By-paths of Bible Knowledge

V.

BABYLONIAN LIFE AND HISTORY

E. A. WALLIS BUDGE, B.A.

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See p 145.

The Fight between Merodach (Bel) and the Dragon.

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BY

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THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY,

56, PATERNOSTER ROW AND 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD.

1884.

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"The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun."—Ecclesiastes i. 9.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE following pages have been written with the view of offering to the Bible student, in a small compass, a little of the history of Babylon, her thought, religion, and manners, and consequently the means whereby he may understand better some of the allusions of the prophets and Bible historians. When they wrote, they knew they were addressing a nation fully acquainted with the knowledge necessary for the understanding of their words. We inhabitants of the West are obliged to have recourse to whatever contemporaneous records we can find for the explanation of the history of the time which is not clearly stated in the Bible. Consequently the notices of Bible events and Bible history which are obtained from the nation which had so much to do with the Jews are of particular value.

The cuneiform writings possess one wonderful attribute, and that is, they are records of events written at the time of their occurrence. Manuscript histories can be tampered with, letters altered or erased, additions inserted, whole parts cut out, and, starting with every-

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thing correct, a careless scribe will make mistakes that after generations will never be able to put right. For example, in the oldest Egyptian papyri, words, and even whole chapters, are written in such a way as to prove that the scribe *cannot* have understood what he was writing. Fortunately, alterations in these cuneiform documents have been rendered impossible, because they have been buried under the dust and dirt of centuries, out of the reach of the hands alike of the destructive Arab and "Tourist," and, in a measure, unaffected by the hand of slowly but surely destroying Time.

The decipherment of the clay tablets is not by any means easy, especially of the unbaked, which have recently been brought to England from old Babylon and Sepharvaim. The writing is complex and difficult, and in many cases the sharp edge of the writing has been sadly rubbed, while the wedge itself is partly or wholly filled in with dust and silica. When the tablets are dug up they are wet and brittle; when they dry, they often fall into dust or crumble away slowly.

Very much that has been done in cuneiform decipherment is quite certain, but there is much that is still uncertain. The small body of cuneiform scholars is working hard to clear up these doubts, some of which day by day disappear. The great need is more syllabaries and bilingual tablets, on which we may find the words explained which at present are unknown. A

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little patience and forbearance too from those who are sceptical as to the results obtained from cuneiform decipherment are necessary; when cuneiform has been studied as long as Greek and Latin, there will be very little in it unknown.

See what it has already done for Bible history! It has told us of the land of Abraham; it has given us a version of the story of the flood; it has told us of Babylon and Nineveh; it has brought us face to face with Sennacherib, Tiglath-Pileser, Sargon, and Esarhaddon; it has revealed to us the home, the language, and the thought of the haughty Nebuchadnezzar; it has given us some of the beliefs, superstitions, religion, learning, and wisdom of the fellow citizens of Abraham, "the friend of God;" it has caused us to know intimately a branch of the great Semitic race akin to the Jewish nation from which sprang the Christ, and it carries us back through the long dark vista of centuries and shadowy time to a period when mankind was learning its letters, and step by step was slowly advancing to civilisation.

The meanings of the names of the cities and countries mentioned in the Bible are now made clear, as are also the meanings of the names of the kings and titles of officers. Thus, Nebuchadnezzar is "Nebo protects the landmark," Nabopolassar is "Nebo protects the son," Nabuzaradan is "Nebo gave a seed," Sargon is "the established king," Esarhaddon is "Assur gave a brother,"

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Sennacherib is "the moon-god increases brothers," Tiglath-Pileser is "the servant, the son of the Holy House," Chedorlaomer is "the landmark of Lagamar," Rabshakeh is "chief of the princes," Tartan is "the mighty son," and so on.

It is necessary to refer here to the inscription of Sargon I. of Sippara, and to state plainly that the opinions of Assyriologists are divided as to its antiquity. A deeply learned French scholar denies that the first character in the name is rightly read, and says that the *form* of the name is not what it should be; and with this latter statement a renowned English scholar agrees. The arguments, however, which they bring forward are not conclusive, in my opinion, although future discoveries may prove them to be right. In favour of the inscription there are many points; among others, the form of the characters of the inscription and the inscription itself, and above all the date given by Nabonidus in his cylinder. The Assyrians and Babylonians kept a good and strict reckoning of events past, and their general correctness goes to show that there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of the statement of Nabonidus. Moreover, the date is found on more than one cylinder clearly and carefully written. The king could have no object in giving a false antiquity to his kingdom, or rather in limiting it to the time of Naram-Sin and Sargon I. There were kings of Babylon before this time; why then did he choose these two monarchs, when he might

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have chosen others of greater antiquity, if he had wished merely to say that his kingdom existed for ever? Finally, I think that the evidence we have leads one to the conclusion that the inscription is of the period of about B.C. 3800. If in future days new inscriptions come to light, and sufficient evidence to the contrary can be brought forward, I for one will cheerfully give up the belief in what I now think a fact.

The land that is to-day a howling wilderness was once a flourishing country; its cities were queens, and their inhabitants were the richest of the rich. But now its cities are ruined, its temples desolate, their gods broken, and the makers have passed away together with their works. European travellers tell of the desolation and misery of the land; the wretched Arab prowls around the mounds which are the ruins of the former cities; the ancient highways of the country are empty, its emporiums are closed, and want, misery, and scarcity are the kings of the land to-day. It is a land with no share in the world's progress, a land given over to a superstition, the utterly corrupt and debased form of its ancient pagan religion, with its belief in genii, ghosts, ghouls, and monsters. What was good in it has departed, with its might, its power, and its glory. The "wood devil" dances there, and, as Isaiah[1] prophesied, it is the home of the satyr and the screech-owl. God has forsaken it, and its glory has perished.

[1] Isaiah xxxiv. 14.

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In this little book but few references by name have been made to the works of other Assyrian scholars, as the space allowed would not admit of it. Here, however, I take the opportunity of expressing my obligations to every scholar who may find his work used or quoted. My thanks are also due to Dr. Richard Garnett, of the British Museum, for reading the proof-sheets of the book, and for his thoughtful suggestions.

As new excavations are made in Babylon, new facts will be brought to light, and it is hoped that these will be embodied in this work from time to time.

ERNEST A. W. BUDGE.

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BABYLONIAN LIFE AND HISTORY.

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FAR, very far back, at a period involved and shrouded in the mists of antiquity, the city Babylon began its existence. No exact date can be assigned to this event, but, judging by the evidence gained from the inscriptions, it must have been at a time when all the "nations around" were in a state of rude barbarism. Egypt existed, no doubt, and had already become a settled empire, and its people had reached a remarkably high state of civiliza-

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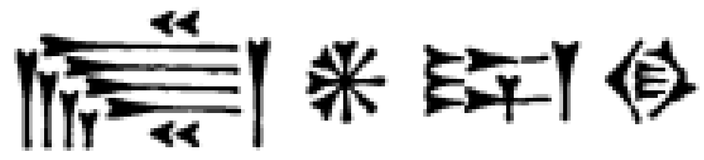
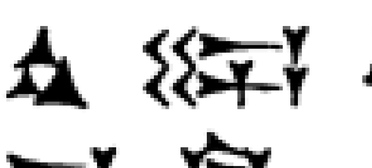
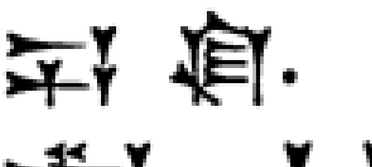
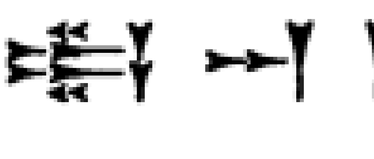
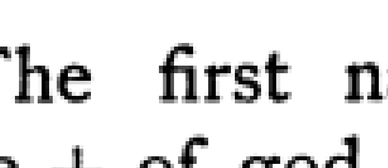
tion. At present it seems as if these two peoples, the Babylonians and Egyptians, were the only nations who have left definite traces of their very early civilization. In later days Babylonia was comprised between the 30th and 36th parallels of latitude, and the 43rd and 51st degrees of longitude. What its extent was in the very early days of its career is unknown.

The name Babylonia is derived from its capital city. Its old name was Kaldu, the people were called Kaldai, *i.e.*, the Kasdim of the Old Testament. They took their name from an ancestor called Chesed,[1] just as the Hebrews took theirs from Eber, the Hittites from Heth and many others. Still more anciently it was designated by the two names Sumir and Akkad, *i.e.*, South and North Babylonia. Babylon, the city, is called by various names in the inscriptions. They are as follows:—

1.  in Assyrian .
2.  .
3.  .
4.  or  .

The first name reads KA DINGIRRA KI, that is, gate + of god + the place, meaning "the place which is the gate of God." The second name reads TIN-TIR KI, that is, "the wood of life." The third is E KI, and means, according to some scholars, "the house" *par excellence*; according to others, "the hollow." It is quite true that it can mean "hollow," but the Babylonian meant that it was the most important dwelling-place in the world, in fact, the metropolis of the universe. The

[1] Gen. xxii. 22.

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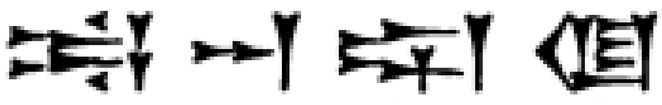
two forms of the name given under No. 4, are simply translations of No. 1, and are read *bab ilani* and *bab-ilu* respectively. The mere look of the name  tells what it means. The first is a representation of a gate with its posts and bars, the second represents a star, the third is the sign of the genitive case, and the fourth is always added after the name of a country. The form Babylon or Babel commonly met with in our Bibles is derived from the Assyrian Semitic translation of the Akkadian *ka dingirra-ki.*

Babylon or *Babilum* (in Assyrian) means, then, "the gate of God." It has been generally stated that Babylon means "confusion," but the inscriptions prove this to be incorrect; the history of the matter is that the Semites made a pun upon the name of the city. There is a root in Hebrew, *balbel*, which means "to confuse, to mix," and from this word they derived the name Babylon, because the "confusion of tongues" took place there. It will be remembered that in a Talmudic discussion the question "Why is Babylon so-called?" was asked. Rabbi Johanan replied, "Because it is confused in Scripture, in Mishnah, and in Talmud." And the Rabbi explained the words "dark places" in the verse "He hath set me in dark places,"[1] by saying that it meant "the doctrine of Babel."

The name "gate of God" is the designation (among others) of the city from the earliest to the latest times upon the monuments. Babylon was situated upon the River Euphrates, above Borsippa. It was called "the dwelling-place of the god Bel," and "the town of Marduk."

[1] Lam. iii. 6.

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Unfortunately no very trustworthy account of the size of Babylon has come down to us. Only one thing is certain, and that is that it was of enormous extent. Every historian differs as to his measurements, as will be seen in the following chapter, and when huge numbers are given the suburbs of the city are probably taken into consideration. The city was surrounded by two walls, the one called Imgur-Bel, the other Nimitti-Bel. They are mentioned by Herodotus. The outer wall is said to have been built by Belus, and repaired by Nebuchadnezzar.

The following is a translation made from two barrel cylinders which came to the British Museum in 1878; it will give an idea of the extent of the works undertaken by Nebuchadnezzar the Great.

COLUMN I.

1. Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon,
2. the exalted prince, the worshipper of the god Marduk,
3. the supreme lord, the beloved of the god Nebo,
4. the unwearied prince of the gate,
5. the restorer of the temple SAG-ILI, and the temple ZIDA,
6. who to the god Nebo and the god Marduk his lords
7. worship has performed before their persons,
8. the exalted one, who causes the *ituti* to be deep, the messenger of the great gods,
9. the eldest son of Nabu-pal-uṣur (Nabopolassar),
10. the King of Babylon am I.
11. Prince Marduk, the great lord, then caused me to hold firmly
12. a sceptre (?) to rule the people [as a] shepherd;

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13. to restore the fortresses, and to renew the temples
14. greatly he encouraged me.
15. I put my trust in Marduk, my lord, my judge,
16. his supreme fortress, the citadel his high place, [the walls]
17. Imgur-Bel, Nimitti-Bel
18. I caused to be completed over against [their] great fortresses.
19. Upon the threshold of its great gates,
20. mighty lords (gods)
21. and [images] of poisonous snakes
22. I set up,
23. the which never had any king my predecessor made.
24. The quay (of the fortress), its ditch (moat),
25. with bitumen and brick
26. the father, my begetter, built and completed for a bulwark (?).
27. As for me, the paths of the ancient quay
28. once, twice
29. I built up with bitumen and brick,[1] and
30. the quay which my father had worked at I excavated.
31. I caused its foundation to be laid with huge flat slabs, and
32. I raised up its summit like a mountain.
33. The quay of brick at the ford of the setting sun
34. within Babylon I completed.
35. The paths along the quay
36. with bitumen and brick
37. the father my begetter had worked at ;
38. its buttresses (?) with brick

[1] *I.e.*, he built two layers of brick work.

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39. along the river of Sippara I bound together;
40. and I fully completed its banks.
41. As for me, his eldest son (*i.e.*, eldest son of Nabopolassar),
42. the beloved of his heart,
43. the paths along the quay
44. with bitumen and brick,
45. in addition to the quay which my father had made, I renewed.
46. In the temple of SAG-ILU the kiṣṣra I set.
47. The palace of heaven and earth, the seat of tranquillity,
48. E KU-A, the shrine of Bel, the temple of the gods, and of Marduk,
49. the gate of Ḥilisud, the seat of the goddess Zirpanitum,
50. and the temple of ZI-DA, the dwelling-place of the divine king of heaven and earth,
51. I caused them to be covered with shining gold, and
52. I made them brilliant as the day.
53. The temple, the foundation of heaven and earth, the tower of Babel
54. I built anew.
55. The temple of ZIDA, the eternal, the (temple) beloved of Nebo
56. I built anew within Borsippa, and

COLUMN II.

1. with gold and sculptured stones
2. I made [it] like the brilliance of heaven.
3. I caused it to be covered over with durable cedar and gold

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4. up to the ceiling of the great temple of Life. The shrine of Nebo
5. I caused to be erected before those three.
6. The great temple, the temple of the "lady of the headland" within Babylon,
7. the temple (called) "he gives the sceptre of the world," the temple of Nebo of Ḥarie,
8. the temple of Namgan, the temple of the wind within Kumari,
9. the temple of the dwelling before the temple of the lady of heaven, near the fortress
10. I rebuilt within Babylon, and
11. I reared up their summits
12. the which never had any king my predecessor done.
13. Four thousand cubits square, the citadel with walls
14. towering and inaccessible,
15. the everlasting fortress of Babylon at the ford of the rising sun
16. I caused to surround.
17. I dug out the moat, I emptied away the water that had gathered there,
18. I made its bed of bitumen and brick, and I excavated
19. the quay which my father had worked at,
20. the lofty fortress with bitumen and brick
21. I built up like a mountain upon its sides.
22. The height of the fortress of Borsippa thoroughly
23. I rebuilt.
24. The quay and the moat [lined and built] with bitumen and brick
25. I made to surround the citadel for a protection.
26. For the god Turkit, the lord, the breaker of the weapons of my enemies
27. I rebuilt his temple within Borsippa.

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28. The temple of the Sun, the temple of the Sun-god of Sippara,
29. the temple the established seat, the temple of the god .....
30. of the city Bātz,
31. the temple of the eyes of the god Anum, the temple of the god Dar
32. of the city of the planet Venus,
33. the temple of heaven, the temple of Istar of Erech,
34. the temple of the Sun, the temple of the Sun-god of Larsa,
35. the temple of KIS-KUR-GAL, the temple of the Moon-god of Ur,
36. these temples of the great gods
37. I rebuilt ; and
38. I caused their beautiful adornments to be completed.
39. The restorations (or furniture) of the temples of SAG-ILI and ZIDA,
40. the new places of Babylon
41. which more than before
42. I have made extensive
43. and I have reared them up even to their summits.
44. An account of all my magnificent works
45. and of my restorations of the temples of the great gods
46. above what the kings my fathers wrote
47. upon a stone tablet I wrote ; and
48. I set it up for future days.
49. The account of all my works
50. which I have written upon the stone tablet
51. with understanding mayest thou look upon
52. and upon the glorious things of the gods.
53. May [men] understand that

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54. I built the fortresses of the gods and of the goddess Istar,
55. of the great lord and of Marduk.

Column III.

1. As for myself Marduk urged me on,
2. he girded me up in heart,
3. reverently, and not failing him
4. I completed his beautiful [works].
5. [I rebuilt] (?) for the god the king of Marad my lord
6. his temple within Marad the . . . .
7. which had been built from a remote time ;
8. its ancient foundation stone
9. which no former king had ever seen,
10. I took hold of, I uncovered and
11. upon the foundation stone, the beloved of the Moon-god, the king,
12. my ancient father, I laid down its foundation.
13. I made an inscription in my name and
14. I placed it within it.
15. O God the king of Marad, lord of all warriors,
16. to the brickwork which my happy hands [have made]
17. be favourable joyfully and
18. my life to a far distant day
19. with abundance of glory,
20. fixity of throne, and length of rule
21. to eternity do thou lengthen.
22. Sweep away the disobedient,
23. smash their weapons,
24. devastate the lands of the enemies,
25. sweep them all away.

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26. Thy mighty weapons
27. which benefit not my enemies
28. may they draw near and may they fight;
29. for the subjugation of my enemies, may they go by my sides.
30. In the presence of Marduk king of heaven and earth
31. upon my works pronounce blessing
32. command my prosperity.

Within Babylon there were two temples of great importance, and these were the objects chosen for restoration by all the Babylonian kings; one was called E-SAGILI, "the temple of the lofty head;" the other E-ZIDA, "the temple of life." A third temple existed, which was called "the temple of the firmament of heaven and earth." The temple of Zida had four gates; one was called "the gate of the rising sun;" the names of the others are difficult to interpret, and no satisfactory translation has yet been given. This temple was dedicated to Marduk, and is the same as that said to be dedicated to Belus by the Greeks. Herodotus says that the two principal buildings in Babylon were this temple of Belus and the royal palace; he says moreover that the river ran between them. Now as this temple of Belus of seven spheres was so large (being a stade[1] square), we ought to find some remains of it. The only spot, however, where ruins are found such as one would expect to find of such an edifice is at a place called Birs-Nimrud, the site of the old Borsippa. This place is eight or nine miles distant from the site of the old Babylon, and as in a hymn we find an expression like this, "O Bel, Babylon is thy dwelling, Borsippa thy

[1] *I.e.*, 606 feet 9 inches.

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crown," it leads us to suppose that Borsippa was included in Babylon. In the Talmud, Babel and Borsippa are mentioned together as places which do harm to the law. The question is asked, What is Borsippa? that is, What does the word mean? Now just as the Jews made a pun on the name Babylon, so they made one on Borsippa, and the answer is given, Borsippa is "*bor shappe*," *i.e.*, a dry well. This question is followed up by another: Why is the place called Borsippa? Because it is like a cistern whose waters are dried up; that is, it makes a man forget all that he has learnt, and they said that the air of the tower caused forgetfulness or oblivion. Elsewhere they said, "We call Borsippa Babel, and Babel Borsippa."

At Babel there is a huge oblong mass of unbaked[1] brick 110 feet high; the north, south, east, and west sides are 200, 182, 200, and 136 yards long respectively. Remains of a facing of burnt brickwork are still to be found at the base, and in the tunnels which were excavated by Sir A. Layard. These burnt bricks bear the name of Nebuchadnezzar. The one stage that remains is coated with blue slag, the other stages have decayed. The mound called Amrám, which is 1,100 yards in length and 800 in breadth, is probably the ruins of the ancient palace. At Birs-Nimrud, however, there are ruins which may be parts of the temple of Belus. They consist of a large mound, whose north-west, south-east, north-east, and south-west sides are 643, 643, 420, and 376 feet long respectively. Its height is 153 feet, and upon its top there is a large mass of brickwork. This huge edifice was built in seven stages,

[1] See Rawlinson's "Herodotus," Vol. II., p. 577.

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The first stage is 272 feet square, and 26 feet high; originally its colour was black. The second stage is 230 feet square, and 26 feet high; it was orange-coloured. The third is 188 feet square, and 26 feet high; it was coloured bright red. The fourth is 146 feet square, and 15 feet high; it was coloured bright yellow. The fifth was 104 feet square, and 15 feet high; it was coloured pale yellow. The sixth is 62 feet square, and 15 feet high; it was coloured dark blue. The seventh is 20 feet square, and 15 feet high; it was silver-coloured. These stages were dedicated to Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, and the Moon respectively. We have in the British Museum fragments of coloured glazed bricks from this spot. This temple was called "the Seven Spheres" according to some, and "the Seven Lights" according to others: and its ruins were thoroughly excavated and examined by Sir Henry Rawlinson, and the above measurements are his.

In a geographical list three places in Babylon are mentioned called *Duru*, and very possibly one of these may be the "plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon," mentioned by Daniel.[1] Through Babylon ran the "great river," the river Euphrates. The Bible also calls it "Euphrates," and "the river Euphrates."[2] The Babylonian name was *Purat*, or *Puratu*; its old Akkadian name *Pura-nunu*, "the great stream;" and this corresponds to the name given it in Gen. xv. 18, etc. Its meaning in Assyrian texts appears to be "the water." The explanations of the meaning of this word generally given that are not derived from these native sources are incorrect. The Euphrates was called "the soul of the land."

[1] Chap. iii. 1.

[2] Jer. xiii. 4, 5, 7; xlvi. 2, 6.

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One of the most important parts of Babylon was Sippara. It was a double town, situated upon the left bank of the Euphrates. One part was called "Sippara of the sun-god," and the other "Sippara of Anunit." Its old name was *Zimbir*, and it became Semiticised to "Sippara." Its exact meaning is uncertain, and the name Sippara has nothing to do with the Hebrew word *sepher*, a "book," with which it has been often compared. Sippara is the same town as the Sepharvaim of 2 Kings xvii. 24, 31, and the dual termination is a reminder of the "double" form of the city. Its name in the inscriptions is *ut-kip-nun-ki*. The chief god of the city was Samas, or the Sun-god; his temple was called *E-babbara*, and in 2 Kings xvii. 31, we read that "the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim." The Euphrates was called the "river of Sippara;" and Sippara is also called Agade in the inscription of Cyrus, which we shall notice farther on. This name is probably the same as the Accad of Gen. x. 10; it means according to some "the fire crown," and may perhaps refer to the sun-god worship. It has been recently shown that the correct reading of the cuneiform sign for Akkad is *Uru*, and I think that there is no doubt that this is the Ur from which Abraham came. The temple of Anunit which existed in the city was built by a king called Sagar-ak-ti-as, and was called E-ul-bar.

Around the city of Babylon (according to Herodotus) was a moat, and the soil which was excavated from this was made into bricks for the wall. The builders used hot bitumen for cement, and pieces of this bitumen, with the impression of the king's stamp on the brick

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upon them, remain to this day, and are in the National Collection. As to the hanging gardens, there seems to be a representation of them upon a sculpture, and their dimensions are known from other sources.

The next most important river in Babylonia was the Tigris. It is called in the inscriptions *Idiḳlat*, or *Diḳlat*. It corresponds to the Hiddekel of Gen. ii. 14, and appears to mean "the river with the high banks." On this river the city Nineveh was situated. The name is non-Semitic, and means "the dwelling-place of the god Ninua." Each of the kings Assurbanipal, Esarhaddon, and Sennacherib built palaces there. Other cities of Babylonia were Borsippa, Kutha, Erech, Nippur, Ur, and Larsa.

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CHAPTER II.

BABYLON ACCORDING TO CLASSICAL AUTHORS.

The statement of Herodotus about Babylon.—Views of other Classical authors as to its size and extent.—Its gates, houses, streets, defences, and walls.—Temple of Jupiter Belus.—Comparison of these accounts with those of the cuneiform inscriptions.—Extract from East India House inscription.—Nebuchadnezzar used cedar covered with gold for the ceilings of his temples.—Inscriptions of this monarch near Riblah.—Want of definite history concerning his Syrian campaigns.

HERODOTUS tells us that "the city Babylon stands on a broad plain, and is an exact square, 120 furlongs in length each way, so that the entire circuit is 480 furlongs. It is surrounded, in the first place, by a broad and deep moat, full of water, behind which rises a wall 50 royal cubits in width, and 200 in height. And here I may not omit to tell the use to which the mould dug out of the great moat was turned, nor the manner wherein the wall was wrought. As fast as they dug the moat, the soil which they got from the cutting was made into bricks, and when a sufficient number were completed, they baked the bricks in kilns. Then they set to building, and began with bricking the borders of the moat, after which they proceeded to construct the wall itself, using throughout for their cement hot bitumen, and interposing a layer of wattled reeds at every thirtieth course of the bricks. On the top, along the edges of the wall, they

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constructed buildings of a single chamber facing one another, leaving between them room for a four-horse chariot to turn. In the circuit of the wall are a hundred gates all of brass, with brazen lintels and side posts."[1]

Herodotus then goes on to say that "the river Euphrates, a broad, deep and swift stream which rises in Armenia, divides the city into two parts. The city wall is brought down on both sides to the edge of the stream. The houses are mostly three and four storeys high; the streets all run in straight lines, not only those parallel to the river, but also the cross streets which lead down to the water side. The outer wall is the main defence of the city. There is, however, an inner wall of less thickness than the first, but very little inferior to it in strength. The centre of each division of the town was occupied by a fortress. In the one stood the palace of the kings, surrounded by a wall of great strength and size; in the other was the sacred precinct of Jupiter Belus, a square enclosure 2 furlongs each way, with gates of solid brass, which was also remaining in my time. In the middle of the precinct there was a tower of solid masonry, a furlong in length and breadth, upon which was raised a second tower, and on that a third, and so on up to eight. The ascent to the top is on the outside, by a path which winds round all the towers . . . . . On the topmost tower there is a spacious temple, and inside the temple stands a couch of unusual size, richly adorned, with a golden table by its side. Below, in the same precinct, there is a second temple, in which is a sitting figure of Jupiter, all of gold."

Other historians give different lengths for the circuit of the city. Ctesias, 360 furlongs; Clitarchus, 365;

[1] Rawlinson's Herodotus, Vol. I., pp. 297–301.

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Q. Curtius, 368 ; Strabo, 385. There are also conflicting statements as to the height of the walls of Babylon. The statement of Ctesias goes to confirm that of Herodotus, for he says they were 50 fathoms high. Pliny gives 200, and others 75 feet as the measurement. Sir Henry Rawlinson thinks that Herodotus referred to hands, four of which were equal to the cubit, and does not think that the height of the walls of Babylon exceeded 60 or 70 English feet. One thing is certain, and that is that the defences of Babylon must have been remarkable in their day for their strength. One of the greatest evils prophesied by the prophet Jeremiah[1] was "the broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire."

The cuneiform inscriptions do not bear out the account of the classical writers as to the height of the walls and the extent of the city. The chief authority on the buildings of Babylon is the large inscription of Nebuchadnezzar preserved in the India House. It consists of ten columns, and is engraved on a "short column of black basalt" in 619 lines. In the first column he gives a list of his own titles, mentions his father Nabu-pal-uṣur, and speaks of his delight to do the works of the gods Nabu, Marduk, Istar, and others. He attributes his enthronement and origin to the god Nebo. In the second and third columns an account of the restoration of the great temple of Marduk, the prince of the gods, is given. It appears that various parts of the temple had fallen into decay, so the pious king collected all sorts and kinds of beautiful and precious stones, and began the restoration. He rebuilt the gates of E-Zida and E-Sagili, he brought cedar wood from Lebanon,

[1] Jeremiah li. 58.

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(like the Jewish king Solomon) to embellish the temple; the inner walls he covered over with pine and lofty cedar wood; in Borsippa he built the temple of Zida, and parts of it he covered with bright silver. In column 4 he gives a list of the temples he built, and of their gods. At the end of this column he mentions the two walls, an outer and an inner, which formed the defences of his city. He says:—

66. of Imgur-Bel
67. and Nimitti-Bel
68. the mighty fortresses of Babylon,
69. which Nabu-pal-uṣur
70. the king of *Tintirki* (Babylon), the father my begetter
71. had made, but had not completed
72. their beauty.

Column V.

1. He excavated its ditch [with]
2. two huge embankments,
3. with brick and with bitumen
4. he bound (lined) its interior.
5. The ditch araḥti
6. he made, and
7. with *buttresses* (?) of brick
8. the bank of the Euphrates
9. he bound, but
10. he did not complete (his work).

The text here becomes very difficult, but is clear when it speaks of Imgur-Bel and Nimitti-Bel. Nebuchadnezzar followed up his father's buildings, and joined the parts of the fortresses which he built with those that

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his father began. He built the wall of Babylon with brick across the river westward. On the eastern side of the river he built a fortification the like of which no other king had ever made. It was 4,000 cubits *long* (?). The moat which he had built he caused to be filled with water as deep as the ocean, to keep off insolent enemies who were hostile to the children of Babylon.

The end of column seven gives an account of the building of his palace. He built the "lofty place of Royalty" within Babylon; it extended from the eastern canal to Imgur-Bel, and from the Sippara River to the Japur-Sabu. The exact meaning of all the words in which the description of the decorations is given is very difficult to make out. Inside Nimitti-Bel, the inner defence of the city, Nebuchadnezzar built a defence 400 cubits [*ammas*] long (?), which he completed in fifteen days. In the eighth and ninth columns a summary of his deeds is given, and the religious king attributes all his glory and all his greatness to the god Marduk. In the tenth is a prayer for the general security of the empire, and for the long rule of the king over the dark races.

For details as to the buildings undertaken by Nebuchadnezzar the reader is referred to the translation of the inscription given in Chapter I. There can be no doubt as to the extent, magnificence, and beauty of these temples and their decorations. A short time ago some inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar were discovered at a spot not far from Riblah; and in them the king states that he cut down cedar trees in Lebanon, and had the wood transplanted to his own land for the beautifying of the temples of the "great gods his lords." Among the ruins of Babylon there are bricks by the thousand, every

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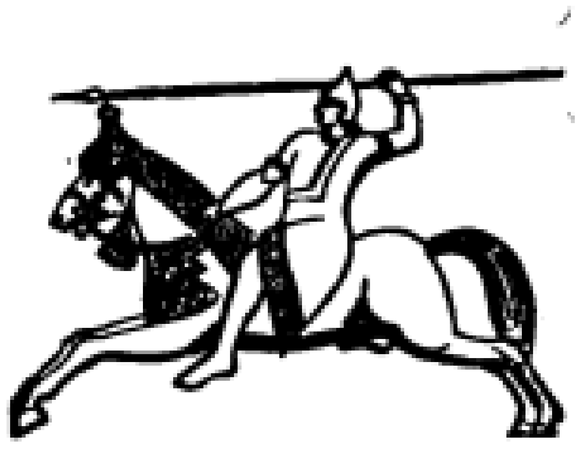
one of which bears the impression of the name of Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabopolassar, and this alone will show how great were his building operations. From this too an inference can be drawn as to the enormous number of men that were compelled by him to serve with "the service of bricks." In the Book of Daniel Nebuchadnezzar is regarded as a builder-king, and the inscriptions support this view most completely. The history of other nations tells us of his wars and expeditions undertaken to subdue the inhabitants of Palestine and elsewhere, but about his military exploits the inscriptions are almost silent: the only piece of his history at present known is found upon a small fragment of clay about half the size of "a man's hand."



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CHAPTER III.

BABYLONIAN HISTORY FROM ABOUT B.C. 3800–1330.

Method of reckoning time in use among the Babylonians.—The eponym canon.—Sir H. Rawlinson's discovery.—Rimmon-Nirari I., B.C. 1330, caused his inscription to be dated.—Contract tablets.—Extract from eponym canon.—The Assyrians kept a strict account of events.—Image of the goddess Nana.—Babylonians made their calculations by the help of astronomy.—Nabonidus mentions Naram-Sin, who reigned 3200 years before his time.—Inscription of Sargon I., B.C. 3800.—Extract from inscription of Nabonidus.—Legend about Sargon.—Babylonian kings Naram-Sin, Ur-Bagas, Dungi, Ismi-Dagan, Libit-Istar, and others.—Hammurabi, the good king.—His canal, his good policy.—Contract tablets dated in his reign.—Revival of commerce in Babylonia.—The kings his successors.—Tablet giving list of kings after the flood.

THE Babylonian empire is certainly one of the oldest in the world, and the question, How old is it? has been asked over and over again. This question is extremely difficult to answer, even with a moderate amount of accuracy, considering our present knowledge. It will perhaps be well, before we begin our sketch of the history of Babylonia, to give an idea of the way in which the Assyrians and Babylonians managed their chronology. They reckoned twelve lunar months to each year, and each of these had either twenty-nine or thirty days. Their year began about the vernal equinox, as Mr. Smith said, "the new moon next before the equinox marking the commencement of the new year." Whenever the twelfth month ended

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more than thirty days before the equinox, they intercalated a thirteenth month. This was called Ve-Adar, and they had also an intercalary Nisan and Elul. These two latter, however, are only found on Babylonian dated tablets. The first year of a king's reign was reckoned from the new year's day *after* his accession to the throne; though there are instances in which this rule has not been adhered to. Now just as there were archons at Athens and consuls at Rome who were elected annually, so among the Assyrians there was a custom of electing one man to be over the year whom they called *limu*, or "eponym." Generally each district and important town had its *limu*, so there is no doubt that the custom was widespread and well known. Babylonian and Assyrian documents were more generally dated by the names of these eponyms than by that of the reigning king.

A common way of reckoning in olden times was by referring to some important event which at that time was well known. An instance of this is given in the Bible,[1] where we read of "the words of Amos which he saw concerning Israel two years before the earthquake."

In 1862 Sir Henry Rawlinson discovered the fragment of the eponym canon of Assyria. It was one of the grandest and most important discoveries ever made, for it has decided definitely a great many points which otherwise could never have been cleared up. Fragments of seven copies of this canon were found, and from these the chronology of Assyria has been definitely settled from B.C. 1330 to about B.C. 620. There is an historical inscription of Rimmon-Nirari I. in the British

[1] Amos i. 1.

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Museum (for a translation of it see page 45), which is dated on the side by the name of the eponym of the year about B.C. 1330. After the fall of the Assyrian empire, about B.C. 620, the dated Babylonian contract tablets serve to keep our reckoning correct down to a few years before the birth of Christ. The following extract from the eponym canon will explain itself:—

B.C.	*Name of eponym.*	*His title.*	*Principal events of the year.*
753	Assur-nirari	the king of Assyria	peace in the land.
752	Samsi-ilu	the tartan	peace in the land.
751	Marduk-salim-anni	chief of the palace	peace in the land.
750	Bel-dayan	*rab-bitur*	peace in the land.
749	Samas-mukin-durug	the *tukulu*	expedition to Zimri.
748	Rammanu-bel-ukin	the governor	expedition to Zimri.
747	Sin-salim-anni	governor of Rezaph	peace in the land.
746	Nergal-naṣir	governor of Nisibin	revolt in Calah.
745	Nabu-bel-uṣur	governor of Arbaha	Tiglath-Pileser ascended the throne on the 13th day of Iyyar. He marched to neighbourhood of the river in the month Tisri.

The historical inscriptions of the Babylonian and Assyrian kings often give notices of events which took place a great number of years before. For instance, Assurbanipal, king of Assyria, tells us in his large inscription that he made an expedition into Elam. Now Kudur-nanḫundi, an ancient king of Elam, had carried off from Assyria or Babylonia the image of the goddess Nana. While Assurbanipal was in Elam the goddess put it into the heart of the king to carry her

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image back into E ANNA,[1] or "the temple of heaven." The king, mindful of the wishes of the goddess, carried back the image which had been brought to Elam "one thousand six hundred and thirty-five years before." Assurbanipal reigned from about B.C. 668 to B.C. 626 (about), and therefore a very good guess can be made at the date of this raid of Kudur-nanḫundi, king of Elam, upon Babylon. It must never be forgotten that the Babylonians were a nation of star-gazers, and that they kept a body of men to do nothing but report eclipses, appearances of the moon, sun spots, etc., etc. Their calculations then may be relied upon for a large amount of accuracy generally.

Now this brings us back to the earliest date we are able to fix in the history of Babylonia. A king called Nabonidus began to reign over Babylon about B.C. 554, and as he was anything but a warlike king he appears to have spent his time in meditation and retirement. He appears also to have been an archæologist and an enthusiastic student of antiquity. He was a votary of the Sun-god, and adorned his temple with the most beautiful decorations. He caused several cylinders of clay, most important to us, to be inscribed, giving an account of all his works and pious deeds to the gods, and the greater part of them were brought in fragments to England by Mr. Rassam in 1882. Among other things, he tells us that he uncovered the part of the temple which Assurbanipal, king of Assyria, had made, and that he

[1] It must be borne in mind that E means "temple," which would be read in Assyrian *bitu*. When prefixed to the names of cities and countries, it means place or house, and is the same word as *Beth* in the names of places in the Bible. For example, Beth-leḥem, Beth-ḥoron, Beth-shemesh, Beth-el, Beth-dagon, etc.

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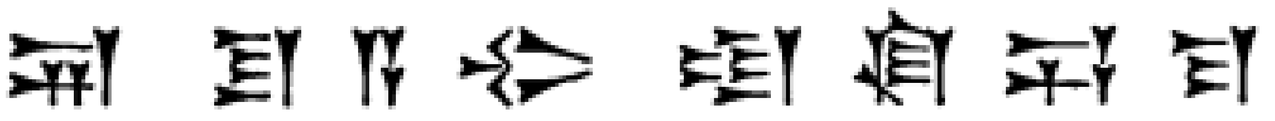
saw the inscription which the Assyrian king had caused to be put there. Nabonidus did not remove it, but, in accordance with the request upon it, he cleansed it, and offered up sacrifices. He then put the inscription back in its place, together with one of his own, and restored the place to its former condition.[1]

Nabonidus then made excavations under the temple of the Sun-god, "the judge of heaven and earth," in Sippara, which Nebuchadnezzar, a preceding king, had made. He sought for the foundation stone, but found it not, and as the temple had much decayed, he brought out the Sun-god and placed it in another temple. Nabonidus made further excavations, and having gone to a depth of 15 square or earth cubits he made a great discovery. As his account of it is of such importance to us and to chronology generally, I quote his own words:—

Column II.

LINE

55. 

bit su - a - tim ad - kì - e - ma

that temple I excavated

---

[1] The concluding lines inscribed on a large cylinder of Assurbanipal in the British Museum read thus:—

Col. 10, l. 109. May he whomsoever, among the kings my descendants Assur and Istar shall proclaim for the dominion of the country and its people,

110. when this temple of Riduti has become old and decayed

111. may he repair its decay, the inscription in my name, my father, and

112. my grandfathers, an everlasting royal seed, may he look upon, the chamber (altar) may he cleanse,

113. may he offer up sacrifices, may he place (my inscription) with his own.

114. And may the great gods whose names are written down in this inscription

115. extend unto him power and glory even as they have unto myself.

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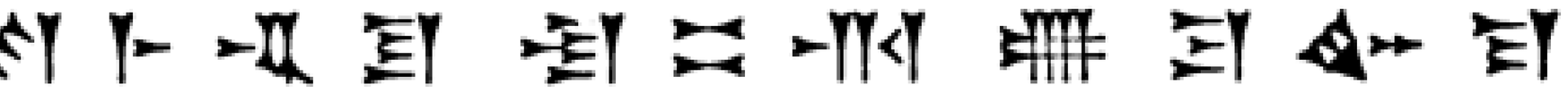
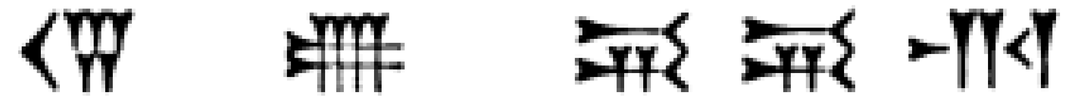
LINE

56. 

te - me - en - su la - bi - ri u - ba - ' - ma

its ancient foundation stone I sought,



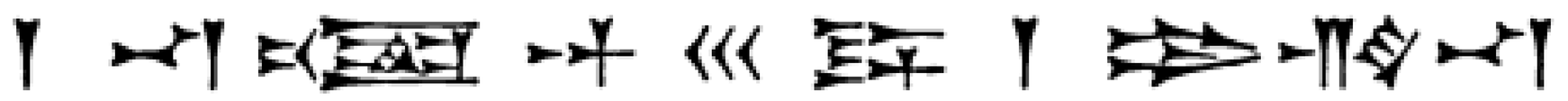
15 ammati ga - ga - ri

fifteen square cubits

57.

u - sap - pi - il - ma te - me - en - na

I dug down [for] the foundation stone of



D.P. Na - ram D.P. Sin abil D.P. sar - gi - na

Naram-Sin the son of Sargon

58.

sa 3 × 1000 + 2 × 100 mu - an - na - mes ma - na - ma

which for three thousand two hundred years no

sarru a - lik mah - ri - ya li - i - mu - ru

king my predecessor had seen.

In other words, Nabonidus, king of Babylon, dug among the foundations of the temple of the Sun-god to find the foundation stone which Naram-Sin, the son of Sargon, who ruled over Babylonia 3,200 years before, had deposited. Now this statement fixes the date of the very early king Naram-Sin, and it also gives his father's name. We have at present no notice of an anterior date or king.

A very short time ago a small, perforated, oval-shaped object, made of mottled, pinkish-grey, hard stone, arrived

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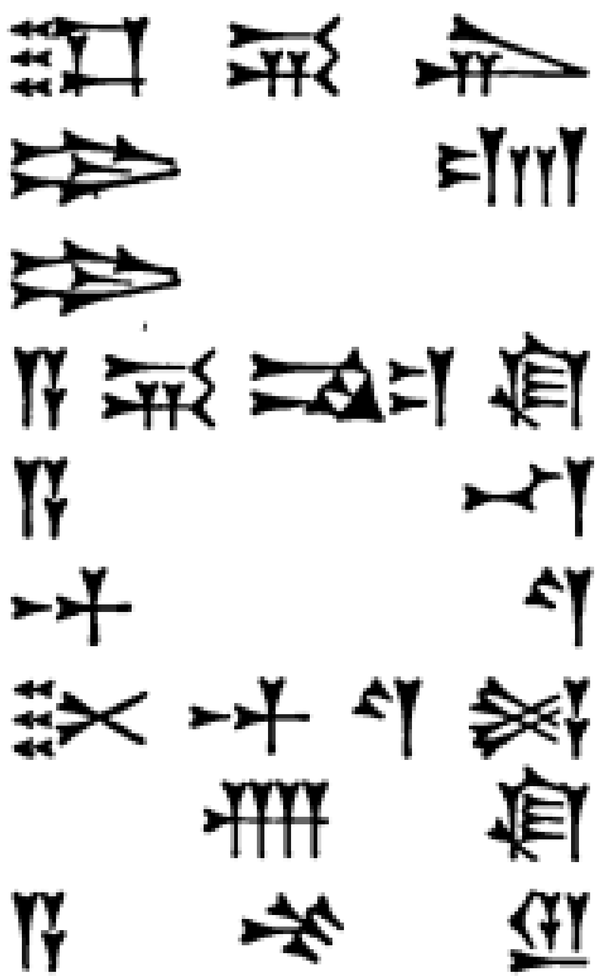
at the British Museum. It was found to contain a legend in what is called technically "*line*" Babylonian writing, that is, writing in which the characters are formed more by lines than by the ordinary wedges. This style of writing is found upon stone gate sockets of the earliest times, and goes back to a period in the history of the nation when they were beginning to discontinue the use of the hieroglyphic or pictorial system of writing, which was found too cumbrous and difficult. The legend transcribed into ordinary Babylonian reads thus :—



I Sargon
the King
king of
Agade
to
the Sun-god (Samas)
in Sippara
have dedicated.

The stone was brought from Sepharvaim (Abû-habbah), and was discovered by Mr. Rassam. It is of the utmost importance, for it is an inscription without doubt made by the father of Naram-Sin, the Sargon mentioned in the inscription of Nabonidus.

Now Nabonidus began to reign about 554 B.C., and he says that Naram-Sin reigned 3,200 years before his time ; these two numbers added together make a total of 3,754 years, which is the date of Naram-Sin's building the temple of the Sun-god at Sippara. Here, then,

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fairly accurate chronology begins. It would be absurd to suppose that there were no Babylonian kings before Sargon or Naram-Sin ; the only difficulty in the matter is to estimate the number of years which must have passed

Stone object bearing the name of Sargon, king of Sippara, B.C. 3800.

before the Babylonians had arrived at the high state of culture and civilization necessary to enable them to produce such an object as that described above. The stone is most beautifully drilled and polished, and the characters are carefully and remarkably well executed.

Babylonian history, then, as known to us, begins with Sargon I, king of Agade, B.C. 3800. A curious legend is extant respecting this king, to the effect that he was born in a city on the banks of the Euphrates, that his mother conceived him in secret, and brought him forth in a humble place; that she placed him in an ark of rushes and closed it with pitch ; that she cast him upon the river in the water-tight ark ; that the river carried him along ; that he was rescued by a man called Akki,

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who brought him up to his own trade; and that from this position the goddess Istar made him king. Sargon I. was a mighty warrior, and "in chariots of bronze passed through difficult countries." He rebuilt the palace at Agade, and the temple dedicated to the goddess Anunit. Naram-Sin conquered a city called Apirak, and made wars in a country called Magan. The name of the king of Magan is lost, so it is impossible to say where this country was, as there are three different lands of Magan mentioned in the inscriptions.

The most important king who reigned after Naram-Sin was called Ur-Bagas. He built in the city Ur a temple to the Moon-god Sin, and also at Larsa a temple dedicated to the Sun-god, and at Nipur and Lagas he reared up many fine buildings and temples.

A king called Dungi reigned after Ur-Bagas over Babylonia, whose chief works were building a tower at Ur, a temple at Erech, and repairing some of his father's works. There are in the British Museum some bronze images and a mutilated torso in black marble of this king.

The next rulers of Babylonia we find sprang from Karrak, a city which became of great importance under the ruling hands of Ismi-Dagan and Libit-Istar. After these kings, several *patesi* or "viceroys" (as the word is translated) ruled, making Zergulla their seat of royalty and government. The most important among these was Gudea. There are to be seen very many fine cylinders and inscribed cones which were made in his reign.

Another very important king was Simti-Silhaḥ, who came from Larsa. He appears to have been an Elamite, and under his rule Larsa became a most important city. His son, Kudur-Mabug, and his grandson, Rim-Agu,

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carried out his policy, and succeeded in making themselves masters of a large part of Babylonia. A list of kings of Babylonia following after Rim-Agu gives the following particulars of this period :—

Sumu-Abi	reigned	15	years.
Sumulau	„	35	„
Zabu, son of Sumulau, built the temples of Samas and Anunit, in Sippara ..	„	14	„
Abil-Sin, son of Zabu ..	„	18	„
Sin-Muballiṭ, son of Abil-Sin	„	35	„

About B.C. 2100 a powerful king (some think him a Kassite), called Ḥammurabi, made war against Kudur-Mabug and his son, Rim-Agu. He defeated them and became master of all Babylonia. Rim-Agu appears to have called in the aid of the Elamites, for a tablet is dated :

> "22nd day of Sebat, in the year
> when Ḥammurabi the king in the service of Anu
> and Bel marched victoriously
> and overthrew the king of Elam and Rim-Agu."

Ḥammurabi was a devout, pious, and broad-minded king. He repaired the temple of every god, and dug a huge canal for the benefit of the people of Sumir and Akkad, which he called "Ḥammurabi, the benefactor of mankind." Commerce must have revived considerably under his rule, for there are a very large number of contract tablets in the British Museum dated in his reign. The contract, or deed of sale, was written on both sides of a flat piece of clay, which piece of clay was then covered over completely with other clay, and upon this the deed

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Contract Tablet and its Case, bearing the name of Rim-Sin, B.C. 2300.

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was again inscribed. It must have been about this time that Abraham went forth from "Ur of the Chaldees."

Ḥammurabi reigned fifty-five years. He was followed by Samsu-iluna, his son, who reigned 35 years. Ebisum was the next king, he reigned 25 years. He had a son called Ammi-satana, who reigned 25 years. The next two kings were called Ammi-sa-duga and Samsu-satana, who reigned 21 and 31 years respectively. There are no details of the reigns of these kings. On a bilingual tablet lately discovered there are nearly a hundred kings' names given; and some day, when the other parts are discovered, it is hoped that it will be possible to reconstruct the chronology of that early time with accuracy. The names of the kings that followed close after the Flood are given, they are:—1. . . . . Sin, 2. . . . . Sin, 3. Amil-Gula, 4. Samas-nasir, 5. Amil-Sin, 6. Amil-Samas, 7. Sapin-mat-nukurti, 8. Muabbid-Kissati, 9. Abil-Ea-sar-mati, 10. Abil-Bel-usum-same, 11. Sargina, 12. Baü-ellit.

The first part of the column, where probably the names of the kings before the Flood were, is broken off. It is to be noticed that the above names are Semitic.

About 1700 years B.C. we find a Kassite dynasty ruling in Babylon, the first king of which was called Agu-kak-rimi, the son of Tassi-gur-umas. His sway extended over Babylon, Asnunak, Padan, Alman, and Guti. He was king of Kassi and Akkadi, and he restored the temples of the gods Marduk and Zir-panitum. He also prays to Anu and Anunitum, Bel and Beltis, Ea and Damkina, to grant him a long life. About the year 1450 we find a king called Kara-Indas ruling over Babylon, and he made a covenant with Assur-bil-nisi-su, the king of Assyria, regarding the boundaries of their dominions.

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The next king, Burna-Buryas, reigned about B.C. 1425. He likewise made a covenant of peace with Bursur-Assur, the then king of Assyria. Burna-Buryas is called "king of Gan-duniyas," a district which has been identified by some with the Garden of Eden. He married Muballiṭat-Serua, the daughter of Assur-uballiṭ, king of Assyria. His son was called Kara-Ḥardas, and he reigned over Babylon. During his reign (we are told by a tablet of synchronous history), "men of the Kassi revolted and slew him," and they placed Nazi-bugas, "the son of nobody," upon the throne. The Assyrian king went to Babylon to take vengeance upon the murderers, slew Nazi-bugas, and placed the son of Burna-Buryas, Kuri-Galzu, upon the throne. Mili-Sipak, or Mili-Siḥu, the son of Kuri-Galzu, next reigned, and after him Merodach-Baladan I. reigned. Mr. Smith attributed to this king a boundary-stone which is now in the Museum. This king was attacked by Bel-Nirari, king of Assyria, and was defeated.

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CHAPTER IV.

BABYLONIAN HISTORY FROM B.C. 1330–668.

Rise of the Assyrian Empire under Rimmon-Nirari, B.C. 1330.—Translation of his inscription.—Extent of his empire.—Tiglath-Pileser I.—His immense kingdom.—His hunting expeditions in Lebanon.—Rise of the Jewish power under David and Solomon.—Assurnaṣirpal, king of Assyria.—Shalmaneser II.—Tribute of Jehu.—The bronze gates of Balawat.—Wars between the Assyrian and Babylonian kings.—Sargon of Assyria sends the Tartan against Ashdod.—Hezekiah and Merodach-Baladan.—Sennacherib.—His wars with Merodach-Baladan.—Sennacherib destroys Babylon.—Terrible damage to buildings and libraries.—The boast of the Rabshakeh.—Sennacherib's death.—Esarhaddon, the kind and merciful king.—His respect for the Babylonian temples.—Translation of an Inscription in Babylonian.

ABOUT B.C. 1330 the kingdom of Assyria began to be powerful and mighty. A most enterprising and spirited ruler called Rammanu-Nirari held sway, and he has left us an account of his conquests in a beautifully executed inscription dated in the eponymy of Shalman-Karradu. As it is not very long, and is a good specimen of an Assyrian historical inscription, I reproduce here Professor Sayce's translation of it.

OBVERSE.

1. RIMMON-NIRARI, the holy Prince, appointment of god,
2. the holy *conqueror*, established by heaven (and) earth (and) the gods,

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3. establisher of fortresses (and) demolished buildings.
4. of the host of the Cassi, Gutium, Lulumi,
5. and Śubari, destroyer of all
6. enemies above and below, the trampler
7. on their countries from Lubdi (?) and Rapiku
8. to the confines of Zabidadi and Nisi,
9. the (remover) of boundaries and landmarks,
10. the (overthrower) of Kings and Princes
11. (whom) the gods ANU, ASSUR, SAMAS, RIMMON,
12. and ISTAR to his feet subjected;
13. the supreme worshipper of BEL.
14. The son of PUDIL, established by BEL,
15. Vicegerent of ASSUR, the conqueror
16. of the lands of Turuci and Nirkhi
17. as far as the frontiers of his *furthest* castles,
18. ruling the mountains and the forests
19. of the frontiers of wide Gutium,
20. of the Gunukhlami and the Śuti,
21. their streams and lands;
22. the remover of boundaries and landmarks.
23. The grandson of BEL-NIRARI,
24. worshipper of Assur also, who on the army of the Cassi
25. laid his yoke, and the spoil of his foes
26. his hand captured, the remover of boundaries
27. and landmarks. The great-grandson
28. of ASSUR-YUBALLIDH, the powerful King
29. whom as a worshipper in Bit-Kurra I fixed.
30. The restoration and peace of his kingdom
31. to distant regions like a mountain he extended;
32. the sweeper away of the armies
33. of the wide-spread Śubari,
34. the remover of boundaries and landmarks.

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35. At that time the ascent to the temple of ASSUR my Lord,
36. which (was before) the gate of the men of my country

REVERSE.

1. and the gate of the stars (called) Judges,
2. which existed in former times, was decayed, and
3. was stopped up and was ruined ;
4. this place I selected,
5. its strength I took,
6. with clay and sand 4 *gurs* I cemented,
7. I made, to its place I restored,
8. and my inscription I placed
9. for future days. The future Prince
10. at the time (when) this place
11. shall grow old and decay
12. its ruins let him renew ; my inscriptions (and) my written name
13. to its place let him restore. The god ASSUR
14. his prayers heareth. Whoever my written name
15. shall erase and his own name shall write,
16. and the record of my inscription shall cause to wash out,
17. to destruction shall devote,
18. in the flood shall lay, in the fire
19. shall burn, in the water shall lay,
20. with the dust shall cover,
21. into a house underground, a place not seen,
22. shall cause to descend and place,
23. then I appoint these curses :
24. (even) the enemy, the stranger, the wicked one and the injurer,
25. the hostile tongue, and whosoever

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26. a rival shall urge on and excite,
27. and whatever he devises he shall accomplish.
28. ASSUR, the mighty god, who dwells in the temple of Kharsak-kurra,
29. the gods ANU, BEL, HEA, and TSIRU,
30. the great gods, the spirit of heaven,
31. (and) the spirit of earth, in their ministry,
32. mightily may they injure him, and
33. with a grievous curse quickly
34. may they curse him ; his name, his seed, his forces
35. and his family in the land may they destroy ;
36. the glory of his country, the duration of his people
37. and his landmarks, by their august mouth,
38. may it go forth, and may RIMMON in inundation
39. malign inundate (with) whirlwind,
40. may the wind dry up, and amongst his offspring
41. destruction, want of crops,
42. curse (and) famine in his country may he lay, with rain his country like a whirlwind may he fill,
43. to a mound and ruins may he turn ; may RIMMON in his evil devouring his country devour.
44. (Dated) the month Mukhur-ili, the 20th day, during the eponymy of SHALMAN-KARRADU.

After the time of Rimmon-Nirari the history becomes doubtful, and all that is known with certainty is that Tukulti Ninip, king of Assyria, conquered Babylonia. Following in his steps, the Assyrian king Assur-Danan attacked and defeated Zagaga-suma-iddina, king of Babylonia, and captured the cities of Zaba, Irriya, and Agarsal.

The next king of Babylonia appears to have been Bel-zakir-iskun ; and during his life the Elamites made several

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fierce attacks upon Babylonia, under the leadership of Kudur-nan-ḫundi.

About this time Nebuchadnezzar the First became king of Babylon, and he made three wars against Assur-ris-isi (or *ilim*), king of Assyria. The particulars of the first campaign are not given; in the second we read that Nebuchadnezzar burnt his baggage and retreated; and in the third he was defeated by the Assyrians, and forty of his chariots taken. Assur-ris-isi was the grandson of Assur-Danan, and the father of Tiglath-Pileser I., king of Assyria, who reigned about B.C. 1120. With Tiglath-Pileser I., Marduk-nadin-aḫi, the next king of Babylon, fought; he marched into Assyria, pillaged the temples, and carried off the images of the gods Rammanu (Rimmon) and Sala. Tiglath-Pileser, however, gathered together his army, made an attack on Babylon, and captured it, overrunning at the same time all Babylonia. He captured both parts of the city Sippara, also Upe and Rapiku.

Under the powerful rule of Tiglath-Pileser I., Assyria became a truly mighty empire. He attacked and defeated on all sides the nations that had rebelled after the death of his father. His armies marched through difficult countries, and crossed the rivers on rafts of inflated skins. He penetrated as far west as the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, and he records that he went into a ship at Arvad, and killed a dolphin. During his journey through the Lebanon forests and mountains he slew one hundred and twenty lions and many other animals. He cared also for the well-being of his people, for he re-cut the canal which Assur-Danan had made to bring water to the city Assur, and put it in good repair. He undertook various buildings, and from one of the towers

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which he made for one of these were obtained three cylinders which record the principal events of five years of his reign. After this king's death (which took place about B.C. 1100) Assur-bel-kala ascended the throne of Assyria, Marduk-sapik-kullat being king over Babylonia. When the latter died the Babylonians set Rammânu-abla-iddina, "son of nobody," upon the throne.

A very important inscription of this monarch exists on a fine large white stone, which records that a grant of land was made to Ritti-Marduk, king of Bit-Karziyabku, in this reign. An English translation was made by Mr. Pinches and myself, and appeared in the "Proceedings" of the Society of Biblical Archæology for April, 1884: a copy of it is given below.

Translation of an inscription of Nebuchadnezzar I., B.C. 1120, recording a grant of land and privileges to Ritti-Marduk, king of Bit-Karziyabku:—

1. When Marduk the king of the gods sent Nebuchad-
   nezzar the glorious prince
2. the mighty, the offspring of Babylon, the chief of kings,
3. the warlike ruler, the governor of Eridu
4. the sun of his country rejoicing his people,
5. protector of the boundaries, the establisher of the
   sons [of Babylonia],
6. the king of justice who judges with righteous
   judgment,
7. the warlike MAN who to make battle increased his
   army,
8. the bearer of the mighty bow, fearless in battle,
9. who with his weapons struck down the power of the
   country of Lullubi,
10. the subduer of Phœnicia, the spoiler of the Kassites,

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Stone object containing an Inscription of Nebuchadnezzar I., B.C. 1120 (about), recording a grant of privileges to Ritti-Marduk, king of BIT-KARZIYABKU. Found at Abû-Habbah (Sepharvaim) by Mr. H. Rassam.

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11. the anointer of kings, the prince, the beloved of the god Marduk
12. [*the words "Marduk the king of the gods sent" (see line* 1) *form this line in the text*]
13. he sent forth his weapons to revenge Akkad.
14. From Dēr the fortress of the god Anu
15. he made destruction for the distance of thirty *kasbu* (*i.e.*, sixty miles).
16. In the month, the month Tammuz, he took the road.
17. The burning (?) . . . . . blazed like fire,
18. and covering (?) the roads there sprouted forth undergrowth (or jungle)
19. there was no water of any sort, the places thereof were destroyed.
20. The strength of the great horses remained,
21. and the zeal of the warlike hero returned.
22. The mighty king went forward, the gods sustained him,
23. and Nebuchadnezzar marched on, none opposing him.
24. He turned not back from the strength of the field, the wooden growth he cut down.
25. Ritti-Marduk lord of the house of Bit-Karziyabku,
26. who his fortress, Bit-Imitti,
27. (to) the king his lord he did not give up—he burnt his fortress.
28. The strong king marched speedily, he captured as far as the bank of the river Ulā.
29. The kings of every region gathered together, they made battle,
30. (and) among them the fire blazed forth.
31. The face of the sun was darkened by their clouds of dust,
32. the hurricane collected itself, the storm broke.

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33. In the storm of their battle
34. a hero, the possessor of a chariot, could not recognize the companion with him.
35. Ritti-Marduk, lord of the house of Bit-Karziyabku,
36. who his fortress, Bit-Imitti,
37. (to) the king his lord he did not give up—he burnt his fortress,
38. he feared not the battle, he { descended / marched } to the enemy,
39. and to the enemies of his lord he came down with fury.
40. By the command of the gods Istar and Rimmon, lords of battle,
41. evil surrounded him, then to the king of Elam his country was subjugated.
42. But king Nebuchadnezzar took his part powerfully;
43. he captured the land of Elam and spoiled its goods.
44. When he returned to Akkad with glory and joy of heart,
45. he looked favourably upon Ritti-Marduk lord of the house of Bit-Karziyabku,
46. who with those hostile and inimical to the king his lord [had contended].
47. As regards all the cities of Bit-Karziyabku, of the land of Namar,
48. which by a former king had been freed, through enemies, against their agreement, had come under the boundaries of Namar,
49. Nebuchadnezzar, the king, his lord, restored, and
50. the king pacified the princes, [he gave] the cities their freedom as in days of old.
51. In the whole boundary of the country of Namar, the messengers of the king,
52. and the chief, the governor of Namar, shall not enter the city,

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53. no master of the horse, foals, or mares,
54. shall cause to go into the midst of the cities ;
55. taxes of oxen and sheep by the king and governor of Namar shall not be taken,
56. a measure (?) or homer of fodder (?)
57. an ass shall not be given to the tax-gatherer,
58. stallion keepers shall not enter the city,
59. stallions shall not be taken among the mares, (and)
60. the fruit of the plantations and the *sakal* tree shall not be cut down.

Column II.

1. The castle of Bit-Šamaš and of the city Ilu-Bašâ shall not be made,
2. the bridge shall not be made, the road shall not be opened.
3. From the people of Nipur, (and) of Babylon, for the army of the king,
4. as many as dwell in the cities of Bit-Karziyabku,
5. whether in town or whether in country, a seizure of men shall not take place.
6. From the time when the god Tuk (?) spoke to him in the boundary of the country of Namar,
7. Nebuchadnezzar king of multitudes, the cities of Ritti-Marduk,
8. the son of Karziyabku, all the ground of the land of Namar
9. freed for future days, and the multitudes dwelling in those cities
10. he appointed for a compensation to the chief, the governor of Namar,
11. at the freeing of those cities.

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Here follows the list of witnesses :—

12. Nazi-Marduk son of Kurkame the *kalu* (*i.e.*, man) of Akkad.
13. Arad-Nanâ the son of Damik-Rammânu the recorder of the land.
14. Marduk-kudurri-uṣur the priest of Bel.
15. Ṭûbiyaenna the captain.
16. Ardu-tariṣ-biti the son of Zabri, the man of the palace gate.
17. Šamaš-nadin-šumi the son of Atta-ilu-ma the governor of the city Isin.
18. Bau-šum-iddina the son of Ḫunna the governor of Babylon.
19. Balaṭsu-Gula son of Arad-Êa the prefect.
20. Marduk-kên-abli son of Ḫimilê the *satam* of the treasure-house.
21. Arad-Gula the son of Kalbi governor of Usti.
22. Ṭâb-asab-Marduk the son of È-saggil-zir governor of the land of Ḫalman.
23. Bêl-nadin-šumi the son of Kirban the governor of Namar.
24. And Nebuchadnezzar the prince of Namar are the witnesses.
25. The scribe who wrote this tablet was [called] Bêl-tabni-bulliṭ, the GASSU.
26. When in future days
27. whoever among the sons of Kirban, or anyone else,
28. shall be appointed to the governorship of the land of Namar,
29. or to the prefectship of the land of Namar, small [and] great all there are [of]
30. the cities of Bit-Karziyabku,

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31. which the king in the boundary of the country of Namar has freed,
32. shall not fear the king and his gods, and shall bring [them] back and establish the [old] boundary
33. and shall destroy the name of god and king, and another shall write,
34. whether a *sakla*, or a *sakka*, or a *sama*, or an evil man,
35. shall instigate, and shall destroy this tablet with stones,
36. (or) with fire shall burn, or in the river shall sink, or shall hide it in a field unseen:
37. that man, may all the great gods, whose names are recorded in heaven and earth,
38. curse him angrily, may God and king mightily afflict him,
39. may Ninip king of heaven and earth, and the goddess Gula, the mighty one of the house of righteousness,
40. destroy his landmark, expel his seed.
41. May Rimmon, the great chief of heaven and earth, lord of watercourses and rain,
42. fill up his rivers with slime.
43. May he establish hunger and want for him, and
44. may oppression, degradation, and evil, by day and by night, be bound to him, and
45. may he press down his hand upon the inhabitant[s] of his wretched city.
46. May Sumaliya, lady of the shining mountains,
47. she who dwells on the heights, and walks upon the hill-tops,
48. may Rammānu, Nergal and Nanā, the gods of Namar,

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49. may Siru, and Supū the son of the temple of the city of Dēr,
50. may the god Sin, and the lady of Akkad, the gods of the house of Kirban,
51. may the great gods, in strength of heart,
52. for evil destine him, and
53. may another become master of the house which he shall build, [and may he be]
54. a sharp goad in his side, and a running in his eye.
55. May he bow down his face to his conqueror,
56. may he not accept his weeping from him,
57. may he cut off his life speedily;
58. by the destruction of his house may his hands enter the mud,
59. may he [*i.e.*, the conqueror] send afflictions to him as long as his life lasts,
60. and as long as heaven and earth exist may he expel his seed.

Simmas-Siḫu (or Sipak), the son of Iriba Sin, next reigned for seventeen years. The Elamites pillaged Sippara in his reign, and did great mischief. His successor was Ea-mukin-ziri, son of Ḳutmar, who reigned for three months. Next came Kassu-nadin-aḫi, son of Sappai, who ruled for six years, and after him E-Ulbar-sakin-sumi, son of Bazi. He reigned for fifteen years, his brother Ninip-kudurri-uṣur reigned for two years, and another brother, whose name is uncertain, for three months. An Elamite dynasty then assumed the government of the country for six years.

The history is again doubtful until the time of Merodach-Baladan II., a son of Iriba-Marduk. We find that a king called Sibir marched into Assyria and destroyed a city called Adlil. A king called Nabu-sum-

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damik next reigned, but he was defeated by Rammanu-Nirari, of Assyria. After Nabu-sum-damik we find a king called Nabu-suma-iskun ruling over Babylon, who likewise was defeated by the Assyrian king. An Assyrian king, Tukulti-Ninip IV., then ruled Babylon for seven years.

About this time the Jewish nation and kingdom rose to great power under David and Solomon. Curiously enough, none of the "nations around" were powerful enough to attack or to harm the kingdom of David after his defeat of Hadar-ezer, king of Zobah. Egypt was quiet, and the unfriendly Assyrian little by little lost all his importance until the empire revived under Assur-naṣir-pal.

While Assur-naṣir-pal was ruling over Assyria, Nabu-abla-iddina held sway in Babylonia. He joined in league with the Suḫi, and they attempted to resist the power of the Assyrian king. They were, however, unsuccessful, and were defeated after two days' battle. Zabdan, the brother of the king of Babylon, was taken captive together with the chief of the host, Bel-pal-iddina. The leader of the Suḫi and seventy of his followers fled by way of the river. Afterwards the Babylonian king made a treaty with Shalmaneser II., king of Assyria, the son of Assur-naṣir-pal, who was now dead. This king was a votary of the Sun-god, and in the so-called "Sun-god" tablet, he relates that a wicked enemy, called the Sutu, had invaded Babylon before his time, had attacked the temple of the Sun, and had wrought considerable damage and destruction therein. Other kings before his time had executed several considerable repairs, but no one had done so much as he did. He apportioned a fixed revenue from the royal farms for the support of

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this temple, and presented the priests with valuable garments.

The next legitimate claimant of the throne was Marduk-suma-iskun, the son of Nabu-pal-iddina, but it was also claimed by an usurper called Marduk-bel-usati, who, aided by the populace, took possession of the country. The Assyrian king, Shalmaneser II., took the part of the lawful heir to the throne, and marched to his assistance. The heir fled to Ḫalman, but was followed by the Assyrians and slain; the rebel was defeated at Gannanati by the Assyrian king, who then marched to Babylon. It must not be forgotten that it was this king who made Jehu, the son of Nimshi, pay him tribute; and on the "black obelisk," which stands in the British Museum, the picture of Jehu kneeling down doing reverence to the Assyrian lord may be seen. This king erected most magnificent gates covered with plates of bronze, having in relief upon them beautifully executed scenes from his wars and expeditions.

Bau-aḫi-iddin and Marduk-balaṭsu-ikbi were the next kings of Babylon. Little is known of either save that the latter was king during the reign of Samsi-Rammanu over Assyria, who made many raids on Babylonia. In one of these raids he took Dur-papsukal, and in another he defeated the Babylonian army. Babylonian history is now silent as to the names of its kings; but we know from the annals of the sister kingdom Assyria, that many expeditions were made by its kings, Rammanu-Nirari III., Shalmaneser III., and Assur-Dan against Babylon. Rammanu-Nirari III. was the son of Samas-Rimmon, who died about B.C. 812. Shalmaneser III. made three expeditions against Babylon between the years B.C. 783 and B.C. 767.

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Here comes a blank in Babylonian history for about twenty years, and the next king we find to be Nabu-naṣir. No mention is made of him in the inscriptions, but he is brought to light by Ptolemy's canon. Tiglath-Pileser III. was king of Assyria during his reign, and he captured "the fortress of Kuri-galzu" (a town built by an early Babylonian king of that name), together with that part of Sippara dedicated to Samas, the Sun-god. The people of these places, he tells us, he took away to people his city of "the fortress of Assur," which he had founded.

Nabu-naṣir died about B.C. 734, and was succeeded by Nabu-nadin-ziri, who reigned two years. He in his turn was succeeded by Nabu-suma-ukin, who reigned but a few weeks. The inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser, the king of Assyria at this time, seem to point out that there were many important chiefs living in Babylonia each maintaining his city and army. He mentions three, Nabu-usabsi, Zakiru, and Ukin-ziru. This latter chief is probably the Chinzirus of Ptolemy, who appears to have become sole king of Babylonia about B.C. 730. The canon of Ptolemy inserts the name Ilulaeus (Assyr. Ulaa) after Ukin-ziru. For the last two or three hundred years, Babylonia had been the scene of perpetual fights and battles, at one time winning, at another losing. The energies of the people had been strained to their highest pitch to maintain their position, but little by little the Assyrian power had dominated until the Assyrians had become masters of the country.

But now a new king of Babylon arose called Merodach-Baladan, or Marduk-pal-iddina, *i.e.*, "Marduk gave a son." He was the son of Yakin, the Yugaeus of Ptolemy's canon, and appears to have been a man of great ruling ability. In arms he was no match for the great Sargon.

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king of Assyria, who began to reign about B.C. 722, for about 712 B.C. we find him sending an ambassador to Hezekiah to solicit aid against him. He then sent to Humba-nigas, the king of Elam, and supported by him the Babylonians rebelled. The Assyrian king, Sargon, conquered them and ravaged the country. This is one of the most interesting periods of Assyrian history, for the great king of Assyria comes into very close contact with the Jews. Isaiah in his twentieth chapter tells us that he sent his Tartan to besiege Ashdod and took it; and on a fragment of clay cylinder of Sargon a most graphic description is given of the means taken by the Assyrian king to capture the city. The siege took place B.C. 711, and the following is Sargon's account of it:—

"In my ninth expedition I went to Philistia and Ashdod, and to the land beside the Great Sea (*i.e.*, the Mediterranean).

"Azuri, king of Ashdod, hardened his heart against bringing tribute to me, and he also sent to the kings round about who were unfriendly to Assyria, and worked wickedness. I shattered his power over his people, and carried off *spoil* (??). After this I appointed his brother Ahmuti to be lord of the realm. I fixed the taxes and tribute which he should pay to me like the other kings round about him. His wicked people, however, hardened their hearts against the payment of tribute; they revolted against their king, and because he had been loyal and good to me they drove him away. After this they established Yaman, a usurper in the kingdom; and they seated a man who was not the lawful heir on the throne of their lord. They assembled their forces for war, and they fortified the town against me. They made an excavation like a ditch all round the city to a

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depth of 34 feet, and into it they directed all the springs of the city, to form a moat. All the inhabitants of Philistia, Judah, Edom, and Moab, dwelling by the sea, whose duty it was to bring gifts and offerings to Assur, my lord, spoke treason. These people and their rebellious chiefs carried their presents to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt—a monarch who could not deliver them—and entreated his assistance. Then I, Sargon, the majestic prince, the worshipper of Assur and Merodach, jealous for the honour of Assur, passed over the Tigris and Euphrates at their flood time. Yaman, who relied upon himself, and who would not submit to my authority, heard of the advance of my expedition to the land of the Hittites; and the might of Assur overwhelmed him. He fled to Meroe, near Egypt, to a far-off place, and was no more seen."

Hezekiah did not support Merodach-Baladan, who then sent to Kudur-Naḫḫunte, king of Elam, and they became allies. Having prepared his army, he made strong his fortifications to resist the march of Sargon of Assyria. But his city Dur-athara was captured, himself put to flight, and obliged to seek refuge in his own country Beth Yakur. On the road thither he retreated to a city called Ikbi-Bel, and Sargon having captured Babylon marched against it. Merodach-Baladan and his followers forsook Ikbi-Bel and took refuge in Dur-Yakin, which they strongly fortified. This was useless, however, for Sargon took the city and carried off Merodach-Baladan and all his family.

Sargon died B.C. 705, and was succeeded by his son, Sennacherib. He reigned quietly for two years, when a man called by Eusebius Hagisa (probably Marduk-zakir-sumi of the inscriptions) came to the throne,

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Sennacherib being deposed. Merodach-Baladan gathered his armies together, attacked this rebel and slew him. He then set himself upon the throne. Sennacherib re-assembled his armies and marched from Nineveh against him, and utterly routed Merodach-Baladan at the city of Kisu, and compelled him to seek refuge in Guzummanu. Afterwards he gathered together whatever people were willing to follow his fortune, and led them to a district called Nagitu, down by the Persian Gulf, where he died an exile. Sennacherib placed upon the throne of Babylon a young man called Bel-epus. Another Babylonian rebel arose called Suzub, the son of Gaḫul, but Sennacherib soon suppressed him and ravaged his country. He was taken captive and sent to Nineveh. Sennacherib was now occupied in trying to destroy Merodach-Baladan's settlement in Nagitu; and, while labouring for this object, Suzub escaped, and, aided by the king of Elam, marched to Babylon and became king. He was routed by the Assyrians and obliged to keep in hiding, but soon after he gathered together another army and again taking Babylon proclaimed himself king. He met the Assyrian army in battle at Ḫalub, on the Tigris; he was utterly defeated, and the son of Merodach-Baladan, Nabu-sumu-iskum, who had joined him, fell into the hands of the victorious Assyrian army. Suzub fled, and Umman-Minanu, his helper, the king of Elam, retreated to his own kingdom.

Sennacherib's vengeance upon Babylon was most severe. He pulled down the temples, removed walls and towers, and hurled them into the river Araxes. Everything capable of being destroyed he destroyed. It is very hard to form even an idea of the damage which this king must have done. In Babylon was the

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accumulated learning of ages and of hundreds of generations of the children of men. The libraries were the repository of all the science and knowledge which the most civilized of the Semitic races had. The books of astronomy and observations of the heavenly bodies were all there, in addition to their beautiful collection of myths and stories of the "childhood of the world." With every other great building, the libraries must have suffered, and very possibly many of the stories and legends which have supplied the other nations of the world with the groundwork of their mythology, perished under the needlessly cruel vengeance which Sennacherib wreaked upon the city, "the gate of God."

Every one is familiar with the boastful speeches of the Rabshakeh[1] (in Assyrian), and without doubt they were the very words which the king himself had commanded to be spoken. In deeds he was cruel, in speech haughty, and every word of his inscriptions breathes the spirit of his boast, "I am the mighty king, the powerful."

Sennacherib deposed Bel-epus and raised to the Babylonian throne his son, Assur-nadin-sumi. The particulars of these battles belong properly to the history of Assyria, but it is necessary to touch upon them briefly for the right understanding of the history of Babylon. Assur-nadin-sumi reigned about six years, and was succeeded by Nergal-edir, who, in his turn, was succeeded by Musesib-Marduk. Sennacherib was murdered about B.C. 681, and his son, Assur-nadin-sumi, whom he had appointed over Babylon, had died about B.C. 694. Another son Esarhaddon, came to the Assyrian throne B.C. 680, but,

[1] 2 Kings xviii. 19–35.

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meanwhile, a son of Merodach-Baladan, called Nabu-zir-napisti-esir, had seized his father's dominions near the Persian Gulf, and wished to rule Babylonia. The sons of Sennacherib after his death quarrelled as to the succession. While this quarrel was going on Nabu-zir-napisti-esir attacked the city of Ur, which was ruled over by Ningal-iddina. His siege was unsuccessful, however, for Esar-haddon, having defeated his brothers, marched against him, and Nabu-zir-napisti-esir was compelled to take refuge in Elam. His brother, Nahid-Marduk, submitted to Esarhaddon, and was appointed by him to the govern-ment of the sea-coast. The judicious king, Esarhaddon, went to Babylon and began to repair the damages which his father had done. He not only was merciful and kind, but he did his best to show that he honoured the ancient city Babylon. He built ten temples there, and there are inscriptions in the British Museum in Babylonian as well as in Assyrian, which go to prove that he wished to conform to the usages of the people and their kings as far as he could. His mild but firm policy pacified the excitable and angry breasts of the various tribes ever ready for war, and rendered his short reign of thirteen years very glorious. During his reign he associated his son, Assurbanipal, with him in the kingdom of Assyria, and left the government of Babylon to another son, Samullu-sum-ukin or Samas-sum-ukin.

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CHAPTER V.

THE FALL OF NINEVEH.—NEBUCHADNEZZAR.
B.C. 668–560.

Assurbanipal's wars with Elam.—His care for the libraries.—Fall of Nineveh.—The vengeance of the Babylonians.—Nebuchadnezzar's war with the Egyptians.—Josiah, king of Judah.—Nebuchadnezzar's buildings and canals.—Inscription on a bronze step.—The siege of Tyre.—The destruction of Jerusalem and captivity of its people.—Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel.—Biblical names of Adam, Abel, Abraham, and Methuselah found on the tablets.

FOR ten or a dozen years we have peace in the land. After this a king of Elam, called Urtaki, made a league with Bel-basa, king of the Gambulu, and began to make war against Assurbanipal and his brother. Assurbanipal hearing of this, sent an army to fight these kings, and it succeeded in driving Urtaki back into Elam, which country he subsequently conquered and placed Umman-igas, a son of Urtaki, upon the throne. Another serious trouble now awaited Assurbanipal. His brother's spirit chafed at the idea of his being in subjection to him, and knowing that the king of Elam was ill-disposed to Assurbanipal, the sacrilegious monarch opened the treasuries of the temples of the gods Bel, Nebo, and Nergal, and taking out their gold and silver he sent it to Umman-igas, the king of Elam, and prayed for his assistance to make a war against his brother, Assurbanipal. The Elamite king was quite ready to take up arms against his benefactor, and raising a large army, he, together with the Babylonian king, began a series of

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desperate and fierce wars. The Elamite king had no sooner left his city on this expedition than his own son, Parritu, rebelled, and, attacking his father, slew him, sending his head as a present to Assurbanipal. He, however, followed the policy of his father Umman-igas, and joined the Babylonian faction. The Assyrian army conquered the Babylonian king and his ally and took Babylon about B.C. 648. The king set fire to his palace, and perished in the flames.

Assurbanipal severely punished the insurgents, but one Nabu-bel-zikri, the ruler of the sea-coast, a grandson of Merodach-Baladan III., found his way to Elam, and took refuge with Inda-bigas, its king, who, being well disposed to Assyria, sent an ambassador to its king to inform him of the event. Naturally enough, Assurbanipal demanded that Nabu-bel-zikri should be delivered up to him. Before this request could be brought to the Elamite king, he and his family had been slain by Umman-aldas, who had ascended the throne. Assurbanipal sent to this new king demanding that Nabu-bel-zikri should be given up; he, fearing this result, called for his armour-bearer, and they ran each other through with their swords. Umman-aldas, the king of Elam, sent the body of Nabu-bel-zikri, together with the head of the armour-bearer, to Assurbanipal. Samas-sum-ukin reigned over Babylon about twenty years, and was succeeded by Kandalanu, who reigned about twenty-two years.

Then followed peace until about B.C. 626, when another revolt broke out in Babylonia, and the Assyrian king sent a general called Nabu-pal-uṣur to quell it. Nabu-pal-uṣur was a general of great ability and tact; and the government of Assyria appear to have made

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him Governor of Babylon on account of the skill which he showed in ruling Babylon and suppressing the rebellion. He afterwards became king of Babylon, and made it great and mighty, as in days of old. When, however, he found that he had armies under his own control, and the power to do with them as he pleased, he next turned his successful troops against their old enemies the Assyrians. The Babylonians were only too glad to assist their vigorous leader Nabu-pal-uṣur in his meditated attack upon Nineveh. Instead of being the general in the service of the government of Assyria, he now became a most formidable rival and opponent of its king. Assyria had been the ruling power for some time, but her power and her glory were diminishing, and she found herself powerless to resist or control the iron-willed rule of her opponent, Nabu-pal-uṣur (Nabopolassar). He was wise enough to see that Assyria could not be completely crushed by one nation, and he therefore made a league with Pharaoh Necho, of Egypt, and asked the Median king, Cyaxares, to give his daughter Amytes to Nebuchadnezzar, his son, to wife. Thus a league was made, and about B.C. 609 the kings marched against Assyria. They suffered various defeats, but eventually the Assyrian army was defeated, and Shalman, the brother of the king of Assyria, slain. The united kings then besieged Nineveh. During the siege the river Tigris rose and carried away the greater part of the city wall. The Assyrian king gathered together his wives and property in the palace, and setting fire to it, all perished in the flames. The enemies went into the city and utterly destroyed all they could lay their hands upon.

With the fall of Nineveh, Assyria as a power practically

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ceased to exist. The Babylonians remembered the vengeance taken upon them by Sennacherib, and the destruction he wrought; and there is very little doubt but that Nabopolassar took care to avenge this treatment.

About this time Josiah, the king of Judah, went out with his small army against the Egyptian hosts.[1] The fate of this courageous, fearless monarch is known to all, and needs no repetition here.

In the fourth year of Jehoiakim,[2] Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, sent his son, Nebuchadnezzar, to make war against the Egyptians; war, for some reason or other, having been declared. While Nebuchadnezzar was carrying out the instructions of his father, news reached him of the death of Nabopolassar; he therefore hastened back to Babylon to receive his father's crown. The battle which Nebuchadnezzar fought with the Egyptian king took place at Carchemish about B.C. 608.

When Nebuchadnezzar reached Babylon he found that the throne had been kept for him. When he had become established in the kingdom he set his various captives, Jews, Phœnicians, Syrians, and Egyptians at work to make Babylon the greatest city in the world. And as a builder he remains almost unsurpassed. He surrounded Babylon with two huge walls, an inner and an outer. The outer wall he simply repaired, but the inner he built entirely. He reared a huge palace in fifteen days,[3] and dug the great canal, the remains of which Sir Henry Rawlinson traced from Hit to the bay of Graine, a distance of nearly 500 miles.

[1] 2 Kings xxiii, 29, 30.

[2] Jer. xlvi. 2.

[3] See Col. 8, line 63, of his large inscription, and this is mentioned by Berosus,

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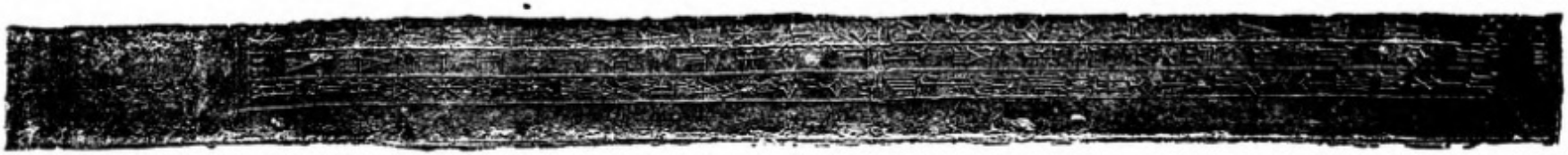
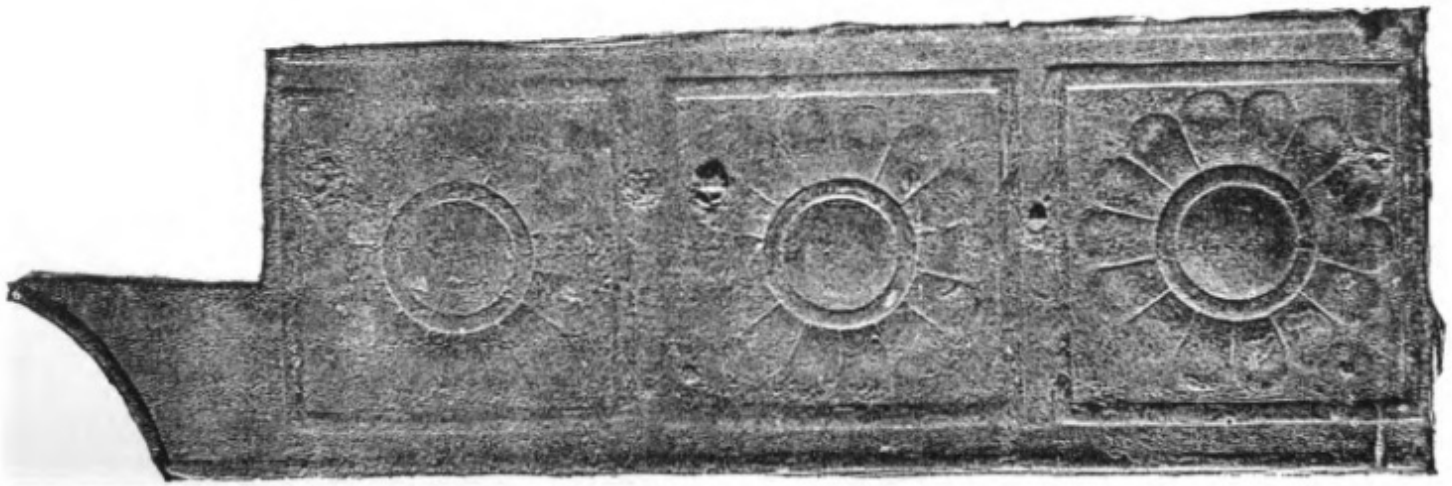


Inscription on the edge of the Bronze Step, bearing the name of Nebuchadnezzar.



Bronze Step (?) of Nebuchadnezzar II.

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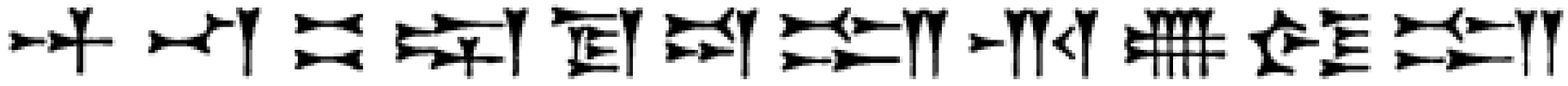
Inscription on a Bronze Step of Nebuchadnezzar.

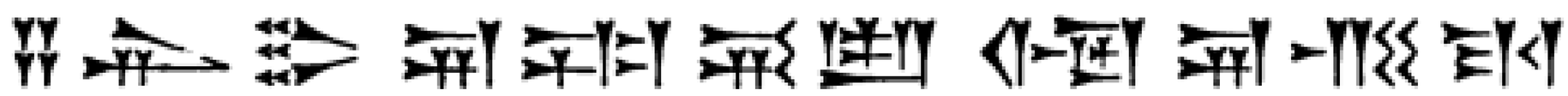
1. 

D.P. Na - bi - um - ku - du - ur - ri - u - ṣu - ur

Nebuchadnezzar

sar ka - dingi - ra - ki

the king of Babylon (the gate of god)

2. 

za- ni - in E SAG - ILI u E ZI - DA

the restorer of the temple Sagili and the temple Zida

3.

ablu asaridu sa D.P. Nabu - abla

the eldest son of Nabu - pal -

u - ṣu - ur sar tin - tir - ki a - na - ku

uṣur the king of Babylon (the seat of life) am I.

4.

a - na D.P. Na - bi - um bil - ni ṣi - i - ri

For the god Nabo the supreme lord

5.

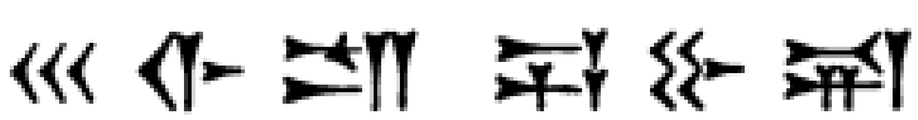
mu - sa - ri - ku u - um ma - la - ki - ya

the lengthener of the day of my rule (or kingdom)

6.

E - ZI - DA bit - su i - na Bar- si - pa ki

E-Zida his temple in Borsippa



es - si - is e - pu - us

afresh I built (made)

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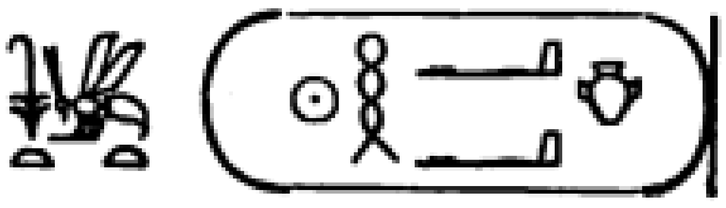
After Nebuchadnezzar had returned from Syria, Judæa threw off his yoke together with Phœnicia, expecting help from the king of Egypt. He marched at once against Tyre, but was unable to take it. He therefore left an army encamped before the city, and went to Jerusalem.[1] Jehoiakim, who was king of Judah at that time, rebelled (2 Kings xxiv. 1); and although he afterwards submitted, it was to no purpose, for Nebuchadnezzar put him in fetters and established Jeconiah in his stead.[2] Soon after Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem again, removed Jeconiah from the throne, carried him to Babylon, and made Zedekiah king in his stead.[3] The Babylonian king, however, met with much resistance from the Tyrians, for it took thirteen years to capture the city. So good an historian as Mr. Grote thinks it never was taken; Jeremiah and Ezekiel both prophesy its downfall,[4] and speaking generally it seems impossible that iron-willed Nebuchadnezzar should be defeated in this matter, having all his army and the whole naval force of Phœnicia to help him.

Three years before the fall of Tyre, however, and in the ninth year of Zedekiah, Jerusalem rebelled, hoping to obtain assistance from the new king of Egypt, Pharaoh Hophra,[5] and with this end in view the Jewish king, Zedekiah, sent messengers to Egypt. But before help could come from this quarter Nebuchadnezzar had

[1] Compare 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6; 2 Kings xxiv. 1–6.
[2] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 8. [3] 2 Kings xxiv. 11-17. [4] Jer. xxvii. 3-6; Ezek. xxvi.
[5] Jer. xxxvii. 5–11; Ezek. xvii. 15–20. The Biblical Pharaoh Hophra (otherwise known as Apries) is the  or of the Hieroglyphs.

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besieged Jerusalem,[1] and hearing that the Egyptian force was on the march, he raised the siege and went to do battle with it. Some say that Pharaoh Hophra was defeated, others that he retreated as the Babylonians advanced. Nebuchadnezzar returned to the siege of Jerusalem, and after two years the city surrendered in the nineteenth year of his reign.[2] Zedekiah's eyes were put out and he was carried to Babylon.[3] Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the temple, the city and its walls, and transported the greater part of the people to his own land.[4]

A few years after this he again marched through Syria and Palestine into Egypt to make war with the Egyptian king, ravaging the country far and wide. As usual he was successful, and obtained much spoil and many captives.[5] Nebuchadnezzar is the subject of the liveliest interest to us, for it was this king that threw the three children into the fiery furnace; and it must never be forgotten that he was very kind to the prophet Jeremiah. Daniel was called[6] Belteshazzar; this is probably a corruption of Beltis-sarra-uṣur, *i.e.*, Beltis protects the king.[7]

The question has been asked over and over again, Is Daniel's name found in the inscriptions? The answer is, No; but this fact is easily explained. When an eastern king performed any great work or deed, or carried on

[1] Jer. xxxvii. 5.

[2] Jer. lii. 12.

[3] "I will bring him to Babylon to the land of the Chaldeans, yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there."—Ezek. xii. 13.

[4] Jer. lii. 12–30; 2 Kings xxv. 8-12.

[5] Compare Jer. xlvi. 3, 13–26; Ezek. xxix. 17–20; xxx. 10-26; xxxi.. 11–16.

[6] Dan. iv. 8.

[7] In cuneiform it would be .

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any war, not only his own share in the labour, but the share of his generals was attributed to him, and everyone's glory became merged in that of the monarch. There is no reason whatever why the name may not be found in future days when all Babylon is excavated. Many another Biblical name is found on the tablets, for example, *Abramu* "Abraham," *Adamu* "Adam," *Ablu* "Abel," *Mutu-sa-ili* (the man of god), Methuselah, and so on. When Sennacherib and his mighty army besieged Jerusalem the "Rabshakeh" did all the work, but his name is not even mentioned in the account of the siege written by the king's orders. When Sargon besieged Ashdod, the "Tartan" did all the work, but the king claimed the glory. So, however great a man Daniel was in Babylon, and however important his work, it is not likely that Nebuchadnezzar would concede to him his due and mention his name. The "plain of Dura" mentioned in Daniel is probably one of the districts in Babylon which are called in the inscriptions "Duru," *i.e.*, fortress.

Nebuchadnezzar died after a reign of 43 years, and was succeeded by his son Amil-Marduk (the Evil Merodach of the Bible), B.C. 562. It is necessary to mention that the form of this monarch's name, Nebuchadrezzar (Ezek. xxvi. 7; xxix. 18, 19; xxx. 10), is the more correct according to the inscriptions: for Nebu = *Nabu*; chadr = *kudur*; and ezzar = *uṣur*.

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Babylonian Contract Tablet with seal-impressions, dated 8th day of Sebat, accession year of Neriglissar, king of Babylon.

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CHAPTER VI.

THE CUNEIFORM ACCOUNT OF THE CAPTURE OF BABYLON BY CYRUS.—THE CAUSES WHICH LED TO IT.—B.C. 560–530.

Rab-Mag.—Nabonidus, king of Babylon, and Belshazzar, master of the army.—Cyrus.—Rise of his power.—Death of the mother of Nabonidus.—Chief events of the years of the reign of Nabonidus.—Extract from an inscription of this monarch.—His researches.—His restorations of the temples.—Nabonidus a sun-worshipper.—Arrival of Cyrus at Babylon.—His Cylinder.—Part of cuneiform text relating to the capture of Babylon.—Translation of it.—Cyrus the "shepherd," the good king.—His conciliatory policy.—His kindness to the Jews.—His restoration of the cities and temples.—Bible account of the fall of Babylon.—Belshazzar's feast.

EVIL MERODACH, after a reign of two years, was assassinated by his sister's husband, Nergal-sarra-uṣur or Neriglissar. Some think that he was the Nergal Sharezer, the Rab-Mag, who was with Nebuchadnezzar at the siege of Jerusalem.[1] He reigned three years, and died B.C. 556. Rab-Mag is in Babylonian *ruba emga*, "the glorious prince." His son Labasi-Marduk (the Laborosoarchod of Ptolemy) succeeded him, and was assassinated after a reign of nine months.

The next successor to the throne was Nabu-Nahid, Nabonidus, the son of Nabu-balaṭ-su-ikbi, who began to reign about B.C. 556. And now slowly but surely the Babylonian empire began to decay. Cyrus was becoming a powerful king, and the inertness of Nabonidus

[1] Jer. xxxix. 3 and 13.

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prepared the way for his future capture of Babylon. Nabonidus dwelt in the city Tema, and to his son Belshazzar was entrusted the care of the army. In the first year of the reign of Nabonidus we find that he made war with a king whose name is lost; in the second there was a slight rebellion in Hamath. In his third year he went to a country called Ammananu. In his sixth year Cyrus, the king of Anzan, went to a country whose name is lost. Hearing of this, the soldiers of Astyages revolted in this year, and delivered him into the hands of Cyrus. On the cylinder of Nabonidus, quoted further on, the king says that Cyrus himself conquered Astyages; but the statement which makes the soldiers of Astyages deliver their king into the hands of Cyrus agrees with that of Herodotus. Cyrus was pushing on his fortunes rapidly, for he captured the royal city in Ecbatana, and carried the silver, gold, furniture, and goods which he had taken there to Anzan. In the seventh year of his reign Nabonidus was still in Tema, while his army was in Akkad. We have no notice of what took place in the eighth year. In his ninth year he was still in Tema, and his army was in Akkad. In the month Nisan of this year the mother of the king died; there was mourning for three days and much weeping. Cyrus, the king of Anzan or Persia, gathered his army together, crossed the Tigris by Arbela, and went to attack a king who lived there. In the tenth year, B.C. 549, Nabonidus was in Tema, and the army in Akkad. The priests made sacrifices to the gods of Babylon and Borsippa, asking for peace. In this year, on the 21st of Sivan, Cyrus marched from the land of the Elamites into Akkad. Of the eleventh year of Nabonidus we know little, save that the king was in Tema, the army in Akkad, and that they

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sacrificed victims to the gods presiding over Babylon and Borsippa, entreating peace. The tablet which gives these particulars also tells us that the god "Bel did not go to Babylon," nor did Nebo come forth during these years; which means that even the worship of the gods began to be neglected. This would make the priests angry, and as they were a caste which always carried great influence, it makes us wonder why the king dared to offend them.

In the seventeenth year of Nabonidus (B.C. 539) Cyrus captured Babylon; but we must give some notice of the work of Nabonidus before we deal with this event. Some little time ago Mr. Rassam brought to England fragments of some Nabonidus "cylinders." One of these is a very important document, and we shall describe here briefly its contents. The cylinder is in three columns, and contains 159 well-written lines. He begins by calling himself the son of Nabu-balaṭ-su-ikbi, the "mighty prince." It appears that an enemy called the Ṣabmanda had gone to Ḥarran and had destroyed the "temple of the Moon-god." The god Bel wished Nabonidus to undertake the re-erection of this temple and the re-establishment of the city, and Marduk and Sin, the Moon-god, appeared to him in a dream and told him what Bel desired. The following is Nabonidus' own account of the matter:—

15. In the beginning of my long reign, Marduk the great lord and Sin
16. the illuminator of heaven and earth, the strengthener of all showed me
17. a dream. Marduk spoke with me (saying)

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18. Nabonidus, king of Babylon, with the horses of thy chariots
19. rear up the walls of E-ḥulḥul and of Sin the great lord,
20. fix the dwelling-place within it.
21. Reverently I spoke to the lord of the gods Marduk,
22. that house of which thou speakest I will build.
23. The Ṣabmanda of which thou speakest destroyed it, strong was their might.
24. Marduk spoke with me saying the Ṣabmanda of which thou speakest
25. they, their country and the kings going by their side shall not exist.
26. In the third year with his small army
27. he made Cyrus the king of Anzan his young servant to go;
28. he overthrew the wide-spreading Ṣabmanda, he captured
29. Astyages king of Ṣabmanda and took his treasures to his own land.

Nabonidus began the work of restoration, and brought his army from Gaza for the purpose. He tells us that Assurbanipal, the son of Esarhaddon, had restored it in his time. During the excavations for the necessary repairs of the foundations he found the cylinders which had been deposited by Shalmaneser II. (who reigned about B.C. 860) and Assurbanipal. Nabonidus gave all his energies to the work, and had the bricks made like "white marble," *i.e.*, he glazed them white. He set figures of the god Laḥmu on each side of the doors of the temple. He then had the image of the Moon-god brought from Su-anna and placed it in the shrine

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at Ḥarran. He made an inscription, which he set side by side with that of Assurbanipal, which he tells us he saw. Having done his duty to the Moon-god, he next speaks of the Sun-god at Sippara. Nebuchadnezzar, it will be remembered, had restored the temple, but this inscription tells us that he looked for the cylinders and found them not. Forty-five years after this restoration Nabonidus looked for them, and found them not. Thinking that the image of the Sun-god had been placed in the wrong shrine, Nabonidus had it removed and set in another temple. After this he tells us that he excavated as much as "eighteen cubits," and found the "foundation stone of Naram-Sin, the son of Sargon, which for three thousand two hundred years no king going before me had seen." He goes on to say that Samas, the Sun-god, the great lord of E-parra, revealed to me the house "the seat of the joy of his heart." The king was very pleased with this success, and he "sacrificed a victim."

The pious king next restored the temple of Anunitum (in Sippara), "the lady who walks before the gods;" it was called E-ulbar. While excavating for the foundations he found two foundation stones of earlier kings, namely those of Sagasalti-Buryas and Kudurri-Bel. This remarkably interesting cylinder ends by a prayer to the gods Samas and Anunit.

This brings us back to the tablet containing the annals of the reign of Nabonidus. After the eleventh year we know not what took place, for the tablet is broken, and we are at a loss for details until the seventeenth year of the reign of Nabonidus, of which year the tablet gives us information. The period of the inertness of Nabonidus appears to be over; the gods were brought

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forth and sacrifices were made, all the images of the gods they could find were taken in procession around Babylon, and only those of Borsippa, Cutha, and Sippara were allowed to remain in their places. The tablet of annals gives the following account of this year:—

"At the end of the month Elul (August) the gods of Akkad, who were above the atmosphere, came down to Babylon. The gods of Borsippa, Cutha, and Sippara came not down. In the month Tammuz (June) Cyrus made battle in Rutum against . . . . of the river Nizallat. The men of Akkad made a revolt. The soldiers took Sippara on the 14th day without fighting, and Nabonidus fled away. On the 16th day Gobryas, the governor of Gutium, and the army of Cyrus came to Babylon without any opposition. Afterwards, having bound Nabonidus, he took him to Babylon. At the end of the month Tammuz the rebels of Gutium closed the gates of E-sagili; but neither in that temple nor any other temples of the country was there found a weapon for its defence. In the month Marchesvan (October), the 3rd day, Cyrus came to Babylon, the roads were dark before him. He made peace to the city and promised peace to all Babylon. Cyrus appointed Gobryas to be governor in Babylon together with others. From the month Kislev (November) to the month Adar (February) they brought back to their shrines the gods of Akkad, whom Nabonidus had sent down to Babylon. In the month of Marchesvan (October) the dark, the 11th day, Gobryas . . . . and the king (Nabonidus) died. From the 27th of the month Adar (February) to the 3rd day of the month Nisan (March) there was weeping in Akkad. All the people were free from their chief.[1] On the

[1] Compare Job iii. 19.

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Terra-cotta Cylinder containing the history of the capture of Babylon by Cyrus the Great, king of Persia.

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4th day Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, in the Temple of the Sceptre of the World, established a festival."

This is the brief history of the conquest of Babylon as recorded in the annals; and it will be easy to see that it was brought about by other things than force of arms. There was a revolt among the troops of Nabonidus, and he fled, hence Sippara was easily taken, and the rebels who shut themselves up in E-sagili were without arms, therefore they were subdued without difficulty. There is a fragment of a cylinder in the British Museum which was drawn up by the command of Cyrus, and which gives his account of the taking of Babylon.[1] As this famous record is so important, a paraphrase is here given :—

The first few lines of the fragment are much broken, and only a few words are readable, but the general import of them seems to be that under the care of Nabonidus the rites of the temples were discontinued, and that the ordinary offerings and sacrifices were left unperformed. At this Merodach, the lord of the gods, grieved, and the gods left their respective shrines. At the sacred feasts which were celebrated within Kal-anna, Merodach did not appear, he had taken himself away to other peoples. Merodach was kind to the people of Sumir and Akkad, and he returned, and rejoiced all the countries. He sought out a king for himself who would perform according to the heart's desire of the god whatever was entrusted to his hand. He proclaimed the renown of Cyrus, the king of Anzan (Persia), throughout

[1] In the inscriptions of Nabonidus no mention is made of any restoration of the temple of Marduk by him, and it seems that he neglected entirely the worship of this very favourite deity of Babylonia. This would of course arouse the indignation of the priests of Marduk.

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THE CUNEIFORM ACCOUNT OF THE CAPTURE OF BABYLON BY CYRUS, WITH HIS GENEALOGY.

Lines 15–21. (See page 79.)

the length and breadth of the land, and he proclaimed his glory to all. He made all the people of Gutium whom he had gathered to his feet, and all the dark races whom he had caused his hand to take, to dwell under law and righteousness. Merodach, the great lord, directed his (Cyrus') hand and heart; he lived happily. The god commanded him to make the march to his city Babylon, he made him take the road to Tintir (Babylon), the forces of Cyrus marched like a cloud and an earth wall. His army was wide-spreading and far-reaching like the waters of a river, his forces were without number. He made them enter Kal-anna without fighting and without contest; he made breaches all round the city, and he (the god) delivered Nabonidus, who did not reverence him, into the hands of Cyrus. All the people of Tintir and all the people of Akkad and Sumir, nobles and priests who had opposed the king, he crushed beneath him, and they came and kissed his feet. And then the god Merodach, who by his service makes the dead to live, and who in difficulty and trouble aids every one, drew near to him favourably and made known his proclamation, saying, "I am Cyrus the king . . . . the great king, the mighty king, king of Tintir, king of Sumir and Akkad, king of the four regions of the earth, the son of Cambyses, the great king, king of the city Anzan, grandson of Cyrus, the great king, king of the city of Anzan, great-grandson of Teispes, the great king of the city of Anzan, of the ancient seed of royalty, whose dominion (reign) Bel and Nebo had exalted according to the beneficence of their hearts."

After Cyrus entered Babylon with joy and gladness, he enlarged the royal palace, the seat of royalty, and Merodach, whom the Babylonians had grieved, daily re-

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joiced the heart of his follower. His wide-spreading forces were spread over the land peacefully, and he repaired the cities and made joyful the children of Babylon. Cyrus was careful to repair immediately the temple of the god Merodach, and the god was pleased to approach him favourably. All the kings of Phœnicia and round about brought their tribute, and kissed the feet of Cyrus. He restored the shrines and dwelling-places of the gods of the towns of Agade, Isnumnak, Zamban, and elsewhere. The gods of Akkad and Sumir, which Nabonidus had brought from their shrines for the final festival, Cyrus restored to their places. The last line or two of the inscription tells us that he prayed daily to Nebo and Bel that they would be pleased to prolong his days, to bless the decree for his prosperity, and that Merodach would regard him as his faithful follower and son.

Such is the account given of this remarkable fragment of the fall of Babylon. It will be remembered that the old historian Herodotus tells us that Cyrus drained the river Euphrates nearly dry by means of a canal running into a lake, and that the Persians marched up through the river gates, which were carelessly left open by the Babylonians. No mention of this is made in the inscriptions; but there is no reason why Cyrus should not have had recourse to this means as well as to fighting. We have mentioned that Nabonidus had entrusted the charge of the Babylonian army to his son Belshazzar, and the Bible tells us that he was slain on the awful night of the capture of Babylon. It makes no mention of Nabonidus. Josephus says, "and when Neriglissar was dead the kingdom came to Baltasar, who by the Babylonians was called Naboandelus," and in another part of his book he calls Nabonidus "Nabonnedon."

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Now it is evident that the father Nabonidus and the son Belshazzar became confused in the minds of the writers of the histories, but one and the same king is meant. It was natural that foreigners should consider Belshazzar to be the king, because he was master of the army.

The Bible and Josephus record an event in this king's life which the inscriptions and Herodotus mention not. It is said,[1] "Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, whiles he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father (*i.e.*, his ancestor) Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem, that the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines, might drink therein . . . . . In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote." Belshazzar, exceedingly terrified at this, called for all the astrologers, soothsayers, and augurs, and demanded an interpretation; but none could read it. At last came Daniel, the servant of the Lord, and read the awful dictum to the king—MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN, *i.e.*, "God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it; thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting; thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians." A verse or two later we read, "In that night was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, slain."

The Babylonians had heard for years of the conquests of Cyrus, but they felt secure when they remembered the walls of their city and the huge gates which broke

[1] Daniel v.

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their line at short distances. They thought of their past conquests, of their glories, of their old lines of kings, and were insolently secure in their hearts. The prophets of Israel denounced Babylon in their prophecies ; all nations took up the cry of joy at her downfall, and the cry "Babylon is fallen" resounded from city to city, and from one end of the earth to the other.

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CHAPTER VII.

BABYLON UNDER THE RULE OF THE PERSIANS, AND UNDER SELEUCUS.

Babylon under the Persians.—The proclamation of Cyrus to the Jews.—Darius, Cambyses, and Gomates.—Sir Henry Rawlinson's translation of the Behistun Inscription.—Extract therefrom.—Kindness of Darius to the Jews.—Confirmation of the decree of Cyrus.—Xerxes gave the Jews permission to build the walls of Jerusalem.—Philip and Alexander the Great, kings of Babylon.—Babylon under Seleucus.—Extract from an inscription of Antiochus.—Lack of historical cuneiform inscriptions after this period.—Gradual decay of Babylon.—Prophecies relating to its fall.

IT fared better, however, with Babylon under the merciful hands of Cyrus than it did when Sennacherib the king of Assyria was the conqueror. Cyrus, the tolerant king, restored its temples, and made its inhabitants to dwell in peace and safety; he re-organised the religious services in its temples, and endeavoured to make the people regard him as a kind reformer more than as a conquering king. He was a generous protector of the Jews, and obtained the glorious appellation of "My shepherd," and "My anointed,"[1] from the Lord God of Hosts, Who also spoke by the spirit of prophecy in Isaiah, and gave an exact description of the siege:—"Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not

[1] Is. xliv. 28; xlv. 1.

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be shut: I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob My servant's sake, and Israel Mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known Me. I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside Me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me: that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside Me: I am the Lord, and there is none else."[1]

Under his rule we are told "Daniel prospered."[2] When Cyrus had arranged the affairs of Babylon, he turned his attention to the Jews, and in his first year[3] "the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, the Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and He hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all His people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel (He is the God), which is in Jerusalem. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem." Not

[1] Is. xlv. 1–6. [2] Dan. vi. 28.
[3] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22, 23; Ezra i. 1–4.

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only did Cyrus speak to the heart to the Jews, but he brought forth the vessels of Jehovah (which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem to the house of his gods), thirty chargers of gold, a thousand chargers of silver, nine-and-twenty knives, thirty basons of gold, silver basons of a second sort four hundred and ten, and other vessels a thousand, altogether 5,400 vessels, and handed them over to Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah.[1]

The actual decree which Cyrus made as to the rebuilding of the temple is given in Ezra vi. 3–5, and is, "Let the house of God at Jerusalem be builded, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof threescore cubits, with three rows of great stones, and a row of new timber; and let the expenses be given out of the king's house. And also let the golden and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took forth out of the temple which is at Jerusalem, and brought unto Babylon, be restored, and brought again unto the temple which is at Jerusalem, every one to his place, and place them in the house of God." Josephus tells us that Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, was unfavourable to the Jews and stopped the building; but in the reign of Darius the original decree of Cyrus was confirmed, and the building proceeded. Thus were confirmed the prophecies of Jeremiah, recorded in the various parts of his book.[2]

Cyrus being himself a monotheist, was no doubt much attracted to the Jews with their one Almighty Jehovah; but for all that he was most tolerant to the other nations who believed in many gods. It is generally thought that Cyrus was the sole king of Babylon after

[1] Ezra i. 7–11. [2] Jer. xxv. 12; xxix. 10; xxxiii. 7–14.

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he had captured Babylon. Daniel, however,[1] says, "and Darius, the Median, took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old;" and Josephus tells us that both Cyrus, the king of Persia, and Darius, the king of Media, made war with Nabonidus.

It is a very hard matter to settle the question as to who this Darius was, for the inscriptions make no mention of him, and if he reigned his reign could only have been for a few months, as the canon of Ptolemy places Cyrus' first year B.C. 538. There has been much argument on this point; some chronologists make this Darius to be Astyages, the grandfather of Cyrus, others say he was Cyaxares, the son of Astyages, others say he was a Median prince, and some say he was a general in the army of Cyrus, while a few think him to be Darius Hystaspes. The arguments which have been brought forward to prove these various theories it would be useless to repeat here, for it would occupy too much space, and when given nothing would be proved. We must wait, and perhaps when Babylon is excavated we shall find tablets which will offer a solution of the mystery. The Babylonian contract tablets make no mention of the name of this Darius the Median.

Cyrus died B.C. 530, and his son, Cambyses (who had been associated with him during the last year or two of his reign), reigned in his stead. Whatever reason there may have been for disaffection among the Babylonians under the reign of Cambyses is unknown; it has been thought that they wished to do away with their Persian lord and his rule. Shortly after his ascending the throne he made an expedition into Egypt, about B.C. 527, and conquered it.

[1] Dan. v. 31.

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Cambyses had left a Magus in charge of the affairs of Babylon, and this Magus with his brother, also a Magus, revolted. Some time previously Cambyses had murdered his brother Bardes or Smerdis; and Patizithes, one of these Magi, knowing this fact, and having a brother very like the deceased Bardes, determined to make him personify him. Then Patizithes persuaded his brother that he would make all straight for him and set him on the throne. He then sent heralds in all directions saying that Bardes, the son of Cyrus, was king in the place of Cambyses. The news was announced by a herald to Cambyses, who was with his army in Assyria, and who then thought that Prexaspes, whom he had appointed to kill his brother Bardes, had deceived him and had not slain him. After a little consultation Cambyses understood the real state of affairs, and resolved to set out immediately against the Magus. The story goes that while leaping on his horse to begin his journey, the blade of the sword wounded his thigh, and the bone became diseased, and the thigh mortifying he died, having reigned nearly eight years. The name of the Magus who assumed the power was called Gomátes, and it is said that he treated the people with great kindness; he was, however, slain by Darius.

Soon after the Babylonians revolted under the rule of Nadintu-Bel, who pretended to be Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabonidus. Darius at once marched against Babylon and defeated the rebels in two battles. The rebel chief, Nadintu-Bel, was captured in Babylon by Darius and put to death. Darius, in his Behistun inscription, translated by Sir Henry Rawlinson, gives the following statements about the revolt of Gomátes :—

"He who was named Cambyses, the son of Cyrus of

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our race, he was here king before me. There was of that Cambyses a brother named Bardes; he was of the same father and mother as Cambyses. Afterwards Cambyses slew this Bardes. When Cambyses slew Bardes it was not known to the state that Bardes was killed. Then Cambyses proceeded to Egypt. When Cambyses had gone to Egypt the state became wicked; then the lie became abounding in the land, both in Persia and in Media and in the other provinces.

"Afterwards there was a certain man, a Magian, named Gomátes. He arose from Pissiachádá, the mountain named Arakadres, from thence; on the 14th day of the month Viyakhana (the 12th month) then it was that he arose. To the state he thus falsely declared: 'I am Bardes, the son of Cyrus, the brother of Cambyses.' Then the whole state became rebellious; from Cambyses it went over to him both Persia and Media and the other provinces. He seized the empire; on the 9th day of the month Garmapada (the 5th month) then it was he thus seized the empire. Afterwards Cambyses, killing himself, died.

"The empire of which Gomátes the Median dispossessed Cambyses, that empire had been in our family from the olden time. After Gomátes the Magian had dispossessed Cambyses of Persia and Media and the dependent provinces, he acted with his own party (?) he became king."

"There was not a man, neither Persian, nor Median, nor any one of our family, who could dispossess of the empire that Gomátes the Magian. The state feared him exceedingly. He slew many people who had known the old Bardes; for that reason he slew the people 'lest they shall recognize me that I am not Bardes, the son

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of Cyrus.' There was not any one bold enough to say aught against Gomátes the Magian until I arrived. Then I prayed to Ormazd; Ormazd brought help to me. On the 10th day of the month Bágayádish (the 1st month) then it was, with my faithful men I slew that Gomátes the Magian and the chief men who were his followers. The fort named Sictachotes, in the district of Media, named Nisaea, there I slew him; I dispossessed him of the empire. By the grace of Ormazd I became king; Ormazd granted me the sceptre."

Darius restored all the temples which the rebel Magian had injured or destroyed, and established the royalty of the old Achaemenian line. He gives his genealogy thus: "My father was Hystaspes; of Hystaspes the father was Arsames; of Arsames the father was Ariyaramnes; of Ariyaramnes the father was Teispes; of Teispes the father was Achaemenes. On that account we have been called Achaemenians. There are eight of my race who have been kings before me, I am the ninth." Sir Henry Rawlinson gives the royal line in a double series provisionally thus:—

1 Achaemenes.
2 Teispes.

3 Cyrus.	7 Ariaramnes.
4 Cambyses.	8 Arsames.
5 Cyrus the Great.	(Hystaspes.)
6 Cambyses.	9 Darius.

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Hystaspes appears to have been a private person, and he certainly played a secondary part in the war of his son Darius against the rebellious Parthians. Darius conquered Gomátes the Magian, Atrines the Susian, Nadintu-Bel the Babylonian, Martes the Persian, Phraortes the Median, Sitratachmes the Sagartian, Phraates the Magian, Veisdátes the Persian, and Aracus the Armenian, each of whom personated some one else and pretended to be a king. This Aracus, or Arahu, personated Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabonidus, in the year 515 B.C. He was the son of Ḥandita, and his rebellion took place at a town called Duban. It was probably in the reign of this Darius that Daniel was cast into the lions' den.

Darius was most kind to the Jews, endorsing and confirming the decree of Cyrus which allowed the Jews to rebuild their temple: He added to the gifts which Cyrus had ordered to be made, and appointed them "Young bullocks and rams and lambs, for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the appointment of the priests which are at Jerusalem, let it be given them day by day without fail; that they may offer sacrifices of sweet savours unto the God of heaven and pray for the life of the king and of his sons."[1] The prophets Zechariah and Haggai lived during the reign of this king. We find Babylonian contract tablets dated in the thirty-fifth year of the reign of Darius, which fact goes to prove that his reign was long and successful. Under him Babylon remained an important town; but it became absorbed entirely into the Persian kingdom. Darius died about B.C. 485, and was succeeded by his son Xerxes, who was favourable and

[1] Ezra vi. 9, 10.

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tolerant to the Jews. Josephus tells us that this was the king who gave Nehemiah permission to go and build the wall of Jerusalem.

No cuneiform documents have yet been discovered which give the history of Babylon at this period, and therefore we have to rely solely upon the statements made by the classical authors on the subject. The contract tablets, however, again come to our help, and record the names of Philip of Macedon and his celebrated son, Alexander the Great, and this shows that the latter was considered the legal king at the time the documents were made. We must wait until Babylon is thoroughly excavated for fresh light concerning its history at this time.

Seleucus became king of Babylon after the death of Alexander the Great, and with him the era of the Seleucidæ begins. At present nothing is known of him from the cuneiform inscriptions. He died about B.C. 281–280, and his son, Antiochus, reigned in his stead.

This king was, as he styles himself, "the eldest son of Seleucus the Macedonian," the king of E-ki (Babylon). He restored the famous temples of SAGILI and ZIDA, and his "pure hands" brought the bricks for this purpose from the land of Hâtim. On the 20th day of the month Adar, in the 43rd year of the Seleucian era (*i.e.*, about 270 years B.C.), he laid the foundation of the temple in Borsippa dedicated to the god Nebo, the eldest son of Marduk, the offspring of the god Aneana, the queen, the opener of the hands of (her) offspring. The wife of Antiochus was called Stratonice, and his son was called Antiochus after himself. The small cylinder which gives the above facts uses the Greek word *kúklos* under the form *ku-uk-lu*. This is very

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important, for it shows that the Greek had so far influenced the Babylonian at that early age as to cause him to use Greek words to express what he could have expressed so easily in his own Semitic tongue. Antiochus prays Nebo, the "eldest son, to grant and establish by thy command the prosperity of Antiochus, Seleucus his son, and Stratonice the queen." He reigned from about B.C. 281–280 to B.C. 261–260. Like Cyrus, he had the good policy to restore the temples of the gods, and to sacrifice to the ancient divinities of the nations which it was his lot to conquer.

This little cylinder was brought to England by Mr. Rassam from Babylon, and the writing upon it is the most curious and complex of all the various styles and kinds of Babylonian varieties. The cylinder is figured on the opposite page, and as the writing is so curious, we have reproduced a few lines of it with a transcript in ordinary Babylonian and Assyrian, that the reader may be able to observe how different the style is; a transliteration and translation are also added. Though the account of the reign of Antiochus given upon this cylinder is very short, yet it is most valuable, for it shows that Antiochus wished to conciliate the Babylonians by rebuilding their temples, and also to restore to the city a little of its former glory.

CYLINDER OF ANTIOCHUS.

1.	D.P.	An- ti - ‘ - ku -	us	sarru	rab - u	
		Antiochus		*king*	*great*	

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Terra-cotta Cylinder of Antiochus, king of Babylon. B.C. 280–261.

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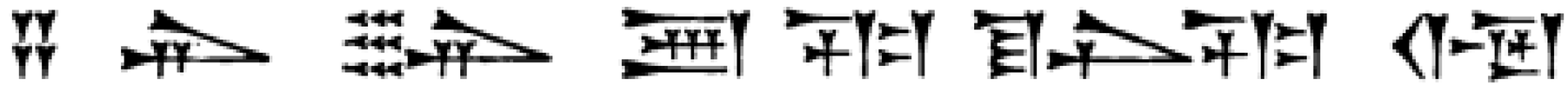
2.

sarru dan - nu sar kissati sar

king great king of multitudes king of

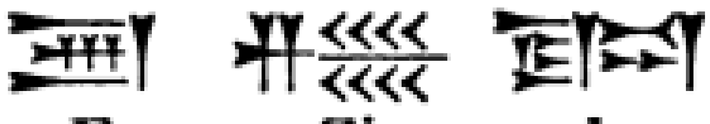
E - ki sar matati

Babylon king of countries.

3 

za - ni - in E - Sag - ili u

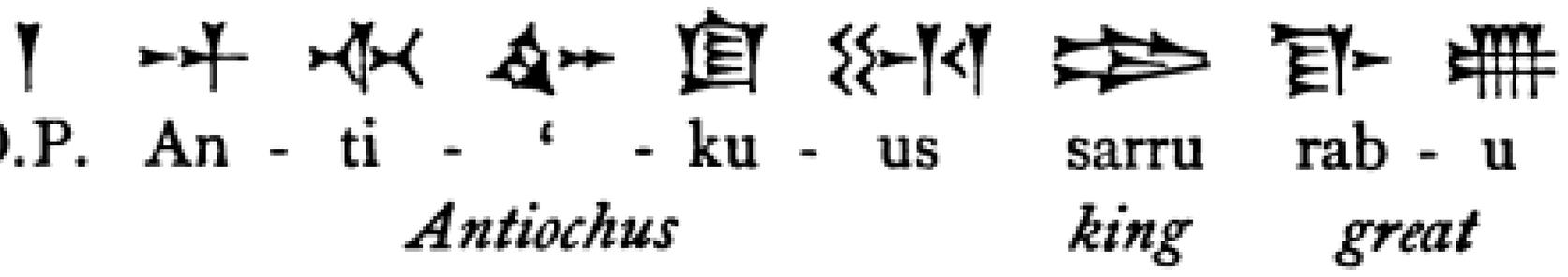
restorer of E-Sagili and



E - Zi - da

E-Zida

ORDINARY BABYLONIAN.

1. 

D.P. An - ti - ‘ - ku - us sarru rab - u

Antiochus king great

2.

sarru dan-nu sar kissati sar E - ki sar matati

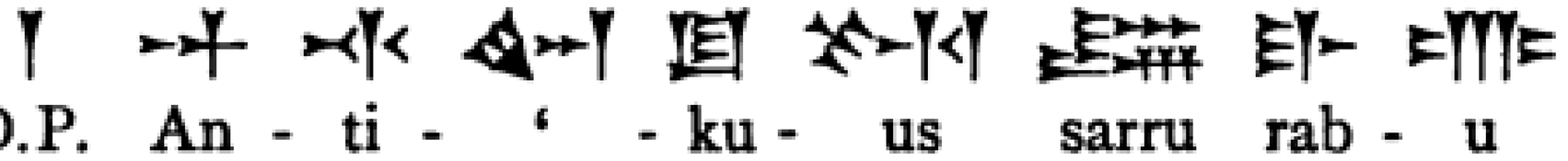
king great king of multitudes king of Babylon king of countries.

3.

za - ni - in E - Sag - ili u E - Zi - da

restorer of E-Sagili and E-Zida.

ASSYRIAN.

1. 

D.P. An - ti - ‘ - ku - us sarru rab - u

Antiochus king great

2.

sarru dan-nu sar kissati sar E - ki sar matati

king mighty king of multitudes king of Babylon king of countries

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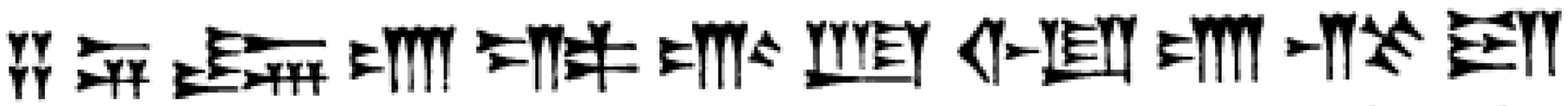
3. 

za-ni- in E - SAG - ILI u E - zi - da

restorer of *E-Sagili* *and* *E-Zida.*

Thus, little by little, Babylon faded away; and the city with a venerable and hoary antiquity was at last broken and utterly crushed by the Persian and the Greek. For ages had Babylonia been a battle-ground for contending nations; she had looked on and seen nation after nation vanish and disappear. Ages before Abraham came from Ur of the Chaldees, was Babylon a city; she was flourishing when Joseph and his people were in Egypt; before Homer sung or Romulus founded his city she was an established power. Her mythology, distorted, formed the base for the beautiful superstructure of the Greek myths and fables; her learning and knowledge furnished food for the minds of the nations her successors, and, together with Egypt, she taught the nations around their letters. Her children were always insolent; in the infancy of their nation they dared to make a tower whose top "should reach unto heaven." A notice of this event is recorded in the Assyrian inscriptions, for we read: "Small and great mingled on the mound, Babylon went to sin corruptly. Their work they laid down all day long, of their tower they made an end entirely in the night. In his anger he poured out secret counsel, and set his face to scatter abroad. He gave a command to make their counsel of none effect." After they had become a mighty nation they dared to brave the threats and denunciations which Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other prophets hurled against them. Babylon was the home of luxury and refinement, and her children only cared to toil for self-grati-

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fication and delight. Isaiah in his prophecy called her the "golden city,"[1] and with his majestic language describes her downfall, saying: "Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee." And of her king he says: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High." And the prophet goes on: "The fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon. Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming."[2] And again Isaiah says: "Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate. Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers. Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man . . . . . Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms."[3]

The renown of Babylon filled the earth; but her haughtiness and pride brought along with them their own punishment. Her king, Nebuchadnezzar, trod down the land of Palestine, and wasted Jerusalem with fire and sword; he sacked the temple and brought out from

[1] Is. xiv. 4. [2] Is. xiv. 8, and following verses.
[3] Is. xlvii. 1–3, 5.

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thence the vessels of the Lord, and marched back to his capital with joy and glory. He made the captive Jews assist in building the walls of his town, and probably the walls of the temples of his pagan gods. His fate and the fate of his city have been accurately described by Jeremiah in his book, saying: "And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling-place for dragons, an astonishment and an hissing, without an inhabitant. Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby. And I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up: and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him: yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall. As Babylon hath caused the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon shall fall the slain of all the earth. Thus saith the Lord of hosts: The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire; and the people shall labour in vain, and the folk in the fire, and they shall be weary." [1]

We, the people of to-day, see how very surely all these threats have been fulfilled. We look for Sodom and Gomorrah, and their place is not known, and but for the enterprise of our nation and the inscribed bricks of Babylon, its exact site would still remain unnoticed and unknown. "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

[1] Jer. li. 37, 43, 44, 49, 58.

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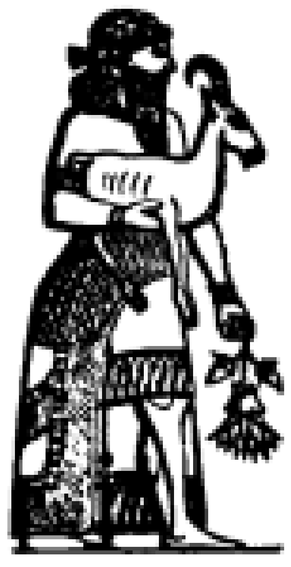
shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged." [1]

The prophet with his God-directed voice pronounced the fate of the city; and it has come to pass; God cursed the land, and can it recover?

[1] Isaiah xiii. 19—22.



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CHAPTER VIII.

BABYLONIAN WRITING AND LITERATURE.

Babylonian wedge-writing.—Manner in which the characters were written.—Comparison of signs.—Cuneiform signs were once pictures.—Compound signs.—Polyphony of the characters.—The syllabaries in two and three columns.—Bilingual lists of words.—Bilingual reading books.—Method of making tablets.—Their shape, size, colour, and texture.—Writing instrument.—Babylonian mathematics.—Their method of counting.—Extract from a table of cube roots.—Babylonian astronomy.—Translations of their reports.—Lists of months.—Names of gods to whom they were dedicated.—Invention of the calendar.—Babylonian observatories.—Comets.—Eclipses.—Magical tablets.—Incantations.—Belief in evil spirits current in the time of Isaiah.—Contract tablets.—Seals of witnesses, nail marks, Phœnician and Greek signatures, etc.—Translations of two slave contracts.—The banking firm of Egibi and Son.—Great importance of these dated documents.—The latest dated contract tablet.—Dr. Oppert's translation of it.—Text of a contract tablet.—Translation.—Translation of contract tablet of the 17th year of Nabonidus.—Translation of a Babylonian boundary stone or landmark.—Omen tablets.—Portents.—Standard inscription.—Cylinders, their shape, number of sides, etc.—Discovery of cylinder of Assurbanipal, containing 1,300 lines.—Gisṭubar legends.

THE groups of wedges in Babylonian writing which form syllables were originally pictures of objects. At first, when but few inscriptions were inscribed, they were carefully done, and bore some rude resemblance to the objects copied. It is uncertain what material was used for writing upon besides stone, metal, clay, etc., but that the cuneiform writers had a substance which they used for the purpose besides these is certain, and this is, perhaps, represented on a sculpture in the British

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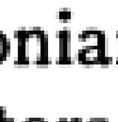
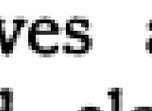
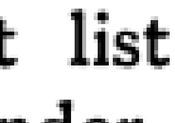
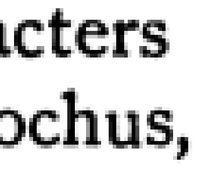
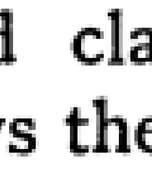
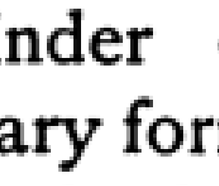
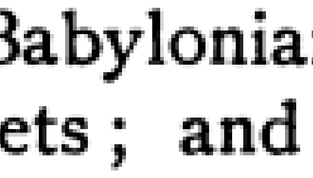
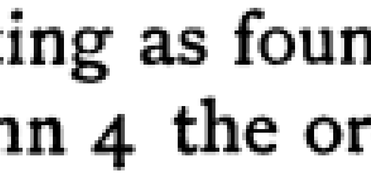
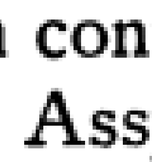
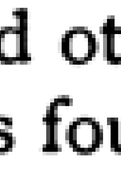
Museum (Assyrian Gallery, No. 84). An official is portrayed noting down the amount of spoil upon a scroll made of some material. The word often translated "papyrus" is called in Babylonian *likhúsi*, and has the determinative for wood before it, which shows that it was some vegetable substance. Now when clay became the material generally used for writing purposes, it was found difficult to form circles; and therefore the original picture of the sun, *i.e.* ◯, in wedges became ◇. This even was found difficult to write, and consequently we find the Assyrian form of this to be ◁. As the scribe wrote from left to right [the wedges being in a slanting direction], custom gradually discarded all the wedges that could not be written easily in this direction, with a few exceptions. The following small table of characters will show how the forms of the characters varied, and how they became simplified. In column 1 a few of the characters are given, selected from inscriptions of the early Babylonian empire. Column 2 gives a short list of characters found on the inscribed clay cylinder of Antiochus, B.C. 280. Column 3 shows the ordinary form of Babylonian writing as found upon contract and other tablets; and column 4 the ordinary Assyrian as found upon the tablets of Assurbanipal's library.

1. B.C. 2000.	2. B.C. 280.	3. ORDINARY BABYLONIAN.	4. NINEVITE OR ASSYRIAN.
			
			
			

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1.	2.	3.	4.
B.C. 2000.	B.C. 280.	ORDINARY BABYLONIAN.	NINEVITE OR ASSYRIAN.

In some cases the character still shows what the object they originally represented was. Thus ✳ represented a star, and the home of a star, *i.e.*, the heavens; it is also placed before a god's name. The sign for gate was , the wedges at the ends representing posts, and those joining them cross-bars. Sometimes two signs are placed together to express a word, and their two meanings added together give a new one. Thus represented a circular object, and ⟨⟨ meant "thirty;" but meant "month," called after the round moon and its thirty days. means "house,"

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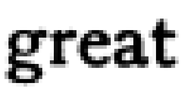
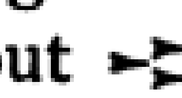
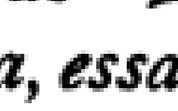
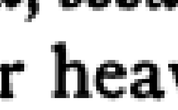
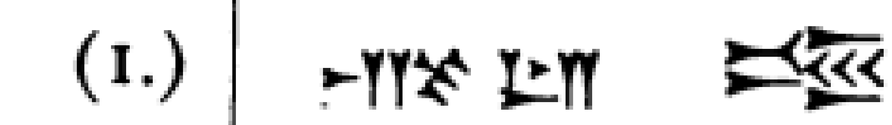
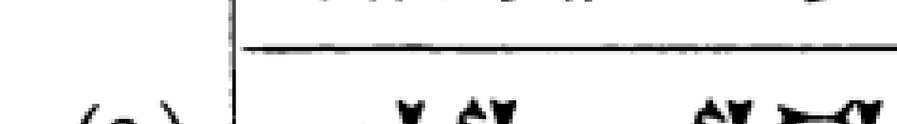
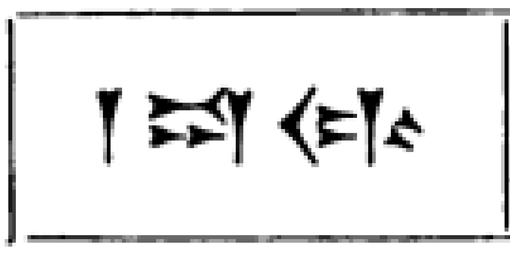
and , "great;" but means "palace," or "great house."  means "mouth," and  "water;" but  means "to drink."  can be called *dingir*, *sa*, *essa*, *ana*, etc.; only when it is read *ana* it means "sky or heaven;" when *sa*, "star;" when *dingir*, "god;" when *essa*, "divinity of corn" (?). It is very difficult at times to discover the right reading of the signs having this quality of polyphony, and hence we find the same king called Assur-izir-pal, Assur-akh-bal and Assur-naṣir-pal by different scholars. This diversity of reading has unfortunately been made a strong point of by the adversaries of cuneiform decipherment; but owing to the discovery of new texts these difficulties vanish day by day.

The Babylonians and Assyrians drew up what are technically called "syllabaries," that is, lists of words, signs, objects, and sentences. At times we find them in two columns, and in two languages, thus :—

(1.)		
(2.)		

and often in three columns, thus :—

(3.)			

In 1 the signs in the right-hand column explain the single sign in the left as meaning "destiny," while the smaller signs are a gloss showing that is is to be read "*Zip*," when used with this meaning. No. 2 gives a short

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sentence of two words in Akkadian, and explains them in Assyrian as meaning "the going forth of the sun." No. 3 has the character to be explained in the middle column, the signs on the right hand read *katamu*, and show that the sign meant cover, while those on the left tell one that its sound is *dul*. Syllabaries in three columns have been found written in Akkadian, Sumirian, and Assyrian. The bilingual lists were exceedingly useful to foreigners who came to Assyria, and they were used by the native children and others; and to us to-day they are among the most important necessaries for the right decipherment of the inscriptions.

The quantity of tablets that were drawn up in two languages must have been enormous. Indeed, at one period nearly all documents were thus written. But, though these syllabaries were necessary and explanatory for the students of Assyrian or Babylonian and Akkadian, yet there was another indispensable, and that was a reading book. Some of these have come down to us among other things, and the following is an extract from one of them :—

a price.
his price.
for his price.
for his price he fixed.
a complete price.
an incomplete price.
his complete price.
his incomplete price.
for his complete price.
for the ending of his incomplete price.

(Tablet K 46.)

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Among the last collections of unbaked clay tablets that came from Babylon were "trial" tablets, *i.e.*, tablets upon which the scribe exercised himself in writing short sentences, and on others lists of signs; and the sight of the ill-formed and badly written attempts remind one of the first attempts of children of to-day in their copy books. It requires no great stretch of imagination to picture the little Babylonian boy with his oblique eyes and thick form bending over his piece of moist clay, laboriously and clumsily impressing his wedges thereon. Human nature is so persistently the same.

And now we must speak of the manner in which the tablet was formed. Fine clay was selected, kneaded, and moulded into the shape of the required tablet. One side was flat, and the other rounded. The writing was then inscribed on both sides, holes were pricked in the clay, and then it was baked. The holes allowed the steam which was generated during the process of baking to escape. It is thought that the clay used in some of the tablets was not only well kneaded, but ground in some kind of mill, for the texture of the clay is as fine as some of our best modern pottery. The wedges appear to have been impressed by a square-headed instrument. So much for the writing materials and elementary matters; we now come to the literature itself.

The Babylonians were essentially calculators, as their astrology required. A wedge, 𒁹, represented 1, two wedges, 2, and so on. 𒌋 = 10, 𒌋𒌋 = 20; 𒁹𒁴 = 100; and 𒌋 × 𒁹𒁴 or 𒌋𒁹𒁴 = 1,000. In Babylonian the year 1884 would be 𒁹𒌋𒁹𒁴 𒐕𒐕𒐕𒐕 𒁹𒁴 𒁹𒌋𒌋 𒐚. The wedge 𒁹 represented 60 as well as one. Tables of squares and cubes were found at Senkerek; the square of 60, 3,600, was given,

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which shows they had need of these high numbers for some kind of reckoning. An example will make this clear.

i.e. 1 is the cube of 1

	,,		do.	,,	8	,,	2
	,,		do.	,,	27	,,	3
	,,		do.	,,	64	,,	4
	,,		do.	,,	125	,,	5
	,,		do.	,,	216	,,	6
	,,		do.	,,	343	,,	7
	,,		do.	,,	512	,,	8
	,,		do.	,,	729	,,	9
	,,		do.	,,	1000	,,	10

Astronomy mixed with astrology occupied a large number of tablets in the Babylonian libraries, and Isaiah refers to this when he says[1] to Babylon, "Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers (the viewers of the heavens, *Marg.*), the star-gazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up." The largest astrological work of the Babylonians contained seventy tablets, and was compiled by the command of Sargon of Agade, thirty-eight hundred years before Christ. It was called the "illumination of Bel." Their observations were made in towers, "*ziggurate*." The following are specimens of their purely astronomical portents and reports:—

(1.) The star Marbuda passed into an eclipse.
The star of the Upper Sphere aforesaid causes fog and rain.
The star Lula portends extended mists.

[1] Is. xlvii. 13.

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The star of the Wolf portends tempest.
The star of Mars to the Double-Star is opposite; the prince dies.
The star Nin-si portends a complete life.
The stars at sunrise are for windy rain and flood.

(2.) The report of Nabu-kul-la-ni.
The Moon and the Sun were seen with one another on the 16th day: king to king hostility sends, etc.

(3.) The sixth day of Niśan
the day and the night
were balanced (*i.e.*, equal).
(There were) six *kasbu* of day
(and) six *kasbu* of night.
May Nebo and Merodach
to the king my lord
draw near.

This latter report refers to the vernal equinox. They divided the day equally into two parts, and assigned six *kasbu* to each; one *kasbu* equalled two hours of time. The Babylonian year was divided into 12 months of 30 days each, with an intercalary month every six years. Every seventh day was a rest day, and on these days it was forbidden to do certain things. Each day was lucky or unlucky, and was under the protection of some god. A tablet calendar in the British Museum (76—11—17. 2389) gives all the lucky and unlucky days in the year. The following are examples of astronomical reports and portents:—

1. The Moon and the Sun are balanced. The country is established. Food

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2. continuously in the mouth of the people continues.
3. The king of the land the throne perpetuates.
4. The Moon and the Sun are separated. The king of the land enlarges (his) ears.
5. (The report) of Sumai.

No. II.

1. The Moon and the Sun are balanced. The country is established.
2. Daily food is in the mouth of the people,
3. The king of the land the throne perpetuates.
4. The Moon and the Sun are separated. The king of the country the ear
5. enlarges.
6. The fourteenth day the Moon and the Sun with one another are seen.
7. The face (is) firm, the heart of the land good,
8. the gods of Akkad
9. for prosperity
10. devise.
11. Joy is in the soldier's heart.
12. The heart of the king (is) good.
13. The cattle of Akkad
14. in the desert safely lie down.
15. (The report) of Istar-sum-esses.

No. III.

1. The Moon and the Sun are balanced.
2. Daily food is in the mouth of the people.
3. The king of multitudes the throne perpetuates.
4. The fourteenth day (the Moon) is seen.
5. A favourable wind. Prosperity
6. to the king my lord. In the midst of a cloud

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7. (the moon) goes. We did not see (it).
8. The Moon at its appearance in clouds was hidden.
9. Rain comes down.
10. There is *fog* (?) and movement.
11. The Moon at its appearance piles the sky (with clouds).
12. Rain falls.
13. In a thick cloud it is seen; and
14. (this is the report) of Nèbo-akhi-erba.

No. IV.

1. The Moon out of its reckoned-time is seen.
2. The tariff is small.
3. The twelfth day with the Sun it is seen, and
4. contrary to their calculated time the Moon and the Sun
5. with one another are seen.
6. A strong enemy ravages the land.
7. The king of Akkad under the enemy is placed.
8. The twelfth day with the Sun (the Moon) is seen; and
9. the twelfth day it is seen; and evil to Akkad,
10. prosperity to Elam and Phœnicia.
11. Evil to Akkad it (is).
12. (The report) of Balaśi.

The months were called after the signs of the Zodiac, and each was dedicated to some god. The following is a list:—

1. Nisannu	[March]	was dedicated	to	Anu and Bel.
2. Airu	[April]	,,	,,	Ea.
3. Sivanu	[May]	,,	,,	Sin.
4. Duzu	[June]	,,	,,	Adar.
5. Abu	[July]	,,	,,	"The Queen of the Bow."
6. Ululu	[August]	,,	,,	Istar.
7. Tasritu	[September]	,,	,,	Samas.

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8.	Araḫ-samna	[October]	was dedicated to	Merodach.
9.	Kislimu	[November]	,, ,,	Nergal.
10.	Ṭabitu	[December]	,, ,,	Papsukal.
11.	Sabatu	[January]	,, ,,	Rimmon.
12.	Addaru	[February]	,, ,,	The seven great gods.
	Araḫu-maḫru (the intercalary month).			

The Akkadians invented the calendar, and for their time were great astronomers. They built observatories in all the great cities, and reports like the above were regularly sent to the king. They were the inventors of the Zodiac. They found out that the sun was "spotted," and they knew of comets. During the reign of Nebuchadnezzar I. it is related that "a comet arose whose body shone like the day, and from its brilliant body a tail like the sting of a scorpion extended." They were able to calculate eclipses, and had long lists of them, for they were supposed to portend future events. There are fragments of two planispheres in the British Museum with figures and calculations inscribed upon them. The ecliptic was called the "yoke of the sky," and the Milky Way "the long road;" such was the wisdom of the Babylonians.

Geology was represented among the Babylonians by lists of stones, earth, etc., and Geography by lists of countries and lands. From a tablet brought to the Museum in 1881 it appears that their cardinal points were rather different from ours, our N.W. being their N., S.W. their W., S.E. their S., and N.E. their E. Natural history was represented by lists of animals, insects, and birds, drawn up in two languages. The history given in the former pages of this book is derived from their own records. If we except the physical sciences, it can easily be proved that the greater part of our learning was known to them.

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Another very important branch of Babylonian literature was formed by the magic tablets. There were whole series of these in their libraries, arranged upon shelves, and each tablet bore as a colophon its number in the series and the first words of the first line. The Babylonian must have passed his life in perpetual terror of evil spirits and demons, and so we find addresses to every kind and sort of spirit to avert evil from the reciter. There is a large incantation tablet in the Kouyunjik Gallery of the British Museum which gives a number of formulas ending with "O spirit of heaven, mayest thou exorcise ; O spirit of earth, mayest thou exorcise." The sentences implore protection against the evil spirits which cause sickness in the different parts of the body. The first three paragraphs entreat the compassion of the spirits of heaven and earth generally, the fourth prays the spirits to avert the ulcer spirit, the fifth is against the "sickness of the head and disease of the heart," the sixth is against the evil eye and evil breast, the seventh entreats the spirits of heaven and earth to exorcise the demons which were supposed to attack children ; and so on to the end of the tablet. Two other paragraphs are worthy of note, the sixteenth and twenty-seventh ; the former directs the placing of the god of a sick man before the rising sun, or the figure of a propitious bull, to free him by its influence from his sickness ; the latter prays to Ninkigal, or Proserpine, to expel the evil spirit from the sick man, and to put a beneficent one in its place. The tablet concludes finally with "the sick man by an offering of grace and peace, like refined copper, becoming pure. May the Sun-god give that man life. Marduk, eldest son of the abyss, peace and happiness be to thee. O spirit of heaven, mayest thou exorcise ; O spirit of earth, mayest thou exorcise."

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The belief that evil spirits took possession of human bodies was current in our Lord's time, for we read,[1] "And in the synagogue there was a man which had a spirit of an unclean devil;" and other allusions to this demoniacal possession are scattered throughout the Bible. In Isaiah's time, too, the belief was prevalent, and these baneful spirits were supposed to dwell particularly in desert places. Isaiah says,[2] "The screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest." The word translated "screech owl" is *lilith*, and the same word is found in Babylonian; it means the "night spirit," which was especially malignant and harmful. The Rabbis have many stories about her.

Another very important branch of Babylonian literature is formed by the "contract tablets." The Semite was always a trader, and was always able to lend money or produce to his more needy brother or foreigner. The historical documents, indeed, reveal the immense wars undertaken by the various kings, and the other tablets record their learning, either actual or theoretical; but these tablets open to our view the very innermost workings of their commercial business. One serious drawback exists, and that is that very many of the words are quite unknown to us. Contract tablets are of all shapes, oval, oblong, square; their colour varies, sometimes black, then brown, dark and light, and all intermediate shades. Sometimes they are baked, often they are not. We have many thousands in our national collection, as many as 5,000 were unpacked at one time. They record loans of money and produce, the sale of houses, fields, and wheat, marriage deeds and dowries, sales of slaves, notices of loans paid, promissory notes, and all sorts and

[1] Luke iv. 33. [2] Is. xxxiv. 14.

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kinds of traffic carried on by one Babylonian with another. At times we find that the contract tablet has been placed in a clay envelope, and upon the outside a copy of the contract within has been inscribed. There is in the British Museum a fine collection of these, which belong to a period as far back as 2400 B.C. On the one side (obverse) the contract and contracting parties' names are stated, on the other (reverse) comes the list of witnesses, and at the bottom follows the date, the name of the king and his country. Often these tablets bear impressions of the seals of the witnesses; the poor impressed the mark of his nail. Often we find signatures in Phœnician, sometimes the reverse is in Greek, and upon one tablet we find some curious writing which at present no one has been able to make out. As the tablet is interesting we give a translation of it :—

1. E-sagila-lissi son of Nabu-kuṣur-su, Bel-balaṭ-śu
2. son of Nidintum, and Ina-E-sagila-lilbir son of Bel-ederu
3. in the joy of their heart, Nana-Babili-sininni, their servant
4. whose right hand with the name of Ina-E-sagila-lilbir the slave dealer
5. son of Bel-ederu, is inscribed, for one maneh eight shekels of silver
6. refined, for the price complete to Urmanū
7. son of Lisir they have given; the money one maneh eight shekels of silver
8. refined, the price of Nana-Babili-sininni, the servant of the men
9. E-sagila-lissi, Bel-balaṭ-śu and Ina-E-sagila-lilbir
10. by the hands of Urmanū have received.
11. In the day when a claim upon Nana-Babili-sininni

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12. the servant of the men, is made, E-sagila-lissi
13. Bel-balaṭ-śu, and Ina-E-sagila-lilbir,
14. the slave dealer, the amount (?) have collected (?) and
15. to Urmanū shall give.

REVERSE.

16. Witnesses : Bel-upaḫḫir son of Bel-balaṭ-su ;
17. Bel-Iddin, son of Ikubu ; Nabu-iddannu,
18. son of Nabu-balaṭ-su ; Sua, the son of Nadin ;
19. Nabu-balaṭ-su, son of Umas ; Bel-eres, son of Samsaa.

[Here follows the line of unknown characters.]

21. Ea-epus, the scribe, son of Nabu-ludda ; Babylon,
22. month Adar, day eleventh, year 23rd Artaxerxes king of countries.

That is to say, Urmanū bought the female slave Nana-Babili-sininni for one maneh and eight shekels of refined silver from the three men E-sagila-lissi, Bel-balaṭ-su, and Ina-E-sagila-lilbir ; and a clause is inserted whereby it is provided that if anyone claims the slave Urmanū shall receive compensation.

The above and the following translations are specimens of slave contracts, which were made by my colleague, Mr. Theo. G. Pinches.

1. Šum-iddina, son of Šulâ, son of the priest of Gula,
2. in the joy of his heart, Itti-Bêl-gûzu
3. his servant, whose left wrist to the name of Meškitu
4. his wife, is inscribed, for one (and) two-thirds of a mana
5. of silver by the one shekel piece coined, for the complete price to
6. Iddina-Nabû, son of Nabû-êpiš-sin, son of the blacksmith

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7. he has given. The day when a claim upon this slave
8. be made, Šum-iddina the slave shall forfeit, and
9. to Iddina-Nabû shall give. The silver, one and two-thirds
10. of a mana which is by the one shekel piece, coined, the price of
11. Itti-Bêl-gûzu his servant, Šum-iddina by the hands of Iddina-Nabû has received.
12. Witnesses: Bêl-iddin, son of Nabû-rimanni, son of
13. Sin-naṣīr; Nabû-usur-napištû, son of Nabû-šum-êsir
14. son of Nabunnâa; Nabû-sab-šunu, son of Bêl-âḫî-irba, son of Tunâ;
15. Kiribtu, son of Liširu, son of Bêlu-Ušumgallu;
16. Kuddâa, son of Marduk-irba, son of Sin-kudurri-uṣur;
17. Irba-Marduk, son of Gula-zir-têpuš, son of the priest of Gulá;
18. Nabû-ûḫî-šu son of Nabû-kissir, son of Ilu-damur;
19. Âḫê-iddin, son of Bêli-šunu, son of Egibi;
20. Bêl-temenna (?) son of Šum-ukûr, son of Bêl-êdem;
21. Nergal-balit, son of Arad-Gula, son of Irani;
22. Nabu-bullitsu, son of Basia, son of Siatu; Bel-iddin,
23. son of Nabu-usitik-urri, son of the Chaldean. In the dwelling
24. of Meskitu, daughter of Bel-lumur, son of Rammanu-sea, wife of Sum-iddina,
25. the seller of the slave. Bel-idannu, the scribe, son of Buzuzu, Babylon, month Adar, day 16th, year 20th,
27. Darius, king of Babylon, king of countries.

In Babylon during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar there lived a man called Egibi, and he was the founder of a firm of bankers who made it their especial business to carry on the commerce of the city. We have an enormous number of the documents of this firm,

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beginning with Nebuchadnezzar the Great, and going on for some five generations or so to the time of Darius. The tablets are dated month after month and year after year, and thus they afford us a sure method of fixing the chronology of that very uncertain period of history. There is a small contract tablet in the Museum at Zürich, discovered by Dr. Oppert, dated in the 5th year of Pacorus, king of Persia, who reigned about the time of Domitian. There is a little doubt about the reading of one of the characters in the name, but if it is correct, it will prove that the use of cuneiform did not fall into disuse until after the Christian Era. I give here Dr. Oppert's translation of the curious little document :—

Owed 40 tetradrachma.
Larassib, son of Bel-akhe-irib will pay into the hands of
Zir-Idin,
son of Hablai, in the month Iyar, 40 tetradrachma, in the
temple of the Sun, in Babylon.
Witnesses : Urrame, son of Puya ; Allit, son of Airad ;
Kistar, son of Sinam ;
Zir-Idin, son of Hablai, writer.
Babylon, in the mouth of Kislev, the 3rd day, in the 5th
of Pikharis, King of Persia.

In the British Museum, however, there are tablets dated in the 218th year of the era of Arsaces, that is, B.C. 29.

Some have tried to show that Egibi is the Babylonian form of Jacob, which would lead one to suspect the family to have been Jews ; but this is not certain at present. The following is a copy of one of the contract tablets in Babylonian characters dated in the 6th century B.C. :—

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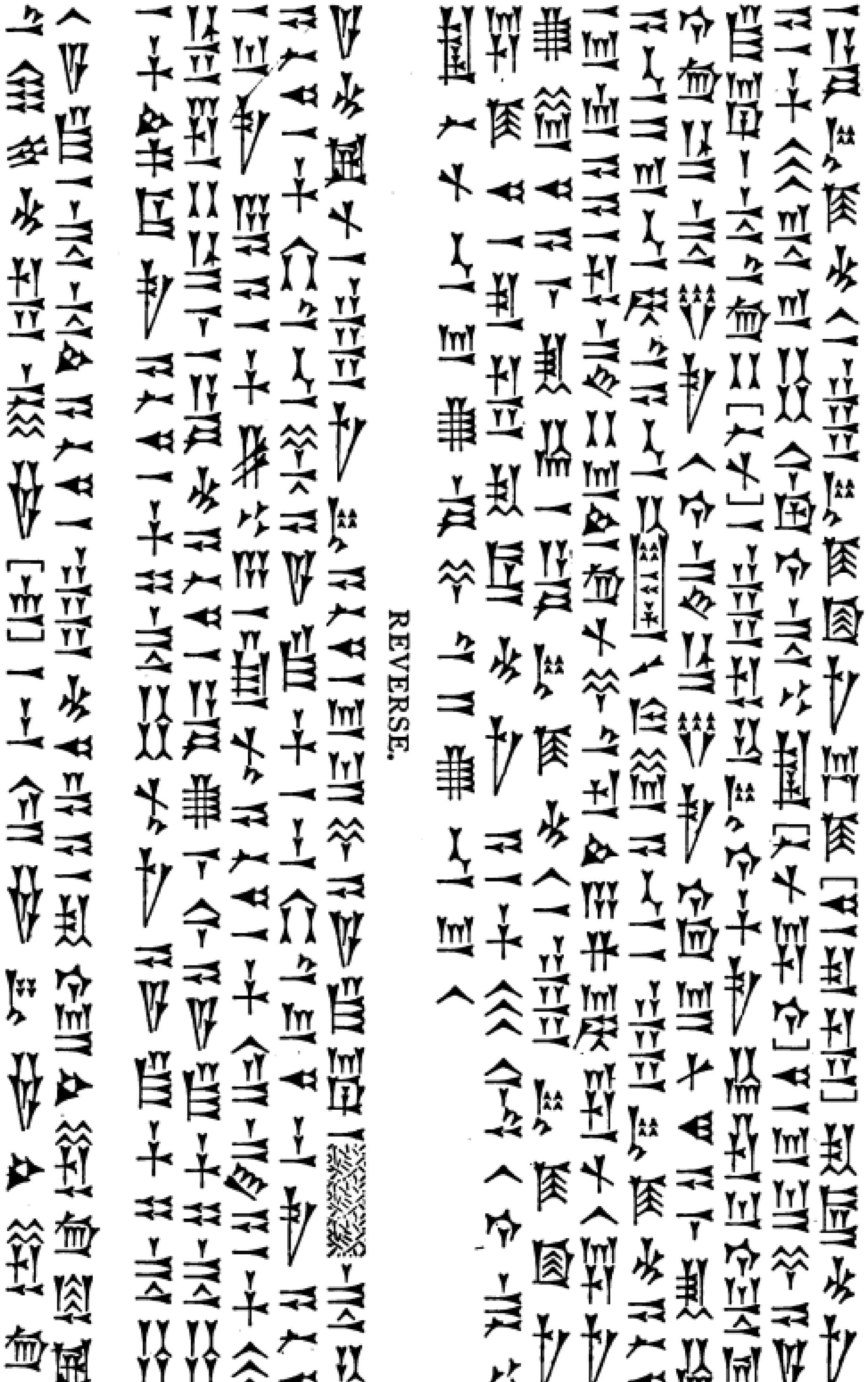

74—6—1. OBVERSE.

REVERSE.

OBVERSE.

Literally translated, it reads :

1. Bel-ḫai-iddin and Nabu-aḫi-bul-lit the sons of E-sagili-suma-epus
2. the son of Sin-damak and the woman Rimat their mother, daughter
3. of Suzub son of the "priest of the altar," in the joy of their heart,
4. Nabu-e-du-aḫi, the woman Bani-tum-umma his wife,
5. the woman Kīsrinni and the woman Gisinni his sister(s)
6. in all four people, for two manehs of silver for the price
7. Complete to Nabu-aḫi-iddin the son of Sula
8. the son of Egibi has given, *bu-ut ši-ḫi-i pa-kir-ra-nu*
9. and *mar ban-u-tu* of the people Bel-aḫi-iddin
10. and Nabu-aḫi-bul-lit the sons of E-sagili-suma-epus
11. the son of Sin-damak and the woman Rimat their mother have brought
12. one *bīt* double they bring.

REVERSE.

1. Witnesses: Nabu-epus-aḫi the son of Suzub son of the altar priest
2. . . . .-ridu the son of Marduk-naṣir the son of the priest of the god,
3. Marduk-basu-anni the son of Bani-ya the son of Ellat-nahid
4. the son of Dup-zir the son of Nergal-ukin the son of "Sin heard my prayers."
5. Bel-iddin the son of Bel-sibsi the priest of the god Zariku
6. Rimmon-ibni the son of Zariku-zir-epus the son of the priest of the god Zariku

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7. the scribe Ri-mut the son of Nabu-suma-iscun the son of Gaḥul
8. Babylon, month Elul, day 16th the year of accession
9. Neriglissar king of Babylon.

The passages in italics are difficult to understand, and the above will serve to show the curious idiom of this class of documents. It should be stated that these tablets were kept in jars. The amount of interest charged for the loan of money, silver, iron, etc., was either three, four, or five per cent.

CONTRACT TABLET, 17TH YEAR OF NABONIDUS.[1]

11 manas 18 drachmas of silver, a deposit, sealed and assured, the price of the house of Bel-rimanni, the son of Mušezib-Bel, son of Da-Marduk, which Bel-aḥe-iddin, the son of Marduk-zir-ibru, son of Egibi, buys; and this sum of money, 11 manas 18 drachmas of silver, is entrusted to Nabu-aḥe-iddin, son of Egibi. The owner of the house will remain in possession as long as Bel-aḥe-iddin, the purchaser of the house, whose son is dead, does not actually take possession of the house, for this deposit (the option shall last) for four years.

After the death of Bel-aḥe-iddin and Nabu-aḥe-iddin, to whom the deposit is entrusted, Bel-rimanni (shall receive) his deposit. Itti-Marduk-balaṭ, the son of Nabu-aḥe-iddin (shall repay) it, but if he, the actual holder, does not give back nor render the deposit, they shall bring him before the tribunal of the chief magistrate and judges, to Zirya, the intendant (?) of the temple Saggal, and he will say thus: the inheritance of the property,

[1] J. N. Strassmaier, Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch., Vol. vii., pt. 3, p. 407.

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including the deposit, belongs to his (*i.e.*, the testator's) son ; Zirya will decide, that he does not know this kind of inheritance of the testator's property, nor about the right of taking possession of it, as if the deposit would belong to the son. Itti-Marduk-balaṭ will render it with his seal in presence of Kiribtu, the magistrate, Edir-Bel, the magistrate, Nirgal-aḥ-uṣur, and Ziki-ukin, the judges, and will give it to Bel-rimanni.

Da-Marduk, the scribe, son of Banu-Śin-ilu.

The royal city of Babylon, in the month Elul, the 5th day, the 17th year of Nabonidus, king of Babylon.

The seal of Nergal-aḥ-uṣur, the judge (the impression is rather effaced) ; the seal of Zikir-ukin, the judge (represents a priest standing before a large bird, over which is a star).

The seal of Kiribtu (a priest standing before an altar, over which on the top of a pole a cock is seated).

The seal of Edir-Bel, the magistrate; a priest standing before an animal seated on an altar, behind which two poles are standing.

Sometimes Babylonian legal documents were inscribed on large stones, which then formed landmarks. Such a stone is generally inscribed on one side with the agreement, names of witnesses, and a whole string of curses on the person who shall dare to move it, and on the other are figured in relief various gods and signs.

The Michaux stone is a fair specimen of this kind of document, and I therefore give Dr. Oppert's translation of it :—

Column I.

Twenty hin of corn is the quantity for seeding an *arura*. The field is situated near the town of Kar-Nabu,

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on the bank of the river Mekaldan, depending on the property of KILNAMANDU.

The field is measured as follows:—Three stades in length towards the East, in the direction of the town of Bagdad; three stades in length towards the West, adjoining the house of TUNAMISSAH; one stade fifty fathoms in breadth towards the North, adjoining the property of KILNAMANDU; one stade fifty fathoms up in the South, adjoining the property of KILNAMANDU.

SIRUSUR, son of KILNAMANDU, gave it for all future days to DUR-SARGINAITI, his daughter, the bride of TAB-ASAP-MARDUK, son of INA-E-SAGGATU-IRBU (the pretended), who wrote this; and TAB-ASAP-MARDUK, son of INA-E-SAGGATU-IRBU, who wrote this in order to perpetuate without interruption the memory of this gift, and commemorated on this stone the will of the great gods and the god SERAH.

COLUMN II.

Whosoever in the process of time, among the brothers, the sons, the family, the men and women, the servants both male and female, of the house of KILNAMANDU, either a foreigner, or a guest, or whosoever he may be (or anyone else), who will destroy this field, who will venture to take away the boundary-stone, or will vindicate it: whether he consecrate this field to a god, or earn it for his superior, or claim it for himself, or change the extent, the surface, or the limits, that he reaps new harvests (crops); or who will say of the field with its measures, "There is no granter;" whether he call forth malediction and hostility on the tablets; or establish on it anyone other who change these curses, in swearing: "The head is not the head;" and in asserting: "There

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is no evil eye;" whosoever will carry elsewhere those tablets; or will throw them into the waters; will bury them in the earth; will hide them under stones; will burn them with fire, will alter what is written on them, will confine them into a place where they might not be seen; that man shall be cursed:

May the gods ANU, EL, HEA, the great goddess, the great gods, inflict upon him the utmost contumely, extirpate his name, annihilate his family.

May MARDUK, the great Lord of eternity without end, bind him in fetters which cannot be broken.

May SAMAS, the great Judge of heaven and earth, judge his unpunished misdeeds, and surprise him in flagrant deeds.

May SIN, the brilliant (*Nannar*) who dwells in the sacred heavens, clothe him in leprosy as in a garment, and give him up to the wild beasts that wander in the outsides of the town.

May ISTAR, the Queen of heaven and earth, carry him off, and deliver him for vengeance to the god and the king.

May NINIP, son of the zenith, son of EL the sublime, take away his lands, funds, and limits.

May GULA, the great Queen, the wife of NINIP, infiltre into his bowels a poison which cannot be pushed out, and may he void blood and pus like water.

May BIN, the great Guardian of heaven and earth, the son of the warrior ANU, inundate his field.

May SERAH destroy his firstborn; may he torture his flesh and load his feet with chains.

May NABU, the supreme Watcher, strike him with misfortune and ruin, and blast his happiness that he not obtain it, in the wrath of his face.

May all the great gods whose names are recorded on

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this tablet, curse him with irrevocable malediction, and scatter his race even to the last days.

The class of tablets inscribed with omens is very interesting, and reveals many of the strange ideas and beliefs of the Babylonians so long since passed away. Omens were drawn from births, dreams, animals, birds, and geometrical figures. The following are specimens:—

(1.) If a dog to the palace goes, and on a bed lies down, that palace none with his hand takes.

If a dog into a temple enters, the gods to the country grant no favour.

If a black dog into a temple enters, the foundation of that temple is not stable.

(2.) When a woman bears a child and its jaws are wanting, the days of the prince are long; that house is destroyed.

When a woman bears a child and its lower jaw is wanting, the produce of the country for a year is not brought down.

There have come down to us from the old Babylonians many isolated tablets, the description of which would occupy too much space, and which when described would only interest the specialist. The tablets which interest us most are of course the historical, and as their contents (as far as they relate to Babylonia) are given in the chapter on Babylonia, a description of their form will suffice here. The Assyrian kings wrote the annals of their wars and victories in lines across the huge sculptures which adorned their palaces. Assyrian and Babylonian kings were fond, too, of having brief notices stamped upon the bricks of their palaces; but the usual form the royal historical documents took was that of a

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prism, or "cylinder," as it is technically called. The large ones have usually six sides, but the finest one of Assurbanipal has ten. Some of these documents take the form of a barrel, on which are two or more columns. When a king built a palace it was customary for him to bury one of these in each of the four corners; and it is owing to this that we have so many perfect ones remaining. Occasionally they are solid. That of Assurbanipal mentioned above has a curious history. Once, when men of the great excavator, Mr. Rassam, were digging, they came to a stop, for they had dug some time and had found nothing. They asked, "Shall we go on?" Mr. Rassam said, "Yes, clear that little pile away." They began to do this, and found the pile to consist of bricks. On opening it they found the noble cylinder containing 1,300 lines standing upright; it is the finest in the British Museum. These cylinders are of wonderful value. It was a fragment of a cylinder of Sargon which proved beyond all doubt that Sargon went and besieged Ashdod, as Isaiah had said in his twentieth chapter. Historical records are also written upon tablets, like the rest of the literature.

A small but remarkably interesting class of literature is composed of the so-called "Izdubar Legends." The world has already taken great interest in the "Deluge tablet" which gives the account of the Flood, and this tablet is one of the series. There were twelve tablets in this series, fragments of five or six of which are in the British Museum. Though they are written in Assyrian, yet the run of thought and many of the expressions give proofs that they are only translations from the very late Akkadian. The story of the Flood is told sometimes in the third, and sometimes in the first person, and the same

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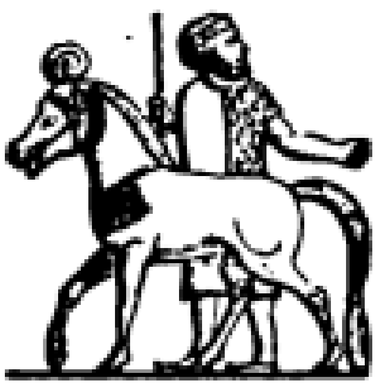
idea is given occasionally in different language. There existed Babylonian copies of this story, for there are fragments of them to be seen in the British Museum, giving important variant readings. Every one knows how long tradition lives in the Orient, and how it is handed down from generation to generation. Who shall say, then, how long these stories were current before they were written down?



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CHAPTER IX.

THE BABYLONIAN RELIGION.

Babylonian belief in spirits.—Their pure belief degenerated.—The Greeks borrowed from their myths.—Difficulty of reducing the religion into a system.—Babylonian Trinity, Anu, Ea, and Bel.—Marduk, the son of Ea.—Marduk, the saviour of mankind.—Ea taught men learning and knowledge.—Ea received through Marduk the prayers of man.—Istar, the "lady of war."—Her two forms.—Her search after Tammuz in Hades.—Her address to Esarhaddon.—Hymn to Istar.—Extract therefrom.—Ea the supreme god, the originator and maker of all things.—The ship of Ea.—His weapons and power.—Sun-god worship.—Tablet representing worship thereof.—Hymns to the sun.—Sin, the moon-god, Ninip, Nergal, Nebo, and Rimmon.—The seven evil spirits.—Babylonian hell and heaven.—Enjoyments of the Babylonian after death.—Description of hell, the "land of no return."—Tiamat.—Her rebellion against the gods.—Marduk, the son of Ea, sent to do battle with her.—His armour.—The fight.—Paraphrase of the Babylonian account.—Tiamat, the prototype of the "old serpent," the devil.—Temptation of Adam.—Babylonian seal giving representation of it.—Babylonian account of the Creation.—The penitent sinner.

WITH our present knowledge it is most difficult to give anything like a perfect account of the religious views of the Babylonians. All that can be done is to gather together the statements made in the texts about the gods, and draw our own conclusions; whether they are right or wrong, texts discovered in the future will decide. The greater portion of the texts relating to the mythology and religion of the Babylonians is in the Assyrian Ninevite character, and these of course are copies of older tablets. As is well known, the great literary king, Assur-

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banipal, caused tablets of all kinds to be copied for his library at Nineveh: it is thought as much for political reasons as for the sake of learning. Babylon was a city in his time hoary with age, and thither we imagine people flocked to learn the wisdom that was their glorious heritage from bygone generations. In Assurbanipal's time his brother, Samullu-suma-ukina, was king of Babylon, tributary of course to him; but he rebelled, and after some difficulty Assurbanipal subdued him and took the city again. It is extremely probable, then, that he caused all these tablets to be copied and taken to his city Nineveh, that henceforth there should be no need of the learned to resort to the aged city of Babylon, and there, together with the priests, to foment other rebellions.

At whatever period the Babylonians formulated their religion, they started with pure and good ideas; at first they began by worshipping the *spirit* of objects in nature, but in latter days the esoteric view of a god was lost, and the utmost confusion prevailed. Their worship gradually degenerated into the lowest and worst possible forms of nature worship. It is certain that the greatest Greek philosophers borrowed largely from the old Babylonian mythology and philosophy. The first trouble that besets any attempt to reduce the religion to order is the enormous number of gods enumerated on the lists. M. Renouf, speaking of the Egyptian Pantheon, once said that he tried to count the number of gods in it, but they were so numerous that he gave it up. The same may be said of the Babylonian Pantheon. At one time one god was a greater favourite with the nation than another, and the cult of the god or gods which the old Babylonians preferred in the early days

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of their empire frequently fell into disuse and neglect in after times. The most important ennead among the Babylonians was as follows :—

Male Element.	*Female Element.*	*Offspring.*
Anu	Anat	Rimmon.
Ea	Damkina	Samas.
Bel	Beltis	Sin.

The oldest Babylonian Semitic inscription that we have, namely, that of Sargon I., B.C. 3800, mentions the Sun-god of Sippara. The very early bricks and cones speak often of the god Bel, who appears to have been worshipped to the last days of the empire. He was one of the great Trinity of Anu, Ea, and Bel ; their wives, or feminine elements, were called Nana, Beltis, and Damkina; and Jeremiah[1] says, "Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces," which goes to prove that his worship was wide-spread and very important among the Babylonians, and his downfall the signal of the destruction of the city. He is mentioned by Isaiah,[2] and again in Jeremiah.[3] He was the Jupiter of the Romans, and the Zeus of the Greeks. There appears to be a confusion between Bel and Merodach (the names occur together on a tablet which applies numbers to the gods), and the temple dedicated to Merodach (as we know by the inscriptions) is the temple of the Belus of the Greeks.

But Merodach himself now claims attention. He was the son of Ea, the "god of the abyss." He was the lord of life and light, and the greatest and best names were given to him. With the Oriental fire has ever been the object of adoration, and as the signs which form his

[1] Jer. l. 2. [2] Is. xlvi. 1. [3] Jer. li. 44.

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name mean either the "circle," or "radiance of the sun," it is not hard to see that the god was a solar hero. His old name meant, "the god who orders good for mankind." His worship goes far back into the early days of Babylonia, for the hymns addressed to him which have come down to us are written in the ancient Akkadian, and our translations are made generally from the Assyrian translation appended. His father Ea was the personification of all knowledge and learning; the omnipresent and omnipotent Marduk (Merodach) was the god "who went before Ea," and was the healer and mediator for mankind. He revealed to mankind the knowledge of Ea; in all incantations he is invoked as the god "mighty to save" against evil and ill. He was the healer of men troubled with evil spirits and diseases, he taught man how to exorcise demons, and he offered to his father Ea the prayers of penitent man. He was, perhaps, the "brightest and best" of the conceptions of the Babylonians, for his sole duty in the Pantheon was to show mercy to mankind. To the last days of the empire his name was revered and his temples kept in order. His wife was called Zirpanitum.

Another lofty conception was that of the goddess Istar, "the lady of battles." Nineveh boasted an Istar; and Arbela also. She was the spirit or goddess of the planet Venus; and a debased form of her worship was carried on by the Jews, who called her Ashtoreth.[1] Her husband was called Tammuz, and she went to seek him in the "land of no return." An allusion is made to him in Ezek. viii. 14, where it says, "There sat women weeping for Tammuz." It was the good goddess Istar that appeared to Assurbanipal in a dream the night before a battle, and

[1] 1 Kings xi. 33.

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told him that he should be victorious. The king sacrificed to the goddess Istar of Arbela, and he made a prayer to her in which he recalled to her mind the benefits that she had done to his father Esarhaddon; he told her that the enemy Teumman had spread out his forces against him, and then entreated her to crush him and overcome him in battle. That night a seer slept and had a vision, and he went to the king saying, "Istar of Arbela drew near me surrounded with glory on the right hand and on the left. She held a bow in her hand with the string stretched by an arrow pointed for battle. Her face was fixed, and she was in pain concerning thee, even as a mother bringing forth. Istar the beloved of the gods has decreed a decree saying thus, Whither thou goest I will go; I will guard thee, and I will cause thee to obtain the desire of thy heart. Before thee the enemy shall not stand in battle, neither shall he oppose thy steps."

And farther back, when the father of this same king, Esarhaddon, was in trouble and grief because of the war brought against him by his brothers, the goddess Istar spake to him by the oracle of Arbela, saying:

"Fear not, O Esarhaddon,
I am, (as) Bel, thy strength
I will ease the supports of thy heart.
Each of the sixty great gods my strong ones
with his life will guide thee.
the Moon-god at thy right hand, the Sun-god at thy left.
Upon mankind trust not,[1] bend thine eyes upon me,
I am Istar of Arbela."

[1] Compare Psalm cxlvi. 3; cxviii. 8, 9.

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And again:

"Mighty legions which devise against me,
before thy feet
I cut them in pieces.
Thou, thou,
art king of kings."

During the reign of Esarhaddon a very beautiful little tablet was made which we now have in the British Museum, its number is S. 954. It contains a hymn to the goddess Istar, and is written in the two languages Akkadian and Assyrian. The reading of some of the lines of the "obverse" is difficult and doubtful, but the "reverse" is sufficiently clear to show the meaning of it, and it will serve as a specimen of the best hymns of this kind. The translation is that of my friend Professor Sayce:—

1. Thou who as the axis of heaven dawnest, in the dwellings of the earth her name revolves; my begetter.
2. As Queen of heaven above and below may she be invoked; my begetter.
3. The mountains fiercely she hurls into the deep; my begetter.
4. As to the mountains, their goodly stronghold (art) thou, their mighty lock art thou; my begetter.
5. May thy heart rest; may thy liver be magnified.
6. O Lord Anu, the mighty, may thy heart rest.
7. O Lord, the mighty Prince (*lit.* mountain) Bel, may thy liver be magnified.
8. Istar, the Lady of heaven, may thy heart rest.
9. O Lady, Queen of heaven, may thy liver (be magnified).

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10. O Lady, Queen of the House of heaven, may thy heart (rest).
11. O Lady, Queen of the land of Erech, may thy liver (be magnified).
12. O Lady, Queen of the land of the four rivers of Erech, may thy heart (rest).
13. O Lady, Queen of Mountain of the World, may thy liver (be magnified).
14. O Lady, Queen of Temple of the Resting-place of the World, may thy heart (rest).
15. O Lady, Queen of Babylon, may thy liver (be magnified).
16. O Lady, Queen of the Memorial of Nana, may thy heart (rest).
17. O Queen of the Temple, Queen of the gods, may thy liver (be magnified).
18. Prayer of the heart to Istar.

A cuneiform tablet mentions an "Istar of Erech," but very little is known of her. The sky-god Anu is generally mentioned among a number of gods, but no especial worship appears to have been paid to him.

Ea was another god of great importance in the Babylonian Pantheon. He was the father of the mighty Merodach, and to the Babylonians was the personification of wisdom and secret knowledge. He was the soul that pervaded all, which animated all, and he is often invoked in the bilingual hymns as the "spirit of earth." He had no father, but was self-begotten, and perpetually renewed himself from the watery element which formed his home, for he is always called "the lord of the abyss" or deep. He was the god that knew how to frustrate the powers of the demons and spirits, for he knew their secrets; and

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by the intervention of no other god could their attacks be warded off. In a tablet containing warnings to the king against injustice Ea fills the place of avenger, for we are told, "if the king avenges not according to the law of his country, the god Ea, the king of destinies, is hostile to his destiny and replaces him by another." On the other hand, if the king avenges according to the writing of the god Ea, the great gods seat him in stability and the praise of justice. Together with his wife, Damkina, he was the originator of all created moving things; he was "the spirit of the earth," and Damkina was the substance; her name means "the lady of the great earth," and she was the personification of the mass of the earth. It has been said that his name means "habitation," *i.e.*, the dwelling-place of created things, and so he has been compared with the Noah of the Bible. The Babylonian hymns attribute to him a ship "unparalleled by fate," in which he sailed over the sea to the help of his son Marduk when he was fighting Tiamat. It was in this ship that Ea saved Sisithrus from the flood, as we are told in the account of it. Among other attributes of Ea we find him called a warrior, and he was furnished with armour made of all sorts of precious stones. His principal weapon was one with "seven rays and fifty faces, which turned every way destroying the bodies of the fighters," which reminds us of the "flaming sword which turned every way" mentioned in Gen. iii. 24. The serpent is one of his forms, and he was represented as having seven heads.

The worship of Samas, the Sun-god, was widespread and his votaries numerous. He was called "the king of judgment," the son of Ea; his wives' names were Malkit, Gula and Anunit. The cities in which his worship was particularly favoured were Larsa or Senkereh,

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and Sippara in Babylon, where he was associated with Anunit, Marduk, and Zirpanitum. In the tablet of warnings to kings alluded to above we find it stated that if the king smites the son of the city of Sippara and gives him to another, the Sun-god, who judges heaven and earth, shall appoint another judge in his country and a just prince and a just judge instead of unjust ones. This agrees with his title of "king of judgment." His worship was very old, and goes back to a time when the great powers of nature were worshipped. The "Sun-god of Sippara" was evidently a well-known deity in the time of Sargon, B.C. 3800, for he mentions this god and no other. One of his truest and best votaries was Nebobaladan, the king of Babylon, who began to reign about B.C. 900. There is a fine tablet in the British Museum made by the order of this king, which contains six columns of beautifully executed Babylonian writing, and also a picture of the worship of the Sun-god. It is figured on the opposite page. The god is seated upon a square seat (having carvings of two figures on one side) set in a pillar-supported porch, and holding in his hand a ring and a short rod. Above is written "the crown[1] of the Sun-god, the . . . . of the Sun-god," and above this are three circles, which represent the new moon, the Sun, and Istar or Venus. Two lines of writing run above the roof which read "the Moon-god, the Sun-god and Istar in . . . . . ."[2] Before the pillar stands a stool with legs supporting a figure of the disk of the sun. It appears to be supported by cords which are held in the

[1] *I.e.*, disk. This may be also read "the disk of the sun-god and the rays from his eyes."

[2] The meanings of the words which occur here on the tablet are not known.

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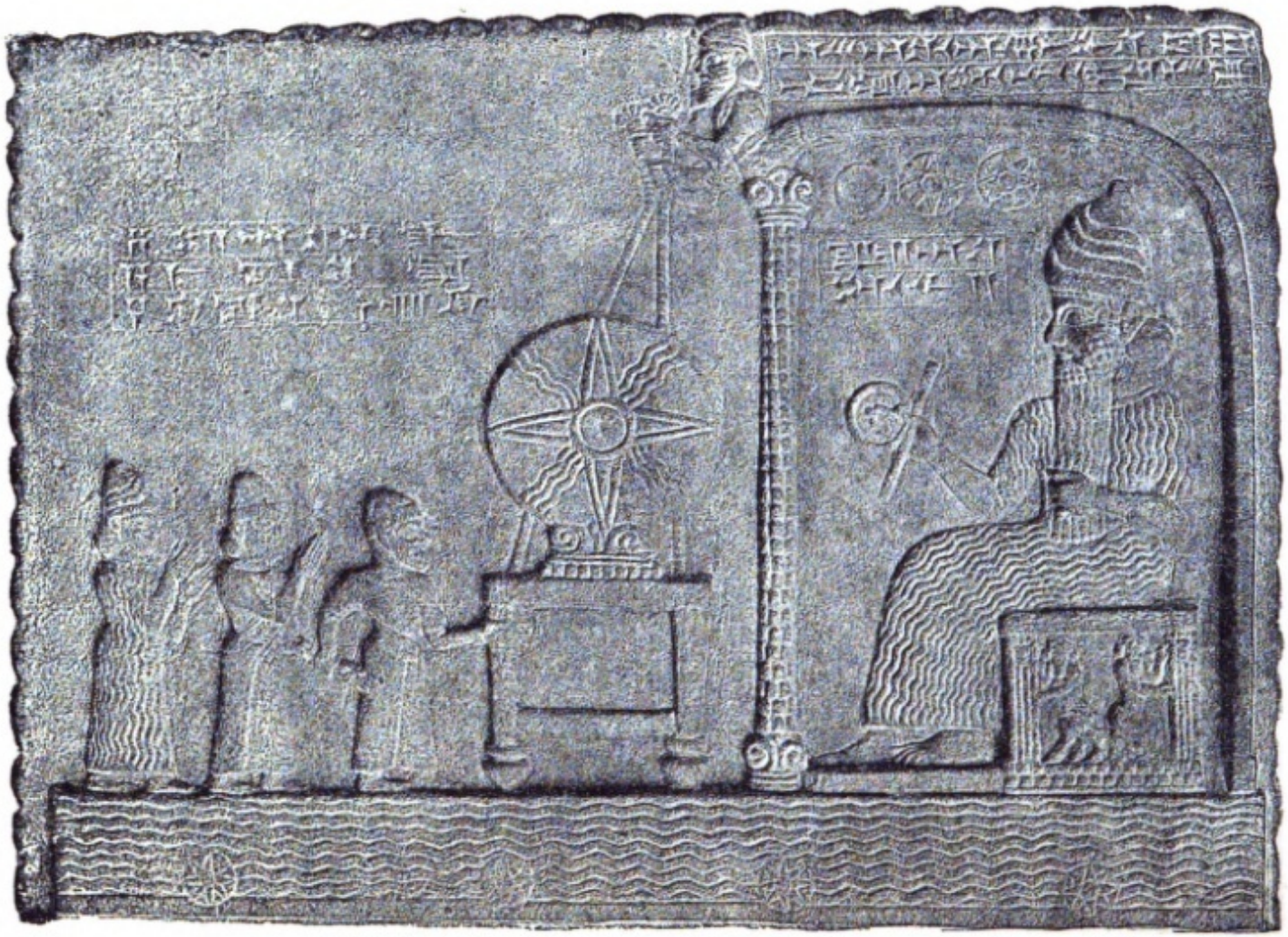

Scene from the so-called "Sun-god Tablet," representing priests and king adoring the Sun's disk or image. About B.C. 900.

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hands of two attendant spirits by the roof. Three figures stand with their faces towards the disk: the first, a priest, is holding the stool by his left hand while with his right he grasps the left hand of the second figure, the king, whose right hand is raised in adoration to the god. The third figure follows at a short distance with both hands raised in adoration. Above the heads of the three figures run the three lines of inscription, which read "the image of the Sun-god, the mighty lord, the dweller in the Temple of Parra (or Bara) which is within Sippara."

Hymns to the Sun.

I.

1. Magical incantation.
2. Sun, from the foundations of heaven thou art risen;
3. thou hast unfastened the bolts of the shining skies:
4. thou hast opened the door of heaven.
5. Sun, above the countries thou hast raised thy head,
6. Sun, thou hast covered the immensity of the heavens and the terrestrial countries.

II.

1. Lord, illuminator of the darkness, who piercest the face of darkness.
2. Merciful God, who settest up those that are bowed down, who sustainest the weak.
3. Towards the light the great gods direct their glances,
4. the archangels of the abyss, every one of them, contemplate eagerly thy face.
5. The language of praise, as one word, thou directest it.
6. The host of their heads seeks the light of the Sun in the South.
7. Like a bridegroom thou restest joyful and gracious.

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8. In thy illumination thou dost reach afar to the boundaries of heaven.
9. Thou art the banner of the vast earth.
10. O God! the men who dwell afar off contemplate thee and rejoice.

Side by side with Samas, the Moon-god, Sin, held a prominent place in the Babylonian Pantheon; he was the personification of the moon, and the eldest son of Bel. Though we Westerns regard the moon as a feminine and the sun as a masculine object, the Orientals (like the Germans) held just the opposite idea, namely, that the moon is masculine and the sun feminine, for the latter is called the "lady of the world." In the Hebrew text of the Bible the sun is regarded as of common gender. The wife of the Moon-god was called Nana, but the moon is represented as a female, hence arose the idea of her hermaphrodite nature. Her chief city was Ur, and her daughter's name was Istar.

The other principal gods, Ninip, Nergal, Nebo, and Rimmon, call for little comment. Ninip was the god of the planet Saturn, and was the Hercules of the Babylonian Pantheon; he was both the son and husband of Beltis. He was, perhaps, the modern representative of the Akkadian god Nindar, "the night sun." Nergal was the god of the planet Mars, and his name forms part of the name Nergalsar-eser, *i.e.*, Nergal-sara-uṣur, "Nergal protects the king." Rimmon was the son of Anu, and the governor of heaven and earth. He represented generally the atmosphere, the storm, and the tempest, and his commonest name is the "inundator."

The god Nebo[1] was also called Nusku, and his wife was

[1] Is. xlvi. 1.

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called Tasmit. He was the god of the planet Mercury, the "lofty intelligence" and the "lord of Tablets;" his chief city was Borsippa. This god is usually mentioned (together with the goddess Tasmit) in the colophons of tablets as the being who gives "broad ears" to the king that he may understand knowledge, and the writing upon the tablets is regarded as "the secrets of Nebo."

In addition to the number of gods which the Babylonians worshipped, we find them much addicted to the belief in spirits, and this to so great an extent that the prayers and incantations against them form a very large portion of their religious literature. Every man, according to their belief, began his existence possessed of some spirit, and everything in nature had its spirit, good or bad. It was the duty, then, of a man to propitiate this spirit if bad, and if good to endeavour to make it serve him. The Babylonian saw the mass of the sun, the moon, etc., and he worshipped its spirit; but in later days this higher idea was lost, and nothing but sun worship pure and simple remained. To the Babylonian, the spirit of the overflowing river, which desolated his lands and destroyed his property, was an evil spirit, and had to be exorcised; the evil spirit which gave him pains, aches, and diseases was regarded as a devil, and was prayed against accordingly. We can trace this belief very distinctly in the Bible. In Matt. xii. 22, we read of a "dumb man possessed with a devil;" the daughter of the woman of Canaan[1] "was grievously vexed with a devil." There were "seven spirits" which the Babylonians imagined to be more wicked and deadly than any others. They were the objects of awe and

[1] Matt. xv. 22.

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terror to them. They appear to have been storm-clouds originally, and were supposed to attack the moon during an eclipse. A hymn tells us that during the eclipse of the moon, the Sun-god fled away and Istar went to the "highest heaven." The god Bel, the father of the moon, saw the attack of the evil spirits upon his son, and sent Nebo, the Mercury of the Greeks, to ask the assistance and advice of Ea, the lord of wisdom. Ea sent the lordly Merodach to do battle with these dreadful spirits, and by his fiery and brilliant armour he completely defeated them, even as he did Tiamat. These evil spirits were born and reared in the mountains of the sunset and the dawn; but, however powerful, they had no part in the hierarchy of heaven, for we read,

"Among the gods their couch they have not."

They went to the depths of the earth, and their dominion extended to highest heaven. In a large tablet containing incantations we find a description of them, and though it has been quoted often before, it appears necessary to give a translation of the part relating to them here. It reads:—

"Seven are they, seven are they!
In the abyss of the deep seven are they,
In the brightness of heaven seven are they.
In the abyss of the deep in a place was their growth.
Male they are not, female they are not.
Moreover the deep is their pathway.
Wife they have not, child is not born to them.
Law and order know they not.
Prayer and supplication hear they not.
Among the thorns of the mountain was their growth.
To Ea are they hostile.

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The throne bearers (?) of the gods are they
Disturbers in the . . . . are they set
Evil are they, baleful are they."

The Babylonian implored every spirit in heaven and earth to ward off the attack of the evil spirits from them, for they were the originators of all diseases and evils. Christ tells us of "seven other spirits"[1] which may enter a man; and we are all familiar with the story of His casting out seven devils from Mary Magdalene.[2]

There was one evil spirit which was a great terror to the Babylonian, and this was the spirit of the South-West Wind, which brought disease and death with it. There are four models of this monster in the British Museum (there is another at Paris), with huge staring eyeballs and gaunt features and lantern jaws. Amulets were worn as a protection against these spirits; and a few of these emblems of superstition have come down to us, telling us very plainly what torments these people must have suffered through terror of the monsters of their religion.

This belief was current in the early ages of the world's history; the prophets knew of it, and appealed to the nations by it; and to-day the Arab, when praying with his face towards Mecca, salaams to the right and to the left, to pacify the spirits that he imagines are present there.

Did the Babylonians know of a heaven or a hell, a place of torment for the wicked, or of a devil? We will give all the evidence we can from the inscriptions, and perhaps we shall find that their Hades was not so very far different from the Sheol, or "the pit," of the Bible, nor the devil much to be distinguished from the Satan we read of.

[1] Matt. xii. 45; Luke xi. 26. [2] Mark xvi. 9; Luke viii. 2.

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Heaven, the place where the spirits of good Babylonians reposed, was called the "land of the shining sky," and was the seat of the gods. It cannot at present be decided whether they attained the conception of one "God the Almighty," but it seems improbable, for to the last days of the duration of their kingdom, in the prayers and histories they mention more than one god. The Jews were the people who enunciated the grand idea of the unity of God.[1] In the Babylonian heaven, "the house of life," the "land of life," the warrior found his reward, for he reclined on a couch, and drank "pure drinks" together with his friends and associates. Not a strange idea for a nation that was at war with its fellows perpetually, but far, very far, from the holy conception of heaven of the prophet of the New Testament, with God for its sun, its tree of life for the healing of the nations, its pure river of water of life, where there is no more curse, nor sorrow, nor pain, nor death, and where God Himself wipes away all tears.

The Babylonian conception of hell is made known to us by a tablet which relates the descent of Istar thither in search of her lovely young husband, Tammuz. It has been stated that the same word for Hades, *i.e.*, Sheol, as that used in the Hebrew Scriptures, has been found in Babylonian texts; but this assertion has been made while the means for definitely proving it do not at present exist. The lady of the Babylonian Hades was called Nin-ki-gal, and the place itself had a river running through it, over which spirits had to cross. There was also "a porter of the waters" (which reminds us of the

[1] Deut. vi. 4: "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord;" or, according to the true translation, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is ONE."

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Charon of the Greeks), and it had seven gates. The tablet mentioned above tells us that—

1. To the land of no return, to the afar off, to regions of corruption,
2. Istar, the daughter of the Moon-god, her attention firmly
3. fixed, the daughter of the Moon-god her attention fixed
4. the house of corruption, the dwelling of the deity Irkalla (to go)
5. to the house whose entrance is without exit
6. to the road whose way is without return
7. to the house whose entrance is bereft of light
8. a place where much dust is their food, their meat mud,
9. where light is never seen, where they dwell in darkness
10. ghosts (?) like birds whirl round and round the vaults
11. over the doors and wainscoting there is thick dust.

The outer gate of this "land of no return" was strongly guarded and bolted, for the porter having refused to grant Istar admission, the goddess says—

"Open thy gate and let me enter in;
If thou openest not the gate, and I come not in,
I force the gate, the bolt I shatter,
I strike the threshold, and I cross the doors,
I raise the dead, devourers of the living,
(for) the dead exceed the living."

There is another name for Hades, the signs which form it meaning "the house of the land of the dead." A gloss gives its pronunciation as *Arali*. Such, then, is

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the Babylonian hell. It is difficult to say where they imagined their Hades to be, but it has been conjectured by some that they thought it to be in the west.[1] Whether they believed in a final judgment or not is unknown, as is likewise the principle which decided whether a man should go to the "land of the shining sky," or the "land of no return." The seven evil spirits dwelt in the deep, and there appears to be some connexion between them and the seven wicked gods which dwelt in Hades. They were probably the companions of the awful monster Tiamat, who made war against the gods, of whom we are now able to give some account.

Tiamat dwelt in the sea, and was a kindred demon of Bahu (the *Bohu* of Gen. i. 2), or disorder, and is the prototype of the "sea serpent" of to-day. Last year a piece of tablet was discovered which gave about 64 lines of the account of the conflict between her and Merodach; and the following paraphrase is made from the fragment of a tablet written in Babylonian, and two or three pieces of an Assyrian copy. The first lines open by saying that the gods had set Merodach upon his throne in the dwelling of the great ones. Then follows a kind of pæan of praise repeated thus:—

"O Merodach thou art honourable also, among the great
gods
thy destiny is unequalled, thy *sumgar*[2] is the god Anu.
O Merodach thou art honourable, among the great gods
thy fate is unequalled, thy sumgar is the god Anu."

[1] The pious Egyptian always prayed for a "happy burial in the Amenti," *i.e.*, the West; and in the Coptic versions of the New Testament this same word *amenti* is used to express "hell," or Hades.

[2] The exact meaning of the word *sumgar* is not known, but it appears to mean "protecting divinity."

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The narrative then proceeds with the statement that Marduk's command is unchangeable and unalterable, and that high and low seek his hand. A prayer follows, which entreats that "whatever goes forth from thy mouth, O Marduk, may it be established, thy fortune not failing." Next there appears to be a reference to the "gifts of the gods," and then another prayer saying, "in the dwelling of the gods, at the place of their crown, may thy place be established." Again follows a pæan of praise :—

"O Merodach thou art also the returner of our benefits,
we ascribe to thee royalty, thou hast in the assembly of
the gods the multitude of the whole of everything,
may thy command be high, may they not force thy
weapon,
may thy enemy tremble."

And the beautiful line of prayer, "O lord, who trusts thee, do thou benefit his soul," comes next. The gods then approved of Merodach's mission against the wicked Tiamat, for we are told "they rejoiced," they drew near to Merodach the king, they endowed him with sceptre, throne, and reign, they gave him an unequalled weapon for destroying his enemies, and said: "Go, make an end of the life of Tiamat, and may the wind carry away her blood to a dismal place." The gods decreed his fate, and made him set out on his enterprise. Now follows the record of the equipment of the god. He had a bow, a club, his right hand held the bow, and he hung the skin quiver at his side. He set the lightning before him, and filled his body with "swift destruction." Then he obtained a scimitar (or as some read "net") to attack Tiamat. We are told that Anu his father made

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the bow, and not content with all these weapons Merodach made league with the south, north, east, and west winds: he made the "evil wind, the malignant wind, the storm, the tempest, and the seven deadly winds," his allies, and they came after him to trouble Tiamat.

The lord of the storm also lifted up his mighty weapon and rode over the sea in his unequalled chariot of fate. He laid hold of Tiamat and bound her fast with bonds. But Tiamat made desperate resistance, though of exactly what nature the fracture in the tablet forbids our knowing. We find, however, that she sought out her husband Kingu, and spread trouble upon his path, probably because he refused to assist her in her rebellion, and she also used incantations to effect the destruction of Merodach. But to no purpose, for Merodach drew near in a "warlike manner," he made his weapon approach her, he took the evil wind and let it loose before and behind him. Tiamat opened her mouth to engulf him, but Merodach drove such a quanity of wind down her throat that she could not cover her lip, he rained mighty winds into her. Now Tiamat's heart was afraid, for Merodach cleft her face, he raised his club, destroyed her belly, he cut through her interior, he mastered her heart, he laid hold of her and destroyed her life. He threw her body down and then sat upon her. Not content with the destruction of the monster herself, Merodach scattered her band of followers and swept away her assembly. The gods that went by her side turned and fled, they clung to one another fleeing helplessly. Merodach destroyed their attack and broke their weapons; they sat down mournfully and filled the regions with groaning. Merodach also made an end of Kingu, Tiamat's husband, and

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"The might of the good god was completely established
over the enemy
he strengthened his hold over the rebellious gods
Tiamat whom he had laid hold of powerfully he turned
backward
the lord trampled down too the foundation of Tiamat."

The next lines tell us that the north wind carried away her blood to a wretched place. Then Merodach's father rejoiced, and was glad when he saw this and when the messengers brought him the news. After his labours the "lord Merodach rested and refreshed his body." Then follows the account of how the heavens were made bright and clear after this dreadful fight, and the text goes on to say that the god made "the waters to come forth, which were not coming forth." Now Tiamat was a sea demon, and while this fight was going on she apparently had stopped the tides from flowing, but this the god Merodach rectified. A representation of the battle, taken from a sculpture in the British Museum, is given in the frontispiece.

The tablet then adds the first line of the next tablet of the series, which reads—

"He made beautiful the fortresses of the gods great."

And after this comes a colophon stating that the tablet contained one hundred and forty-six lines, and was written by Nabu-beli-su Nahid-Marduk for the saving of his life, and that it was placed in the temple of Zida.

The tablet not only gives us a valuable piece of mythology of the Babylonians, but the colophon shows that it was a meritorious act on the part of a pious man to write or copy a religious book as a thank offering to a

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god. It is another form of an old Semitic idea; the Jews wrote copies of the law each man for himself, every king was bound to do so; to-day the Mahommedans write copies of their Koran. To go back to the Babylonian tablet, however. The story is told in very concise and brief language, and the expressions are here and there somewhat obscure. The sense of a few of the lines I cannot make out, owing to a number of words the meanings of which at present are unknown. If one puts aside the weird and mystic imagery of the Oriental from it, it is the account of the battle of light against darkness. Merodach is the "brilliance of the sun," and he goes armed with the bow of his father Anu, "the sky god," and the *mul-mul-lum*,[1] or principle of the stars and fire; he takes the lightning and gathers together to his side the winds, the powers of the heavens. With this armour he does battle against Tiamat. The Hebrew equivalent of this word we meet with in the second verse of the first chapter of Genesis. We read that there was darkness upon the face of the deep, and the word rendered deep is *t'hom*, *i.e.*, Tiamat, in Babylonian. Tiamat is represented as the abyss from whence all things noxious sprang; she herself is personified in the form of a being with scales, feathers, wings, claws, gaping jaws, and a tail, and over this hideous being the glorious light sprang. St. John, in the Apocalypse, spoke of the time when there shall be "no more sea," intimating that the abolition of the sea with its monsters and terrors was to be a part of the glorious future. In the tablet spoken of above the line—

"O lord, who trusts in thee, do thou benefit his soul,"

[1] The word is rendered club; perhaps "fire stick" would be a better translation.

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reminds one forcibly of various passages in the Psalms, and reveals to us the craving of the soul of the Babylonian for the assistance and support of a mighty and powerful god. Whether they had a deeper meaning veiled under the words is hard to say, but it is not at all improbable that the ideas of right and wrong were represented by them under the symbols of light and darkness.

A curious name is given to Tiamat in the tablet, she is called "the great serpent" (we have already spoken of her shape above and of her being the personification of chaos), which reminds one of the Revelation where Satan is called "the great dragon."[1] The Jews, too, have called Satan "the prince over chaos." This Tiamat then is clearly the Babylonian tempter which led man astray, and which brought death and destruction into the world. There is a seal in the British Museum bearing an engraving which seems to be a picture of the fall of man. It is figured on page 156, and has been published before.[2] In the middle of the scene there stands a tree with branches, and on either side of the trunk there is a fruit. Seated on the right is a man, and upon the left is a woman, behind whom stands the serpent. The tree is the "tree of life," which played a great part in the Babylonian and Assyrian religions, and was understood too by the Babylonians to be the symbol of immortality.

As to the views of the Babylonians about the creation we know but little, for only a few lines on this subject, and these on a fragment of a tablet, have come down to us. They read—

"When on high the heavens were not named,

[1] Rev. xii. 7–9; xx. 2.
[2] Smith, "Chaldean Genesis," p. 91.

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and beneath, the abyss recorded not a name,
the water deep first begot them, the lady Tiamat
was the bringer forth of all.
The waters first were collected, but the clouds were not
collected together, and in the earth was not a seed.
Then none of the gods had come forth."

These words evidently refer to a time when the earth was "without form and void."

Apparently the pious Babylonian repented deeply at times, for we find the lament of one which says, "From the days of my youth I am bound fast to the yoke of sin;" and his conscience was at times sorely troubled. When in distress, through a calamity or any other cause, he asks himself, "Have I estranged father and son, brother and brother, or friend and friend? Have I not freed the captive, released the bound, and delivered him who was confined in prison?[1] Have I resisted my god or despised my goddess? Have I taken territory not my own, or entered with wrong motives the house of my fellow? Have I approached the wife of my fellow man? Have I shed man's blood or robbed one of his clothing?"

The Babylonian could bewail his sins, iniquities, and ignorance in very pathetic words, and the following lines will show how nearly the words and ideas approach some of our own prayers of to-day:—

"O my lord, my transgression is great, many are my sins.
O my god ....
O my goddess ....
O my god that knowest that I knew not, my transgression is great, many are my sins.

[1] Compare Matt. xxv. 44.

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O my goddess that knowest that I knew not, my transgression is great, many are my sins.
The sin that I committed I knew not.
The sin that I sinned I knew not.
The forbidden things did I eat.
The . . . . did I trample upon.
My lord in the wrath of his heart has punished me.
God in the strength of his heart has overpowered me.
I lay on the ground, and no man extended the hand.
In tears I dissolved myself, and none my palms took.
I cried aloud; there was none that would hear me.
The feet of my goddess I embraced.
To my god, who knew though I knew not, I made supplication.
To my goddess who knew, I made supplication.
How long, O my god?
How long, O my goddess?
O my god, seven times seven are my transgressions, my transgressions are before me.[1]
My transgressions are before me, may thy judgment give me life.
May thy heart like the heart of the mother of the setting day to its place return.[2]
For the tearful supplication of my heart, let the name of every god be invoked 65 times.
Peace afterwards.

We have now seen something about the Babylonian's gods, his heaven, his hell, his devil and evil spirits. We have also seen some of his best ideas and conceptions. He had grand ideas about his gods, but he appears to

[1] This prayer to be repeated ten times.
[2] This prayer to be repeated five times.

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have feared the attacks of the evil spirits more than he trusted in his great gods to defend him from them. At the beginning he peopled all nature and everything in nature with spirits, but by degrees he attributed more power to some of these than to others, and hence arose the "great gods." His religion was a mixture of sublimity and absurdity, of purity and impurity, of refined ideas and coarse conceptions; in short, he made the gods in his own image. He never grasped the idea of one God making and ruling all things, the Ruler and Governor of nations and individuals alike, but he multiplied idols and gods without end. This brought down Jeremiah's just observation,[1] "It is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols." He was superstitious and easily terrified by the supernatural, and was slavish in his obedience to it. His mind was easily led captive by the pomp and religious processions, which the priests took care to make as attractive as possible. To these were added the practices of nature worship so strongly denounced in the Bible under the names of Baal, Baal-Peor, Ashtoreth, and "the groves;" and thus the mind of the Babylonian was led astray, and whatever good he had lying in his soul was crushed and blotted out. In the day of retribution when Babylon fell his idols were powerless to save him, as he found to his bitter cost.

Though the Babylonians asked the Jews to sing them "one of the songs of Zion," yet they profited nought by it, neither did they learn anything of Jehovah, who had done mighty deeds and "driven out mighty nations" for this people. Though Daniel and "the three children" were living witnesses of God in Babylon, its people repented not, as Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah.

[1] Jer. l. 38.

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Its gods are gone, its people, and its tributary kings, like their conquerors, have vanished; there is nothing but the accumulated dust of centuries in the land instead of its former glory, and it is beholden to the children of the West for the discovery in recent times of its ancient site.

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CHAPTER X.

BABYLONIAN LIFE AND ART.

Religious duties of great importance.—Babylonian names.—Cremation.—War.—Commerce.—Slavery.—Reading and writing.—Engraving.—The Babylonians good builders.

ONE of the chief concerns of the Babylonian was to attend to his religious duties, and to take part in the worship and praise due to his gods. We are ignorant of the exact ceremonies that were carried out in their temples, but it seems that processions of priests bearing the image of a god were common and frequent. The kings richly endowed the temples with part of the spoils which they obtained in war, and each person, according to his ability, no doubt did the same. They craved for a visible representation of their deities, and were not satisfied with an invisible presence, even if they had any conception of it. Every person, high or low, rich or poor, took part in the nature-worship which was carried out under the beautiful sky of Chaldea. It is probable that they chanted hymns and praises to their gods, for the Babylonian copy of the fourth tablet of the "Creation" series, recording the fight between Merodach and Tiamat, exhibits a rhythm and a parallelism in many of its lines. One would think that the narrative part was recited or sung by a few voices, and the lines of praise by a huge chorus in which everyone joined. Their sacred books were the so-called Gisṭubar legends,

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which relate that the solar hero Gisṭubar performed twelve mighty deeds, each of which formed the subject of a narrative. The Babylonians prayed, for their prayers have come down to us. Every seventh day was a "Sabbath," or as they put it, "a day of rest for the heart." A god or goddess presided over every day in the year, and lists of the days of the months, with their regents mentioned, have come down to us. Their representation of the Sun-god took the form of a disk, and a beautiful woman was the type of Istar, the daughter of the Moon-god. At the doorways of their palaces they placed huge stone figures of a composite being, with the face and head of a man, the body and tail of a horse, the legs and hoofs of a bull, and the huge feathered pinions of a mighty bird, which indicated that it had the wisdom and intelligence of a man, the swift body of the horse, the fleet wings of the eagles, and the mighty treading down power of the bull. These figures "guarded the footsteps of the king their maker."

The contract tablets show us that the Babylonians had two names, one an official and the other private; whether any ceremony attended the naming is not known. When the Babylonian died he was most probably burnt, and it is thought that furnaces were always kept going for this purpose. It has been suggested that it was into one of these furnaces that the "three children" were cast after it had been made "seven times hotter" than usual. There are earthenware pots in the British Museum which contained the calcined bones and ashes of people that were burnt more than two thousand years ago, and these pots are common and abundant in the ruins of the old Babylonian cities. In the time of the Parthians they used coffins, and of these specimens in a greenish glazed

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earthenware are still to be seen. On the death of the Babylonian his soul went to the "land of the silver sky," and dwelt with the heroes of bygone times and the kings who ruled ages before. Isaiah describes the home of these spirits in almost identical words.[1] The numerous temples must have given occupation to an enormous number of people and servants, and even the body of priests necessary for performing the various services must have been large.

The chief occupation of the Babylonian was war; as soon as one king was dead, all the tributary kingdoms tried to assert their independence. This, of course, necessitated expeditions to all parts of the country to put down the various rebellions. There was a set time of the year for warlike expeditions, as we learn from 2 Sam. xi. 1. The Babylonians were armed with swords, bows and arrows, and staves; in the later days they had helmets and shields. Their battles consisted more of surprises and skirmishes than what we should call definite warfare. They showed no mercy, and once having captured a city they destroyed it utterly, slaying the unfortunate inhabitants and burning everything that could be burnt. A few of the kings took the captives to their capitals, and made them build walls and temples, etc., for them. In besieging cities they used scaling ladders, and men were set under cover to dig out the stones from the foundations, that the city walls might fall. They used horses and chariots in battle, but the greater part of the army must have gone on foot. It will be remembered that the Rabshakeh of Sennacherib offered Hezekiah horses, saying, "I will give thee two thousand horses if thou be able on thy part

[1] Isaiah xiv. 9

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to set riders upon them."[1] A list was kept of the people destroyed in each city, and of the spoil taken. Wars were undertaken on various pretexts, such as rebellion and invasion of territory; but the kings often made raids on slight provocation when the funds of their treasuries were low. It was the wealth of Hezekiah's palace and of the Temple that attracted Merodach-Baladan and Nebuchadnezzar; and the riches of Tyre always made it an attractive object for conquest in the eyes of the Babylonians and Assyrians.

Many of the Babylonians were engaged in commerce, for the Semite was always a trader, and we know for certainty that it was respected, inasmuch as we find that the business of the firm of Egibi and Son was carried on throughout all the wars and civil commotions which convulsed Babylon. The Babylonians made legal promises to pay certain debts they had contracted. They bought and sold land, and they lent money or merchandise on interest. This business firm of Egibi and Son arranged dowries for unwedded women, and some records of this sort are in our national collection.

The Babylonians bought slaves, male and female, and it appears that some of the owners went so far as to brand their own name upon them with hot irons.

In stature the Babylonians were short and thick-set; they had the characteristic Semitic nose, thick lips, and "oblique eyes." Their hair was thick and curly, and of course black; whether they plaited or knotted it in the way we see it represented is doubtful, for the dressing shown on the sculptures may be for the sake of ornament. They wore dyed raiment, probably of a brilliant colour, girdles round their waist, and sandals on their feet.

[1] Isaiah xxxvi. 8.

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The Babylonian youth learned to read and write early. The task of learning the huge syllabary was no easy one, he therefore copied the characters over and over again, until the eye, the hand, and the memory all helped him to gain a perfect knowledge of them. Those who were intended for priests or astronomers learnt the omens, the astrological and the astronomical texts, and the old Akkadian language. The king was absolute monarch; he heard complaints and redressed wrongs; the power of life and death was in his hands. How the Babylonian king amused himself is not known; the Assyrian hunted lions, etc. The Babylonian libraries were well stored with tablets by generations gone by, and therefore they became the centre of attraction for the *literati* and *savants* of that day. The Babylonians were very superstitious, and very fearful of the evil spirits and genii, which they imagined were always ready to attack them. They were great astrologers and moderately good astronomers; we owe a very great deal to them. They drew maps upon clay, and there are fragments of their planispheres, which are divided into divisions corresponding to degrees, among the treasures of our national collection.

The Babylonian was a skilful engraver upon the hardest stones, of which the polish and smoothness is a marvel even in the nineteenth century. The little stone which contains Sargon's inscription (B.C. 3800) is beautifully rounded and smooth, the inscription being admirably cut. They excelled in seal cutting, and delighted in inscribing figures of the beings of their Pantheon upon agate, chalcedony, jasper, hæmatite, etc. Drawings of some of these seals are shown on the opposite page.

The Babylonians were good builders, as the ruins and remains of their temples and walls testify. Some of

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ANCIENT BABYLONIAN SEALS.

Hea-Bani struggling with a savage animal.

Engraving on a Babylonian seal representing the temptation of Adam and Eve and the Tree of Life.

The Babylonian hero Gisṭubar in conflict with a lion.

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their bricks they burnt, others they sun-dried, and each brick bore the impression of the seal of the king its maker. Some bricks were glazed with one colour (these were probably used to lay the foundations in damp places), others for ornament in two or more colours, and occasionally we find them both fluted and glazed. They knew the use of the arch, and they used pillars in their buildings. Their palaces were decorated with all kinds of beautiful stones; it has been thought that they were but one storey high, but this is scarcely credible. Owing to our ignorance of the meaning of many of the architectural terms employed in their buildings, we cannot make exact statements about them, but their palaces and temples were very extensive. They made plantations around them, and a little tablet gives us the names of the various plants and trees that were in the gardens of Merodach-Baladan. Of the houses of the poorer classes we know nothing; their dwellings have long since passed away. There were beautiful objects of art in the king's palaces, bronze statuettes, glass bottles and vases, alabaster jars, ivories with gold and beautiful colours, though these belong probably to the later period of the empire. The objects of art and luxury which the Babylonians were unable to produce for themselves they could obtain from Phœnicia and Egypt, and no doubt they availed themselves of the opportunity.

Every single tablet that is recovered from the mounds of Babylonia reveals fresh facts and gives new testimony of the enormous amount of knowledge possessed by the Babylonians. It will be impossible to obtain an exact idea of what they knew until all the mounds have been excavated and all the literature read and understood. Already there is enough work for many lifetimes; the

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quantity of work to be done is enormous, and the labourers in the field are very few. The task of reading the cuneiform inscriptions is a hard one, and much patient work is necessary before it can be done; but surely it is a study attractive enough!

In this little book only a few of the most important facts have been touched upon, and we have tried to state only such things as admit of proof and are certain. It is self-evident, however, how very necessary the knowledge of the facts obtained from the cuneiform inscriptions is for the right understanding of that part of Bible history which relates to Babylon and Assyria.

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