

No. 4, *marked* (B)—

בִּנְיָמִן
בְּרֵנְבֹוֹ

In Hebrew—

נבוגרי בר
ברנבו אחוהי

“Nabúgrí, son of Barnabû, his brother.”

No. 5, *marked* (A)—

עמחע(בתי)
מחמימי(טי)
גריבון
אמח

In Hebrew—

עמתע(ברת)
מקימ(בר)
גריבון
אמח

“‘Amtha’ (daughter) of Moqîmû, son of Ghríbûn, their mother.”

The name Barnabû, which occurs so many times in these inscriptions, is found also in De Vogué, *Ins. Sem.*, No. 73. He derives it from Bar-Nebo, “Son of Nebo,” which is doubtless correct.

SENNACHERIB'S CATASTROPHE AT NOB.

ISAIAH X, 28-34.

By Rev. W. F. BIRCH.

If any should object that Isaiah x does not refer to Sennacherib, or that Nob was not the scene of his disaster, I shall make good my title by producing evidence sufficient to satisfy such as believe that Zion, the City of David, was solely on Ophel (so called). Those who profess to believe *on evidence* that it was situated elsewhere, are obviously themselves already proof against all I can say.

My earliest attempt in *Quarterly Statement*, 1877, 51, to identify Nob was, I now see, doomed to failure from the first, since I did not know (1) how to deal with profane writers (*e.g.*, Josephus and the son of

Sirach), and (2) that Isaiah x, 28-32, must remain a *sealed* passage until the topography rightly understood be used to elucidate the history.

In regard to this passage or march an amusing variety of opinions exists. Some consider it to be too *poetical* to be *actual*, others too *particular* to be *prophetical*. It seems to me that all four epithets are in this case equally merited. This description of the last two days of Sennacherib's campaign is certainly "one of the most picturesque and magnificent representations that human poetry has ever produced." It was uttered as a prophecy, and is rich in detail, of which point after point was minutely fulfilled. Isaiah declares first *the route*, then *the reconnaissance*, and lastly *the rout* of the Assyrian. I will now give the story, and afterwards (if needed, as I hope) the proof.

THE STORY.

Another Passover was at hand. Rab-shakeh with his strong detachment had rejoined Sennacherib at Libnah, reporting the utter failure of his braggadocio at Jerusalem.

The great king was vexed at Hezekiah's firmness; but chagrin gave place to anxiety on his learning that Tir-hakah was marching against him.

It was now necessary for Sennacherib to put himself in the best posture of defence against this powerful foe, and most desirable for him to gain possession of Jerusalem without any delay. Accordingly, leaving Libnah, he marched northwards. Up the famous ascent of Beth-horon toiled the vast Assyrian host laden with spoil; but instead of advancing by the direct road to Jerusalem, it suddenly turned to the left at Khurbet el Lattâtn and passing Beeroth went off in the direction of Bethel. The Jewish watchmen posted on Nebi Samwil (Mizpeh of Benjamin) would duly report to Hezekiah the Assyrians' approach, and sudden turn to the north, and the subsequent reappearance of their vanguard on the east side of Bethel, as if marching down towards Ai. Jerusalem would be troubled at these tidings, but Hezekiah might calmly reflect, "The Assyrian (though he meaneth not so) is but fulfilling the words of the prophecy 'He is come to Aiath (Ai)'; a prophecy leading him eventually to Nob and destruction.

Another hour brings the Assyrian to Migron; before nightfall he has laid up his baggage at Michmash, crossed the difficult "passage," and occupied Geba (Jeba). Thus the first day's prophecy is accomplished. The predicted route has proved the actual route. The march that to a hypocritical nation seemed foolish and impossible has become an accomplished fact.

In this strategical movement, Sennacherib has shown prudence. He has acquired as his basis a strong defensive position, the identical one selected by the countless host of the Philistines in the days of Saul. Hence he can retreat at will: here Tir-hakah can only attack him at a

great disadvantage; here his vessels of gold and silver, the spoils gathered from conquered cities, are perfectly safe.

Another day dawns, and more prophecy is fulfilled. The Assyrian scouts probably mount to the plateau, a mile and a quarter west of Geba, and gazing over hill and dale see on every side a terror-stricken neighbourhood. The precision of the details in Isaiah x, 29-31, is such, that it is incredible that anyone who had not visited the spot should ever have so accurately described the panorama. It may be that actually standing on one of the remarkable stones noted by Mr. Schick in his June report, the inspired prophet first foretold in impassioned language the advance of Sennacherib. Facing north (as in the view of Moses from Pisgah) he in imagination spies the enemy at Ai, and traces his advance to Migron, Michmash, "the passage," and Geba; all places within his view. Now turning round to the south he names town after town as they appear in consecutive order in the prospect before him from west to east. Standing there to-day, and turning to Isaiah x, 29-31, we have the true key to the landscape before our view. Village and ruin to the number of seven, perched each on its own hill, still remain to answer perfectly to the exact position required in this perplexing prophecy. Here on our right over against us is Ramah, the Deceleia of Baasha; next comes Gibeah of Saul suitably overhanging the valley of blood: next, almost due south, we see Gallim, the home of Phalti, Saul's son-in-law, and more to the left, Laish. Then comes poor priestly Anathoth; next, on its ridge, Madmenah (corrupted from Azmaveth), and last of all, due west of us, is the site of Gebim (close to the (true) Rock Rimmon), whose inhabitants, to escape the Assyrian, snatching up their household goods, fled for concealment to Benjamin's favourite refuge, the cave of El Jai in Wady Suweinit, a hiding-place not to be attacked with impunity, either then or now.

Meanwhile, Sennacherib, marching westward, has gained the main road to Jerusalem; by noon he has passed Shafat, and soon after on his surmounting a slight eminence, the Jewish capital bursts full upon his view. He beholds at last the object of his march, and at once the advance of the whole army is arrested. He halts at Nob, and feasts his eyes with the sight of the holy city, its eastern ridge crowned by the temple, the mount of the daughter of Zion, and (to the right of it) the more elevated western hill of Jerusalem, *i.e.*, the upper city of Josephus.

But the mid-day heat is past, yet the great host remains motionless. Why is this? Hannibal hovered about Rome, and Richard I beheld Jerusalem from Mizpeh, and turned back; but why should the great king with his enormous army come to a dead stop at Nob, only a mile and half from Jerusalem.

Prophecy had said, "As yet shall he remain at Nob this day"; but what did he know or care about such prophecy? Sennacherib, however, though haughty, was not without the wisdom of the serpent. It was all very well on the monuments to boast of capturing third-rate places like Eltekeh and Timnath (in Dan), at the beginning of the war. Lachish, however, and Libnah had recently given him trouble enough.

He knew, too, it took three years to reduce Samaria. Jerusalem was a still greater city and better defended; in fact, it was a first-class fortress, situate in a district (thanks to Hezekiah's precautions) almost waterless in the summer months. Sennacherib knew well enough he had no time to take Jerusalem by force. His tongue and pen must therefore serve him for sword and spear, and for gaining Jerusalem he has to rely far more on bluster and blasphemy than on bows and banks.

Accordingly, in order to deal privately with Hezekiah, he dispatched to him a letter defying the God of Israel (2 Chron. xxxii, 17; 2 Kings xix, 10-13) and then, like a Fowler watching his net, he waited at Nob to see the result, shaking his hand.

That letter ruined Sennacherib. He might with impunity carry captive 200,000 Jews (they deserved it), but when he took to writing blasphemy, his iniquity was full indeed. Accordingly it was no marvel that, when Hezekiah after reading the letter, at once, without consulting prince or prophet, "went up into the temple and spread it before the Lord and prayed" (2 Kings, xix, 16), the answer was at once brought by the prophet, Thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, he shall not come to this city, still less shoot an arrow there, still less come before it with shield, still less cast a bank against it. "For I will defend this city, to save it, for my own sake," &c.

What! shall Sennacherib, exasperated by silent resistance, with nearly 200,000 men at his feet and less than two miles from Jerusalem, not even come near to observe it as did Titus? No; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

The envoys returned without any reply from the Jewish king, since the God that answereth by fire was himself sending the answer direct that very night.

We may imagine how Sennacherib would now vapour on Scopus, brandishing and waving his hand in sight of the Jews, and thus indicating that he would soon make Jerusalem an offering to his god. It was too late, however, in the afternoon for the army to move forward that day.

The sun went down, and the full moon rose over the mountains of Moab. Hezekiah, happy in his God, and some at least in Jerusalem with him, betook themselves to keep the Passover feast. On and beyond Scopus the 185,000 lay down to sleep their last sleep, while Sennacherib, perhaps, caroused with his leaders and captains. As the night advances the gentle breeze of evening grows to the fatal blast; angry clouds drive up from the south-west, the moon is obscured; all around is pitchy darkness. Suddenly a flash of lightning immediately followed by a crash of thunder confounds the host. "At the voice of Jehovah shall Asshur be panic-stricken" (Cheyne), and rattling hailstones quickly add to his terror. A terrific storm, like that at Beth-horon or Eben-ezer in days of yore, has broken upon the camp of the Assyrians. Jerusalem escapes unscathed. Safe within its walls the inhabitants must have witnessed with joy and thankfulness the distant raging of the elements, heaven's artillery playing with deadly effect upon the myrmidons of Sennacherib,

flash after flash of lightning illuminating the distant heights as far as Mizpeh and Tell el Ful, while shrieks of terror rent the air between the claps of thunder. At last an hour of horror ends in the stillness of death. One may slightly alter the poet's words to describe the scene :

Jam satis terris nivis atque diræ
Grandinis misit Pater et rubente
Dexterâ sacræ jaculatus arcis
Terruit hostem.

In abject terror, Sennacherib and a few others had huddled together for safety into the rock-cut tombs on the west side of Nob. Possibly that now styled "The Cave of Grapes" (Enab, ? corrupted from Nob) sheltered on that awful night both the dust of the high priest Ahimelech and the trembling form of the great king. Almost all the host, to the number of 185,000 men, perished, either killed by lightning or crushed to death by hailstones. Thus Isaiah's words were fulfilled, and "thus the Lord saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria."

WAS THERE A STREET OF COLUMNS IN JERUSALEM ?

By the REV. J. E. HANAUER.

IN a letter written about a year ago I called attention to a line of limestone columns, the remains, as I believed, of the ancient "agora," or market-place of the Byzantine period, and apparently still *in situ*, though enclosed on all sides with masonry. These columns are situated on the eastern side of the "Sük el Lahamin," the westernmost of the three parallel bazaars east of the Muristan. When Dr. Robinson was here in 1852 only two of these columns were visible ("Bib. Researches," Vol. III., page 168). More than a year ago I ascertained, by a personal examination of the shops on the eastern side of the above-named "Sük," the existence of five other columns of the same sort, to the south of, and in line with, the two noticed by Robinson, and making with them seven in all, visible at intervals where the plaster, mortar, and rubble-masonry have fallen from the walls which have been built between and around them. Immediately south of the bazaars are other fragments of columns, not however, as I think, *in situ*. Some are built into walls, and four, with heavy Byzantine capitals, support the dome of a building now used as a coffee-shop, but looking as if it had originally been intended for a little Greek church. Yet further southward in the long street leading through the Jewish quarter to the spot where, accord-