

## NOTES OF THE QUARTER

### The British Museum Excavations at Nineveh, 1931-2

On 13th October, 1932, Dr. R. Campbell Thompson read a paper, illustrated by lantern slides, on his excavations at Nineveh, conducted for the British Museum in the season of 1931-2. He had been accompanied by his wife, and with him as colleague was Mr. M. E. L. Mallowan, whose wife also accompanied him. As before, the expenses of the expedition had been generously borne by Sir Charles Hyde, Bart., and the lecturer thanked him not only for his liberality in financing the work but also for his personal interest in the work and welfare of the staff of the expedition.

The first work to be carried out was the completion of the excavation of the Temple of Ishtar. A large pavement of burnt brick was discovered, but none of the bricks bore any name to indicate their maker, and the presumption is that it was built in the early part of the first millennium B.C. The area of the temple is now shown to have been approximately 300 by 150 feet, built on a solid foundation of unburnt brick some 6 feet thick. Few traces of walls were left, as the combined effects of weather and the ravages of man have woefully ruined it. But numerous pieces of *zigâti* (inscribed "bowls") were found, which enable a complete list of the various restorations to the temple to be made. Among the objects found was half a mace-head inscribed with the name of Kadashman-Enlil, a Kassite king of the fourteenth century B.C.

With the completion of this area there was time and money left to test the unfinished ground to the north-west of Sennacherib's palace, and three trenches dug here show that more of the palace actually exists in this direction. Here were found fragments of cuneiform tablets from the Royal Library, and various Parthian remains, including a silver ring with a gold figure attached.

As a third part of the programme, the house on the flat (supposed in 1927 to have been built by Sennacherib for his son) was finally cleared. It will be remembered that the beautiful prism of Esarhaddon and about eighty pieces of prisms came from this spot, and the new diggings resulted in the finding of about 250 more pieces, many of them large, and, most curious to relate, two Hittite linear hieroglyphic inscriptions (one being on a clay tablet).

But the most important work of all was the digging of a pit 90 feet deep, in the charge of Mr. Mallowan. This was done in order to complete our knowledge of the prehistory of the mound, and it was dug to virgin soil.

Mr. Mallowan has now been able to divide the prehistoric periods of Nineveh into five, the earliest, about 5000 B.C., showing rough incised pottery, and the second, about 4500 B.C., producing some extraordinary painted sherds. The third period, about 4000 B.C., was noteworthy for its burials in pots; and the fourth contained the rough votive bowls, almost always upturned, as though for offerings. The last, the fifth, about 3000 B.C., showed a great quantity of the black-painted ware, with birds and long-necked ibexes. It had been altogether a most fruitful season.

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### **Revival of the Hebrew Language and Literature in Palestine**

On Thursday, 24th November, Mr. I. A. Abbadly, Chief Hebrew interpreter to the Government of Palestine, read a paper on this subject to the Royal Asiatic Society.

Mr. Abbadly reviewed the growth of the Hebrew language from its infancy to its present stage of development in Palestine as a modern spoken vernacular. He described how the language managed from its very early beginnings to absorb and assimilate a number of foreign linguistic elements without losing any of its vitality. In this respect it is distinguished from Classical Arabic in that the latter,