comfort for Edom, whose call from Seir is answered in 21¹² by the very watchman of our passage, with studied obscurity; and yet it was not Isaiah's intent to leave without a word of cheer Jahve's own remnant, "my threshing and the corn of my floor." For their sakes it is revealed to the prophet in symbolic figure, that in the dim future vengeance will overtake the oppressor; and even before his impious boasts ring in the ears of the loyal people, 'Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? who is Jahve?' — even now when, like a pall, the terrible doubt is spreading whether Jahve can stand before these mighty gods, comes the clear, strong message: "All the graven images of her gods are broken unto the

ground." And as the representative city of Jahve is now threatened by heathen Asshur, so the representative city of that kingdom shall then be destroyed. For it may well be that Babylon, not Nineveh, was regarded by our prophet as the appropriate symbol of the hostile world-power. The impossibility of the equation Babel = Asshur is stoutly maintained by eminent authorities and as stoutly denied by others. The question should be settled if possible, and it cannot be settled by brushing it aside impatiently. It is by no means a question dividing between conservatives and radicals, for it cuts quite across that division. Professor Rawlinson joins hands with Professor Cheyne to assert this impossibility, while in opposition are found Dr. Kay and Professor Tiele.

Two points are to be proven: first, that Assyria-Babylonia was one power; next, that on the lips of Isaiah, Babylon would be a proper symbol for that power. The first point is held by the two historians whose consensus carries greatest weight, Eduard Meyer and C. P. Tiele. In accordance with the plan of each, the former treats the matter incidentally, the latter thoroughly.

Meyer (*Geschichte* i. 461), after speaking of the subjection imposed on other lands conquered by Assyria, goes on to remark: "Only Babylonia occupies a different position. To be sure, we find governors here too, but nevertheless it is to be regarded essentially as an independent kingdom united with Assyria by a kind of personal union. Plainly Sargon was proud of the fact that he himself possessed the fountain-head of the culture of his own land. For this reason he calls himself Sargon II., looking back to the old king of Agade; for this reason he lays special emphasis on the number of his years as king of Babylon, and has his inscriptions engraven in old-Babylonian script. He mentions the particular interest which he took in Babylon, Sippar, Nippur, and other cities of Babylonia, in that he permitted the inhabitants to pursue their occupations in peace, and in that he held their gods in high esteem. Just so in every inscription he boasts that he has restored the lapsed usages of the cities of Asshur and Charran."

Professor Tiele's history has a significant title, *Babylonisch-Assyrische Geschichte*. He begins it by justifying this title. The passage is too long to quote, but may be summarized thus, using his own words:

It is only in appearance that this is the history of two powers; in reality it is that of a scarcely separable whole. Often not formally united, it is true, and each possessing its own peculiar character,

they yet belong indissolubly together, even their constant strifes testifying that only one at a time could be a sovereign power. They were also, as matter of fact, one and the same people, in speech, religion, culture, and civilization, with no greater difference than that between Spartans and Athenians, or between North and South Germans. The history before us is not only that of one people, but of one world-power, whose different branches come alternately into prominence.

He goes on to trace interesting historical parallels with the double kingdom on the Nile, Upper and Lower Egypt, and the double kingdom on the Jordan, Israel and Judah, in which last, as he shows, the separation was much sharper than that between Babylonia and Assyria, "and yet," he adds, "no one ever doubted the essential unity of Hebrew history." "We are justified, then," he concludes, "in conceiving and representing the history of the ancient Chaldeans, Assyrians, and Babylonians as a single whole."

Against these arguments I find nothing of more importance than the following from Professor Rawlinson (*Pulpit Commentary*, on Is. 13¹; see also McCurdy, i. 86, but cf. § 174-178) :

Neither Isaiah nor any other sacred writer knows of an Assyro-Babylonian kingdom or empire. Assyria and Babylonia are distinct kingdoms in Genesis (10⁸⁻¹²), in 2 Kings (18-20), in 2 Chronicles (32), in Isaiah (36-39), and in Ezekiel (23, 30, and 31). They had been at war almost continuously for above seven centuries before the time of Isaiah. . . . The two countries were never more one than Russia and Poland, and until Tiglath-Pileser assumed the crown of Babylon in 729 B.C., they had always been under separate monarchs.

Professor Rawlinson seems quite unconscious of the bearing of his final concession. It was not only Tiglath-Pileser who took the hands of Bel, doubtless deeming that day the proudest of his life, but Sargon also, and Sennacherib; that is, it was just in Isaiah's time that the two kingdoms were united under the same monarchs, who successively took the title, "king of Babylon."

As to Professor Rawlinson's Scripture references, those in Ezekiel refer to a later period; Gen. 10⁸⁻¹², even if we accept its unity, says nothing about two separate kingdoms; we simply read into it our traditional notions; and the passages in 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, and Isaiah are extracted from a common source, the only pertinent reference being to Merodach-Baladan. Now he was not the king of a rival empire, nor a Babylonian patriot, as Lenormant called him, but a usurper, who made a mere ripple in the long stream of Babylonian

history, a usurper from whom the native Babylonians were glad to be delivered by Sargon.

I must next show that **בבל** is a fitting expression to indicate this united world-power. Our passage refers to the siege of a city (vs.²). The hostile army is seen in vision (vs.⁷); but there follows, after long waiting, another vision (vs.⁹), in which an army is described in terms only partly identical. If this first host portends disaster to Judah, the second may symbolize divine retribution, which in the vision should proceed with poetic justice, idols over against the God of Israel, city over against city. But why is not this city Nineveh, the capital of Assyria? I ask in reply: What was Nineveh to Isaiah and his people? Its very name nowhere occurs in his prophecies, nor in any prophet until long afterward when Nahum and Zephaniah take up the burden. On the other hand, what was Babylon? Since the days of the conquest of Canaan, there had been frequent points of contact between Israel and the home of their primal traditions, from Achan's Babylonian garment to the recent re-population of Samaria. If the stories of the Jahvist in the Book of Genesis were in written form about the year 800, they were fresh in the minds of Isaiah's generation. If they were older still, so much better was their opportunity to be fixed in popular belief. In any case, **בבל** had already become, as it has never ceased to be, the type of a proud, hostile power, that lifts itself against Jahve only to be brought low before him. Our prophet does but repeat the shout of Jahve's avenging messengers on the ancient Plain of Shinar, **נפלה נפלה בבל**. There is a passage, whose genuineness I would not defend, in the Book of Micah (4¹⁰), where the daughter of Zion, threatened by the Assyrian, is told: "thou shalt come even unto Babylon." Driver (*Introd.*, pp. 349-50) argues at length that this is an interpolation, but concedes the very point we are making at present by saying that in itself it would be proper enough to depict an exile to Assyria in the words "thou shalt come even to Babylon," since Babylon was a chief city of Assyria. And if Micah *could* have said "to Babylon," meaning "to Assyria," the same is true of Isaiah, who thus could have written 39⁶. Instead of straining our eyes to look forward 170 years, we may refer ch. 39 to Sennacherib's invasion, and compare the particulars in vs.²⁷ with the striking parallels in his prism inscription.

We read in 2 Ki. 17 that the king of Assyria captured Samaria, and brought men thither from Babylon. Sargon says in his Annals that in the first year of his reign he transported men from Babylon to

Syria. The writer in 2 Kings states that the men from Babylon made Succoth-Benoth. We may be sure that this experiment in idolatry at their doors, this trial of strength between Jahve and the gods of Babylon would be watched with deep concern by the prophets of Judah. Their interest in all the neighboring peoples was primarily religious; and so in the passage before us: "Babylon is fallen, fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken to the ground."

It makes nothing against the view here presented that at the capture of Babylon the idols were not actually destroyed. What they stand for is the heathen power hostile to the Lord; and that was destroyed, and will be, on to the consummation. Note the same thought in Jer. 51⁴⁰⁻⁴², which quotes and expands the phrase in question; the whole context is important.

As Babylon hath caused the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon shall fall the slain of all the land.

Ye that have escaped the sword, go ye, stand not still; remember the Lord from afar, and let Jerusalem come into your mind. We are ashamed, because we have heard reproach; confusion hath covered our faces; for strangers are come into the sanctuaries of the Lord's house. Wherefore behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will do judgment upon her graven images; and through all her land the wounded shall groan.

This may serve to show how, in general, the brief, brilliant hints of our poet are taken up and worked out by later writers. The style of Is. 21¹⁻¹⁰ marks it off as a signal work of genius. Hitzig was vastly mistaken in his sneer at its author: "Er ist nur stark in der Schwäche."

If a definite situation is desired, into which our passage may naturally fit, I would refer to the excitement into which all the little states of West Asia were thrown by the death of Sargon in 705. Edom got no satisfaction from our watchman, and gave up the league; among the kings who yielded to Sennacherib was Malik-rammu, king of Edom. Judah was overrun, but would not submit. I believe our chapter is rightly placed before ch. 22, but after ch. 20, whose prophecy is about to be fulfilled; the inhabitants of this coast-land will see the peril of trusting in Egypt, and exclaim: 'and we, how shall we escape?'

If I have rightly grasped the historical situation, it will not be necessary to discuss the theory of Winckler (*Allg. Untersuch.*, 122 f.) which finds the occasion for the prophecy in the uprising of Šamaš-šum-ukin in 648. Suffice it to say that the natural sense of vs.² does

not favor this view. If the date 705-3 can be maintained by the above line of reasoning, the Isaian authorship will be generally admitted.

But the converse does not follow, that the refutation of the view which makes Babel stand for the Assyrian empire would carry with it the denial of Isaiah's authorship. For we may combine, with much plausibility, a part of Kleinert's theory, namely, that Babylon is the ally of Jerusalem and is captured by the Assyrians, with the main reference to the siege of Jerusalem, not Babylon, contended for above. I am not sure but this combination presents the fairest method of dealing with all the facts of the problem which are at present accessible. Two varieties of this theory are possible. According to one of these, the impending siege of Jerusalem is, as above, the subject up to vs.⁸; while vs.⁹ refers not to Sargon's capture of Babylon in 710, but to Sennacherib's in 704/3. That capture is now foretold, whether by human or Divine prescience need not be determined. Judah is the threshing-ground, since it is to be overrun by the Assyrian armies. The final message is not one of comfort, but of unrelieved warning, thus coming into closer parallelism with 22¹⁻¹⁴.

The objection to Kleinert's view, namely, that the prophet shows so strangely sympathetic an interest in the siege of the heathen city, disappears, if the city in question is his own Jerusalem; while most of Kleinert's arguments retain their force. Of course it was just as important to Merodach-Baladan in 704 as in 710 to secure the alliance of Hezekiah; among other things, the imprisonment of Padi shows how far the king of Judah had been willing to act with the confederates.

But I would propose another, and simpler, modification of the theory. In the great coalition forming against Assyria, it was essential for all the powers from Egypt around to Babylon to support one another. We know from the vivid picture in Is. 30⁶ that Hezekiah sent an embassy to Egypt; we should not know it otherwise, though every one sees that it was a natural move to make. It was equally natural for him to send a similar embassy to Babylon; he had already received its delegation with favor; it was his turn now to send "letters and a present." Assuming that he did so, "the treasure on the backs of asses and camels" with troops to guard it, is what the watchman sees, vs.⁷.⁵ They have started for Babylon,

⁵ Hofmann, *l.c.*, objects to "this strangest sort of an army," if regarded as a military force.

but the prophet knows it is in vain ; not, as in Egypt's case, because of lukewarmness, but because of discomfiture. Hence the whirlwind will sweep on into Judah (vs.¹⁻⁶). The זֶרְעַם of vs.⁶ gives the reason for this sad certainty ; the watchman has beheld not only the setting forth, but also, after long suspense, the return of the embassy (vs.⁹), while the Divine voice proclaims the ruin of Babylon and therewith of Judah's hopes.

Any one of these hypotheses, or perhaps some other, may be sufficient to offset the edifice of mere conjecture that has been growing around the Cyrus theory. What we really *know* of the historical situation is consistent with Isaiah's authorship ; and further light on the history of the times may any day make plain what is still obscure. I have but touched upon the many points of contact between these ten verses and the acknowledged prophecies of Isaiah ; but they are generally conceded. It was only with hesitation that Cheyne and Driver abandoned the Isaian authorship in the form held by Kleinert, on account of historical considerations. In Driver's case we have his own statement (*Isa.*², p. 218) : "On the whole, while reluctant to abandon Isaiah's authorship of this prophecy, the writer must allow that it now seems to him to be doubtful whether this view of it is correct." But the arguments he presents do not bear against the theory here advocated, and Driver greatly understates the evidence from diction when he says in the same connection : "Phraseologically, it is true that it presents two or three points of contact with Isaiah's usage." Kleinert came much nearer the truth, in the place cited above : "In view of the numerous coincidences with Isaiah, in vocabulary and ideas, it is not too much to say that had not the reference to Babylon occurred, the anonymous piece would always and at once have been considered Isaian." (Delitzsch, *Isaiah*³, in loco, is still stronger.) As already shown, the points of contact with ch. 22 alone are more than "two or three." I present a number, relating to both language and thought, from other parts of Isaiah.

Verse 1. The sweeping on of the Assyrian to invade Judah is denoted by the rare word (in this sense) הִלָּחַץ ; the same event is described by the same word, with the image of water instead of wind, at 8⁸ ; "he shall sweep onward into Judah." See also 5²⁸ (whirlwind). The construction כְּשֹׁמֶת בָּנִיב is paralleled in 9³ $\text{כְּשֹׁמֶת בְּקִצִיר}$.

Verse 2. Delitzsch in his fourth edition gives up the Isaian authorship of our passage, but yet remarks : "Conformably to Isaian custom, a fresh start is made at vs.²."

הזוֹרָה, meaning revelation from God, recurs at 29¹¹; in the kindred sense of covenant at 28¹⁸; elsewhere only in the physical sense of conspicuousness. Verse 2 proceeds:

הַבְּתֵר בִּנְיָהּ וְהַשְׁחָדִי שׂוֹרֵד

This is quoted literally with evident reference to Sennacherib in 33¹, which thus makes definite what Kleinert calls "the great unnamed" of our passage. I cannot insist on this, as ch. 33 has become one of the antilegomena; but Assyria is a robber also in 10¹⁸ 17¹⁴ 22⁴.

צָוֵר has various meanings, but Isaiah uses it as here in the sense 'besiege' at 29³. At 7⁶ another confederacy plans to go up against Judah.

Verse 3. Dismay at the sight = 5³⁰.

Verse 4. הִתְפַּזְּזוּ, 'to wander,' is one of Isaiah's favorite words; see 3¹² 9¹⁵ 28⁷ 29²⁴ 30²⁸. Note also 7² (moved as trees).

נֶשְׂפָה, 'the evening,' is very rare in the prophets. Isaiah has it at 5¹¹. For the thought, cf. 17¹⁴. "At eventide" (the evening of my desire), "behold, terror." For אָשׁ (impersonal) cf. 28³, end.

Verse 5. Cf. 5¹¹⁻¹³, where Judah's nobles are revelling and are surprised with disaster. For the infinitives, see 5⁵ 20³ (close by).

Verse 6 begins with an Isaian formula; so 8¹¹ (note the whole context there) 18⁴ 21¹⁶ 31⁴. On לִי cf. 20³.

Verse 7. The particulars are joined on oddly as in 18². For the triple repetition at the close, there are two exact parallels in Isaiah: 28²¹ and 29¹⁴. Similarly 32³.

Verse 8. "Continually," "by day," "by night" = 28¹⁹.

Verse 9. פָּסִילִים here is the counterpart of the same word in 10¹⁰, where Sennacherib boasts that his hand has found the graven images of other peoples, and he expects to serve Jerusalem in the same way. The retort comes here; he shall fall into the pit that he digged. See the same word again 30²².

Verse 10. The vision closes with the characteristic Isaian phrase, Jahve Sebaoth.

Looking at the contents of our passage as a whole, and in all its relations, we must simply add it to the other prophecies of Isaiah which relate to the invasion of Palestine by Assyria, with the consequent chastisement of Israel.