

was built from its materials. * * * The floods of the Euphrates and the rains of winter too have exercised their share in burying and disintegrating the materials. All these agencies at work have combined to render Babylon a byeword and a reproach among nations."

Near the ruins of Babylon was a remarkable mound known by the name of Birs Nemroud, in regard to the origin of which there had been several conjectures, some regarding it as the remains of the Tower of Babel. Recent discoveries among its rubbish, and the inscriptions deciphered by Col. Rawlinson, show that it was a temple erected to the heavenly bodies, that it was restored and completed by Nebuchadnezzar, though its original foundation was laid under Tiglath Pileser, 1100 B. C. Mr Loftus here remarks, "Nebuchadnezzar was a great builder and restorer. His records are discovered in every part of Babylonia, and abound in the immediate vicinity of Babylon—corroboratory to the fullest extent of the words of Scripture, 'Is not this great Babylon that I have built?'" Mr Loftus adds further:—

"The view from the summit of the Birs Nemroud is very extensive, and its utter desolation has been the theme of frequent observation. No one can stand there and survey the scene around without being struck with the literal fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy. 'I will make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water; and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction saith the Lord of Hosts.'—Spreading out like a vast sea upon the North and West is a marsh, which all the labors of the ancient and modern rulers of the kingdom have never been able to subdue. In certain seasons, the waters of the Euphrates rise above their ordinary level, and flood the whole surface of the low lands of Chaldæa, confirming every word of the prophet."

Due south from this stands the tomb of Ezekiel so called. Of course the original tomb erected over the prophet's remains has long since been destroyed, but Mr L. sees no reason to doubt that the present occupies the same position. Its examination showed nothing of particular interest.

Many of our readers are aware that the bricks and other ancient remains found in Babylonia are covered with inscriptions, in what is called the cuneiform or wedge-shaped character. These are so called on account of the letters being generally formed of various combinations of a figure shaped like a wedge. These have been deciphered principally through the perseverance of Col. Rawlinson, and his readings have thrown much light upon ancient history. Among other things, they afford an interesting confirmation of the view of Scripture regarding the early settlement of this portion of the world.

"The recent researches," says Mr L., "made in the interpretation of the primitive cuneiform inscriptions have led to the not inconsistent belief, that in the earlier ages previous to the historic period (which commenced with the empire of Nimrod) the region on the North of the Persian Gulf was probably inhabited by a Semitic race, which was gradually dispossessed by a powerful stream of invasion or colonization from the South. The Hamitic or Scythic element, which prevails in the most ancient cuneiform records throughout Babylonia and Susiana, points to Ethiopia as the mother country of the new settlers. They appear to have crossed the Red Sea and the peninsula of Arabia, leaving traces of their migration along the shores of the Persian Gulf. In the language of the inscriptions, they are called 'Akkadim'—a name preserved in one of their cities, the Accad of Genesis*—and their first settlements are concluded to have been Erech and Ur, the modern sites of which are represented by the ruins of Warka and Mugayer."

Mr L. also quotes Herodotus and Homer as referring to the Cushites both in the East and West. We need not say how closely this agrees with Scrip-

* Ch. x. 10.