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NOTES AND STUDIES

ISAIAH XXI IN THE LIGHT OF ASSYRIAN HISTORY.

II

*Verses 11-17*

IN examining the two shorter Burdens with which this chapter closes it may be well for us in the first place to compare them with the longer Burden, verses 1 to 10, which formed the subject of my last paper, in order to shew that all three come from the same pen—viz. that of the prophet Isaiah—and were called forth by the same political crisis, viz. Sargon's Babylonian campaign in 710 and 709 B.C.

Note, then, in the first place, that the same dramatic power which characterizes the longer Burden is no less strikingly exhibited in these shorter prophecies. The prophet not only sees visions, but he has the power of making his readers see them too. With a few rapid strokes he dashes off pictures so vivid and impressive that our imagination readily fills in the details. Observe, also, the remarkable similarity in point of structure which exists between the Burden of the Wilderness of the Sea and the Burden upon Arabia. Each of these Burdens is divided into two strophes, and in each the second strophe begins with the words, 'For thus hath the Lord said unto me'<sup>1</sup>—verses 6 and 16—and ends with a solemn declaration that the oracle comes from the LORD God of Israel—verses 10 and 17.<sup>2</sup> Now we have already seen good reason to think that the former Burden is from the pen of the prophet Isaiah; we must therefore make the same admission with regard to the latter. Equally strong, too, is the evidence with regard to the Burden of Dumah. The pathetic tone of this most touching oracle as well as the metaphors employed are the same that meet us in Isa. viii 20-ix 2. In both

<sup>1</sup> In the original there is a slight variation in the order of the words thus translated in these two verses.

<sup>2</sup> Compare also the strong similarity both of tone and of language in verses 16 and 17 and in Isa. xv 14.

passages 'night' and 'darkness' stand for the distress and anguish caused by war, 'morning' for the return of peace and prosperity. And just as the earlier passage speaks of those for whom there will be no morning, so it is ominously hinted here that such may be the fate of Dumah when the second and darker night overtakes her. We may, then, reasonably assert that Isaiah wrote all three Burdens, while the points of resemblance between them lead us to think that he wrote them all *about the same time*. This conjecture is borne out upon further examination. The first, as we have seen, was called forth by Sargon's campaign against Merodachbaladan. That campaign occupied *two* years, viz. 710 and 709 B.C., the intervening winter being spent by Sargon at Babylon. Now it is this fact which throws a remarkable light, first on the prediction contained in the Burden upon Arabia that *within a year according to the years of an hireling* the scare of the Dedanite caravans will be followed by the overthrow in battle of the powerful tribe of Kedar, and then on the answer of the watchman in the Burden of Dumah that a seemingly brief morning will be followed by a second and apparently darker night. Clearly we have only to imagine a raid into the desert made by the Assyrian cavalry from Babylon as their base in the year 710 B.C., followed up by more formidable operations in the next year, in order to be able to see a very possible fulfilment of both of these shorter Burdens. The question thus becomes one of probability; but before we proceed to the discussion of it, it will be advisable for us to engage in a closer examination of these remarkable prophecies.

'Nowhere else', says Ewald, 'do we find oracles of such great brevity, and conveyed in language of such an enigmatical complexion.' True: yet it is possible by a study of the geographical names, which occur in these prophecies, to remove much of their vagueness; and that without in any degree diminishing the force and beauty of this part of God's word. Thus, in the Burden of Dumah a cry comes from Seir, plaintively pathetic, and repeated in a tone of weariness well indicated in the Hebrew by the shortening of the last word in the second clause: *Shomēr, mäh millailäh; shomēr, mäh milleyl*, 'Watchman, how far is it in the night? Watchman, how far in the night?' How soon, that is, will the night of terror and danger, of sorrow and anguish, be over? that night which broods over Judah the watchman's home as well as over Edom, since both of these nations according to Sargon were found plotting together against Assyria in the year 711 B.C. at the time of the fall of Ashdod. Now it will be seen in the course of this paper that the interpretation offered depends on the identification of Dumah with a spot, not in Edom, but far across the eastern desert, nearly half-way to Babylon. The study is, in fact, geographical as well as historical, for without some definite knowledge

of the places and countries mentioned in these Burdens it is impossible for us either to enter into their meaning or to search out their fulfilment.

Of the different geographical names here mentioned—Dumah, Seir, Arabia, Dedan, Tema, and Kedar—Arabia is the most familiar, and with the exception possibly of Kedar the hardest to define. It may, however, be stated with certainty that in the Bible as in the Assyrian inscriptions the name denotes, not the whole of that vast peninsula now so called, but only that portion which lies to the north of the Shammar mountains, including the triangular tract known as the Syrian Desert, which extends from Palestine to the Euphrates and has its apex a little to the north of Damascus. The Arabians, according to Jer. iii 2, dwell in the *Midbar*, i.e. 'the Wilderness' *par excellence*, the *Madbaru* or *Mudbaru* of the Assyrian records, which Sargon speaks of as extending from Rapiqu<sup>1</sup> on the Euphrates to the Brook of Egypt. It was in this *Midbar* that Uzziah, who was helped by God against the Arabians, built towers for the protection of his flocks.<sup>2</sup>

But besides the country of Arabia the inscriptions of Tiglathpileser IV, Sargon, Esarhaddon, and Ashurbanipal mention a kingdom of Arabia which appears to have had for its capital the fortress of Adumû, to be identified, as we shall see presently, with Isaiah's Dumah. This kingdom of Arabia is referred to in Jer. xxv 24 and Ezek. xxvii 21, and probably also in the Isaianic Burden; but it is not a little remarkable that Dumah or Adumû, the centre of that kingdom, has here a separate Burden of its own. The most likely explanation is that at this crisis Dumah was in the hands of the Edomites and had become a dependency of Mount Seir. In endeavouring to locate the kingdom of Arabia some help may be obtained from the inscriptions of Ashurbanipal. Ashurbanipal informs us that Vaiteh king of Arabia sent succours to his rebellious brother Shamash-shum-ukin the king of Babylon; and further that the forces of Vaiteh were defeated by the Assyrians along what is now the eastern border of Palestine, so that Vaiteh himself was driven to seek a refuge with his ally Nathan the Nabathæan, whose land is described as *ruqu*, i.e. 'distant' from Assyria, presumably more distant than the kingdom of Arabia.<sup>3</sup> These statements of the Assyrian king all point to the Jowf oasis as the nucleus of the ancient kingdom of Arabia, this oasis holding a central position with regard to Babylon, Eastern Palestine, and the country of the Nabathæans.

Now, according to the Isaianic Burden, 'the children of Kedar' are the chief tribe of this kingdom of Arabia. Similarly in Ezek. xxvii 21 we read of 'Arabia and all the princes of Kedar'. The words suggest some close

<sup>1</sup> Cylinder Inscription, lines 12, 13.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Chron. xxvi 7, 10. In the latter verse the initial letters of 'wilderness', 'lowland', 'plain', and 'mountains' ought all to be capitals.

<sup>3</sup> See the Rassam Cylinder, col. vii 107-124 and viii 57.

connexion between Arabia and Kedar, without permitting us to look on the two as identical. Exactly the same impression is conveyed by the inscriptions of Ashurbanipal. On one of his cylinders Ashurbanipal calls Vaiteh 'king of Arabia', on another 'king of Kedar'.<sup>1</sup> In the former inscription he states that after Vaiteh had fallen into his hands, his wife Adija, who is styled 'queen of Arabia', was captured along with Ammuladi king of Kedar. Then later on he tells us how he appointed Abiyateh the Kedarene to succeed Vaiteh on the throne of Arabia.<sup>2</sup> The impression thus given is that the tribe of Kedar, being a purely nomadic people, were vassals of the sovereigns of Arabia, whose capital city of Adumû appears to have lain in the heart of their deserts.<sup>3</sup> In times of peace the kingdom of Arabia, having a fixed geographical centre in the group of oases near to Adumû, would naturally exercise a supremacy over the neighbouring tribes; but in times of war 'the mighty men of the children of Kedar' would be apt to assert themselves.

The Biblical Dumah, which has been identified with the Arabian Adumû, is the next geographical name which calls for our attention. *Dumah* is the Hebrew for 'silence'. Hence Ewald would render the title of the second Burden 'High Oracle of Silence'. But such a rendering is inadmissible for this reason, that the titles of all the other Isaianic Burdens contain the name or description of some place or country. Equally inadmissible is the view of the Septuagint that 'Dumah' stands for Edom. This is a mere guess, arising out of the mention of Seir, and may be placed side by side with their confounding Tema with Teman. A far more rational conjecture is to identify the Dumah and Tema of these Burdens with the two sons of Ishmael mentioned in Gen. xxv 14, 15. Just as Kedar and Nebaioth stand for tribes of nomad Arabs, so Dumah and Tema represent settled communities. They are, in fact, the Biblical names of the two chief oases of ancient Arabia. Dumah is the lovely oasis, or rather group of oases, known as the Jowf,<sup>4</sup> one of whose chief towns, now called Jowf, bore till lately the name of Daumat-el-Jandal, 'the stony Dumah'. Tema is the oasis and town of Teima. That Dumah should form the subject of a prophecy is not at all surprising, when we consider the fertility of this desert-province joined to its unique central position. The Jowf lies a little to the north of a straight line drawn from the head of the Gulf of Akabah to the mouth of the Euphrates, and is nearer to Palestine than to the Euphrates in the ratio

<sup>1</sup> Rassam Cylinder vii 83 and Cylinder B vii 87, 88.

<sup>2</sup> Rassam Cylinder viii 15, 24, 25; 31, 46, 47, and ix 16, 17.

<sup>3</sup> Rassam Cylinder ix 2, where Ashurbanipal speaks of 'the Kedarenes of Vaiteh son of Bir-Dadda king of Arabia'.

<sup>4</sup> The Jowf is a large oval depression, some sixty or seventy miles long, whence the name El Jowf, 'the Hollow'. For a striking description of its beauty see Palgrave's *Journey through Central Arabia* vol. i p. 56. A picture of the Jowf is given in Lady Anne Blunt's *Pilgrimage to the Nejd* vol. i, opposite p. 120.

of about three to four. It is situated on the shortest and most direct route from Egypt to the Euphrates valley: it also lies midway between Damascus and Hail in Central Arabia. At the time when this Burden was uttered the Jowf belonged to Edom, for the voice that enquires so anxiously as to the fate of Dumah calls to the prophet out of Seir. This is a little surprising when we consider that the Jowf, which lies due east of Edom, is separated from that country by more than 200 miles of flat arid desert. On the other hand, we must remember that the Jowf lies nearer to Edom than to any other country, and that Edom was now strong. In the days of Ahaz she recovered the port of Elath on the Red Sea and invaded Judah,<sup>1</sup> and now her strong arm has stretched across the desert and seized on the Jowf.

The above theory as to the Jowf being in 710 B. C. in the hands of the Edomites is supported by an incidental statement in Lam. iv 21, where Edom is addressed as having settlements in the land of Uz. Wetzstein has brought forward some very strong arguments to shew that Uz, the home of the patriarch Job, must be located in the western corner of the Hauran, due east of the southern end of the Sea of Galilee.<sup>2</sup> This district lies between Damascus and Samaria, and must have suffered very severely at the time of the fall of those cities in 732 B. C. and 722 B. C. respectively, and again in 720 B. C. when Sargon put down the revolt of Jaubihdi of Hamath, in which those cities took part. It is reasonable, therefore, to suppose that the land of Uz fell into the hands of the Edomites shortly after its thrice-repeated desolation by the Assyrians. Now with this acquisition of Uz by the Edomites we are inclined to connect their seizure of the Jowf, which is easily approached from the Hauran by way of the Wady Sirhan, a wady well supplied with water to within fifteen miles of the Jowf. It is possible, also, that these forward movements on the part of Edom may have some connexion with a statement made by Sargon in his Annals that in 715 B. C. he settled Arabs in Samaria. The Assyrians sought to denationalize conquered peoples by the settlement of alien populations in their midst. Thus Sargon may at this same date have promoted, or at least permitted,<sup>3</sup> a settlement of hostile Edomites both in Dumah and in the land of Uz.

Tema, the modern Teima, the second great oasis of ancient Arabia, lies some 200 miles almost due south of the Jowf. It is mentioned by Tiglathpileser IV along with Sheba and Ephah.<sup>4</sup> That most interesting relic the Teima Stone,<sup>5</sup> which, to judge from the type of the Phoenician

<sup>1</sup> 2 Chron. xxviii 17 and 2 Kings xvi 6, where for ארם Syria we should probably read אדום Edom. Elath was recovered to Edom, not to Syria.

<sup>2</sup> For the fertility of this district see *A Pilgrimage to the Nejd* vol. i pp. 33, 37, 47.

<sup>3</sup> See Olmstead *Western Asia in the Days of Sargon* p. 73.

<sup>4</sup> Nimrud Inscription, Rev. line 53. <sup>5</sup> See *The Biblical World* for June 1909.

alphabet employed, must date from the fifth or sixth century B.C., gives us a fair idea of the cosmopolitan character of ancient Tema. It records the introduction into the pantheon of Tema of a new divinity, Tsalm of Hajam, whose hereditary priesthood is to be endowed with sixteen palms of the field and five from the treasure of the king. Tsalm is a name of the planet Saturn, called by the Assyrians *kakkabu tsalmu*, 'the dark star'. On the narrow edge of the stone is a bas-relief of the new divinity draped in Assyrian fashion, and also of his priest, who bears the name Tsalm-shezab, 'Tsalm has delivered'. The name of the priest's father, Pet-Osiri, 'he whom Osiris gave', which occurs in the course of the inscription, is Egyptian; and the inscription itself is written in Aramaic. The fact that Aramaic was the language of the desert helps to explain the introduction of certain Aramaic words and forms into the Burden of Dumah.<sup>1</sup> The cosmopolitan character of the people of Tema as witnessed to by the Teima Stone, as well as their commercial proclivities,<sup>2</sup> would make their oasis a natural haven of refuge for the flying Dedanite traders.

For the home of the Dedanites themselves we look to the rugged mountainous tract that lies to the west and south of Teima, viz. the lava-field of the Harra, known as the *Wa'ar* of Arabia. In the geographical chain 'Dedan and Tema and Buz' given in Jer. xxv 23, Buz has been identified with the land of Bazu, mentioned in Esarhaddon's Arabian campaign, and has been located in the Jebel Shammar to the east of Teima. Dedan must therefore lie to the west of that town. Again, in Ezek. xxvii 19-21, where the order of names appears to run from south to north, Dedan is mentioned after Vedan (= Waddan near Medina) and Javan (= Jawan or Jahn), and before Arabia and Kedar, which bids us look for it in the same neighbourhood. Further, the physical characteristics of the Harra harmonize well with the prophet's warning in Jer. xlix 8, where the Dedanites, engaged as here in traffic, are counselled to withdraw from the Edomite frontier, and to 'dwell deep' in the recesses of their native mountains that so they may escape the approaching overthrow. As that overthrow comes from the north it will follow that Dedan must lie to the south of Edom. The same may be inferred from Ezek. xxv 13 R.V.

'The forest in Arabia' must be sought for between the Jowf and Teima, inasmuch as the former is the centre of the disturbed district, the latter the haven of refuge for which the fugitives make.<sup>3</sup> Now the

<sup>1</sup> These will be found in Delitzsch's *Isaiah in loco*. The question as to whether *Isaiah* understood Aramaic is answered in the affirmative by Isa. xxxvi 11.

<sup>2</sup> Job vi 19.

<sup>3</sup> This rules out of court Wetzstein's suggestion that the Hebrew word *ya'ar*, translated 'forest', points to the *Wa'ar* of Arabia. The *Wa'ar*, which lies west, south, and east of Teima, is too remote from the scene of hostilities.

French explorer Hubert tells us that when travelling SSE. from the Jowf to Hail on the second day's march he found himself in the vicinity of a lofty chain of wooded hills called El Felouh.<sup>1</sup> The hills were reached at 1.12 p.m., and the last of them was passed at 8.57 p.m.<sup>2</sup> It might thus be possible to identify 'the forest in Arabia' with this district; but a better identification than even the wooded hills of El Felouh, which lie rather too much to the east, is to be found in the sand-desert of the Nefûd, through which the direct route from the Jowf to Teima passes. This is indeed a dry and thirsty land, in which the fugitive caravans might well need succours. 'Over all this ground', writes Wetzstein, 'you do not find a single drop of water either in winter or summer.'<sup>3</sup> And yet 'desert for desert'—so Blunt assures us—'there is none more luxuriant than this district of red sand.' Three different grasses are found there and two considerable bushes, worthy to be ranked as trees.<sup>4</sup> The bosky nature of this desert tract would allow of its being described by the Hebrew word *ya'ar* in the sense of 'thicket', a meaning which it sometimes bears. And yet it is not so much the bushes as the remarkable configuration of the Nefûd that marks it out as the sheltering refuge referred to in the Isaianic Burden. The whole surface of the ground is pitted with deep horse-shoe hollows called *fuljes*. These *fuljes* vary in depth from 20 to 220 feet, and in width from 50 yards to a quarter of a mile. In the deepest of them the solid ground is reached beneath the superincumbent sand.<sup>5</sup> In this labyrinth of hollows the traders would be completely screened from view, and could safely 'lodge', or pass the night, for the dry sands of the Nefûd would leave no tell-tale footmarks to betray their whereabouts. Death from hunger, thirst, and fatigue would form their chief danger, and glad must they have been for the friendly succours which reached them as they neared Teima.

We have now sufficiently discussed the different geographical names contained in these Burdens, and it will be seen what a flood of light they throw on the passage. But in order to substantiate our theory that these prophecies met with their fulfilment in a cavalry raid into the desert made by the Assyrians from Babylon in 710 B.C. followed by a more formidable invasion in the following year, we have to consider three

<sup>1</sup> Marked on Stieler's Map and in *The Times Atlas*.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal d'un Voyage en Arabie* p. 50.

<sup>3</sup> Appendix to Delitzsch's Isaiah.

<sup>4</sup> 'The Nefûd is better wooded and richer in pasture than any part of the desert we have passed since leaving Damascus. It is tufted all over with *ghada* bushes, and bushes of another kind called *yerta*.' *A Pilgrimage to the Nejd* vol. i p. 157.

<sup>5</sup> See an article by J. S. Blunt in the *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, new series, vol. ii pp. 94-96. A picture of the *fuljes* in the Nefûd is given in *A Pilgrimage to the Nejd*, opposite p. 160.

questions: first, the possibility of leading an armed force from Babylon across the desert to attack the Jowf; secondly, the inducement to the Assyrians at that time to undertake such an expedition; and lastly, the positive evidence that such an expedition was actually undertaken by them.

The question as to the possibility of leading an armed force from Babylon against the Jowf can now be solved, thanks to the researches of modern travellers. In a paper by Captain S. S. Butler, read before the Royal Geographical Society in May 1909, entitled 'Baghdad to Damascus', the writer observes that 'between Nedjef'—on the Euphrates a little to the south of Babylon—'and El Jowf there is a distinct line of communication and wells'. According to Glaser the Wady Sirhan or North Arabian *Jowf*, i.e. 'valley' or 'depression', drains into the Euphrates.<sup>1</sup> In Stieler's map of Arabia this wady is marked as running south-east from the Hauran to the Jowf, and thence ENE. to the Euphrates in the vicinity of Babylon. Further, that part of the wady which lies between the Jowf and the Euphrates is marked on the map as 'low ground, good pasturage'. A definite route across the desert, furnished with water supplies and pasturage would greatly facilitate the advance of an army; whilst, as to the distance to be covered, it is not so great as might be imagined. According to Wetzstein 'the great enchanting oasis of El Jowf with the city of Dumah' is only 'four *Delul*-marches to the south-west of Babylon'.<sup>2</sup> In view of the above facts it would evidently be easier to conduct an armed force to the Jowf from Babylon or Damascus than from any other quarter, and easiest from Babylon. When, then, we bear in mind the spirit shewn by the Assyrians in overcoming obstacles, and more especially in executing long desert marches, we cannot suppose that they would find any so great difficulty in marching from Babylon upon the Jowf. But we must not leave this part of our subject without calling attention to the fact that when Sargon drew near to Babylon he entrenched himself on the *west* side of the Euphrates in the old fortress of Dur-Ladinu in Bit-Dakkuri. Bit-Dakkuri is held to have been the most northerly of the Chaldaean states which lay between Babylon and the sea.<sup>3</sup> It follows, therefore, that Dur-Ladinu cannot have been far from Nedjef, the point where the road to the Jowf quits the river.<sup>4</sup> It would thus be most favourably situated for any advance on that oasis, and if, as I imagine, Sargon

<sup>1</sup> *Skizze der Geschichte und Geographie Arabiens* vol. ii p. 343.

<sup>2</sup> Appendix to Delitzsch's *Isaiah*. The *Delul* is the dromedary or riding camel as distinguished from the common draught camel. According to Doughty 'a *Delul* in good condition will go 70 miles a day for short distances; 60 to 65 for a week, and 50 for a fortnight' (*Arabia Deserta* vol. ii p. 519).

<sup>3</sup> H. Winckler *Untersuchungen* pp. 51, 52.

<sup>4</sup> Olmstead (*Western Asia* p. 139) places it near the modern Kербela.

made it the head-quarters of his army during the Babylonian campaign, we can well understand how easily from this base in the autumn of 710 B.C. a cavalry raid could be made into the country round Dumah, followed up by a more serious expedition in the next year.

Secondly, as regards the inducements to such an expedition: at the time at which we are looking they certainly were not small. The Jowf was a most desirable possession in itself. It was also a most convenient halting-place on the shortest route between Babylon and Egypt, and a great desert centre. Sargon, who had just made Babylon the second capital of his empire, would naturally wish to control the commerce of the desert and to draw it to that city. This he could most conveniently do by seizing the Jowf, a feat comparatively easy of accomplishment while the main body of his army was quartered at Babylon. A further inducement, if any were needed, would be found in the consideration that in capturing the Jowf he would be inflicting a well-deserved chastisement upon Edom, a state which in conjunction with Philistia, Judah, and Moab had been found 'speaking seditions and acting with base wickedness' at the time of the siege of Ashdod in the previous year.<sup>1</sup> All this being taken into account, we are almost inclined to say that it would have been strange if, when such a convenient opportunity offered, Sargon had left the Jowf untouched, and the more so since such an expedition would permit of his chastising the Arabs, whose sympathies were always with the enemies of Assyria.<sup>2</sup>

Lastly, the positive evidence that such an expedition against the Jowf was actually undertaken by the Assyrians is furnished by the following extract from a cylinder of Esarhaddon,<sup>3</sup> which refers to an event that must have happened about 675 B.C., i. e. some thirty-five years after the time at which we are looking:—

'Adumû, a fortress in Arabia, which Sennacherib king of Assyria, the father who begat me, captured, and [the goods, the treasures, and] the gods thereof he carried away to Assyria . . . Hazael, king of Arabia, came with his costly present to Nineveh the city of my lordship, and kissed my feet. For the restoration of his gods he implored me. I granted him mercy. Those gods I renovated, I wrote upon them the might of Ashur my lord and the inscription of my name, and I gave them back to him. Tabua, who had been brought up in my palace, I appointed to sovereignty over them. Along with her gods I sent her back to her land. I added 65 camels to the former tribute imposed by my father, and I laid it upon

<sup>1</sup> See the broken cylinder of Sargon already quoted. The original, marked K 1668, is in Table-case C in the Nimrûd Gallery of the British Museum.

<sup>2</sup> e. g. they served as mercenaries in the army of Hezekiah, and went to the help of Shamashi-shum-ukin when he rebelled against his brother Ashurbanipal.

<sup>3</sup> Now in the Assyrian Room of the British Museum, Table-case H, No. 91028.

him. Afterwards fate carried off Hazael, and I set on his throne his son Jahu. Fifty camels and 1,000 bundles of spices I added to the tribute paid by his father, and placed it on him.<sup>7</sup>

The Adumû of the above extract has with very considerable probability been identified with the Biblical Dumah, which is found written Ἰδουμά<sup>1</sup> in the Septuagint of 1 Chron. i 30 and again in Gen. xxv 14 in some copies; and Dumah, evidently to be sought for in Arabia, has no better identification than Dumat-el-Jandal,<sup>2</sup> at present called Jowf, in the desert province of the same name.

Adumû is described by Esarhaddon as a *fortress* in Arabia. The present town of Jowf, though not without ancient fortifications, such as the castle and the tower of Marid, cannot boast of any structure reaching back to the age of Sennacherib. But the very name Dumat-el-Jandal, 'the stony' or 'rocky Dumah', either denotes that the town was fortified or else points to the fact that stone was plentiful in the neighbourhood. If we adopt the latter sense, and bear in mind the richness of this oasis, we shall be driven to the conclusion that this lovely spot must always have had its guardian fortress.

The nationality of Hazael is a point of some interest. He may have been an Arab; in which case the Arabs must have recaptured Adumû subsequently to its being taken by Sargon from the Edomites. On the other hand, since we are told by Ashurbanipal that he had a brother named Bir-Dadda, i. e. Benhadad, we are tempted to look upon him as a Syrian. And yet it is just as likely that he was an Edomite, for in the Old Testament Hadad appears as distinctively an Edomite royal name.<sup>3</sup> However this may have been, if Hazael were not an Arab, then by marrying him to an Arabian princess brought up at the court of Assyria, Esarhaddon must have sought to conciliate the Arab tribes around Adumû, who appear to have had a partiality for female rulers,<sup>4</sup> and at the same time to establish a strong Assyrian influence in that city. This was just at that time a matter of some importance, since the oasis lay, as we have seen, on the shortest route between Babylon—so lately raised from its ruins to be the second capital of the empire—and Egypt, the country which Esarhaddon was planning to conquer.

Esarhaddon tells us that Adumû was captured by his father Sennacherib, but he does not tell us who was king of Adumû at the time of

<sup>1</sup> To be carefully distinguished from Ἰδουμαία, which is found instead of Ἰδουμ almost universally in the prophetic books.

<sup>2</sup> Supposed to be the Domatha of Pliny. *Nat. Hist.* vi 32.

<sup>3</sup> See 1 Chron. i 46, 50 and 1 Kings xi 14. As to the Aramaean origin of some of the Edomite princes see Hommel's *Ancient Hebrew Tradition* p. 222 foot-note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Tiglathpileser IV mentions two successive queens of Arabia, Zabibi and Samsi. Samsi is also mentioned by Sargon. Ashurbanipal mentions another female sovereign, Adija.

its capture. The break in the sentence just before the mention of Hazael suggests that Adumû may have been under another king at the time when Sennacherib took it. In either case the gods of Adumû are of necessity the gods of Hazael king of Adumû, who comes to Nineveh with a costly present to get them back. Now it has been supposed that this 'present' was the yearly tribute imposed by Sennacherib, and undoubtedly the Assyrian word *tamartu*, here employed, is sometimes used in that sense. But *tamartu* has also the meaning of 'gift', and is used of gifts no doubt often extorted by fear. The ordinary word for 'tribute' is *madatu* or *mandattu*, which occurs twice at the close of the above extract. That it was not his yearly tribute which Hazael brought to Esarhaddon is proved by the words which follow, '*I granted him mercy*'. This is a very strong expression. It is used by the Assyrian kings, and more especially by Ashurbanipal, of lenience shewn to those whose lives had been justly forfeited by the sin of rebellion.<sup>1</sup> If Hazael had gone on paying his tribute regularly year by year, he would have had no need of mercy. The phrase indicates that the tribute imposed by Sennacherib must have ceased to be paid, so that for a time at least Adumû must have been in a state of rebellion. But if this were so, what could have led Hazael to run the great risk of appearing in person before the Assyrian king? He was influenced probably both by hope and by fear. By hope in part, because Esarhaddon was a merciful monarch, and had just shewn remarkable lenity in rebuilding the rebellious city of Babylon which his father had so ruthlessly destroyed. This act of Esarhaddon has kindled hope in the breast of Hazael; but it has also kindled fear. For Babylon is so much nearer to Adumû than Nineveh that it is no longer safe for Hazael to remain in a state of rebellion. With Babylon again established as a second capital of the empire, how easily may an armed force be once more sent against Adumû. It is these considerations that have induced Hazael to run the great risk of appearing in person before the Assyrian king.

So far no mention has been found in the inscriptions of Sennacherib of the capture of Adumû. If it had occurred during the earlier part of his reign, 705 to 689 B.C., we should have expected to find it recorded, as the inscriptions for that period are sufficiently full and explicit. After 689 B.C. to the end of the reign in 681 B.C. all is at present a blank. Hence many would place the capture of Adumû in this interval. But the history of the oasis, as we have sought to trace it in the above extract from Esarhaddon, rather favours an earlier date. Adumû was captured by Sennacherib apparently when under some other king than Hazael, and was laid under tribute. The tribute, we may suppose, was paid for

<sup>1</sup> As in the case of Necho of Egypt and Baal of Tyre.

a time ; then presently it was discontinued, we know not for how long. But shortly after the rebuilding of Babylon, 680 to 678 B.C., Hazaël, the then ruler of Adumû, comes to Nineveh to ask for the gods of his city, and doubtless at the same time to tender his submission. This view of the case points to an earlier date for the capture of Adumû than the interval 689 to 681 B.C. And surely it would have been more to Assyria's interest to capture the Jowf and lay it under tribute during the closing years of Sargon, at a time when it was designed to make Babylon the second capital of the empire, than during the dark interval, 689 to 681 B.C., when Babylon was lying in ruins. I suggest, then, that Adumû was captured by Sennacherib in 709 B.C., during the life of his father Sargon ; and that this explains how it is that no record is left us of its capture save the brief incidental notice of Esarhaddon quoted above. The Assyrian scribes, as is well known, were wont to centre attention on the exploits of the reigning monarch almost to the exclusion of those performed by his generals, and in 709 B.C. the inscriptions of Sargon were certainly getting so full that there would be no room for the warlike achievements even of his son.

But it is possible to adduce some yet further evidence for the capture of Adumû by Sennacherib in the year 709 B.C. The facts may be stated thus. After the close of the campaign against Merodachbaladan in that year, Sargon appears to have stayed on in Babylonia two years longer. He was thus absent from Assyria from 710 to 707 B.C. ; during which interval, or at any rate during the latter half of it, Sennacherib was left in charge in Assyria with his head-quarters at Kalah.<sup>1</sup> Now to this period must be assigned four letters written by Sennacherib to his father Sargon. The earliest of the four makes mention of the floods in Kurban, which we know from another source happened in 710 B.C.<sup>2</sup> A second refers to the tribute brought from Qummukh and the discontentment felt with regard to it. This may be assigned to the year after the conquest of Qummukh, i. e. to 707 B.C.<sup>3</sup> The remaining two are concerned with the Armenian troubles. One dwells on the threatening advance of Argishtish king of Armenia, the other on his overthrow by the Gimirrai. Hence they have been assigned respectively to 708 and 707 B.C.<sup>4</sup> It will thus be seen that the year 709 is so far left untouched. Now a little earlier in these same Armenian troubles, and

<sup>1</sup> See Olmstead's *Western Asia* p. 17 foot-note 45, where he shews that line 16 of the fragment Rm. 2. 97 *sharru ishtu Babili issukhra*, 'the king departed from Babylon', refers to the fifteenth year of Sargon, 707 B.C.

<sup>2</sup> Harper's *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters*, No. 731. Compare Johns's *Assyrian Deeds and Documents* 1141 line 59.

<sup>3</sup> Harper, No. 196.

<sup>4</sup> The two letters in question are Harper, Nos. 198 and 197. The former is assigned by Olmstead to Elul (September) 708 B.C., and the latter to the summer of the following year. *Western Asia* pp. 154-156 and foot-notes 26 and 41.

probably in this very year 709 B.C., we have two letters from the Assyrian general Upakhhir-Bel addressed to Sargon.<sup>1</sup> In both of these letters reference is made to Kharda, an Assyrian town near the Armenian frontier, and in the later letter Argishtish is mentioned by name. But what concerns us now is the fact that in the earlier letter immediately after the usual greeting 'Peace be to the king', there follows a second greeting: '*Peace to the king's son.*' The most probable interpretation of this most unusual addition is that the writer, who was doubtless well informed, believed Sennacherib to be in Babylonia with his father at the time when he wrote the letter.

But if Sennacherib was in Babylonia in the year 709 B.C., it may be asked what further evidence we have to shew that he made a campaign from Babylonia into Arabia. Here Herodotus comes to our help, for when writing of Sennacherib's famous expedition against Palestine and Egypt in 701 B.C. he styles him 'King of the Arabians and of the Assyrians', and calls his army 'the army of the Arabians'.<sup>2</sup> This singular prominence given to Arabia, which so sorely puzzled Josephus,<sup>3</sup> receives some explanation if Adumû, the capital of Arabia, was actually taken by Sennacherib *before* he ascended the throne of Assyria; for then he would appear to the Egyptian informants of Herodotus as king of Arabia *before* he became king of Assyria. Then as to 'the Arabian army' of which Herodotus speaks: the words have been held to mean that Sennacherib was greatly assisted by the Arabs in his Palestinian expedition. But the Arabs were never in any hurry to help the Assyrians, and if, as seems likely, they did so on this occasion, it must have been because some strong Assyrian influence had already been established in Arabia, viz. by the capture of Adumû.<sup>4</sup>

Our argument then is, that Sennacherib while in Babylonia in the year 709 B.C. made a campaign into Arabia, starting from Babylon, or possibly from Dur-Ladinu, as his base; and in the course of the campaign he captured Adumû or Dumah, then in the hands of the Edomites, and at the same time inflicted a severe defeat on the tribe of Kedar in the neighbouring deserts, thus completing the fulfilment of the two shorter prophecies in Isaiah xxi. It thus appears with regard to the three Burdens contained in this chapter that in every case the earlier portion of each Burden was fulfilled by Sargon, viz. in 710 B.C., and the latter portion by Sennacherib, viz. in 689 B.C. as regards the longer Burden, and in 709 B.C. in the case of the two shorter ones.

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<sup>1</sup> Harper, Nos. 548 and 424. See *Western Asia* pp. 151, 152, also foot-note 14.

<sup>2</sup> Hdt. ii 141.

<sup>3</sup> Ant. x i. 4.

<sup>4</sup> In the same way Esarhaddon by his Arabian campaign secured the help of the Arabs in his invasion of Egypt.