Two Newly Discovered Sculptures in Cœle Syria.

GHOSN-EL-HOWIE, PH.D.,

SHWEIR, SYRIA.

ABOUT two years ago, Mrs. Howie, late of Scarboro', Yorkshire, now of Mt. Lebanon, Syria, was travelling in the Lebanon, and when she reached the western edge of the plain known as Cœle Syria, or "the Valley of Lebanon," she discovered two sculptures on

two immense boulders, one some miles up the mountains, the other near the edge of the plain, at the mouth of a gorge which is at the same time the channel of a huge winter torrent.

Mrs. Howie did no more at that time than sketch the boulders, and the pressure of other work diverted attention from the discovery, its importance hardly being realized. Lately, however, her interest in these rocks was rekindled, and she made several photographs of the sculptures.

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The one in the mountains presents the figure of a bull, and further examination seems to reveal the presence of a cow and a lion, or possibly two lions. This combination suggests a Hittite origin; and, if this should prove to be the case, the value of this discovery will be considerable.

The other sculpture, that in the gorge, represents apparently an armed female figure, and may be the Hittite mother-goddess, or

possibly "the mistress," *belit*, referred to in the Tell el Amarna letters.

For some time past archæologists have supposed that no remains of this kind were to be found in Canaan. Thus Captain Conder remarks, "In like manner we find in Western Palestine no ancient representations of human or animal forms carved on rocks or as statues, excepting a few buried bronze and pottery figures in ruins older than Joshua's age." For this reason Mrs. Howie believes that students of this subject will be interested in her discovery, which lies almost at the door of Western Palestine.

Bible students, if not Bible readers, must have noticed that in the Pentateuch there is no mention of *temples* for idolatrous worship, although the worship of idols is frequently referred to, and forbidden under the severest penalties.

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There is, however, frequent mention of "figured stones," "stones of picture," or, as the Arabic has it, "*hajaran messoweran*," that is, stones, or rocks, on which likenesses are traced (cf. Lev. 26[1]).

These "figured stones," or likenesses on rocks, were one of the snares into which the people of Jehovah fell, and against them the reforming kings, Hezekiah and Josiah, waged a war of extermination as far as their power could reach. This, doubtless, is the reason why "we find in Western Palestine no ancient representations of human or animal forms carved on rocks."

Mrs. Howie's newly discovered likenesses of human and animal forms on rocks lay just outside the sphere of influence of the kings of Judah, and thus escaped destruction, although they belonged to the very class of images forbidden in Lev. 26[1]. They have thus an important bearing on Biblical archæology.

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