ASSYRIAN REPORT TABLETS.

TRANSLATED BY
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The following interesting inscriptions bring us into contact, as it were, with the common people of ancient Assyria. There are several hundreds of tablets containing inscriptions of this class in the British Museum, showing a very perfect system of communication between Nineveh, the capital, and the remotest parts of the empire. From those which do not treat of the political affairs of the empire we obtain much interesting information concerning the manners and customs of the Assyrians in Biblical times. From the other class, which may be called despatches, we get long accounts of the progress made by the different generals and commanders of the Assyrian armies in subduing some small state, quelling some revolt in a distant part of the empire, or bringing rebels to justice. They also abound in uncommon words and phrases which are most interesting to the student of philology.

It is very probable that many of these tablets were first written upon papyrus, and after having been sent
to the king, were copied by the royal scribes, and placed in the Royal Library at Nineveh for future reference. In support of this we find, among other proofs, a sort of postscript attached to one of them, which may be translated as follows:

Insomuch as this (is) the fourth shaft-of-a-reed,’ anybody [who] neither into the presence of Bel, nor into the presence of the King (my) Lord [shall bring it, let the gods curse].

The above is an interesting and conclusive proof that clay and stone were not the only writing materials used by the Assyrians.

The number of dated tablets is very small in comparison with those without dates, so that, for the most part, we can only arrive at an idea of the time when they were written by internal evidence, and that only approximately. There are some, however, which refer to historical events mentioned in the royal annals, the dates of these can therefore be determined accurately.

These tablets vary in length from one to about six inches, and in width from three-quarters to two inches and a half. Of the following inscriptions, the text of the first four is unpublished, that of V. is published in Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia, Vol. IV., pl. 54, No. 1.

1 The character used here is one that represents the Akkadian alal, rendered by the Assyrian dappa-sathru, “written tablet,” and natsakusa-qint, “shaft of a reed;” this last is shown to be the proper rendering by the phonetic complement.
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I.

This inscription evidently refers to the preparations for one of those lion-hunts in which Assuru-bani-abla delighted so much, scenes from which occur so frequently upon the slabs which once adorned his palace. These mural carvings show us the lions and lionesses coming out of their cages, set at liberty only to afford amusement to the great king, who, in his chariot, draws the bow against them—a truly kingly sport!

To the King my Lord thy servant . . . 'iddina; may there be peace (to the) King my Lord; for ever (and) ever may NABU (and) MARDUK to the King my Lord be propitious.

Twenty-five lionesses which are caged, with three males, from Calah, from Nineveh, (and) from Dur-Sargina, have set out. I detected not a pregnant one. At sunrise they counted (them), of which they will tell the King my Lord.

II.

Letter referring to the stealing of some gold belonging to the king.

To the King my Lord thy servant ARAD-NABI: may there be peace to the King my Lord; may, ASSUR, SAMAS, BEL, ZIR-PANITUV, NABU, TASMITU, ISTAR of Nineveh, (and) ISTAR of Arbela, these great divinities loving thy kingdom (for) a hundred years to the King my Lord give life; old age and offspring may they give in plenty to the King my Lord.

1 Lacuna.
The gold about which, in the month Tasrit, the Astro- 
loger, the Palace Astronomer, and TUKLAT-ISISUNU, 
transgressed: 3 talents of the best gold, 4 talents not the 
best, the hand of the Chief-of-the-defiled has placed in (his) 
house, he sealed up the gold (which was) for a statue of the 
King, and for a statue of the King's mother, (and) gave it 
ot (up). May the King my Lord to the Astrologer (and) 
to the Palace Astronomer by a command fix (that) they may 
discover the gold. Up to the month Dhabūni to the army 
let them give, let them make payment.

III.

Inscription referring to the dedication of horses to 
the Temple of Bit-ili at Erech.

To the King of nations my Lord, thy servant Nabû-IRASSI, 
may Erech and Bit-Anna to the King of nations my Lord 
be propitious; a day of health the divinity of Bit-Erech and 
Nana for the preservation of the life of the King my Lord 
are granting.

Sheep from Bit-ili and from the city Pekod in the city 
Tahua they eat; their two shepherds, the one from Bit-ili 
and the other from Pekod, (with) white horses, their 
[harness] and saddles of silver [inscribed] and copper 
ornamented, [also harness] and saddles inscribed [and 
ornamented for] young ones one has sent.

The King of Elam to Istar of Erech has dedicated 
horses, at the same time he has caused some to be given to 
the King my Lord. With [all] reverence, the sum to

1 Lit., "the man of omens."
2 Dhabūni is another form of Dhabitu, "the month of benefits," Heb. יָּיִשׂ.
3 It is common in these salutations to use, instead of the name of the 
deity, that of the city or temple over which the deity presided; thus Erech 
stands for Istar, Bit-Anna for the goddess Nana.
4 Istar.
5 That is, the full number of the horses.
Bit-ili I gave not. At the same time the keepers of the horses he has dedicated to the King my Lord I send, and copper, ornamented and inscribed, in addition; when I had seen to the King my Lord I caused them to be brought.

May the King my Lord do according as he has laboured.

IV.

The following exceedingly interesting inscription is a despatch from an Assyrian officer to the king, in which the writer, by repeating the king's message to him, expresses his gratitude for the favours he had received. It contains also the account of a revolt of the people of Carchemish, and other interesting matters.

To the King my Lord thy servant Isid-Nabi, may there be peace to the King my Lord; may Bel, Nabi, Istar of Nineveh (and) Istar of Bit-Kidimuri, to the King my Lord for ever (and) ever be propitious; soundness of heart, soundness of flesh to the King my Lord may they give. Peace to the attendants of the King my Lord.

Nadin-sum-illi, son of Aramis-ar-Ilani, the Librarian, the will of the King in my presence made known thus to me: "The assembly of the enemy was abroad, so fifty soldiers from his band twelve horses with their hands took, they went by command of the Lords of Nineveh. The treasure also I have divided, the portion that (is) mine has been distributed (also). (To be) an attendant of the King thou, (even) thou, wast raised. I have made to go from me thus this (command)." (As for) the price, into the presence of the King my Lord I cause it to be brought."

1 "The house of the divinity," Istar of Ereb.
2 Istar of Arbeia, called in Assurbanipal's annals, "the divine queen of Kedmi."  
3 From this it would appear the king required a gratitude for the honours which he bestowed.
Let the King my Lord ask him\(^1\) concerning the destructions, (and) to the King my Lord may he reply: "(As for) the Viceroy\(^2\) of the Carchemishians, his servants killed him, One among them he\(^3\) has not left. We took the ordinances\(^4\) of Bélitès, who (is) the Divine Lady of Kidimuri, (and) who the mothers whom she loves establishes. To the King my Lord he causes (them) to be brought."

May (a statue of) the Lady of Sipara by the King my Lord be carved.

We have passed on. Peace to the King my Lord. (In) the city of Assib the people one has numbered.

V.

News of a revolt in some part of Arabia, supposed to have happened late in the reign of Assurù-bani-abla.

To the King of nations my Lord thy servant Nabû-suma-esir. May Nabû and Maruduk healthy days, extended years, a sceptre of justice, a lasting throne, to the King of nations my Lord give.

Insomuch as the King my Lord the command fixed for me thus: "The news of the Arabians, all thou wilt hear, stop its course; from the Nabateans then thou wilt go forth." Aïhamaru, the son of Ammihitah, (of) the Masahians over to them then\(^5\) came, the soldiers he killed and he devastated. One among them that they left to the midst of the city of the King descends; at the same time to the King my Lord I send him. May the King from his mouth hear.

\(^1\) *i.e.*, the messenger who carried the despatch.

\(^2\) The word in the original is *Damgaršu*, which, from the context, evidently means viceroy.

\(^3\) That is, the sender of the despatch, Isid-Nabi, had avenged the death of the *Damgaršu* of the Carchemishians, by not leaving one of the servants, his murderers, alive.

\(^4\) It was the custom of the Assyrians to set up in a conquered city "the ordinances of Assur," here, however, the ordinances which are set up are those of Istar of Arbela, mentioned under the name of Beltès.

\(^5\) That is, after the command had been obeyed.
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