

For the Pearl.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF PROPHECY.

RUINS OF BABYLON.

No. 1.

Having had reference to the travels of Captain the Hon. G. Keppel entitled "a personal narrative of a journey from India to England by Bassorah Bagdad, the Ruins of Babylon, and Persia in 1824"—and aware of the high character given to these travels by all the reviewers;—to complete the "Illustrations of Prophecy" I shall transcribe from his pages much valuable matter—also from the Travels of Captain Mignan in 1827—and of Mr. Buckingham. Sir Robert Ker Porter's Travels I have perused carefully as relates to Babylon—the detail is quite too voluminous for our present purpose.

In page 115, vol. 1st.—Captain Keppel observes, "The soil of Ancient Assyria and Babylonia consists of a fine clay, mixed with sand, with which as the waters of the river retire, the shores are covered. This compost when dried by the heat of the sun, becomes a hard and solid mass—and forms materials for the fine bricks, for which Babylon was celebrated. We put to the test the adaptation of this mud for pottery—by taking some of it when wet from the banks of the river—and then moulding it into any form we pleased—having been exposed to the sun for half an hour, it became as hard as stone. These remarks are important as the indications of buildings throughout this region are different from those of other countries. The universal substitution of brick for stone being observable in all the numerous ruins we visited, including those of the great cities of Selucia, Etesiphon and of the mighty Babylon herself, for which we have the authority of Scripture that her builders used brick for stone, and slime (Bitumen) for mortar. Gen. 11. 3.—In consequence of this the ruins instead of showing fragments of Pillars or any definite marks by which we might conjecture the order of Architecture, exhibit an accumulation of mounds, which on a dead flat soon attract the eye of a traveller, and have at first sight the appearance of sandy hillocks—on a nearer inspection they prove to be square masses of brick facing the cardinal points, and though worn by the weather, built with much regularity; the vicinity is strewn with fragments of tiles and broken pottery—coins also are sometimes found. Travellers should bring instruments for digging for hidden treasures.

From this place (Mahowel) the ruins of the once mighty Babylon are distinctly visible—like irregular and misshapen hills; 14 miles to the N. N. E. is the Tower of Babel, now known by the name of Nimrod's Tower (Birs Nimrod). Renoullin in his geography of Herodotus, has so completely established the identity of the ruins with that city, that I shall merely state, the site is still called Babel by the Natives;—the traditions of oriental writers, and the Arabs assign the highest antiquity to those ruins with whom all ancient authors agree—the appearance of the place also answers the description given by these authors, and the position agrees with the relative distance of Babylon from other great cities—the city of Selucia for instance on the N. E., and the city of Is, on the N. W. the ruins seem by me to correspond with all ancient accounts. The aspect of the fallen city is precisely that which the divine writings predict Babylon would exhibit after her downfall. The geographical accounts convince me that Babylon could not have stood elsewhere, than on the spot I visited, and the prodigious remains are conclusive evidence that they could have belonged to no other city—when we consider the sandy nature of the soil on which Babylon stood, the perishable materials of which it was composed, and the many large cities which have been built of the ruins—when workmen have been constantly employed in removing the bricks—that for three thousand years the ruins have been subject to the injuries of the weather, and that in consequence of the Euphrates periodically overflowing its banks, they are inundated for two months in the year; we ought to be still more surprised that such vast masses should have withstood so many concurring causes for total extinction. I take it for granted therefore that all the ordinary buildings are crumbled into dust; and that only the remains of the largest exist,—whoever has seen the mud habitations of an eastern city will readily accede to this suggestion—if any further argument were wanting the fact mentioned by Diodorus Siculus that the greater part of the land within the walls was ploughed up in his time, would be in my opinion conclusive evidence: after stating upon what grounds, I rest my belief in the identity of those ruins, it is fair to add that our party in common with other travellers have totally failed in discovering any traces of the city walls. I ask, was it possible for tired travellers to explore the ruins of walls sixty miles in circumference. Mr. Buckingham traced the walls and found some of them remaining, in a state of great dilapidation. The divine predictions against Babylon have been so literally fulfilled in the appearance of the ruins that I am disposed to give the fullest signification to the words of Jeremiah that "the broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken." Jer. 51. 58. St. Jerome who lived in the fourth century states, that the walls were then standing, enclosing wild beasts for the hunting of the Persian Kings. The vast remains "of Babylon the great" the glory of the Chaldees excellency were then visible; with the Temple of Jupiter Belus towering over the

ruins in inexpressible grandeur. March 26, 1824.—At day light we quitted Mahowel, from which place the ruins of Babylon commenced,—at 9 o'clock we arrived at the first ruin of magnitude it is called by the Natives the Muzillibah or overturned; in 1616, it was visited by Pietro Della Valle who not having examined the vast ruin on the opposite bank of the river, supposed it to be the Tower of Babel—its form may have been originally square but is now oblong, the sides face the four cardinal points of the compass, then to the N. and S. are upwards of 200 paces in extent that to the East 180, that to the West 136—the height is very singular it is well to be observed that in Della Valle's time the altitude of this ruin was 200 feet, and the wall about two thousand six hundred, proving the liability of those ruins to a gradual decrease, for in the space of 200 years the mound has diminished 60 feet in height, and nearly 500 in circumference. The western side by which we ascended thro' the lowest, is the most remarkable, as it shows more distinctly the form of the structure—the mound appears to be a solid mass—it is composed of sun dried bricks, cemented with clay mortar—between each layer of brick is one of reeds the summit is traversed by large channels formed by the rain; in walking we stepped on several pieces of alabaster, and on a vitreous substance resembling glass; we saw great quantities of ornamental and other kinds of pottery—these were vast numbers of entire kiln burnt bricks, 14 inches square and 3 thick; on many were inscribed those unknown characters resembling arrow heads, so remarkable in the ruins of Babylon and Persepolis. The freshness of the inscriptions was astonishing appearing to have been recently stamped; instead of having stood the test of upwards of three thousand years—from the mode in which the bricks are disposed of in this, and several other ruins it is evident that with some exceptions the great buildings of Babylon were composed of sun burnt bricks and coated with bricks burnt in the furnace,—the mound was full of large holes. We entered some of them and found them strewn with the carcasses and skeletons of animals recently killed,—the odour of wild beasts was so strong that prudence got the better of curiosity, for we had no doubt of the savage nature of the inmates; our guides indeed told us that all the ruins abounded in lions and other wild beasts—so literally has the divine prediction been fulfilled that "wild beasts of the desert and of the islands should lie there." Isaiah 13. v. 21. 22. After exploring this ruin we proceeded to Hillah—with the exception of a few huts, the town is situated on the west bank of the Euphrates. We crossed the river by a bridge of boats like that at Bagdad—the Euphrates here is 150 feet broad. On producing our firman, the house of Musad, the governor of Merbela, was allotted to us, and a Janissary was sent by the Governor to attend us. Hillah was built in the twelfth century out of the ruins of Babylon. It is enclosed within a mud wall of mean appearance, but the Bazaar is tolerably good—its inhabitants ten thousand. Garden produce, rice, dates and grain; the soil is very productive—little cultivated, however. If any thing could identify the people of Hillah as the descendants of the ancient Babylonians, it would be their extreme profligacy, for which they are notorious. The veranda of the house we occupied was paved with inscribed Babylonian bricks; we amused ourselves with compassing them with others we had brought from the ruins. At first sight many appeared alike, but on examination some letters appeared different; this would indicate that they were not stamped from a mould, but separately. These characters have hitherto baffled the inquiries of the learned; Maurice is of opinion that the inscriptions have a reference to Astronomy. When Alexander came to Babylon, Calisthenes was informed by the Chaldeans that their astronomical observations were recorded on kiln burnt bricks, "*Cocylibus laterculis inscriplas.*" We brought with us from Babylon several curious cylinders, of which numbers are found in the plains. I have presented three to the British Museum. These cylinders differ from each other in size and material, the larger an inch long; they are perforated in the centre, and from the numbers found have probably been worn by the common people as amulets. Mr. Keppel describes three amulets, and proves that two of them illustrated the account of Herodotus respecting the dresses of the Babylonians, viz. that they have two sorts of linen that falls to the feet—another over this made of wool—a white sash covers all.

March 27th. Early this morning we set out to visit the town of Babel, all well armed and mounted. At a short distance from Hillah we met ten horsemen sent by the Governor. A just idea of the state of the country may be formed by our being obliged to have a party of twenty armed horsemen to go a distance of six miles, though we had nothing except our arms to attract robbers. On our road we met a large party of the desert Arabs, who offered us no molestation, but gave us the usual salutation, "Salam aleikam." They were probably of the same tribe as our guard, otherwise it is not likely we should have escaped so well. In describing a sham fight of the Arabians, the author observes. Nothing could be more animated, or would have afforded a finer subject for the painter than this group of wild men; it is difficult to conceive the effect of a large party of armed horsemen thus huddled together in the greatest apparent confusion, with drawn swords and couched lances. This was a general passage of arms, and not without its interest; but when two hostile tribes meet, they then put into fierce execution, the address which they acquire by this constant practice. From He-

rodotus we learn that the Tower of Babel, which was also the Temple of Belus was a stadium in length and breadth; this would give a circumference of two thousand feet. The temple consisted of eight turrets rising one above the other. Rennel calculates its height at 500 feet—the ascent was outside, and a convenient visiting place half way up this temple was destroyed by Xerxes. Alexander wished to rebuild it, but died before he commenced; he however employed two thousand soldiers for two months to remove the rubbish. The ruins of the Tower of Babel are six miles S. W. of Nillih. At first sight they appear like a hill with a castle on the top. The greater portion is covered with a light sandy soil."

Your obedient servant, H. H.

For the Pearl.

THE ALBUM LEAF.

Upon being urged to write something original for a Lady's Album, the following lines were composed by the author, which by request we have been permitted to publish.

1

This leaf is like the finest snow
Just lodged upon a garden wall,
Unstained by ought impure below
As Adam was before the fall.

2

Eliza then if urged by thee
With recreant hand I'm led
To mar its virgin purity,
The shame is on thine head;
And if an awful voice I hear,
Or fearful form I see,
At some dread bar I must appear
What shall I say for thee?

3

As Adam in the garden hid
When crime to him was laid,
I fear I'd act as Adam did
And say as Adam said,
The woman urged what I have done
She pressed me to agree,
And then Eliza what must come
But woe to you and me?

4

That precious drop of Eastern sea
Fresh from its pearly shrine,
Of purer nature could not be
Than was this leaf of thine.
So great a change henceforth deplore
For see what now remains,
Its vellum surface scribbled o'er
With crooked inky stains.

Annapolis.

P. W. MORRIS, JR.

THE WONDERS OF THE DEEP.

BY REV. JOHN PIERPONT.

"What a wonder is the sea itself! How wide does it stretch out its arms, clasping islands and continents in its embrace! How mysterious are its depths!—still more mysterious its hoarded and hidden treasures! With what weight do its watery masses roll onward to the shore, when not a breath of wind is moving over its surface! How wonderfully fearful is it, when its waves, in mid ocean, are foaming and tossing their heads in anger under the lash of the tempest! How wonderfully beautiful, when, like a melted and ever-moving mirror, it reflects the setting sun, or the crimson clouds, or the saffron heavens after the sun has set; or when its 'watery floor' breaks into myriads of fragments the image of the quiet moon that falls upon it from the skies!

"Wonderful, too, are those hills of ice that break off, in thunder, from the frozen barriers of the pole, and float toward the sun, their bristling pinnacles glistening in his beams, and slowly wasting away under his power, an object at once of wonder and of dread to the mariner, till they are lost in the embrace of more genial deeps. And that current is a wonder, which moves for ever onward from the southern seas, to the colder latitudes, bearing in its waters the influence of a tropical sun, and saying to the iceberg from the pole, 'Hitherto may ye come, but no farther.' And, if possible, still more wonderful are those springs of fresh water which, among the Indian Isles, gush up from the depths of a salt ocean, a source of refreshment and life to the seaman who is parching with thirst 'beneath a burning sky.' And is it not as wonderful, when, not a spring of fresh water, but a column of volcanic fire shoots up from 'the dark unfathomed caves of ocean,' and throws its red glare far over the astonished waves, that heaven and tremble with the heaving and trembling earth below them! wonderful, when that pillar of fire vanishes, leaving a smoking volcano in its place! and wonderful, when that volcano, in its turn, sinks back, and is lost in the depths whence it rose!

"Then there are other wonders in the living creatures of the deep, from the animalcule, that 'no eye can see,' and that scarcely 'glass can reach,' up to 'that Leviathan which God hath made to play therein.' In 'this great and wide sea are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.' Yet He, who hath made them all, even there openeth his hand and satisfieth the desires of all. Wonderful is it, that, of these 'creatures innumerable,' each one finds its food in some other, and in its turn, serves some other for food; and that this great work of destruc-