GREAT RIVERS

THE EUPHRATES AND THE TIGRIS

A NARRATIVE OF DISCOVERY & ADVENTURE.

OF THE WORLD

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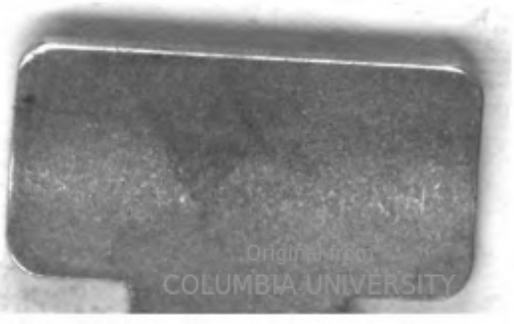

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GENERAL VIEW OF MOSUL.

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Great Rivers of the World.

THE EUPHRATES

AND

THE TIGRIS.

A NARRATIVE OF DISCOVERY AND ADVENTURE

WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THE RUINS OF

BABYLON AND NINEVEH.

LONDON: THOMAS NELSON AND SONS.

EDINBURGH AND NEW YORK.

1879.

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THE EUPHRATES AND THE TIGRIS.

PART I.

The Euphrates: and the Ruins of Babylon.

CHAPTER I.

"MIGHTY BABYLON."

THE ancient kingdom of Babylonia included a considerable portion of those districts of Asia known by the ancients under the name of Mesopotamia, from their position between the Euphrates and the Tigris. In its narrowest limits it stretched along the former river for about one hundred and fifty miles (or in a north-westerly direction from the point now indicated by the modern town of el-Shuyukh to the ruins of Babylon), and thence, in the same direction, for two hundred and eighty-seven miles, to Kabuch on the Khabur.

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Its capital was that mighty Babylon which occupied a place so conspicuous and so memorable in the history of the ancient world; the name of which is, to this day, a synonym for colossal pride and power, and a text on which to hang the old, old lesson of the instability of human things, the "vanitas vanitatum."

Babylon was situated on the Euphrates, which, indeed, divided it into two parts; while it was connected with the Tigris by canals that extended across the great Babylonian plain. Though at one time the most famous of the world's famous cities, its ruin was so absolute, so complete, that modern research has experienced no little difficulty in determining its exact site.

To what remote period shall we trace its annals?

Well, it is not without good reason that some authorities suppose it to have occupied the situation, or, at least, to have stood in the immediate vicinity, of that Babel which the Book of Genesis describes as the beginning of Nimrud's kingdom; as the scene of man's impious attempt to raise a tower which should reach to the very heavens, and of his consequent punishment by the dispersion of tongues. From this last incident its name is generally derived;

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RUINS OF BABYLON.

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but a more probable etymology refers it to "the gate" or "court" of the god Bel. Berosus, the Babylonian chronicler, preserves a tradition of the Biblical Babel. A lofty tower, he says, was erected on the plain where Babylon afterwards spread its palaces and gardens, but the winds assisted the gods in destroying it. Its ruins, he adds, still exist at Babylon; and that the city was called Babylon (from the Hebrew *Babel*, or "confusion"), because the gods there introduced a diversity of tongues among men, in order to deprive them in the future of the power of combination.

No other reference to Babylon occurs in the Bible until we come down to the reign of Hoshea, about 730 B.C., when its armies invaded Samaria, and carried away the people captive. Previous to this epoch, it would seem to have been of little importance; certainly inferior to the great Assyrian capital, Ninus; and certainly dependent upon the Assyrian Empire. Berosus and other ancient writers record various circumstances in connection with it, and perpetuate the names of some of its kings. But they are all so vague and uncertain, that we need not trouble the reader with them, or enter into any discussions as to their authenticity. Mardoch-Em-

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padus, one of these shadowy potentates, is generally identified with the Merodach-Baladan of the Bible, who despatched ambassadors to congratulate Hezekiah on his recovery from sickness. Afterwards we read of Manasseh, king of Judah, as carried prisoner to Babylon by the king of Assyria. Next come the names of Saosduchinus and Chyniladanus, who appear to have reigned partly at Ninus (or Nineveh), and partly at Babylon. Throughout this period the Assyrian power was gradually declining, while the Chaldeans were growing in wealth, prosperity, and energy. About 625 B.C. Nabopolassar allied himself with the Medes in the capture of Nineveh, and his share of the victory seems to have been the independent sovereignty of Babylon, where he founded a dynasty destined to enjoy a brief but magnificent career.

Nabopolassar reigned for one and twenty years, and effected much towards the increase and consolidation of his kingdom, pushing his frontiers further and further westward, and beginning that embellishment of his capital which was completed by his son Nebuchadnezzar. The latter during the lifetime of his father, was engaged in checking the advance of Necho, king of Egypt, whom he completely defeated

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at Carchemish on the Euphrates. Afterwards he overran Palestine, marched forward to Jerusalem, received the homage of Jehoiakim, and carried the victorious arms of Babylon to the borders of Egypt. Thence he was recalled to the capital by the death of his father in 604 B.C.

He immediately addressed himself, with all the surprising vigour of his character, and with what Mr. Grote calls "his unbounded command of naked human strength," to the construction of those walls and palaces, quays and temples, which provoked the wonder of Herodotus, and called forth from Nebuchadnezzar himself the proud vaunt,—"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?"

Of all the seats of empire either of the ancient or the modern world, Nebuchadnezzar's daring genius made Babylon the greatest. Something of that greatness was due to the advantages of its natural position. Its founders, as Dean Stanley remarks, had taken advantage of the "huge spur of tertiary rock" which projects from the Syrian desert into the alluvial basin of Mesopotamia, and upon it, as upon a dry and solid platform, had built their city; which

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southward was defended by the lake-like river or estuary extending in that remote period from the Persian Gulf. "On this vantage-ground it stood, exactly crossing the line of traffic between the Mediterranean coasts and the Iranian mountains; just also on that point where the Euphrates, sinking into a deeper bed, changes from a vast expanse into a manageable river, not wider than the Thames of our own metropolis; where, also, out of the deep rich alluvial clay it was easy to dig the bricks which from its earliest date supplied the material for its immense buildings, cemented by the bitumen which from that same early date came floating down the river from the springs in its upper course." But if it owed much to its geographical situation, it owed more to the magnificent conceptions of Nebuchadnezzar. The imagination must have been singularly lofty and daring which designed the giant works of imperial Babylon! It is true that he partly rebuilt the edifices of his predecessors; but all that was most wonderful and stately,—the Temple of Bel, the massive ramparts, the Hanging Gardens, the extensive quays, the broad canals,—these were planned and executed by Nebuchadnezzar himself.

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"Great Babylon!" "Mighty Babylon!" Great and mighty, indeed; for though it never equalled the size and populousness of London, yet no ancient or modern city can be compared with it in the extent of its walled and enclosed area, which was not less than forty, some writers say sixty, miles in circumference. In truth, it was a province or a country enclosed within a city. Its houses were so intermingled with gardens and parks, and shadowy woods, that its appearance was rather that of a richly cultivated and thickly inhabited countryside than of a city; and yet it preserved a city's order and regularity. The streets, like those of modern Washington, were laid out in rectangles, and were uniformly straight, as well as uniformly wide. The houses, unlike those of most ancient cities, were three or four stories high. But the grandeur of Babylon consisted mainly in the gigantic dimensions of its public buildings, surpassing even those of Thebes, Memphis, or Abusimbel. Though now reduced to ruins, their colossal piles, says Ainsworth, domineering over the monotonous plain, produce an effect of grandeur and magnificence which cannot be imagined in any other situation.

"Great Babylon!" "Mighty Babylon!" Great

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and mighty, indeed, with its towering walls,—according to Herodotus, not less than three hundred feet high,—protecting it from any sudden enemy, as the Celestial Empire was protected by the Great Wall of China, or Roman Britain by the Wall of Severus. Along their summit ran a vast terrace, broad enough to admit of the turning of chariots with four horses,—fifty cubits broad, says Herodotus. At their foot yawned a wide deep trench or moat; and through a hundred brazen gates they gave egress and ingress to the waves of life incessantly pouring out of and into the glorious city. Across the Euphrates was thrown a noble bridge, with a castle or palace at each end, commanding an extensive view over the enclosed area, and forming the keys of their several positions. The inner walls of the western castle were embellished with numerous life-like representations of animals; and its towers with pictures of hunting scenes, among which, at a later date, a Greek traveller saw one of Semiramis slaying a leopard, and of Ninus, her husband, attacking a lion with a lance.

"Great Babylon!" "Mighty Babylon!" What stir and activity and life pulsed in those broad streets, which all abutted on the river; and that

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river, how was it thronged with vessels of all sizes, loaded with the products of far-off climes! In Nebuchadnezzar's monumental inscription he is represented as saying: "Of the great waters, like the waters of the ocean, I made use abundantly. Their depth was like the depths of the vast sea." The Babylonians were at that time pre-eminently a commercial people; their city, a city of merchant princes. From the bitumen pits of Hit the river brought down the cement with which the builders raised their enormous piles; gems and rare wines were imported from Phœnicia; tin, perhaps, from remote Britain; huge blocks of basalt from Armenia and Kurdistan; frankincense and spices and costly woods from Arabia and India. When at a later epoch the name of Babylon was transferred to the West to indicate the greatness and splendour of its Imperial City, the recollection of the traffic of the Euphrates, says Dean Stanley, had lived on with so fresh a memory that it was immediately associated with its Italian substitute, Rome. To the inland capital on the banks of the narrow Tiber it was wholly inapplicable; but the fact that the imagery had thus survived, and was thus made use of, shows how profound an impression had been made on the

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minds of the Hebrew exiles by the opulence of the Chaldean metropolis:—"The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all wood of incense, and all manner of vessels of ivory, and all manner of vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and of iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men; the shipmasters, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, and the craftsmen, and the merchants who were the great men of the earth."

Among the edifices which adorned this rich, this powerful, and busy city, two were pre-eminent in grandeur—the Palace of its Kings, and the Temple of Bel.

The Palace was larger than many cities; for with its gardens, groves, and lakes, it measured seven miles in circumference. The walls were covered with spirited paintings; in the interior was brought together all that the ancient world could furnish of the things that minister to luxury and ease. The Hanging Gardens, devised by Nebuchadnezzar for

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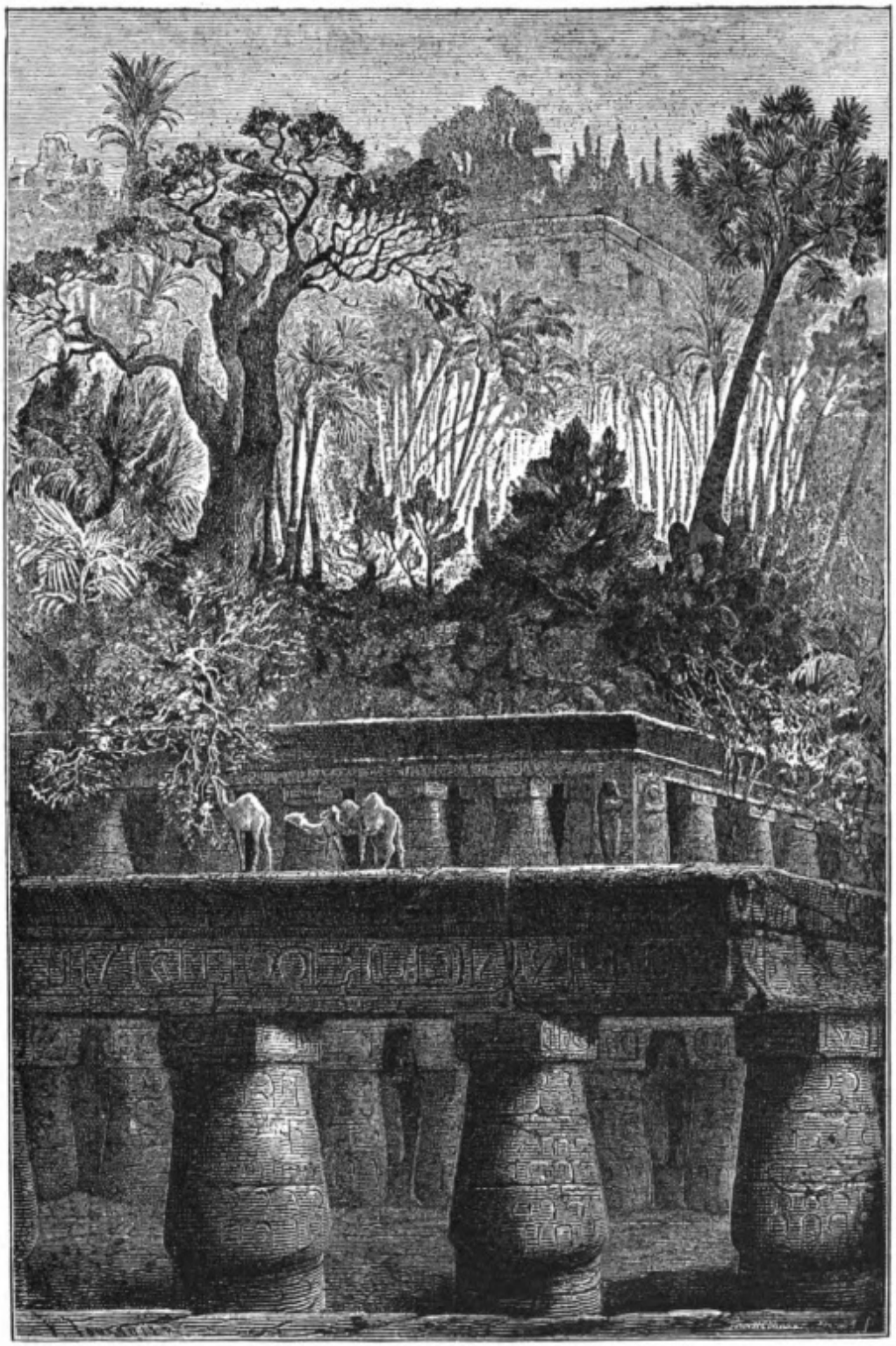

HANGING GARDENS OF BABYLON.

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the gratification of his queen, a Median princess accustomed to more romantic scenery than the plain of Babylon could afford, rose in a succession of terraces, one above the other, to a height of seventy feet, the topmost terrace being planted with forest trees and flowering shrubs.

The Temple of Bel was on the other side of the Euphrates, and towered high above every other building of the city, forming its central point, and attracting to its prodigious bulk the eye of every traveller as he crossed the Mesopotamian plain. Like the Great Pyramid, it rose square upon square; eight huge tiers or stages, with a total elevation of 600 feet. Its base was a square of 200 yards. "No other edifice consecrated to worship,"—to quote Dean Stanley once again,—"not Carnac in Egyptian Thebes, nor Byzantine St. Sophia, nor Gothic Clugny, nor St. Peter's of Rome, has reached the grandeur of this primeval sanctuary, casting its shadow far and wide, over city and plain. Thither, as to the most sacred and impregnable fortress, were believed to have been transported the huge brazen laver, the precious brazen pillars, and all the lesser vessels of the Temple of Jerusalem, together doubtless with all the other like sacred

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spoils which Babylonian conquest had swept from Egypt, Tyre, Damascus, or Nineveh. And when, from the silver shrine at the summit of this building, the whole mass of mingled verdure and habitation for miles and miles was overlooked, what was wanting in grace or proportion must have been compensated by the extraordinary richness of colour. Some faint conception of this may be given by the view of Moscow from the Kremlin, over the blue, green, and gilded domes and towers springing from the gardens which fill up the vacant intervals of that most Oriental of European capitals. But neither that view nor any other can give a notion of the vastness of the variegated landscape of Babylon as seen from any of its elevated points."

The materials used in the buildings of Babylon were simply bricks and bituminous cement; but these, by variety of tints, were made to produce a vivid and even brilliant effect. The different stages or stories of the Temple were each of a different colour,—black, orange, crimson, gold, deep yellow, blue, and silver. The houses were painted in all the tints of the rainbow; and this wealth of artificial colouring at once contrasted and harmonized with the emerald verdure of the palms that reared their

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feathery crests in every garden, with the flashing silver of the canals that intersected the streets, and with the glow and gorgeousness of the waving crops that covered far and wide the surrounding levels.

"Great Babylon!" "Mighty Babylon!" Such was it in the days of its pride and strength, when Nebuchadnezzar reigned as king. That to him was due its magnificence we know from the constant occurrence of his name, and of no other, on the burned bricks now accumulated along the banks of the Euphrates in waves of ruin. To him, too, must be ascribed the foundation or rebuilding of most of the cities of Upper Babylonia. Further, it was he who ordered the construction of hydraulic works on a scale which astonishes even the modern engineer; which were possible only through the cheapness of human labour in a land where every man's life was held, as it were, dependent on the king's breath. We may mention the canals that carried the waters of the Euphrates over the plain; the embankments and break-waters erected along both the Euphrates and the Tigris, and the shores of the Persian Gulf; the great canal which extended from Hit to the sea; and the vast reservoir for purposes of irrigation near Sippara.

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The execution of undertakings so colossal becomes all the more wonderful when we remember that the reign of Nebuchadnezzar was a reign of war, and not of peace. He was scarcely seated on his throne before the Jews again began to trouble him, and the Phœnicians almost simultaneously threw off their allegiance (B.C. 598–597). The young monarch concluded an alliance with Cyaxares the Mede, and then marched against Tyre, which, after a siege of thirteen years, was captured and destroyed. He despatched another army against Jerusalem; but the siege being carried on too slowly for his energetic character, he suddenly appeared before the sacred city in person, beat down its defences, spoiled it of its treasures, carried off its king, Jehoiachin, and ten thousand prisoners to Babylon, and placed Zedekiah on the throne. Eight years afterwards (B.C. 586), Zedekiah revolted, encouraged by the promise of help from Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar once more marched against "the rebellious city," resolved on visiting it with a signal punishment. The prophet Jeremiah advised submission; but the king and princes put their hope in Egypt, and when the king of Babylon drew off his army to meet Pharaoh-Hophra, they rejoiced and made merry as if the

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victory were already won. But the Egyptian king shrank from encountering the Chaldean army; Nebuchadnezzar re-invested the city, which was speedily stormed and razed to the ground. Zedekiah made an attempt to escape, but was taken prisoner, and brought before Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah in Hamath. His eyes were put out, and he died in a Babylonian dungeon.

After an interval of five years, we find Nebuchadnezzar making war against Egypt with his usual success. His victorious army swept through the country; and deposing Apries, the Pharaoh-Hophra of Scripture, he set Amasis upon the throne as his vassal and tributary. In this career of unclouded fortune, in the colossal character of his enterprises, as in his singular relation to God's "chosen people," we recognize circumstances which elevate Nebuchadnezzar above almost all the other conquerors of the ancient world, and invest him with a commanding individuality that few of them possess. It has been well said, that the personal element, which gives so much of its life to history, first comes out distinctly in him among the world's earlier rulers. Though his empire is but a name, and his splendid capital a heap of indistinguishable ruins, we are

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conscious of a deep and abiding interest in this remarkable man, with his magnanimity, his generosity, his grand ideas, his lofty aspirations, his brilliant successes, and his signal overthrow. Nor is our interest the less because we see in him a remarkable example of that Divine discipline which regulates the fortunes of humanity. Who does not know the Scriptural history of his connection with the prophet Daniel, and the lessons taught to the great sovereign through the prophet's agency? It was in the second year of his reign that his dream of the colossal image, with head of gold and feet of clay, was interpreted to him by Daniel as signifying the future establishment of the kingdom of God on the ruins of the world's imperial systems. The warning was forgotten; and, intoxicated by a long series of victories, he set up on the plain of Dura a golden image of the Chaldean god, probably as an apotheosis of himself, and commanded that the representatives of all the nations he had subjugated should offer it public adoration. Those of Judea alone refused, and were forthwith cast into the fiery furnace, to endure the trial of the devouring flames uninjured, and thus to wring from the monarch an acknowledgment of the supremacy of Jehovah, the God of Israel.

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Then followed Nebuchadnezzar's punishment, which in one moment reduced him to the level of the beasts of the field. His malady seems to have been that peculiar and terrible form of insanity known as "lycanthropy," in which the victim fancies himself a wolf or some other beast. It is reputed to have lasted for seven years; and some passages in the "Standard Inscription" are understood by recent authorities as alluding to it. Nebuchadnezzar afterwards regained his reason, and the later years of his reign were gladdened with the sunshine of prosperity and power. He died, after a reign of forty-three years, in B.C. 561, and was succeeded by his son, Evil-Merodach.

Of this king we know but little. The Scriptural narrative records that he restored the Jewish king Jehoiachin to an honourable place at his court; and the ancient chroniclers assert that he reigned only two years, and was put to death by his brother-in-law and successor, Neriglissar (B.C. 559). Some traces of a palace built by him have been discovered among the ruins of Babylon. The sins of the parents are avenged upon the children; and his son, Laborosoarchod (B.C. 556), was murdered after a reign of only nine months. The throne then fell

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to Nabonidus (or Nabo-nahit, that is, "Nebo makes prosperous"), the Labynetus II. of the Greek historian Herodotus, and the last king of Babylon. He associated with him in the government of his empire his son Bil-shar-utzur (Bel-shar-ezer), the "Belshazzar" of Daniel.

During the progress of these events the power of the Chaldean empire had waned as rapidly as that of the Persian had risen. Under Cyrus, a conqueror scarcely inferior in energy and daring to Nebuchadnezzar himself, the arms of Persia overran the whole of Western Asia, and Media and Lydia ceased to exist as independent states. Alarmed at his rapid strides, Nabonidus set to work to repair and strengthen the defences of Babylon; and his forces, defeated by Cyrus in a battle which they had risked in the open country, retired within its massive walls. "The mighty men of Babylon," says the prophet Jeremiah, "forbore to fight; they remained in their holds." Respecting the siege which ensued the chroniclers afford but the scantiest details; and it is not easy to understand the parts played by Nabonidus and his son respectively. The former, however, would appear to have taken refuge in Borsippa, where he was surrounded by a

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Persian army. After the conquest of Babylon he submitted to Cyrus, and met with generous treatment. The charge of the great city fell, therefore, to Belshazzar, who, relying on the immense strength of its fortifications, and the vast resources it contained, revelled in arrogant security, laughed at the dangers which threatened him, and did not shrink from insulting the God of heaven. How long the defence was maintained, or what were the various incidents of the siege, we have no means of determining; but we know that the eventual triumph of Cyrus was remarkable for its suddenness and rapidity, and that the whole Chaldean empire was shattered by it as at a single blow. The capture of Babylon in a night, while the king and his courtiers and his people were feasting in careless ease, is, as Ewald remarks, the fixed kernel of the tradition in all its forms; and the outline of the scene in the Book of Daniel stands out distinctly from the shadowy background, and throws over the whole narrative a fiery glow.

The catastrophe with which the history of Babylon thus strangely ended was deficient in no element that could appeal to the imaginations of men. No other great city, not Tyre, nor Jerusalem, nor Rome,

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fell with so terrible a crash; the fall of no other was attended by such surprising circumstances:—

"The king was on his throne,
The satraps thronged the hall;
A thousand bright lamps shone
O'er that high festival.
A thousand cups of gold,
In Judah deemed divine—
Jehovah's vessels hold
The godless heathen's wine.

"In that same hour and hall,
The fingers of a hand
Came forth against the wall,
And wrote as if on sand:
The fingers of a man;—
A solitary hand
Along the letters ran,
And traced them like a wand."

The picture in the Book of Daniel, unsurpassed in the graphic character of its details, brings before us the whole population of Babylon as intent upon revelry, the occasion, probably, being some "high festival" of Belus or Nebo. Yet was the mirth in street and garden as nothing compared with the mirth in the royal palace, where Belshazzar sat in state, surrounded by his nobles, with incense going up before him, and the sounds of music filling the gorgeous hall, and the tables laden with the vessels of gold and silver brought from the Temple at

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Jerusalem. Into these were poured the choice wines imported from Phœnicia, and the king and his nobles drank, and with them the women of the royal harem; and they pledged the gods whose images, in wood and stone, and iron and brass, plated with gold and silver, were set all round about the hall. "In that same hour came forth the fingers of a man's hand and wrote over against" the great golden candlestick which illuminated the wall of the palace. And Belshazzar saw the part of the hand which wrote; and, as he looked, his knees smote together, and his countenance waxed pale. Pale, too, were the faces of his nobles and of the women of his harem as they gazed at the dread warning written in characters of fire; unable to interpret them, yet intuitively assured that they boded evil to Babylon and its glories. The Chaldean soothsayers were summoned, but none of them could explain the mysterious inscription; "the unknown letters stood, untold and awful still."

The offer of the purple robe and golden chain of royal favour,—of the next place in the empire after the two royal persons of state,—proved ineffectual to quicken their understanding. Then the queen mother, the "Sultana Validé,"—perhaps, Nitocris,

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daughter of Nebuchadnezzar,—advised that Daniel, the aged Hebrew seer, should be sent for. He came, and quickly read the Divine judgment, for it was embodied in Hebrew letters,—*Mene, Mene, Tekel, Peres*; and signified that the days of Babylon the mighty were numbered and ended, that it had been weighed and found light, and that, therefore, it was divided and given to the Persians. "In that night," says Scripture, with awful abruptness,—"in that night was Belshazzar the king slain."

From other sources we are able to learn in what way the last scene of all was brought about. The great river which had been the source of Babylon's prosperity now proved the agent of its ruin. By diverting its course, Cyrus opened a way for his army along the river-bed into the very heart of the city; and his stratagem was assisted by the contemptuous negligence of the Chaldeans themselves, who had left the bronze gates unclosed which opened on the river. The area within the walls was of such immense extent that considerable portions of it might well be held by the conquerors before any alarm could reach the palace; especially as the clash of battle would be unheard amid the far-

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resounding din of festivities. So it came to pass as Jeremiah had predicted: "One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to shew the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end, and that the passages are stopped, and the reeds they have burned with fire, and the men of war are affrighted."

"Belshazzar's grave is made,
His kingdom passed away;
He, in the balance weighed,
Is light and worthless clay:
The shroud, his robe of state;
His canopy the stone;
The Mede is at his gate,
The Persian on his throne!"

Thus fell the Empire of Babylon in B.C. 538. It was a fall which resounded over all the known world. "At the noise of the taking of Babylon the earth was moved as by an earthquake, and the cry was heard among the nations." "A sound of a cry cometh from Babylon, and great destruction from the land of the Chaldeans: because the Lord hath spoiled Babylon, and destroyed out of her the great voice; when her waves do roar like great waters, a noise of their voice is uttered." Babylon the great, Babylon the mighty was fallen!

And Isaiah, remembering its iniquities, and looking

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forward into the future with a vision strengthened by Divine power, proclaimed aloud the coming desolation of the proud Chaldean city :—

"And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces."

The prediction, indeed, was not immediately fulfilled; but though the word of doom is sometimes slow in its operation, it is always sure. After the Persian conquest, Babylonia became a province of the empire, and Babylon one of the royal residences, ranking as the second in honour. It was from thence that Cyrus issued his edict for the return of the Jews to Palestine. His successors resided there for a great part of the year, though disturbed at first by the revolts of its Chaldean inhabitants.

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When Persia fell before the conquering march of Alexander the Great, Babylon fell with it. It was there that the Macedonian hero held his court after his return from his Indian expedition (B.C. 324). It was there that he yielded to the Asiatic influences, and dreamed of converting his military empire into a theocracy. His imagination, struck by the natural advantages of its position, was busy with schemes for making it his imperial capital, and reviving the prosperity of the country; and it was while visiting the lower course of the Euphrates, with the view of repairing its system of canals, that he caught the marsh-fever which his intemperate habits aggravated into a fatal malady. His successor did not rebuild Babylon, which had partly fallen into decay, but chose a site near it on the banks of the Tigris, which he called Seleucia, and constructed of materials conveyed from the old Chaldean capital. When another change of dynasty took place, and the Parthian occupied the throne of the Greek, the city was again removed, and Ctesiphon was founded on the opposite side of the river. Then came the Arabs, who desired a new capital for their new empire, and finally fixed its site at Bagdad.

Meanwhile, the decay of Babylon had been rapid.

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The full waters of the Euphrates, no longer kept within bounds by embankments and canals, poured over the level plain, and transformed it into malarious swamps. The temples, and palaces, and mansions, built of brick, became masses of ruin, "a dwelling-place for dragons," the haunt of the tiger and the jackal. And the desolation extended when that land which Chaldean civilization had rescued from the savage Turanian tribes, and defended against the Arabs of the desert, once more, by a strange recurrence in the cycle of history—as Mr. Philip Smith remarks,—fell under the nominal government of the Turanian Turks, and became the real possession of the Arab nomades. And so the glory of Babylon has utterly passed away, and the doom foretold by the prophet has been literally fulfilled. The whole plain is a wilderness :—

"With half-closed eye a lion there
Is basking in his noontide lair,
Or prowls in twilight gloom.
The Golden City's king he seems,
Such as in old prophetic dreams
Sprang from rough Ocean's womb.

"But where are now his eagle wings,
That sheltered erst a thousand kings,
Hiding the glorious sky
From half the nations, till they own
No holier name, no mightier throne?—
That vision is gone by.

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"Quenched is the golden statue's ray;
The breath of heaven has blown away
What toiling earth had piled,
Scattering wise heart and crafty hand,
As breezes strew on ocean's strand
The fabrics of a child."—(*Keble.*)

Shapeless heaps of rubbish, says Mr. Layard, cover for many an acre the deserted plain. The lofty banks of ancient canals traverse the country like natural ridges of hills. Some have been long choked with sand; others still carry the copious waters of the Euphrates to distant villages and groves of palm. On all sides fragments of glass, marble, pottery, and inscribed brick, are blended with that peculiar nitrous and whitened soil which, created by the remains of ancient habitations, checks or destroys vegetation, and renders the site of Babylon "a naked and hideous waste."

The most remarkable of the relics of the great city lie at a short distance inland from the left bank of the river; and here, according to Chesney, three of its four great quarters can still be traced,—namely, Amram, the Kasr, and the Mujellebéh. The pyramidal mass of El-Heimar, about six miles to the east, is supposed to indicate the fourth quarter.

Amram is described as consisting of an extensive

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quadrangular mound, to the north of which lie other considerable mounds, some of which are circular. The site of the Kasr, or Palace, is marked by numerous fragments of glass, and of ornamented stucco-work. Here also are the massive square buttresses that supported the Hanging Gardens. For centuries they have resisted, and for centuries will continue to resist, the assaults of time, being constructed of the finest yellow brick, united by a peculiarly durable cement. When General Chesney visited the place, in 1835, a single cedar tree flourished among the ruins; but this has since been swept away.

To the west lies the Mujellebéh, or Babel. A very remarkable feature here is a projecting work placed below the summit of each angle, in the form of three semicircular towers connected together, so as to afford what modern military engineers call a flanking defence. On the surface of the mound are various apertures leading into subterranean passages, which are arched overhead, and formed by solid brick walls cemented with bitumen. The ground plan of the Mujellebéh is oblong, its sides nearly corresponding to the four cardinal points. The northern and southern measure each 200 yards in

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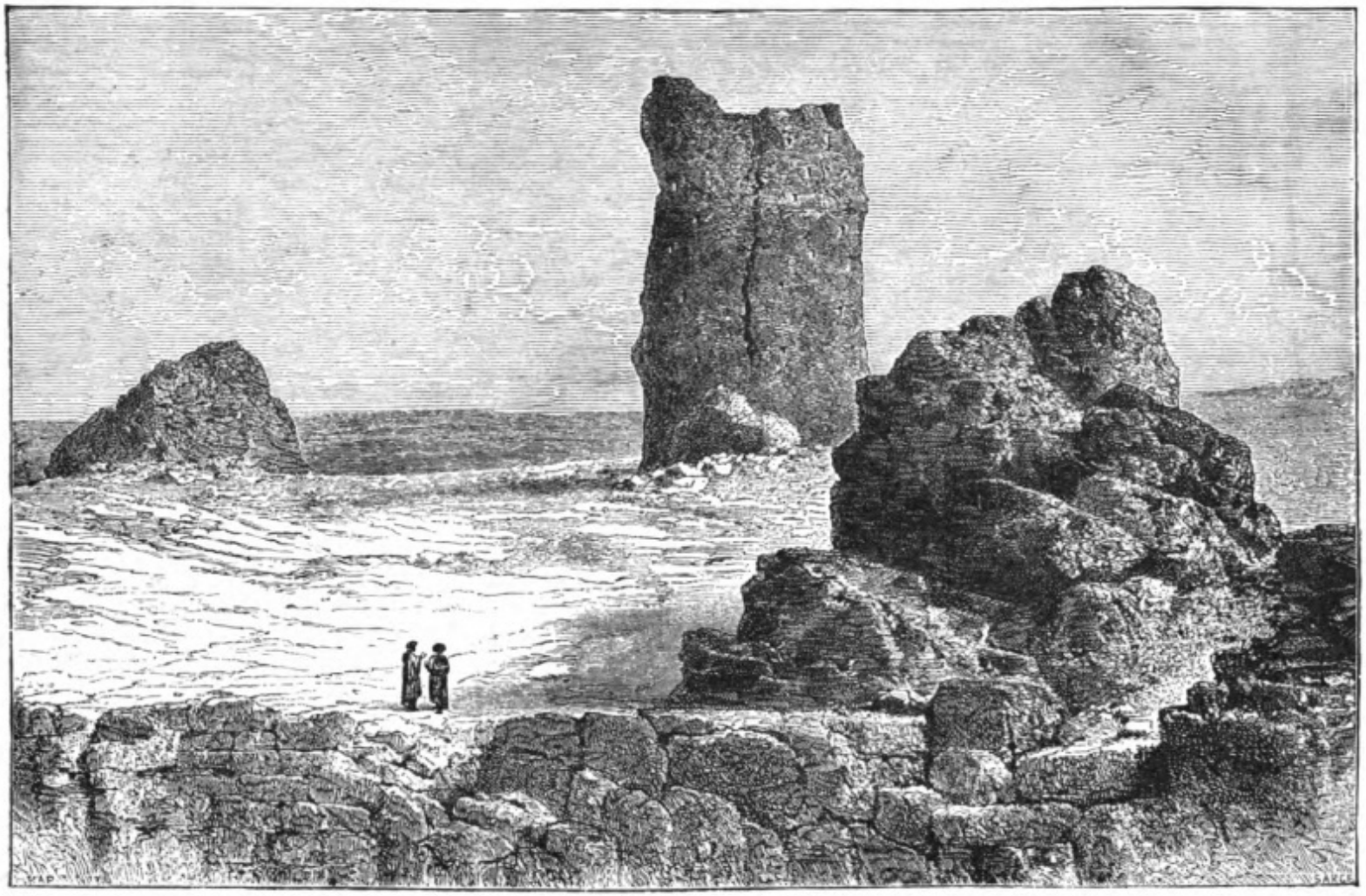

SUPPOSED REMAINS OF THE TOWER OF BABEL.

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length, the eastern is 180 yards, the western 130. The summit is now of irregular elevation, varying from 130 feet at the lowest to 180 feet at the highest.

On the opposite bank of the river, about seven or eight miles to the south-west, rises the extraordinary pile of the *Birs-i-Nimrúd*. This, in dimensions, almost exactly resembles the Mujellebéh, but the height to the top of the wall is at least one hundred feet more. Mr. Rich, who visited it in 1811, identifies it with the Temple of Bel. Other authorities regard it as marking the site of the ancient Borsippa; and some have seen in it the remains of the Tower of Babel.*

A recent traveller, M. Lejean, supplies a graphic description of the present condition of the plain and ruins of Babylon, which we shall adapt and condense for the information of our readers.

That Babylonia, he says, which in the era of the Persians yielded fully a third of the whole agricultural revenue of the empire, is now a solitude and a desert. In the days of Herodotus it was

* The reader may be referred to the works of Rich, Sir R. Ker Porter, Ainsworth, Rennell, Rawlinson, and Layard.

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remarkable for its abundant harvest of cereals, repaying the husbandman's labour a hundred-fold; yet it must be remembered that it was not naturally fertile. The soil was arid and sun-parched; rain fell rarely; and no pleasant springs or fertilizing streams enriched it with verdure. But Chaldean enterprise and industry conquered every obstacle. From the Euphrates, the Tigris, and the Diyala broad canals were led across the plain, while others served to connect the great rivers, and afforded the means of easy transport and communication. These canals were so many arteries from which issued smaller water-courses; these in their turn feeding innumerable rills, until the whole resembled the net-work of veins which covers the surface of a leaf. The principal channels were navigable, and presented a busy scene with the constant passage to and fro of barges laden with corn and fruit. Xenophon mentions four of these. The most important now in existence is the Saklaoridja, which is forty feet broad, and the current of which flows at the rate of a quarter of a mile an hour.

The ancient *Gyndes* is now named the Diyala. Connected with it is an historical anecdote. In advancing against Babylon, Cyrus nearly lost his

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life in its waters, his horse being carried off its feet. Enraged at what he deemed the insolence of the river, he vowed that he would reduce its pride until it could not frighten a child; and employed his whole army in excavating trenches of outlet which contracted the Gyndes into an insignificant stream. In this useless work a whole summer was wasted, and the campaign against Babylon failed for that year. We need hardly add that the story has no authentic foundation.

Let us now, in imagination, substitute ourselves for some traveller, crossing, in the days of the warrior-queen Semiramis, the plains of Babylon, then at the summit of its pride and power. Before us, on both sides of the broad causeway, furrowed by the wheels of heavy chariots, extends an open and somewhat monotonous level, undulating with a green sea of corn. At intervals, rows of palm-trees spread their shade over populous villages, consisting of circular houses, built of palm-wood, with conical roofs, and high gates coated with bitumen,—the habitations those of artisan and peasant. Those of the nobles, like the temples, are easily recognized by their quadrangular form, and by being built of bricks, some unbaked, some

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baked and covered with a thick shining varnish of a deep green colour. A few large towns, like those of Sippara and Accad, are conspicuous from afar by the lofty towers of brick which dominate them. The vivid verdure of the cultivated fields and pastures is intersected by numerous whitish lines; these are the banks of the canals, in which round boats of leather or osier, strengthened by a thick layer of bitumen, are passing up and down. They carry cargoes of grain; and, as they cannot move against the current, on reaching their destination and being unloaded, they are taken to pieces; their framework is sold; and the outer skin placed on the back of an ass, and transported to the original point of departure. The men who work these barges wear a long stuff tunic, with a woollen *abaïa* flung over it, in the Arab fashion; a kind of Persian *mitre* covers their long plaited hair; and they carry in their hands a staff wrought with the ingenious carving in which the Easterns excel. Everywhere we see an exuberance of life and activity; the population is so dense that along some of the canals, notably the *Nil* and the *Chât-Ibrahim*, the inhabited places succeed one another uninterruptedly for a distance of twelve to fifteen miles.

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Such was the Past: as for the Present, it speaks for itself. An immense yellow desert, covered with heaps of ruins, and traversed in all directions by dried-up canals; a few poor villages inhabited by fellahs, and scattered along the river-bank; here and there some clusters of black tents belonging to various tribes of Arabs, each more squalid and addicted to robbery than the other;—such is the present condition of the realm of Nebuchadnezzar. In the time of the Khalifs the ancient prosperity of the land had not disappeared; but the Turks came, and we know the old Oriental proverb,—"Where the Turk treads, the grass ceases to grow." The blocked-up canals have ceased to run; the peasants have fled before the Arabs, who are no longer held down by a strong government; the Euphrates, left to itself, has distributed the surplus of its annual inundations over the western plains, which are covered with pestiferous lagoons.

Mounting on one of the embankments that still remain, we are able to survey the whole of the immense Babylonian panorama.

There are ruins, and eloquent ruins in Europe—those of Rome and Athens have a poetry of their own; but in the Western World vitality is so in-

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tense, and life so quick to fill up the gaps made by death, that our very monuments are soon lost to sight, or at least to memory, among the new edifices which modern activity piles up around them. One of the most celebrated of our dead cities, Sparta, is not so fast asleep in the shade of its oleanders but that it can sometimes listen to the babble of its coquettish neighbour, Mistra; while the nymph of Eurotas must be sore astonished when she finds herself face to face with its prefect in official embroidery. These contrasts are not without their attraction; but nothing in Europe can so elevate and chasten the mind as the sublime solitudes of Palmyra and Baalbek, Memphis and Babylon.

From the descriptions of recent travellers we might expect to see at Babylon a confused and undulating mass of ruins; but, on the contrary, the landscape is open, clear, and with well marked and easily comprehended outlines. Immediately at our feet, running parallel to one another in an east-south-east direction, six sloping banks mark the course of three canals, two of which are ancient, while one is modern. Between the two former runs a broad ditch, which may be supposed to answer to the northern fosse or moat of the Golden City; between

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the modern canal and the first of the two others the elongated area, about ten acres, is covered with bricks and fragments of pottery ware. If this spot were no part of the ancient city, it must at all events have been the site of a group of important habitations. Beyond the canals stretches a vast whitish level, scantily sprinkled with shrubs, and furrowed by ancient water-courses. At various points rise mounds of ruins, like Aboo Roussa and Hossein; and among them, sharply defined against the horizon, rises a mass of reddish violet colour, with flanks cut almost perpendicularly, and a levelled summit, resembling in all respects those hills of red clay which are so numerous in Upper Nubia. That is Babel; or at least the ancient citadel to which the Arabs have given that name of mystery and romance. To the left of it, two isolated clumps of palm trees, and two mounds separated by no considerable interval, are vaguely seen against the far-off horizon. The greater of these is Heimar, to which we have already alluded; it is thought to have been the south-east angle of Babylon; the other is called Kabu-el-Hayad, or "the tomb of the tailor," and is simply a heap of ruins.

No words can fitly convey to the reader the

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mute, desolate grandeur of the desert where sleeps the city which, in its time, was the capital and centre of the civilized world. It has nothing of the almost cheerful aspect of the ruins of Nineveh, where a luxuriant vegetation has overgrown the ramparts and shattered palaces, where a bright melodious stream sings and sparkles through the reeds, more freely than in the days of Nimrud or Salmanazar. Here the vitreous soil seems to labour under a curse; the peaceable denizens of the steppes of the Tigris, such as the hare and the gazelle, are nowhere seen; not even the black tent of an Arab relieves the solitude.

Crossing in succession the three canals, we stand in the midst of Babylon, and observe that the great trench to which allusion has been made strikes towards the lake—now dried up, and its bed covered with lacustrine shells—which Semiramis, according to some authorities, and Nitocris, according to others, constructed to receive the superfluous waters of the Euphrates.

As we cross the glittering plain we suffer much from the enervating leaden heat, which seems to come up in gusts from the nitrous soil. We reach

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the Mujellebéh, or Babel, and ascertain that its four sides, as Chesney states, face the four quarters of the heavens. There can be no doubt that it represents the general plan of the ancient citadel or palace, the outer buildings of which have been swept away by the twofold action of man and the elements. After Cyrus and his victorious battalions came the masons of Hillah, who converted Babylon into an immense quarry of bricks. Cuneiform inscriptions abound here, but none of much interest have been discovered.

The following Mohammedan legend is attached to Babel. The Creator sent thither on a mission two of his purest angels, Harout and Marout, who forgot themselves so far as to fall in love with an honourable and virtuous married lady. The latter obtained from them, in a moment of weakness, the watchword which opens the gate of paradise, whither she hastened to depart, leaving the two enamoured seraphs to awaken to a sense of the enormity of their intended sin. Straightway they confessed it to the Eternal, who, touched by their repentance, commuted the terrible penance they had incurred into a light punishment; he consigned them to an invisible well at Babel, in which they

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remain suspended by their eyebrows until the day of doom.

Descending the hill, we proceed along the course of the beautiful Euphrates. Its two banks, and particularly the right, which is somewhat lower and better irrigated than the other, form one long uninterrupted series of gardens, shaded with date-palms, and starred with pomegranate-flowers; at intervals, some rustic irrigatory machines, set in movement by two meagre horses, raise their long leathern sacks and fantastic timber frame-work; a few isolated farms are visible, and, behind the palms, a couple of Arab settlements. This soft and living landscape lies but two paces from the dreariest solitude; never was there a sharper or more striking contrast.

Crossing the river by a bridge of boats, we make our way to Hillah, which occupies part of the site of the southern quarter of Babylon, and dates from the epoch of the khalifs. It is mentioned in the travels of Benjamin of Tudela, who found in it a population of six thousand Jews. At present the Jews number about five thousand, or one third of the total population. Mr. J. S. Buckingham gives

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an amusing account of a little adventure which befell him here. He and his companions, on their return from a visit to the mounds at Heimar, entered the eastern division of Hillah; that is, that part of it which lies on the eastern side of the Euphrates. It appeared to them to consist chiefly, as it does now, of one good street, leading directly to the river, and used as a bazaar, with numerous smaller streets diverging on either hand. At the western end it was closed by a large door, through which they passed, coming immediately on the bridge of boats which forms the means of transit across the river.

They happened to arrive at an hour when the bridge—not of the solidest construction—was particularly crowded; and every person's attention being arrested by the sight of an European dress, the crowd grew denser and denser as the curious halted to stare at the strangers. Their Kurd guide, who forced his way before them, rode a very spirited horse; and as he every now and then reared on his hind heels, he made the boat under him roll from side to side. This, communicating a similar motion to the planks of the bridge, never failed to be followed by a shriek from that part of the crowd who

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stood near. Mr. Buckingham's companion, who rode next in order, shared in the general alarm; and, being naturally impatient, gave vent to his feelings in language which, though none understood, all felt to be expressive of anger; while Mr. Buckingham himself, riding behind as attendant or escort, was sore bested to keep off with his lance the train of insolent boys who had gathered round, exclaiming, "Feringhee! Giaour! Kafr!" (Frank! Unbeliever! Infidel!) and jumping on the elastic planks of the bridge, purposely to increase the confusion and apprehension that prevailed.

It was in the midst of this scene of mirth to some, and of fear to others, and of annoyance and vexation to himself, that a couple of Bedaween halted to address Mr. Buckingham, who wore the Arab attire, calling out very gravely, "Ya Arab, ibn Arab" (You Arab, the son of an Arab)—a complimentary phrase, equivalent in purport to the well-known "Hebrew of the Hebrews." He replied in the affirmative, as the shortest answer he could give, and the one most likely to prevent further questions. But he was mistaken. They first inquired why he travelled with a Kurd; and before he could reply, abused him for associating with a

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people whom the Arabs hold in detestation. As it was neither the time nor the place for an explanation, Mr. Buckingham allowed them to believe that he was an Arab, with no proper regard for the honour of his race. For though they would have seen nothing abnormal or objectionable in a Kurd's acting as escort to a Frank and Christian, yet for an Arab to share that duty with one of the despised people seemed to them a reproach and a disgrace.

"El humd ul Illah!" (Praise be to God!) was heard from a score of tongues, as the party stepped from the oscillating bridge on to *terra firma*; and "Mash Allah!" and "Sult Salāmee!" and other shouts of wonder and self-gratulation on reaching the opposite side of the stream in safety, followed, as if they had escaped from the horrors of a storm at sea, rather than from the dangers of a floating bridge in a calm and not a rapid river.

No such incident befalls *us* on our visit to Hillah, and we have leisure to notice the varied character both of its houses and its inhabitants. The Jews have thriven and waxed strong; but the reverse has been the case with the Chaldeans, of whom there are not above three thousand. These Chaldeans are

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Roman Catholics of the Oriental rite, and, as such, are under the protection of France. They are a handsome race, perfectly recalling the type represented on the Assyrio-Babylonian monuments. The women are generally tall, robust, and of a comeliness rather sculptural than delicate. They are beautiful, but not pretty; commanding, but not engaging.

From Hillah we proceed, this time in a different direction, on another excursion to the ruins of Babylon. After passing the great canal called *Nil*, we reach a small Mohammedan mosque in the quarter known as Amram, situated on an irregular pile of ruins. This enormous "rubbish heap," in Mr. George Smith's opinion, does not cover, as some have supposed, a palace or temple, but probably only marks the spot where the old city was most thickly inhabited. The excavations carried on here do not yield a crop of much interest or importance.

Striking to the northward, we arrive at the vast irregular mound of the Kasr, which we have already described. "All authorities agree," says Mr. Smith, "that here was situated the Palace of Nebuchadnezzar; but the Hanging Gardens have been placed in a different position by almost every writer. I

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have weighed the evidence," he adds, "and examined the site, and my own conclusion is that they were on the west side of the Kasr mound, between the palace and the river Euphrates. It is unfortunate that while whole volumes have been expended on dissertations and speculations on the size and buildings of Babylon, no satisfactory attempt has been made to ascertain the truth by excavation. The isolated pits and tunnels made here and there in the mounds are acknowledged to have had no effect on these questions, and the recovery of Babylon has yet to be accomplished."

Stately piers and buttresses of fine yellow bricks are still to be seen on the Kasr; and in one of the hollows on the north is the roughly sculptured group of a lion standing over a man, to which every traveller alludes. Not less noticeable is the solitary tree, supposed by not a few authorities to be the last relic of the glories of the Hanging Gardens, and celebrated as the Tree of Semiramis. The Moslems attach to it a sacred character. They call it Atéti, and assert that Ali fastened his horse to it before engaging in that battle of Kabala in which he perished. It was once a vigorous and noble tamarisk; but only the trunk remains, branches and

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boughs having been pulled to pieces by travellers and tourists for the sake of the wood.

Let us now diverge again to Birs Nimrud, which lies to the south-west. Mr. George Smith characterizes it as one of the most imposing ruins in the country; its height being rendered all the more impressive by its position in the centre of a vast plain, with nothing to break the view. The principal mound, as we have already stated, rises about one hundred and fifty feet above the plain in the shape of a pyramid or cone, on the summit of which stands a solid mass of vitrified bricks. We repeat these details for the sake of adding that Sir Henry Rawlinson, when he examined this site, concluded that the tower was in *seven* stages: the lowest, 272 feet each way, and 26 feet high; the second, 230 feet square, and 26 feet high; the third, 188 feet square, and 26 feet high; the fourth, 146 feet square, and only 15 feet high. Thus it will be seen that each stage decreased by 42 feet in length and breadth. From receptacles in the corners of one of these stages, Sir Henry Rawlinson obtained inscribed cylinders, which stated that the building was the Temple of the Seven Planets; that it had

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been partially built by a former king of Babylon; and, having fallen into decay, was restored and completed by Nebuchadnezzar.

Our authority, M. Lejean, sees in the vitrified blocks on its summit the most remarkable peculiarity of this so-called "Tower of Babel." At first he took them to be igneous rocks, of which they have all the appearance, and especially the cohesion. A second glance showed him the greenish-yellow layers of bricks held together by the well-known bituminous cement, and covered with a coat of bitumen; the whole having been baked and vitrified *en bloc*, until it attained a solidity equalled only by that of the Roman masonry. M. Lejean suggests, and the suggestion is not improbable, that the entire tower originally was encased in the same kind of vitrification.

The same writer examines into the theory which puts forward Birs Nimrud as the Tower of Babel—a theory endorsed by the late eminent Assyriologist, Mr. George Smith. He dismisses it with, as it appears to us, unnecessary readiness, and adopts the following conclusions—which, however, are not inconsistent with it: That the Birs is the Temple of

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Belus described by Herodotus and Diodorus; that it was at the same time, as Sir H. Rawlinson has proved, the "Tower of the Seven Planets," or the principal observatory of the Babylonians; and, finally, that the great mass of ruins lying to the east, and surmounted by a *ziaret*, or oratory, consecrated to Abraham, represents the *Bursif* of the Chaldeans, the Borsippa of Strabo, the centre of one of the two great astronomical castes of Babylon, the Borsippanians; the other, that of the Orchoenians, was settled at Orchoe, now called Warka.

It is impossible to wander among these ruins without emotion, when we reflect that they saw, in all probability, the origin and development of the most exact and beautiful of the sciences. It is said that Alexander the Great found the Babylonians in possession of an uninterrupted series of astronomical observations extending over nineteen hundred and four years; that he sent the catalogue to Aristotle; and that, afterwards, Ptolemy made it the basis of his Astronomical Geography. We know that they were inscribed on enamelled bricks, like those which have been discovered by thousands at Birs, at Kasr, at Amram.

The ancients attributed to Borsippa another spe-

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ciality—the possession of an enormous quantity of bats of exceptional size. They seem, however, to have emigrated to Hillah and Bagdad; and no other souvenir of them remained at Birs than a very fine figure of a bat in bronze discovered among the ruins by Colonel (now Sir Arnold) Kemball, when British Consul at Bagdad.

A short distance from Birs begins a sheet of water, "deeply, darkly, beautifully blue," extending almost to the western horizon; this is the lake or lagoon of Hindia, formed by the overflow of the canal of the same name. It stretches in a semi-circle around the Birs, and is studded with numerous islands and banks of reeds, the dazzling green of which contrasts very agreeably with the somewhat sombre and "ashen" tint of the plain. Among the islands are scattered various pretty Arab villages, surrounded by luxuriant verdure.

Nothing can be more strange or sharp or painful than the contrast between the populous life of the lagoon and the desolation of the plain. Between Birs Nimrud and Hillah there is not a house; nothing but ruins, ruins, ruins. A score of dried-up canals bear witness to the ancient prosperity of a country where now-a-days the traveller may wander

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for twelve to fifteen hours without encountering any other sign of the presence of man than some tombs of Mohammedan sheikhs, and some clusters of black tents, inhabited by Arabs lank of limb and fierce of mien.

The voyager, desirous of viewing Babylon aright, should undertake a short excursion on the Hindia; hiring for this purpose one of those boats, well shaped and good sailers, painted black like the gondolas of Venice, which circulate incessantly in the arteries of the lagoon, and may be regarded as the "wooden walls" of Arab liberty. And, in effect, the Arabs are lords and masters of the Hindia, from which the Turks have hitherto made no attempt to drive them. "When I arrived," says a recent traveller, "at Birs, just as I was about to pass the modern canal which separates the Tower from the main mass of the Borsippa ruins, I saw among the reedy growth of this pretty canal (which is utilized, I believe, in the irrigation of the neighbouring fields) one of these boats, near which stood a group of Arabs, clothed in black and brown *abaïas*. It is my belief that by paying suitably for the hire of such a boat, and preserving a cautious and peaceful demeanour, one would be well received in the lacustrine villages. These people

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have no serious hatred except for the Turks,—who, by the way, from the Danube to Abyssinia and Yemen, are accustomed to find this sentiment thoroughly unanimous."

Behind the Hindia spreads an immense desert, the dim yellowish line of which is unrelieved by tree or sand-hill. This is the *Hamaâd*, a name which recalls the Hammada of Tripoli, and is one of the innumerable synonyms employed by the Arabs to designate a vast and sterile wilderness. On the threshold of the Hamaâd, a great square pile stands white against the horizon; it is the Khan Sabba, for the use of pilgrims who visit the sacred tomb of Meched Ali. In the distance is seen Kefl, or Kefil, celebrated for the tomb of the prophet Ezekiel, which attracts every year a multitude of Hebrew and Mohammedan pilgrims. We may add that the river Chebar of the Bible, where Ezekiel saw his earlier visions, is now identified with the *Nahr Malcha*, or Royal Canal of Nebuchadnezzar, the principal cutting which diverted the waters of the Euphrates. Near this canal, on the summit of a small mound, rises a square tower, built of bricks alternately with layers of reeds, which measures about forty feet square, and has suffered greatly from the action of time. It is

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called *Chichper*, or *Sisper*, and would seem to mark the site of the ancient *Sippara*, which, according to the Chaldean tradition of Berosus, is the oldest of the cities of the world.

Berosus, in his account of the Deluge, which corresponds in many respects with the Biblical narrative, says, that Xisithrus, the Chaldean Noah, warned by the Divine Voice of the approaching submersion of the earth, took the books of the Chaldean religion and interred them in the City of the Sun, at Sippara. After the waters had subsided, he recovered them, and carried them with him to Babylon, which he began to reconstruct.

According to Strabo, who Grecizes the name into Hipparenum, it was a famous centre of the Chaldean teaching.

To the north of Babylon, and on the left bank of the Euphrates, lie the ruins of Akkad, or Agadi, mentioned in the Book of Genesis as a city of Nimrud. In an inscription discovered at Kouyunjik by the late George Smith, is given a history of its king Sargon. He was born of royal parents, but concealed by his mother, who placed him on the Euphrates in an ark of rushes coated with bitumen.

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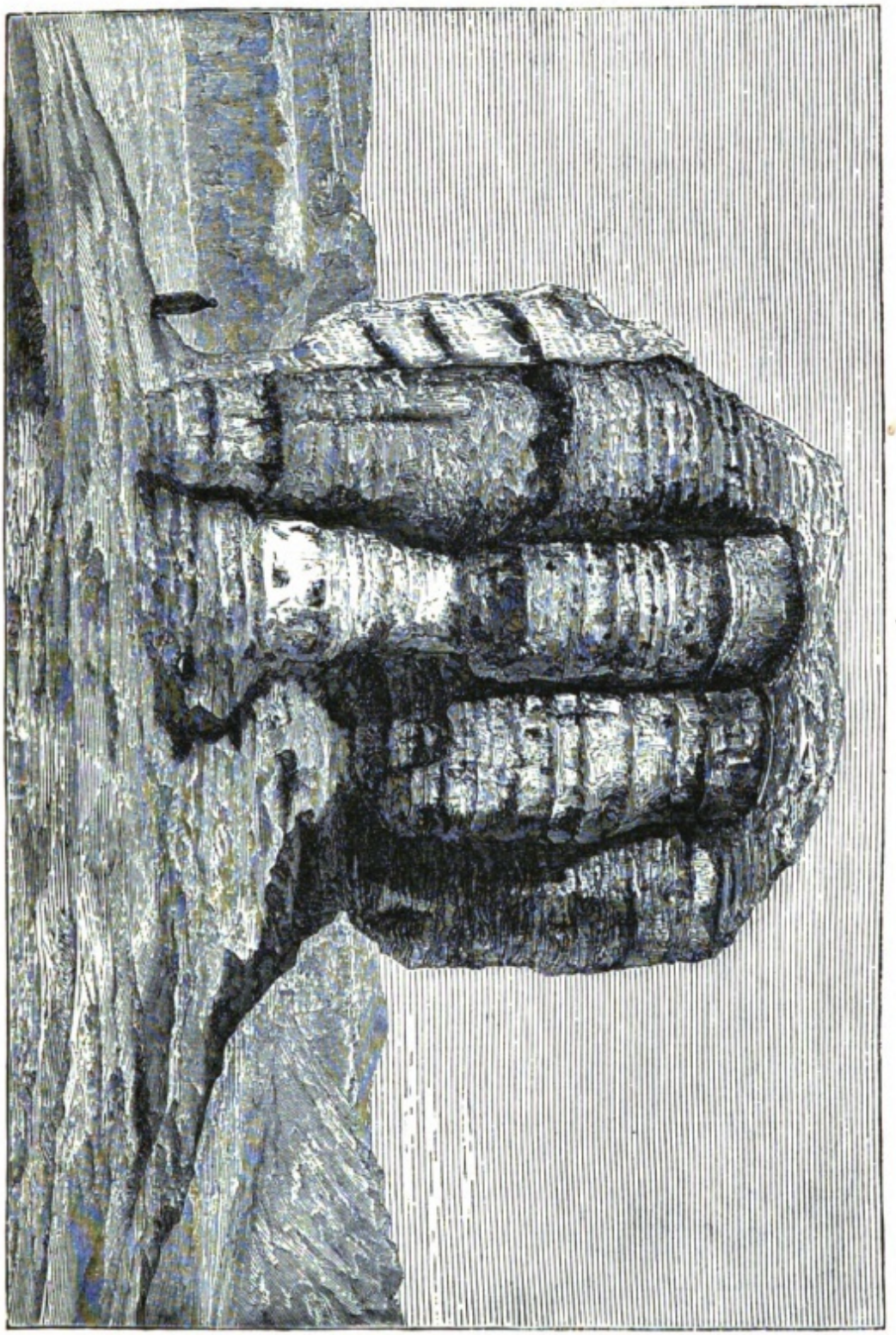

PYRAMID AT AKAR-KUF.

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like that in which the mother of Moses hid her child. There he was found by a man named Akki, a water-carrier, who adopted him as his son. He afterwards became king of Babylon, and his capital was this great city of Akkad, where he reigned for forty-five years.

Its site is now identified with Akar-Kuf. The principal monument is a pyramid of sun-dried bricks, which has suffered severely from the assaults of time. It seems to have been built up of courses, placed alternately upon one another at right angles, until a thickness of two feet eleven and a half inches had been attained. Over each portion so built, a layer of reeds was carried quite through the structure, each layer having a depth of from one and three-quarters to two inches. Then came another of bricks, and this order was followed up to the summit of the tower. The measurement from east to west is one hundred and ten feet, from north to south one hundred and twenty-eight feet; the present elevation does not exceed one hundred and twenty-eight feet. About half way up is an entrance-door, probably the portal of the tomb, which an Arab tradition asserts to have been that of Nimrud himself.

The name of Nimrud overshadows all Babylonia

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and Assyria, as that of Abraham predominates in Mesopotamia, that of Cæsar in ancient France, that of Trajan in the Danubian valley, and that of Alexander the Great throughout the East. Whence or how arises this wide-spread popularity of a man who was the founder perhaps of a race or dynasty, but in Biblical history figures only as "a mighty hunter before the Lord"?

It must be remembered that the chase, in days of old, differed absolutely from the mild and inoffensive amusement to which our modern squires are so partial. To gain a clear idea of the "mighty hunter," we must allow our fancy to travel back to the early ages of humanity, when the free, sovereign, and unrestrained forest covered the world with its dense shades. The eldest born of that forest was not man, but the roaring, tumultuous, ferocious multitude of beasts of prey, from the tiger which leaped from his lair on the victim he durst not encounter face to face, to the lion and the leopard, the stealthy depredators of the flocks—to the elephant trampling heavily through the maize-fields which he desolated—to the hippopotamus wallowing in the stream, and the wild boar lying in wait in the thickets—to the malicious ape which destroyed for the pleasure it found in

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destruction; not to speak of the python with its formidable coils, of the cerastes with its deadly fangs, of the crocodile half hidden among the river-reeds, and the alligator basking in the mud of the sunny pool. It was to combat with such foes as these that Nimrud sallied forth; and it was because of his success and his prowess as a hunter in the primeval forest that his name has become the nucleus of so many fables and traditions.

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CHAPTER II.

THE COURSE OF THE EUPHRATES.

BEFORE we proceed to sketch the more interesting features of the Euphrates valley, which may yet become of great importance to England in connection with the overland route to India, it will be desirable that we shall briefly indicate the general direction of the river.

In Central Armenia, at no considerable distance from the shores of the Black Sea, the Euphrates, or El Frat, rises. It is formed by the junction of two streams, the Kara-Su, or "Black River," and the Mourad-Chai. The sources of the former are situated in the Anti-Taurus, twenty-five miles north-east of the town of Erzerúm, in about lat. 40° N., and long. 41° 30′ E.; those of the Mourad, which is the larger branch, about seventy miles further to the

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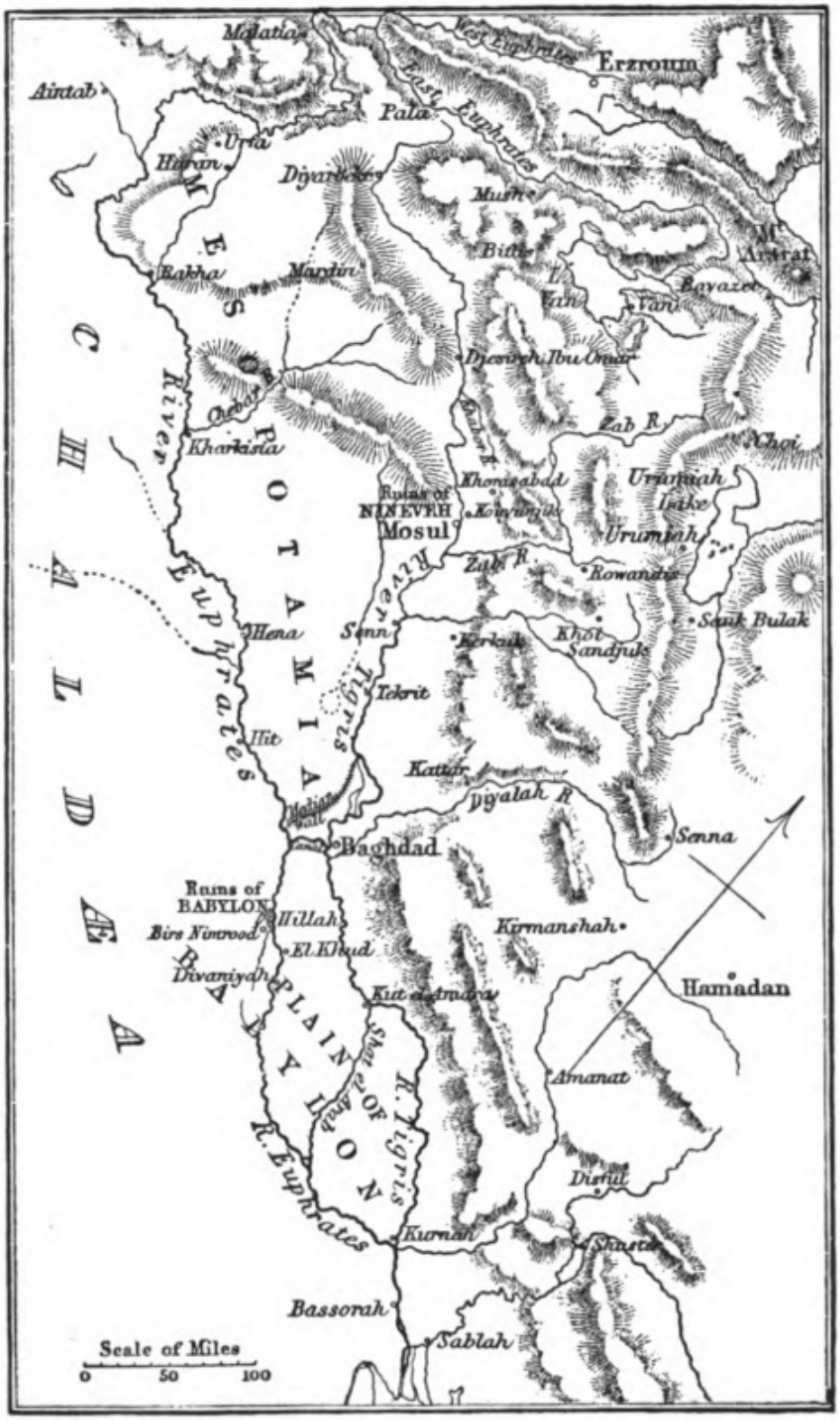

THE EUPHRATES AND TIGRIS.

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east, in the same range. The former flows south-west, to a point ten miles north of Keban' Ma'dan, where it is joined by the latter (lat. 38° 58′ N.); and the united stream, under the name of El Frat, or the Euphrates, continues in a south-westerly course for about fifty miles, breaking through the Taurus, and flowing through the most varied and picturesque scenery imaginable. At Sumeisat, eleven hundred and ninety-five miles from the sea, it becomes navigable. After a strange semicircular sweep, it passes Bir, which is one hundred miles distant from the Mediterranean, and about six hundred and thirty feet above its level. At Samester it takes a southerly direction, and forms the boundary, for a considerable distance, between Mesopotamia and Syria. Bending to the south-east, it stretches across an immense plain, and for seven hundred miles receives no tributaries, until at Kurneh it is swollen by the swift waters of the Tigris. It now takes the name of the Shatt-el-Arab, and gradually developing into a deep and copious river, maintains a south-easterly course until, by several mouths, it empties itself into the Persian Gulf, ninety miles below Kurneh.

The total length of the Euphrates is estimated at 1,600 miles, while the area of its basin has been

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computed at 195,000 geographical square miles. The volume of water which it discharges into the Persian Gulf is 401,010 cubic feet per second. The average width of the Shatt-el-Arab exceeds 600 feet; and its depth of water is sufficient for vessels of 500 tons. That of the Upper Euphrates is eight or nine feet. Its current, in the flooded season, runs at the rate of five miles an hour, but at other times varies from two and a quarter to three miles.

The higher reaches of the river are enclosed between wooded hills, and diversified by a succession of low, narrow islands, generally inhabited, and often cultivated. Below Hit the scenery changes its character; there are fewer hills, and the grassy banks of the river are occupied by Arab villages. In the neighbourhood of Lamlum the country is level, and rises but slightly above the river. Irrigation, therefore, is rendered easy; and the land, being plentifully watered, yields abundant crops, while the date-palm flourishes vigorously, and affords a welcome shade.

The inundation of the Euphrates, caused by the melting of the mountain-snows, begins early in March and continues to increase until the end of May. The river is very full and rapid during the month of

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June, after which it begins to subside, and in mid-September reaches its lowest.

The water of the Euphrates, though turbid, is not unwholesome. Fish are abundant.

In 1835 Captain (afterwards General) Chesney, who had previously distinguished himself by his exertions in endeavouring to open up an overland route to India, was selected by the British Government to take charge of an expedition for the exploration of the Euphrates.

As early as 1830 he had made acquaintance with the river, having on that occasion traversed the Arabian desert from Damascus, a journey of which he furnishes some interesting particulars. He had joined a caravan, which was bound for El-Kaim, a town on the Euphrates, and thence for Bagdad. The day's march lasted generally about eight hours. Then the camels were made to lie down to be relieved of their loads, which were placed in convenient order for reloading in the morning. After being allowed to browse for a couple of hours, each animal was compelled to swallow a ball of cotton seeds before taking its rest. Then the Arabs prepared their own supper, consisting usually of thin

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cakes of bread, and a pillau of *bourgul*, or boiled wheat, mixed with some butter or oil, followed by a few dates, and an ample supply of water.

The scenery through which our traveller passed was exceedingly monotonous; a dead sandy level, being bounded on either side by a range of elevated but barren hills. One day Captain Chesney had endeavoured to beguile the time, rendered wearisome by the monotony of the landscape, and strayed to some little distance from his party, which suggested to the joke-loving Arabs the idea of a little amusement. A couple of Arabs, almost naked, and apparently much excited, rushed wildly towards him from behind a hill, brandishing a stick, and yelling most vociferously. Being wholly unarmed, and taken by surprise, the traveller took to his heels, closely pursued by his supposed enemies. "On approaching the caravan," he says, "two of our people darted forward with drawn swords, as if to give me protection and intercept my pursuers. They still endeavoured to get at me by making a round, but being foiled, their trick and disguise came to an end, though the joke continued to be heartily enjoyed by the whole party for some time."

In the course of their journey over the parched

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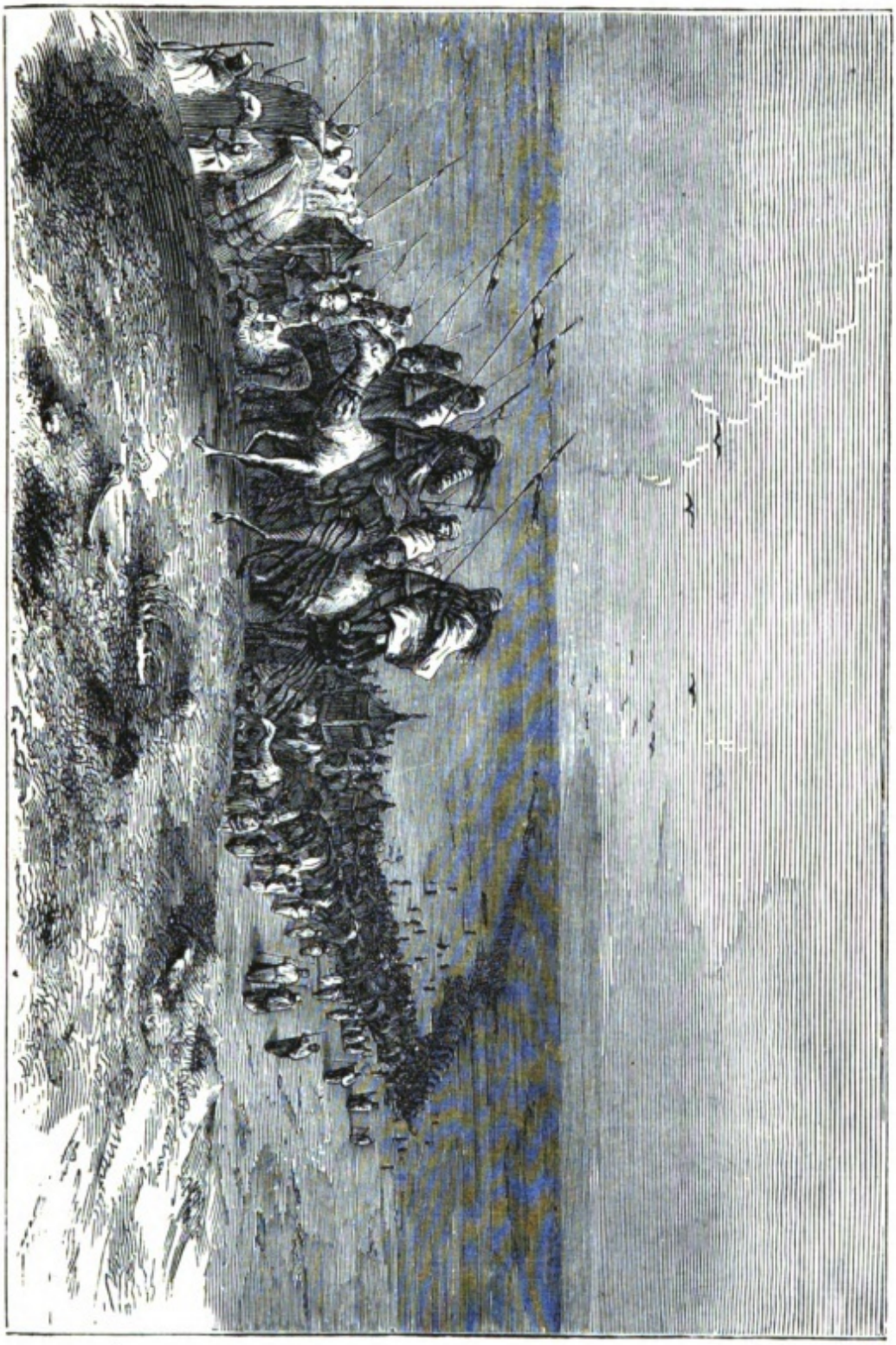

CARAVAN CROSSING THE DESERT.

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and sterile plain the camels suffered considerably from want of water, and even the caravan was sore bestead. There was great rejoicing, therefore, when, on the eighth day, they arrived at an ancient well not far from the site of the once splendid Palmyra. It was cased with stone, and of considerable depth. The operation of drawing water was very tedious; for the caravan had but a single leathern bucket, which was lowered and drawn up with tiresome iteration until all the water-skins were filled. This operation completed, the camels had to be furnished with a copious draught, as also with a sufficient reserve to enable them to continue their journey. The second or reserve stomach with which, as our readers know, the "ship of the desert" is equipped, contains, when filled, water enough to last for six or even nine days.

As they followed up the Derb Sultán, or Imperial Road, which in olden days led from Palmyra to Zenobia's summer palace on the banks of the Euphrates, they found that the scenery improved, and the country became less desert; green hills loomed against the horizon, and healthy shrubs and vigorous growths of grass spread all around. On the fourteenth day they crossed the rocky bed of a

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partially dried-up river; and on the fifteenth came in sight of the tower of El-Kaim, and, soon afterwards, of the waters of the great Euphrates, sparkling in the sunshine, at El-Werdi. That evening the caravan encamped at the foot of some low hills overhanging its right bank. Here, while at supper, Chesney's attention was attracted by a curious dull creaking sound, accompanied by that of falling water, mingled occasionally with the roar of lions from a different quarter. He sallied forth to ascertain what it all meant, and after walking about a mile, came upon some machinery by which the river water is raised for purposes of irrigation. This is effected by means of a light, graceful aqueduct, having at its extremity a water-wheel of fifty feet in diameter, to which the current communicates a rotatory motion and the requisite power, through a simple contrivance which, at the same time, fills the aqueduct. Water-wheels of this description are very common along the banks of the Upper Euphrates. A number of clay cylinders, each about eleven and a half inches long by three and a half inches in diameter, are placed round the periphery of the wheel, and set in motion by the current. These successively discharge their contents into a conduit, which con-

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veys the water into the interior with a creaking noise audible at a considerable distance.

Captain Chesney now left the caravan, in order to push forward to Anna, where he hoped to make arrangements for descending the Euphrates. From El-Kaim he followed the course of the river downward, in an easterly direction. Just above Rava it pours its broken waters over the rocky ledge of Karablah, which constitutes the great obstacle to navigation between Bir and Bosrah. Below Rava the river winds through a long chain of picturesquely wooded islands until it reaches Anna, a town of some importance. In the vicinity is the island of Tilbus, crowned with ruins of the fortifications of Thelutha or Thilutha, which at one time contained the treasury of the Parthians, and at a later period was unsuccessfully besieged by the Emperor Julian. On another island moulder the remains of the palace of the Persian emperor Ardeshir; on a third, those of an extensive castle; on a fourth, those of a bridge which in former days threw its span across the whole breadth of the river; and on a fifth, rises a lofty and graceful Persian "minaret." On the opposite bank are visible the memorials of the ancient Anatho. Thus the entire neighbourhood of Anna

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is replete with features of interest; and the town itself, which commands the passage between Aleppo and Bagdad, is well worth inspection.

Here Captain Chesney obtained a raft, on which he proposed to undertake the descent of the Euphrates. Its dimensions were as follows:—Its base was a rectangular platform, fourteen and a half feet long by thirteen and a half feet wide, with a sort of well, or inlet, left open at the after-extremity of the structure, which was duly strengthened by successive layers of branches, crossing each other at right angles, until they attained the sufficient thickness of about two feet. On the interlaced branches rested rough planks, supporting a platform on which was fitted up a kind of fire-place protected by an enclosure of wet clay; and the buoyancy of the whole was secured by forty inflated sheep-skins placed beneath the raft.

Captain Chesney's party consisted of his dragoman and his dragoman's slave boy, an Arab pilot named Getgood, and two Arabs to guide the raft, each of whom was provided with a kind of long-handled paddle made of date-wood. Supplied with a tent, cooking utensils, some fuel, and a stock of provisions, they embarked; and proceeded to float down the

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river with the current. Some distance below Tiblus, the river sweeps to the south-west for five miles; and then, at Hawajji-el-Khawaslik, makes a singular bend or convolution, quite in the shape of a horse-shoe, returning to its original course at a point only two miles distant in a straight line from the point of divergence.

As the voyagers passed between a double row of high hills covered with brushwood, they caught sight of a sudden puff of smoke on the right bank, and almost immediately a couple of balls struck the water, one beyond, and the other rather short of the raft. As the assailants were covered by the brush-wood, the captain and his people immediately arranged their sacks and baggage so as also to form a screen. Another shot followed; whereupon the dragoman fired a discharge of buckshot right into the brushwood, with the effect of dislodging the Arabs, and securing the voyagers from further annoyance.

They passed Hadisa, a walled town situated on a low island; floated over some formidable rocks, which cause a whirlpool; and so dropped down between green banks studded with villages and aqueducts, the view being bounded by groves of

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date-palms and high hills. Throughout the whole distance from Anna to Hit,—that is, one hundred and thirty-one miles,—they passed through a constant succession of water-mills and aqueducts, villages and hamlets,—the river having an average width of three hundred and fifty yards and a depth of eleven feet. Its surface is enlivened by numerous green and pleasant islands. At Hit their attention was called to the boiling springs of bitumen, which darken the sky with dense clouds of smoke. Boat-building is the principal occupation of the inhabitants, and their method of construction is as original as it is simple.

"They have neither docks nor basins, nor even slips, to facilitate their labour; yet they can construct a serviceable boat in a short time, with no other tools than an axe and a saw, with a ladle for pouring out the melted pitch, and a roller for smoothing it. The first process in this primitive mode of ship-building, is to choose a level spot of ground, near the water, on which the carpenter traces the figure of the bottom of the projected boat—not, it is true, with mathematical accuracy, but still a line *is used*, and a certain system followed. In the space thus marked out, a number of rough branches are laid

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in parallel lines, and others interlaced across them. A kind of basket-work, of reeds and straw, is then plaited through them, to fill up the interstices; and some stronger branches, laid across at intervals of eight or ten inches, give the requisite stability to the bottom. The sides are then built up, which is done by driving upright posts of the requisite height through the edge of the platform, about a foot apart; these are filled in, in the same way as the bottom, and the whole is consolidated by placing strong branches, or stems of small trees, as tie-beams, at short intervals from gunwale to gunwale. The necessary stability being thus obtained, the outside of the boat is coated with hot bitumen, which is melted over a fire made on the ground close at hand, and reduced to proper consistency by an admixture of sand and earth." This kind of boat draws only six inches when empty, and twenty-two when laden.

The bitumen pits of Hit seem as copious now as in the days when they supplied the Babylonian builders with the material of their cement. Sulphur also is abundant, and there are numerous naphtha springs, which make their way to the surface through saline tepid water. They bear a high reputation

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among the natives for their extraordinary curative properties.

Below Hit the river scenery loses in picturesqueness,—the graceful aqueducts and water-wheels being replaced by large water-skins worked by bullocks; the skins being carried up and down an inclined plane to the river to give them increased power. At Meshaid and Abú Serar the depth decreases to little more than six feet. The fields on each bank are carefully cultivated, the labour falling chiefly upon the women; and villages of tents or clay-built wigwams occur at short intervals. Below Felujah the river broadens and deepens, and its banks exhibit a pleasing picture of activity and life.

Passing Iskanderiah, the voyagers arrived at the town of Musseyib, where the Euphrates is spanned by a bridge of boats. The depth is here fifteen feet, and the average width one hundred and eighty yards. Next they came in sight of the mounds of Babylon, of the Mujellebéh and the Birs Nimrud, and the ruins which still testify to the former greatness of the Chaldean capital. At Hillah there is another floating bridge, and the stream flows on with a full and tranquil current, through numerous villages, surrounded by gardens and palm-groves.

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At seventy-five and a half miles below Hillah, Captain Chesney reached Diwanyah, whence he descended to Old Lamlum, once the Chaldean Lake, the point at which the river divides into two branches.

On the principal branch, twenty-seven miles down, is New Lamlum, a collection of reed-huts, which, when the annual inundation rises very high, are removed by their inhabitants to safer quarters. At El-Kerayem the two branches reunite, and the Euphrates assumes the character of a noble stream, two hundred yards wide, studded with islands, and reflecting in its waters the pillar-like trunks of the date-palms which cluster around each little village. At Kumeh, nearly one hundred and eighty miles from Lamlum, the Euphrates receives the waters of the Tigris, and the united stream acquires the name of the Shatt-el-Arab, which flows on between villages and palm-groves to Basrah, with a depth of twenty-one feet and an average width of six hundred yards. Captain Chesney here embarked in a fast-sailing Persian boat, and followed the tidal waters of the Shatt to its junction with the Persian Gulf.

We now come to the proceedings of the Govern-

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ment Expedition which Colonel Chesney led with so much vigour and determination.

He was provided with two small steamers of light draught, the *Euphrates* and the *Tigris*. These were built in sections, and transported overland to a point on the Euphrates, which, in compliment to his royal patron, William IV., he named Port William. The difficulties of transport were immense, but these, as well as the opposition of the Turkish authorities, the colonel's energy overcame. The steamers were put together, launched, provisioned, and duly equipped; and the expedition started on its survey of the river in March 1836. The excitement of the population, as, without sails or oars, the vessels descended at the rate of thirteen or fourteen knots an hour, was almost unbounded. They compared their magical propulsion to the flight of an arrow, driven through the water by a supernatural power, "throwing one half of the river on this side, the other on that." The *Tigris* was left behind at first, and the survey effected by the *Euphrates* alone; but after a short delay the former was got ready, and the two steamers proceeded in company, after passing the ruined castle of Kara Bambūge.

On April 19 they arrived at Beles; now a de-

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cayed and desolate city, but in ancient times the port of Aleppo. If the Euphrates line to India should ever be opened up, no doubt it will recover all its former importance. Here they were visited by three Arab chiefs, with eight attendants, whom they entertained and astonished by a nocturnal display of rockets. A further impression was produced next day by firing some discharges of canister shot from the nine-pounder guns with which the two steamers were armed; and so convinced were the chiefs of the enormous power of the English that they gladly signed a treaty of peace between their tribes, the Amzā, and the Government of Great Britain. We may surmise, however, that by this time the treaty has been forgotten.

On the 6th of May the expedition reached Jabir, with its so-called Giant's Castle, its lofty minaret, and Tel Marabout, or the Saint's Hill, in the background. These works are attributed by tradition to Alexander the Great; while it is also said that an Egyptian conqueror, named Ja'ber, constructed the castle to support his invasion of Egypt. Its dimensions are considerable, and it occupies a commanding position.

Continuing their descent they arrived at Hannan,

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the site of the ancient Thapsacus, which is generally and rightly identified with the "Tiphsah" of the Bible (1 Kings iv. 24). The most important passage on the northern Euphrates, it was used by the younger Cyrus, whose soldiers forded it, we are told, with the water up to their breasts. Not long afterwards, Darius crossed it to encounter Alexander and his Greeks, recrossing all too quickly after his crushing defeat at Issus. The conqueror also crossed it in pursuit, on two bridges of boats, which were joined together. Not far distant lie the ruins of Susa, on a tributary of the Tigris; of Susa, the *Shushan* of the Old Testament, one of the richest and most powerful cities of the Elder World. It was the chief treasury of the Persian empire; and one of the capitals at which the Persian kings were accustomed to spend a portion of the year. It was at Susa that Alexander the Great was married to Arsinoe; and out of its treasures that he made enormous presents to his generals and soldiers. All its glories are now represented by three lofty mounds of ruins, measuring together three miles and a half in circumference. Some excavations, conducted by Sir W. F. Williams and Mr. Loftus, a few years ago, disclosed the remains of a gigantic

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colonnade, with a frontage of 343 feet, and a depth of 244 feet, consisting of a central square of thirty-six columns, flanked on the north, east, and west by a similar number. Numerous inscriptions in the cuneiform character have also been discovered, testifying to the remote antiquity of some of the buildings; while a later record, the only extant memorial of Artaxerxes Mnemon, who defeated the Greeks in the famous fight of Cunaxa, describes his completion of a palace, begun by Darius, son of Hystaspes, and dedicated to the goddesses Tanaitis and Mithra. A monument in the neighbourhood, evidently of Mohammedan origin, the natives have dignified as the Tomb of Daniel.

Thirteen miles below Thapsacus, Colonel Chesney came to Racca, which figures conspicuously in Moslem history, and is associated with the memory of the great khalif Haroun-al-Raschid, whose ruined palace may still be traced. It was also a residence of the khalif El-Mansour, a name justly celebrated in connection with astronomical science. His love of learning, however, did not prevent him from being a victim to a love of money; and his notorious avarice procured him the sobriquet of Abu Dawanek, or "Father Halfpenny."

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While lying off Amram, Colonel Chesney and one of his officers, Mr. Ainsworth, went ashore to explore some ruins. They had gone but a short distance when eight Arabs, each armed with a spear and a long gun, favoured them with their company. Their suspicions being aroused, Chesney and Ainsworth took the precaution of separating from each other; Ainsworth keeping at such a distance as would enable him to render assistance when needed. While they moved on thus cautiously, Chesney suddenly saw an unexpected enemy in front of them; a cobra-capella just rising on its tail, and preparing to strike Ainsworth with its fangs. It would probably have succeeded, but that one of the Arabs, with wonderful accuracy of aim, darted the point of his spear through the creature's head. Thereby a twofold result was gained. Ainsworth was rescued from a serious danger; and a friendly understanding was established with the Arab, whose tent and those of his companions the Englishmen proceeded to visit.

Next day, the descent of the river was resumed. The width continued to vary from two hundred and fifty to three hundred yards. The landscapes were

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agreeable, bounded on the right by a range of green hills, and on the left by a magnificent forest, in the shades of which innumerable nightingales poured forth their unequalled melodies.

"After steaming," says Chesney, "about forty-five miles, we stopped under the left bank, where we met the large tribe of Affudell Arabs, fully two thousand strong, who crowded the river-banks at first, but retired as we came near. On receiving from us reiterated assurances of friendship, they took courage and returned, and came quite close to the vessels. They were all armed with very short muskets and spears, and had also short swords: they made an urgent but of course ineffectual appeal to us for assistance against their enemies on the opposite side of the river. Having obtained another good supply of wood, we steamed rapidly towards what would have appeared to be a mountain barrier, if it had not been evident that the boats had found a passage through it, which we followed, our wonder increasing as we advanced. It seemed as if we had entered one of Nature's grandest works. On each side of the river, perpendicular cliffs rise to a height varying from three hundred to five hundred feet: the Euphrates has here, for the third time during

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its course from Bir to the ocean, found its way through a mountain barrier, and had brought us to the so-called "beetle-browed" precipice described by the old Italian voyager Gasparo Balbi.

The next point of interest was Zelebi, where moulder the remains of the summer palace of Zenobia, the great Queen of Palmyra. It is impossible to gaze without emotion on the scenes associated with the memory of this remarkable woman. Modern Europe has had its heroines; but, as Gibbon says, Zenobia is the only female whose superior genius broke through the servile indolence imposed on her sex by Asiatic customs. But she was scarcely less famous for her beauty than for her heroism. She was of a dark complexion; her teeth were white as pearls; her large black eyes sparkled with fire, tempered by the most attractive sweetness. Her voice was harmonious—an excellent thing in women. Intellectually, she was also above the standard of her sex; and a mind naturally powerful was strengthened and adorned by study. She was thus fitted to control the destinies of a great empire, which extended from the Euphrates to the frontiers of Bithynia. It was her misfortune, however, to come into collision with imperial Rome; whose

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armies, under Aurelian, defeated her forces at Antioch and Emesa, and, betrayed by her allies, she was compelled to shut herself up within her capital. But her defence could not be long protracted, and she attempted to escape. Mounted on the fleetest of her dromedaries, she gained the banks of the Euphrates, when she was overtaken by Aurelian's light horse, seized, and brought back a captive to the feet of the emperor.

From the ruins of Zelebi, with its palace, temple, and necropolis, the expedition descended the river, which in this part of its course is wide, deep, and very tortuous, to Deir, a town of about one thousand mud-built houses, clustering on a conical hill rising from the right bank of the river, and enclosed by a canal on the east and south. Next they passed the mouth of the Khabur, the *Araxes* of Xenophon, where, in the triangle formed by the junction of the two rivers, lie the ruins of Abu-Serai, the *Carchemish* of Scripture. On the opposite bank may be seen the scanty memorials of *Kalneh*, the Calanne of Nimrud (Gen. x. 10); and between these two sites are the broken abutments of the bridge by which the Emperor Trajan led his army

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across the river on his expedition into Lower Mesopotamia.

To the south of Ma'den is situated, on the crest of a lonely hill, the extensive castle of Rahabah, the *Rehoboth* of the Ammonites. From Ma'den the two British steamers descended to Salahyah; and between Salahyah and Anna were overtaken by a terrific storm, which proved disastrous to the little *Tigris*. The catastrophe must be described in the words of one of Colonel Chesney's followers :—

"A squall was observed on the right hand, which it was thought would not reach us; but just as we were going through the rocky passage of Is-Geria,—which, however, we did not see, as there were three feet of water over the rocks,—the squall was observed coming in our direction from the west-south-west, with great rapidity, and looking like a large cloud of black mud. As soon as the rocks were passed, the *Tigris* made signal to pick up our berth, and she rounded by us to the left bank. As our broadside came to the stream, we were taken with the violence of the hurricane, which made us heel considerably; but being too near the *Tigris*, it became necessary to back our paddles, to avoid a fatal collision. It was blowing tremendously, and the

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air so thick with sand that we could scarcely see. On our bow touching the bank, Charlewood and a number of the crew jumped on shore, and by the greatest exertions got an anchor out, which, with the full power of steam, held her till two chain-cables were got out, and secured by means of jumpers driven into the ground; but with all this she dragged, and would have gone down at her anchor, had the storm continued, for the waves were then four feet above the bank of the river. When at its height, we saw the poor *Tigris* fall off from the shore, and drift past us at a fearful rate, broad-side to the wind, and heeling over considerably. She soon disappeared in the cloud of sand; but on looking astern, soon after, I saw her in a sinking state, with her bow already under water,—in fact going down, and it is believed that on reaching the bottom she turned keel upwards."

Colonel Chesney himself was on board the *Tigris*, and says that she had barely cleared the rocks of Is-Geria when the hurricane increased in fury. In order to bring up under the shelter of the high bank, she rounded to, at which moment two men were stationed at the bow, each with an anchor, ready to leap ashore. But just as the steamer

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struck the bank with some violence, the storm drove her back with so sudden a recoil, that only one of the men effected a jump before she was driven headlong by the desert whirlwind, which soon laid her on her beam-ends. By means of an anchor and the use of the engine, her officers hoped to bring her head to the wind, but were disappointed in their expectation, the raging waves breaking over the deck and through the port-holes, and extinguishing the fires; so that, with her broadside to the wind, she drifted, a helpless log, towards her consort. What seemed an inevitable, and would certainly to both vessels have been a fatal, collision, was prevented by the presence of mind of Lieutenant Charlewood, who, not without much danger to his own crew, backed his vessel, so that the *Tigris* might pass downwards; after which both steamers were instantly lost to sight of each other in the intense darkness of this disastrous day.

Lieutenant Lynch now reported that the unfortunate *Tigris* was sinking, and "Sauve qui peut" became the general concern. But in less than a minute she was going to the bottom, with every officer and man on board at his proper post. Already the deck was under water, when a tran-

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sient gleam of light revealed the not distant bank, and showed the direction in which any bold swimmer should seek to save himself. In diving out of the vessel, Colonel Chesney relates that his back was caught by the ridge rope of the deck awning,—a circumstance which showed that the vessel was already seven or eight feet below the surface. While endeavouring to get clear, he felt some person at his back, but they were immediately parted by the swirl and eddy of the agitated waves. Soon afterwards, his feet touched the ground in a corn-field, and at this instant, turning his eyes towards the river, he saw, by the partial light, the ill-fated *Tigris* keel upwards. In addition to Colonel Chesney, five officers and nine men were saved, the billows having carried them some feet above the river-bank, and deposited them in the middle of a corn-field. The storm now subsided as quickly as it had arisen, having lasted only twenty-five minutes; the sky shone out bright, clear, and cloudless; and the Euphrates resumed its ordinarily tranquil appearance. But brief as had been the desert hurricane, it had caused the loss of several valuable lives.

It was in the neighbourhood of this very spot that the Roman emperor Julian, with his fleet and

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army, suffered severely from a similar tempest, in the course of his descent towards Mesopotamia. The country which they traversed, says Gibbon, from the Chabur to the cultivated lands of Assyria, may be considered as a part of the desert of Arabia, a dry and barren waste, which all the arts of human industry could not render productive. Julian marched over the same ground which had been trodden above seven hundred years before by the footsteps of the younger Cyrus; through a country described by one of the companions of his expedition, the sage and heroic Xenophon, as a plain throughout, level as the sea, and full of wormwood. What other kind of shrubs or reeds grew there had all an aromatic smell; but no trees could be seen. Bustards and ostriches, antelopes and wild asses, appeared to be the only inhabitants of the desert; and the fatigues of the march were alleviated by the amusements of the chase. Of the same tract of country Mr. Layard writes:—To the Chabur were transported the captive children of Israel. Around Arban may have been pitched the tents of the sorrowing Jews, as those of the Arabs were during my visit. To the same pastures they led their sheep, and they drank of the same waters.

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Then, the banks of the river were covered with towns and villages, and a palace temple stood upon the mound, reflected in the transparent stream. But the "common lot" has long since called away the busy crowds which thronged the banks of the river. From its mouth to its source, from Carchemish to Ras-al-Ďin, there is now no single permanent human habitation on the Chabur. Its rich meadows and its deserted ruins have alike become the encamping places of the wandering Arabs.

During Julian's march the loose desert sands were frequently swept up in destructive clouds by sudden storms; and on one occasion a great number of the Roman soldiers, with their tents, were thrown to the ground by the violence of an unexpected hurricane, and one thousand of the Roman galleys perished in the tempest-tossed river.

On the 26th of May, Colonel Chesney, who had embarked on board the *Euphrates*, reached Anna, the ancient *Anatho*, a town we have already described. On the 31st, the descent of the river was resumed, and the steamer sped along that extraordinary bend, or convolution, to which the attention of the reader has been directed in a preceding page.

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The river scenery here increases in beauty and interest. The waves sparkle around picturesque islands, and reflect the shadows of noble trees. Populous villages are of frequent occurrence; and the landscape gains a certain peculiar charm from the appearance of men and women attired in the graceful Arab costume, and busy in the performance of various open-air avocations.

Below Hadisa lies Jibba; both are situated on islands. Below Jibba the rocks of Hajji-el-Karaf divert the river's course to the north. In fifteen miles it turns southward; another five, and it resumes its usual south-easterly direction. Of Hit and its bituminous boiling springs, we have already spoken. Eighty-seven miles below Hit, the voyager arrives at Felujah. Another seventy miles, and he reaches Musseyeb, and its bridge of boats. Here, as the river approaches the ruins of Babylon, it increases in depth, but contracts in span, and flows with a full and equable current through luxuriant groves of date-trees. Then Babylon comes in sight, and sharp and distinct against the warm blue sky towers the huge pyramidal pile of Birs Nimrud. After a short stay at Hillah, Colonel Chesney and his party steamed towards the sea, with rich gardens

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and plantations of fig, mulberry, and pomegranate trees on either hand. At New Lamlum, a town of portable reed huts, already described, the river does not exceed one hundred to one hundred and fifty yards in width. The banks are here inhabited by a Persian sect, the Shiahs, famed for their pilfering propensities.

Below Lamlum the Euphrates spreads through a marshy country in several channels. Colonel Chesney took the deeper and more navigable, and passed in succession some considerable castles. At Kerayim the various branches of the great river reunite; and to the marshy level succeeds an undulating and pleasant country. With a deep wide stream the river flows on to El-Khudr and its poplar groves; where a slight collision occurred between the British expedition and the Arabs. The latter, however, after the guns of the steamer had fired a couple of broadsides, came to the conclusion that discretion was the better part of valour, and took to flight.

Eight miles below Kut-el-Amrah, with its splendid woods of pomegranate and date trees, and seventy-five miles below El-Khudr, stands Sheikh-el-Shuyukh, the commercial capital and largest settle-

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ment of the Arabs on the Euphrates. It is described by Chesney as containing some fifteen hundred clay-built houses, and as many tents, which repose in the pleasant shadow of the vine, the fig, the pomegranate, and the rose.

Next day the steamer accomplished another seventy-five miles, and conveyed the expedition to Kurnah, a town celebrated for the superior quality of its dates, and situated at the junction of the Euphrates and the Karūn. Thus, the descent and survey of 1153 miles of the great Mesopotamian river were completed; and nothing remained for Colonel Chesney and his companions but to follow, as far as Basrah, the joint estuary of the Euphrates and the Tigris, which here takes the name of the Shatt-el-Arab, and is wide enough and deep enough for the passage of ordinary men-of-war. This portion of their enterprise was speedily and safely accomplished; for Basrah is only forty-three miles below Kurnah.

Afterwards the steamer crossed the Persian Gulf to Bushire, where she refitted, was reprovisioned, and took a fresh crew on board. Then she recrossed the Gulf, steamed up the Euphrates to Kurnah, and thence commenced the ascent of the Tigris.

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But here we must take leave for the present of Colonel Chesney, and proceed to examine the course of the Tigris, and the ruins of the great cities on its banks, as well as to collect the memorable associations that have rendered it scarcely less an object of attraction and interest than the Euphrates itself, in connection with which it forms one of those double-river systems, like that of the Ganges and the Brahmapútra, so peculiarly characteristic of the hydrography of Asia. In history, as in physical geography, the two rivers are closely allied, and their valleys have usually been united under the same imperial rule. Who shall decide between them as to relative importance or interest? If the Euphrates had its Babylon, the Tigris had its Nineveh.

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PART II.

The Tigris.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

ACCORDING to Pliny, this celebrated river, in the upper part of its course, where its current flowed equably and tranquilly, was called *Diglito;* lower down, where it moved with greater swiftness, it bore the name of *Tigris,* which, in the Median language, signified an arrow. These appellations it still retains, "*Diglito*" having been slightly modified into *Daghell, Dadschla,* or *Didschle.*

The two principal sources of the Tigris rise on the southern slope of the Anti-Taurus, at a distance of not more than fifteen miles south of those of the Euphrates. Uniting in a single stream, it flows for about one hundred and fifty miles first in a north-

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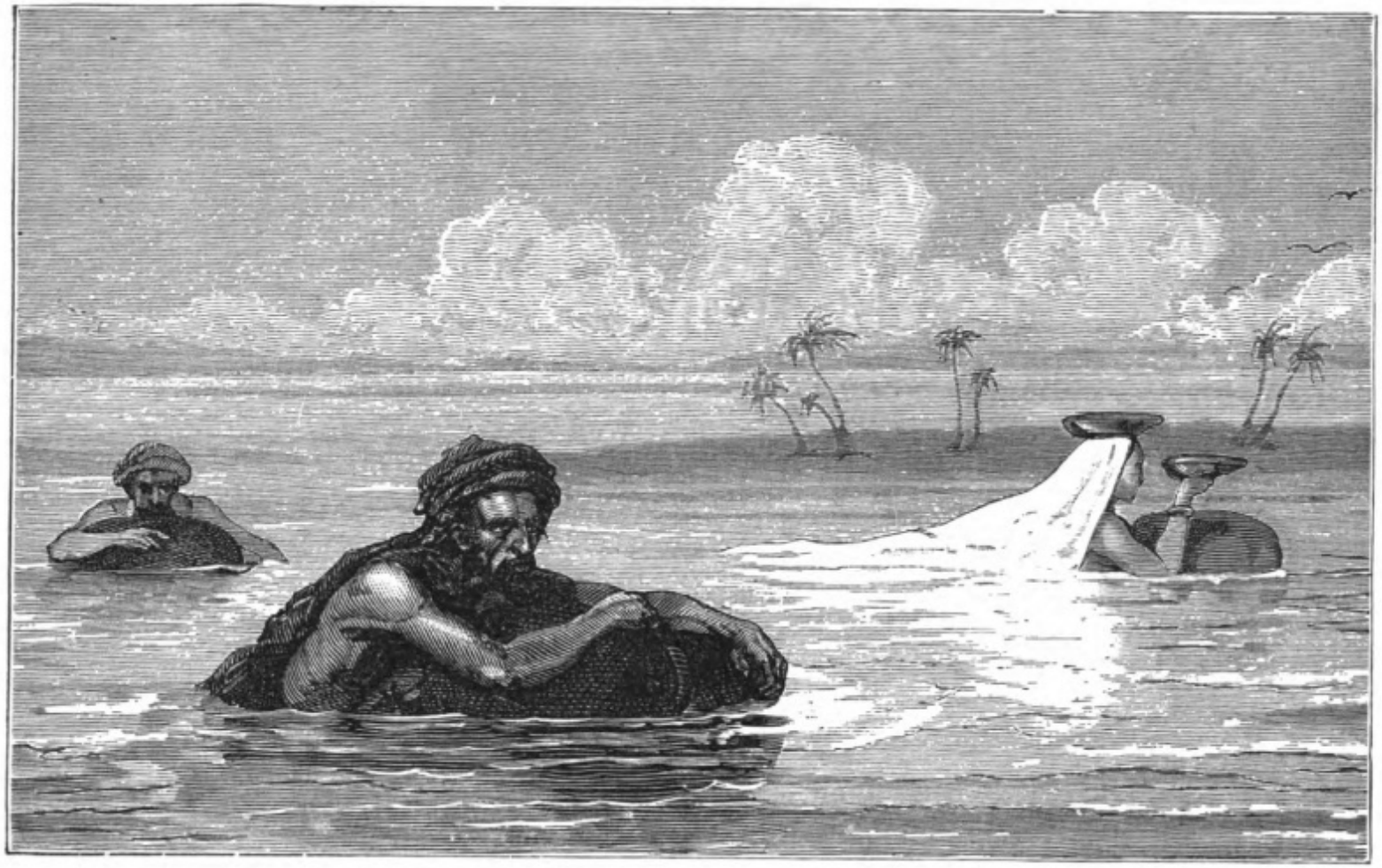

MILKWOMAN AND ARABS CROSSING THE TIGRIS.

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easterly, then in a southerly, and afterwards in an easterly direction, until it receives its eastern arm. Its main course is afterwards south-easterly, and it passes Diarbekir, Mosul, and Bagdad, before it reaches its point of confluence with the Euphrates at Kurnah or Korna (in lat. 31° N., and long. 47° 15′ E.). At Bagdad it approaches within thirty miles of its sister-river, and flows in a nearly parallel line for about eighty miles, when it diverges, and recedes a distance of seventy to one hundred miles, until it arrives at Kurnah.

The scenery of the river is, on the whole, well diversified and highly picturesque. Its banks are scantily inhabited, however, and the surrounding country is but imperfectly cultivated. The pasture-lands are rich, and attract the nomades of Mesopotamia. Between Mosul and Tekrit agriculture seems to flourish; but from Tekrit southward a wilderness prevails, which loses its savage character only within the neighbourhood of Bagdad. Between Bagdad and Kurnah the thickets are dense and overgrown, and lions and other beasts of prey are unpleasantly numerous. Like the Euphrates, the Tigris is in flood for a part of the year, beginning to rise in November, and reaching a maximum in

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the middle of May. Its velocity is then upwards of 7.33 feet per second, and the volume of water it discharges at Bagdad equals 164,103 cubic feet.

The average width of the Tigris from between Mosul and Bagdad is two hundred yards, and the ordinary speed of its current four and a quarter miles per hour. At certain seasons of the year rafts ascend from Diarbekir to Mosul, a distance of about two hundred and ninety-six miles. From Mosul to Bagdad it is navigable all the year round for boats of light draught.

Beginning our exploration of the river at Kurnah, we pass the so-called Tomb of Ezra; the Nehar-Samorah of Benjamin of Tudela, and the Zamusa of the Talmudists, of which we read :—"The sepulchre of Ezra the priest and scribe is in this place, where he died on his journey from Jerusalem to the court of King Artaxerxes." The river is here two hundred yards wide, with an average depth of from twelve to thirty-six feet, and the banks are well wooded. We pass Bistow, seventy-one miles above Kurnah; and Ras-al-Kheyran, sixty-eight miles above Bistow. The river broadens as we ascend to Kūt-el-Amrah (fifty-four miles), situated opposite to the embouchure

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MERCHANTS ON THE TIGRIS.

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of the Shatt-el-Hit. The latter river traverses Mesopotamia, and falls into the Euphrates at the small town of El-Arju.

Through a narrow winding channel in mid-stream our vessel carries us onward to Al-Hamarah jungle, a favourite resort of wild beasts; and afterwards through a maze of islands to Um-el-Būl, or "Mother of Drummers,"—so named from the sound produced by the waters lashing against the rocks. The next point of interest is the ruins of Ctesiphon, situated on a great bend of the river, and not far from the confluence of the Delhub.

The ground here is exceedingly irregular and broken. Hillocks and hills rise in every direction, like the hummocks of an Arctic ice-floe; and all around are scattered piles of ancient masonry. Conspicuous among these memorials of a buried past is the monument known as the *Tauk-Kezra*, or *Tak-i-Khosrō*; the vast façade of a noble structure, in the centre of which expands a lofty arch.

Mesopotamia, we may remind the reader, was formerly a province of Persia, in the later days of its pride and power, when it had carried its victorious arms into Asia Minor. Among the cities of Babylonia which opened its gates to the conquerors was

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Seleucia. This city, founded by Seleucus Nicator on the right bank of the Tigris, was for some generations the capital of the kingdom inherited by that lieutenant of Alexander from his glorious master. Khosroes the Great, whom the Persians call *Khosrō* and *Noushirvan*, or "the Just," when he captured Seleucia, established himself there so securely that he found the time and the means to undertake some architectural works on a scale of great magnificence. From the masses of ruin which extend along the west bank of the Tigris, it would seem that the site where Seleucia then flourished particularly attracted his attention. But in accordance with an Asiatic custom, and from a jealous reluctance to attach his name to a city which did not owe to him its origin, he built on the opposite bank a new city, known as Ctesiphon or Mad'en. As it was made the seat of government, as well as the residence of the sovereign, naturally the population of the ancient and decayed city migrated to the new. Seleucia, thus abandoned, soon fell into decay; and its ruins, gradually diminishing, eventually left no other traces than piles of masonry covered by the sands of the desert, and mounds of earth thickly overgrown with bushes and brushwood.

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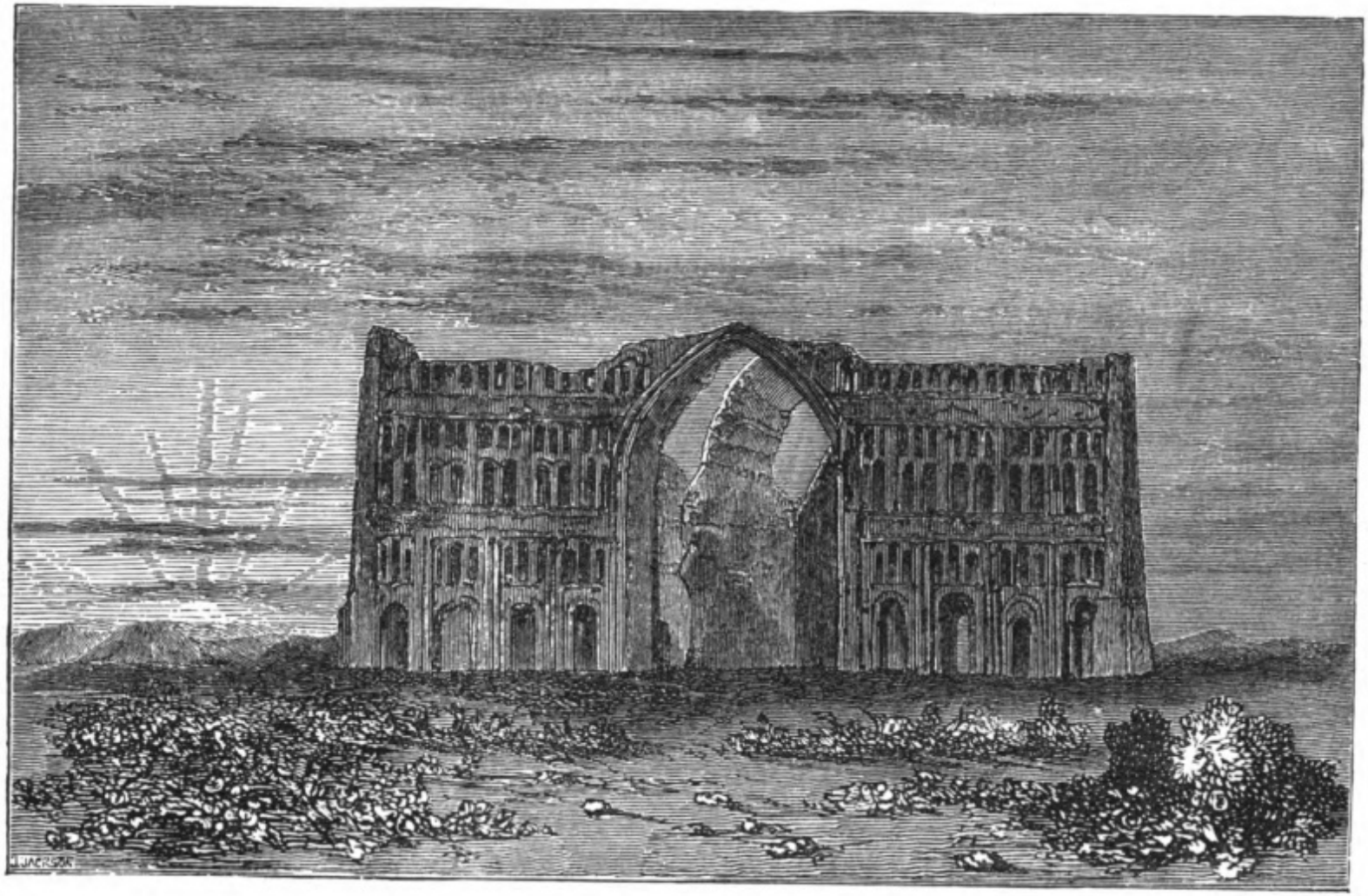

THE ARCH OF KHOSROES.

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And the present condition of its rival, Ctesiphon, is little better. Everything has disappeared except the stately monument already alluded to, which the Arabs designate *Tak-i-Khosrō*, or "the Arch of Khosroes." It is not, however, so much an arch as a gigantic vault, not less than two hundred and seventy feet in height, by three hundred and twenty feet in length, and seventy feet in breadth. The immense hall which it roofs over was probably the Presence Chamber, where sat the king enthroned, surrounded by his ministers and nobles. Other apartments were situated on either hand.

The entire front of the edifice measures nearly two hundred and seventy feet, its ornamentation consisting, throughout its breadth and height, of arcades between pilasters or attached columns. The arch of the great vaulted hall is of singular construction. The architect has given to it an elliptical curve; and, moreover, he has placed end to end numerous tubes or pipes of pottery, each twenty centimètres in diameter, at certain regular intervals, and introduced into the structure of the masonry. We hope this description is not too scientific for our readers; we borrow it from a distinguished archæ-

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ologist. In examining the monuments of antiquity we are often compelled to indulge in vague conjectures, and in the present case we ask ourselves, What object were these tubes intended to serve? The only answer it is now possible to offer is, that they were intended to promote a free circulation of air, an urgent necessity in the burning climate of Mesopotamia. From some fragments still extant it would seem that the cross-beams employed to connect the arch with the walls of the façade were of cypress wood or cedar. And it is therefore allowable to suppose that these trees then flourished in the surrounding country, the barren soil of which now yields only some meagre brushwood, calcined by the sun every summer.

The historic tradition having faded in the course of centuries, the great Khosroes has been replaced in the mind of the common people by a vulgar enough personage, a certain Soliman-Pak, Mohammed's barber. A small mausoleum with a white cupola, shaded by a palm-tree, has been raised in his honour, and is frequented by numerous pilgrims. This barber of the prophet's has completely replaced, so far as the Mohammedans are concerned, the con-

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queror of Belisarius, and the name of Tak-i-Khosrō has been effaced by that of Soliman-Pak.

From Ctesiphon we ascend the river to Bagdad. Nothing of interest occurs between the two points, and the intervening scenery is neither beautiful nor sublime.

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CHAPTER II.

BAGDAD.

BAGDAD is the chief town of a Turkish pashalik of the same name, which is bounded by the pashaliks of Diarbekir and Van on the north; by Syria and Arabia on the west and south; and on the east by Persia. On the south-east it touches the Persian Gulf. It is generally divided into three parts; that east of the Tigris, comprising the districts of Kurdistan and Khuzistan; the barren wilderness west of the Euphrates; and the region between the two rivers, the northern portion of which, the ancient Mesopotamia, is now known as Algesirah, or "the Island," and the southern, the ancient Babylonia and Chaldea, as Irak-Arabi.

Bagdad, the famous city, which figures so largely in the narratives of the early travellers, and formerly

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exercised so great an influence on the imagination of Western Europe, is situated on both banks of the Tigris, in lat. 33° 20′ N., and long. 44° 23′ E. It is enclosed by a brick wall five miles in circumference, and its two divisions are connected by a bridge of boats. Its motley population—Turks, Arabs, Armenians, Jews, Hindus, Afghans, and Egyptians—numbers probably seventy thousand. It has lost its ancient importance as the great centre of commerce between East and West Asia, but still maintains a considerable trade with Aleppo and Damascus, and the towns on the Persian Gulf. It contains upwards of one hundred mosques, which raise their domes and minarets above encircling groves of palm; but, otherwise, its buildings are insignificant.

Bagdad was founded by Almansur, a khalif of the Abbaside dynasty, 762–766 A.D., who obtained the requisite materials from the ruins of Ctesiphon and Seleucia. Its early fame was due, however, to the genius and character of Haroun-al-Raschid, who made it the capital of an extensive empire. He erected numerous buildings on the east side of the Tigris; and his palaces, and the mausoleum which he erected for his favourite wife, Zobeide, were embel-

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lished with the utmost splendour that Oriental taste could devise. It was in his reign that the city attained the degree of wealth and magnificence which has made it famous in so many legends; and some idea of which may still be obtained from the stories of the "Arabian Nights." In reading these enchanted pages we fill our minds with dreams of a brilliant past, such as Tennyson has embodied in one of his earlier poems :—

" When the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free
In the silken sail of infancy,
The tide of time flowed back with me,
The forward-flowing tide of time;
And many a sheeny summer-morn,
Adown the Tigris I was borne,
By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,
High-walled gardens green and old;
True Mussulman was I and sworn,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

" Anight my shallop, rustling through
The low and bloomëd foliage, drove
The fragrant, glistening deeps, and clove
The citron-shadows in the blue:
By garden-porches on the brim,
The costly doors flung open wide,
Gold glittering through lamplight dim,
And broidered sofas on each side:
In sooth it was a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

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" Often, where clear-stemmed platans guard
The outlet, did I turn away
The boat-head down a broad canal
From the main river sluiced, where all
The sloping of the moon-lit sward
Was damask-work, and deep inlay
Of braided blooms unmown, which crept
Adown to where the water slept.
A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid."

The poet's fancy may somewhat exaggerate the colouring of the picture, which differs widely, indeed, from the present aspect of Bagdad, with its narrow and squalid streets, and grim-fronted houses, but in the main its truth is confirmed by the reports of early travellers. We must find room for the description of the khalif's Palace :—

" With dazëd vision unawares
From the long alley's latticed shade
Emerged, I came upon the great
Pavilion of the Caliphat.
Right to the carven cedarn doors,
Flung inward over spangled floors,
Broad-basëd flights of marble stairs
Ran up with golden balustrade,
After the fashion of the time,
And humour of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

" The fourscore windows all alight
As with the quintessence of flame,
A million tapers flaring bright
From twisted silvers looked to shame

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The hollow-vaulted dark, and streamed
Upon the moonëd domes aloof
In inmost Bagdat, till there seemed
Hundreds of crescents on the roof
Of night new-risen, that marvellous time,
To celebrate the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid."

In the tenth century, Bagdad was captured and devastated by the Turks. In 1253, the last descendant of the Arabian khalifs was deposed by Halaku, grandson of the Tartar conqueror Genghis Khan; whose dynasty, in turn, was overthrown by the celebrated Timur in 1393. Early in the sixteenth century it was taken by the Persians, under Shah Ismael; but their occupation was repeatedly disputed by the Turks. In 1638 it maintained a gallant but unavailing defence against the forces of Sultan Murad IV.; and since that time it has remained in the possession of the Turks, who have done nothing to develop the undeniable advantages of its position.

The following account of Bagdad is based on the narratives of Flandin and other recent writers.

It is a city which never fails to excite the curiosity of the intelligent traveller; monuments, inhabitants, costumes, social usages,—necessarily,

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all are interesting in a city so much celebrated by tradition, and a city which, in the eyes of the European, has even now the prestige of the unknown, situated as it is out of the main highways of modern commerce. The Arab life has a physiognomy of its own; and the citizens of Bagdad, as well as the Bedaween of the Desert, have a peculiar character, whose signs are obvious in all things. Before visiting it, the traveller pictures to himself this city as still full of memorials of the palmy time when the power of the khalifs covered it with glory. He expects to see, at every step, the remains of the marvels of that celebrated era of Islam, and he retains recollections of the wondrous romances with which Scheherazade occupied the "Thousand and One Nights." But, alas! Bagdad has lost its past. A dense layer of sand buries the foundations of edifices once associated with Haroun-al-Raschid and Zobeide. Here and there, in the obscure corners of the bazaars, on the bank of the Tigris, and in the midst of nameless ruins, may be discovered a few mural panels, on which are barely legible the fragments of Cufic inscriptions; or a minaret, the ancient origin of which is attested by its shattered condition; and some wrecks of enamelled façades,

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the bright-coloured mosaics of which shine conspicuously against a background of broken masonry. With the exception of these débris, as far as they are interesting, the traveller finds nothing amidst the accumulated dust of Bagdad; and it may almost be said that this great city retains no memorial of its glorious khalifs. In vain he goes in quest of those ancient Mohammedan temples where the fanatical Abbasides demanded of the prophet that he should temper anew their scimitars before they hastened to fresh fields of battle and slaughter. If the traces of that heroic age of Islam have not been entirely effaced in Bagdad, they are so vague, so uncertain, so lost in the midst of accumulated ruins, that the sole monument of the Past stands side by side with the desolation of the Present. The eleven centuries which have rolled by since its foundation by Almansur, the constant succession of wars and rebellions, the inundations of the Tigris, and the whirlwinds of the Desert, have all contributed to the destruction of the splendid edifices with which the Arab civilization and the enthusiasm of Mohammedanism embellished this once famous city, the Queen of the East. The traveller of to-day must give up all the illusions he has cherished about Bagdad.

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He must content himself with the modern city, with its modern mosques, with its arts and manufactures, which are analogous to those of Persia. He will find sufficient food to satisfy his curiosity, if not to excite his admiration. The swift full river, the cloudless sky of Mesopotamia, which reflects its brilliant azure on the enamelled cupolas, the mosques, the picturesque bazaars, the motley affluence of nearly all the nations of the East, still offer so many attractive pictures, that of Bagdad it may truly be said that "once seen, it can never be forgotten."

Bagdad has the appearance of a great city; and, from afar, its minarets distinguish its place in the immense desert which surrounds it, in which it glitters like an oasis. On the east it is enclosed by a girdle of walls in tolerably good condition, strengthened by some bastions, and defended by a fosse which is easily filled with the waters of the Tigris. This enclosure, at either end, abuts on the bank of the river, which bathes the western portion of the city. It is on this side that Bagdad looks most charming. The palace of the pasha, the mosques, the cafés, the houses, and the gardens, mirrored in the glassy stream, form a splendid

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panorama. Behind the line of houses and buildings at the foot of which flows the Tigris, are grouped the various quarters of the city, traversed by a net-work of narrow streets.

The most beautiful of the many mosques is that of the *Maidan*, or Achmet-Khiaïa; it is coated all over with enamelled bricks, which form graceful arabesques of the most vivid colours. It dominates a great square, or *Maidan*, on which open numerous cafés, shops, and caravanserais. Every morning this area is thronged with the Arab venders of lemons, water-melons, fowls, and other articles. It is also the place of arrival and departure for the caravans of the North; their numerous camels and mules are here unloaded of their heavy burdens, while waiting for those which they will convey to Asia Minor. Near at hand is the gate Bab-el-Khâdem, by the side of which stands another but smaller mosque, with an ogival doorway ornamented by designs in relief, composed of small bricks so arranged as to form peculiarly graceful embroideries.

That part of the town comprehended between the Tigris and the wall is very large; but it will be long before it is entirely covered with houses. To the east and south considerable areas are encumbered

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with ruins, or abandoned as pasture-land to the camels. In the middle rises the tomb of a sheikh; a small monument surmounted by a pyramid or cone, each side of which is ornamented with fluted facets. Attached to it is a garden enclosed within crenellated walls, and green with the foliage of trees and the feathery crests of palms. Round about are scattered numerous modest tombs, scarcely rising above the surface of the soil.

Opposite that quarter of the town built on the left bank of the river is situated another, less considerable, and yet of sufficient importance to pass for a second town; and this all the more readily, inasmuch as its population has a character of its own. It is inhabited almost exclusively by Arabs of the desert, who reside there temporarily; and by Persians, who prefer it as a place of sojourn to the city proper. They have been induced, indeed, to fix upon it by the religious animosity and difference of creed which exist between them and the Sunnite Mohammedans. They are more sheltered there from the annoyances of the people of Bagdad; and are more at liberty to make their pilgrimages to Kerbelah, one of their sacred places.

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Between the two quarters extends a long bridge of boats, over which passes an incessant stream of Bedaween caravans, horsemen, loaded camels, and flocks of sheep intended for the food supply of Bagdad. At each end of the bridge stands a café, with an open gallery, where the Bagdadites refresh themselves at their leisure, sipping their delicious Mocha coffee, or smoking in elegant narghilèhs the best tobacco of the East. From these galleries the view embraces the opposite bank, where Bagdad accumulates its busy life; and its graceful cupolas and brilliant-coloured minarets, intermingled here and there with beautiful clusters of palm trees, sparkle under a pure and radiant sky. Along the quay are moored several large barks or *bagales*, with immense yards, waiting to take on board their cargoes before dropping down to Bassorah and the Persian Gulf. Sometimes a large raft, piloted by a single man, with a small hut upon it, constructed of reeds and branches, drifts slowly down the current. It is made up of timber from the mountains of Kurdistan, and on its voyage has traversed one hundred and fifty leagues, allowing for the sinuous course of the Tigris. In this way is Bagdad supplied with fuel. The Kurds, who carry on this branch of trade, fasten a great number of

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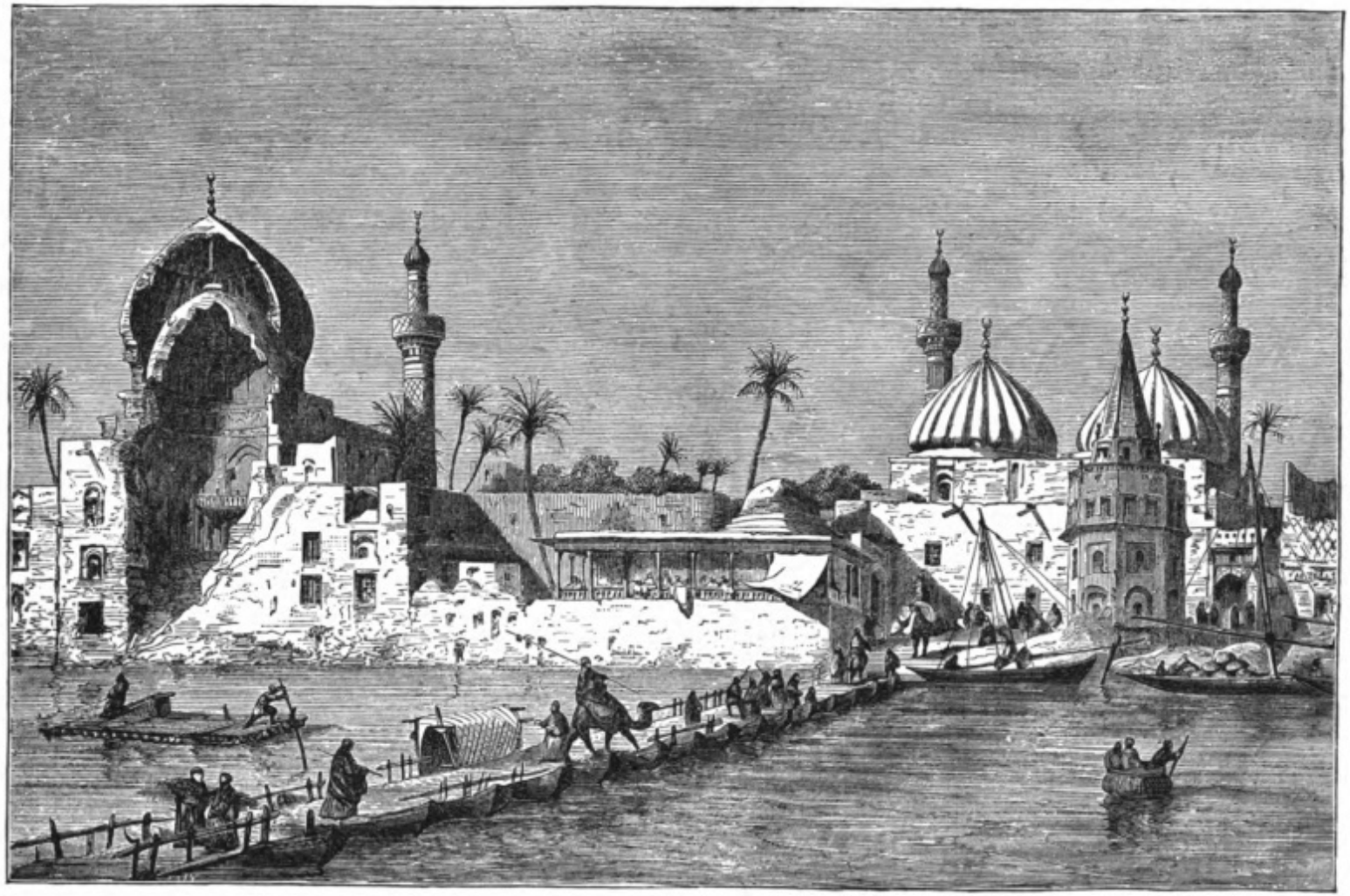

BRIDGE OF BOATS AT BAGDAD.

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goat-skin bladders to their rafts, in order to insure their floating qualities. On reaching their destination they remove the bladders, exhaust the air, pack them up into a small compass, and place them on the back of an ass, to return to their original starting-point, and recommence their not unprofitable industry.

All the buildings of Bagdad, both public and private, are constructed of furnace-burnt bricks. They are small of size, and of a yellowish red colour. The streets are unpaved, and their sides generally present the monotonous appearance of blank walls, as the entrance doors are small and mean, and windows rarely open on the public thoroughfare. Mr. Buckingham speaks of the Serai, or Palace of the Pasha, as an extensive rather than a grand edifice. It is situated in the north-west quarter of the town, not far from the banks of the Tigris. The most ancient of the mosques is the "Tamah el Sookh el Gazel," or the mosque of the Cotton Thread Market,—so named from its locality. Of the original building, however, nothing more remains than the minaret and a small portion of the outer walls. "The former of these is a short, thick, heavy column of the

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most graceless proportions, built of bricks, diagonally crossed and varied in colours, as in the minaret of the great mosque at Mosul. The spring of the projection for the gallery, from whence the invitation to prayer is repeated, commences even below the centre of the column, and goes up in a series of pointed arched niches, dropping ornaments like stalactites, till it reaches about two-thirds the height of the shaft, gradually swelling outward, and terminating in the gallery before mentioned. The piece of the column above this is short, and terminated by a roundish summit; the whole is much inferior to the Turkish minarets of Syria, and still more so to the light and elegant ones seen in many parts of Egypt. The exterior surface of this minaret bears also marks of violence; but sufficient of it remains to show that some parts of it were highly ornamented with the fanciful sculptures of arabesque work; and an inscription recorded by Niebuhr states it to have been erected by the khalif Mostanser, in the year of the Hegira 633, or 1235 A.D.,—about fourteen years after the date of a tower seen in the outer wall of the city."

On the left bank of the Tigris, and near the Per-

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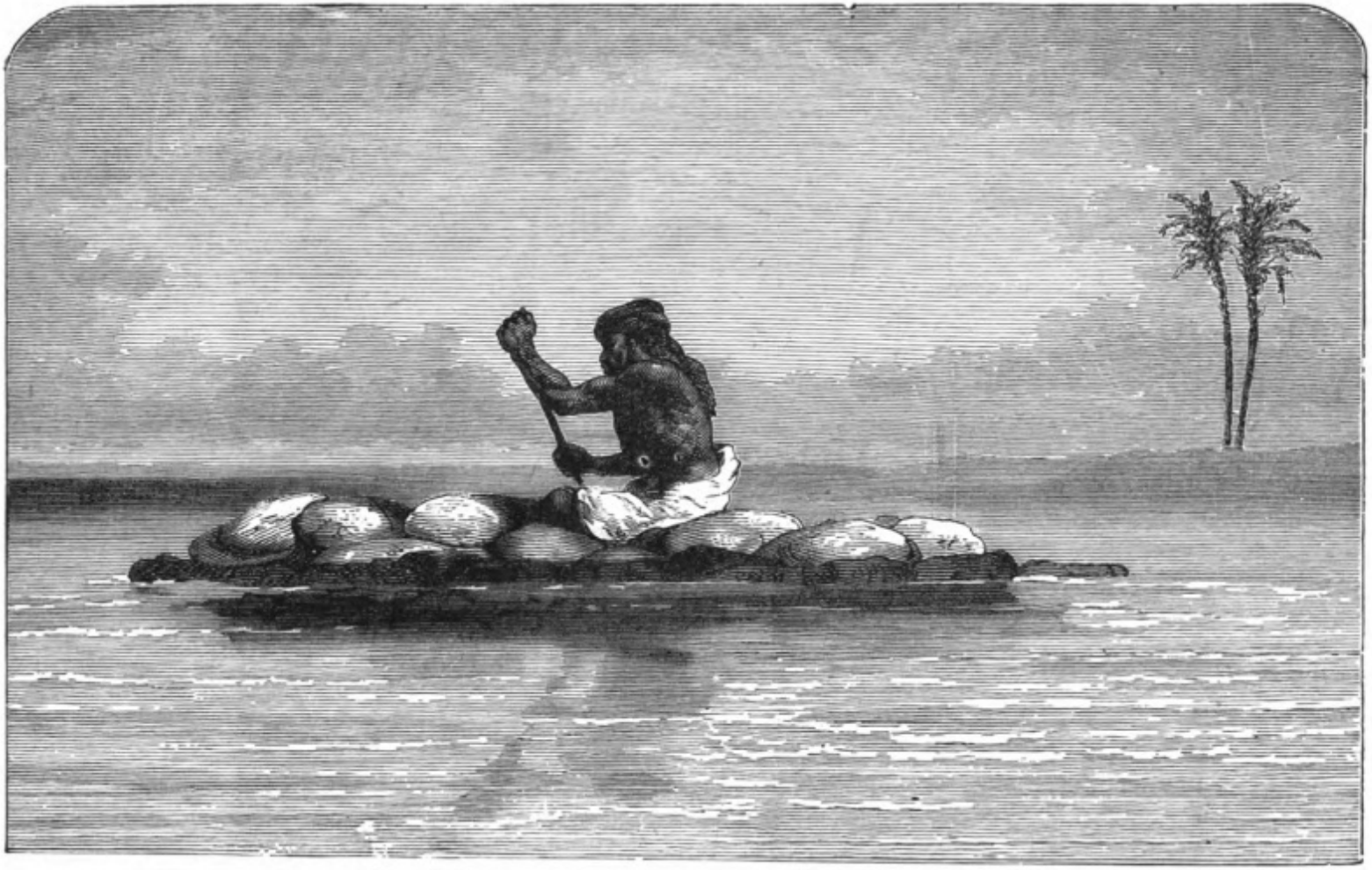

RAFT OF INFLATED BLADDERS ON THE TIGRIS.

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sian quarter, four graceful enamelled minarets, among which rise two cupolas equally bright with mosaic and arabesques, may be seen in the midst of the palm trees. These belong to a grand mosque, round which are grouped the houses of a village almost entirely inhabited by *mollahs* or priests, and by pilgrims who resort thither for devotional purposes. This monument is known as the *Malchid-Imam-Moussa*, or "Mosque of the Imam Moussa."

A short distance beyond, in the uncultivated plain which already wears the aspect of the desert, are several tombs, with a conical upper story. The largest enshrines the dust of Zobeide, the beautiful and powerful wife of the khalif Haroun-al-Raschid, whose personal graces procured her the merited designation of the "Flower of Ladies." Her lonely mausoleum, however, is sadly neglected. If a few lettered Arabs remember that this princess was one of the glories of Bagdad, and that her fame extended even into Persia, the vulgar appear ignorant even of the fact that the soil of this country preserves her remains. Along both banks of the Shatt-el-Arab extend immense gardens and forests of date-palms, which are cultivated with peculiar care. For these trees are of great value to the natives, whom they

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supply with an abundant stock of wholesome and agreeably flavoured food. An Arab can dine off a few dates and a handful of rice. By extensive irrigation and well-directed labour they train and multiply these "elegant and generous palms."

To sum up :—

Bagdad is, or undoubtedly may become, one of the most important points of the Asiatic continent. A vast emporium of the wares of India, Persia, and Turkey, its immense bazaars are as full of interest as of variety. We find collected in them the products of nearly all the countries of Asia, and are compelled to admit that many of the objects exhibited are not less artistic than original. For Bagdad are bound the caravans of Asia Minor, and the numerous camels of Arabia and Syria; alongside its quays are moored the *bagales* which come, by way of Bassorah, from Bouchir, Bahrein, Muscat, and even from Bombay. From the east and the west, from the north and the south, all Asia flows into Bagdad. It is the great mart of an active and lucrative commerce, the centre of a trade in which all the nations of this part of the world participate. To give an idea of the extent of the commercial transactions

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of which it is the theatre, it is enough to say that there are sixty European houses in the city, representing England, France, Holland, Italy, and other countries.

Moreover, the position of this ancient and celebrated city, on a great navigable river which flows into the Indian Ocean, or at least communicates directly with it; its situation at the extremity of the Turkish empire, and near the frontier of our Indian dominions, on the borders of Persia and on those of Arabia, give it an incontestable importance as a centre of political action. Further, it is planted in the heart of a territory of almost incalculable fertility, which needs only an enlightened government to develop its resources. From the Karduk Mountains to the shore of the Persian Gulf, from the chain of the Zagros to the Euphrates, spreads a vast country, watered by several rivers, traversed by ancient canals which have fallen into desuetude since the days of the Romans; everywhere the generous soil calls for culture and a numerous and industrious population; asks but for stalwart arms and modern agricultural science to yield a wealth equal to that of India or Arabia Felix. Abundant crops of indigo,

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sugar, coffee, cotton, and the finest corn would enrich thousands and ten thousands of colonists who should carry thither their perseverance and their knowledge, and the appliances of a civilization which the Bedaween despise because they have not experienced its need.

We now ascend the Tigris to Mosul and the far-famed ruins of Nineveh.

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CHAPTER III.

NINEVEH AND ITS RUINS.

NINEVEH holds a foremost place among the great empire cities of the Ancient World.

Its name is generally explained as derived from an Asiatic deity, *Nin*, who is supposed to correspond with the Greek Hercules. It occurs in the names of Ninus, the mythical founder of the city, and other Assyrian kings.

Nineveh is first mentioned in the Book of Genesis in connection with the earliest migrations of the human race. Asshur, or Nimrud, is there described as ruling over an empire which extended from the land of Shinar, or Babylonia, in the south, to Assyria in the north, and as founding four cities, the most famous of which was Nineveh. Hence Assyria was afterwards known to the Jews as the "land of

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Nimrud," and was supposed to have been first peopled by a colony from Babylon.

So far as can be determined from the vague historical records which have descended to us, Babylon and Nineveh always formed two distinct, though not always two separate, states. There is every reason to believe, from the monuments discovered by Botta, Layard, and George Smith, that in very early times the kings of Babylonia ruled over Assyria; but at a later date those of Assyria ruled over Babylonia. As to the Assyrian monarchs, they are at the outset mere shadows, the phantoms of historical tradition. We have already alluded to Ninus, who extended his conquests, it is said, to Bactria in one direction, and in the other to the Mediterranean. We read also of Semiramis, the great warrior-queen, than whom, perhaps, no figure bulks more conspicuously among old Asiatic legends. Her supremacy extended even into India and Ethiopia. She aggrandized Babylon; she covered Asia with opulent cities and splendid monuments. In Media and Assyria it was customary for the people to connect her name with every ancient memorial which astonished by its grandeur. Such was the case with the ramparts of Babylon and its

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Hanging Gardens, the Temple of Bel, and Tomb of Ninus, raised at the gate of Nineveh on an artificial mound of prodigious dimensions. She divided the supremacy of the Asiatic imagination with Nebuchadnezzar.

Another celebrated name is that of Sardanapalus, which has come down to us as the emblem of an effeminate life, wasted upon enervating luxuries and the refinements of vice. An epitaph attributed to his own hand enumerates in cynical terms the material enjoyments of the world, and represents them as the *summum bonum* of human existence. According to tradition, he was the last king of his dynasty. The rulers or tributary princes of the conquered states,—the king of Bactria, Arbaces, governor of Media, and Belesis, viceroy of Babylon,—joined in a conspiracy against a sovereign whose indolence and debauchery had rendered him contemptible. Nineveh was unable to resist the forces of so formidable a coalition; and as the hostile soldiers burst into the city, Sardanapalus, with a last touch of heroism, accumulated all that he held most precious on a funeral pyre, which he lighted himself, and then leaped into the flames. The reader will remember the fine use which Byron has made of this

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romantic story, elevating his subject by making the Assyrian king capable of a true affection for a noble Greek slave, Myrrha. The pyre is ready, and sovereign and slave are exchanging their last farewells:—

Sar. One last embrace.
Myr. Embrace, but *not* the last; there is one more.
Sar. True, the commingling fire will mix our ashes.
Myr. And pure as is my love to thee, shall they,
Purged from the dross of earth, and earthly passion,
Mix pale with thine. A single thought yet irks me.
Sar. Say it.
Myr. It is that no kind hand will gather
The dust of both into one urn.
Sar. The better:
Rather let them be borne abroad upon
The winds of heaven, and scattered into air,
Than be polluted more by human hands
Of slaves and traitors. In this blazing palace,
And its enormous walls of reeking ruin,
We leave a nobler monument than Egypt
Hath piled in her brick mountains.....
Adieu, Assyria!
I loved thee well, my own, my fathers' land,
And better as my country than my kingdom.
I sated thee with peace and joys; and this
Is my reward! and now I owe thee nothing,
Not even a grave. [*He mounts the pile.*
Now, Myrrha!
Myr. Art thou ready?
Sar. As the torch in thy grasp!
Myr. 'Tis fired! I come." *

* The inscription, attributed to Sardanapalus, was found according to Arrian, at Anchialus, and ran as follows:—"Sardanapalus, son of Anacyndaraxes, in one day founded Anchialus and Tarsus. Eat, drink, play; all other human joys are not worth a fillip." But the whole story is exceedingly doubtful.

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The dismemberment of the Assyrian monarchy, following on this event, is generally supposed to have taken place about B.C. 747; a date which is also that of Nabonassar, the reputed founder of a new Babylonian dynasty. The history of Assyria thus divides itself into two periods: the *ancient monarchy*, anterior to 747, and the *new monarchy*, which dates from 747, and lasted one hundred and forty-one years,—that is, until the second capture of Nineveh, and its complete destruction in 606. This catastrophe was the result of the measureless ambition and thirst for aggrandizement of successive monarchs of the new dynasty. In less than half a century from the death of Sardanapalus, the Ninevite kings had partly recovered the supremacy of Assyria in Western Asia—Armenia, Cilicia, Syria, Mesopotamia, Palestine, all owned a more or less direct allegiance to them. Sennacherib, at the head of a great army, invested Jerusalem, and carried off upwards of two hundred thousand captives. Babylonia itself seems to have been reduced to the position of a tributary kingdom. For a century the arms of Nineveh were checked by the mountain-barrier which separates Assyria from Media. And when at length ambition inspired the Ninevite kings to cross

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the limit which Nature herself seems to have erected between the Semitic and Iranian races, and strike a blow for empire in Upper Asia, it proved their ruin. Media had grown into a powerful kingdom; and its sovereign, whom the Greeks name Cyaxares, assuming in his turn the offensive, invaded Assyria, laid siege to Nineveh, carried it by assault, swept it with fire and sword, and reduced the splendid city, one of the glories of Asia, to hideous ruin. Its inhabitants were destroyed, scattered abroad, or carried into captivity. It never rose again from the ground. So complete was the catastrophe, that men lost all recollection of the very site of Nineveh. Herodotus must have passed over it, and Xenophon, with his ten thousand Greeks, encamped in the immediate vicinity; but to neither of these exact and intelligent observers was it known. Alexander the Great won the victory of Arbela almost in sight of its ruins; yet neither he nor any of his followers remembered that they were those of the once famous Nineveh. In the Roman period a small fortified tower or castle occupied some portion of the site, which appears to have revived the traditional name of *Nineve*. After the Arab conquest, a fort on the east bank of the Tigris was called *Ninawi*. Then

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a cloud once more settled upon the ruined solitude. The prophecies of Nahum had been fulfilled.

Until within the last half century the ruins occupying the traditional site of Nineveh consisted apparently of mounds of earth and rubbish; which, unlike the masses of brick masonry at Babylon, gave no indications of artificial construction, except, perhaps, a few traces of a wall of sun-dried bricks. Some of these mounds were of surprising magnitude, and might have been mistaken for natural elevations, but for the innumerable fragments of pottery scattered around them. On some, the scanty population of the country had planted villages; on others, small mud-built forts; others waved with crops of wheat or barley. In the Arab tongue they were called *Tel*, in the Turkish *Teppeh*; in either case, the word signifying a hill or an artificial elevation. So numerous are they in the region to the east of the Tigris, that archæologists have found it difficult to determine which are really to be considered as having been comprised within the boundaries of ancient Nineveh. The northern boundary of the chief aggregation is now fixed at Shereef-Khan, and the southern at Nimrud, about six and a half

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miles from the junction of the Tigris with the Zab (the ancient *Lycus*). The eastern points are Khorsabad, ten miles north-east of Shereef-Khan, and Karamless, fifteen miles north-east of Nimrud. We have thus an irregular quadrangular area, which is covered with memorials of the ancient life. But these may be distinguished into five or six main groups, the remains of strongholds or enclosures, formerly defended by walls, ditches, and towers: namely,—1. The group immediately opposite the modern town of Mosul, including the great mounds of Kouyunjik and Nebi Yunnus; 2. The mounds of Nimrud and Athur, near the confluence of the Tigris and the Zab; 3. Khorsabad, about ten miles to the east of the Tigris; 4. Shereef-Khan, about five and a half miles to the north of Kouyunjik; and 5. Selamiyah, three miles to the north of Nimrud.

No attempt was made to excavate any of these mounds until 1820, when Mr. Rich, the British consul at Bagdad, visited them and made a collection of stones and of bricks bearing cuneiform inscriptions, which he sent to the British Museum, where they formed the first nucleus of its famous Assyrian gallery, afterwards so greatly enriched by Mr.

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ARAB VILLAGE OF KHORSABAD.

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Austen Layard, and, more recently, by the late Mr. George Smith.

Mr. Rich's discoveries aroused the curiosity of M. Botta, whom the French Government had appointed to the consulate at Mosul in 1842; and, at the expense of a French scientific society, he began a series of researches. At first, his efforts were directed to the mound of Kouyunjik: they produced but little result; and he then, at the suggestion of a native, set his men to dig at the village of Khorsabad. A large mound, partly covered by the village-huts, revealed an ancient site. A cutting was effected on its declivity, and after a few hours' labour, the pick-axes of the workmen laid bare the angle of a wall; then a second wall; then a third; afterwards, three halls or chambers, the walls of which were covered with sculptures and inscriptions, hunting scenes, war scenes, religious scenes, and colossal symbolic figures; forming part of a spacious and magnificent palace, a truly royal residence. That it had been destroyed by fire was clear from the carbonized beams, and the panels of the walls, all blackened or calcined. The furious character of the war which overthrew the last Assyrian dynasty had left everywhere its traces.

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Encouraged by this success, the French Government hastened to place at the disposal of their consul such funds as were necessary, and also the services of a skilful artist, Eugéne Flandin. The works were then pushed forward with increased vigour; inscriptions were scrupulously copied, and the glories of Assyrian art reproduced in a series of magnificent pictures. And a fine collection of ancient memorials enriched the Museum of the Louvre. After all, M. Botta's discoveries were not so remarkable in themselves as they were fortunate in awakening in the mind of Mr. Layard an interest in the ruins of Nineveh. In the course of his Eastern travels he visited Khorsabad, and watched with much curiosity the excavations undertaken by M. Botta. Afterwards, in descending the Tigris from Mosul to Bagdad, he was much struck by a site eight or nine hours' journey to the south of the former town, and on the east bank of the river. A vast mound, covered with broken pottery and cuneiform bricks, indicated the apparent site of a considerable city. To the Arabs it is known by the name of Nimrúd, and their traditions attribute its origin to the earliest ages of the world. On returning to Constantinople (where he was attached to the English

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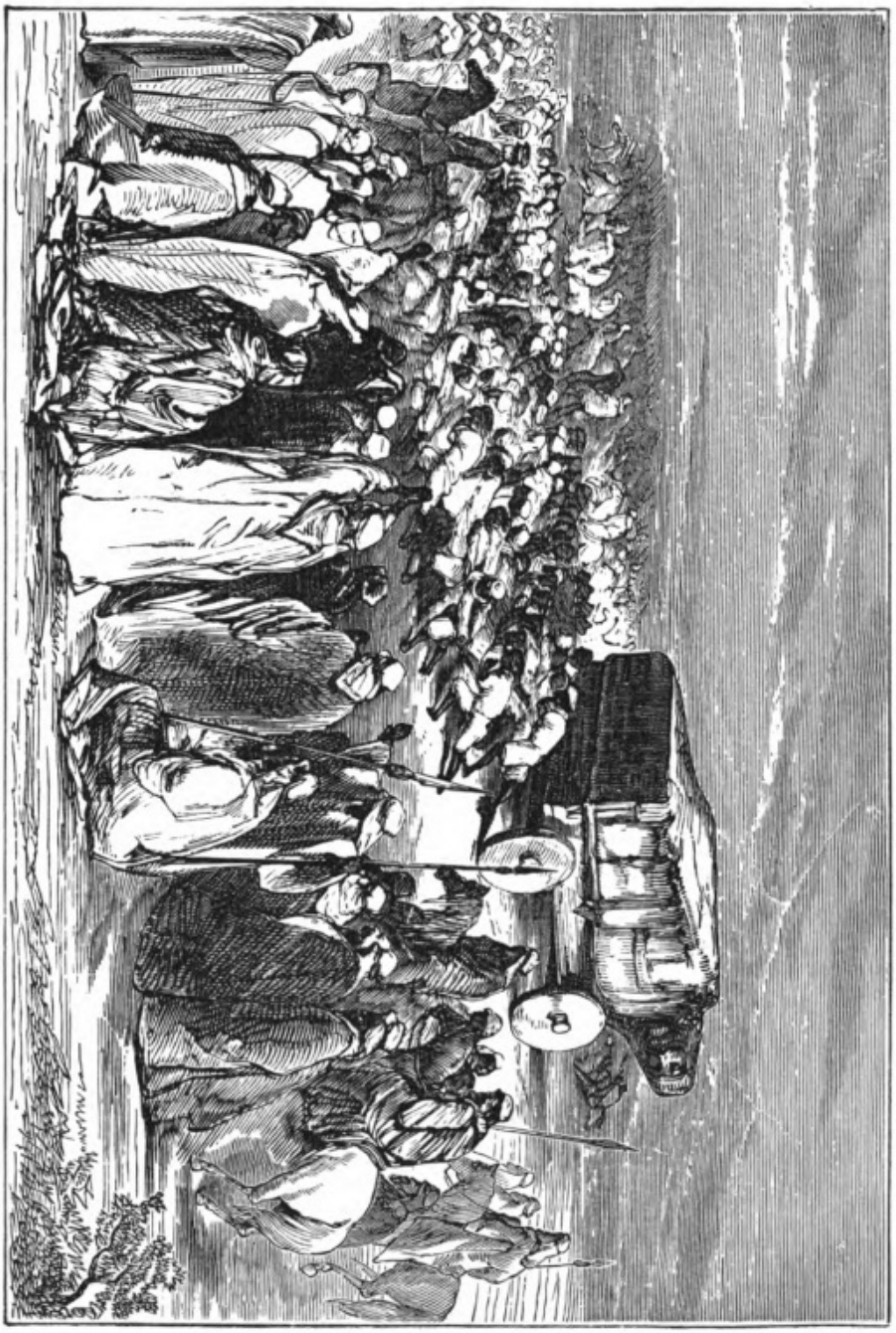

REMOVAL OF A BULL AT NIMRUD

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embassy) he interested several gentlemen in his projects, and supplied by them with the necessary funds, he hastened, in 1845, to return to Mosul.

His preparations were soon completed, and having engaged the services of a body of workmen, he commenced his excavations, which quickly yielded an abundant crop of treasures. Portions of walls uncovered at the outset, showed by the grandeur and beauty of their sculptures that they had belonged to a royal residence. As at Khorsabad, the traces of a destructive conflagration were everywhere; but, fortunately, an immense number of valuable objects had escaped destruction. Every hour brought forth new bas-reliefs, new inscriptions. The mural sculptures, as in the case of the Egyptian monuments, represented the campaigns of the prince who had built the palace; while the inscriptions recorded their history, and enumerated the kings, and towns, and countries that had been subjugated. Winged bulls with a human face, and of colossal proportions, guarded the principal entrance of the palace. On one occasion the Arabs discovered an enormous human head sculptured in alabaster. They said it was Nimrud himself; but Mr. Layard saw at once that it must belong to a winged lion or

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bull. It was in admirable preservation. The expression was majestically calm, and the outline of the features showed a wonderful freedom and unexpected knowledge of art. A corresponding figure was next exhumed; and soon afterwards, a pair of winged human-headed lions, differing from the others in form, the human shape being continued to the waist, and furnished with arms. In one hand each figure carried a goat or stag; and in the other, which hung down by the side, a branch with three flowers. These lions were about twelve feet in height, and the same number in length; with body and limbs admirably moulded, and the strongly developed muscles and bones rendered with correct anatomical knowledge. Expanded wings sprung from the shoulders and spread over the back; a knotted girdle, with tassels, encircled the loins.

"I used to contemplate for hours," says Mr. Layard, "these mysterious emblems, and muse over their intent and history. What more noble forms could have ushered the people into the temple of their gods? What more sublime images could have been borrowed from nature, by men who sought, unaided by the light of revealed religion, to embody their conception of the wisdom, power, and ubiquity

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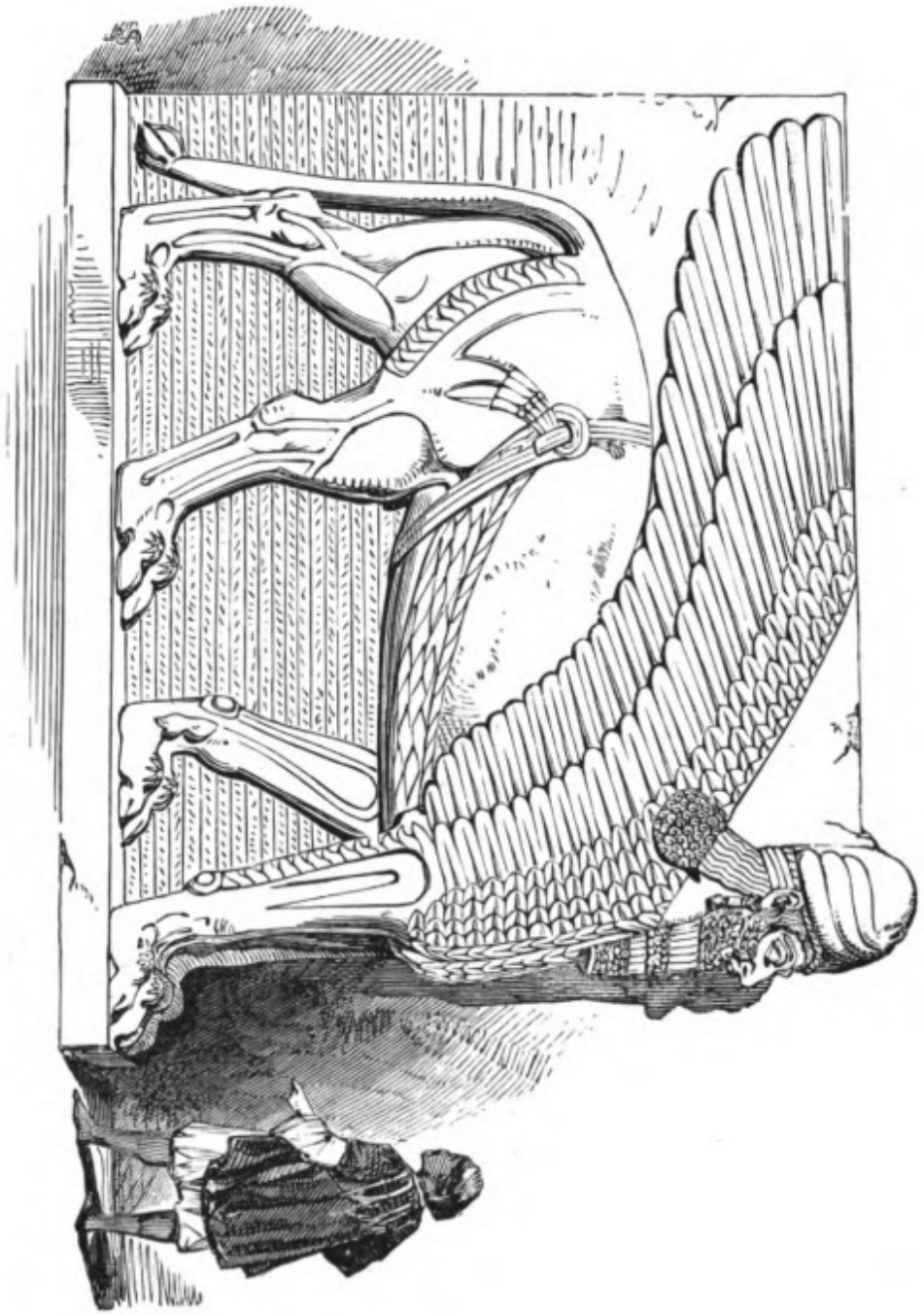

WINGED LION.

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of a Supreme Being? They could find no better type of intellect and knowledge than the head of the man; of strength, than the body of the lion; of rapidity of motion, than the wings of the bird. These winged human-headed lions were not idle creations, the offspring of mere fancy; their meaning was written upon them. They had awed and instructed races which flourished three thousand years ago. Through the portals which they guarded, kings, priests, and warriors had borne sacrifices to their altars, long before the wisdom of the East had penetrated to Greece, and had furnished its mythology with symbols long recognized by the Assyrian votaries. They may have been buried, and their existence may have been unknown, before the foundation of the Eternal City. For twenty-five centuries they had been hidden from the eye of man, and they now stood forth once more in their ancient majesty. But how changed was the scene around them! The luxury and civilization of a mighty nation had given place to the wretchedness and ignorance of a few half-barbarous tribes. The wealth of temples, and the riches of great cities, had been succeeded by ruins and shapeless heaps of earth. Above the spacious

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hall in which they stood, the plough had passed, and the corn now waved. Egypt has monuments no less ancient and no less wonderful; but they have stood forth for ages to testify her early power and renown; whilst those before me had but now appeared, to bear witness in the words of the prophet, that once 'the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon, with fair branches and with a shadowing shroud of an high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs.'"

Beneath the huge mound which had so long covered the Assyrian Pompeii, it was not one palace only that Mr. Layard discovered, but three palaces, within a common enclosure, which occupied the south-west angle of the ancient city. Our space, however, prevents us from supplying any detailed account of his labours. Sometimes he carried on his excavations by cutting long open trenches, sometimes by subterranean galleries. In each case, the results were surprising, and Assyrian civilization underwent, as it were, a complete resurrection.

The reader must not confound, as, under the common name of excavations at Nineveh, is sometimes confounded, Mr. Layard's work at Nimrud

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with M. Botta's at Khorsabad. The latter site lies to the north-east, the former to the south of Mosul. The inscriptions exhumed attest that the Assyrian name of Nimrud was Kalah, a name occurring in the Book of Genesis as that of one of the oldest of the Assyrian cities (Gen. x. 11). Nineveh itself was situated directly opposite to the present town of Mosul, on the other side of the Tigris. There, two considerable mounds rise opposite each other, at a distance of about one mile; the southern being that of Nebi Yunnus, connected by local legends with the Biblical story of Jonah, and "consecrated" by the tomb of a Mohammedan saint; the northern that of Kouyunjik. The latter, as we have already stated, was the scene of Botta's researches. It was re-examined by Mr. Layard in 1847. He pursued his investigations with such skill and energy, infusing something of his own vigour and enthusiasm into his Arab labourers, that in the space of a few months he disinterred no fewer than seventy-one halls, chambers, or passages, covered with an immense quantity of inscriptions and sculptured bas-reliefs. He had struck the very centre of a palace more spacious and more profusely ornamented than the palaces of Nimrud. The con-

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struction of this magnificent pile, according to the inscriptions, was due to Sennacherib, son of king Sargun, the founder of Khorsabad; that is, between the years 650 and 750 B.C. The pavement of the halls was from twenty to thirty feet below the upper surface of the mound.

Having exhausted his funds, Mr. Layard was compelled to return to England; but succeeding quickly in raising a further sum, he resumed his excavations towards the end of 1848. New discoveries were then made of historical and religious bas-reliefs, inscriptions, colossal sculptures, and other objects of interest. Among these discoveries one of the most important was a hall containing a considerable quantity of bricks or cylinders, covered with a fine close hieroglyphical writing. This precious collection, dating from the reign of Sennacherib, the builder of the palace, seems to have been both a depôt of public records and a library; a library of which each volume, or rather each page, was a tablet of baked clay. In this singular repertory was comprised the science of Assyria; its historic annals, its astronomy, its theology, its grammar, and even its polyglot vocabularies.

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Mr. Layard, in this second expedition, did not confine himself to Assyrian territory, but extended his inquiries, in 1849, into Babylonia. He made some excavations on the site of Babylon, but without any great results. Afterwards, in descending the Tigris, he halted at a locality known to the Arabs under the name of Kalah-Shergat, remarkable for one of the largest mounds in all this region. It lies on the right bank of the river, two days' journey below Nimrud. Among the more interesting objects found here were numerous copies of a cylinder on which is engraved a long inscription in the name of the king Tiglath-Pileser. The study of this inscription furnished Assyriologists with one of the most valuable historical documents which have been exhumed from Assyrian soil. We will endeavour to give a brief analysis of it :—

As is customary in these inscriptions, the king begins with an invocation to the great gods of the land of Assur. Then follows a long enumeration of his titles. "Tiglath-Pileser, the powerful king, the supreme king of the peoples of all tongues; king of the four regions, king of kings, lord of lords, master supreme; the illustrious chief protected by the Sun-god, armed with the sceptre,

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clothed with the girdle of authority over all men, reigning over all the people of Bel; the mighty prince whose praises are spread afar among the kings, the honoured sovereign whose servants Assur has designed for the government of the four regions, and has rendered his name celebrated for all posterity; who has conquered numerous plains and mountains in the high and low countries; the brilliant star who has carried war into stranger-lands, and under the auspices of Bel, the god who has no equal, has submitted to the yoke the enemies of Assur."

After this preamble, the king of kings begins to name his various expeditions and victories, proceeding with year after year, and campaign after campaign. A very great number of countries, provinces, and peoples or tribes, are mentioned; some situated to the north and north-west in Upper Armenia; others to the west, towards the confines of Asia Minor (the two furthest countries in this direction are the land of Komoukha, which seems to correspond with the Commagene; and the land of the Koumain or Khamana, which should probably be looked for in northern Syria, towards Mount Amanus); others to the south-west, as far as the

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Mediterranean; and, lastly, others to the east, towards the mountainous districts which separated Assyria from Media.

Tiglath-Pileser also sets forth the victories which signalized the first five years of his reign. He had rendered himself master of forty-two countries and their kings, "from the region which is beyond the Zab, with its plains, its forests, and its mountains, to the country beyond the Euphrates, the land of the Khatti, and the Western Sea." Next he tells us the temples and palaces he constructed or restored, the canals he opened up for the irrigation of the country, the useful animals and new trees he had introduced into Assyria. Altogether the impression conveyed by the inscription is, that the Assyrian monarch was not only a successful warrior, but an able and a sagacious statesman.

With Tiglath-Pileser commences a period of about three centuries, forming the most brilliant era in Assyrian history. It was then that the Ninevite empire attained the climax of its power. We may here remark that none of the monuments exhumed are earlier than this glorious period. The two of greatest antiquity, the palace north-west of Nimrud and the central palace, were respectively raised

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by Sardanapalus, son of the Tiglath-Pileser of the inscription, and by Salmanasar, son of Sardanapalus. The palaces disinterred at Khorsabad and Kouyunjik are a century or two centuries later.

Very great is the interest attaching to the monuments of Salmanasar, in the central palace. The most important is the "stèle," in black basalt, of which a plaster cast is preserved in the Louvre; a monument containing on its four faces the chronicle of one and thirty years of the king's reign, accompanied by numerous rows of curious bas-reliefs representing the victorious monarch receiving the tributes of foreign countries. The expeditions, related year by year in the inscription, are directed, like those of Tiglath-Pileser, sometimes to the north-west and north, in the country of "Hararat" (or Armenia); sometimes to the east and south-east towards Media and the mountaineer tribes of the intermediate region; sometimes westward into the Syrian lands.

A single paragraph, in which we follow Sir H. Rawlinson's translation, will give the reader an idea of the style and purport of this valuable document:—

"In the eleventh year of my reign," says the king, "I set out from the city of Nineveh, and for

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the second time crossed the Euphrates. I captured the eighty-seven towns belonging to Araloura, and one hundred towns belonging to Arama, and gave them up to pillage. I regulated all matters regarding the country of Khamana, and, passing through the land of Teri, descended to the towns of Tamath; and I took the city of Esdirnak, with the eighty-nine towns dependent upon it, exterminating the enemies of Assur, and carrying off their treasures. Hemithra, king of Atesch, Arbouleria, king of Hamath, and the twelve kings of the Khetas who were in alliance with them, rose against me, and united their forces. I encountered them, I defied them, I killed ten thousand of their men, and I led into slavery their captains, their chiefs, and their men of war. I ascended afterwards to the city of Habbaril, one of the principal cities belonging to Arama (the king of Armenia), and I received there the tribute of Barbaranda, king of Chetina, in gold, in silver, in camels, in sheep, and in oxen. I returned to the land of Khamana, where I founded palaces and cities."

The Salmanasar who thus recounts his martial exploits lived in the first half of the ninth century, probably about 860 or 870 B.C.

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On the breast of a statue of the god Nebo, the supreme divinity of Babylon and Nineveh, which was exhumed at Nimrud in 1854, was engraved an inscription worthy of notice. It is a dedication of the statue "to Phalloukha, king of Assyria, and his imperial consort, Sammouramit, queen of the palace." This Phalloukha, from the correspondence of dates,—another inscription describes him as grandson of king Salmanasar,—would seem to be identical with the Pul or Phoul, whose expeditions into Syria and the land of Israel, about 774 and 764 B.C. respectively, are recorded in the Bible. But an interesting feature of the inscription is, that it contains the name of "Semiramis;" not the legendary Semiramis of Ctesias and the Median traditions, who flits across the mist of bygone centuries like a phantom, but the "Semiramis" of Herodotus, who has a really historical character, and is celebrated for having executed the first great works in the embellishment of Babylon. The epoch to which the precise statements of the historian relegate this famous queen is, in fact, identical with that of Phalloukha.

Amid the pomp and splendour of the three brilliant centuries between the reigns of Tiglath-

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Pileser and the husband of Semiramis, when the Assyrian kings reigned over all Western Asia, when Babylonia and Media, Mesopotamia and Armenia, Syria, and even Egypt, were but the provinces or tributary states of Nineveh, who could have foreseen that so much greatness was to perish in a terrible catastrophe? Yet the day destined to witness the crash of empire was now at hand; the fall was as sudden as the elevation had been rapid.

History reveals to us the cause. Media and Babylonia, supported by the king of Bactriana, united in an offensive and defensive alliance to recover their independence. Nineveh was overthrown, and a new dynasty succeeded to that which had been glorified by such grand achievements. But it was not long before the princes of this new race re-conquered, foot by foot, the ancient preponderance of their kingdom. The inscriptions discovered by Botta and Layard confirm and complete the Scriptural records. Salmanasar, who subjugated Samaria in B.C. 721, and carried away the remnant of the ten tribes into captivity, was the second king of the new monarchy. His successor, Sargun, erected the city and palace buried

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under the mound of Khorsabad. He was a warrior and a conqueror; and his son, Sennacherib, inherited his military capacity. The palace unearthed by Layard at Kouyunjik, the royal quarter of Nineveh, was commenced by him, and completed by his son and successor, Sardanapalus. The Assyrian architecture is commemorated by no more beautiful monument. In one of the inscriptions on its walls we read:—"I have enlarged all the buildings of Nineveh, my royal city. I have reconstructed its ancient streets; I have widened the narrow ones; I have made the entire city to shine like the sun."

A few words must now be devoted to the paintings and statuary discovered among the ruins of Nineveh. We shall follow the judicious criticisms of M. Saint Martin.

Whether Assyrian art, like Egyptian art, was fettered by certain religious ordinances or formulas, it is impossible to determine; but both in Assyria and Egypt the plastic arts were abruptly arrested at the very point of their development. In both countries prevailed the same conventionality of types and rigidity of outlines; though there was more elasticity in Assyria than in Egypt. The

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FIGURE CARRYING A GOAT, NIMRUD

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Assyrian artist, it is true, has, like the Egyptian, a constant type for each of his figures; whether he puts before us priest, warrior, or captive, he adopts always the same costume, the same symbols, almost the same attitude; but in the delineation of each individual, he evidently sought to approximate to nature. In the countenance and the limbs, he introduced a degree of life and freedom to which the Egyptian sculptor was a stranger. He rendered, as well as he could, the prominence of the muscles and the play of the joints. His chisel took a delight in details, in ornaments, in the execution of the hair and beard. And in the representation of animal life he displayed a very considerable skill. Even with modern artists he could challenge comparison in the vivacity and freedom of his horses and his lions. But in his human figures correctness of proportion and a knowledge of foreshortening were as wholly wanting as perspective and harmony in his scenes and groups. All was thrown upon the same plane with a truly primitive simplicity of execution. If he desired to depict a valley watered by a running stream, he could devise nothing better than to plant his trees in an inverse direction; so that on one

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bank the tree-tops rose on high, and on the other appeared to grow downwards. It is difficult to understand how such barbarism could be reconciled with the comparative perfection to which certain manual arts had attained; though the same anomaly is found existing among the ancient Egyptians, as well as among all the civilized nations of Southern and Eastern Asia.

True Art,—that is, the art which breathes the sentiments of the beautiful and the harmonies of Nature,—is an offspring of the Greek genius. And yet the Greek Art has its roots in the Asiatic Art, just as the delicate flower, the corolla of which reflects the azure of heaven, derives its life and sustenance from the rude, dull earth.

Only two statues, properly so called, have been found among the Assyrian memorials; one, a seated figure, much mutilated, in the ruins of Kalah-Shergat; the other, erect, in one of the palaces of Nimrud. The latter is nearly half life-size, and is carved out of a compact limestone.

It had always been supposed that the first inspiration of the plastic arts passed from Egypt into Greece and Italy. But one of the results, and not the least interesting, of the Assyrian discoveries

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is, that this theory has been found incorrect. The exact resemblance of the vases and cups of Phœnicia and Nineveh to the most ancient ceramic products of Etruria and Greece, shows whence came the imitation. The resemblance is one of form, ornament, and emblematic subjects. From this point of view, the study of Assyrian art obviously acquires a special importance. It is the same with its sculpture, the first germ of the antique statuary. We may trace its progress across Asia Minor, from the banks of the Euphrates to the shores of the blue Ægean, and from Asiatic Greece into Hellas itself. Asia Minor, before it passed under the sceptre of the Persian, had, for long centuries, acknowledged the Assyrian supremacy. Time has obliterated almost all the landmarks of the Assyrian period, but those of the Persian era are still numerous; and Persian art, as it was developed under the dynasty of the Akhemenides, was nothing more than an offshoot of Assyrian art.

The clearest proofs of the remarkable manual dexterity of the Assyrian workers are found in the crowd of small articles of daily and personal use, as well as in some special departments of industrial

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labour. Here, again, we observe a characteristic which they had in common with the Egyptians, in whose tombs, as the reader knows, have been found ornaments, utensils, jewels, weapons, dating from twelve to fifteen centuries before the Christian era, of almost marvellous perfection of design and execution.

The Assyrians were acquainted with glass and various kinds of enamel. They could bake clay for bricks, or for vessels and pottery-ware of finer or coarser texture. Bricks were very largely employed, in Assyria as at Babylon, for purposes of building and ornament, as well as in various other ways. It was upon square or cylindrical bricks that they inscribed, as we have seen, either by means of moulds, or by writing with stylets on the clay while soft, all the records and facts which they wished to preserve. They applied also to the bricks employed in interior work designs in various colours, producing an effect not unlike that of Etruscan ornament. Their pottery shows both taste and elegance; and as much may be said of their vessels in alabaster or bronze. In sun-baked clay they modelled also a number of fanciful articles.

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Their skill was considerable in the manufacture of linen and woollen stuffs, which they dyed, and embroidered with much choice ornament, as well as with groups of human figures and animals. "Of all Asiatic nations," says Mr. Layard, "the Babylonians were most noted for the weaving of cloth of divers colours. In these stuffs gold threads were introduced into the woof of many hues. Amongst those who traded in 'blue clothes and broidered work' with Tyre, were the merchants of Asshur or Assyria (Ezek. xxvii. 24); and that the garments of Babylon were brought into Syria, and greatly esteemed at a very early period, we learn from their being classed amongst the most precious articles of spoil, even with gold, in the time of Joshua. They formed, perhaps, 'the dyed attire and broidered work' so frequently mentioned in the Scriptures as the garments of princes and the most costly gifts of kings. The ornaments and figures upon them may either have been dyed, worked in the loom, or embroidered with the needle, like 'the prey of divers colours of needlework, of divers colours of needlework on both sides.'"

The invention of cotton-weaving, according to Pliny, is due to Semiramis; and the brilliant colours

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and fine textures of the Babylonian cottons were held in high repute. Such was the case, also, with the silken robes of Assyria. The looms of Babylon continued celebrated down to the days of Roman supremacy. Their products, like the Assyrian robes, seem to have been embroidered with figures of flowers and animals. Arrian records that a purple carpet covered the tomb of Cyrus; and that Babylonian garments, carpets, and purple drapery adorned the couch on which his dead body was laid.

But in metal-work the Assyrians displayed as much skill as in the products of their looms. Their mountains yielded iron, silver, copper, lead, and perhaps, in small quantities, gold. Iron abounded to such an extent that it was a recognized article of export, occasionally in the ore, but generally in the shape of bricks or pigs. The metals were also sent abroad in manufactured forms, such as vases; or, if gold and silver, in rings. Copper was extensively used, not only for ornaments, but in the construction of weapons and tools. It was inlaid into their iron helmets, and formed part of their armour. Daggers and arrow-heads were frequently made of it; but in this case a certain quantity of iron was mixed with it, and it was further hardened by an

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alloy of tin. Mr. Layard thinks that the sculptor's tools were probably of some such combination; though, as the Egyptians were apparently acquainted at a very early period with steel, and used it, as well as bronze, in sculpturing stone, marble, and granite, we may infer that the Assyrians also were acquainted with this useful form of iron. "The soft limestone of their monuments would not, however, like the granite of Egypt, require a very highly-tempered instrument. But the black basalt is hard, offering considerable resistance to the tools of the sculptor; and we find that the Assyrian statues in this material are less carefully finished than the bas-reliefs of alabaster."

In casting as in working metals the Assyrians showed a remarkable dexterity. Amongst the copper figures which Mr. Layard discovered at Nimrud, some lions in solid metal were of great beauty, almost rivalling the bronzes of Greece. Several large cups of the same metal are distinguished by this peculiarity,—they are adorned with an inscription, arranged in spiral lines. This inscription is not in cuneiform characters, but in letters resembling the ancient Phœnician, which appear to have been the "cursive" and, probably, common writing of Nin-

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eveh and Babylon. The jewellery figured on the bas-reliefs, bracelets, collars, ear-rings, and the like, display an astonishing amount of manual skill. It is a common characteristic of both Assyrians and Egyptians, that their tombs contain the weapons, jewels, and other personal articles of the deceased. These, dating from twelve to fifteen centuries before the Christian era, are frequently as graceful in design as exquisite in workmanship. The Assyrians were also fine artists in ivory, and knew how to engrave upon various kinds of precious stones.

As to the Assyrian religion and worship, we can offer but a few suggestive particulars, referring the reader for fuller details to the works of Layard, Birch, Rawlinson, and George Smith. And it must be owned that though much valuable information has been obtained from the inscriptions and bas-reliefs, our knowledge is far from exact. The symbols most frequently met with in the sculptures and ornaments, putting aside the human-headed bulls and lions, are human figures with a hawk's head, or a fish's body, winged genii, and a kind of Hercules strangling a lion in his arms. Two emblems of constant recurrence are the pine-apple, and a basket,

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which a symbolic personage holds in each hand. Among the Assyrians, as among the Persians, the emblem of the Supreme Divinity is a figure issuing from a winged circle.

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PART III.

Mr. George Smith's Discoveries.

THE late Mr. George Smith, an Assyriologist of high repute, made some discoveries among the ruins of Nineveh in 1866–72, including the tablets containing the Chaldean account of the Deluge, which excited great public interest, and induced the proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph* to place at his disposal a sum of one thousand guineas for further explorations, on condition that he supplied their journal from time to time with accounts of his journeys and the results of his researches.

In April 1873 he commenced work on the mound of Nimrud. Thence he proceeded to Kouyunjik. Having formed a collection of antiquities, he transported it to England, returning to the scene of his profitable labours in January 1874,

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and occupying himself in well-directed excavations for several months. He finally returned to England in June.

Among his most remarkable "finds," was the Izdubar or Flood series of legends, engraved upon twelve tablets, and recording the adventures of a hero, whom Mr. Smith names Izdubar, and identifies with the Nimrod of the Bible. These legends appear to have been compiled during the early Babylonian empire, or upwards of two thousand years before Christ; and, so far as can now be ascertained, they lead to the conclusion that Izdubar or Nimrod, a great hunter or giant, ruled over the country round Babylon, and, afterwards expelling the tyrannical sovereign of Erech, added this territory to his kingdom. Afterwards he destroyed a monster which ravaged the adjacent districts; and formed a close intimacy with a seer, named Heabani, who visited his court at Erech. The two destroyed several other wild animals, and conquered a chief, Humbaba, whose mountainous land was full of pine-trees. Another chief, Belesu, was next subdued; and then an animal called "the divine hell" was killed. "Izdubar," says our authority, "was now in the height of his power, and ruled

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over all the valley of the Euphrates and Tigris, from the Persian Gulf to the Armenian Mountains. Misfortunes now set in. First, Heabani was killed by a wild animal called a 'tamabukkû,' the nature of which I have not ascertained; next, Izdubar was struck with a disease,—apparently, from the description, a kind of leprosy. Izdubar went on a wandering excursion to the sea-coast to be cured of his malady, and is supposed there to have met the deified hero who escaped the flood. In the new fragments I found at Kouyunjik I discovered that this hero bore the name of *Hasisadra*, which is the origin of the Greek form of his name, Xisithrus. Hasisadra is supposed to have told Izdubar how to obtain his cure; and then the king returned to Erech, and again mourned over his friend Heabani. The legends close with a petition to the gods for Heabani, who, after his death, is in the lower region of the departed, or hell. Hea, one of the gods, listens to this prayer, and releases Heabani, who then rises to heaven."

The principal incident, however, in the Izdubar legends, of which the foregoing may be taken as a specimen, is the account of the Deluge, which Hasisadra is supposed to pour into Izdubar's

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wondering ear. Its points of correspondence with the Biblical narrative are numerous and important. After describing the construction of an immense ship, the legend continues to relate that "Surip-pakik, son of Ubaratutu," entered into it, with his grain, furniture, and goods, his women servants, his female slaves, and the young men, the beasts of the field, and "all the animals of the field." Then—

"A flood Shamas made and
he spake saying in the night: 'I will cause it to rain heavily.'...
That flood happened (of which)
he spake saying in the night: 'I will cause it to rain (*or* it will rain) from heaven heavily.'...
The raging of a storm in the morning
arose, from the horizon of heaven extending and wide.
Vul in the midst of it thundered, and
Nebo and Saru went in front;
the throne-bearers went over mountains and plains;
the destroyer Nergal overturned;
Ninip went in front and cast down;
the spirits carried destruction,—
in their glory they swept the earth;
Of Vul the flood reached to heaven.
The bright earth to a waste was turned;
the surface of the earth like...it swept;
it destroyed all life from the face of the earth;...
the strong deluge over the people reached to heaven.
Brother saw not his brother; it did not spare the people.
In heaven
the gods feared the tempest, and
sought refuge; they ascended to the heaven of Anu."

After various details, intended to show the im-

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mensity of the catastrophe, we find that on the seventh day the storm subsided, and the rains ceased, and there was quietness on the face of the waters. Then the Assyrian Noah looked forth; and, behold, all mankind was turned to corruption, and the dead bodies floated to and fro like reeds.

"I opened my window, and the light broke over my face;
it passed. I sat down and wept;
over my face flowed my tears.
I perceived the shore at the boundary of the sea;
for twelve measures the land rose.
To the country of Nizir went the ship;
the mountain of Nizir stopped the ship, and to pass over it it was not able...
On the seventh day
I sent forth a dove, and it left. The dove went and turned, and
a resting-place it could not enter, and it returned.
I sent forth a swallow, and it left. The swallow went and turned, and
a resting-place it could not enter, and it returned.
I sent forth a raven, and it left.
The raven went, and the drying up of the water it saw, and
it did eat, it swam, and wandered away, and did not return.
I sent the animals forth to the four winds; I poured out a libation;
I built an altar on the peak of the mountain;
by sevens herbs I cut;
at the bottom of them I placed reeds, pines, and spices.
The gods collected at its burning, the gods collected at its good burning;
the gods like flies over the sacrifice gathered.
From of old also the great god in his course
The great brightness of Anu had created."

Izdubar, the hero of these legends, is regarded by Mr. Smith as a representative of the beginning

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of empire, a type of the great conquering monarchs who succeeded him. The tablets show that, like later kings, he had his court, his seer or astrologer, and his officers. But the special value of these memorials lies in their revelation of the fact that, nearly four thousand years ago, the Babylonians cherished a tradition of a Flood which was divinely ordained as a punishment for the world's wickedness; of a holy man who built an ark, and escaped the general destruction; who was afterwards raised up on high to dwell among the gods. They tell us, also, that the builders of Nineveh and its palaces believed in hell, a place of torment under the earth; and heaven, a place of glory in the sky. And it is interesting to note the resemblances between their description of the two and that which is given in Holy Writ. They believed in a soul or spirit separate from the body, which did not perish on the death of the mortal frame, and this soul or spirit they represent as rising from the earth at the divine command, and winging its way to heaven.

Other inscriptions discovered by Mr. Smith were of a purely historical character, and relate to various early Babylonian kings. Thus, one disinterred at

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Kouyunjik belonged to king Aga, who restored the temple of Merodach some two thousand years before the Christian era. Another, of equal antiquity, is connected with Dungi, a Chaldean monarch. Yet another refers to Hammurubi, an early Babylonian sovereign, who is described as "the powerful warrior destroying the enemy, sweeper away of opposition, possessor of his enemies; maker of battle, spreader of reverence; the plunderer, the warrior, the destroyer." Mr. Smith also discovered a monolith of the king Merodach-Baladan,—a large white stone, about three feet high, having on the face a rude picture containing the emblems of the gods, including the symbols of the sun and moon, a scorpion, dove, winged lion, a ziggurat or tower, and many others; and on the back an inscription in three columns, of 115 lines of writing, giving an account of a field of which this was the boundary or memorial stone, and recording that the said field had been conferred by Merodach-Baladan, the king, on his servant Maraduk-zakir-izkur, in acknowledgment of services rendered to the state.

The inscriptions which relate to the reign of Tiglath-Pileser are of special interest, from the way in which they touch the Biblical history at various

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points. The names of Azaiah and Jehoahaz (Ahaz), kings of Judah; of Menahem, Pekah, and Hoshea, kings of Israel; of Rezon of Damascus, and Hiram of Tyre, are of frequent occurrence; while such particulars as remain of the later campaigns are in exact accordance with the Biblical narrative of Tiglath-Pileser's alliance with Ahaz, king of Judah. In one of the fragments a description is given of the siege of Damascus and the defeat of Rezon, king of Syria; in others we read of the conquest of the Philistines; in others, again, of the invasion of Israel, the death of Pekah, king of Samaria, and the accession of Hoshea. There can be no doubt that Mr. Smith was justified in concluding that further and systematic excavations at Nimrud would throw a valuable light on the study of Jewish history.

But the inscriptions which we owe to the research of Mr. Smith are not all of an historical character. Many relate to religious subjects, to astrology and astronomy, to geography and natural history, demonology, laws, contracts, and the like. One of them, engraved in two languages on a tablet of terra cotta, is very curious, and would seem to have been

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composed by an Assyrian *valis*, at once bard and priest. Mr. Smith calls it a hymn to the light of heaven; but it is rather a kind of lyrical invocation, in which light is sometimes eulogized, sometimes apostrophized. We subjoin the translation :—

"1. That which in the storehouse of heaven is kindled, and to the cities of men flies, my glory.

2. Queen of Heaven above and below, may they call my glory.

3. Countries at once, I sweep in my glory.

4. Of countries their walls am I; their great defence am I in my glory."

Here the inscription changes its character :—

"5. May thy heart rejoice; may thy liver be satisfied;

6. O lord great Anu, may thy heart rejoice;

7. O lord great mountain Bel, may thy liver be satisfied;

8. O goddess lady of heaven, may thy heart rejoice;

9. O mistress lady of heaven, may thy liver be satisfied;

10. O mistress lady of the temple of Anu, may thy heart rejoice;

11. O mistress lady of Erech, may thy liver be satisfied;

12. O mistress lady of Zasreh-erech, may thy heart rejoice;

13. O mistress lady of Harris-Kalama (that is, Mount of the World), may thy liver be satisfied;

14. O mistress lady of Silim-Kalama, may thy heart rejoice;

15. O mistress lady of Babylon, may thy liver be satisfied;

16. O mistress lady named Nanu, may thy heart rejoice;

17. O lady of the temple, lady of the gods, may thy liver be satisfied."

In their employment of the liver as the seat of the affections the Assyrian poets anticipated the Roman.

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Another remarkable memorial described by Mr. Smith, and supposed by him to have been the production of some Chaldean priest during the early Babylonian monarchy, belongs to a series of mythological subjects, and relates the story of the Seven Wicked Gods or Spirits.

It opens thus :—

"1. In the first days the evil gods
2. the angels who were in rebellion, who in the lower part of heaven
3. had been created,
4. they caused their evil work
5. devising with wicked heads...
6. ruling to the river...
7. There were seven of them. The first was...
8. the second was a great animal...
9. ...which any one...
10. the third was a leopard...
11. the fourth was a serpent...
12. the fifth was a terrible.....which to...
13. The sixth was a striker which to god and king did not submit,
14. the seventh was the messenger of the evil wind which.....made.
15. The seven of them messengers of the god Anu their king—
16. From city to city went round
17. the tempest of heaven was strongly bound to them,
18. the flying clouds of heaven surrounded them,
19. the downpour of the skies which in the bright day
20. makes darkness, was attached to them
21. with a violent wind, an evil wind, they began,
22. the tempest of Vul was their might,
23. at the right hand of Vul they came,
24. from the surface of heaven like lightning they darted,
25. descending to the abyss of waters, at first they came.
26. In the wide heavens of the god Anu the king
27. evil they set up, and an opponent they had not.

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28. At this time Bel of this matter heard and
29. the account sank into his heart.
30. With Hea the noble sage of the gods he took counsel, and
31. Sin (the moon), Shamas (the sun), and Ishtur (Venus) in the lower part of heaven to control it he appointed.
32. With Anu to the government of the whole of heaven he set them up.
33. To the three of them the gods his children,
34. day and night to be united and not to break apart,
35. he urged them."

And so the legend continues. The god Sin, or the Moon, is represented as having been much troubled by the rebellion of the evil spirits, who leagued together in their wickedness, and came down to Earth like a wind from the midst of heaven. And Bel, seeing the trouble of Sin, sent word thereof to the god Hea in the ocean; who, after duly hearing the message, spake with abundant wisdom, ordering his son Merodach to repair to "the shining Sin." Here a portion of the ancient poem is lost: probably it contained the remainder of Hea's speech, and an account of Merodach's mission to Sin's assistance. Of the following portion of the legend, says Mr. Smith, six fragments are extant, but they are insufficient for a complete restoration of the text. What we can ascertain is this, that the inhabitants of Nineveh and Babylon believed that a great rebellion occurred in Heaven in the early

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days of creation, when animals of hideous form usurped to some extent the supremacy of the universe. Sun, Moon, and Stars as yet had not been set in their appointed courses. In the upper celestial regions ruled the god Anu, who may be regarded as almost identical with the Ouranos of the Greeks. He was supreme ruler of Heaven, and of the seven evil spirits, while his son Vul was god of the atmosphere and its phenomena. Bel, as god of the middle regions, held sway upon Earth; as already stated, he was the chief centre and object of all Babylonian worship. He represents the principle of active and creative life, while Anu is a passive divinity, overlooking all the movements of the universe, but seldom checking or controlling them. The region under the earth, and the ocean, were governed by Hea, who seems to typify the wisdom or intelligence of the gods. Thus we have a trinity of deities, a godhead with a threefold character. As for the seven demon-gods, they were probably the originals of the Titans of the Greeks; and their rebellion against Anu and Hea reminds us of the Titanic war against Zeus. In order to dispel the confusion and disorder prevailing in Heaven, Bel resolves to set in their places the

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Sun, the Moon, and the Stars (represented by Venus), and to institute the "reign of law." But the evil spirits, as emblems of chaos, resist this design, make war on the Moon, and contrive to gain over to their alliance Venus, and the Sun, and Vul, the god of air. When Bel gains information of this confederacy, he despatches a mission to Hea for his advice. We may conclude that the legend terminated with the destruction of the seven evil spirits, and the triumph of the Moon, who is considered, says Mr. Smith, the type of the good kings of the country. For our own part, we would venture to interpret the whole legend as an astronomical fiction, in which are mixed up some reminiscences of earlier traditions of the contention between the good and evil principles of the universe.

Concluding here our brief summary of Mr. Smith's discoveries, we proceed with a few remarks on the character of the old Ninevite civilization, as shown in the monuments that have of late years given up their secrets. The image which these present is necessarily an imperfect, a mutilated, and a broken one; but yet, as we have seen, it retains something of the old grandeur and magnificence.

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The Hebrew prophets, contemporaries of the Assyrian power, and after them Herodotus and Ctesias, speak in the most glowing terms of the wealth of the Ninevite and Babylonian kings, of the splendour of their court, of the stateliness of their edifices; and now we see that the ruins, buried beneath the dust of four-and-twenty centuries, confirm this ancient testimony, and dazzle us, as it were, with a last glance of the old proud monarchies of the East.

We must not expect, however, that the social condition of the Chaldean world resembled that of the polished and intellectual age of Pericles, still less that it approximated to the refined and enlightened civilization of our modern communities. There was a certain materialistic element, so to speak, in the civilization of the ancient East. Its development, like its splendour, is wholly external, with numerous and violent contrasts, and in not a few points closely touching upon barbarism.

At the summit of the hierarchy is placed the king. His person figures in a multitude of scenes of war, religion, and the chase, represented on the monuments. Sometimes we see him seated on his throne, with bow and arrow in hand, assisting at the siege of a hostile city; sometimes mounted on

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his chariot, and surrounded by his guards, returning victorious from a distant expedition. Again he is seen surrounded by his eunuchs (easily recognized by their beardless face and the effeminate roundness of their features), and by symbolic figures, recalling, doubtlessly, some of his religious attributes. More frequently he is shown with his captains and officers of state awaiting his commands. He wears a long tunic, bordered by a fringe, which is heavy with rows of pearls; and over it droops a mantle, covered with costly embroideries. From his ears depend precious ear-rings, and his naked arms, above the elbow, as well as his wrists, are loaded with spiral bracelets. The left hand rests on the rich handle of a sword suspended from his girdle, and always carried horizontally.

As all the monuments brought from Assyria have been found in the royal palaces, nearly every detail of their sculptures refers to the actions or habits of the sovereign; and we miss that complete representation of the public and private life of all classes which renders the Egyptian antiquities so valuable and so interesting. Accordingly, the household decorations and furniture are always represented as very costly; but we may reasonably suppose that,

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THE KING, NORTH-WEST PALACE NIMRUD.

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apart from the nature of their material and their ornaments, the articles in use in daily life were the same among the lower as among the higher classes. The Assyrians, unlike our modern Orientals, seated themselves on seats not unlike our fauteuils and tabourets; and their meals, like ours, were laid out upon tables. Tables and chairs were richly and tastefully decorated, and the ornamentation resembles that which is in vogue among ourselves.

The clothes, at least of court personages and officials, display an equal luxuriousness. They are tunics or robes of greater or less length, mantles of various shapes, scarves with long fringes, embroidered girdles—the whole covered with a profusion of ornaments, which, as well as the embroideries, are always in excellent taste. The Assyrian fancy ran riot in capricious designs like arabesques, in wreaths of flowers, in graceful combinations of animals and foliage.

Like all the Eastern nations, the Assyrians bestowed special attention upon the beard; and the mode in which it is arranged in plaits on the bas-reliefs is very curious and characteristic. The hair, of which equal care was taken, fell down to the neck in a thick *chignon*, plaited or curled like the beard.

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In none of the sculptured bas-reliefs which adorned the Assyrian palaces is a single female figure represented, except in certain scenes of captive enemies, where the two sexes are commingled. To war in its various aspects—the march, the siege, the battle, the victory—the great majority of the Ninevite sculptures are dedicated. The Assyrian forces were composed partly of foot soldiers armed with pikes or bows, partly of horsemen armed in the Parthian fashion, and partly of archers mounted on chariots. Some are clothed from head to foot in coat of mail. They were guided by standard-bearers. The machines of which they made use were not unlike those employed at a later period by the Romans. With huge rams, carried upon wheels, they battered down the hostile ramparts; with long ladders they escaladed the walls, and stormed the beleaguered city. A battle-field presents on the monuments a terrible scene of confusion and carnage; and from the Biblical narrative we learn that the Assyrians disgraced their victories by ruthless slaughter. Gory heads, prisoners impaled in sight of a besieged town, others flayed alive,—these are painful testimonies to the inhuman character of the Assyrian wars. Maritime campaigns are also

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figured on the monuments—campaigns which take place on the waters of the Tigris or the Euphrates, or in vast lagoon-like marshes, or even on the sea. These last refer, in all probability, to the wars of the Assyrians on the Phœnician coast. On a bas-relief which shows us the king and his army returning from one of these distant expeditions, a choir of musicians and vocalists advances before the king. The principal instrument in use among them seems to be a kind of theorbo or light harp. Some of the musicians blow a double flute; another strikes with a stick a stringed instrument which he carries before him in a horizontal position. Many apparently keep time to the music by a cadenced step. We have said that women are not introduced in the Assyrian bas-reliefs; but we must plead that the exception proves the rule; for in this particular scene women, accompanied by children, follow the musicians, singing.

The chase, too, is eminently warlike in its character, as we remark in the scenes that occur so frequently on the bas-reliefs. The royal hunts almost assume the proportions of military expeditions; we see them sometimes mentioned together in the same inscriptions. To destroy the beasts of

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prey, especially the lion and the buffalo, which infested the plains of the Euphrates and the Tigris, was to render a greater service to the state than by conquering a province. When the Book of Genesis says of Nimrod that "he was a mighty hunter before the Lord," we may well take the words of the sacred text in no emblematical or non-literal sense, but in their direct acceptation. It is thus that in the Greek myths the first exploits of the heroes and demigods compass the destruction of the wild beasts which ravaged the country, then alternating between swamp and forest.

We have left ourselves little space to speak of the Assyrian architecture. So far as the habitations of princes and nobles were concerned, their scale was evidently colossal. They were raised upon a massive terrace of steps, faced with bricks, while their outer walls, also composed of bricks, were decorated with slabs of basalt or marmoriform gypsum, on which were sculptured bas-reliefs with their inscriptions. Human-headed bulls or lions, wrought in granite or alabaster, gave a monumental aspect to the entrance gate. The interior was not less imposing than magnificent. A long suite of

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RESTORATION OF AN ASSYRIAN PALACE, KHORSABAD.

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halls, with numerous chambers and private apartments on either side, succeeded one another, covering an immense area. Some of these halls, which have been exhumed and cleared, measure one hundred feet in length, and nearly the same in breadth. Their ceilings were supported by rows of huge pillars; their walls were profusely embellished with marbles and sculptures. The whole effect, it is evident, must have been one of equal stateliness and splendour.

But here we must pause. We have endeavoured in the preceding pages to trace the course of the Euphrates and the Tigris, and to indicate the character of the scenery through which they take their way. But their chief interest necessarily centres in the memorials of a remote antiquity which are scattered along their banks; in the monuments which tell the romantic story of the rise and fall of mighty empires. With the Euphrates must always be associated the name of Babylon; with the Tigris that of Nineveh. It is strange that two such imperial cities should have risen within so short distance of each other; but it is stranger that they should have been so alike in their civilization, their history, their sudden wealth and prosperity, their rapid decay,

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and their long centuries of oblivion. As among the Famous Rivers of the world the Euphrates and the Tigris must always occupy together a foremost place, so must Babylon and Nineveh be always associated among its Memorable Cities.

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Great Rivers of the World.

THE EUPHRATES

AND

THE TIGRIS.

A NARRATIVE OF DISCOVERY AND ADVENTURE

WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THE RUINS OF

BABYLON AND NINEVEH.

LONDON: THOMAS NELSON AND SONS.

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