

"A new and interesting aspect has been given to them, by the readings of the inscriptions on clay tablets, found at Nineveh, and to which especial attention has been given by the late Mr. G. Smith of the Archaeological Department of the British Museum. Assurbanipal, King of Assyria, one of the Kings known to the Greeks by the name of Sardanapalus, reigned at Nineveh about B. C. 673. He was a grandson of the Biblical Sennacherib, and son of Esarhaddon; and it seems that he had inherited from his father, a library of Chaldean and Assyrian literature, written on tablets of clay, and containing much ancient lore of the nations inhabiting the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates. * * * His Scribes ransacked the record chambers of the oldest temples in the world, and Babel, Erech, Accad, and Ur, had to yield up their treasures of history and theology to diligent copyists, who transcribed them in beautiful arrow-head characters, on new clay tablets, and deposited them in the library of the great King. * * * They were also inscribed with legends, stating the sources whence they had been derived. * * * Though the date of the writing of these tablets is comparatively modern, being about the time of the later Kings of Judah, the original records from which they were transcribed, profess to have been very ancient—some of them about 1,600 years before the time of Assurbanipal, so that they go back to a time anterior to that of the early Hebrew patriarchs. * * * The subjects treated of in the Nineveh tablets are very various, but those that concern our present purpose are the documents relating to the creation, the fall of man, and the deluge.' The Dr. says, these tablets were "exhumed by Layard and Smith."

Now let us look at the various particulars of this story of the Dr. and ascertain what portions are *facts*, and which are *fictions*, or mere *inventions*. The following may be admitted as facts.—There were such Kings of Assyria. Layard and Smith dug up those clay tablets from the earth, near the river Euphrates, supposed to be the site of Nineveh. The time of making the inscriptions on them, B. C. 673. (This was about the time of Manasseh, king of Judah. The translation of the inscriptions will be given in the proper place in another page.) Now for the fictions, or inventions:—1. Assurbanipal inheriting a library from his father. 2. His Scribes ransacking record chambers of temples at Babel, Erech, Accad, and Ur, and obtaining from them treasures of history and theology. 3. Their making these identical clay tablets, and depositing them in the king's library; and lastly, these tablets being transcribed from other records of a much earlier date.

Now take these fictions from the story, and it remains a shapeless *skeleton*, utterly worthless as to the purpose for which the Dr.