

## BREVIA.

**Dante and Delitzsch.**—Nothing is more delightful than to watch the irresistible working of the personal element in that curious and costly product—a literary and historical critic. Professor Elmslie lately called the reader's attention to a paper by Professor Sayce in the American magazine *Hebraica*, which, as he says, "bristles with ingenious, not to say audacious, emendations" (EXPOSITOR, February, 1888, p. 150). I do not see why he hesitated to use the second epithet; but knowing how often a guess of this ever-active pioneer has been verified, I should not like to direct a cheap sarcasm against his as yet very doubtful god Sheth. No one who has been trained in a severe school of Hebrew philology is likely to be convinced by Professor Sayce's essay, and therefore I do not see why the veteran Franz Delitzsch takes such pains to refute it (*Zeitschrift für kirchliche Wissenschaft*, 1888, Hist. III., pp. 124-126). Why not have let it stand as a proof of the versatility and ingenuity of one who is primarily a comparative philologist and Assyrian scholar, and only by way of relaxation a Biblical critic? A more stimulating writer than Professor Sayce it would be difficult to find; and his individuality, which colours all that he writes, is the great secret of his charm. Professor Franz Delitzsch is himself full of a potent individuality, and the time was when he had it quite as little in restraint as his much younger antagonist. And even now—turn to the first number of the same *Zeitschrift* for 1888, and read his most interesting contributions to the study of Dante. I must not dwell on those details of his article which appeal to the Dantophilist proper, though I know that many English theologians are students of Dante. But is not this remark a proof of "subjectivity" equal to anything in Professor Sayce's essay?—"Veltro is the anagram of *Lutero*. Of course, Dante knew nothing of this. It is an accident, but a Divine accident, *i.e.* one appointed by God."

The reference is to the famous greyhound in the first canto of the *Inferno*. Delitzsch admits that Dante expected the great reformer to come from the family of Can Grande della Scala, but thinks that, like Isaiah, Dante mingled the distant with the near future. I cannot follow Delitzsch in this, nor do I see what is gained by it; but I am interested in it as a deduction from a view

in which I have myself followed Delitzsch, that, for the sake of susceptible minds, especially in the first ages of the Gospel, a providential guidance may have been given to the utterances of "inspired" persons, and so the literal fulfilment of ancient prophecies may in some sense be admitted even by a historical critic.

T. K. CHEYNE.

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**The Woman's Language of Chaldæa.**—The critic of Dr. Delitzsch's *Assyrian Dictionary* in the last number of THE EXPOSITOR has fallen into error upon one point. He is alluding to Dr. Delitzsch's reading of *naqbu* for the Accadian *eme-sal*, and his rendering of the supposed Assyrian word by "Female Language"; and he adds: "Upon this statement a whole theory about the Sumerian and Accadian language was built up by Delitzsch, Haupt, Sayce, and Hommel. But quite recently Dr. Bezold has proved that the reading *naqbu* is a mistake for *eme-sal*, and thus this elaborate and wonderful theory falls to the ground with a crash."

With Dr. Delitzsch's theory and its fate I have nothing to do, but an Assyriologist ought to know that the theory put forward by myself, and adopted by Hommel, has no connexion with it or with the reading *naqbu*; indeed it presupposes that this reading is incorrect. The facts are very simple. Certain of the pre-Semitic texts of Chaldæa are written in a form of Accadian, which shows extensive signs of phonetic decay, and seems to have been the dialect spoken in Sumer or Southern Babylonia. The same decayed forms are qualified in the "syllabaries" with the two ideographs *eme-sal*, which signify "the language of a woman," reminding the linguistic student of the numerous cases in which a peculiar "woman's language" is spoken, distinct from that of the men. That such a woman's language existed in Accad is the theory which I have propounded, and I have always protested against the idea that the ideographs *eme-sal* were shown by the word *naqbu* (which by the way, ought to have been *naqbitu*) to represent a mere grammatical error.

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