

**RECORDS OF THE PAST: BEING ENGLISH
TRANSLATIONS OF THE ANCIENT
MONUMENTS OF EGYPT AND WESTERN
ASIA, PUBLISHED UNDER THE SANCTION OF
THE SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY.
VOL. IX. ASSYRIAN TEXTS**

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VARIOUS

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NOTE.

Every Text here given is either now translated for the *first time*, or has been specially revised by the Translator to the date of this publication.

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Multa sermone lingua, celestibus ara,

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P R E F A C E.

THE present volume, which in accordance with the plan of the "RECORDS OF THE PAST" is dedicated to translations from the Assyrian and Babylonian, will be found to contain several texts rendered from these languages by additional translators. As the work attracted European notice, it was at once perceived to be available for bringing into notice the most important texts and the translations of foreign scholars, and a considerable portion of the present volume will be found due to them. Dr. Oppert, whose early and successful researches place him in the first rank of Assyrian scholars, has contributed no less than three long translations, one in conjunction with M. Menant, who was formerly associated with him in his labours. Amongst the English translators may be cited Mr. Boscawen, and Mr. Pinches, of the young and rising school of Assyriology in this country, who has each contributed translations; and there is in the present volume one from the late Mr. George Smith, which he unfortunately did not live long enough to revise. The principal historical texts will be found comprised in the "RECORDS OF THE PAST," and the materials supplied for those who desire to use them, either for the purposes of general history or a comparison with the contemporary events of sacred or profane history. In fact they offer a new

account of the events which took place in Western Asia, and must be considered as the authentic narrative of the annals of Babylonia and Assyria, compiled by contemporary writers under official supervision, and not traditions collected by foreigners imperfectly acquainted with the language of the countries whose history they narrated. Besides the historical texts, the mythological inscriptions reveal the subjective portion of these early religions hitherto not known, except by the names of a few gods who played an important part in them. The strange and weird tales, revealed for the first time to the modern mind, come upon it with all the attractions of a romance and the interest of early folklore; for although novels or works of imagination have not been found, the legends recently discovered, whatever interpretation may be assigned to their object, have the greatest analogy with oriental epic, and that golden thread of traditional beginning which runs through the circle of mankind. In this volume will be found a translation of the Phœnician inscription on the sarcophagus of Esmunazar by Dr. Oppert. There are amongst the extant inscriptions a few which ought to enter into the Records, and this is one of them, but there has always been a difficulty about obtaining translations, partly owing, in some instances, to the imperfections of texts. It is to be hoped, however, that the inscription of Dhiban will enter into the series before the work closes.

S. BIRCH.

23^d July, 1877.