

and issued vigorous protests against the conclusions of the critics.

These archaeologists, indeed, make no attempt to deal with the chief arguments on which the critics rely to support their conclusions, viz., those based on peculiarities of language and style. But arguments based on language and style alone are notoriously insecure. They carry weight with most minds only when the historical evidence points in the same direction, or when there is no historical evidence either way. In the case of the Pentateuch, these linguistic arguments in favour of a comparatively late authorship have had more consideration than they would otherwise receive in the absence of direct historical evidence through certain presuppositions which seemed to have force.

One of these presuppositions was the improbability that Moses was able to write at all, or that, if he could write, he would find anyone able to read his writings. A few years ago this constituted a real difficulty. The force of this presupposition has now been utterly and forever broken by the recent discoveries in Babylon and Egypt, which make it perfectly certain that the art of writing was not only known in both these countries long before the time of Moses, or even Abraham, but that it was freely used for literary purposes as well as for official records and correspondence. Not only so, but it is now certain that there were several forms of writing already employed, and that Egyptian officials at any rate were expected to be able to read and write in the language and cuneiform script of Babylonia, as well as in their own hieroglyphics. Under these circumstances, one has no difficulty in understanding how Moses might be able to write in the native language of his own people, and how a considerable number among them would be qualified to read and value what he had written.

It has also become abundantly clear that parallels to some of the older portions of Genesis existed among the Babylonians before the time of Abraham's migration, and that the stories