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MESOPOTAMIA

AND

ASSYRIA,

FROM THE

EARLIEST AGES TO THE PRESENT TIME ;

WITH

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THEIR NATURAL HISTORY.

BY J. BAILLIE FRASER, ESQ.,

Author of "An Historical and Descriptive Account of Persia," &c.

WITH A MAP AND ENGRAVINGS.

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THE HISTORY OF

ASSYRIA

FROM THE EARLIEST PERIODS TO THE
FALL OF THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE
BY
MRS. J. B. SEARCY

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P R E F A C E .

In the work now presented to the public, the author has endeavoured to bring under one view all that is known of the history and aspect, moral, physical, and political, of the provinces of Mesopotamia and Assyria; and to give, at the same time, a sketch of the causes that have produced the revolutions of which they have been the theatre. The subject is extensive and complicated, and the difficulty of compressing the matter which it embraces into one volume was proportionally great. That all which might have been done towards the attainment of this object has really been effected, is more than the author ventures to assert; but he can safely affirm that no pains have been spared in collecting the most suitable materials to be found in the writings of others, as well as in applying such as have been furnished by his own acquaintance with those interesting countries.

Recd. Jan 25 '28 RF

In point of fact, little original matter can be expected, unless we were to recover some of the lost works of the ancients, or to succeed in deciphering those inscriptions in the cuneiform character which have hitherto baffled the researches of the learned. Late discoveries, indeed, seemed to afford some reasonable hope of success; but it must now be admitted that, though several ingenious conjectures have been made, and some plausible speculations have been hazarded, no accession has been obtained to our knowledge of facts. The subject in general, therefore, remains as dark and uncertain as before.

Nearly all that can be said or known respecting the history, chronology, religion, and manners of these primeval empires, will be found collected in the "Universal Ancient History," a work of very

great learning and research ; but those who desire to apply to the original sources of information may, in addition to the sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament, consult the works of Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, Arrian, Xenophon, Plutarch, and such others as are usually cited by writers on this subject. Cory's "Ancient Fragments" will supply the English reader with what remains of the works of Berossus, Abydenus, Apollodorus, and Alexander Polyhistor. Hyde, Bryant, Jackson, Hales, Usher, and Newton, may be referred to for chronology. Sir William Drummond, Faber, Bochart, and Beke, will afford food enough for those who delight in ingenious speculations ; while Prideaux and Russell will show what can be done to connect profane with sacred history.

For light to guide him in geographical description, the inquirer must have recourse to the works of Ptolemy, of Strabo, and of Cellarius, together with the minor geographies of Hudson and Isidore of Charax ; to Abulfeda and Ibn Haukul among the Mohammedans ; while, for comparative geography, his main help will be found in D'Anville, Rennell, and Vincent. Williams, in his Geographical Memoir, has presented some learned disquisitions ; and the researches of Rich, himself a man of classical learning as well as a judicious observer, are of the highest value. The works of Heeren treat of every branch of the ancient history of these regions ; and, though we may not agree in all his conclusions, they are entitled to respect as the opinions of a laborious and acute inquirer into Oriental antiquities.

Our information regarding what may be termed the middle ages of those countries—that is, from the destruction of Babylon by Darius down to the Mohammedan era—is greatly more extensive and complete than that which we possess respecting their remoter history. Those who are anxious for a more intimate acquaintance with the events of this period,

will find ample materials in the pages of the Universal History, and in the more eloquent chapters of Gibbon.

In all that relates to the history and condition of the Christian population in those provinces, and of the various sects that have successively sprung up or still continue to exist, the best authority is Assemani, whose Oriental Dictionary is a mine of invaluable information on such subjects. Mosheim and other Church historians may likewise be consulted, as also Bingham, the author of "*Origines Ecclesiasticæ*," though these all draw chiefly from Assemani.

Of the condition of modern Mesopotamia—that is, from the Mohammedan conquest to the present time—notices are to be found in the works of various travellers, from Rawolf and Benjamin of Tudela downward. But less is known of Assyria, which now constitutes a portion of the Turkish empire; and there is no general account of the present state of the two provinces, although much valuable information may be gathered from the works of Niebuhr, Olivier, Rich, Buckingham, Porter, and Rousseau. These materials, together with what the author has been enabled to glean from other sources, as well as from his own observations, form the basis of this portion of the present work; and he must here take occasion to express his obligations to Colonel Taylor, Political Resident at Bagdad, to whom he has been indebted, not only for the valuable manuscript journal of the late Mr. Elliot, but for much important information on matters connected with the statistics of the country, as well as with the manners of the people.

Much still remains to be done in both provinces, for there are many districts of which, as yet, little or nothing is known. The labours of modern travellers are, however, daily throwing light on their antiquities, natural history, and geography: and when the works of Colonel Chesney, Major Rawlinson.

and others, shall have been given to the public, and Mr. Ainsworth and his colleagues shall have completed the expedition they have undertaken under the auspices of the Royal Geographical Society, the secrets of some of the most interesting districts in Upper Mesopotamia and Kurdistan, especially those of Sinjar, Hatteras, and Mount Jewar, will, it is expected, be laid fully open to the European world. In the mean time, as every source of information, both private and public, has been made use of in combination with the author's personal knowledge of the country, it is hoped that the geographical account which has been given will be found at once entirely accurate, and as particular, too, as the limits of such a work will permit. In this description may be included the characteristic details of manners and customs of the Arab and Kurdish tribes, which, derived chiefly from actual observation, have been confirmed by various persons, whose opinions, from their opportunities of judging, are entitled to the highest credit.

The sketch of the natural history of these provinces has likewise been drawn up with an anxious desire to afford a summary of whatever valuable information has been collected upon the subject.

Of the decorations of this volume, the author has only to observe, that they are all engraved from drawings made by himself upon the spot, and that he can vouch at least for their accuracy, nothing having been added to the original sketch except the particular effect which was deemed appropriate to the subject.

The utmost care has been bestowed on the construction of the map, which will be found to contain all the additions made by recent travellers to our geographical knowledge of the interesting country which occupies the basin of the Tigris and Euphrates.

May, 1841.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

General Description of Mesopotamia and Assyria.

High Claims of these Countries on our Regard.—Interest attached to their early History.—Inquiry checked by Scantiness of authentic Records.—Little known of the Origin of either the Assyrian or Babylonian Empire, and their intimate Connexion with each other.—Definition of "Assyria" according to the Greek Historians.—The Jewish Writers.—Boundaries.—Mesopotamia.—Limits defined.—Divisions of Assyria according to Ptolemy—Strabo—D'Anville.—Mesopotamia according to Strabo.—Modern Divisions of both Provinces.—Inhabitants.—Tribes.—Arabs, and their Locations.—Kurds.—Habits.—Face of the Country.—Mountains.—Rivers.—Euphrates.—Its Course.—Scenery and Places along its Banks.—Periods of Rise and Fall.—The Tigris and Tributaries.—Its Course.—Shut el Arab.—Khabour and Hermas.—Greater and Lesser Zab.—Diala.—System of artificial Irrigation.—Nature of the ancient Canals.—Names of those on Record.—The Palleopas.—The Nahrawan and Dijeil.—Modern Canals.—Marshes of Babylonia.—Waa sut.—The Shut el Hye.—Chaldean Marshes, and Marshes of Susiana Page 17

CHAPTER II.

History of the Assyrian Monarchy.

Uncertainty of the Chronology of these Periods.—Necessity of adopting some consistent System of Notation.—Errors of Usher, Lloyd, and others.—Discrepancy of Opinion between various Authors.—Mode of Notation adopted.—Sources of Information.—Sacred Writ.—Greek Historians.—Herodotus—Ctesias.—Commencement of the Assyrian Empire according to each.—Syncellus and Polyhistor.—Beke's "Origines Biblicæ."—Scriptural Account.—Lists of Kings of both Monarchies to the Fall of Babylon.—Claims of Ctesias to Credit discussed.—Opinions divided.—His Account of the Assyrian Monarchy.—Ninus.—Semiramis.—Ninyas, &c.—Thonos Concolerus.—His Identity with Sardanapalus.—Errors of Ctesias.—History of the Monarchy according to Scripture and Ptolemy's Canon.—Asshur Founder of it.—Pul.—Tiglath-Pileser.—Shalmaneser.—Sennacherib.—Esarhaddon, supposed to be the warlike Sardanapalus.—Saosducheus, &c.—Various Conjectures.—Nabuchodonosor.—Fall of Nineveh—And of the Assyrian Empire 37

CHAPTER III.

Rise and Fall of the Babylonian Empire.

The only authentic Record contained in Holy Writ.—Ptolemy's Canon affords the only true Chronology.—Nabonassar.—Merodach Baladan.

— Esarhaddon, the warlike King of Assyria.— Nabopolassar.— His Power.— Nabocolassar or Nebuchadnezzar.— Aids in the Destruction of Nineveh.— Overruns Syria, and carries the Jews into Captivity.— Humbles Pharaoh.— His Dreams.— Divine Predictions.— His Humiliation.— Repentance.— And Death.— Evil Merodach.— The Belshazzar of Daniel.— Murdered by Neriglissar, who probably is identical with Darius the Mede.— He seizes the Throne.— And is slain in Battle.— Labrosarchod.— Nabonadius.— Nitocris.— Her Acts and Improvements.— Babylon attacked by Cyrus.— Taken by turning the Euphrates.— Fulfilment of the Prophecies.— Gradual Decay of Babylon.— Its Destruction by Darius.— By Xerxes.— Seleucia.— Accounts of its Desolation by various Authors Page 60

CHAPTER IV.

Origin, Government, Religion, Laws and Customs, &c., of the Ancient Assyrians and Babylonians.

Sources of Information.— Origin of the Assyrians.— Government.— Religion.— Gods of the Assyrians.— Customs and Laws same as those of the Babylonians.— Government of the Babylonians.— Names of their Monarchs, and Derivation.— Their Habits.— Officers and Functionaries.— Establishment and Titles.— Laws.— Little known regarding them.— Sale of Virgins.— Punishments.— Religion.— Chaldeans.— Opinions regarding their Origin.— Regarded as a nomad Race by Heeren and Gesenius.— Faber's Theory of the Progress of their Religion.— And of the Dispersion of Mankind after the Flood.— Of the Cushim or Cushim.— Remarks on Faber's Theory.— Mr. Beke's Theory.— Supported by Coincidence of ancient and modern Names.— Bochart.— Difficulties of the Subject.— The Chaldeans the dominant People in ancient Babylon.— Origin and Progress of their Religion.— Chaldean Cosmogony and Doctrines according to Berosus.— Its Similarity with the Scriptural Account of the Noachian Deluge.— Mythology.— Pul or Belus.— Nebo, Rach, Nego, Merodach, &c.— Grossness and Depravity of their Ceremonies.— Manners and Customs of the Babylonians.— Learning.— Science.— Astronomy and Astrology.— Mathematics.— Music.— Poetry.— Skill in working Metals and Gems.— Manufactures.— Commerce 74

CHAPTER V.

Antiquities.—Babylon.

Greatest Interest of these Countries attaches to the early Periods of their Existence.— Vestiges of former Greatness everywhere abundant.— Ruins of Babylon.— Discussions regarding the Identity of Site of ancient Babel and Babylon.— Denied by Beke, who places the Land of Shinar in Upper Mesopotamia.— Ainsworth's geological Observations.— Tower of Babel.— No Scriptural Authority for supposing that it was destroyed at the time of the Dispersion of Mankind.— Location of the other Cities of Nimrod.— Accad.— Erech.— Calneh.— All Traces of the most ancient Postdiluvian Fabrics probably effaced by subsequent Structures.— Ancient Babylon described.— By what Authors.— Extent.— Height of its Walls according to various Authorities.— Structure.— Streets.— Intersected by the Euphrates.— Bridge.— New Palace and hanging Gardens.— Temple of Belus.— Described by Herodotus.—

Golden Statue.—Other gigantic Works.—Canals.—Artificial Lake.—Its Construction attributed to Semiramis, to Nebuchadnezzar, and to Queen Nitocris.—Population.—Space occupied by Buildings.—Scriptural Denunciations against Babylon Page 94

CHAPTER VI.

Ruins of Babylon described.

Allusions to them by ancient Authors.—From A.D. 917 to 1616.—Described by Niebuhr and Beauchamp.—By Olivier.—By Rich.—General Aspect.—Face of the Country.—Principal Mounds described.—Hill of Amran.—El-kasr.—Remarkable Tree.—Embankment.—Mujelibé.—Coffins discovered there.—Birs Nimrod.—Vitrified Masses.—Al Heimar.—Other Ruins.—Buckingham's Account and Opinions of the Mujelibé, El-kasr, &c.—Al Heimar.—The Birs.—Sir Robert Ker Porter.—His Description of the same Ruins.—His Search for farther Ruins on the west Side of the Euphrates.—Difficulty of reconciling the Position of these Ruins with the Accounts of ancient Historians.—Speculations regarding the ancient Walls of Babylon.—Probable Mistakes of Buckingham.—Changes in the Course of the Euphrates.—Conjectures concerning the Birs Nimrod—And the ancient Borsippa.—Discrepancy between ancient Accounts.—Arrian and Berosus.—Cities built from the Ruins of Babylon.—Ainsworth's Suggestion of a Change of Names for the several Ruins.—His Mistakes in regard to Measurements.—The vitrified Masses.—Much Room yet for Investigation respecting these Ruins and the circumjacent Country.—Prospects of this being effected 107

CHAPTER VII.

Other Ruins of Babylonia and Chaldea.

Akkerkoof.—The Site of Accad.—Umgeyer—According to some Opinions the ancient Orchoe.—Jibel Sanam.—Teredon.—Workha.—Sunkhera.—Yokha.—Til Eide.—Guttubeh.—Iskhuriah.—Zibliyeh.—Tel Siphra, &c.—Waasut or Cascara.—Seleucia and Ctesiphon.—Tauk e Kesra.—Cupidity of a Pacha.—Kalla mal Kesra.—Opis, Situation of.—Median Wall.—Traditions regarding its Use.—Sittace.—Sheriat el Beitha.—Samarra.—The Malwiyah.—Large Mosque.—Kaf or Chaf.—Giaoureh.—Kadesia.—Statue of black Basalt.—Tecret.—Al Hadhr or Hatra.—Felugia.—New Fields of Enterprize for Explorers . . . 128

CHAPTER VIII.

Nineveh and its Environs.

Ancient Nineveh nowhere particularly described in Sacred Writ.—Account of by Diodorus.—Its Walls.—Incidentally mentioned by Herodotus.—By the Prophets Jonah and Nahum as an exceedingly great and profligate City.—Mr. Rich's Account of its Ruins.—Visible Remains.—Tel Koyunjuk.—Sepulchral Chamber and Inscription, &c.—Nebbi Yunus.—Inscribed Gypsum—And Antiques.—Mosque in Memory of the Prophet Jonah.—Conjectures.—Strabo's Account of the City's Extent.—Mounds of Yaremjee, Zembil Tepessi, &c.—Vestiges not numerous.—Mounds of Nimrod or Al Athur.—Larissa of Xenophon!—Resin!

—Remains.—Pyramid.—Mr. Rich's Voyages down the Tigris to Bagdad.—Ancient Sites on the Banks.—His Visit to Mar Mattei.—Villages of Yezidees and Jacobite Christians.—Ain u Sofra.—Yezidees.—Their Pope.—Some Particulars of their Faith and Worship.—Position, Appearance, and Description of the Convent.—History.—Establishment.—View from its Terrace.—Ras ul Ain.—Excursion to Rabban Hormuzd.—And Al Kosh.—Character of the Yezidees.—Al Kosh.—Birth and Burial place of the Prophet Nahum.—Ascent to, and Appearance of the Convent of Rabban Hormuzd.—Establishment.—Aspect of the Priests and Monks.—Discipline.—Period of Founding.—Grottoes.—Manuscripts.—Destroyed.—Chaldean Villages populous.—Convent of Mar Elias.—Churches of Mars Toma and Mar She-maoun Page 142

CHAPTER IX.

Subsequent History of Mesopotamia and Assyria.

Rennell's Opinion of Xenophon's Retreat.—Advance of Cyrus.—Battle of Cunaxa, and Death of Cyrus.—Truce between the Greek Generals and the King.—The former advance to the Tigris, and cross it at Sit-tace.—Their March to Opis—And to the Banks of the Zab.—Treachery of Tissaphernes.—Clearchus and other Officers put to Death.—Farther Attempts at Treachery.—Defeated by the Prudence of the Grecian Officers.—Xenophon appointed to the Command.—The Greeks cross the Zab.—Are assailed by Mithradates.—Arrangements for repulsing the Enemy's light Troops.—March to Larissa—To Mespila.—Struggles during their Progress to the Carduchian Mountains.—Resolve to ascend them in Preference to crossing the River.—Are resolutely opposed by the Carduchians.—Abandon their useless Slaves and Baggage.—Difficulties of the Ascent.—Severe Contests with the Enemy.—And Losses.—Cross the Centrites, and pass into Armenia.—Change of Dynasty.—Battle of Arbela.—The Seleucidæ.—Arsacidae.—Appearance of the Romans in Mesopotamia.—Reduced to a Roman Province.—First Expedition of Crassus.—Embassy from Orodes.—The Romans driven out by the Parthians.—Second Expedition of Crassus.—Advice of the King of Armenia.—Treachery of Abgarus—Who conducts them into the Deserts of Charrae.—Infatuation of Crassus.—His Army attacked by Surenas.—His Son slain.—The Romans forced to retreat with great Loss to Charrae.—Again betrayed and surrounded.—Crassus forced by the Legionaries to negotiate.—Is slain during an Interview with Surenas.—The Army destroyed.—Reflections on the Conduct of Xenophon and Crassus 155

CHAPTER X.

Continued Contests between the Romans and Persians.

The Parthians overrun the Country to Antioch, which is twice saved with Difficulty.—Antony, having obtained the Eastern Provinces of the Roman Empire, overtaxes Syria.—That Province, &c., overrun by Labienus.—Pacorus defeated by Ventidius and slain.—Antony resolves to invade the Parthian Empire.—His Success at first.—Takes the Route of Armenia.—Invests Praaspa, the Capital of Media.—Is forced to raise the Siege and retreat.—Hardships during his Retreat.—Succeeds in reaching and crossing the Araxes.—His impatient Obstacity.

—Farther Losses in Armenia.—Augustus Cesar forces Phraates to make Peace.—Successes of Trajan.—War continued with various Success.—Exploits of Shapoor.—Constantius succeeded by Julian.—Julian's Defiance of Shapoor.—His Expedition.—Successful Career.—Change of Fortune at Ctesiphon.—He is betrayed—Attacked, and killed by a Javelin.—Disastrous Retreat of the Roman Army under Jovian.—Mesopotamia continues the Theatre of War till the Invasion of the Huns.—The Roman Provinces invaded by Nooshirwan.—He is checked by Belisarius.—Victorious Career of Khoosroo Purveez.—Arrested by Heraclius, who outmanœuvres and defeats the Persians.—Triumphant Expeditions of Heraclius.—Farther Efforts of Khoosroo.—He is defeated at all Points.—Destagerd taken.—Khoosroo put to Death by his Son Siroes, who concludes a Treaty with Heraclius.—Capture of Ctesiphon by the Moslems, and Incorporation of the two Provinces with the Dominions of the Caliphs Page 177

CHAPTER XI.

Present State of Mesopotamia.

Buckingham's Account of Bir.—Orfa.—Mosque and Pool of "Abraham the Beloved."—Mosques.—Gardens.—Population.—Manufactures.—Castle.—History.—Haran.—Division of Opinions in regard to its Identity with the Haran of Genesis.—March to Mardin.—Plundering Arabs.—Mardin described.—Ceremonial of the Syrian Church.—March to Diarbekir.—Wadi Zenaar.—Approach to Diarbekir.—The City described.—Walls.—Mosques and Churches.—History.—Population.—Sinjar Mountains.—Dara.—Nisibin.—Sheik Farsee.—Extortion.—Account of Nisibin.—More Extortion.—Journey to Mosul.—Appearance of Mosul.—Description.—Houses.—Bazars.—Coffee-houses.—Churches.—Population.—Government.—Trade.—Climate.—Extent according to Mr. Southgate.—Sinjar District visited by Mr. Forbes.—Yezidee Robbers subdued by Hafiz Pacha.—Til Afar.—Bukrah.—Mirka.—Kirsisi.—Kolgha.—Samukhah.—Sakiniyah.—Description of the Country.—Geographical Observations 189

CHAPTER XII.

Present Condition of Assyria.

Portion of Kurdistan included in Assyria.—Nestorian Christians of Jewar.—Sert.—Colonel Sheil's Journey to Jezirah ibn Omar.—Plain of Mediyad.—Jezirah ibn Omar described.—Its Chief.—Swimming the Tigris.—Skirt the Mountains to Accra and the Zab.—Change of Scenery.—Cross the Zab.—Erbile (Arbela).—Altun Kupri.—Kirkook.—Kufri.—Antiquities.—Tooz Khoormattee.—Kara Teppé.—Aspect of Lower Assyria.—Sugramah Pass, and View from it.—Pachalic and Pacha of Solymaneah.—Present State of the Town.—The Bebeh Tribe of Kurds.—Climate.—Shahrasour.—State and Chief of Rewandooz.—His Rise and Character.—Pachalic and Pacha of Amadih.—Dr. Ross's Description of the Meer, his Camp, Government, Army.—Scheme of executive Justice.—Fate.—Town of Rewandooz.—Nestorians of Jewar.—Their Origin.—Numbers.—Government.—Face of their Country.—Antiquities at Shahraban.—The Zendan.—Kasr Shireen.—Ha-oosh Kerck.—General Meanness of Sassanian Ruins.—Kelwatha.—

B

Pachalic of Zohab.—Sir e Pool e Zohab.—The ancient Calah or Hulwan.—Antiquities there.—Royal Sepulchre . . . Page 207

CHAPTER XIII.

Modern Babylonia.

Bagdad.—Its Origin, Position, and History.—Walls—Gates—Mosques and Shrines.—Impressions on entering the City from Persia.—Banks of the Tigris.—Boats.—Bazars.—Market-places.—Sketch by Buckingham.—Private Houses.—Domestic Habits.—Women.—Georgians and Arabs.—Population.—Establishment of Daood Pacha.—Plague in Bagdad.—Its rapid Progress.—Exposure of Infants.—Inundation.—Condition of the Pacha.—Instances of sweeping Mortality.—Fate of Caravans and Fugitives.—Subsequent Calamities.—Present Population.—Costume.—White Asses and black Slaves.—A Battle within the Walls.—Insubordination at Kerbelah and Nejeff Ali.—Sketch of a March in Babylonia.—Camp of the Zobeid Sheik.—His Tent—And Entertainment.—Expenditure of an Arab Chief.—March towards Sook el Shiok.—Arab Bravado.—Hospitality.—Madan Arabs.—Their Houses—And Flocks of Buffaloes.—The Montefic Arabs.—Their Reed Huts.—Sook el Shiok.—Interview with the Sheik of the Montefic . . . 230

CHAPTER XIV

Religion, Character, Manners, and Customs of the Inhabitants of Modern Mesopotamia and Assyria.

Variety of Races.—Arabs.—Countries inhabited by.—Religion.—Character.—Blood-feuds.—Sketches of the Arabs on the Euphrates by Elliot.—Beni Saeed.—Hamet ul Khaleel —Their Women.—Costume.—Camp of the Al Fadhlee.—Food.—Jungle Arabs.—Mode of decamping and encamping.—Contrast between the Jungle, or Fellah and Bedouin Arabs.—Kurds.—Religion.—Points of Similarity with the Scottish Highlanders.—Manners in Society and in Domestic Life.—Selim Aga.—Roostum Aga.—National Character.—Personal Appearance.—Women.—Turkomans.—Christian Population.—Nestorians, Chaldeans, or Syrians.—Divisions of Sects.—Early Progress of Christianity in the East.—Christian Bishops and Sees.—The Nestorian Heresy.—Condemnation of its Author.—Rise of the Jacobite Schism.—Its wide Dissemination.—Number of Sees.—Armenians and Roman Catholics.—Character of the Christian Population.—Chaldeans of Mount Jewar —Sabeans.—Origin.—Tenets.—Persecution.—Places of Abode, and supposed Numbers.—Manicheans.—Doctrines of Manes.—History of the Sect.—Yezidees.—Supposed Origin.—Various Appellations.—Secrecy observed by them concerning their Religion.—Account of their Tenets so far as is known.—Tribes of the Sinjarli Yezidees.—Their Sacred Fountains and Repositories of Treasure.—Character by Rich.—Shaitan Purust and Chirag Koosh.—Their Origin.—Ali Ullahis . . . 260

CHAPTER XV.

Natural History.

Introduction. GEOLOGY.—FIRST DISTRICT—Primary Rock.—Kebban Silver and Lead Mines.—Copper Mines.—Carbonaceous Marls and

Sandstones.—Coal.—SECOND DISTRICT—Supercretaceous Deposite.—Limestone Deposite.—Compact Chalk.—Plutonic Rocks.—Formations near Orfa and Mosul.—Marble.—Sulphur Springs.—Mines.—Hills of Kurdistan.—Calcareous Gypsum.—Hill of Flames.—Kufri Hills.—Hamrine.—Formation of Euphrates.—Gypseous.—Plutonic Rocks.—Marls.—Hills of Denudation.—Sand Hills.—Naphtha Springs.—THIRD DISTRICT—Limits.—Moving Sand Hills.—Salt Efflorescences.—Marshes.—Water Country. BOTANY.—FIRST or MOUNTAIN DISTRICT—Forest Trees.—Cultivated Plants.—Gallnuts.—Gum Arabic.—Manna.—SECOND DISTRICT—Plains of Assyria.—Spring Flowers.—Summer.—Common Plants.—Potherbs.—Fruits.—Cultivated Plants.—Vegetables.—THIRD DISTRICT—Alluvial.—Succulent Plants.—Grasses.—Sedges.—Babylonian Willow.—Limit between the Land and the Water.—*Mariscus Elongatus*. ZOOLOGY.—MAMMALIA of First District—Plantigrade Carnivora.—Felines.—Rodents.—Ruminants.—Angora.—Taurus.—Goat.—*Other Districts*—Bats.—Insectivora.—Carnivora.—Lions.—Tigers.—Chaus.—Lynx.—Hyenas.—Wolves, &c.—Domestic Cats.—Dogs.—Turkoman Dog.—Rodents.—Pachydermata.—Boar.—Horse.—Ass.—Ruminants.—Dromedary.—Camels.—Gazelle.—Sheep.—Bovide.—ORNITHOLOGY—Raptors.—Vultures.—Eagles.—Owls.—Incessores.—Cranes.—Nightingale.—Larks.—Sparrows.—Bee-eaters, &c.—Game-birds.—Grouse.—Partridges.—Cursores.—Ostrich.—Grallatores.—Palmipedes.—REPTILES—Tortoises.—Lizards.—Frogs, &c.—FISHES.—INSECTS . Page 290

ENGRAVINGS.

Map of Mesopotamia and Assyria	<i>To face the Vignette.</i>
VIGNETTE—The Bir Nimrod.	
Tauk e Kesra	<i>to face page 135</i>
View of Bagdad	230
Mesopotamian Arabs and their Tents	262

The first part of the book is devoted to a general history of the subject, and to a description of the various methods which have been employed for its investigation. The second part is devoted to a detailed account of the experiments which have been performed, and to a discussion of the results which have been obtained. The third part is devoted to a consideration of the various theories which have been advanced to explain the phenomena which have been observed, and to a comparison of these theories with the experimental results. The fourth part is devoted to a consideration of the various applications of the subject, and to a discussion of the progress which has been made in these applications. The fifth part is devoted to a consideration of the various problems which remain to be solved, and to a discussion of the methods which are being employed to solve these problems.

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MESOPOTAMIA AND ASSYRIA, ANCIENT AND MODERN.

CHAPTER I.

General Description of Mesopotamia and Assyria.

High Claims of these Countries on our Regard.—Interest attached to their early History.—Inquiry checked by Scantiness of authentic Records.—Little known of the Origin of either the Assyrian or Babylonian Empire, and their intimate Connexion with each other.—Definition of "Assyria" according to the Greek Historians.—The Jewish Writers.—Boundaries.—Mesopotamia.—Limits defined.—Divisions of Assyria according to Ptolemy—Strabo—D'Anville.—Mesopotamia according to Strabo.—Modern Divisions of both Provinces.—Inhabitants.—Tribes.—Arabs, and their Locations.—Kurds.—Habits.—Face of the Country.—Mountains.—Rivers.—Euphrates.—Its Course.—Scenery and Places along its Banks.—Periods of Rise and Fall.—The Tigris and Tributaries.—Its Course.—Shut el Arab.—Khabour and Hermas.—Greater and Lesser Zab.—Diala.—System of artificial Irrigation.—Nature of the ancient Canals.—Names of those on Record.—The Palacopas.—The Nahrawan and Dijeil.—Modern Canals.—Marshes of Babylonia.—Waausat.—The Shut el Hye.—Chaldean Marshes, and Marshes of Susiana.

It may be safely asserted that there are no regions in the world which possess more powerful claims on our regard than those which form the subject of the following pages.

Mesopotamia and Assyria, if not actually the cradle of mankind, were, at all events, the theatre on which the descendants of Noah performed their first conspicuous part. The plains of Shinar witnessed not only the defeat of that presumptuous enterprise, which scattered them abroad upon the face of the earth, but also the exploits of the "Mighty Hunter," and the triumph of his ambition in the establishment of the first monarchy recorded either by sacred or profane writers.

On the banks of the Euphrates and the Tigris did the two greatest cities of the ancient world rise into magnificence: Nineveh, which repented in sackcloth and ashes at the preaching of Jonah, and Babylon, the "glory of kingdoms," which, elevated by the proud Nebuchadnezzar to the height of splendour, listened to his impious boastings, and saw his deep humiliation. There did Daniel prophesy, and expound the mysterious warnings of the Most High; and there did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego experience the signal protection of that Almighty Power whom they feared and obeyed.

By the capture, too, of that superb metropolis was the word of prophecy fulfilled, and the rule of the great Cyrus—an instrument in the Divine hand—consolidated over Asia; and on the field of Arbela was that splendid empire in its turn overthrown by the rising power of the Macedonian conqueror, who, after his brilliant career, returned to the capital of Assyria to end his days.

In like manner have the plains of Mesopotamia borne witness to the catastrophe of Cunaxa, and the gallant bearing of the indomitable ten thousand; seen the defeat and death of Crassus; the retreat of Marc Antony; the fall of the apostate Julian; the disgraceful peace of his successor; and the changing fortunes of the bold Heraclius.

Events so various and important must invest the countries where they occurred with a deep interest; and that portion of them, in particular, which has reference to the early postdiluvian ages, cannot fail to excite the curiosity of those who delight in marking the moral progress of the human race. But all hope of tracing clearly the events of their early history is checked by the scantiness of means; for, while the annals of more recent times are illustrated by numerous records, the glimpses of light shed from authentic sources upon the remote period to which our views are now directed, serve only to show that, at a very uncertain era after the universal deluge, a monarchy was founded on the Euphrates by Nimrod, the son of Cush, which rose into considerable importance; and that, at some subsequent period, it was overthrown by a neighbouring power, the seat of which was on the banks of the Tigris.

Mesopotamia and Assyria have, from the most ancient times, been so intimately connected, both geographically and politically, that they will be most clearly described

in conjunction with each other. Herodotus, Strabo, and others use the latter appellation, as including both, in conjunction with certain other provinces; and Heeren adverts to this fact when he observes that the Greek historians apply the term generally to several monarchies which flourished in the regions about the Tigris and Euphrates previous to the reign of Cyrus. The Jewish writers, on the other hand, use it to express a distinct nation of conquerors, and the founders of an empire, having the seat of government at Nineveh, and which flourished between the years 800 and 700 B.C.* Hence, to define the limits of Assyria, according to the ideas of ancient historians, would be impossible, because, like those of all Eastern sovereignties, they varied with the fortune of every chief who held the sceptre. But, viewing both countries merely in the light of geographical divisions of Asia, it will not be difficult to indicate their boundaries.

Loosely speaking, Assyria may be considered as terminated on the west by the course of the Tigris, on the north by Armenia, on the northeast and east by Mount Zagros and the Gordyæan range, and on the southeast by the province of Susiana or Kuzistan.

Mesopotamia may be more strictly defined, as embraced by the Tigris and Euphrates, except on the north, where it meets the mountains of Armenia. But it will be proper to specify more exactly the various regions which are to pass under our review.

If a line were drawn from Arghana Madan by Erzen to Sert, along the crest of the intervening heights, and from thence carried behind Amadiéh along the tops of Aiagha Dag or Zagros, including Solymaneah and Zohab, till it should reach the Pass of Kerrend, and extended again by a course comprehending Mendali, to a point upon the Tigris somewhat below Ctesiphon, such a line, taken in conjunction with that river from its source to the point where they meet, will circumscribe pretty accurately the ancient Assyria.

Again, if the same line were continued westward to Malatia on the Euphrates, the boundary of Mesopotamia would from thence be indicated, as already observed, by the course

* Manual of Ancient Geography, by A. H. L. Heeren. Oxford, 1829, 8vo, p. 25, 26.

of that river; but as both banks are comprehended in the basin, and may physically, as well as politically, be regarded as connected with each other, we shall include in our description all places of importance on the one as well as on the other.

By Ptolemy, Assyria is divided, from northwest to southeast, into the provinces of Arrapachitis, Adiabene (which is sometimes used to designate the whole country), Arbelitis, Calachene, Apolloniatis, and Sittacene. Aturia or Atyria, Artacene, Chalonitis, and Corduene, are also mentioned by others; but there are no means of distinctly ascertaining their respective boundaries.

Strabo describes it as conterminous with Persia and Susiana, and as comprehending Babylonia and a considerable portion of the surrounding district, the countries of the Elymæans, Parætaceniens, and Chalonitis, towards Mount Zagros; the plains in the environs of Nineveh, namely, Dolomenia, Calachenia, Chazenia, and Adiabene; the valleys of the Gordyæans, and the Mygdonians of Nisibis even to Zeugma* of the Euphrates; and the vast region beyond the river inhabited by the Arabs, to the Cilicians, Phœnicians, and Libyans, and the portion of the coast comprehending the Sea of Egypt and the Gulf of Issus.†

Herodotus remarks that Babylon and the other parts of Assyria formed the ninth satrapy of Darius; and as by that historian Syria is considered as included in Assyria, this government, in his estimation, must have extended from the Mediterranean to the head of the Persian Gulf, and from Mount Taurus to the Arabian Desert.‡

D'Anville assigns to both countries nearly the same limits which we have given them, and describes Mesopotamia as a region between rivers, the Aram Naharaim of the Pentateuch,§ and called "ul Jezeerah," or the Island, by the Arabs.¶

* Or the Bridge, or place for passing the river, the site of the present Roumkala.

† Strabo, curâ Casauboni. Amst., 1763, folio, lib. xvi., p. 1070.

‡ Herodotus, curâ Wesselingii. Amst., 1763, folio, lib. iii., p. 245.

§ Beke, in his *Origines Biblicæ*, disputes this opinion, and conceives, upon grounds which he sets forth, that "Aram Naharaim" of the Pentateuch is to be sought in the land of Damascus, watered by the Rivers Pharphar and Abana.

¶ *Géographie Ancienne*, par M. D'Anville, 3 tomes, 12mo. Paris, 1768, tome ii., p. 190.

By Strabo, Mesopotamia is declared to be bounded on the north by Taurus, which separates it from Armenia; that it is largest near the mountains, where, between Thapsacus, at the passage of the Euphrates, and the point where Alexander crossed the Tigris, it is 2400 stadia broad; while between Babylon and Seleucia, the space separating the rivers does not exceed 200 stadia. He states that the Mygdonians inhabit the part near the Euphrates and the two Zeugmas; that they possess the city of Nisibis, called also Antiocha Mygdonia, at the foot of Mount Masius, that of Tigranocerta, the districts of Carrhes and Nicephorium, Chordiraza and Sinnaca; that near the Tigris, among the mountains, is the country of the Gordyæans, called by the ancients Carduchi, where also are found the Cosæans, the Parætaceniens, and the Elymæans; and that the southern portions of Mesopotamia are inhabited by the Scenite Arabs, a nomade people, who live by plunder, and change their abodes when pasture and booty fail.*

It would be very difficult to assign to these several divisions a place in modern maps. The northern part of Mesopotamia, to the foot of Mount Masius, is certainly the Mygdonia of the Greeks, including Nisibin and Aljezira. To the west, and stretching southward, lies the district of Osroene, including the ancient Edessa, Charraë, and Nicephorium; Circesium (now Karkisia), at the junction of the Khabour with the Euphrates, is rather the name applied to a city than a country; and, excepting the towns upon the river's bank, there appears to have been no place of consequence between Khabour and Babylonia proper: indeed, the tract must have always been in great measure a desert. These limits extended from the Median wall which joined the two rivers, and included all the space between them, which, no doubt, was subdivided into many districts, the names of which have not reached our time. The lower part of this province obtained the designation of Chaldea, because, after the capture of Babylon, many of the inhabitants retired thither, carrying with them their arts and sciences; but this colony must be carefully distinguished from the true and ancient Chaldea, the birth-place of Terah and Abraham, the mother-country of the wise men, and, doubtless, of the race that ruled both there and in Nineveh.

* Strabo, lib. xvi., p. 1082.

Returning to the northern limits of Assyria, we find the districts of Carduchia and Corduene in the mountains between Sert and Julamerik; Arbelitis, of which the capital was Arbela, in the low lands; the plains of Dolomenia and Calachene spread around Mosul; the Gordyæans, Elymæans, and Parætaceniens occupied the valleys of the Gordyæan Mountains, at whose foot, towards Kirkook, stretch the plains of Adiabene, Apolloniatis, the present Shahraban, and Chalonitis, which last appears to have been the southeastern district, bordering on Louristan and Susiana. Such, perhaps, according to our present knowledge of the ancient divisions of these provinces, is the nearest adaptation of them to modern maps.

We have now to consider the modern divisions of the countries we have undertaken to describe. The pachalic of Bagdad is at present a dependancy of the Turkish empire, and governed by a pacha sent from Constantinople. It is arranged into the following districts :

Mardin, governed by a waiwodeh.
 Nisibin, ———.
 Mosul, by a pacha, nominated by the Porte, but subject to the Pacha of Bagdad.
 Arbel, a beg.
 Kirkook, a mussellim.
 Khoe, till lately subject to the men of Rewandooz.
 Kewy Sanjak, a pacha.
 Solymaneah, a pacha.
 Dour, a zabit.
 Tecret, a beg.
 Samieh, a zabit.
 Zohab, a pacha.
 Khanekin, a pacha.

Mendali, a zabit.
 Janan, ———.
 Bagdad, residence of the pacha.
 Bussora, a mussellim.
 Sook el Shiook, a sheik.
 Semava, a sheik.
 Khezail, a sheik.
 Lemlum, a sheik.
 Nejeff, a mootwullee.
 Kerbela, a mootwullee.
 Hillah, a beg.
 Jubbeh, a beg.
 Hit, a beg.
 Anah, a beg.
 Rahaba, a beg.

To this enumeration must be added the towns on the right bank of the Euphrates, above Rahaba, most of which are included in the pachalic of Aleppo, and have been already adverted to. These, with the districts of Diarbekir, Orfa, Jezirah ul Omar, Sert, Amadiéh, Accra, and some others among the Kurdish Mountains, will complete the detail of our limits in so far as territory is concerned. But besides the fixed inhabitants who form the agricultural population, and the dwellers in the towns, there are a vast number of wandering tribes, both Arabs and Kurds, who roam over its surface, paying little regard to any govern-

ment whatever. The whole country from Mardin to Karkisia, following the line of the Khabour and Hermas Rivers, has of late been overrun by the Jerbah tribe, who, attracted some years ago from Arabia by the hopes of better pasture, took possession of that part of the Jezirah. The vicinity of Bagdad is in the same manner infested by the tribe of Delaim, aided by the Jubboor.

From Semava to Hillah the country is swampy, in consequence of the Euphrates having long since broken its embankments. This tract, including what are known as the Lemlum Marshes, is held by the Khezail Arabs, who cultivate the ground, and feed large flocks of buffaloes, on which they subsist. Above Hit, the whole western bank of the river, and the country beyond it, is in the possession of numerous petty clans, who in their turn are domineered over by the Aneiza, a very powerful tribe, who range the Desert from the vicinity of Aleppo to an unknown extent inward, suffering no one to pass without their permission.

On the eastern side of the Tigris, the Chaab Arabs hold possession of the low country of Susiana from the River Kerkha to the sea; while northwest of that river, the Beni Lam exercise sovereignty until they are met by the Feilee tribes of Louristan, who feed their flocks and pillage travellers to the very neighbourhood of Mendali. From thence northward to the boundary of Assyria, between the Gordyæan Mountains and the Tigris, the country swarms with various classes of robbers, who, by their ravages, check every attempt at improvement which the inhabitants might otherwise be induced to make. Owing to these causes, as well as from the influence of a bad government, Mesopotamia and Assyria, which comprise in their extent some of the richest land in the world, are reduced almost to an unproductive desert.

The face of this extensive country, stretching nearly 800 miles from northwest to southeast, by a medium breadth of 200, exhibits great variety of soil, climate, and appearance. Thus the whole of Irak or Babylonia may be described as a rich alluvial flat, varied by marshy tracts and a few sandy stripes. Again, the lower part of Mesopotamia degenerates from a loamy deposit into a hard gravel; while the higher districts of Diarbekir, Sert, Jezirah ul Omar, Amadiéh, and Solymaneah, consist of little else than a mass of mountains intersected by fertile valleys. These

ridges rise to a still greater height in the neighbourhood of Julamerik, and Mount Jewar is said to ascend at least 15,000 feet; on the other hand, the plains of Arbela and Nineveh, of Kirkook, Tooz Khoormattee, and Kufri, though in some places scorched, are yet occasionally very productive.

In like manner, while the low country is parched with the intense heat of summer, the eye may be regaled by the sight of a snowy ridge hanging like a cloud in the air; and when the inhabitants of Bagdad are panting in their *sirdabs*, or cellars under ground, whither they retire to avoid the rays of the sun, the traveller who is crossing the mountains of Kurdistan is glad to draw his cloak tightly about him, to protect his person from the cold blasts that descend from the ice-covered peaks. Thus, too, the date-tree yields its luscious fruit in perfection in the plains of Babylonia, while only the hardier fruits of northern climes can be matured in the orchards of the Kurdish highlands.

The mountain ranges of Sinjar, of Masius, and the Hamrines, are among the principal ones of Upper Mesopotamia. The exact extent and direction of the first is not well known; but it is connected, as we gather from Mr. Ainsworth, on the northeast with a series of low rounded eminences called the Babel Hills, which appear to cross the Tigris below Jezirah ibn Omar to the south of Zaco.

Mount Masius runs in a westerly direction from the Tigris to the parallel of Nisibin, when, turning towards the north at Dara, it again assumes its former line, overlooking throughout its course a very level plain. Northward from this boundary the country consists of high tablelands, intersected by ridges of rocky mountains, which are branches of Taurus, under the names of Karahjah Dag, Ali Dag, Madan, Mahrab, and Kalaat Dag. The last two are peaks of that range which divides the eastern Euphrates and the Tigris, the sources of the latter river being situated in its southern face, near the Arghana mines.

Both provinces have been by nature blessed with the means of almost unlimited fertility in the abundant streams which water them, though this benefit has been differently distributed in each. In Assyria and Upper Mesopotamia the rivers and mountain streams are numerous; and there is no want either of rain or snow to assist in bringing the crops to maturity. On the other hand, in Lower Mesopo-

tamia and Babylonia, productiveness must depend on the industry and judgment with which the inhabitants dispense the ample supplies afforded by the Tigris and Euphrates, and take advantage of their periodical inundations.

From Erzingan (eight caravan days' journey from Erzeroum), Colonel Chesney remarks* that the Euphrates may be described as a river of the first order, struggling in an exceedingly tortuous course through numerous obstacles; and, though forming frequent rapids, is still so shallow that, during the autumn, loaded camels can in some places pass it. Its velocity is from two to four miles an hour, according to season and localities. It is navigable for large boats, or, rather, rafts of 120 tons, from Erzingan probably, and certainly from Malatia, downward.† This was the case in the days of Herodotus; and the produce of Armenia might still be carried as far as Hillah, as it then was to Babylon.

The upper part of the river brought to the recollection of the colonel and his party the scenery of the Rhine below Schaffhausen, being enclosed between two parallel ranges of hills, and having its banks covered, for the most part thickly, with brushwood and timber of moderate size, with a succession of long narrow islands in its bed, on some of which are considerable towns. There are also numerous villages on either side, chiefly inhabited by Arabs, among whom the Weljee or Welda, and the Bohabour tribes appear to be the principal. From Bir downward to Hit, the stream is much interrupted with shallows and fords, where camels pass with ease; and between Racca and Anah, a distance of about 170 miles, the bed is particularly rocky. On the whole, the scenery is described as possessing a very picturesque character, not a little heightened by the frequent occurrence of ancient aqueducts formed of mason-work, coming boldly up to the water's edge, and which, owing to the frequent windings of the river, appear in every possible

* In his Report contained in the Parliamentary papers on the Euphrates Expedition.

† This seems doubtful, as Mr. Brant, British consul at Erzeroum, who crossed the river (there still called the Morad) on his way from Kharput to Malatia, at a place called Ezz Ogloo, considerably below the latter, affirms that from that place, for forty-five miles downward, it bursts through the great chain of Taurus, and forms such a succession of rapids, and runs in so rocky a channel, that no rafts or boats attempt to pass. Below that space, he says, it becomes and continues to be navigable.

variety of position. These celebrated structures will hereafter be more particularly delineated.

About ten miles below Hit, the hills almost entirely cease; there is little brushwood and few trees on the banks, and the ancient aqueducts give place to the common wheel or water-skins, raised by bullocks with ropes drawn over pulleys. The river winds less, and instead of rocks and pebbles, the bed is now formed of sand or mud, while the current is duller and deeper than before. As far as Hillah, almost the only habitations to be seen are the black hair-tents of the Bedouins, rising among patches of cultivation and clusters of date-trees. Approaching the latter place, canals for irrigation become more frequent; and near the remains of ancient Babylon, two streams called the Nil proceed from the river, one above and the other below the principal ruin, and form a lake which fertilizes much land.

For thirty miles below Hillah the banks are covered with mud villages imbedded in date-trees, to which succeed huts built neatly of reeds, with earthen forts or castles to protect the crops. Farther down, near Lemlum, the land, being flat, is easily irrigated; and here the river divides itself into several streams, the two lower of which encircle a considerable island, and in the season of flood overflow the country on either side to the extent of sixty miles. The moment that the waters recede, which happens in June, the whole of this tract is covered with crops of rice and other grain, and dotted with reed cottages. These last, when suffered to remain too long, are frequently surprised by the rising inundation; and it is no uncommon thing to see persons on foot or in their canoes following their floating village in order to arrest the materials. Not many years ago, the whole town was thus swept away; yet the inhabitants constantly rebuild their dwellings in the same spot.

In passing through these marshes, the river, which from Bir to Hillah preserves a breadth varying from 300 to 450 yards, is contracted occasionally to fifty, with a depth of from six to nine feet, and a very winding course. But at Saloa Castle, twenty miles below Lemlum, it again augments in size, and the lake on the right bank disappears.

But the eastern bank continues still low and marshy, and the country requires to be protected by *bunds* or dams, which, however, often break when the waters rise, and

much damage is occasioned. The stream, nevertheless, maintains a breadth varying from 200 to 400 yards as far as Korna, where it forms a junction with the Tigris; and from this point the united river is from 500 to 800 yards in breadth, and three to five fathoms deep.

A slight increase takes place in the Euphrates in January, but the grand flood does not commence till about the 27th of March; and it attains its height about the 20th of May, after which it falls pretty rapidly till June, when the rice and grain crops are sown in the marshes. The decrease then proceeds gradually until the middle of November, when the stream is at its lowest. The rise of the water at Anah in ordinary seasons is from ten to twelve feet; though it occasionally amounts to eighteen, entering the town, and overflowing much of the bank. At its greatest height it runs with a velocity exceeding five miles an hour, but after a decrease of twenty days there is a corresponding diminution of rapidity, insomuch that boats can track against the current.

The course of the Euphrates from Bir to Bussora has been estimated by Colonel Chesney at 1143 miles, and from Bir upward by the eastern branch to its source near Malasgird, is about 500 more, making an aggregate of fully 1600 miles.

The Tigris takes its rise in that branch of Taurus where the mines of Arghana are situated, and whence the waters flow to this river on the south, and to the Morad on the north. Bursting through the eastern part of Mount Masius, from which it receives many small tributaries, it is joined at Osmankeuy by a considerable stream, called by Kinneir the Batman Su, by the Turks Bulespena or Barema. Another large supply is afforded by the Erzen, which is said to take its rise in Susan, a district northwest of Betlis, probably in the range of Mount Niphates. It was sixty yards broad where crossed by the author now named, and reached his horse's knees. The next feeder is the Betlischai, which falls into it somewhere above Jezirah ul Omar, and was found by him to be eighty yards broad, and not fordable. He erroneously takes it for the Khabour, which, rising in the district of Amadiéh, unites with the Heizel, and falls into the Tigris below Zaco.

Passing the ruins of Ctesiphon and Seleucia, the Tigris holds its course through a deep alluvial soil and marshy

land. Its banks, like those of the Euphrates, are thickly sprinkled with heaps and mounds, the vestiges of former habitations, with Arab tents or huts, and some considerable villages, among which the chief is Koote ul Amara, giving its name to the river as far as Korna. At this latter place the two great streams unite, forming, as has been seen, the Shut el Arab, though Abulfeda calls it still the Digleh or Tigris all the way to the sea.

Among the rivers of importance which have their rise in Mesopotamia are the Khabour (ancient Chaboras), and the Hermas or Huali, which unite before they fall into the Euphrates at Karkisia. Of these, the first has its source partly in the springs of Ras ul Ain, and partly at a greater distance in the northwest; the second originates in Mount Masius, and flows by Nisibin and Sinjar to lose itself in the other.

The greater Zab is formed of many streams which flow from the Kurdish Mountains. It is joined about twenty-five miles from its confluence with the Tigris by the Gomet, the ancient Bumadus, which has its rise north of Accra. The lesser Zab, too, derives its waters from various sources. One large branch from Lahijan in Kurdistan, called the Ak-su, runs by Sardasht, and, joined by another stream from the vicinity of Banna, unites with that which passes through the Keuy Sanjiak valley, above Altun Kupri. The rest, though considerable, are less known.

The Diala issues from the Koh Saugur, between Hamadan and Kermanshah, from whence, bursting through a pass of the Shahu Mountains, and receiving many tributaries in its course, it forces its way through the remarkable defile of Darnah, where there are still the ruins of a town and castle. From thence, receiving an accession at Gundar, it enters the singular plain of Semiram by a tremendous gorge, and assumes a southwesterly course until it unites with the Hulwan River near Khanekin. Previous to this it is called the Shirwan, from an ancient city of that name, past the ruins of which it flows; but after its junction it assumes the appellation of the Diala, which it retains till it falls into the Tigris a little below Bagdad.

Having thus described the principal rivers of these countries, it will be proper also to give some idea of the system of artificial irrigation which was so essential to the prosperity of the alluvial districts.

The fertility of Babylonia has been the theme of all ancient writers. Herodotus remarks that this province and the rest of Assyria were by Darius constituted the ninth satrapy of his empire, and that it contributed a full third part of the revenues of the state. This great productiveness did not arise from the soil in its natural state, for at this day it produces little besides a scanty sprinkling of tamarisks, thorns, or salsugineous plants. It was effected by the wisdom of a judicious monarch, who, aiding the efforts of an industrious people, supplied the means of irrigation from the periodical floods of the Euphrates and Tigris. The same historian, Diodorus, and others, inform us of great hydraulic operations being conducted by several sovereigns of Babylon; and of these the magnificent system of canals by which the flat surface of the land was divided into sections, all within reach of the water, was, no doubt, the most important. The traveller, in passing over the face of the country, now almost a desert, meets everywhere with vestiges which prove how completely traversed it once was by such arteries of fructification. It is remarkable, too, that all these canals, instead of having been sunk in the earth, like those of the present day, were entirely constructed on the surface; a fact which proves not only the superior skill of the engineers of antiquity, but the infinitely greater attention to agriculture paid in those times by farmers or peasantry. By what means the water was raised to fill these conduits, does not in every case appear; whether by dikes thrown across the river, or by depressing its bed at the point of derivation. The former expedient was certainly adopted in many instances on the Athem, on the Diala, on the Tigris above Samarra, and on the Euphrates near Hit. But it must be recollected that the country contiguous to both rivers, and the Euphrates in particular, was protected by embankments from the periodical rise of their streams, a measure which, by confining the water, raised it so as to fill these canals. In this manner they served the double purpose of vents for drawing off the dangerous superabundance of the fluid, and collecting it for the beneficial purpose of irrigation.

The principal canals mentioned by ancient geographers are the Nahr-raga, the Nahr Sares, the Fluvius Regius, the Kutha, and the Pallacopas. The first of these, which, according to Pliny, has its origin at Sippara or Hippara,

appears to occupy the place of the Nahr Isa, which, derived from the Euphrates at Dehmah near Anbar, joined the Tigris in the western part of that city.

The Nahr Sares of Ptolemy is by D'Anville considered as identical with the Nahr Sarsar of Abulfeda, who describes it as rising below the former, as passing through the level country between Bagdad and Cufa, and joining the Tigris between Bagdad and Madayn. Mr. Ainsworth says "this corresponds to the present Zimberaniyah," and remarks that Ammianus Marcellinus notices a canal between Macepracta and Perisabor on the Nahr Malikah, which must be the Sarsar.*

The *Fluvius Regius* of Ptolemy is undoubtedly the Nahr Malikah of the Arabian geographers, which, according to Ammianus, was drawn from Perisaboras on the Euphrates, and is said by Abulfeda to have joined the Tigris below Madayn. It was one of the most ancient, as well as most important of these works in Babylonia, being attributed by tradition to Cush, and to Nimrod king of Babel; while Abydenus, with more probability, attributes it to Nebuchadnezzar.

We are told that, about seven miles below the Nahr Malikah, a second canal was derived from the Euphrates, which traversed the country nearly parallel with the others, and, like them, emptied itself into the Tigris. In its course it passed the old city of Kutha, supposed to have derived its name from Cush, the father of Nimrod, whose posterity possessed the land.†

These are the four canals supposed to have been passed by the army of Cyrus the younger, after the battle of Cunaxa, on their way to Sittace; and, from the position of these works, a good idea may be obtained of the method of irrigation in those days. The country was intersected by them at intervals of six or eight miles, and could thus be watered throughout its whole extent by smaller ones derived from the principal conduits.

But, besides these larger channels, there were many of inferior size, constructed to supply particular towns and dis-

* *Researches in Assyria, Babylonia, and Chaldea*, by William Ainsworth, F.G.S., &c., Svo, London, 1838, p. 163-165.

† Mr. Ainsworth (*Researches*, p. 166) thinks that this town of Kutha may be represented by the ruins and mounds of the Towebah, which by some are considered as the northern quarter of ancient Babylon.

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tricts, each quarter of Babylon itself being provided with water in that manner. The numerous dry beds still to be seen in all directions, prove the extent to which the system was carried.

Nearly twenty-two miles below the point of derivation of the Kutha canal, as we are told by the same geographer, the Frat divided itself into two streams, the more southern of which passes beyond Cufa into the marshes of Roomyah. The other and larger branch flows opposite the Kasr ibn Hobeirah, and bears the name of the Nahr Soora.*

The former branch of the Euphrates here spoken of is, we believe, the same that now forms the lake called the Sea of Nejeff, and which sweeps round till it joins the marshes of Roomyah.

It is probable that hence was derived the great canal of Pallacopas, which appears to have been executed in the very early days of the Babylonian monarchy, and intended, perhaps, as much to promote agriculture by means of irrigation, as to drain a mass of waters injurious to health and improvement.

We learn from Arrian that much expense was incurred by the governors of Babylon in restraining an over-abundant flow through the Pallacopas into the fenny districts; and that, therefore, Alexander, willing to do the Assyrians a benefit, resolved to dam up that entrance from the Euphrates. He proposed that a cut should be made about thirty furlongs from the mouth of the canal, where the soil was rocky, being satisfied that much water would be thereby saved, and its distribution better regulated.†

From the first part of this account we should be led to think that the ancient canal had its commencement, at least, in what Abulfeda terms the southern branch of the Euphrates, as through this the water reached the marshes. From the second it would appear as if Alexander had pursued his intention of effectually damming up the overflow of the river in the old bed of the canal, and made a fresh

* Mr. Ainsworth (Researches, p. 171, 172) calls it Nahr Surah or Sares, and from thence deduces its identity with the Nahr Sares of Ptolemy; but we believe it was called Nahr Soora from the name of a town in its vicinity.

† Arriani Historia, curâ Gronovii, Lugd. Bat., 1704, folio, lib. vii., p. 302.

opening at the distance of thirty furlongs in firmer ground. The circumstance of his sailing down the Euphrates to the mouth of the Pallacopas, and through that canal to the place where he built the town now called Meshed Ali, would lead to the supposition that the new cut must have been about the parallel of Cufa or Dewannieh. That the Pallacopas was continued to the sea, into which it emptied itself somewhere about Teredon, is certain, although its channel is now nearly obliterated; for both Colonel Chesney and Lieutenant Ormsby, in journeying westward from Bussora, found its bed between Zobeir and the Jibel Sanam, which is the site of ancient Teredon. The last named of these gentlemen found that it was sixty paces broad; and his guide told him that, in travelling along its channel all the way from Khor Abdullah (the supposed ancient mouth of the Euphrates) to Hillah, mounds, with the usual vestiges of old buildings, are frequently met with on its banks. In the days of Abulfeda, however, the Pallacopas was no longer in operation, and the waters seem to have escaped by their old vent into the marshes, the work of Alexander having probably given way. Of late, the higher portion of the Babylonian fens received a great augmentation from the damage done to the embankments of the river in the memorable inundation of 1830. For many years previous to that time, the Montefic Arabs had farmed the whole western side of the Euphrates from the Pacha of Bagdad at a certain sum, and upon condition of maintaining in good order the *huds* which prevented it from overflowing the country from Sook el Shiok to Hit. In that year these embankments were swept away, and have not since been replaced, so that the river, when in flood, has a free passage into the Bahr e Nejeff.

These were the principal canals derived from the Euphrates in this quarter. No doubt there were many others in the level districts of Mesopotamia, but they are less known; and it is highly probable that the alluvial territory between the Hye, the Tigris, and the Euphrates, was equally well supplied with such means of irrigation. In like manner, the districts about Bussora bear marks of having been anciently supplied with conduits, though most of the names are now lost.

The waters of the Tigris have also been made subservient to the purposes of agriculture by means of various ca-

nals; and two of these merit especial mention. The first was the Nahrawan, the most magnificent, indeed, of all similar works achieved by the ancient kings of Babylon. Its sources were threefold. The first, issuing from the river at the point where it cuts the Hamrine hills, ran distant from the parent stream about six or seven miles towards the ancient town of Samarra, where it was joined by the second conduit. This last, leaving the Tigris at a place called Guntree Rissasse, fell into the other, which then received the name of Nahrawan, and the united current ran nearly south-southeast towards the Athem, absorbing first the superfluous waters of the Nahr But, then the Athem itself, next the Nahr Raathan, and, finally, a third cut from the river at Gaim. Hence it proceeded generally at the distance of from six to twelve miles from the course of the Tigris, as it flowed in those days, but approaching it at Bagdad; a little after which it crossed the Diala, exhausting its contents, which were raised to a proper level by a bund.

In like manner, this gigantic aqueduct stretched onward till, entering Kuzistan, it absorbed all the streams from the Lour and Buckharee Mountains, and at length joined the Kerkha, or, as some say, was lost in the marshes of that part of Susiana.

In its long course of nearly 400 miles, this canal, which equalled the Tigris in size, being from 250 to 400 feet broad, fertilized a vast district of country, sending off numerous branches on both sides, and one, in particular, to Jarjarya, not far from Koote ul Amara.

On its margin are found ruins of various buildings, and on either bank the sites of towns and cities, which once derived wealth from the commerce or agriculture it encouraged, and which, with it, have sunk into ruin. Much of the marsh now existing in the line of its course has been formed by the waters it formerly directed to useful purposes; and those of the Diala, in particular, have forced a passage to the Tigris below Bagdad, converting much land, once carefully cultivated, into a swampy waste.

Second to the Nahrawan, but also of great importance, is the Dijeil Canal, which issued from the right bank of the Tigris some miles below Samarra. It flows parallel to that river to within twenty-five miles of Bagdad, and even now fertilizes a large extent of territory, which, however, is at present in the hands of the Jerbah Arabs.

The following canals are still in operation, and exhibit a melancholy contrast with the magnificent catalogue of antiquity :

1. The Boogharaib, deriving its waters from the Euphrates below Felugia, joins the marshes of Bagdad.

2. The Massoodee, drawn from a swamp fed from the Euphrates, and falls into the Tigris two hours below the former.

3. The Daoodee (cut by Daood Pacha), which connects the two just mentioned.

4. The Rithwannieh issues from the Euphrates southwest from Bagdad, and joins the Tigris below the Massoodee.

5. The Mahmoodee, which has its supplies from the Euphrates, flows towards Seleucia, but is exhausted in the process of irrigation.

There are a few smaller cuts between these last and the town of Hillah, but they water comparatively little ground.

6. The Khalis (on the Assyrian side of the Tigris), supplied by the Diala, runs nearly seventy miles with a winding course towards the southwest, that brings it to within twenty miles of Bagdad.

7. The Khoraisan, which flows from the opposite side of the same river, has nearly an equal course in a southeasterly direction.

With the exception of the last two, these canals are works of very inferior extent and importance to the ancient ones.

8. The Dijeil, already described, is ancient, but now almost entirely filled up.

Besides these, there are several near Bussora, such as the Nahr Kerbela leading to that place, and the Nejeff constructed by Nadir Shah, of the present state of which we are ignorant. Mr. Ainsworth* mentions a system of irrigating ducts near Gerah, as the Mejilah, the Jemilah, the Antar, the Jamidah, and others; and there are similar works opposite Semava, including the extensive line of the Shatrah Canal, which gives numerous offsets to the Euphrates, and unites with the Hye near its mouth. With the exception of the irrigation accomplished by means of the water-wheel on the banks of the rivers, it is from the

* Researches, p. 127.

operation of these cuts that the whole agricultural produce of the present Babylonia is still raised, the food of the inhabitants provided, and the revenue furnished.

The *Marshes* of that district must here also claim a few words. The first to be noticed is the great tract already alluded to which lies near Hillah, and is seen stretching out like a vast sea.

These swamps are fed by the Euphrates at the season of its great rise, the embankments which restrained its waters having been destroyed. They communicate with the Roomyah and Lemlum Marshes, through which the river winds, but probably also send a considerable portion of their fluid down the ancient Pallacopas, and to an unknown distance into the Arabian desert.

The Lemlum themselves are the next in succession southward, though connected with the former, and constituting part of the *Paludes Babyloniae*, in which many of the galleys of Alexander lost their way when they accompanied him on his voyage. These marshes, according to Colonel Chesney, occupy a space of sixty miles in breadth, and rather more in length. A considerable portion of them, however, is cultivated by Khezail Arabs.

Mr. Ainsworth says that there is but a narrow band of soil between them and the Tigris; but in this he is mistaken, as actual observation has proved that they extend rather towards the Hye than to that river.

The next fenny tract is the one that surrounds the ruins of Workha, considered by Mr. Ainsworth and Colonel Taylor to be the district of Chaldea proper; and which, doubtless, is connected with the marshes of Lemlum. Of its extent there exists no accurate information, as the nature of the country renders travelling there extremely difficult.

Communicating with this watery land by creeks or ditches, if not by a continuity of swampy ground, is the valley of the Boo je Heirat and Shut el Hye. This valley appears once to have been the bed of the Tigris itself, for Abulfeda distinctly says that Waasut was intersected by the Digleh, which was spanned by a bridge of boats. This city, the ancient Cascara, and the seat of one of the bishops of early Christianity, was once populous, rich, well cultivated, and flourishing. The industry of the inhabitants restrained within proper embankments the over-

abundance of the waters with which it was surrounded; but when wars and troubles arose, these were either neglected or destroyed, and the populous province accordingly returned to a state of nature, and became a country of lakes and morasses.

Mr. Ainsworth considers this Waasut to be the seat of the ancient Cybate, and adopts the opinion that the Nahrawan which appears in the valley is the same which originates at Samarra on the Tigris. Probably some of the lakes described by Abulfeda represented in his day the Chaldean one of Pliny, which, according to the English traveller, lay beyond the former course of the Tigris and Nahrawan, and was, no doubt, connected with it. The whole country east of the Hye is indeed of a very low and marshy character, "while the dry land on the banks of the Euphrates stretches beyond the Shut el Hye, protected by the date-plantations, the rampart-enclosed reed huts, and the more stable habitations of the Montefic Arabs from Kut (Koote), by Sook el Shiok to Omu el Bak, the 'mother of moschetoes;' the inland country to the east and to the west in the parallel of the 'Sheik's Market-town' becomes already occupied by an almost perpetual inundation; and at Omu el Bak the waters spread from the banks of the river in every direction like a great lake, extending to the extreme verge of the horizon, and only here and there interrupted by groves of date-trees, and occasional huts islanded in the desert of waters. On the ascent of the steamer Euphrates in the latter end of October, and the descent of the same vessel in the beginning of November, 1836, the extent of this great inundation had undergone very little diminution from what it had been in the month of June, nearly at the period of the great floods."* But few particulars are known of the former extent of the several lakes or morasses which are separated by slips of higher land, where the Beni Ruffeyah and other Arabs pitch their tents. At the end of this Chaldean lake Pliny places Ampe, which Mr. Ainsworth is disposed to think is now represented by Korna, at the junction of the two rivers. D'Anville, however, considers this town as identical with Ptolemy's Apamea and the Digla of Pliny. On the other side of the present bed of the Tigris are found the marshes of Susiana,

* Ainsworth's Researches, p. 128, 129.

which, if the river formerly ran through the valley of the Hye, must have been continuous with the Chaldean Lake, or only separated by the low territory of the Messina of Pliny, Ptolemy, Strabo, and others. Indeed, the whole country of Susiana, which lies on the left bank of the current, appears to be little more than one succession of morasses.

CHAPTER II.

History of the Assyrian Monarchy.

Uncertainty of the Chronology of these Periods.—Necessity of adopting some consistent System of Notation.—Errors of Usher, Lloyd, and others.—Discrepancy of Opinion between various Authors.—Mode of Notation adopted.—Sources of Information.—Sacred Writ.—Greek Historians.—Herodotus—Ctesias.—Commencement of the Assyrian Empire according to each.—Syncellus and Polyhistor.—Beke's "Origines Biblicae."—Scriptural Account.—Lists of Kings of both Monarchies to the Fall of Babylon.—Claims of Ctesias to Credit discussed.—Opinions divided.—His Account of the Assyrian Monarchy.—Ninus.—Semiramis.—Ninyas, &c.—Thonon Concoletus.—His Identity with Sardanapalus.—Errors of Ctesias.—History of the Monarchy according to Scripture and Ptolemy's Canon.—Asshur Founder of it.—Pul.—Tiglath-Pileser.—Shalmaneser.—Sennacherib.—Esarhaddon, supposed to be the warlike Sardanapalus.—Saosducheus, &c.—Various Conjectures.—Nabuchodonosor.—Fall of Nineveh—And of the Assyrian Empire.

HAVING thus given a description of the boundaries, divisions, and general aspect of the countries hereafter to be more minutely delineated, we shall endeavour, as succinctly as possible, to sketch the history of the monarchies of which, from the earliest times, they were the seat. This is a task of no ordinary difficulty; for so obscure is the chronology of those remote periods, and perplexing are the names and actions attributed by various writers to individuals who are said to have flourished during them, that, in spite of the numerous attempts to connect the detached notices on the subject, it still remains not a little dark and confused. As an instance of this, and of the discrepancy which prevails among chronologists on some of the most important epochs, it may be mentioned that Dr. Hales, in

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his learned work, recites upward of 120 several opinions in reference to the interval which elapsed between the creation of the world and the birth of our Saviour, and the extremes are removed from each other by no less than 3268 years. A difference of 1142 years occurs, in like manner, among authors in fixing the era of the Deluge; they disagree, also, to the extent of 300 years regarding the time of the fall of Nineveh; and a like diversity prevails upon the date of the Exode of the Jews from Egypt.

An attempt to reconcile the various systems that have produced such discordant opinions would be but an idle waste of time, and unsuited to a work of this nature, which professes rather to give results than to enter into laboured disquisitions. It is proposed only to state the issue of the most successful investigations on the subject of the ancient Babylonish and Assyrian monarchies. But, in order to succeed even in this, some system of chronology must be adopted, and we shall shortly explain the nature of that which has been preferred.

It is generally known that the scheme of Usher, Lloyd, and others, which furnishes the marginal dates in the authorized version of the Scriptures, and was adopted in the eighth century in place of the more ancient notation of the Septuagint, is now held to be altogether erroneous. The era of creation, according to that account, is only 4004 years anterior to the birth of Christ.

The following are considered as among the highest authorities on this subject:

Josephus, according to various authors.....	{ 5555 5481 5402 4698
The Septuagint.....	{ 5586 5508
Syncellus	5500
Pezron	5872
Eusebius	5200
Jackson.....	5426
Hales.....	5411

Dr. Russell, who, in his "Connexion of Sacred and Profane History,"* has examined this subject with great assiduity and learning, and who has consulted not only the writings of Jewish and pagan historians, and of the early

* Vol. i., Preliminary Dissertation; and vol. ii., chap. i.

fathers, but also the works of the most distinguished modern chronologists, inclines to fix this important point in the year B.C. 5441, which, being nearly a mean of the best authorities, we will venture to adopt as that by which to determine such dates as admit of precise notation. On the same grounds, he places the era of the Deluge in

Or after the Creation	B.C.3185 2256
Making, till the era of redemption	5441

Assuming, therefore, this point as established, we shall proceed to the history of those early ages so far as there are grounds on which to base our narrative.

The principal sources of information are, first, the Scriptures of the Old Testament; and, secondly, the writings of several Greek historians who have treated of those times.

Of these last, the two most important are, Herodotus, who lived about the year B.C. 430, contemporary with Nehemiah and Malachi, and who himself visited Babylon and saw its condition only a hundred years after it was taken by Cyrus. The other is Ctesias, a physician of Cnidos, who, accompanying Cyrus the younger in that quality on his expedition against his brother Artaxerxes Mnemon, was taken prisoner at the battle of Cunaxa, B.C. 399, and resided at the court of that monarch seventeen years.

From the writings of these two historians, it will be found that all subsequent annalists and geographers, including Diodorus and Strabo, have chiefly drawn their materials; and it is these original elements, multiplied and often distorted by the theories and conjectures of numerous commentators, that supply all the information we really possess regarding those early and obscure periods in the history of man.

The authors of the "Universal History," a work of deep erudition and research, incline to reject almost entirely the testimony of Ctesias, whose long list of kings, with its mixture of Greek, Egyptian, Persian, and Median names, seems to destroy the pretensions of its compiler to veracity; while they attach much credit to the accounts of Herodotus, as agreeing far better than those of other historians with the chronology of Sacred Writ and the few insulated facts that can be brought to bear upon the subject.

According to their computation, after this historian, the Assyrian monarchy commenced 1236 B.C., and continued 520 years.*

Dr. Russell, in his very elaborate examination of the question, for which we must refer our readers to the work itself (vol. ii., chap. i.), comes to the conclusion that the account of Ctesias is by no means to be altogether rejected; and the result of his inquiry is to place the origin of the Assyrian empire in the year B.C. 2126
Or after the Flood 1059

3185

which, with the assumed period from the Creation to the Flood of 2256

makes, up to the birth of Christ 5441

And he observes that this comes to within one year of the date fixed by Ctesias for the commencement of his catalogue of the Assyrian monarchs, the accession of Ninus being placed in the year B.C. 2127.

Proceeding with his retrospect, and quoting from the *Chronographia* of Syncellus of the Chaldean kings who succeeded Nimrod at Babylon, Dr. Russell carries back the commencement of that monarch's reign, or the origin of the first Babylonish monarchy, to the year 601, or 619 after the Deluge, that is, to B.C. 2566: the difference between the two former sums arising from an equivalent difference assigned to the duration of certain reigns, according to Syncellus and Alexander Polyhistor. A third dynasty has been added to these by Moses of Chorene, an Armenian historian, who quotes from Abydenus, a compiler of Chaldean records; but he inclines to reject this as being quite unknown to the two former authors.

It is to be observed that these three later and Christian writers are the only ones who have touched upon this portion of Babylonian history; all others commencing their labours only where Sacred Writ terminates its short but invaluable notices upon this dark era.

This fact has been prominently set forward by Mr. Beke in his laborious and interesting work of "*Origines Bibli-cæ*," in which he examines with great ingenuity every-

* *Ancient Universal History*, 8vo, Lond., 1747-1754, vol. iv., p. 264-270.

thing which has been presented to us on these important points in the Sacred Volume, and rejects almost entirely all other evidence upon the subject as fabulous and unsatisfactory.

It must, in fact, be confessed that, with regard to the earliest period of the Babylonian annals, we have no other source of information worthy of any credit besides the Bible; and all which we learn there is the bare fact that, at a certain time, a son or descendant of Cush attained to great power, and founded a kingdom, "the beginning of which was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh in the land of Shinar."*

In the same manner, the whole which we are told regarding the foundation of an Assyrian kingdom is, that at some period, equally undetermined, "out of that land [of Shinar] went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah."† It is true that the proper reading of this passage has been much disputed; for many authorities, both English and German, contend that its true meaning is, that Nimrod went forth as a conqueror into the land of Asshur, and builded Nineveh and the other towns. In either case, Asshur must have preceded Nimrod, as we find the country already called by his name; and farther down we are informed that he was a son or descendant of Shem.

Of the kingdom of Babylon we hear no more from Scripture history till the days of Merodach Baladan, B.C. 721, who revolted from the Assyrians and wrote to King Hezekiah; while the first mention of an Assyrian monarch is in the year B.C. 821, when Jonah was sent to one in Nineveh, who by some is supposed to be identical with the Arbaces of Ctesias.

Considering as we do the Sacred Volume as containing the only undoubted source of information on this subject, down to the era of Nabonassar, B.C. 747, when the Canon of Ptolemy, founded on astronomical observation, commences (Nabonassar having himself destroyed all records of antecedent kings and dynasties), it would still be improper, in a work of this sort, to pass over entirely the testimony of historians who have written from such sources as were open to them, and which, among a great mass of

* Gen., x., 10.

† Gen., x., 11, 12.

42 HISTORY OF THE ASSYRIAN MONARCHY.

error and fable, unquestionably contains some facts which may be reconciled with those that proceed from less doubtful sources. We shall therefore give a succinct account of the origin of the two monarchies, as it appears in the most accredited histories; and, in order to assist the reader in comprehending the chronology of the period, we have framed the accompanying table, upon the data already referred to, showing the dynasties, names of kings, periods of their respective reigns, and the year of their accession before the Christian era, from the rise of the Babylonian power under Nimrod, and that of Assyria under Asshur, down to the extinction of both by the arms of the renowned Cyrus in the year B.C. 536.

BABYLON.

CHALDEAN KINGS.

	Years.	B.C.
1. Nimrod, 619 years after the Deluge, founds a kingdom in the land of Shinar, and reigned	6	2566
2. Chomasbolus	7½	2560
3. Porus	35	2552
4. Nechubes	43	2517
5. Abius	48	2474
6. Oniballus	40	2426
7. Zinzirus	45	2386
	<hr/>	
		224½

ARAB KINGS.

1. Mardocentes deposes Zinzirus in	2341
And reigned	45
2. Name and period lost, say	40
3. Sisimardacus	28
4. Nabius	37
5. Parannus	40
6. Nabonnebus	25
	<hr/>
	215
Deposed and slain by Ninus in	2126

ASSYRIA.

Asshur, period unknown, went out from Shinar and built Nineveh and other cities.

No account of his successors till the time of Ninus.

ASSYRIAN EMPIRE.

ASSYRIAN KINGS ACCORDING TO CTESIAS.

	Years.	B.C.
1. Ninus, conquered Babylon in		2126
Reigned	52	
2. Semiramis	42	2074
3. Ninyas	38	2032
4. Arius	30	1994
5. Aralius	40	1964
6. Xerxes or Balzus	30	1924
7. Armanithres	38	1894
8. Belochus	35	1857
9. Balzus	52	1821
10. Sethos, Altadas	35	1769
11. Mamylus	30	1734
12. Ascalius or Mascaleus	30	1704
13. Sphærus	28	1674
14. Mamylus	30	1646
15. Sparthæus	40	1616
16. Ascatades	42	1576
17. Amyntes	50	1534
18. Belochus II.	25	1484
19. Baletores or Baletaras	34	1459
20. Lamprides	37	1425
21. Sosares	20	1388
22. Lampares	30	1368
23. Panyas	45	1338
24. Sosarmus	42	1293
25. Mithreus	37	1251
26. Teutamus or Tautanus	32	1214
27. Teutæus	44	1182
28. Thineus	30	1138
29. Dercylus	40	1108
30. Empacmes	38	1068
31. Laosthenes	45	1030
32. Pertiades	30	985
33. Ophræteus	21	955
34. Ephecheres	52	934
35. Acraganes	42	882
36. Thonos Colcolerus or Sardanapalus	20	841
Under this monarch occurred the revolt of the Medes and Babylonians, which terminated in a separation of the monarchy once more into the Babylonian and Assyrio-Median States		821

BABYLONIAN SOVEREIGNS ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE AND PTOLEMY.

Earlier Sovereigns unknown, probably Belesis and his family.

	Years.	B.C.
1. Nabonassar; the era of this monarch's accession ascertained by astronomical calculation, reigned	14	747

44 HISTORY OF THE ASSYRIAN MONARCHY.

	Years.	B. C.
2. Nadius	2	733
3. Chinzirus	5	731
4. Jugæus	5	726
5. Merodach Baladan	12	721
Revolts from the Assyrians, and writes to King Hezekiah		710
6. Arcianus	5	709
1st Interregnum	2	704
7. Belibus	3	702
8. Apronadius	6	699
9. Regibelus	1	693
10. Mesesemordak	4	692
2d Interregnum	8	688
11. Esarhaddon subdues Babylon, and reduces it to a tributary state	13	680
12. Saosducheus or Nebuchadnezzar I.	20	667
13. Chyniladan	22	647
14. Nabopolassar or Labynetus	21	625
In alliance with Cyaxares, who takes Nineveh.....		606

ASSYRIAN SOVEREIGNS ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE AND PTOLEMY.

	B. C.
1. King of Assyria, mentioned in Jonah, unnamed, probably identical with Arbaces of Ctesias	821
Jonah's prophecy about	800
2. Pul or Belus, Mandaces of Ctesias	790
1st Invasion of Israel	770
3. Tiglath-pileser	747
2d Invasion of Israel	740
4. Shalmaneser	726
3d Invasion of Israel	722
5. Sennacherib	714
1st Invasion of Judea	711
6. Esarhaddon, Assarhaddon, or Sardanapalus I.	710
In this reign the Medes and Babylonians again revolt; the former elect Dejoces for their king; the latter, under Merodach Baladan, assert their independence.	
Babylon reconquered	680
2d Invasion of Judea, and captivity of Manasseh	674
7. Ninus III.	667
8. Nabuchodonosor I.	658
Defeat of Arphaxad or Phraortes the Mede	641
3d Invasion of Judea by Holofernes.....	640
9. Sarac, or Sardanapalus II.	636
Nineveh taken by Cyaxares in alliance with Nabopolassar ..	606

BABYLONIAN EMPIRE AFTER THE CAPTURE OF NINEVEH, ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE, PTOLEMY, BEROSUS, HERODOTUS, AND XENOPHON.

	Years.	B. C.
1. Nabopolassar throws off the Assyrian yoke, Nineveh being destroyed, reigned	2	606

HISTORY OF THE ASSYRIAN MONARCHY. 45

	Years.	B.C.
2. Nabecolassar, Bochtanser, or Nebuchadnezzar.....	43	604
Subdues Persia or Elam		596
3. Evil Merodach	3	561
4. Nericassolassar, Neriglissar, or Belshazzar*	5	558
5. Laborosoarshod did not reign a year.		
6. Nabonadius or Labynetus II. appointed by Cyaxares or Darius the Mede*	17	553
Babylon taken by Cyrus, and the empire terminated		536

It is unnecessary to repeat the lists of Chaldean and Arabian kings which appear in the table, as no particulars whatever are given of their reigns. The last of them, if they ever had an existence, was overthrown and probably put to death by the celebrated Ninus, the first in Ctesias's catalogue of Assyrian rulers, who at this time waxed great, and succeeded in uniting under one sovereign the crowns of Assyria and Babylon.

Of the monarchs who filled the throne of Assyria, from the foundation of the empire by Asshur till the accession of Ninus, no record has reached our times, either in profane or in sacred history; and the magnitude and duration of the empire itself can only be inferred from the fact that it contained many rich and populous cities, and became so powerful as to overthrow the might of Babylon. As, however, the whole narrative touching the following race of kings rests upon the authority of Ctesias, it may be well to examine shortly what degree of credit is due to his writings.

That he had good opportunities for observation and inquiry cannot be denied; for he enjoyed the favour of the monarch at whose court he lived, and had access, it is asserted, to the records of the empire, preserved from a remote period.

But, in the first place, we are met by the fact already stated, that Nabonassar had, previously to the time he treats of, destroyed all, or, at any rate, most of the national records; and, in the second, unfortunately for his credit, he did not confine himself to those things concerning which he might have had personal knowledge. Besides, the account he wrote of India was such as to stamp him in the minds of all his readers as a perfect romancer: hence the great Aristotle, nearly his contemporary, declares him to be a writer entitled to no belief; and others of the ancients

* Hales.

have been equally severe on him. "Who can see Ninus at the head of millions of men, at a time when the earth must have been but thinly inhabited, when mankind must have been a good deal in a state of simplicity and nature; who can read this without arraiguing the historian of falsehood and forgery? Or who can read his story of Semiramis—her mighty valour and heroic deeds at the age of twenty or thereabout; her two millions of men employed in the building of Babylon; her 300,000 skins of black oxen made up in the form of elephants, and other things of this nature—and not conclude that what contained it was no genuine history, but a most barefaced romance?"*

Then, continues the same writer, the very medley of names, Greek, Egyptian, and Persian, argue his list to be the grossest forgery. In the canon of Scripture, all the five names recorded are evidently Assyrian, being derived from the names of their gods: thus we find Pul or *Phul*, Tiglath-pileser for Tiglath-*pul-assur*, Shalmaneser for Shalman-*assur*, and Esarhaddon for *Assur-haddon*; whereas no such analogy is observable in the lists of Ctesias and his followers. Again, the length and equality of the reigns is against all experience and probability: besides which, there exist anachronisms and discrepancies from sacred history which condemn him; for, according to him, Ninus and Abraham must have existed together, as the former, by his account, conquered Persia, Media, Egypt, Assyria, and all Asia in the days of the patriarch, while no trace of any such events is to be found in Scripture. On the contrary, the succession of rulers given in the Bible is totally inconsistent with the fabled conquests by Ninus and Semiramis.

Dr. Russell, on the other hand, is inclined to repose far greater confidence in the testimony of Ctesias, partly because, he argues, it does not appear that the historian could have had any motive for fabricating a falsehood, and partly because there are strong grounds for believing that some, at least, of the sovereigns and conquerors he mentions actually had existence, and performed some of the exploits attributed to them. But for the long and elaborate chain of reasoning by which he arrives at the conclusion that the term of duration and list of kings assigned by that his-

* Ancient Universal History, vol. iv., p. 265.

torian to the Assyrian monarchy, from its foundation by Ninus to its extinction under Thonos Concolerus or Sardanapalus, are worthy of credit and adoption, we must refer to the work itself,* as it is too long for insertion here, and depends too much upon a nice comparison of dates and events to admit of abridgment. With these remarks upon the credibility of Ctesias, we shall proceed to give a short account of his history.

Ninus, the first-mentioned sovereign, is represented as a martial and ambitious prince, who, conceiving the idea of extensive conquest, trained up the youth of his kingdom to warlike usages and personal endurance. By these means, having created a formidable army, he entered into a league with the King of Arabia, by whose assistance he overran Babylonia, reduced its cities and strongholds, carrying the royal family away to captivity and death.

Armenia, his next object, would have fallen an easy prey, had not its king, Barzanus, appeased the conqueror with gifts, and consented to become his vassal. Pharnus, the sovereign of Media, was next overthrown and put to death; and, if we are to credit the historian, in seventeen years Ninus appears to have brought into subjection the greater part of Asia, except India and Bactriana; probably the vast regions of Tartary also remained untouched. Having led his victorious army back to his own country, he employed the treasures he had amassed, and the multitude of people he had collected, in building the city of Nineveh, the origin of which is in Scripture assigned to Asshur, at probably a much earlier period, unless, with some, we should conclude that Ninus and he are the same person.

An expedition against the Bactrians having failed, the great conqueror, after constructing the stupendous city described by our author, proceeded a second time against that nation; and the enterprise was not more remarkable for the success which attended the arms of the Assyrian monarch, than for its being the occasion of his union with the renowned Semiramis, whose name is so well known in the ancient history of the East, although chronologers cannot agree within 1500 years as to the period of her existence.

So extraordinary a heroine could not in those days be

* Connexion of Sacred and Profane History, vol. ii., c. 1.

permitted to have a mere human origin; and, accordingly, Ctesias ascribes her birth to the amour of a certain goddess, named Derceto by the Greek writers, with an obscure youth who was sacrificing at her altar. The infant, abandoned by its mother near Ascalon in Syria, was reared, according to tradition, by flocks of pigeons, from which circumstance these birds were held sacred in Syria; and the name of Semiramis is by some asserted to be derived from a word in that language signifying a dove.

The fact probably is, assuming the reality of her existence, that she was a woman of low origin, but remarkable for beauty of person and vigour of mind. By these qualities she captivated the heart of Menon, governor of Syria, who married her, and had by her two children. In the end he became so attached to her, that, when forced to accompany his sovereign into Bactriana, he desired her to repair to the camp in disguise. She obeyed, and made her appearance in a dress calculated to conceal her sex, and yet to set off her charms so much, that the Persian ladies afterward assumed it.

Ninus, who on this occasion is said to have led against Bactriana the incredible multitude of 1,700,000 foot, 210,000 horse, and 10,600 scythe-armed chariots, had already reduced the whole country, with its numerous and populous cities, except the capital, which was still maintained by its king Oxyartes. The acute and intelligent observations of Semiramis upon the conduct of the siege first attracted the great monarch's attention; and the valour and ability which she displayed in carrying into practice the measures she advised, not less than her beauty, made, in the sequel, so powerful an impression on his heart, that he attempted by negotiation to obtain the lady from her husband. Finding these means ineffectual, he succeeded in his object by menace; upon which Menon, in a fit of rage and despair, put an end to his life, and Semiramis became the consort of Ninus.

By this lady the Assyrian ruler had a son named Ninyas, who succeeded his mother on the throne. For himself, he did not live long to enjoy his triumphs; and his death has by some subsequent writers been attributed to the treachery of the woman whom he had, at the expense of faith and honour, raised to a throne. It is said that, having secured the good-will of the nobles, she induced the king

to invest her with the sovereignty over his dominions for five days, and that the first use she made of this power was to put himself to death. Other authors, who follow Ctesias, are silent regarding the manner of his demise, which is supposed to have taken place at Nineveh in a natural manner, after his return from the conquest of Bactria, and at the close of a reign of fifty-two years. At all events, sufficient honours were paid to his remains by the widow, for she erected in his capital a tumulus of the most gigantic proportions.

Secure on the throne, Semiramis now thought only of eclipsing the glory of her husband; and her first act was to build the city of Babylon, the same, we are told, of which the ruins still excite the astonishment of travellers, and the magnificence of which, according to the account preserved from Ctesias, is calculated to excite doubt even more than amazement. Nor were her splendid works confined to the metropolis. The banks of the Euphrates and Tigris were embellished with towns; and the commerce of her empire was improved by various judicious measures, as were its agricultural resources by the canals which she caused to be formed.

Having completed her operations in Mesopotamia, Semiramis assembled a vast army, and marching into Media, left there also magnificent monuments of her power and taste, and where, during the completion of these works, according to some authors, she abandoned herself for a long time to a course of the most profligate vice and luxury. But, arousing from this disgraceful sloth, she visited the whole of her Asiatic dominions, and passing thence through Egypt, added the greater part of Libya to her wide territories. From thence she marched to reduce Ethiopia, and, having settled affairs in that quarter, she again entered Asia, and reposed for a while at Bactra.

But tranquillity had no charms for this restless conqueror. The wealth and prosperity of distant India excited her ambition; she longed to view its wonders, to possess its riches, and therefore she resolved to invade it. Three years were consumed in preparing an armament suited to this great enterprise; and the force with which she at last left Bactra is by Ctesias set down at the incredible multitude of 3,000,000 foot, 200,000 horse, 100,000 armed chariots, 100,000 camelmen, besides artificers. To these were

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added 2000 vessels for navigating the Indus, carried to the banks of the river on camels, together with the hides of 300,000 black oxen, made into artificial elephants, formed for the purpose of familiarizing her cavalry with the sight of these animals, as well as to terrify the Indians and encourage her own troops by a show of the counterfeit quadrupeds.

The preparations made by Stabrobates, the sovereign of India, for repelling this alarming invasion, were such as became a powerful prince, jealous of his independence, and indignant at an unprovoked aggression. It is asserted that he gathered together a far greater army than Semiramis commanded, and, adding contumely to defiance, upbraided his enemy with her infamous mode of life, and threatened, should his arms be successful, to put her to a cruel death. She smiled at his threats, and advanced to the Indus. "He does not know me yet," said she; "he will soon have an opportunity of judging me by my actions and deportment." But the height of her fortune and the limit of her empire had now been reached. A temporary success rendered her bold; and, decoyed across the river, over which she constructed a bridge of boats, she came to a decisive action with the Indian king. Her artificial elephants could not withstand the shock of the true ones; and, being wounded in a combat hand to hand with Stabrobates, she was forced to recross the stream. The bridge was destroyed in order to check pursuit; but, though many of the Indians perished in the struggle, a multitude of her own troops also were destroyed, and the Assyrian queen retreated to Bactra with scarcely a third part of her army.

This was the last of her enterprises. Her own son, desiring to anticipate the prediction of an oracle, which declared "that she should, at a certain period, disappear from the eyes of men," sent a eunuch to assassinate her. She forgave him the attempt, surrendered herself into his hands, and was translated from earth, as was asserted, in the form of a dove, a flock of which birds had settled at the moment upon her palace.

Such, after a glorious and successful reign of forty-two years, and a life of sixty-two, was the end of the celebrated Semiramis; and the description of her actions alone has been held by many as clearly decisive as to the defect

of the historian's claim to credit. It is not alone the incredible numbers of her army and vast preparations that cast over the narrative an air of fable, for this may be found in other authors, both Greek and Mohammedan, in relating facts which themselves rest on indisputable evidence. We may instance the enormous armaments attributed to Darius and Xerxes in their invasions of Greece, and the incredible multitudes of human beings said to have been slaughtered by Zinghis Khan. In the sack and destruction of five cities alone, Merve, Nishapore, Herat, Rhé, and Bagdad, the number of persons put to death, according to the historians of Zinghis, exceeds eight millions! But to attribute to distant countries like India such an advanced state of power, riches, and civilization, at a period little more than a thousand years after the Flood—and not only to call into existence such prodigious armies, but imagine they could be maintained in remote quarters of the globe, when the race of men were as yet but thinly scattered over any part of its surface—argues not only a strong disposition to romance, but a deficiency of all authentic records.

Ninyas, the son of Semiramis, was ill qualified to maintain the mighty fabric of empire which his parents had reared. Little, in truth, remained for him to do; for all Asia, with the exception of India, acknowledged his supremacy, and few were the adventurers in those early times hardy enough to dispute his power. Unmoved by any necessity for exertion, he abandoned himself to voluptuous enjoyment. Concealing himself from the eyes of his subjects, as if he were something more than mortal, he spent his time in lascivious sloth among his concubines and eunuchs. Yet it would appear that he did not altogether neglect the affairs of state; for we hear that, in order to preserve tranquillity throughout his dominions, it was his practice to levy an army every year, enrolling a certain number of men from each province, who, at the end of that period, were each bound by an oath of fidelity, and dismissed to their homes. The rapid changes involved in this system were considered to afford security against any serious conspiracy on the part either of officers or soldiers.

Of the long list of his successors, little or nothing has been recorded by Ctesias, or at least by his transcribers, beyond their names, and that they pursued a line of policy

similar to that of their progenitor. And here, again, there does appear a most conclusive objection to the authenticity of this portion of the narrative. That, at any period of the world, a term of 1200 years should have been occupied in one empire by a single family, in an unbroken line of consecutive sovereigns, whose reigns all extended to so unusual a length, is a fact unparalleled in history, and opposed to the course of human affairs: and that this long period should, moreover, have been so unproductive of great events as not to afford a single prominent occurrence to give the means of fixing a date, is a circumstance so entirely at variance with all probability, as to render the whole recital totally unworthy of credit.

The last of this long race of sovereigns, Thonos Conco-lerus of Ctesias, the Sardanapalus of Diodorus, Justin, and Polyhistor, has left a name almost unequalled for effeminate luxury and depraved sensuality. It is asserted that he had become so lost to a sense of decency, that not only did he clothe himself like a woman, but painted his face, and, assuming the ornaments and air of the most worthless of the sex, sat and spun among his concubines. The boldness and resolution, however, with which he is represented to have roused himself and defended his kingdom, when attacked by the rebel Medes and Babylonians under Arbaces and Belesis, is so inconsistent with the character attributed to him, that it has been brought forward as one among other reasons for concluding that there were more than one king of the race named or entitled Sardanapalus;* and that two of them—one an effeminate, the other a brave prince—have, in the accounts of Ctesias and his followers, been confounded together. But this is one of many conjectures to which the obscurity of this period of history has given rise, when the false light of fable was beginning to fade before the gleams of truth from more authentic sources.

It is at the termination of this monarch's reign and life that Ctesias has placed the destruction of Nineveh; but this obviously must be a mistake; for, according to the most approved chronology, the downfall of Thonos Con-

* St. Martin and others suppose this to have been a title borne by the kings of Assyria (derived, no doubt, from the appellations of their gods), rather than a name peculiar to any one sovereign, as there appear to have been more than one who bore it.

colerus took place about the year B.C. 821.* Yet, twenty years afterward, following the same notation, we find the prophet Jonah sent to preach repentance to the Ninevites, in "that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also much cattle;"† and that their unnamed king, and all his people, received the divine warning with reverence, humbling themselves before the Lord in sackcloth and ashes. The most probable solution of this difficulty is, that Ctesias and his followers have somehow confounded together the taking of Nineveh by Arbaces and Belesis and the death of Sardanapalus, when the former prince established the Medo-Assyrian dynasty upon the throne of Nineveh, with the final capture and demolition of the city, and overthrow of the empire by Cyaxares the Mede, in the year B.C. 606.

The account of this first taking of Nineveh, and the death of the last sovereign of the line of Ninus, is shortly as follows. Sardanapalus, living in despicable effeminacy, became odious to his subjects, and more especially to a valiant noble named Arbaces, and Belesis, a priest and astrologer. These two conspired for the overthrow of their unworthy sovereign, the latter assuring his confederate that, by the rules of his art, he could foresee that he was to dethrone Sardanapalus, and become lord of his dominions. The former, on his part, promised that, should they succeed in their enterprise, he would bestow the government of Babylon upon him.

The conspirators raised their friends, and, gaining over many of the king's troops, attacked the royal army, but were defeated in three pitched battles. Belesis, however, relying on his astrological revelations, persevered; and, re-enforced by the revolted troops of Bactria, surprised the army of Sardanapalus at a splendid festival, and routed them with immense slaughter. The king fled to Nineveh, where, having laid up immense magazines, and trusting to the response of an oracle, which declared that the great city would never be taken until the river had become her enemy, he abandoned himself in fatal security to the indulgence of sloth, while the enemy blockaded his walls.

He was at length roused from his delusion; for, after

* Dr. Russell's *Connexion*, vol. ii., c. 1.

† *Jonah*, iv., 11.

two years, the river, swollen to an extraordinary size by an unusual fall of rain, overflowed its banks, and swept away no less than twenty stadia, or about two miles and a half, of the fortifications. Sardanapalus saw that, the oracle being fulfilled, his hour was come; and he prepared to meet it in a characteristic manner. Retiring to his palace, he caused a vast pile of wood to be raised in one of the courts, having a chamber constructed within. On it he heaped all his gold and silver plate and rich apparel, and, entering with his eunuchs and concubines, set fire to the pile, whereby he destroyed himself and them together.

Thus far have we followed Ctesias, whom we now relinquish for other guides. Of the credit due to the earlier parts of his work, we have already expressed a distinct opinion. That there may be some foundation for a portion of his list of kings, it would be idle to dispute or deny, and that the later periods of his narrative afford more frequent and decided glimpses of truth, may also be safely admitted. But, cut off as we are from all reference to the original, and restricted to the works of copyists, who may not always have abstained from alterations, it seems impossible to admit the statements within the pale of authentic history.

We shall now shortly examine the history of the Assyrian or Medo-Assyrian dynasty, according to the canon of Scripture and of Ptolemy, which have a remarkable coincidence, arranged principally from the Universal History, and the authorities followed by its compilers.

With its exception of the slight mention of Asshur as the founder of Nineveh in the book of Genesis, the first ruler of that city noticed in the Old Testament is the personage to whom Jonah was sent, unless we should admit "*Chushan-rishathaim*, king of Mesopotamia,"* who held the children of Israel in bondage eight years, to be an Assyrian sovereign. And of that nameless monarch visited by the prophet, nothing more is known than what we read in the Bible; but it has been conjectured that he was the same as Arbaces the Mede.

The next mention in the inspired writings of an Assyrian king is that of Pul, who was contemporary with Menahem, king of Israel, B.C. 771, perhaps the Mandau-

* Judges, iii., 8.

† 2 Kings, xv., 19.

ces of Ctesias, and successor to Arbaces. The only fact recorded of this prince is that he invaded Syria, and received from the court of Samaria 1000 talents of silver as the price for forbearance and future protection.

Pul appears to have been succeeded by Tiglath-pileser, B.C. 747, probably his son, and perhaps the Sosarmus or Artycas of Ctesias, who, in the year B.C. 740, overran the dominions of Israel, and carried away many of the inhabitants captive.* He pursued the same system towards his other conquests in that quarter; for we find in the same sacred text,† that, instigated by the King of Judah, he marched against Damascus, slew Rezin its king, and, transporting his people to Kir in Media, put an end to his sovereignty.

Shalmaneser, the Enemessar of Tobit, succeeded Tiglath-pileser, B.C. 726. Provoked by the rebellion of Hoshea, king of Israel, who had been reduced to the condition of his tributary, and who had solicited the assistance of So, king of Egypt, to enable him to throw off the Assyrian yoke, he overran the country with a powerful army, laid siege to Samaria, which, at the end of three years, he took, and, carrying all the people into captivity, brought to a termination the independent existence of the ten tribes. He then proceeded against the cities of Sidon, Acre, Palætyrus, and others, which, revolting from the Tyrians, opened their gates; but he failed, after a struggle of five years, to gain possession of Tyre itself.

Sennacherib, possibly the Arbianes of Ctesias, makes his first appearance in Sacred Writ in the fourteenth year of the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah, B.C. 714, marching against the dominions of that prince, who had withheld the stipulated tribute. On this occasion, the Assyrian monarch not only compelled him to acknowledge his supremacy, and promise an annual payment of thirty talents of gold and 300 of silver, but, unsatisfied with these concessions, and with the treasure which the other was forced to strip from the house of God, he sent his generals, Tartan, Rabsaris, and Rab-shakeh, with a mighty host, to reduce Jerusalem itself. These men declared their master's will, taunted Hezekiah with his weakness, and warned him not to put his trust either in the power of Egypt or in

* 2 Kings, xv., 29. 2 Chron., xxviii. † 2 Kings, xvi., 9.

the arm of Jehovah; for that the one was a broken reed, that would pierce the hand of him who should lean thereon; and as for the other, "Know ye not," said they, in the name of their master, "what I and my fathers have done unto all the people of other lands? Were the gods of the nations of those lands any ways able to deliver their lands out of mine hand, . . . that your God should be able to deliver *you* out of *mine* hand?"* Therefore did he summon the people to submit, that they might be taken to a land abounding with corn and oil, where they might live and not die.

It was on this memorable occasion that Hezekiah called upon the name of the Lord. And the arm of the Almighty was stretched forth; and, of the multitude of armed Assyrians that followed their king to battle, 185,000 men were in one night smitten dead. The rest, terror-struck, fled with their baffled monarch, and returned with speed to Nineveh, where, soured by disappointments, he became so cruel and tyrannical as to exhaust the endurance even of his own family, and was at length put to death by his two sons, Adrammelech and Sharezer, while performing his devotions in the temple of Nisroch his god.†

The decline of the Assyrian power may be dated from the reign of this prince. His father's losses before Tyre, and his own in Judea, with his subsequent misrule and death, were probably the exciting causes of a second revolt of the Medes, who were desirous to throw off the yoke. And though Esarhaddon (according to Ptolemy, Asaradin; to Tobit, Sarchedon;‡ to Isaiah, Sargon§), third son of the murdered monarch, in B.C. 710, and his successor, exerted himself to maintain the integrity of the empire, he was unable to reduce the rebels to subjection, who soon after were formed into a separate monarchy under their first king, Dejoces, B.C. 704.

These events have led some to regard Esarhaddon as the warlike Sardanapalus who resisted the efforts of his rebellious subjects with so much fortitude.¶ That he was an equitable¶ as well as a courageous prince, seems probable,

* 2 Chron., xxxii., 13-15.

† Tobit, i., 21. 2 Kings, xix., 37. 2 Chron., xxxii., 21.

‡ Tobit, i., 21.

§ Isaiah, xx., 1.

¶ Ancient Universal History, vol. iv., p. 327, 329.

¶ Ezra, iv., 10, calls him the great and noble Asnapper.

and his reverses in the north were counterbalanced by successes in the southwest; for he reduced Babylon—whose king, Evil Merodach, had revolted from the Assyrian sway—and then advanced into Syria, to recover the ground lost by his father. He took from the kingdom of Israel the few remaining subjects left by his ancestors, thus expunging it from the list of nations; and reducing that of Judah to utter dependance, carried its king Manasseh in chains to Babylon.* From thence he pursued his victorious career into Egypt and Ethiopia, making a multitude of captives,† and returned, having, in a great degree, revived the splendour of the Assyrian monarchy.

Chronologists; have introduced a king between Esarhad-don and Saosducheus, under the name of Ninus III., who does not appear in Scripture, and whose reign is said to have commenced in the very year when the Saosducheus of Ptolemy's canon took possession of the throne of Nineveh and Babylon, viz., B.C. 667.

At all events, he was succeeded by Saosducheus, of whom little is related, except that he reigned twenty years, and was followed by his son Chyniladan, B.C. 647.

This prince is supposed by the authors of the *Universal History*§ to be the Nabuchodonosor of the book of Judith, an active and warlike sovereign, who, alarmed at the encroachments of the Medes, raised a great army, and on the plain of Ragau (Rhages) utterly defeated Arphaxad (or Phraortes), the Median monarch, putting him to death in the neighbouring mountains, whither he had fled after the battle. Returning to Nineveh, which even then, according to the book of Judith, and also to Herodotus, was in its power and glory, he feasted his army a hundred and twenty days;|| after which he sent Holofernes to punish those vassals who had resisted his authority, and refused the aid he required in his late campaigns. His general's expedition was fortunate for a season. Such as did not fall or flee before him submitted to the will of his master, until he proceeded against the Jews, and invested Bethulia, a hill-fortress, encamping in a valley near the place, "spreading themselves in breadth over Dothaim even to Belmaim, and

* 2 Chron., xxxiii., 11.

† Isaiah, xx., 4.

‡ Blair, Hales, and others. Dr. Russell follows them.

§ We refer to the fourth volume of this valuable work, p. 328, for the grounds on which this opinion is supported.

|| Judith, i., 16.

in length from Bethulia unto Cyamon, which is over against Esdraelon."* There he fell, as is well known, a victim to his own inordinate passions, by the hand of the Jewish heroine Judith, who had devoted herself to destroy him in order to save her country;† and the Assyrians, panic-struck at the loss of their leader, fled to their own country, pursued with great slaughter by the enemies they had despised.

It seems not improbable that, in the successful warfare of Nabuchodonosor with the Medes, the great feast held after it, and the dispersion and slaughter of the Assyrians themselves subsequently to the death of Holofernes, we may discover the events which have been confounded by Ctesias, and form his conclusion to the reign of Thonos Concolerus.

Of Chyniladan we hear no more, but that he was succeeded by a king called by Polyhistor, Sarac—probably the Sardanapalus of Justin and other modern authors—in 636 B.C.; but, less able or less fortunate than his predecessor, he lost all that had been wrested from the Medes, and his power was reduced so low that Nabopolassar, the governor of Babylon, to whom he had committed the command of his forces in that country, thought it a fit occasion to throw off the Assyrian yoke. Entering into an alliance with Cyaxares the Mede, he assisted that prince in his attack upon Sarac, and the city of Nineveh was invested by the combined troops. This unfortunate ruler, whose mind had been enfeebled by misfortune, dreading to fall into the hands of his enemies, put an end to his life by burning the palace in which his wealth and family were bestowed in the manner related by Ctesias in reference to Concolerus. But some confusion of dates appears here, by which it seems doubtful whether this event was not suspended at least twenty-eight years; for at this period the Scythians overran Central Asia, against whom the combined Median and Babylonian force found full employment for their arms. In the mean time, Nabopolassar died, leaving the kingdom to his son, the celebrated Nebuchadnezzar (or Nabuchodonosor), who completed the destruction of the Assyrian pow-

* Judith, vii., 3.

† The authors of the Universal History advert to the probability of the story of Judith being fictitious. The point need not be discussed here; we refer our readers, if curious on the subject, to that book, vol. iv., p. 173, and to Prideaux.

er about 606 B.C. The great city of Nineveh, levelled to the ground by Cyaxares, no longer lifted her head among nations. In process of time, indeed, other towns rose from amid its ruins, and flourished, and decayed, and were forgotten; but even at the present day the site of that great and mighty capital may be traced upon the banks of the Tigris.

The empire itself, however, was now no more; the word of God had gone forth against it, and its power was withered, its glory passed away. "Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs. The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high with her rivers running round about his plants, and sent out her little rivers unto all the trees of the field. Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long, because of the multitude of waters when he shot forth. All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations. Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches: for his root was by great waters. The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him: the fir-trees were not like his boughs, and the chestnut-trees were not like his branches; nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty. I have made him fair by the multitude of his branches; so that all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God, envied him. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Because thou hast lifted up thyself in height, and he hath shot up his top among the thick boughs, and his heart is lifted up in his height, I have delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen; he shall surely deal with him: I have driven him out for his wickedness. And strangers, the terrible of the nations, have cut him off, and have left him; upon the mountains and in all the valleys his branches are fallen, and his boughs are broken by all the rivers of the land; and all the people of the earth are gone down from his shadow, and have left him. Upon his ruin shall all the fowls of the heaven remain, and all the beasts of the field shall be upon his branches: to the end that none of all the trees by the waters exalt themselves for their

height, neither shoot up their top among the thick boughs, neither their trees stand up in their height, all that drink water: for they are all delivered unto death, to the nether parts of the earth, in the midst of the children of men, with them that go down to the pit,"* &c.

CHAPTER III.

Rise and Fall of the Babylonian Empire.

The only authentic Record contained in Holy Writ.—Ptolemy's Canon affords the only true Chronology.—Nabonassar.—Merodach Baladan.—Esarhaddon, the warlike King of Assyria.—Nabopolassar.—His Power.—Nabocolassar or Nebuchadnezzar.—Aids in the Destruction of Nineveh.—Overruns Syria, and carries the Jews into Captivity.—Humbles Pharaoh.—His Dreams.—Divine Predictions.—His Humiliation.—Repentance.—And Death.—Evil Merodach.—The Belshazzar of Daniel.—Murdered by Neriglissar, who probably is identical with Darius the Mede.—He seizes the Throne—And is slain in Battle.—Labrosarchod.—Nabonadius.—Nitocris.—Her Acts and Improvements.—Babylon attacked by Cyrus.—Taken by turning the Euphrates.—Fulfillment of the Prophecies.—Gradual Decay of Babylon.—Its Destruction by Darius—By Xerxes.—Seleucia.—Accounts of its Desolation by various Authors.

It is now requisite to turn back nearly a century and a half, that we may discover the establishment of the contemporary kingdom of Babylon, the history of which is so intimately connected with that of Assyria that it is impossible to disunite them.

It has been already observed, that the only authentic notice of what is generally supposed to have been the origin of the ancient Babylonian power—the first monarchy of the postdiluvian world—is contained in three verses of the 10th chapter of Genesis; that the lists of Chaldean and Arabian kings given by Syncellus, Polyhistor, and Moses of Chorene, are entitled to no credit, because they rest not on any authentic ground; and that there is no mention of any ruler of Babylon before Merodach Baladan, who, B.C. 710, wrote to Hezekiah.† Prior to this time, however,

* Ezekiel, xxxi., 3-14.

† There is, it is true, mention made in Gen., iv., 1, 2, of Amraphel, king of Shinar, who warred with the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah in the days of Abraham.

commences the canon of Ptolemy, the most valuable of uninspired records; and had the chronology of the previous period been certain, and the date of the first revolt of the Medes and Babylonians from the Assyrians under Arbaces and Belesis been accurately fixed, we might have expected to find the commencement of the Babylonian kingdom placed in the year B.C. 821, contemporary with that of the Medo-Assyrian, and Belesis named as the first sovereign. But historians have wisely preferred the accounts of Ptolemy, confirmed by occasional notices in Sacred Writ, to the less certain authority of other profane writers; and he appears to have discovered no king prior to Nabonassar.* It has been established by astronomical calculations that this monarch's reign began on Wednesday, the 26th of February, B.C. 747, in the twenty-third year after the appearance of Pul on the west of the Euphrates. This shows the kingdom to have been of Assyrian origin, and accords with what is stated by the prophet Isaiah:† "Behold the land of the Chaldeans: this people was not, till the Assyrian founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness: they set up the towers thereof, they raised up the palaces thereof."

It is uncertain who this prince was; but, as he was contemporary with Tiglath-pileser, some have supposed that he may have been his brother, a son of Pul, king of Assyria. This, it is acknowledged, is entirely conjectural; and that he was tributary or subservient to Tiglath-pileser appears more certain. Indeed, the authors of the *Universal History* are inclined to think that the Semiramis of the Greeks, if she ever did exist as queen of Babylon, must have been the wife of this prince, and that, as her husband commenced the city, she must have exerted herself after his death in beautifying it, from whence she obtained the reputation of being its founder. For the arguments by which this hypothesis is supported, we must refer to the work itself.

Of the three monarchs who, according to the canon, next succeed, nothing is recorded; and Mardoch Empades, the Merodach Baladan of Scripture,‡ fifth on the list, is only

* It has been already observed, that Nabonassar, desirous of being thought the first monarch of the dynasty, destroyed all the records of Babylon that had been preserved in the temple or archives.

† Chap. xxiii., 13.

‡ 2 Kings, xx., 12. Isaiah, xxxix., 1. He is called the son of Baladan.

remarkable as having held communication with the kings of Judah. He sent a special messenger to Hezekiah to congratulate him on his recovery from illness. The next who claims notice is Asaradin, the Esarhaddon of Scripture, who, we have seen, acquired fame as the warlike Sardanapalus of Assyria, and who possibly, on the race of Nabonassar becoming extinct or rebellious, B.C. 680, took possession of the sovereignty. It was he who utterly swept away the people of Israel, and carried Manasseh, king of Judah, with him in chains to Babylon. Of his successors, Saosducheus and Chyniladan, we have already spoken, as masters at once of Assyria and Babylon.

The most brilliant period of the Babylonian history now approached. Nabopolassar, having broken the power, if not destroyed the city of Nineveh, removed the seat of empire to his capital. During the time when the forces of these allies were employed in repelling the Scythian invasion, Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, attempted to recover his former possessions in Syria; and, in his way to besiege the city of Carchemish, overthrew the King of Judah, who lost his life in the encounter.* Nabopolassar was succeeded by his son Nobocolassar (or Nebuchadnezzar), who, after driving out the Syrians, co-operated with Cyaxares in destroying Nineveh. Having resolved to punish other invaders, he marched at the head of a powerful army against the Egyptians, who had formed an alliance with the revolted tribes on the western bank of the Euphrates. In this enterprise he was not only successful, but on his return entered Judea, took Jerusalem, rifled the temple, and made the king a prisoner. The humble submission of the fallen Jehoiakim, and the promise of a yearly tribute, saved him from the fate of the other captives, who were sent in chains to Babylon. Pursuing his victorious career, he humbled Pharaoh; and, after making himself master of the whole country between the Nile and the Euphrates, he returned to Babylon, loaded with spoil and encumbered with captives, when he began to enlarge and embellish the seat of his growing empire.

In this he eminently succeeded, though he himself lived to experience the lowest degree of human degradation as well as of grandeur. His history is familiar to every

* 2 Chron., xxiv., 20-24.

reader of Scripture. The revelation which he had in the second year of his reign* was the commencement of a series of Divine intimations which accompanied his career, and were not more remarkable in themselves than for the manner of their fulfilment. The dream in question troubled Nebuchadnezzar the more, because in the morning "the thing had gone from him;" and although, with the unreasonable caprice of a despotic prince, he threatened the Chaldeans, the magicians, and the wise men with death, unless they should interpret his vision, he could give them no aid whatever in describing its tenour or its nature.

The tyrannical mandate had already gone forth, and the soothsayers of Babylon trembled under the upraised sword of their executioners, when they were saved by the faith and courage of Daniel, a young Hebrew, who, with three companions, had, by the command of the king, been educated in the Magian sciences, and whose life was thus involved in the general sentence of destruction. Remonstrating with the captain of the guard, who was intrusted with the execution of the royal decree, he boldly pledged himself to declare the interpretation to his majesty, and, together with his associates, prayed "to the God of heaven concerning this secret, and it was revealed unto Daniel in a night vision." And he returned thanks to the Lord, and blessed his name, and made known to the monarch both his dream and its interpretation.

Nebuchadnezzar proceeded in his appointed course, each step of which was the subject of a prophetic annunciation. The unfortunate people of Judah, already heavily visited, fell under his displeasure; for Jehoiakim, having, in spite of the warnings of the faithful Jeremiah,† thrown off his allegiance, lost his life miserably, while his son Jehoiachin, who went out with his mother from the city to humble themselves to the conqueror, were made captives. The metropolis was plundered, the temple spoiled, and the inhabitants carried away in such numbers that scarcely were there enough left to cultivate the ground; while the victor, on his return, placed Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, on the tributary throne.

In like manner were the successes of this tyrant against

* Daniel, ii.

† Chap. xxii., xxvi.

the Elamites or Persians, the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Tyrians and others, made the subject of prophetic announcement, and Jeremiah* sent tokens of the impending wrath to the ambassadors of all the devoted powers. Encouraged by Pharaoh Hophra, the people of western Syria renounced their allegiance; but the King of Babylon, an instrument, no doubt, of vengeance in the hand of the Almighty, overthrew first the monarch in whom they had confided, and then, turning his arms against Jerusalem, he destroyed its walls, burned it with fire, and, putting out the eyes of the ill-advised Zedekiah, carried him in chains to the Eastern capital.

The prediction† against Tyre and Egypt still remained to be accomplished. A thirteen years' siege of the first at length gave to the conqueror possession of an empty city, for the inhabitants had retired to a neighbouring island with their effects, though his army, meanwhile, was successfully employed in reducing to obedience the Sidonians, the Ammonites, and the Edomites.

But the plunder of Egypt compensated for his disappointment at Tyre; and, having laid waste that land, "from the tower of Syene even unto the border of Ethiopia,"‡ he returned to his capital.

With the gold amassed in these various expeditions, and especially with the spoils of the Temple of Jerusalem, it is supposed he erected the colossal statue in honour of his god Bel, which he placed in the plain of Dura, and commanded his subjects, of whatever nation or faith, to fall down and worship it. The beautiful story of the three Hebrew youths, who, refusing to comply with this tyrannical and unholy mandate, were in consequence cast into the fiery furnace, is well known to every reader of the sacred annals.

But the hour of retribution and reverse drew nigh; for scarcely had he returned from this splendid career of victory, when his mind was again disturbed by a singular and ominous dream, which seemed to prefigure events so awful as to shake for a moment even the intrepid soul of the prophet who was called upon to interpret it. "Daniel was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him."§

* Chap. xxvii.

‡ Ibid., xxix., 10.

† Ezekiel, xxvi., xxvii., xxviii.

‡ Daniel, iv., 19.

But, recovering his equanimity, he lifted up his voice, and boldly declared the will of the Most High, the terrible sentence which drove the haughty monarch to herd with the beasts of the field. Nor was the fulfilment of this dreadful denunciation long deferred, although it appears that the humbling effect of its announcement had been but transitory. Only one year afterward, we find the devoted ruler walking in the front of his palace, contemplating the mighty works of which he had been the author, with a heart, not filled with gratitude and veneration towards the Giver of all good, for the unmerited prosperity which he had bestowed upon him, but swelling with pride and arrogance; saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" But, "while the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O King Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee: and they shall drive thee from among men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar; and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like bird's claws. And at the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? At the same time my reason returned unto me; and, for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me: and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom; and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, and extol, and honour the King of heav-

en, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."*

Never was there so overwhelming a check given to human pride; never a more impressive warning held forth to the impious and the vain; nor can language express a more affecting acknowledgment of error, or a deeper and more grateful piety, than breathes in the concluding words of the royal penitent's narrative. We envy not the feelings of the man who should attempt to weaken the force of such a lesson by seeking to explain, upon natural causes, events which arose out of a direct interposition of divine power.

During the period of the monarch's humiliation, the reins of government were held by his son, Evil Merodach, whose bad administration was severely punished by his father upon his return to reason. But the aged sovereign survived this act of justice only one year; and the manner of his death, on which sacred history has been silent, has by profane writers been described as attended with preternatural circumstances. A spirit of prophecy is said to have come upon him as his hour approached; and, ascending to the top of his palace, he foretold the destruction of his kingdom by the Medes and Persians, praying at the same time that he might not live to witness the event. While yet speaking, it is added that he, like Semiramis, was snatched away from the view of men, and was no more seen upon earth.

Evil Merodach, called Ilvarodam in Ptolemy's canon, and usually considered the Belshazzar of Daniel, who speaks of him as the son of Nebuchadnezzar,† now released from the dungeon into which the just displeasure of his father had cast him, commenced his reign by an act of mercy. He took from the prison, where he had languished thirty-seven years, Jehoiachin, king of Judah, and treated him ever afterward as a sovereign.‡ But, while acting as regent during the visitation inflicted on his parent, he had the imprudence to provoke the anger of Astyages, king of Media, by plundering a part of his country during a great hunting-match which he held on the occasion of his marriage with Nitocris, a Median lady; and an armed body being sent out to punish the aggressors, the Prince

* Daniel, iv., 30-37.

† Ibid., v., 2.

‡ Jeremiah, liii., 31.

of Babylon was routed, and pursued with great slaughter to his capital. In this battle the great Cyrus, though only sixteen years of age, first distinguished himself.* This act of folly appears to have been the origin of those forebodings of evil uttered by the father, and which appear to have thoroughly subdued the spirit of the son, who, retiring into his palace, abandoned himself to sloth two whole years, after which he was murdered by Neriglissar, the husband of his sister, supposed to be a Mede, who headed a conspiracy of the nobles.

In this account of the end of Evil Merodach, supposing him to be identical with the Belshazzar of Daniel, of which there seems little room to doubt, there is a remarkable coincidence between the narrative given by the prophet and that of profane authors. Berosus, an annalist, it is true, deserving of no great credit in his accounts of very remote periods, but who is entitled to more belief as the events he describes approach nearer to his own time, relates that he was killed at a banquet by some of his lords. Daniel writes that, on the occasion when the miraculous writing on the wall appeared, Belshazzar made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and commanded the golden and silver vessels, *which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple of Jerusalem, to be brought, that the king and his princes, his wives and concubines, might drink therefrom.* "In that night," says the prophet, emphatically, "*was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, slain.*" And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.†

This statement, it is obvious, can refer to nothing more than the death of Belshazzar himself, which, according to Ptolemy's canon, occurred in the year B.C. 553, seventeen years before the final destruction of Babylon, and not to the latter event, of which there is no distinct record in Holy Scripture. The Darius here mentioned, and who must not be confounded with Cyrus, is supposed, with sufficient probability, to be Neriglissar the Mede, and chief conspirator, who seized the kingdom. That this conqueror continued to reign in Babylon after his accession to the throne, appears from the sixth chapter of Daniel, where he is represented as setting over his kingdom 120 princes, of whom

* Cyropædia of Xenophon.

† Daniel, v., 30, 31.

the prophet himself was made the first; while Cyrus is spoken of in the 10th chapter distinctly as *King of Persia*. That the sovereignty of Babylon existed independently of that of the Medes and Persians for a space after the death of Belshazzar, is therefore as clearly proved from Scripture as from the canon of Ptolemy and other profane writers. Indeed, the concurrence of known dates renders this obvious and apparent; but, for farther information upon this perplexing subject, we must again refer to the authors of the *Universal History*.*

Neriglissar, or Darius, is represented to have been a wise and prudent prince; but the power of the Medes and Persians was so greatly on the increase, that he was forced to solicit aid from his allies to enable him to resist them. The accounts of this period are chiefly gathered from the works of Berosus and the *Cyropædia* of Xenophon, which last describes both the war and its issue. After an attempt at mediation on the part of the sovereign of India, who sent ambassadors for the purpose of proffering his good offices, the armies met, and a general engagement ensued, in which Neriglissar was slain, and his army utterly dispersed.

But the day on which Babylon was doomed to fall had not yet arrived. What use the conquerors made of their victory does not appear; but we find that the throne was next occupied by a youth, son of the late monarch, who by Berosus is called Laborosoarchod, and Labassoarasc by Abydenus.† In this respect they both differ from Ptolemy's canon, where no such name intervenes between Neriglissar and the last king, Nabonadius. Perhaps it was in consequence of his very brief reign of only nine months that he has been omitted. He evinced a most vicious and cruel disposition, which is probably the cause which led to his assassination by Nabonadius.

The prince just named, the Labynetus of Herodotus, is understood to have been the son of Evil Merodach and of the celebrated Nitocris, who naturally enough was moved with indignation at seeing his country falling into ruin, and his people oppressed by the worthless heir of a usurper, who had excluded him from the throne. Yet, to preserve, even for a season, his hereditary power, recovered by such

* *Ancient Universal History*, vol. iv., p. 422-426.

† *Ibid*, vol. iv., p. 418.

violent means, was a painful struggle. The resources of the kingdom, though still sufficient to check the progress of certain invaders, had been greatly impaired by misrule, and were still in a declining state, while probably Nabonadius was not qualified, either by talents or disposition, to restore their efficiency. It appears, indeed, that his reign of seventeen years derived its chief lustre from the acts of his mother Nitocris, who exerted herself not only to embellish the city and improve the surrounding country, but to fortify it so as to resist the storm which she foresaw would come from the east. Many of her hydraulic operations were calculated to extend cultivation and increase the resources of the state; but she also added to the works of the capital, constructing walls along the river-banks, to prevent an enemy from gaining access in that way. Herodotus also ascribes to her the building of the bridge, which till her time had been wanting at Babylon. Of her death there is no particular mention, but it probably was the forerunner of the defeat of her son and the fall of the monarchy.

Cyrus, having at length not only established himself firmly on the throne of Persia, but reduced a great part of Asia to obedience, once more directed his arms against Babylon. Nabonadius attempted to oppose the great warrior in the field, but was beaten back into the city, and immediately placed under a close blockade. The immense strength and perfect state of the fortifications, not less than the condition of the magazines, which contained supplies sufficient for twenty years' consumption, inspiring the citizens with confidence, they gave themselves up to unbounded luxury and enjoyment. This unwise security suggested to Cyrus the means of their overthrow. Herodotus and Xenophon both relate that, after he had passed full two years before Babylon, and had even begun to despair of success, the incautious blindness of the inhabitants induced him to attempt a bold stratagem. On the night of an annual festival, which they were wont to spend in drinking and jollity, he cut the bank of a canal which communicated with a great lake that had been formed to receive the superabundant waters of the Euphrates at the period of its flood. The river poured its contents into that reservoir, which was of capacity sufficient to receive them for a time; and, placing strong bodies of troops at the

points where the stream entered and quitted the city, which was divided by it into two parts, he commanded them, so soon as it should become shallow enough to admit of being forded, to enter by its channel. In the disorder of the night, the gates leading from each street to the bank had been left unclosed and unguarded. The Persians advanced unopposed; and the several parties, meeting at the palace, seized and put to death the king, on which the surviving inhabitants submitted to the conqueror.

Such was the termination of the Babylonian empire; and thus was commenced the fulfilment of that series of prophetic denunciations pronounced by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel. It is interesting to trace how closely the circumstances that are related of this event by profane historians correspond with and illustrate the narrative of Sacred Writ. Great obscurity, no doubt, still hangs over this interesting period; and chronologists are as much perplexed by the conflicting dates deduced from various computations, as the historians have been puzzled by the numerous discrepancies that appear, both in regard to names and persons, in the records of different authors. But on this one important point there is no material dispute, namely, that the kingdom of Babylon, including the empire of Assyria, was finally subverted by Cyrus the Great, about the year 536 before the Christian era. It is equally manifest that these powerful sovereignties never afterward recovered a separate or independent existence, but passed as subordinate provinces to each succeeding conqueror that arose in the East. Alexander, indeed, entertained views of restoring the city to its ancient glory, and making it the metropolis of his immense dominions; but death prevented the accomplishment of his intentions. His successor, Seleucus, established a capital on the banks of the Tigris, but it endured only for a season, and is now, like the other, deserted and desolate. The followers of Mohammed also founded an empire, of which Mesopotamia and Assyria formed a portion; but, for their chief town, they avoided the proscribed site of Babylon, and built Bagdad on the Tigris. Yet even their more recent power has passed away like that of their predecessors: the structures they erected have ceased to exist, and the modern inhabitants can scarcely point out where the palace of the caliphs once stood. "Babylon, the glory

of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency," is indeed "as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: . . . wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces. . . . How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!"*

It may, however, be interesting to trace with somewhat more distinctness the gradual decay of this magnificent city, after its first capture by Cyrus the Great. Leniently dealt with by that conqueror, who appears to have made it the seat of his government seven months in the year, the inhabitants recovered in a great measure from the effects of the calamity which had stricken their nation, and lived happily under the protection of their new master. But his son Cambyses, a dissolute and cruel prince, having loaded them with heavy taxes, and removed the royal residence entirely to Susa, they took advantage of the troubles consequent on his death, and attempted to throw off the Persian yoke. This called down upon them the vengeance of Darius, his successor, who marched with a powerful army to reduce them to obedience.

Besieged within their walls, the Babylonians had recourse to a very cruel expedient, in order to economize the consumption of their stores. Each man selected from his women the wife he was most attached to, and a single maid-servant; and all the rest of his family, old men and children, fathers, mothers, sisters, and infants, were without distinction strangled. Thus relieved from the fear of want, they not only held the city, but completely baffled every stratagem put in practice by Darius to throw them off their guard. The disgrace of ultimate failure on his part was prevented by the extraordinary self-devotion of one of his chief officers. This man, named Zopyrus, having mutilated himself by cutting off his nose and ears, and mangling his body by stripes, fled to the Babylonians, feigning that he had been thus used by his master for advising him to raise the siege, and had come to them burning for revenge.

* Isaiah, xiii., 19-22; xiv., 12.

Falling into the snare, they at once received and employed him. Some considerable successes over the Persian troops, which Darius connived at to cover the deceit, induced the inhabitants to intrust Zopyrus with a still more important charge, till at length the guard of the city ports was confided to his care. On the next assault, the Cissian and Belidian gates were opened by him to the Persians, who thus, through the wiles of a pretended deserter, became a second time masters of Babylon. Resolved to provide against the chance of future rebellion, Darius crucified three thousand of the principal citizens, and beat down the walls, it is said, from the height of 200 cubits to fifty, which, if we admit the correctness of the former dimensions, may account for the difference on this head between the measurement given by Herodotus and that of Strabo. But he provided for the repopulation of Babylon by sending them 50,000 women to replace those they had murdered; and, to cherish a spirit of loyalty, gave them Zopyrus for their governor.

His son Xerxes was still more cruel and less scrupulous; for we learn from Arrian that, after his return from Greece, he destroyed the temple of Belus and other places consecrated to the national worship, and carried off the great golden image of which Herodotus was told by the Chaldeans.

But it is not easy to reconcile the destruction of the walls by Darius, and of the temple by Xerxes, with the description which the former historian gives as an eyewitness of its condition in his own day, for he speaks of it as it existed at that time, and not merely as it had formerly been. As we hear of no farther violence being inflicted on the city till the time of Alexander, it must appear not a little singular, that then, which was but one century afterward, the temple of Belus should again have become so much dilapidated that the work of ten thousand men should be required for two months merely to remove the fallen ruins. By that time, however, the city also had suffered greatly from its misfortunes; and though we learn, as has just been stated, that the intention of the conqueror was to restore the fame of the national god, and make Babylon his chief residence, his death put a stop to all the measures which he contemplated for carrying his purpose into effect. His successor, Seleucus Nicator, by building

Seleucia on the Tigris, and transferring thither the seat of government, dealt to the waning glories of Babylon a still more deadly blow, the moral effects of which were, no doubt, accelerated by the removal of materials to the modern capital, which is said to have vied in splendour with the more ancient one. Pausanias, indeed, informs us that Seleucus compelled the inhabitants to settle in the new city, and that the walls of Babylon and the temple of Belus had then almost ceased to exist, though there were still a few Chaldeans who continued to dwell around the consecrated edifice. Pliny remarks that the old metropolis, swallowed up by the other, had become quite a wilderness.

From this time we hear little of the condition or fortunes of the great city. A Parthian general is said, about the year B.C. 127, to have destroyed what remained of the public buildings, overturned the temples, and carried off many families to Media, where they were sold as slaves. In the reign of Augustus, as Diodorus informs us, there was but a very small portion of it inhabited. Strabo, who wrote in the reign of the Emperor Tiberius, but who probably never himself visited Mesopotamia, observes that "at the present time Seleucia is actually a much more considerable city than Babylon, which is to a great degree deserted, and to which may be applied, without any hesitation, the words of the comic poet, 'The great city is a great desert.'"

A persecution of the Jews, who had taken refuge in Babylon, in the reign of Caligula, rendered her desolation yet more complete, insomuch that little mention is made in the expeditions of Trajan and Severus of the metropolis once so great; and Lucian of Samosata, who flourished in the time of Marcus Aurelius, speaks of it as formerly remarkable for its vast circumference and numerous dependancies, but which would soon disappear as Nineveh had done.

Saint Jerome, who resided in the East more than thirty years, about the beginning of the fourth century, speaks of Babylon as a preserve of game for the Persian kings; and Theodoret, bishop of Cyprus, who died about A.D. 458, says that the city was no longer inhabited either by Assyrians or Chaldeans, but only by some scattered Jews. He adds, that the Euphrates had changed its course, and no longer passed through the town except by means of a small canal.

From this time the city is no more mentioned but as a

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collection of shapeless ruins in a howling wilderness, the haunt of venomous creatures and beasts of prey; and so complete is the annihilation of all which might tell of the past, that tradition and science are equally unable to discover, among the heaps of dust and potsherds which attract the traveller's eye, even the site of the celebrated temple of Belus, or the gigantic walls of Babylon.

CHAPTER IV.

Origin, Government, Religion, Laws and Customs, &c., of the Ancient Assyrians and Babylonians.

Sources of Information.—Origin of the Assyrians.—Government.—Religion.—Gods of the Assyrians.—Customs and Laws same as those of the Babylonians.—Government of the Babylonians.—Names of their Monarchs, and Derivation.—Their Habits.—Officers and Functionaries.—Establishment and Titles.—Laws.—Little known regarding them.—Sale of Virgins.—Punishments.—Religion.—Chaldeans.—Opinions regarding their Origin.—Regarded as a nomad Race by Heeren and Gesenius.—Faber's Theory of the Progress of their Religion—And of the Dispersion of Mankind after the Flood.—Of the Cushim or Cushim.—Remarks on Faber's Theory.—Mr. Beke's Theory.—Supported by Coincidence of ancient and modern Names.—Bochart.—Difficulties of the Subject.—The Chaldeans the dominant People in ancient Babylon.—Origin and Progress of their Religion.—Chaldean Cosmogony and Doctrines according to Berosus.—Its Similarity with the Scriptural Account of the Noachian Deluge.—Mythology.—Pul or Belus.—Nebo, Rach, Nego, Merodach, &c.—Grossness and Depravity of their Ceremonies.—Manners and Customs of the Babylonians.—Learning.—Science.—Astronomy and Astrology.—Mathematics.—Music.—Poetry.—Skill in working Metals and Gems.—Manufactures.—Commerce.

Origin.—It will now be proper to place before our readers the little that is known of the origin, government, religion, laws, and customs of the ancient Assyrians and Babylonians. The sources of information on these subjects are much the same as those from whence the general history is derived, and are neither less limited nor imperfect. From Scripture we know that Assyria was occupied by Asshur and his descendants, to whom, no doubt, it owes its name. We have the same authority for believing that a portion, at least, of Mesopotamia was possessed by

Nimrod and his progeny; and an attempt has been made to prove that another section became the abode of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, and his posterity.*

Government.—Of the nature of the Assyrian government we know nothing more than may be gathered from the Bible; that it was an hereditary monarchy, and quite despotic. We are equally in the dark respecting the laws by which it was governed. It is probable they were few and simple, depending chiefly, in their application, on the will of the prince, partaking, in a great degree, of the nature of patriarchal rules, though sometimes harshly enforced by arbitrary power.

Religion.—This, there is no doubt, was a polytheistical idolatry; for there is sufficient proof that the nation had various idols. In Scripture, for example, we hear of Sennacherib being slain by his sons while worshipping in the temple of his god. In all probability, the deities and forms of adoration among the Assyrians were nearly the same as those of their neighbours, and particularly the Babylonians, a circumstance which will afterward be more particularly noticed. It may, therefore, be sufficient at present to name such of their divinities as were peculiar to them, of which Nisroch was one. Adrammelech and Anammelech, both mentioned in the Old Testament, appear to have been other names for Moloch, which itself signifies Lord, or supreme power; and they were revered under various representations, as that of a mule, a peacock, a pheasant, or a quail.

Derceto, the reputed mother of Semiramis, though of Mesopotamian origin, was recognised at Ascalon. The Greeks attributed to her several other names; and, like their own Venus, she was represented as half woman, half fish. Hence the Assyrians are said to have had a superstitious reverence for the finny tribes; a feeling which they extended to pigeons, from their having been the nurses of their great queen, who disappeared from the eyes of mankind in the shape of a dove. In fact, it appears that, like other nations of antiquity, they deified all their deceased sovereigns who had in any degree distinguished themselves.

The customs, arts, and trade of Assyria, having, so far as is known, been similar to those of Babylon, require no

* *Origines Biblicæ*; or, *Researches in Primeval History*. By Charles Tilstone Beke; 8vo, Lond., 1834, vol. i., p. 106.

separate notice ; we shall therefore proceed at once to the consideration of these particulars in relation to the latter people.

Government of the Babylonians.—This, like that of all other Eastern states, was essentially despotic, gradually degenerating from the pure patriarchal form into the sway of an absolute monarch. Everything centred in the person of the sovereign ; all decrees were issued by him ; and, claiming a supernatural character, he even demanded divine worship. The names of the kings, accordingly, were derived from those of their gods, or of former rulers who were confounded with them ; and, on a similar principle, they affected strict retirement from the vulgar eye, and seldom appeared in public.

Haughty and arrogant as they were, these autocrats were nevertheless obliged to have frequent communion with their nobles, with whom we find them occasionally feasting, and from whom were selected the chief officers who administered the government of the country. Of the duties of some of these functionaries we are incidentally informed by various authors ; and it appears that the judges were divided into three sections, and chosen from the gravest personages of the empire. On the first class devolved the regulation of marriage, and the punishment of all crimes which violated its sacred obligations ; the second took cognizance of robberies and thefts ; and the third decided in all civil affairs. We find also, from the book of Daniel, that Nebuchadnezzar deputed his authority to princes, governors, captains, judges, treasurers, counsellors, and sheriffs, whose duty it was to maintain good order in all departments of the imperial service. Again, from the same source, we gather that the great king had a household corresponding in the extent of its establishment to his mighty state, including the captain of his guard, the prince of his eunuchs, the supreme judge, and the chief of the magicians, who were always in attendance. The first of these was the minister of his justice ; the second had charge of the interior of the royal dwelling, and the education of the youth who were brought up within the palace ; the third sat at the king's gate, that is, in an adjoining apartment, to hear complaints and to pass judgment ; the last attended near his person, to interpret all omens and dreams, fix fortunate periods, and to satisfy the monarch's mind with

regard to everything that related to prognostication. All these were chosen on account of their personal qualities, as well as the excellence of their mental endowments. He was saluted with the Oriental form of "O king! live forever!" which resembles nearly the mode of address adopted at the present day towards the great sovereigns of Asia, whose courts, in respect of attendance and magnificence, bear a close resemblance to those of the Assyrian and Mesopotamian empires.

Of their laws nothing in detail appears to be known, except that strange and revolting arrangement, particularly described by Herodotus and Strabo, whereby it was provided that, instead of parents disposing of their own daughters in marriage, all young women should be brought to a public place appointed for the purpose, and put up for sale, one by one, to the highest bidder. The money thus obtained for the most beautiful was employed in obtaining husbands for those left without an offer, and who were disposed of in the same manner, with a premium proportioned to their want of personal attraction. But the historian informs us also that the whole business was conducted with the strictest attention to decorum, being always under the superintendence of the officers appointed for this duty, respectable by their age and rank, and who, before the bargain was concluded, received security from each purchaser that he would marry the object of his choice.

We have no information respecting their punishments, farther than that they appear to have been inflicted according to the will or caprice of the reigning monarch. This we see exemplified in the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and in that of the prophet himself, when, through the intrigue of his enemies, he was cast into the den of lions.

The administration of their various religious rites was committed to the Chaldeans, who composed the hierarchy of the country, and engrossed the whole of their boasted learning. They were not only the priests, but formed the scientific body of the nation, pretending to the gift of prophecy, a knowledge of augury and divination, and the power, by means of enchantment, of influencing the destinies of men. By these means they acquired a most dangerous influence over their superstitious countrymen; but who these Chaldeans originally were, is a problem

that has never yet been satisfactorily solved, although frequently made the subject of much learned discussion. Even the stock from which they sprung, and the land where they first acquired power, are matters still involved in darkness. From the profane writers of antiquity we gain little knowledge on the subject; and although they are frequently mentioned in Scripture, the notices are isolated, and sometimes obscure. Thus far it is certain that they were a distinct nation as far back as the days of Terah, the father of Abraham, who lived "in Ur of the Chaldees;" and it may be inferred, from a statement in the book of Job,* that they were a predatory race. Yet the prophet Isaiah, it might be thought, must have had some other people in his view when he said,† "Behold the land of the Chaldeans: this people *was not*, till the Assyrian founded it for them that *awell in the wilderness*." Could this have been applied to a tribe who lived in Mesopotamia in the days of Terah and Abraham?

Heeren; following Gesenius in his disquisition on this very text, is disposed to seek for the original Chaldeans in the mountains of Kurdistan, or still farther to the north, and suggests that the name may have been applied by the Semitic nations to the more barbarous tribes of upper Asia, as that of *Turani* afterward was, by the inhabitants of Iran or Persia, to the Tartars. He regards them as a nomad race, who, about the year B.C. 630, descending from the mountains of Taurus and Caucasus, overwhelmed southern Asia, and, entering the Mesopotamian plains, first as mercenaries, at length started forth as conquerors, and made themselves masters of the rich provinces of Babylonia and Syria. This, however, appears to be a mere conjecture, founded on insufficient grounds, and inconsistent with the declaration of Scripture as to the existence of the Chaldeans in Mesopotamia at a much earlier period.

Mr. Faber, who has treated the question fully in his ingenious work upon Pagan Idolatry, regards the Chaldeans as a branch of the descendants of Cush, the son of Ham; and his theory is so curious that we shall attempt a very slight sketch of it, in order to give the reader an idea of

* Chap. i., 17.

† Chap. xxiii., 13.

‡ Historical Researches, 3 vols. 8vo, Oxford, 1833, vol. ii., p. 147, and note.

the various speculations to which this dark subject has given rise.

This learned author supposes that the descendants of Noah did not quit the land of Armenia at an early period after the Flood, but that the patriarch lived and died in the vicinity of the spot whence he issued from the Ark. No sooner did his personal influence cease to be felt, than divisions took place among his progeny, which disposed the different families or clans to a separation. Nimrod, a man of an ambitious spirit and powerful mind, being surrounded by his kindred, who regarded him with devotion, naturally controlled the councils of the whole body, who, passive and disunited, easily submitted to his sway. To restrain the turbulent, laws soon became necessary, as well as officers to administer and an armed police to enforce them. These statutes were framed, of course, by the great leader, whose family constituted the magistrates, and from whose tribe were chosen the conservators of the peace; who, thus armed, and formed into a disciplined band, became the first military establishment—an irresistible engine in the hands of the mighty hunter.

But the religion professed by these early inhabitants of the earth—a devotion to the will of the one almighty Creator—was unfavourable to the project of absolute dominion entertained by Nimrod; for the command of God had gone forth that they were to separate, and replenish the earth with human beings: a consummation which the ambitious chief sought to prevent. To effect his purpose, a change of worship was necessary, and that, accordingly, became his next object. To administer this new religion a priesthood was indispensable, selected from his own military caste, whose interests were identified with those of the tribe, and in whom alone their ruler could trust. Such an institution would, of course, be revered and upheld by soldiers proud of their privileges, who, at the same time, would naturally regard their holy brethren as their best coadjutors in obtaining and preserving their own power.

Such was Nimrod, the leader of the Noachites, and on such a basis was his power constituted, when, according to our author, he led the unbroken nation of mankind, about 559 years after the Flood, from the country of Armenia into the plains of Shinar, and about 54 years later commenced the tower and city of Babel. This undertaking, a short

time afterward, was brought to an abrupt conclusion by divine interposition; whence followed the ordained dispersion of mankind.

The moral effect of so severe a blow upon such a proud nation would, it is supposed, appear in dividing them into many portions, each of whom would seek their own fortune where chance might lead, some containing individuals of all classes and castes, others composed entirely of priests and military; which last would carry with them a high notion of their former privileges, and claim for themselves the peculiar honours due to a race of unpolluted nobility.

This tribe or clan, of which Nimrod was the chief, and, in fact, the king, is designated by Mr. Faber the *Cushim* or *Cuthim*, as being the descendants of Cush, the son of Ham; and they are regarded by him as fulfilling a very exalted destiny, and sustaining a most remarkable part in the history of mankind. It is imagined by many that Ham and his race became accursed on account of the sin against his father Noah; but this exposition of the well-known passage in the 9th chapter of Genesis is rejected by the author just named, who, for reasons which he sets forth, conceives the curse to be limited to Canaan, while he confers the sceptre of the world on the warlike posterity of Cush, notwithstanding that reading of the Sacred Volume which blesses both Shem and Japheth, and gives to them Canaan as their servant.

He also maintains that the first postdiluvian empire, that of the Cuthites, commenced with the institution of an idolatrous religion at Babel. After this, he admits, Scripture is silent on the future fate of the family; but he nevertheless asserts that there is no quarter of the world where the name and the race are not to be found. He conceives that, while many of them emigrated to different quarters of the earth, Nimrod, with the portion who adhered to him, founded Babel, and three subordinate towns; and that he afterward *went forth* to Nineveh, where he discovered the family and descendants of Asshur already settled. These he drove out, and built a city after his own name, while his former capital, now abandoned, sunk for a time into a merely provincial town. Meanwhile, the dispersed Cuthites took their way in various directions, settling at first principally in the mountainous tract which stretches from

the head of the Ganges by the south of the Caspian Sea to the northeast of the Euxine, including all that lofty region called by the natives "the stony girdle of the earth," from whence they overran most parts of the world. Thus in Africa they occupied the whole country from the Thebais to the source of the Nile and Mountains of the Moon, as well as the land of Egypt, which was subjugated by a tribe of pastoral Cushim from Upper India and Ethiopia. In Asia their rule stretched from the banks of the Indus to the Mediterranean Sea; while, migrating northward, they covered Touran (Tartary) with an unmixed race, under the name of Scuths or Scyths. These were the Celto-Scuths of the West, and the Indo-Scuths of the East. In short, "this enterprising people, who, by a singular fate, have ever been, at different periods, the corrupters and the reformers, the disturbers and the civilizers of the world, were known by various names, either general to the whole, or particular to certain divisions. They were called Scuths, Chusas, Chasas, Cisseans, Cosseans, Coths, Ghauts, and Goths, from their great ancestor *Cush*; whose name they pronounced *Cusha*, *Chusa*, *Ghoda*, *Chasa*, *Chasya*, or *Cassius*. They were styled *Palli*, *Bali*, *Bhils*, *Philistim*, *Palistim*, *Bolgs*, or *Belgæ*, from their occupation; for the term denotes *shepherds*. And they were partially denominated *Phanakim* or *Phœnicians*, and *Huc-Sos* or *Shepherd-kings*, from their claiming to be a royal race; *Sacas*, *Sagas*, *Sacasenas*, *Sachim*, *Suchim*, *Saxe*, or *Saxons*, from their god *Saca* or *Sacya*; *Budins* or *Wudins*, from their god *Buddha* or *Woden*; *Teuts* or *Teutons*, from their god *Teut* or *Taut*; and *Germans* or *Sarmans*, from their god *Saman* or *Sarman*, and his ministers the *Samaneans*, or *Sarmaneans*, or *Germaneans*, as they are indifferently called, according to a varied pronunciation of the same word."*

The Chaldeans, then, according to Mr. Faber, were those descendants of *Cush* who, under *Nimrod*, built *Nineveh*, and founded what has been called the Assyrian empire, but really the Cuthic; and the first Chaldean dynasty he supposes to coincide with that of the seven monarchs mentioned by *Eusebius* and *Syncellus*—and which lasted 224 years, or, according to *Alexander Polyhistor*, only 190—and with the *Mahabadians* of the *Iranians*. To these he

* The Origin of Pagan Idolatry. By George Stanley Faber, B.D.; 3 vols. 4to, Lond., 1816, vol. i., p. 85, 86.

adds the list of kings given by Ctesias, which, commencing with Ninus, terminates with Thonos Concolerus; and from this results a line of sovereigns of the Cuthic lineage, extending through a space of 1495 years from Nimrod. These positions he endeavours to establish at great length and with much ingenuity; dwelling particularly on a passage of Justin, quoted from Trogus Pompeius, which mentions a Scythian race of kings, who, prior to the era of Ninus, coming from the north, and extending their sway even to Egypt, were the dominant power for some time in India. These, he contends, were the imperial Cuthim, for they must have been Nimrodic monarchs: and thus, says he, "we may be morally sure that the descent of the Scythians from the Armenian Caucasus, previous to their acquiring the sovereignty of Asia, really means, however it may be disguised, *the descent of the Cushim, at the head of the subjugated Noachidæ, from Mount Ararat into the Babylonian plain of Shinar*, and that the national appellation of Scythians or Scuthim is the selfsame word, pronounced only with a sibilant prefix, as Cuthim or Cushim."*

We have enlarged on this author's views, because he enjoys a high reputation for learning, and his work, however open to criticism in some points, assuredly displays much research as well as talent. But, though we do not mean to enter the lists with him, we cannot avoid observing, that his account of the origin of the Chaldees appears not to coincide with the facts narrated in Scripture, nor with the probable condition of the world in those early ages.

In the first place, the Noachidæ, whether subjected or not by a section of their number, and whether remaining in Armenia or existing in the plains of Shinar at the period in question, comprehended at all events the whole of the human race.† There could not, therefore, be any other of the sons of men whom they might subdue on their descent, either in Egypt, or in any part of Asia; indeed, none of the countries could have received their names, as the several families of the Noachidæ, from whom they derived their respective appellations, had not yet dispersed to seek their several abodes.

In the second place, it seems scarcely possible to identi-

* Origin of Pagan Idolatry, vol. iii., p. 402.

† Gen., xi., 1-9.

fy the Chaldees of Ur, in the days of Terah and Abraham, with the Cushim of Ninus, who in Sacred Writ are always designated as Assyrians, and whose descendants, if Mr. Faber's hypothesis be just, must about that time have been in great glory, and enjoying the power won for them by the victorious Semiramis. In fact, it seems difficult to conceive that a monarchy, so extensive as that of Assyria is represented to have been, could have existed contemporaneously with so many petty sovereigns in its vicinity; and the presence of any great power in that quarter must appear extremely doubtful when we read of Abraham rescuing Lot and defeating the King of Elam with only 318 men of his household.

Mr. Beke propounds a theory totally different from that now stated. Ur of the Chaldees he supposes to have been peopled by the descendants of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, who, according to the system laid down in his work, settled in the northwestern parts of Mesopotamia, and, as their numbers increased, extended themselves southward and eastward along the valley of the Hermas, from Nineveh to the territory of Shinar, which latter he conceives, upon grounds to which we may hereafter have occasion to advert, not to have been in Babylonia, but near the foot of Mount Masius. These Arphaxadites or Casdim he conceives to have been the ancient Chaldeans; considering the latter term as an abbreviation of the Hebrew patronymic Arphacasmim, that is, the children or descendants of Arphaxad.*

This reasoning receives some corroboration from the fact that many places in that neighbourhood retain the appellations they bore in ancient times, and which they probably received from their first settlers. Thus Haran,† which still exists in the vicinity of Ur, received its name, no doubt, from the brother of Abraham; and Serug, in the same country, was most probably the dwelling-place of the grandson of Peleg. Nineveh is not the only spot which preserves the name of Nimrod. Babel remains unchanged; and Mosul even at this day is known to its Christian inhabitants as the city of Atur: a fact which is implied in the title-page of the Syro-Chaldean Bibles, found in every church.

* *Origines Biblicæ*, vol. i., p. 107.

† Mr. Beke, however, does not admit this to have been the Haran of Abraham's brother.

Nor need this immutability of name be regarded with surprise, when we reflect that the Syrian, Chaldaic, Hebrew, and Arabic are all cognate tongues, which have not, as in other lands, been superseded, or even greatly corrupted, by the more barbarous dialects of the strangers who from time to time have overrun the district. The unchanging Arabic is still the general language of all those regions, while Jews and Christians use, with little variation, the forms of speech that were common in the days of the captivity. This is a state of things singularly favourable for etymological discoveries and the advancement of comparative geography; and though the application of the one science to the other may occasionally be carried too far, there is, in the present case, strong grounds of probability, at least, for the derivation of the term Casdim and the location of the Chaldees in Ur.

In both these points, it is true, Mr. Beke is opposed by high authority. The learned Bochart ridicules Josephus and others when they maintain that the Chaldeans were formerly called Arphaxadites, and insists that they derive their name from Chased or Chesed, the son of Nahor, brother of Abraham, who was their progenitor, and from whom, in the ancient Scripture, they are always called Chasdim. In confirmation of this he quotes Hieronymus, who says that "Chased also is the fourth from whom the Chasdim, that is, the Chaldeans, were afterward called;" from whence, too, Ur Chasdim, that is, Ur of the Chaldees, is always described as the region or city in which he dwelt. He confesses, indeed, that Chased was not born at the time when we read that Abraham went forth from Ur of the Chaldees, but that the city was so called by anticipation; a figure, he says, common in Scripture, as the one from which that celebrated people *were* to spring. Arphaxad, he adds, appears to have given his name to that part of Assyria called by Ptolemy Arrapachitis.*

Enough has now been stated to show the difficulties of this subject, which would be perplexed rather than elucidated by the recital of farther conjectures. But, notwithstanding this obscurity, there is no doubt that the Chaldeans, as the dominant people in ancient Babylon, possessed

* Bocharti *Geographia Sacra*, editio quarta, folio, Lugd. Bat., 1707, lib. ii., cap. iv., p. 74.

all power and learning, as well as the influence which belonged to the priesthood. Whether their idolatry commenced with the era of the dispersion or not, it probably arose in the manner common to all such superstitions. The Almighty, invisible to mortal eye, was worshipped through the medium of his most glorious works; and thence sprung Sabaism, the adoration of the heavenly host.

To this simple and pure veneration another element was soon added. The souls of those kings who had greatly distinguished themselves on earth were regarded after their death as protecting spirits, who continued to watch over their people and families upon earth. From heroes they were transformed to demigods, and at length each was identified with some one of the heavenly host. The founder of their race, or he who was regarded as such, was represented by the sun; and a female influence, naturally provided as his consort, took her place in the mythological character as the moon. The other chief personages received various names and titles, suiting their several characters, but all might be resolved into the one original idea.

The Chaldeans, according to Berosus,* taught that there were kings who ruled at Babylon before the Deluge, the amount of whose reigns were 120 sari, or 432,000 years, each saros being a period of 3600. The last of these was Xisuthrus, at the termination of whose reign of eighteen sari came the Deluge. In the time of the third of these antediluvian monarchs appeared Oannes Annedotus, an amphibious creature, half man, half fish, who ascended by day from the Erythrean Sea, and instructed the assembled multitudes of mankind. He taught that there was a time when all things were darkness and waters, wherein resided monsters of various sorts, with snakes, reptiles, and fishes. Over these presided Omoroca, a female who long reigned in gloomy and solitary independence; but at length Belus came and cut her asunder, and out of one half of her body was formed the earth, while the other half became the heavens, upon which all the monsters were annihilated. This, he said, was an allegory, conveying to them the aqueous origin of the universe; for that Omoroca was the same as *Thalath*, or the sea, although the word might also mean the moon. Afterward, seeing that the earth

* Ancient Fragments. By Isaac Preston Cory; 2d edit., 8vo, Lond., 1832, p. 30.

wanted living beings, he commanded one of the gods to cut off his head, and the other gods, mixing the blood with earth, formed the human species from the compound. This same Belus, whom men also called Dis, or Pluto, divided the darkness from the light, and separated the earth from the heavens; disposed the world in order, and called forth the starry host.

Oannes also taught the Babylonians the use of letters, and made them acquainted with the principles of architecture, jurisprudence, and geometry; showed them valuable seeds, and was their instructor in all useful arts. Of this merman there were four appearances, one of which was under the name of Odacon.

To Xisuthrus the god Cronus appeared in a vision, and told him that a flood would take place in a particular month, and that he should write a history of all things down to the time, and bury it in the City of the Sun at Sippara.* He was instructed to build a ship, and embark in it with his family, friends, and a pilot, together with animals of all sorts. Having obeyed the mandate, he sailed about the world, floating on the face of the waters until the Deluge abated, when the vessel stranded, as is supposed, among the Gordyæan Mountains, where, like Noah, after sending forth birds, he found that the earth was dry, and, with his wife, and daughter, and the pilot, quitted his asylum. Having then built an altar and sacrificed to the gods, he and his companions disappeared.

Those who remained in the ship now disembarked, and began to lament their lost companions, calling upon the name of Xisuthrus. Him they saw no more; but they heard his voice in the air, admonishing them to pay due regard to religion, and telling them that, on account of his piety, he had been translated to live with the gods, and that his wife, children, and the pilot enjoyed the same honours. He farther told them to make the best of their way to Babylonia, and search at Sippara for the records he had left, and which were to be made known to all mankind.

The similarity of this account to that of the Noachic Deluge must be quite apparent, although the whole is greatly disfigured by its Chaldean dress. At what period idolatry began, we know not, nor when the simplicity of

* The Perisabora of the ancient geographers, and Anbar, the ruins of which are still to be seen close to the castle of Felugia.

the patriarchal system gave way to the fantastic innovations of man; but we learn from Scripture that images were made use of as objects of adoration as early as the days of Terah, the father of Abraham. The period of hero-worship soon followed; and the gods of the Chaldees from henceforth are to be viewed in images and monsters made by the hands of men.

The first of the ancient kings who received the honours of deification was Pul or Bel, Belus, to whom his son, the Tiglath-pileser of Sacred Writ, or Ninus of profane writers, erected an image; and his title to this distinction appears to have been acknowledged throughout Mesopotamia as well as Assyria, for a temple was built to him in Babylon at a very early period, where he was regarded as the tutelary divinity. In this celebrated structure, however, there appear to have been two gods, one of whom was understood to be invisible, while the other was represented by a colossal statue of gold. There were also two altars; on the one, which was of the same precious metal, and of moderate size, only young victims could be offered; on the other, which was larger, none but such as were full grown; hence it would appear that one of these gods was held subordinate to the other.

The next in importance of their deities appears to have been represented by an idol called Succoth-benoth, mentioned in 2 Kings, xvii., 30, and which is said to mean the *tabernacles of the daughters*. Herodotus says that this goddess was by the Babylonians called *Mylitta*, signifying *mother*; and Selden considers the name as the root of the *Venus* of later mythologies, a derivation which is supported by other authorities, and involves but an easy change of orthography.

Another of the Assyrian or Babylonian deities was Nebo or Nabo, whose name so often enters into those of their kings, and who, therefore, may be supposed to have been held in high estimation. He is found in Isaiah (chapter xlvi.) coupled with Bel, and may possibly have been the same with Chemosh or Baal-peor of the Moabites; but little more is known of him than that he is understood to have been much consulted as an oracle.

To these may be added Rach, Nego or Nergal, Mero-dach, and many others that have not reached our time, who were objects of worship to the capricious Babylonian-

ans, whose city appears to have been the resort of all idols.

The epistle of Jeremy the prophet, appended to the book of Baruch, contains a view of their ceremonies, their temples, and their priests, which gives a very revolting picture of grossness and utter depravity. Not only was immorality encouraged by example, but human victims were sacrificed in order to appease the imaginary deities of a barbarous people. It is supposed, however, that this atrocious violation of all the feelings of humanity, as well as of divine law, was too revolting to be long continued, and that the shedding of human blood was afterward confined to the inhabitants of a particular district, who were called Sepharvites from the name of their city, Sepharvaim, and who offered even their own children in sacrifice. But the practice appears to have been revived at Hierapolis, where all that is abominable in idol-worship seems to have taken refuge after the destruction of Babylon.

With regard to the manners and customs of the Babylonians, the little information we possess is collected from the writings of Herodotus, Strabo, Berosus, Quintus Curtius, and other ancient authors, who quote principally from one another, and who, doubtless, chiefly recorded those things which seemed strange to them, and in which the people of Babylon differed from other nations. But we hear nothing of their employments, their domestic habits, or of those minute observances that make up the greater portion of human life. We learn, indeed, that the people were peculiarly credulous, superstitious, and immoral; that they were gorgeous in their apparel, expensive in their establishments, affecting even a degree of effeminacy in their dress and adornments. Their under garment was of linen, reaching to their heels; over this they wore a vestment of woollen, and above all a white mantle or cloak, often very expensively ornamented. They wore their own long hair, their heads being covered with a tiara or mitre. They anointed their bodies with oil of sesamum, and were particularly lavish of perfumes. Each man carried on his finger a seal-ring,* and in his hand a staff or sceptre, which, by law, was adorned on the head with some badge or figure, as a rose, a lily, an eagle, a beast; and their feet were shod

* Great numbers of these are picked up at this day in the ruins of Babylon and the surrounding country.

with a sort of slipper, such as is observed in the sculptures at Persepolis. It is almost unnecessary to observe that this account applies only to the latter period of the Empire, and not to the earlier times, when their manners must have been more simple, the public mind more energetic, and habits of vice less prevalent.

The whole learning of the nation rested, as we have already said, with the Chaldees, who refer their first instruction in astronomy, geometry, and astrology to that Oannes of whom we have just spoken. Sir Isaac Newton leans to the opinion that this person was an Egyptian, who, not long before the days of David and Solomon, fled into Chaldea, carrying with him the science of his country. This opinion, however, seems rather at variance with the Scripture, where the learning of the latter nation is spoken of as remarkable at a very early age; and the attempt of the first postdiluvians to build the tower of Babel, implies an acquaintance with the principles of architecture which could only belong to an advanced state of the exact sciences. Besides, according to the tradition of Jews, Arabs, and Indians, the Egyptians owed all their knowledge to the Chaldeans, from whose country it was conveyed by Abraham: and, rivals as the two nations were, both in arts and arms, the claim to superior antiquity, at least, did certainly lie in favour of the Mesopotamians.

But, whatever may have been its source, it is manifest that their science in later times was stationary. They departed not from the rules they had been taught; professed neither to know, to require, nor to teach more than they themselves had learned from their ancestors; and their principal merit appears to have consisted in being perfectly acquainted with what they professed to know. In point of fact, their attainments were very trifling, and their notions of astronomy, in particular, were fanciful and absurd. They appear to have considered the earth as a being like a vessel or boat, hollow within, round which the sun, and moon, and stars revolved, but at what relative distances they were totally ignorant; hence they attributed the greater length of time occupied by their respective revolutions only to a greater tardiness of motion. The moon, however, they conceived was an exception to this hypothesis; they taught that she shone with a light not her own, and accounted for her eclipses by her immersion in the shadow

of the earth; but as to the eclipses of the sun they were totally uninformed.

They divided the zodiac into twelve spaces, each being distinguished by a sign, and throughout which the several planets performed their revolutions. These bodies were six in number, enumerated according to their respective shares of influence, as follows: Saturn, the Sun, Mars, Venus, Mercury, and Jupiter; and they were denominated interpreters, as portending by their motions and aspect the will of the gods.

Under the planets they ranged thirty stars, which they called counselling gods; half of whom took cognizance of what was done under the earth, the other half of that which was done by men, or in the heavens; and they taught that once in ten days one of the superior stars descended as a messenger to the inferior, and *vice versâ*, by which a regular correspondence was kept up. Of these deities there were twelve chiefs, one of whom was assigned to each month of the year and section of the zodiac. Out of the inferior stars, again, they selected twenty-four, placing twelve towards the north pole and twelve to the south.

All these luminaries were believed to exercise great power over the fortunes of men; and from their aspects and position with reference to each other, they predicted all of good or evil that should befall the individuals born under their sway. This, it will be observed, was less a system of astronomy than of astrology, to the knowledge of which, indeed, they made the highest pretensions.

As to the world, they taught that it was eternal—without beginning and without end; and they acknowledged a Divine Providence, who directed the motions of the heavens and the course of nature by means of inferior agents or deities. Beyond this, little is known of their doctrines on those lofty subjects.

That the Chaldeans had a considerable acquaintance with mathematics and geometry appears certain, as we have already observed; for, without some knowledge of these sciences, they could not have constructed the buildings and other important works which are attributed to them, and of which the vestiges still remain.

It is likewise manifest that they had musical instruments and performers, as in the book of Daniel we read

of flutes, cornets, harps, sackbuts, psalteries, and dulcimers; but we are ignorant of their real form; and it is not improbable that they bore some resemblance to those used by the rude band now called the *Nokara Khanek*, which in Persia and other Eastern countries plays at stated times over the gateway of the royal palace.

Of their poetry we know nothing; and their total ignorance of medicine may be estimated from the fact that it was their custom to expose their sick publicly in places where every passer-by might see them, in the hope that some one who had been similarly afflicted might communicate the means of cure.

That they were skilful in the working of metals, and in the cutting of stones and gems, appears not only from the uses they made of these substances in their palaces, temples, and houses, but from the fragments which are, even at this remote period, occasionally found among the ruins of Babylon and other cities of Mesopotamia. They were also celebrated for their manufacture of linen and woollen. The cloaks called *sindones*, usually made of cotton, were highly valued for fineness of texture and brilliancy of colour, insomuch that they were commonly set apart for royal use. Their carpets of finest fabric and most splendid dyes, also their gorgeous drapery and embroideries, were equally famous. The former were in great request in Persia, where every bed and couch were covered with them.

Pliny mentions a suit of Babylonian hangings for a dining-room which cost a sum equal in our money to £6458 6s. 8d.; and Plutarch, in his life of Cato, tells us that the stern patriot, having received in a legacy a Babylonian cloak or mantle, sold it immediately, as being far too costly for him to wear. This people, too, as well as the Assyrians, were celebrated for their purple dye.

That the commerce of ancient Babylon must have been very great, is unquestionable. The riches and luxury of the country alone afford sufficient proof of this; and assuredly no city of that period could boast of a more advantageous position as a trading entrepôt. Built upon one, and commanding the navigation of two noble streams, both leading to the Persian Gulf, and surrounded by populous districts, nothing was wanting to encourage a spirit of adventure; and that such did exist to a very great ex-

tent we know, though of the exact nature and particulars of the commerce itself we have no detailed account. The natives were fond of magnificence, and full of artificial wants; costly in dress, perfumes, ornaments, and in their general habits of life. Their own country did not produce the articles they consumed in such abundance, and they must therefore have imported them; and as the land around afforded little to give in return, the means of purchasing must have arisen in part from the profits of trade and barter.

It is known, also, that many of the early sovereigns gave great encouragement to merchandise as well as to agriculture. Gerrha, supposed to have been near the site of the modern El Katif, was a commercial station; Teredon, on the Pallacopas, was founded by Nebuchadnezzar; and Semiramis is said to have built towns upon the banks of the Tigris as marts for Media and Persia.

The land-trade of Babylon is divided by Heeren* into five chief branches: that to the east with Persia and Bactria; to the north with Armenia; to the west with Phœnicia and Asia Minor; and, finally, to the south with Arabia.

The great road to the east ran by Ecbatana to the Caspian Gates, through which it led to Hyrcania and Aria, and thence in a northerly direction to Bactra, which last was the entrepôt of Central Asia, Tartary, and the more southern provinces.

The path for western commerce, according to Strabo, passed north through Mesopotamia to Anthemusia on the Euphrates, twenty-five days' journey, where it turned towards the Mediterranean. This line could only be traversed by strong caravans, on account of the Scenite Arabs, who occupied the Desert and plundered all whom they could overpower.

The northern route to Armenia and Asia Minor was the great military communication made by the Median sovereigns, from Susa by Babylon to Sardis. It was divided into 110 stages of five parasangs or about twenty miles each, every one having a splendid caravansera attached to it. Tavernier traced it from Smyrna to Tokat, from whence, in later times, it went to Erivan for the purpose of reaching Ispahan, subsequently the capital of Persia. The

* Historical Researches, vol. ii., p. 203.