

## ILLUSTRATIONS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

IT is one of the most instructive and comforting proofs that our Lord is watching over His Church, to find every year the number of evidences of truth in the Bible increasing. This has been lately shown in a most interesting book, published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, but from its expensive form, not accessible to our readers in general. The work is called the "Land of Israel," and contains the latest researches by a traveller of great learning and general information, especially of a geological kind, in Palestine. Some of the illustrations we propose to lay before our readers. Our first illustration is the Assyrian and Egyptian *rock-tablets*, which, cut in the hard lime-stone, still attest the march of the various invaders of Palestine. Mr. Tristram, the traveller just mentioned, after leaving Beyrout, the place of his embarkation, says, "On one occasion we rode by the shore for six miles, skirting the Bay of St. George (the traditional site of the slaughter of the famous dragon), up to the point where a little headland pushes into the sea at the height of about 100 feet, on the very edge of which is hewn the ancient road, so often travelled for the last 3,000 years by the invaders of Syria, Egyptian, Assyrian, Roman, or Turkoman.

On the highest point of this promontory, facing the sea, and a few yards behind and above the wood, and also a little lower down, where the path rapidly descends to the mouth of the river, are hewn those tablets which were first brought to the notice of modern times by Henry Maundrell, in A. D. 1697, and which have ever since been considered the most attractive monuments of antiquity in Northern Palestine.

As every writer on the country has fully described them, it is needless to repeat their accounts, but it was not without a feeling of the deepest interest that we gazed on those rock-hewn figures and inscriptions, and remembered that those monuments which to the old traveller of 160 years ago were merely "perhaps the representation of some persons buried hereabout, whose sepulchres might probably also be discovered by the diligent observer," have been ascertained by the actual re-

searches of Lepsius and Layard on the spot, to be the records of the progress of the successive oppressors of Israel, both Egyptian and Assyrian. Here Sennacherib has left the verification of his proud boast, 'By the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon: and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof, and I will enter into the height of his border. . . . I have digged and drunk water:' and, did the Hebrew text admit, one might feel disposed to add the gloss of the Septuagint, 'I have made a bridge,' and apply it to the noble structure which spans the stream below.

Close by the tablet of Sennacherib is the Egyptian sepulchre of Rameses, a monument of hoar antiquity, even in the days when the Assyrian chariots drove beneath it, and on which probably Herodotus (II. 107), more than 2,200 years ago gazed with the same longing as ourselves to pick up the broken tradition. And though but one of the Assyrian tablets still retains any legible cuneiform characters, may not the remaining sepulchres, however closely the figures resemble each other, be the records of other invasions of Palestine, of which no less than five are recorded in Holy Writ? After these old figures how strangely modern reads the inscription of Antonine at the foot of the pass. Yet the Roman had conquered and put his stamp on Syria, of which the very road we trod was an evidence. That road, as every traveller and his stumbling horse knows full well, is but a wreck of upturned paving stones. Pity that those Gallic legions, who in the year A. D. 1860, appropriated an Egyptian tablet to record the unresisted presence of the troops of Napoleon III., had not, like the Romans, employed the hammer of the engineer before they gave licence to the chisel of the engraver."

We have only space for another "illustration," interesting at this holy season. He says, "I found the old sheik waiting for me at the church door; he invited me to accompany him to his house, which consisted of a large lofty barn, the lower part of which was half granary, half stable, the granary open to the top, and a few steps lead-