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TRANSACTIONS

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VOL. VI.—PART II.

In the month of September last, I was sent by the Trustees of the British Museum to remove the collection from Naples. I found a copious and careful catalogue of the whole, drawn up, about two years since, by Signor Gargiulo, which, though of no literary pretensions, proved very serviceable in the identification of the objects, as it has since been in their classification. The necessary arrangements having been completed, the collection was safely conveyed, in the beginning of December, to the British Museum, where it will now shortly be thrown open to public view.

EDMUND OLDFIELD.

V.—ON THE ALLEGED CONNECTION BETWEEN THE
EARLY HISTORY OF GREECE AND ASSYRIA.

BY THE LORD BISHOP OF ST. DAVID'S,
PRESIDENT.

(Read May 20th, 1857.)

THE value of the discoveries which have already unlocked so many authentic records of early Assyrian history, can hardly be overrated, though it will probably be long before it can be fully appreciated, as we may now be witnessing no more than the dawn of that light which those discoveries are destined to shed, in their future progress, on objects and epochs which have not yet been brought within their range. It was to be expected that, even at their present stage, they should give rise to manifold conjectures, and be invoked in aid of various systems, sometimes perhaps prematurely, or to an extent which will not stand the test of critical investigation. The lively interest which the Royal Society of Literature has taken in the subject, induces me to draw its attention to an attempt which has been recently made in Germany, and in a great measure grounded on those discoveries, to connect the early history of Greece with that of Assyria, and to establish the strictly historical character of

events which have been considered by some eminent modern critics as purely mythical.

The work to which I refer is entitled *Geschichte der Assyrier und Iranier vom 13ten bis zum 5ten Jahrhundert vor Christus*, von Jacob Krüger. The author belongs to that school of historical criticism which maintains that an intercourse between Greece and Asia may be traced through authentic records to the period in which his history begins; and in his preface he speaks with some asperity of those who take a different view, as deficient either in knowledge or judgment; and is especially severe on the late Karl Otfried Müller, as guilty of what he calls the "colossal folly" of attempting to inclose Greece with a "Chinese Wall," so as to exclude the influence of Eastern civilization on the early development of the Hellenic mind. One who so pronounces upon others, challenges the strictest examination of his own conclusions; and if they should not prove satisfactory, those who reject them will at least have had the benefit of all the light which he has been able to throw upon them, and cannot be charged with ignorance of the premises on which they rest. I should not be doing justice to the hypothesis which I propose to discuss, if I did not first of all exhibit it in its broad outlines, so that it may have the benefit of whatever speciousness it may claim on the score of intrinsic coherency and compactness. But it will be seen that, although I shall find myself obliged to cast a glance over a very wide field of historical and chronological inquiry, the matters with which this Paper is properly concerned, and on which alone I desire to be considered as expressing a decided opinion, lie within a comparatively

narrow compass. I am not able to say whether M. Kruger's work, which was only published last year, has met with a favourable reception in Germany. I have reason to believe that the subject itself is there regarded with some degree of aversion in many philological circles; and there is much in his book as to which I should be surprised if it obtained the assent of any whose judgment is of much weight. But this is of the less importance, as, on one material point, he has had the good fortune unconsciously to coincide with an author for whose learning and genius I entertain most profound respect; and there are other points in which his views appear to be in accordance with some which once prevailed very extensively among English scholars, and as to which I do not know how far they have been yet abandoned. It is not then the importance, either as to celebrity or intrinsic merit, of the work itself, that has induced me to select it as a subject for criticism. Nor indeed is it my intention to deal with it controversially, any further than may be absolutely necessary for my main object, which is neither polemical nor dogmatical, but is simply to inquire into the present limits of our knowledge with regard to a certain period and field of ancient history; and for such an inquiry the statements which I am about to consider may, perhaps, by their breadth and boldness, afford a more convenient occasion than might have been the case if the subject had been treated by some more distinguished author.

Among all the events related in the great Persian epos, the *Shah-nameh*, none is more memorable, or attended with more momentous and far-reaching consequences, than the partition made by Feridun. This

powerful monarch, after having overcome the monstrous tyrant Zohak, and chained him to a rock in the deepest cavern of Mount Demawend, was still reigning in peace and prosperity, when he thought fit to divide his vast dominions, extending from India to the Mediterranean, among his three sons, Tur, Selm, and Iredsh. To Tur he assigned the provinces on the Oxus; to Selm, those of the extreme west; but the fairest, richest, noblest portion, the land of heroes, Iran and Yemen, he bestowed on his favourite youngest son, the virtuous and gentle Iredsh. The two elder brothers, burning with envy and hatred, conspired against the younger, slew him, and sent his head to Feridun. But an avenger sprang up in the person of Minutshahr, the son of a posthumous daughter of the murdered prince.¹ Minutshahr, when he came to man's estate, successively vanquished the two guilty brothers, slew each of them with his own hand, and sent each of their heads to Feridun, who, sated, but grieved with the vengeance which he had sought, sank into the grave, leaving his great-grandson lord of the whole realm.

So far it must seem doubtful whether we have anything before us but materials for poetry, as to which, judging from their own appearance, we could not say whether they contain any real facts, or are purely fictitious. We now come to our author's view of them. M. Kruger believes that he can identify Firdusi's hero,

¹ The name *میرشهر* occurs again, more than 2000 years later, as that of the son of Kabus, who, after the extinction of the Sasanian dynasty, reigned in Gilan, Tabaristan, and Kirkan (Hyrcania), and married a daughter of Mehdad of Gogzi.—Mirchoud, *App. ad Hist. Sassan.* ed. Wilken, r. 20. His dominions thus appear to have been the very theatre of the campaigns of the ancient Minutshahr.

Minutshehr, with the founder of that Assyrian dynasty which is stated by Herodotus to have borne rule in Upper Asia for 520 years before the revolt of the Medes. He believes this to be the same personage who elsewhere appears under the name of Ninus, of Calah (as founder of the capital so called), and of Ashur-da-pal-il, or Sandapal, in Sir H. Rawlinson's newly discovered list of Assyrian kings. On the other hand, he has satisfied himself that the land of Selm is no other than the Kingdom of Tantalus, comprising not only the whole of Asia Minor, but Syria and part of Northern Africa, with the ancient Sipylus for its capital. But the sovereignty of this Selm dynasty extended (as he undertakes to show) much further west, if not to Italy, at all events to Greece, which acknowledged a kind of feudal dependence on the house of Tantalus. The victorious arms of Minutshehr forced the son of Tantalus to evacuate his Asiatic provinces, and retire to Greece, where, by a series of conquests, he established his direct dominion not only in the peninsula to which he gave his name, but in the north. But this new settlement of Pelops gave rise to fresh contests between his descendants and their old Assyrian enemies. The Assyrians, still bent on aggression, not content with the stronghold in which they had placed a governor called Dardanus, built the new town of Ilion, an "Assyrian Sebastopol," and "standing menace" to the Pelopid princes. From this point they continued to infest the coasts of Greece by piratical excursions, until the common sense of insult and danger united all the Grecian chiefs, under the command of Agamemnon, in the expedition against Ilion. The auxiliaries sent by the Court of Assyria