

named in Chronicles, so I believed and now maintain (no other suggestion, so far as I know, having been made) that the required Hebrew word, of which some letters survive, corresponds to *straight down* in the Biblical account. We are told *whence*, and *whither*, and *the distance* the waters flowed. The mutilated word (obviously not referring to the pool) most naturally would and (it seems to me) *must* describe *how* they flowed.

In 2 Chron. xxxii, 30, this *how* is described as *lemattah* and is translated in the Authorised and Revised Versions as *straight down*; but I am glad to find that at least fifty years ago the word was explained to mean *by a subterraneous course*; while *subterranean passage* is the very term applied to the tunnel by Professor Sayce in *Quarterly Statement* 1881, 141.

I need not attempt to show how *lemattah* in Chronicles can have assumed the particular combination of letters professedly found in the inscription. It must, however, be assumed that in the inscription, the first three Hebrew letters, viz., במא are *correctly* deciphered by the experts. All that remains for me is to complete in the *purest Biblical Hebrew*, the word thus beginning (and to complete it) in such a way that it may suitably describe the course of the waters through the tunnel.

The only word I can recommend is במאורה (as written in Isaiah xi, 8), meaning *in the hole or cavern*. Genesisius says, "Root עור Arab..... to be deep, to be *excavated*." Accordingly I translate the fifth line thus, "The waters flowed from the spring to the pool *in the cavern* (hole or subterraneous passage) a thousand cubits."

Let me frankly admit that *mearah* is not quite the word I should have expected to meet with in this inscription. A monotonous repetition of נקבה (excavation) would have been more in keeping with the stonemason's style or the composer's meagre vocabulary.

One, however, who has not seen squeeze, cast, or stone, cannot (where there is obviously no collusion) challenge the unanimous decision of independent inspectors unbiassed, at least, in regard to the first three letters of the mysterious word.

W. F. BIRCH.

## SUTEKH, CHIEF GOD OF THE HITTITES.

THE more we learn of the gods of the Hittites, the more we shall know of the Hittites themselves, for the ideal aim of nations and tribes is to become like their own gods. Sutekh was clearly the principal deity of the Hittites, for his name occurs the oftenest, and on the Karnac copy of the Egypto-Hittite treaty he is invoked as the deity of many places.

What was his form and representation? And what was his precise place in the astro-religious system of the ancients? On the engraved silver plate which contained the Hittite text of the treaty, the god was figured in the centre. The silver plate has not come down to us. Yet who knows but that the figure of Sutekh may one day be found surviving among the hieroglyphs of some Hittite inscription! The name is probably

Egyptian, compounded of Sut or Set (= Sothis, the Dog-star) and ekh, meaning ruler. We may look upon it as an Egyptian equivalent for the Hittite name of the deity, or as the name of an Egyptian god corresponding to the Hittite deity, and the actual name used by the Hittites is yet to be sought for. Sutekh is generally accepted as being another form of the name Set. Set was a god whose worship was established among the Hyksos or Shepherd Kings, and who had once been in favour with the Egyptians, but had come to be regarded by them as a personification of the Evil Principle. He thus became connected and confounded or identified with Typhon, as the murderer of Osiris. The place of this evil deity was in the Underworld, the dark abyss below the horizon. This is the astronomical position of the stars ushered in by Sothis, in the slow motion of *precession*. These stars make up the constellation of the whale (*Cetus*, Κητος) which, according to the Greeks, is the sea-monster from which Perseus delivered Andromeda. According to Liddell and Scott, the Greek Κητος, besides meaning sea-monster and the constellation of the whale, seems to have the root meaning of gulf or depth or abyss; and this is surely because the whale constellation is in the same dark region as the abyss, as the abyss is located in the mythological system.

Sutekh, then, may be the god of the constellation Ketos, including as its herald the bright star Sirius. So his worshippers might be called Keteioi or Ceteans, just as the worshippers of Athene were called Athenians, and the worshippers of Assur, Assyrians. The Moabites are called in Scripture the children of Chemosh, after their god, and the Hittites are called the children of Heth (Hebrew *Cheth*, Assyrian *Kheta*)—why not also after their god? Homer makes mention of some Ceteans (*Odys.* xi, 521), and the Scholiast says they were “a people of Mysia of whom Telephus was king.” Mr. Gladstone has suggested their identity with the Hittites; and Prof. Sayce thinks Mr. Gladstone may be right. (“The Hittites: the story of a Forgotten Empire,” by A. H. Sayce, p. 120.)

The suggested etymological connexion of Kheta with Ketos does not require us to believe that the Hittites borrowed a god from the Greek pantheon, or a name from the Greek language; for the borrowing may have been the other way. The worship of a sea-monster by the Hittites (if that was so) was but as the worship of Dagon by the Philistines, or the reverence of the Babylonians for Onnes the Fish-man, who brought them civilisation. That the Hittites should reverence, as a god of heaven and earth, a deity discarded by the Egyptians as a ruler of darkness, was only what was charged also upon the Hyksos, and upon the Israelites themselves by their enemies.

The consort of Sutekh is believed to have been Atargatis or Derketo, a goddess half-woman, half-fish (Wright's “Empire of the Hittites,” Sayce's “Hittites”); and this lends further support to the idea that Sutekh himself was a Fish-man, the god of the deep.

GEORGE ST. CLAIR.