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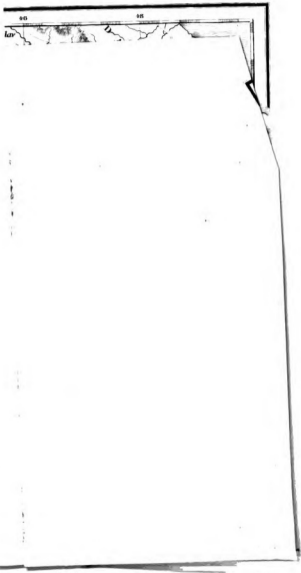
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THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



MEMORANDUM

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MESOPOTAMIA
AND
ASSYRIA.



THE GREAT TOMB.

OLIVER & BOYD, EDINBURGH.

MESOPOTAMIA

AND

ASSYRIA,

FROM THE

EARLIEST AGES TO THE PRESENT TIME ;

WITH

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THEIR NATURAL HISTORY.

BY J. BAILLIE FRASER, ESQ.,

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

WITH A MAP, AND ENGRAVINGS BY JACKSON.

EDINBURGH:

OLIVER & BOYD, TWEEDDALE COURT ;

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PREFACE.

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

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

to our knowledge of facts. The subject in general, therefore, remains as dark and uncertain as before.

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

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

Our information regarding what may be termed the middle ages of those countries,—that is, from the destruction of Babylon by Darius down to the Moham-

medan era,—is greatly more extensive and complete than that which we possess respecting their remoter history. Those who are anxious for a more intimate acquaintance with the events of this period, will find ample materials in the pages of the *Universal History*, and in the more eloquent chapters of *Gibbon*.

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

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

Much still remains to be done in both provinces; for there are many districts of which as yet little or nothing is known. The labours of modern travellers are, however, daily throwing light on their antiquities, natural

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

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

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

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

May 1841.

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

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

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

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

Events so various and important must invest the countries where they occurred with a deep interest ; and that portion of them in particular which has reference to the early postdiluvian ages cannot fail to excite the curiosity of those who delight in marking the moral pro-

gress of the human race. But all hope of tracing clearly the events of their early history is checked by the scantiness of means ; for, while the annals of more recent times are illustrated by numerous records, the glimpses of light shed from authentic sources upon the remote period to which our views are now directed, serve only to show that, at a very uncertain era after the universal deluge, a monarchy was founded on the Euphrates by Nimrod, the son of Cush, which rose into considerable importance ; and that, at some subsequent period, it was overthrown by a neighbouring power, the seat of which was on the banks of the Tigris.

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

Loosely speaking, Assyria may be considered as terminated on the west by the course of the Tigris, on the north by Armenia, on the north-east and east by Mount

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

Zagros and the Gordyæan range, and on the south-east by the province of Susiana or Kuzistan.

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

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

Again, if the same line were continued westward to Malatia on the Euphrates, the boundary of Mesopotamia would from thence be indicated, as already observed, by the course of that river; but as both banks are comprehended in the basin, and may physically as well as politically be regarded as connected with each other, we shall include in our description all places of importance on the one as well as on the other.

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

Strabo describes it as conterminous with Persia and Susiana, and as comprehending Babylonia and a considerable portion of the surrounding district, the countries of the Elymæans, Parætaceniens, and Chalonitis towards Mount Zagros; the plains in the environs of Nineveh, namely, Dolomenia, Calachenia, Chazenia, and Adiabene; the valleys of the Gordyæans, and the Mygdonians

of Nisibis even to Zeugma* of the Euphrates; and the vast region beyond the river inhabited by the Arabs, to the Cilicians, Phœnicians and Libyans, and the portion of the coast comprehending the Sea of Egypt and the Gulf of Issus.†

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

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

By Strabo, Mesopotamia is declared to be bounded on the north by Taurus, which separates it from Armenia; that it is largest near the mountains, where, between Thapsacus, at the passage of the Euphrates, and the point where Alexander crossed the Tigris, it is 2400 stadia broad; while between Babylon and Seleucia, the space separating the rivers does not exceed 200 stadia. He states that the Mygdonians inhabit the part near the Euphrates and the two Zeugmas, that they possess the city of Nisibis, called also Antiocha Mygdonia, at the foot of Mount Masius, that of Tigranocerta, the districts of Carrhes and Nicephorium, Chordiraza, and Sinnaca; that near the Tigris among the mountains is the country

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

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

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

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

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

of the Gordyæans, called by the ancients Carduchi, where also are found the Cossæans, the Parætaceniens and the Elymæans; and that the southern portions of Mesopotamia are inhabited by the Scenite Arabs, a nomade people, who live by plunder, and change their abodes when pasture and booty fail.*

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

Returning to the northern limits of Assyria, we find the districts of Carduchia and Corduene, in the mountains between Sert and Julamerik; Arbelitis, of which the capital was Arbela, in the low lands; the plains of Dolomenia and Calachene spread around Mosul; the Gordyæans, Elymæans, and Parætaceniens occupied the

* Strabo, lib. xvi. p. 1082.

valleys of the Gordyæan mountains, at whose foot towards Kirkook stretch the plains of Adiabene, Apolloniatis the present Shahraban, and Chalonitis, which last appears to have been the south-eastern district, bordering on Louristan and Susiana. Such, perhaps, according to our present knowledge of the ancient divisions of these provinces, is the nearest adaptation of them to modern maps.

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

Mardin, governed by a wai- wodeh.	Khanekin, a pasha.
Nisibin, ———.	Mendali, a zabit.
Mosul, by a pasha, nominated by the Porte, but subject to the Pasha of Bagdad.	Janan, ———.
Arbel, a beg.	Bagdad, residence of the pasha.
Kirkook, a mussellim.	Bussora, a mussellim.
Khoee, till lately subject to the men of Rewandooz.	Sook el Shiook, a sheik.
Kewy Sanjiak, a pasha.	Semava, a sheik.
Solymaneah, a pasha.	Khezail, a sheik.
Dour, a zabit.	Lemlum, a sheik.
Tecreet, a beg.	Nejeff, a mootwullee.
Samieh, a zabit.	Kerbela, a mootwullee.
Zohab, a pasha.	Hillah, a beg.
	Jubbeh, a beg.
	Hit, a beg.
	Anah, a beg.
	Rahaba, a beg.

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

bour and Hermas rivers, has of late been overrun by the Jerbah tribe, who, attracted some years ago from Arabia, by the hopes of better pasture, took possession of that part of the Jezirah. The vicinity of Bagdad is in the same manner infested by the tribe of Delaim, aided by the Jubboor.

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

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

The face of this extensive country, stretching nearly 800 miles from north-west to south-east by a medium breadth of 200, exhibits great variety of soil, climate, and appearance. Thus the whole of Irak or Babylonia may be described as a rich alluvial flat, varied by marshy

tracts and a few sandy stripes. Again, the lower part of Mesopotamia degenerates from a loamy deposit into a hard gravel; while the higher districts of Diarbekir, Sert, Jezirah ul Omar, Amadiéh, and Solymaneah consist of little else than a mass of mountains intersected by fertile valleys. These ridges rise to a still greater height in the neighbourhood of Julamerik, and Mount Jewar is said to ascend at least 15,000 feet; on the other hand, the plains of Arbela and Nineveh, of Kirkook, Tooz Khoormattee and Kufri, though in some places scorched, are yet occasionally very productive.

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

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

Mount Masius runs in a westerly direction from the Tigris to the parallel of Nisibin, when, turning towards the north at Dara, it again assumes its former line, overlooking throughout its course a very level plain. Northward from this boundary the country consists of high table-lands, intersected by ridges of rocky mountains, which are branches of Taurus, under the names of Ka-

rahjah Dag, Ali Dag, Madan, Mahrab, and Kalaat Dag. The two last are peaks of that range which divides the eastern Euphrates and the Tigris,—the sources of the latter river being situated in its southern face, near the Arghana mines.

Both provinces have been by nature blessed with the means of almost unlimited fertility in the abundant streams which water them, though this benefit has been differently distributed in each. In Assyria and Upper Mesopotamia the rivers and mountain-streams are numerous; and there is no want either of rain or snow to assist in bringing the crops to maturity. On the other hand, in Lower Mesopotamia and Babylonia, productiveness must depend on the industry and judgment with which the inhabitants dispense the ample supplies afforded by the Tigris and Euphrates, and take advantage of their periodical inundations.

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

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

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

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

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

For thirty miles below Hillah the banks are covered with mud villages embedded in date-trees, to which suc-

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

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

But the eastern bank continues still low and marshy, and the country requires to be protected by *bunds* or dams, which, however, often break when the waters rise, and much damage is occasioned. The stream, nevertheless, maintains a breadth varying from 200 to 400 yards as far as Korna, where it forms a junction with the Tigris; and from this point the united river is from 500 to 800 yards in breadth, and three to five fathoms deep.

A slight increase takes place in the Euphrates in January; but the grand flood does not commence till about the 27th March; and it attains its height about the 20th of May, after which it falls pretty rapidly till June, when the rice and grain crops are sown in the marshes. The decrease then proceeds gradually until the middle of November, when the stream is at its low-

est. The rise of the water at Anah in ordinary seasons is from ten to twelve feet; though it occasionally amounts to eighteen, entering the town, and overflowing much of the bank. At its greatest height it runs with a velocity exceeding five miles an hour, but after a decrease of twenty days there is a corresponding diminution of rapidity, insomuch that boats can track against the current.

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

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

Passing the ruins of Ctesiphon and Seleucia, the Tigris holds its course through a deep alluvial soil and marshy land. Its banks, like those of the Euphrates, are thickly sprinkled with heaps and mounds, the vestiges of former habitations, with Arab tents or huts, and some considerable villages, among which the chief is Koote ul Amara, giving its name to the river as far as Korna. At this latter place the two great streams unite; form-

ing, as has been seen, the Shut el Arab, though Abulfeda calls it still the Digleh or Tigris all the way to the sea.

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

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

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

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

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

for drawing off the dangerous superabundance of the fluid and collecting it for the beneficial purpose of irrigation.

The principal canals mentioned by ancient geographers are the Nahr-raga, the Nahr Sares, the Fluvius Regius, the Kutha, and the Pallacopas. The first of these, which, according to Pliny, has its origin at Sippara or Hippara, appears to occupy the place of the Nahr Isa, which, derived from the Euphrates at Dehmah near Anbar, joined the Tigris in the western part of that city.

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

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

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

* Researches in Assyria, Babylonia, and Chaldea, by William Ainsworth, F.G.S., &c. 8vo. London, 1838, p. 163-165.

† Mr Ainsworth (Researches, p. 166) thinks that this town of Kutha may be represented by the ruins and mounds of the

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

But besides these larger channels, there were many of inferior size, constructed to supply particular towns and districts, each quarter of Babylon itself being provided with water in that manner. The numerous dry beds still to be seen in all directions, prove the extent to which the system was carried.

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

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

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

We learn from Arrian that much expense was incurred by the governors of Babylon in restraining an

Towebah, which by some are considered as the northern quarter of ancient Babylon.

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

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

From the first part of this account we should be led to think that the ancient canal had its commencement, at least, in what Abulfeda terms the southern branch of the Euphrates, as through this the water reached the marshes. From the second it would appear as if Alexander had pursued his intention of effectually damming up the overflow of the river in the old bed of the canal, and made a fresh opening at the distance of thirty furlongs in firmer ground. The circumstance of his sailing down the Euphrates to the mouth of the Pallacopas, and through that canal to the place where he built the town now called Meshed Ali, would lead to the supposition that the new cut must have been about the parallel of Cufa or Dewannich. That the Pallacopas was continued to the sea, into which it emptied itself somewhere about Teredon, is certain, although its channel is now nearly obliterated; for both Colonel Chesney and Lieutenant Ormsby, in journeying westward from Bussora, found its bed between Zobeir and the Jibel Sanam, which is the site of ancient Teredon. The last-named of these gentlemen found that it was sixty paces broad; and his guide told him that in travelling along its channel all the way from Khor Abdullah (the supposed ancient mouth of the Euphrates) to Hillah, mounds, with the usual vestiges of old buildings, are frequently met with on its banks. In the days of Abulfeda, however, the Pallacopas was no longer in operation, and the waters seem to have escaped by their old vent into the marshes,

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

the work of Alexander having probably given way. Of late, the higher portion of the Babylonian fens received a great augmentation from the damage done to the embankments of the river in the memorable inundation of 1830. For many years previous to that time, the Montefic Arabs had farmed the whole western side of the Euphrates from the Pasha of Bagdad at a certain sum, and upon condition of maintaining in good order the *huds* which prevented it from overflowing the country from Sook el Shiok to Hit. In that year these embankments were swept away, and have not since been replaced, so that the river, when in flood, has a free passage into the Bahr e Nejeff.

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

The waters of the Tigris have also been made subservient to the purposes of agriculture by means of various canals; and two of these merit especial mention. The first was the Nahrawan, the most magnificent, indeed, of all similar works achieved by the ancient kings of Babylon. Its sources were threefold. The first, issuing from the river at the point where it cuts the Hamrine hills, ran distant from the parent stream about six or seven miles towards the ancient town of Samarra, where it was joined by the second conduit. This last, leaving the Tigris at a place called Guntree Rissassee, fell into the other, which then received the name of Nahrawan, and the united current ran nearly south-south-east towards the Athem, absorbing first the superfluous waters of the Nahr But, then the Athem itself, next, the Nahr Raathan, and finally, a third cut from the river at Gaim. Hence it proceeded generally at the distance of from

six to twelve miles from the course of the Tigris, as it flowed in those days, but approaching it at Bagdad; a little after which it crossed the Diala, exhausting its contents, which were raised to a proper level by a bund.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4. The Rithwannieh issues from the Euphrates, south-west from Bagdad, and joins the Tigris below the Massoodee.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

* Researches, p. 127.

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

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

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

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

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

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

lous, rich, well cultivated, and flourishing. The industry of the inhabitants restrained with proper embankments the over-abundance of the waters with which it was surrounded; but when wars and troubles arose these were either neglected or destroyed, and the populous province accordingly returned to a state of nature, and became a country of lakes and morasses.

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

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

morasses which are separated by slips of higher land where the Beni Ruffeyah and other Arabs pitch their tents. At the end of this Chaldean lake, Pliny places Ampe, which Mr Ainsworth is disposed to think is now represented by Korna, at the junction of the two rivers. D'Anville, however, considers this town as identical with Ptolemy's Apamea, and the Digla of Pliny. On the other side of the present bed of the Tigris are found the marshes of Susiana, which, if the river formerly ran through the valley of the Hye, must have been continuous with the Chaldean lake, or only separated by the low territory of the Messina of Pliny, Ptolemy, Strabo, and others. Indeed, the whole country of Susiana which lies on the left bank of the current appears to be little more than one succession of morasses.

CHAPTER II.

History of the Assyrian Monarchy.

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

HAVING thus given a description of the boundaries, divisions, and general aspect of the countries hereafter to be more minutely delineated, we shall endeavour, as succinctly as possible, to sketch the history of the monarchies of which, from the earliest times, they were the seat. This is a task of no ordinary difficulty, for so obscure is the chronology of those remote periods, and perplexing are the names and actions attributed by various writers to individuals who are said to have flourished during them, that in spite of the numerous attempts to connect the detached notices on the subject, it still

remains not a little dark and confused. As an instance of this, and of the discrepancy which prevails among chronologists on some of the most important epochs, it may be mentioned that Dr Hales, in his learned work, recites upwards of 120 several opinions in reference to the interval which elapsed between the creation of the world and the birth of our Saviour, and the extremes are removed from each other by no less than 3268 years. A difference of 1142 years occurs, in like manner, among authors in fixing the era of the Deluge; they disagree also to the extent of 300 years regarding the time of the fall of Nineveh; and a like diversity prevails upon the date of the Exode of the Jews from Egypt.

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

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

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

Josephus, according to various authors.....	} 5555 5481 5402 4698	
The Septuagint.....		
		} 5586 5508

Syncellus.....	5500
Pezron.....	5872
Eusebius.....	5200
Jackson.....	5426
Hales.....	5411

Dr Russell, who, in his "Connection of Sacred and Profane History,"* has examined this subject with great assiduity and learning, and who has consulted not only the writings of Jewish and Pagan historians, and of the early fathers, but also the works of the most distinguished modern chronologists, inclines to fix this important point in the year B. C. 5441, which being nearly a mean of the best authorities, we will venture to adopt as that by which to determine such dates as admit of precise notation. On the same grounds, he places the era of the Deluge in B. C. 3185
Or after the Creation 2256

Making, till the era of redemption 5441

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

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

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

From the writings of these two historians it will be found that all subsequent annalists and geographers,

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

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

The authors of the "Universal History," a work of deep erudition and research, incline to reject almost entirely the testimony of Ctesias, whose long list of kings, with its mixture of Greek, Egyptian, Persian, and Median names, seems to destroy the pretensions of its compiler to veracity; while they attach much credit to the accounts of Herodotus, as agreeing far better than those of other historians with the chronology of sacred writ and the few insulated facts that can be brought to bear upon the subject. According to their computation, after this historian, the Assyrian monarchy commenced 1236 B. C. and continued 520 years.*

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

	1059
	—
	3185
which with the assumed period from the Creation	
to the Flood of	2256
	—
makes, up to the birth of Christ,	5441

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

Proceeding with his retrospect, and quoting from the

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

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

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

This fact has been prominently set forward by Mr Beke in his laborious and interesting work of "*Origines Biblicæ*," in which he examines with great ingenuity every thing which has been presented to us on these important points in the sacred volume, and rejects almost entirely all other evidence upon the subject as fabulous and unsatisfactory.

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

In the same manner, the whole which we are told regarding the foundation of an Assyrian kingdom is, that at some period, equally undetermined, "out of that land [of Shinar] went forth Asshur, and builded

* Gen. x. 10.

Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah."* It is true, that the proper reading of this passage has been much disputed ; for many authorities, both English and German, contend that its true meaning is, that Nimrod went forth as a conqueror into the land of Asshur, and builded Nineveh and the other towns. In either case, Asshur must have preceded Nimrod, as we find the country already called by his name ; and further down we are informed that he was a son or descendant of Shem.

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

Considering as we do the sacred volume as containing the only undoubted source of information on this subject, down to the era of Nabonassar B. C. 747, when the Canon of Ptolemy, founded on astronomical observation, commences (Nabonassar having himself destroyed all records of antecedent kings and dynasties), it would still be improper in a work of this sort to pass over entirely the testimony of historians who have written from such sources as were open to them, and which, amongst a great mass of error and fable, unquestionably contains some facts which may be reconciled with those that proceed from less doubtful sources. We shall therefore give a succinct account of the origin of the two monarchies, as it appears in the most accredited histories ; and in order to assist the reader in comprehending the chronology of the period, we have framed the accompanying table, upon the data already referred to, showing the dynasties, names of kings, periods of their respective reigns, and the year of their accession before the Christian era, from the rise of the Babylonian power under

* Gen. x. 11, 12.

Nimrod, and that of Assyria under Asshur, down to the extinction of both by the arms of the renowned Cyrus in the year B. C. 536.

BABYLON.

CHALDEAN KINGS.

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

ARAB KINGS.

1. Mardocentes deposes Zinzirus in.....	2341
And reigned.....	45
2. Name and period lost, say.....	40..... 2296
3. Sisimardacus.....	28..... 2256
4. Nabius.....	37..... 2228
5. Parannus.....	40..... 2191
6. Nabonnebus.....	25..... 2151
	<hr/>
	215
Deposed and slain by Ninus in.....	2126

ASSYRIA.

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

No account of his successors till the time of Ninus.

ASSYRIAN EMPIRE.

ASSYRIAN KINGS ACCORDING TO CTESIUS.

	Years.	B. C.
1. Ninus, conquered Babylon in.....	2126	
Reigned.....	52	
2. Semiramis.....	42..... 2074	
3. Ninyas.....	38..... 2032	
4. Arius.....	30..... 1994	
5. Aralius.....	40..... 1964	
6. Xerxes or Balæus.....	30..... 1924	
7. Armanithres.....	38..... 1894	
8. Belochus.....	35..... 1857	
9. Balæus.....	52..... 1821	

	Years.	B. C.
10. Sethos, Altadas.....	35.....	1769
11. Mamythus.....	30.....	1734
12. Ascalius or Mascaleus.....	30.....	1704
13. Sphærus.....	28.....	1674
14. Mamylius.....	30.....	1646
15. Sparthæus.....	40.....	1616
16. Ascatales.....	42.....	1576
17. Amyntes.....	50.....	1534
18. Belochus II.....	25.....	1484
19. Baletores or Baletaras.....	34.....	1459
20. Lamprides.....	37.....	1425
21. Sosares.....	20.....	1388
22. Lampares.....	30.....	1368
23. Panyas.....	45.....	1338
24. Sosarmus.....	42.....	1293
25. Mithræus.....	37.....	1251
26. Teutamus or Tautanus.....	32.....	1214
27. Teutæus.....	44.....	1182
28. Thineus.....	30.....	1138
29. Dercylus.....	40.....	1108
30. Empacmes.....	38.....	1068
31. Laosthenes.....	45.....	1030
32. Pertiades.....	30.....	985
33. Ophræteus.....	21.....	955
34. Ephecheres.....	52.....	934
35. Acraganes.....	42.....	882
36. Thonos Concolerus or Sardanapalus.....	20.....	841
Under this monarch occurred the revolt of the Medes and Babylonians, which terminated in a separation of the monarchy once more into the Babylonian and Assyrio-Median States.....		
		821

BABYLONIAN SOVEREIGNS ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE AND PTOLEMY.

Earlier Sovereigns unknown, probably Belesis and his family.

	Years.	B. C.
1. Nabonassar; the era of this monarch's accession ascertained by astronomical calculation, reigned.....	14.....	747
2. Nadius.....	2.....	733
3. Chinzirus.....	5.....	731
4. Jugæus.....	5.....	726
5. Merodach Baladan.....	12.....	721
Revolts from the Assyrians, and writes to King Hezekiah.....		710
6. Arcianus.....	5.....	709
1st Interregnum.....	2.....	704
7. Belibus.....	3.....	702
8. Apronadius.....	6.....	699

	Years.	B. C.
9. Regibelus.....	1.....	693
10. Mesesemordak.....	4.....	692
2d Interregnum.....	8.....	688
11. Esarhaddon subdues Babylon, and reduces it to a tributary state.....	13.....	680
12. Saosducheus or Nebuchadnezzar I.....	20.....	667
13. Chyniladan.....	22.....	647
14. Nabopolassar or Labynetus.....	21.....	625
In alliance with Cyaxares, who takes Nineveh.....		606

ASSYRIAN SOVEREIGNS ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE AND PTOLEMY.

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

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

	Years.	B. C.
1. Nabopolassar throws off the Assyrian yoke, Nineveh being destroyed, reigned.....	2.....	606
2. Nabocolassar, Bochtanser, or Nebuchadnezzar.....	43.....	604
Subdues Persia or Elam.....		596
3. Evil Merodach.....	3.....	561

C

	Years.	B. C.
4. Nericassolassar, Neriglissar, or Belshazzar*	5.....	558
5. Laborosoarshod did not reign a year.		
6. Nabonadius or Labynetus II. appointed by Cyaxares or Darius the Mede*.....	17.....	553
Babylon taken by Cyrus, and the empire terminated.....		536

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

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

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

But, in the first place, we are met by the fact already stated, that Nabonassar had, previously to the time he treats of, destroyed all or at any rate most of the national records; and in the second, unfortunately for his credit, he did not confine himself to those things concerning which he might have had personal knowledge. Besides, the account he wrote of India was such

* Hales.

as to stamp him in the minds of all his readers as a perfect romancer : hence, the great Aristotle, nearly his contemporary, declares him to be a writer entitled to no belief ; and others of the ancients have been equally severe on him. “ Who can see Ninus at the head of millions of men, at a time when the earth must have been but thinly inhabited, when mankind must have been a good deal in a state of simplicity and nature ; who can read this without arraigning the historian of falsehood and forgery ? Or who can read his story of Semiramis,—her mighty valour and heroic deeds at the age of twenty or thereabouts,—her two millions of men employed in the building of Babylon,—her 300,000 skins of black oxen made up in the form of elephants, and other things of this nature,—and not conclude, that what contained it was no genuine history, but a most barefaced romance ?”*

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

Dr Russell, on the other hand, is inclined to repose far

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

greater confidence in the testimony of Ctesias, partly because, he argues, it does not appear that the historian could have had any motive for fabricating a falsehood, and partly because there are strong grounds for believing, that some at least of the sovereigns and conquerors he mentions actually had existence, and performed some of the exploits attributed to them. But, for the long and elaborate chain of reasoning, by which he arrives at the conclusion that the term of duration and list of kings assigned by that historian to the Assyrian monarchy, from its foundation by Ninus to its extinction under Thonos Concolerus or Sardanapalus, are worthy of credit and adoption, we must refer to the work itself,* as it is too long for insertion here, and depends too much upon a nice comparison of dates and events to admit of abridgment. With these remarks upon the credibility of Ctesias, we shall proceed to give a short account of his history.

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

Armenia, his next object, would have fallen an easy prey, had not its king, Barzanus, appeased the conqueror with gifts, and consented to become his vassal. Pharnus, the sovereign of Media, was next overthrown and put to death; and, if we are to credit the historian, in seventeen years Ninus appears to have brought into subjection the greater part of Asia, except India and Bactriana,—probably the vast regions of Tartary also remained untouched. Having led his victorious army back to his own country, he employed the treasures he

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

had amassed, and the multitude of people he had collected, in building the city of Nineveh, the origin of which is in Scripture assigned to Asshur, at probably a much earlier period, unless, with some, we should conclude that Ninus and he are the same person.

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

So extraordinary a heroine could not in those days be permitted to have a mere human origin; and, accordingly, Ctesias ascribes her birth to the amour of a certain goddess, named Derceto by the Greek writers, with an obscure youth who was sacrificing at her altar. The infant, abandoned by its mother near Ascalon in Syria, was reared according to tradition by flocks of pigeons; from which circumstance these birds were held sacred in Syria; and the name of Semiramis is by some asserted to be derived from a word in that language signifying a dove.

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

Ninus, who on this occasion, is said to have led against Bactriana the incredible multitude of 1,700,000 foot,

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

By this lady the Assyrian ruler had a son named Ninyas, who succeeded his mother on the throne. For himself, he did not live long to enjoy his triumphs ; and his death has by some subsequent writers been attributed to the treachery of the woman whom he had, at the expense of faith and honour, raised to a throne. It is said, that having secured the good will of the nobles, she induced the king to invest her with the sovereignty over his dominions for five days, and that the first use she made of this power was to put himself to death. Other authors, who follow Ctesias, are silent regarding the manner of his demise, which is supposed to have taken place at Nineveh in a natural manner, after his return from the conquest of Bactria, and at the close of a reign of fifty-two years. At all events, sufficient honours were paid to his remains by the widow, for she erected in his capital a tumulus of the most gigantic proportions.

Secure on the throne, Semiramis now thought only of eclipsing the glory of her husband ; and her first act was to build the city of Babylon, the same, we are told, of which the ruins still excite the astonishment of travellers, and the magnificence of which, according to the account preserved from Ctesias, is calculated to excite doubt even more than amazement. Nor were her splendid works confined to the metropolis. The banks of the

Euphrates and Tigris were embellished with towns ; and the commerce of her empire was improved by various judicious measures, as were its agricultural resources by the canals which she caused to be formed.

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

But tranquillity had no charms for this restless conqueror. The wealth and prosperity of distant India excited her ambition ; she longed to view its wonders, —to possess its riches,—and therefore she resolved to invade it. Three years were consumed in preparing an armament suited to this great enterprise ; and the force with which she at last left Bactra is by Ctesias set down at the incredible multitude of 3,000,000 foot, 200,000 horse, 100,000 armed chariots, 100,000 armed camelmén, besides artificers. To these were added 2000 vessels for navigating the Indus, carried to the banks of the river on camels, together with the hides of 300,000 black oxen, made into artificial elephants, formed for the purpose of familiarizing her cavalry with the sight of these animals, as well as to terrify the Indians and encourage her own troops by a show of the counterfeit quadrupeds.

The preparations made by Stabrobates, the sovereign of India, for repelling this alarming invasion, were such as became a powerful prince, jealous of his independence, and indignant at an unprovoked aggression. It is asserted that he gathered together a far greater army than Semiramis commanded, and, adding contumely to defiance,

upbraided his enemy with her infamous mode of life, and threatened, should his arms be successful, to put her to a cruel death. She smiled at his threats, and advanced to the Indus. "He does not know me yet," said she; "he will soon have an opportunity of judging me by my actions and deportment." But the height of her fortune and the limit of her empire had now been reached. A temporary success rendered her bold; and, decoyed across the river, over which she constructed a bridge of boats, she came to a decisive action with the Indian king. Her artificial elephants could not withstand the shock of the true ones, and, being wounded in a combat hand to hand with Stabrobates, she was forced to recross the stream. The bridge was destroyed in order to check pursuit; but though many of the Indians perished in the struggle, a multitude of her own troops also were destroyed, and the Assyrian queen retreated to Bactra with scarcely a third part of her army.

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

Such, after a glorious and successful reign of forty-two years, and a life of sixty-two, was the end of the celebrated Semiramis; and the description of her actions alone has been held by many as clearly decisive as to the defect of the historian's claim to credit. It is not alone the incredible numbers of her army and vast preparations that cast over the narrative an air of fable, for this may be found in other authors, both Greek and Mohammedan, in relating facts which themselves rest on undisputable evidence. We may instance the enormous armaments attributed to Darius and Xerxes in their invasions of Greece, and the incredible multitudes of human beings said to have been slaughtered by Zingis

Khan. In the sack and destruction of five cities alone, Merve, Nishapore, Herat, Rhé, and Bagdad, the number of persons put to death, according to the historians of Zingis, exceeds eight millions! But to attribute to distant countries like India such an advanced state of power, riches, and civilisation, at a period little more than a thousand years after the Flood,—and not only to call into existence such prodigious armies, but imagine they could be maintained in remote quarters of the globe, when the race of men were as yet but thinly scattered over any part of its surface, argues not only a strong disposition to romance, but a deficiency of all authentic records.

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

Of the long list of his successors little or nothing has been recorded by Ctesias, or at least by his transcribers, beyond their names, and that they pursued a line of policy similar to that of their progenitor. And here, again, there does appear a most conclusive objection to the authenticity of this portion of the narrative. That at any period of the world, a term of 1200 years should

have been occupied in one empire by a single family, in an unbroken line of consecutive sovereigns, whose reigns all extended to so unusual a length, is a fact unparalleled in history, and opposed to the course of human affairs: and that this long period should moreover have been so unproductive of great events as not to afford a single prominent occurrence to give the means of fixing a date, is a circumstance so entirely at variance with all probability, as to render the whole recital totally unworthy of credit.

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

It is at the termination of this monarch's reign and life that Ctesias has placed the destruction of Nineveh;

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

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

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

The conspirators raised their friends, and, gaining over many of the king's troops, attacked the royal army, but were defeated in three pitched battles. Belesis, however, relying on his astrological revelations, persevered; and, reinforced by the revolted troops of Bactria, surprised the army of Sardanapalus at a splendid festival,

* Dr Russell's Connection, vol. ii. c. 1. † Jonah, iv. 11.

and routed them with immense slaughter. The king fled to Nineveh, where, having laid up immense magazines, and trusting to the response of an oracle, which declared that the great city would never be taken until the river had become her enemy, he abandoned himself in fatal security to the indulgence of sloth, while the enemy blockaded his walls.

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

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

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

With its exception of the slight mention of Asshur as

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

The next mention in the inspired writings† of an Assyrian king is that of Pul, who was contemporary with Menahem king of Israel, B. C. 771, perhaps the Mandaces of Ctesias, and successor to Arbaces. The only fact recorded of this prince is that he invaded Syria, and received from the court of Samaria 1000 talents of silver, as the price of forbearance and future protection.

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

Shalmaneser, the Enemessar of Tobit, succeeded Tiglath-pileser, B. C. 726. Provoked by the rebellion of Hoshea king of Israel, who had been reduced to the condition of his tributary, and who had solicited the assistance of So king of Egypt to enable him to throw off the Assyrian yoke, he overran the country with a powerful army, laid siege to Samaria, which, at the end of three years, he took; and carrying all the people into captivity, he brought to a termination the independent existence of the ten tribes. He then proceeded against

* Judges, iii. 8.

† 2 Kings, xv. 29. 2 Chron. xxviii.

‡ 2 Kings, xv. 19.

§ 2 Kings, xvi. 9.

the cities of Sidon, Acre, Palætyrus, and others, which, revolting from the Tyrians, opened their gates; but he failed, after a struggle of five years, to gain possession of Tyre itself.

Sennacherib, possibly the Arbianes of Ctesias, makes his first appearance in sacred writ in the fourteenth year of the reign of Hezekiah king of Judah, B. C. 714, marching against the dominions of that prince, who had withheld the stipulated tribute. On this occasion, the Assyrian monarch not only compelled him to acknowledge his supremacy, and promise an annual payment of thirty talents of gold and 300 of silver, but, unsatisfied with these concessions, and with the treasure which the other was forced to strip from the house of God, he sent his generals, Tartan, Rabsaris, and Rab-shakeh, with a mighty host, to reduce Jerusalem itself. These men declared their master's will, taunted Hezekiah with his weakness, and warned him not to put his trust either in the power of Egypt or in the arm of Jehovah: for that the one was a broken reed that would pierce the hand of him who should lean thereon; and as for the other, "know ye not," said they, in the name of their master, "what I and my fathers have done unto all the people of other lands! Were the gods of the nations of those lands any ways able to deliver their lands out of mine hand, . . . that your God should be able to deliver *you* out of *mine* hand?"* Therefore did he summon the people to submit, that they might be taken to a land abounding with corn and oil, where they might live and not die.

It was on this memorable occasion that Hezekiah called upon the name of the Lord. And the arm of the Almighty was stretched forth; and, of the multitude of armed Assyrians that followed their king to battle, 185,000 men were in one night smitten dead. The rest, terror-struck, fled with their baffled monarch, and returned with speed to Nineveh; where, soured by disap-

* 2 Chron. xxxii. 13-15.

pointments, he became so cruel and tyrannical as to exhaust the endurance even of his own family, and was at length put to death by his two sons Adrammelech and Sharezer, while performing his devotions in the temple of Nisroch his god.*

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

These events have led some to regard Esarhaddon as the warlike Sardanapalus who resisted the efforts of his rebellious subjects with so much fortitude.§ That he was an equitable|| as well as a courageous prince seems probable, and his reverses in the north were counterbalanced by successes in the south-west; for he reduced Babylon,—whose king, Evil Merodach, had revolted from the Assyrian sway,—and then advanced into Syria, to recover the ground lost by his father. He took from the kingdom of Israel the few remaining subjects left by his ancestors, thus expunging it from the list of nations; and reducing that of Judah to utter dependence, carried its king Manasseh in chains to Babylon.¶ From thence he pursued his victorious career into Egypt and Ethiopia, making a multitude of captives,** and returned, having in a great degree revived the splendour of the Assyrian monarchy.

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

† Tobit, i. 21. ‡ Isaiah, xx. 1.

§ Ancient Universal History, vol. iv. pp. 327, 329.

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

¶ 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11. ** Isaiah, xx. 4.

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

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

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

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

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

‡ Judith, i. 16.

§ Ibid. vii. 3.

|| The authors of the Universal History advert to the probability of the story of Judith being fictitious. The point need

Assyrians, panic-struck at the loss of their leader, fled to their own country, pursued with great slaughter by the enemies they had despised.

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

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

not be discussed here ; we refer our readers, if curious on the subject, to that book, vol. iv. p. 172, and to Prideaux.

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

The empire, itself, however, was now no more ; the word of God had gone forth against it, and its power was withered,—its glory passed away. “ Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature ; and his top was among the thick boughs. The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high with her rivers running round about his plants, and sent out her little rivers unto all the trees of the field. Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long, because of the multitude of waters when he shot forth. All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations. Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches : for his root was by great waters. The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him : the fir-trees were not like his boughs, and the chesnut-trees were not like his branches ; nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty. I have made him fair by the multitude of his branches ; so that all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God, envied him. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Because thou hast lifted up thyself in height, and he hath shot up his top among the thick boughs, and his heart is lifted up in his height ; I have delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen ; he shall surely deal with him : I have driven him out for his wickedness. And strangers, the terrible of the nations, have cut him off, and have left him ; upon the mountains and in all the valleys his branches are fallen, and his boughs are broken by all

the rivers of the land; and all the people of the earth are gone down from his shadow, and have left him. Upon his ruin shall all the fowls of the heaven remain, and all the beasts of the field shall be upon his branches: to the end that none of all the trees by the waters exalt themselves for their height, neither shoot up their top among the thick boughs, neither their trees stand up in their height, all that drink water: for they are all delivered unto death, to the nether parts of the earth, in the midst of the children of men, with them that go down to the pit,"* &c.

* Ezekiel, xxxi. 3-14.

CHAPTER III.

Rise and Fall of the Babylonian Empire.

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

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

It has been already observed that the only authentic notice of what is generally supposed to have been the origin of the ancient Babylonian power—the first monarchy of the postdiluvian world—is contained in three verses of the 10th chapter of Genesis; that the lists of Chaldean and Arabian kings, given by Syncellus, Polyhistor, and Moses of Chorene, are entitled to no credit, because they rest not on any authentic ground; and

that there is no mention of any ruler of Babylon before Merodach Baladan, who, B. C. 710, wrote to Hezekiah.* Prior to this time, however, commences the canon of Ptolemy, the most valuable of uninspired records; and had the chronology of the previous period been certain, and the date of the first revolt of the Medes and Babylonians from the Assyrians under Arbaces and Belesis been accurately fixed, we might have expected to find the commencement of the Babylonian kingdom placed in the year B. C. 821, contemporary with that of the Medo-Assyrian, and Belesis named as the first sovereign. But historians have wisely preferred the accounts of Ptolemy, confirmed by occasional notices in sacred writ, to the less certain authority of other profane writers; and he appears to have discovered no king prior to Nabonassar.† It has been established by astronomical calculations that this monarch's reign began on Wednesday, the 26th of February, B. C. 747, in the twenty-third year after the appearance of Pul on the west of the Euphrates. This shows the kingdom to have been of Assyrian origin, and accords with what is stated by the prophet Isaiah,‡ "Behold the land of the Chaldeans: this people was not, till the Assyrian founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness: they set up the towers thereof, they raised up the palaces thereof."

It is uncertain who this prince was; but, as he was contemporary with Tiglath-pileser, some have supposed that he may have been his brother, a son of Pul king of Assyria. This, it is acknowledged, is entirely conjectural; and that he was tributary or subservient to Tiglath-pileser appears more certain. Indeed, the authors of the Universal History are inclined to think that the

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

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

‡ Chap. xxiii. 13.

Semiramis of the Greeks, if she ever did exist as queen of Babylon, must have been the wife of this prince, and that, as her husband commenced the city, she must have exerted herself after his death in beautifying it, from whence she obtained the reputation of being its founder. For the arguments by which this hypothesis is supported we must refer to the work itself.

Of the three monarchs who according to the canon next succeed, nothing is recorded; and Mardoch Empades, the Merodach Baladan of Scripture,* fifth on the list, is only remarkable as having held communication with the kings of Judah. He sent a special messenger to Hezekiah to congratulate him on his recovery from illness. The next who claims notice is Asaradin, the Esarhaddon of Scripture, who, we have seen, acquired fame as the warlike Sardanapalus of Assyria, and who possibly, on the race of Nabonassar becoming extinct or rebellious, B. C. 680, took possession of the sovereignty. It was he who utterly swept away the people of Israel, and carried Manasseh king of Judah with him in chains to Babylon. Of his successors, Saosducheus and Chyniladan, we have already spoken, as masters at once of Assyria and Babylon.

The most brilliant period of the Babylonian history now approached. Nabopolassar having broken the power, if not destroyed the city of Nineveh, removed the seat of empire to his capital. During the time when the forces of these allies were employed in repelling the Scythian invasion, Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt attempted to recover his former possessions in Syria; and in his way to besiege the city of Carchemish overthrew the King of Judah, who lost his life in the encounter.† Nabopolassar was succeeded by his son Nabocolassar (or Nebuchadnezzar), who, after driving out the Syrians, cooperated with Cyaxares in destroying Nineveh. Having

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

† 2 Chron. xxxv. 20-24.

resolved to punish other invaders, he marched at the head of a powerful army against the Egyptians, who had formed an alliance with the revolted tribes on the western bank of the Euphrates. In this enterprise he was not only successful, but on his return entered Judea, took Jerusalem, rifled the temple, and made the king a prisoner. The humble submission of the fallen Jehoiakim, and the promise of a yearly tribute, saved him from the fate of the other captives, who were sent in chains to Babylon. Pursuing his victorious career, he humbled Pharaoh; and after making himself master of the whole country between the Nile and the Euphrates he returned to Babylon, loaded with spoil and encumbered with captives, when he began to enlarge and embellish the seat of his growing empire.

In this he eminently succeeded, though he himself lived to experience the lowest degree of human degradation as well as of grandeur. His history is familiar to every reader of Scripture. The revelation which he had in the second year of his reign* was the commencement of a series of divine intimations which accompanied his career, and were not more remarkable in themselves than for the manner of their fulfilment. The dream in question troubled Nebuchadnezzar the more, because in the morning "the thing had gone from him;" and although, with the unreasonable caprice of a despotic prince, he threatened the Chaldeans, the magicians, and the wise men with death, unless they should interpret his vision, he could give them no aid whatever in describing its tenor or its nature.

The tyrannical mandate had already gone forth, and the soothsayers of Babylon trembled under the upraised sword of their executioners, when they were saved by the faith and courage of Daniel, a young Hebrew, who, with three of his companions, had by the command of the king been educated in the Magian sciences, and whose life was thus involved in the general sentence

* Daniel, ii.

of destruction. Remonstrating with the captain of the guard, who was intrusted with the execution of the royal decree, he boldly pledged himself to declare the interpretation to his majesty, and, together with his associates, prayed "to the God of heaven concerning this secret, and it was revealed unto Daniel in a night vision." And he returned thanks to the Lord, and blessed his name, and made known to the monarch both his dream and its interpretation.

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

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

* Chap. xxii. xxvi.

† Chap. xxvii.

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

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

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

But the hour of retribution and reverse drew nigh; for scarcely had he returned from this splendid career of victory, when his mind was again disturbed by a singular and ominous dream, which seemed to prefigure events so awful as to shake for a moment even the intrepid soul of the prophet who was called upon to interpret it. "Daniel was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him."‡ But recovering his equanimity, he lifted up his voice and boldly declared the will of the Most High,—the terrible sentence which drove the haughty monarch to herd with the beasts of the field. Nor was the fulfilment of this dreadful denunciation long deferred, although it appears that the humbling effect of its announcement had been but transitory. Only one year afterwards, we find the devoted ruler walking in the front of his palace, contemplating

* Ezekiel, xxvi. xxvii. xxviii.

† Ibid. xxix. 10.

‡ Daniel, iv. 19.

the mighty works of which he had been the author, with a heart, not filled with gratitude and veneration towards the Giver of all good for the unmerited prosperity which he had bestowed upon him, but swelling with pride and hardened with arrogance ; saying, " is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty ? " But " while the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken ; The kingdom is departed from thee : and they shall drive thee from among men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field : they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar ; and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws. And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation : and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing : and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth ; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou ? At the same time my reason returned unto me ; and, for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me : and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me ; and I was established in my kingdom ; and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise, and extol, and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment : and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."*

* Daniel, iv. 30-37.

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

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

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

* Daniel, v. 2.

† Jeremiah, lii. 31.

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

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

This statement, it is obvious, can refer to nothing more than the death of Belshazzar himself, which, according to Ptolemy's canon, occurred in the year B. C. 553, seventeen years before the final destruction of

* Cyropædia of Xenophon.

† Daniel, v. 30, 31.

Babylon, and not to the latter event, of which there is no distinct record in holy Scripture. The Darius here mentioned, and who must not be confounded with Cyrus, is supposed, with sufficient probability, to be Neriglissar the Mede, and chief conspirator, who seized the kingdom. That this conqueror continued to reign in Babylon after his accession to the throne, appears from the sixth chapter of Daniel, where he is represented as setting over his kingdom 120 princes, of whom the prophet himself was made the first ; while Cyrus is spoken of in the 10th chapter distinctly as *King of Persia*. That the sovereignty of Babylon existed independently of that of the Medes and Persians for a space after the death of Belshazzar, is therefore as clearly proved from Scripture as from the canon of Ptolemy and other profane writers. Indeed, the concurrence of known dates renders this obvious and apparent ; but, for further information upon this perplexing subject, we must again refer to the authors of the *Universal History*.*

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

But the day on which Babylon was doomed to fall had not yet arrived. What use the conquerors made of their victory does not appear ; but we find that the throne was next occupied by a youth, son of the late monarch, who by Berosus is called Laborosoarchod, and Labassoarasc by Abydenus.† In this respect they both

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

† *Ibid.* vol. iv. p. 418.

differ from Ptolemy's canon, where no such name intervenes between Nerglissar and the last king, Nabonadius. Perhaps it was in consequence of his very brief reign of only nine months that he has been omitted. He evinced a most vicious and cruel disposition, which is probably the cause which led to his assassination by Nabonadius.

The prince just named, the Labynetus of Herodotus, is understood to have been the son of Evil Merodach and of the celebrated Nitocris, who naturally enough was moved with indignation at seeing his country falling into ruin, and his people oppressed by the worthless heir of a usurper, who had excluded him from the throne. Yet to preserve, even for a season, his hereditary power, recovered by such violent means, was a painful struggle. The resources of the kingdom, though still sufficient to check the progress of certain invaders, had been greatly impaired by misrule, and were still in a declining state, while probably Nabonadius was not qualified, either by talents or disposition, to restore their efficiency. It appears, indeed, that his reign of seventeen years derived its chief lustre from the acts of his mother Nitocris, who exerted herself not only to embellish the city and improve the surrounding country, but to fortify it so as to resist the storm which she foresaw would come from the east. Many of her hydraulic operations were calculated to extend cultivation and increase the resources of the state; but she also added to the works of the capital, constructing walls along the river-banks, to prevent an enemy from gaining access in that way. Herodotus also ascribes to her the building of the bridge, which till her time had been wanting at Babylon. Of her death there is no particular mention, but it probably was the forerunner of the defeat of her son and the fall of the monarchy.

Cyrus, having at length not only established himself firmly on the throne of Persia, but reduced a great part of Asia to obedience, once more directed his arms against Babylon. Nabonadius attempted to oppose the great

warrior in the field, but was beaten back into the city, and immediately placed under close blockade. The immense strength and perfect state of the fortifications, not less than the condition of the magazines, which contained supplies sufficient for twenty years' consumption, inspiring the citizens with confidence, they gave themselves up to unbounded luxury and enjoyment. This unwise security suggested to Cyrus the means of their overthrow. Herodotus and Xenophon both relate, that after he had passed full two years before Babylon, and had even begun to despair of success, the incautious blindness of the inhabitants induced him to attempt a bold stratagem. On the night of an annual festival which they were wont to spend in drinking and jollity, he cut the bank of a canal which communicated with a great lake that had been formed to receive the superabundant waters of the Euphrates at the period of its flood. The river poured its contents into that reservoir, which was of capacity sufficient to receive them for a time; and placing strong bodies of troops at the points where the stream entered and quitted the city, which was divided by it into two parts, he commanded them, so soon as it should become shallow enough to admit of being forded, to enter by its channel. In the disorder of the night, the gates leading from each street to the bank had been left unclosed and unguarded. The Persians advanced unopposed; and the several parties, meeting at the palace, seized and put to death the king, on which the surviving inhabitants submitted to the conqueror.

Such was the termination of the Babylonian empire; and thus was commenced the fulfilment of that series of prophetic denunciations pronounced by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel. It is interesting to trace how closely the circumstances that are related of this event by profane historians correspond with and illustrate the narrative of sacred writ. Great obscurity, no doubt, still hangs over this interesting period; and chronologists are as much perplexed by the conflicting dates deduced

from various computations, as the historians have been puzzled by the numerous discrepancies that appear both in regard to names and persons in the records of different authors. But on this one important point there is no material dispute, namely, that the kingdom of Babylon, including the empire of Assyria, was finally subverted by Cyrus the Great, about the year 536 before the Christian era. It is equally manifest, that these powerful sovereignties never afterwards recovered a separate or independent existence, but passed as subordinate provinces to each succeeding conqueror that arose in the East. Alexander, indeed, entertained views of restoring the city to its ancient glory, and making it the metropolis of his immense dominions, but death prevented the accomplishment of his intentions. His successor, Seleucus, established a capital on the banks of the Tigris, but it endured only for a season, and is now, like the other, deserted and desolate. The followers of Mohammed also founded an empire, of which Mesopotamia and Assyria formed a portion; but, for their chief town, they avoided the proscribed site of Babylon, and built Bagdad on the Tigris. Yet, even their more recent power has passed away like that of their predecessors: the structures they erected have ceased to exist, and the modern inhabitants can scarcely point out where the palace of the caliphs once stood. "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency," is indeed "as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: . . . wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces. . . . How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!"*

It may, however, be interesting to trace with some-

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

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

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

Falling into the snare, they at once received and employed him. Some considerable successes over the Persian troops, which Darius connived at to cover the deceit, induced the inhabitants to intrust Zopyrus with a still more important charge, till at length the guard of the city ports was confided to his care. On the next assault the Cissian and Belidian gates were opened by him to the

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Persians, who thus, through the wiles of a pretended deserter, became a second time masters of Babylon. Resolved to provide against the chance of future rebellion, Darius crucified three thousand of the principal citizens, and beat down the walls, it is said, from the height of 200 cubits to fifty, which, if we admit the correctness of the former dimensions, may account for the difference on this head between the measurement given by Herodotus and that of Strabo. But he provided for the repopulation of Babylon by sending them 50,000 women to replace those they had murdered; and, to cherish a spirit of loyalty, gave them Zopyrus for their governor.

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

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

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

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

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

Saint Jerome, who resided in the East more than thirty years, about the beginning of the 4th century, speaks of Babylon as a preserve of game for the Persian kings; and Theodoret bishop of Cyrus, who died about A. D. 458, says that the city was no longer inhabited either by Assyrians or Chaldeans, but only by some

scattered Jews. He adds, that the Euphrates had changed its course, and no longer passed through the town except by means of a small canal.

From this time the city is no more mentioned but as a collection of shapeless ruins in a howling wilderness, the haunt of venomous creatures and beasts of prey; and so complete is the annihilation of all which might tell of the past, that tradition and science are equally unable to discover, among the heaps of dust and potsherds which attract the traveller's eye, even the site of the celebrated temple of Belus or the gigantic walls of Babylon.

CHAPTER IV.

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

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

Origin.—It will now be proper to place before our readers the little that is known of the origin, government, religion, laws, and customs of the ancient Assyrians and Babylonians. The sources of information on these subjects are much the same as those from whence the

general history is derived, and are neither less limited nor imperfect. From Scripture we know that Assyria was occupied by Asshur and his descendants, to whom, no doubt, it owes its name. We have the same authority for believing that a portion at least of Mesopotamia was possessed by Nimrod and his progeny; and an attempt has been made to prove that another section became the abode of Arphaxad the son of Shem, and his posterity.*

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

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

Derceto, the reputed mother of Semiramis, though of Mesopotamian origin, was recognised at Ascalon. The

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

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

The customs, arts, and trade of Assyria, having, so far as is known, been similar to those of Babylon, require no separate notice ; we shall therefore proceed at once to the consideration of these particulars in relation to the latter people.

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

Haughty and arrogant as they were, these autocrats were nevertheless obliged to have frequent communion with their nobles, with whom we find them occasionally feasting, and from whom were selected the chief officers who administered the government of the country. Of the duties of some of these functionaries we are incidentally informed by various authors ; and it appears that the judges were divided into three sections, and chosen from the gravest personages of the empire. On the first class devolved the regulation of marriage, and the punishment of all crimes which violated its sacred obligations ; the second took cognizance of robberies and thefts ; and the third decided in all civil affairs. We find also from

the book of Daniel that Nebuchadnezzar deputed his authority to princes, governors, captains, judges, treasurers, counsellors, and sheriffs, whose duty it was to maintain good order in all departments of the imperial service. Again, from the same source, we gather that the great king had a household corresponding in the extent of its establishment to his mighty state; including the captain of his guard, the prince of his eunuchs, the supreme judge, and the chief of the magicians, who were always in attendance. The first of these was the minister of his justice; the second had charge of the interior of the royal dwelling, and the education of the youth who were brought up within the palace; the third sat at the king's gate, that is, in an adjoining apartment, to hear complaints and to pass judgment; the last attended near his person, to interpret all omens and dreams, fix fortunate periods, and to satisfy the monarch's mind with regard to every thing that related to prognostication. All these were chosen on account of their personal qualities, as well as the excellence of their mental endowments. He was saluted with the oriental form of "O king! live for ever!" which resembles nearly the mode of address adopted at the present day towards the great sovereigns of Asia, whose courts, in respect of attendance and magnificence, bear a close resemblance to those of the Assyrian and Mesopotamian empires.

Of their laws nothing in detail appears to be known, except that strange and revolting arrangement, particularly described by Herodotus and Strabo, whereby it was provided that, instead of parents disposing of their own daughters in marriage, all young women should be brought to a public place appointed for the purpose, and put up for sale, one by one, to the highest bidder. The money thus obtained for the most beautiful was employed in obtaining husbands for those left without an offer, and who were disposed of in the same manner, with a premium proportioned to their want of personal attraction. But the historian informs us also that the whole business was conducted with the strictest attention

to decorum, being always under the superintendence of the officers appointed for this duty, respectable by their age and rank, and who, before the bargain was concluded, received security from each purchaser that he would marry the object of his choice.

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

The administration of their various religious rites was committed to the Chaldeans, who composed the hierarchy of the country, and engrossed the whole of their boasted learning. They were not only the priests, but formed the scientific body of the nation, pretending to the gift of prophecy, a knowledge of augury and divination, and the power, by means of enchantment, of influencing the destinies of men. By these means they acquired a most dangerous influence over their superstitious countrymen; but who these Chaldeans originally were, is a problem that has never yet been satisfactorily solved, although frequently made the subject of much learned discussion. Even the stock from which they sprung, and the land where they first acquired power, are matters still involved in darkness. From the profane writers of antiquity we gain little knowledge on the subject; and although they are frequently mentioned in Scripture, the notices are isolated, and sometimes obscure. Thus far it is certain, that they were a distinct nation, as far back as the days of Terah the father of Abraham, who lived "in Ur of the Chaldees;" and it may be inferred from a statement in the book of Job* that they were a predatory race. Yet the prophet Isaiah, it might be thought, must have had some other people in his view when he said,† "Behold the land of

* Chap. i. 17.

† Chap. xxiii. 13.

the Chaldeans: this people *was not*, till the Assyrian founded it for them that *dwell in the wilderness.*" Could this have been applied to a tribe who lived in Mesopotamia in the days of Terah and Abraham?

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

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

This learned author supposes that the descendants of Noah did not quit the land of Armenia at an early period after the Flood, but that the patriarch lived and died in the vicinity of the spot whence he issued from the ark. No sooner did his personal influence cease to be felt, than divisions took place among his progeny, which disposed the different families or clans to a separation. Nimrod, a man of an ambitious spirit and powerful

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

mind, being surrounded by his kindred, who regarded him with devotion, naturally controlled the councils of the whole body, who, passive and disunited, easily submitted to his sway. To restrain the turbulent, laws soon became necessary, as well as officers to administer and an armed police to enforce them. These statutes were framed of course by the great leader, whose family constituted the magistrates, and from whose tribe were chosen the conservators of the peace ; who, thus armed, and formed into a disciplined band, became the first military establishment—an irresistible engine in the hands of the mighty hunter.

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

Such was Nimrod, the leader of the Noachites, and on such a basis was his power constituted, when, according to our author, he led the unbroken nation of mankind, about 559 years after the Flood, from the country of Armenia into the plains of Shinar, and about 54 years later commenced the tower and city of Babel. This undertaking, a short time afterwards, was brought to an abrupt conclusion by divine interposition ; whence followed the ordained dispersion of mankind.

The moral effect of so severe a blow upon such a proud

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

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

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

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

The Chaldeans, then, according to Mr Faber, were

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

those descendants of Cush who, under Nimrod, built Nineveh and founded what has been called the Assyrian empire, but really the Cuthic; and the first Chaldean dynasty he supposes to coincide with that of the seven monarchs mentioned by Eusebius and Syncellus—and which lasted 224 years, or according to Alexander Polyhistor only 190—and with the Mahabadians of the Iranians. To these he adds the list of kings given by Ctesias, which, commencing with Ninus, terminates with Thonos Concoerulus; and from this results a line of sovereigns of the Cuthic lineage, extending through a space of 1495 years from Nimrod. These positions he endeavours to establish at great length and with much ingenuity; dwelling particularly on a passage of Justin, quoted from Trogus Pompeius, which mentions a Scythian race of kings, who, prior to the era of Ninus, coming from the north, and extending their sway even to Egypt, were the dominant power for some time in India. These he contends were the imperial Cuthim, for they must have been Nimrodic monarchs: and thus, says he, “we may be morally sure that the descent of the Scythians from the Armenian Caucasus, previous to their acquiring the sovereignty of Asia, really means, however it may be disguised, *the descent of the Cushim, at the head of the subjugated Noachidæ, from Mount Ararat into the Babylonian plain of Shinar*, and that the national appellation of Scythians or Scuthim is the selfsame word, pronounced only with a sibilant prefix, as Cuthim or Cushim.”*

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

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

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

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

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

* Gen. xi. 1-9.

ancient Chaldeans; considering the latter term as an abbreviation of the Hebrew patronymic Arphacaddim, that is, the children or descendants of Arphaxad.*

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

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

In both these points, it is true, Mr Beke is opposed by high authority. The learned Bochart ridicules Josephus and others, when they maintain that the Chaldeans were formerly called Arphaxadites, and insists that they

* *Origines Biblicæ*, vol. i. p. 107.

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

derive their name from Chased or Chesed, the son of Nahor, brother of Abraham, who was their progenitor, and from whom in the ancient Scripture they are always called Chasdim. In confirmation of this he quotes Hieronymus, who says that "Chased also is the fourth, from whom the Chasdim, that is the Chaldeans, were afterwards called;" from whence too, Ur Chasdim, that is, Ur of the Chaldees, is always described as the region or city in which he dwelt. He confesses indeed that Chased was not born at the time when we read that Abraham went forth from Ur of the Chaldees; but that the city was so called by anticipation,—a figure he says common in Scripture, as the one from which that celebrated people *were* to spring. Arphaxad, he adds, appears to have given his name to that part of Assyria, called by Ptolemy Arrapachitis.*

Enough has now been stated to show the difficulties of this subject, which would be perplexed rather than elucidated by the recital of further conjectures. But notwithstanding this obscurity, there is no doubt that the Chaldeans, as the dominant people in ancient Babylon, possessed all power and learning, as well as the influence which belonged to the priesthood. Whether their idolatry commenced with the era of the dispersion or not, it probably arose in the manner common to all such superstitions. The Almighty, invisible to mortal eye, was worshipped through the medium of his most glorious works; and thence sprung Sabaism,—the adoration of the heavenly host.

To this simple and pure veneration another element was soon added. The souls of those kings who had greatly distinguished themselves on earth were regarded after their death as protecting spirits, who continued to watch over their people and families upon earth. From heroes they were transformed to demi-gods, and at length, each was identified with some one of the heavenly host. The

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

founder of their race, or he who was regarded as such, was represented by the sun ; and a female influence, naturally provided as his consort, took her place in the mythological character, as the moon. The other chief personages received various names and titles, suiting their several characters ; but all might be resolved into the one original idea.

The Chaldeans, according to Berossus,* taught that there were kings who ruled at Babylon before the deluge, the amount of whose reigns were 120 sari, or 432,000 years, each saros being a period of 3600. The last of these was Xisuthrus, at the termination of whose reign of eighteen sari came the deluge. In the time of the third of these antediluvian monarchs appeared Oannes Annetodus, an amphibious creature, half man, half fish, who ascended by day from the Erythrean Sea, and instructed the assembled multitudes of mankind. He taught that there was a time when all things were darkness and waters wherein resided monsters of various sorts, with snakes, reptiles, and fishes. Over these presided Omoroca, a female who long reigned in gloomy and solitary independence ; but at length Belus came and cut her asunder, and out of one half of her body was formed the earth, while the other half became the heavens ; upon which all the monsters were annihilated. This, he said, was an allegory, conveying to them the aqueous origin of the universe ; for that Omoroca was the same as *Thalath*, or the sea, although the word might also mean the moon. Afterwards, seeing that the earth wanted living beings, he commanded one of the gods to cut off his head, and the other gods, mixing the blood with earth, formed the human species from the compound. This same Belus, whom men also call Dis, or Pluto, divided the darkness from the light, and separated the earth from the heavens,—disposed the world in order, and called forth the starry host.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

To these may be added Rach, Nego or Nergal, Mero-dach, and many others that have not reached our time, who were objects of worship to the capricious Babylonians, whose city appears to have been the resort of all idols.

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

With regard to the manners and customs of the Babylonians, the little information we possess is collected from the writings of Herodotus, Strabo, Berosus, Quintus Curtius, and other ancient authors, who quote principally from one another, and who, doubtless, chiefly recorded those things which seemed strange to them, and in which the people of Babylon differed from other nations. But we hear nothing of their employments, their domestic habits, or of those minute observances that make up the greater portion of human life. We learn, indeed, that the people were peculiarly credulous, superstitious, and immoral,—that they were gorgeous in their apparel, expensive in their establishments, affecting even a degree of effeminacy in their dress and adornments. Their under-garment was of linen, reaching to their heels; over this they wore a vestment of woollen, and above all, a white mantle or cloak, often

very expensively ornamented. They wore their own long hair, their heads being covered with a tiara or mitre. They anointed their bodies with oil of sesamum, and were particularly lavish of perfumes. Each man carried on his finger a seal-ring,* and in his hand a staff or sceptre, which, by law, was adorned on the head with some badge or figure, as a rose, a lily, an eagle, a beast; and their feet were shod with a sort of slipper, such as is observed in the sculptures at Persepolis. It is almost unnecessary to observe, that this account applies only to the latter period of the empire, and not to the earlier times, when their manners must have been more simple, the public mind more energetic, and habits of vice less prevalent.

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

But whatever may have been its source, it is manifest that their science in later times was stationary. They

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is likewise manifest that they had musical instruments and performers, as in the book of Daniel we read of flutes, cornets, harps, sackbuts, psalteries, and dulcimers ; but we are ignorant of their real form ; and it is not improbable that they bore some resemblance to those used by the rude band, now called the *Nokara Khaneh*, which in Persia and other eastern countries, plays at stated times over the gateway of the royal palace.

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

That they were skilful in the working of metals and in the cutting of stones and gems, appears not only from the uses they made of these substances in their palaces, temples, and houses, but from the fragments which are even at this remote period occasionally found among the ruins of Babylon and other cities of Mesopotamia.

They were also celebrated for their manufacture of linen and woollen. The cloaks called *sindones*, usually made of cotton, were highly valued for fineness of texture and brilliancy of colour, insomuch that they were commonly set apart for royal use. Their carpets of finest fabric and most splendid dyes, also their gorgeous drapery and embroideries, were equally famous. The former were in great request in Persia, where every bed and couch were covered with them.

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

That the commerce of ancient Babylon must have been very great, is unquestionable. The riches and luxury of the country alone afford sufficient proof of this ; and assuredly no city of that period could boast of a more advantageous position as a trading entrepôt. Built upon one and commanding the navigation of two noble streams, both leading to the Persian Gulf, and surrounded by populous districts, nothing was wanting to encourage a spirit of adventure ; and that such did exist to a very great extent we know, though of the exact nature and particulars of the commerce itself we have no detailed account. The natives were fond of magnificence and full of artificial wants,—costly in dress, perfumes, ornaments, and in their general habits of life. Their own country did not produce the articles they consumed in such abundance, and they must therefore have imported them ; and as the land around afforded little to give in return, the means of purchasing must have arisen in part from the profits of trade and barter.

It is known also that many of the early sovereigns gave great encouragement to merchandise as well as to agriculture. Gerrha, supposed to have been near the

site of the modern El Katif, was a commercial station ; Teredon on the Pallacopas was founded by Nebuchadnezzar ; and Semiramis is said to have built towns upon the banks of the Tigris, as marts for Media and Persia.

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

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

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

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

But the commerce with Armenia was chiefly maintained by the river Euphrates on rafts of timber bound upon inflated hides, or in rude boats. These were loaded with wine and other produce of the country, and when they reached Babylon were sold, together with the commodities which they conveyed, the force of the stream

* Historical Researches, vol ii. p. 203.

rendering it impossible for them to return up the river. The owners, however, carefully preserved the skins, which were folded upon asses or mules, and carried back by land. This traffic is described as having been prosecuted to a great extent.

But the main branch of trade was undoubtedly that with India and the countries beyond the Gulf. This was carried on of course in ships, many of which, it may be presumed, were the property of Chaldean merchants; for that this people possessed a mercantile navy is not only alluded to in Scripture,* but is rendered certain from many incidental notices preserved to us in the Greek writers. Still there is reason, as Heeren observes, for believing that much of this intercourse was conducted by the Phœnicians, who had settlements on the eastern coast of Arabia and were the great carriers between India and Babylon.†

The principal objects of this trade were frankincense and drugs, spices, especially Ceylon cinnamon, ivory, ebony, fragrant woods, precious stones, pearls, gum-lac for dye, robes, gold and gold dust, and Indian dogs; which last were greatly in demand all over Central Asia. One of the satraps of Babylon is said to have devoted the revenue of four towns to their maintenance; and Xerxes carried an immense number along with him when he invaded Greece.

The chief places in the East to which this navigation was directed, were on the western coasts of the Indian peninsula, — to Crocola, now Curachee, probably to Barygaza, now Baroach, and to Ceylon.

Heeren speaks of certain ports in the gulf which were places at once of produce and of commerce. Tylos, an island according to Ptolemy fifty miles from the Bay of Gerrha, supplied walking-sticks, and timber for ship-building,‡ the Aradus and Daden of the Hebrew poets.

* Isaiah, xliii. 14.

† Historical Researches, vol. ii. p. 246.

‡ There is no island of the gulf which now produces any timber.

Bahrein must then as now have supplied abundance of pearls.

The trade to Persia and Bactria afforded to the Babylonians many articles both of luxury and manufacture. Carmania (Kerman) sent its wool; Bactria, lapis-lazuli, emeralds, rubies, and other precious stones; Cabul, onyxes and sardines; Khorasan, turquoises; and though not mentioned particularly by any author, there is no doubt that the various commodities which form the lading of caravans at this day were then equally objects of commerce. Their saffron, indigo, and assafetida, with the various gums and drugs, dyes, and manufactures of Upper India, as well as of the countries between it and Persia, were brought in abundance to Babylon, not only for consumption there but for transit to the coasts of the Mediterranean. Cotton and wool must have been required to a great extent, for their manufactures; and even silk, as some suppose, may have found its way from China.

CHAPTER V.

Antiquities—Babylon.

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

It is obvious, from the slight sketch we have given of the history of the countries under consideration, that the great interest they possess attaches to the early period of their existence, when they were the seats of empire, populous and rich, and covered with cities, towns, and villages, of which now in many cases not even the names remain. Before, therefore, describing the country in its present decayed condition, it is fit that our attention should be turned to the vestiges of that fallen greatness; the venerable remains of departed

prosperity which meet the traveller's eye in every quarter,—in the alluvial plains of Babylonia as well as in the rocky mountains of Assyria. In describing the most prominent of these, we shall endeavour, by examining what time has spared, and making use of the imperfect lights which history or tradition presents, to compare in some degree the brilliant past with the desolate present, and trace in the obscure mounds and shattered walls that now encumber the land, the abodes of generations who once were among the wise and mighty of the earth.

Of these vestiges no place affords a more abundant display than Babylonia and Chaldea, the Irak-Arabi of the Mohammedans. Not only are the ruins of the ancient capital, the first and probably the greatest city of the world, to be found within their precincts, together with those of Seleucia, Ctesiphon, Orchoe, and Waasut ; but the whole plain is thickly covered with traces of former habitations. Scarcely, indeed, is there a single rood of ground which does not exhibit some fragment of brick, or tile, or glass, or sepulchral urn, to tell that man has lived in a region which now presents to the eye but one vast expanse of arid desert,—a howling wilderness, where the only evidence that he still exists is afforded by the black Bedouin tent or the wandering camel which here and there dots its dreary surface.

Among these numerous vestiges the mounds of ancient Babylon claim of course the first place in interest and importance ; and we shall accordingly proceed to consider it as it was and is. But, before attempting a description of this great city, there are some preliminary questions which can scarcely fail to suggest themselves as involving considerations of the highest interest, and which it is therefore proper to examine.

In the first place, are we to consider the ruins which are now very generally admitted to be the remains of the Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar, as occupying also the position of the Tower of Babel, and the first city of the postdiluvians ? Do any one of the mounds which now

meet the traveller's eye represent the relics of that earliest architectural effort of the human race? Or did the Babel of Nimrod, the capital of the mighty hunter, occupy the same spot as the metropolis of the Chaldæo-Babylonians?

These questions lead directly to another, on the solution of which the replies to them must mainly depend, namely, whether the land of Shinar, mentioned in the book of Genesis, is identical with the Babylonia of more recent times? To the consideration of this point we shall first address ourselves.

Many learned disquisitions have been promulgated upon this subject, and various results embraced by their authors. The opinion most commonly received is, that the plains of Babylonia do really represent the land of Shinar. Some writers, however, are disposed to deny this proposition; and among these Mr Beke has endeavoured to prove not only that the territory of Babylonia is not identical with the land of Shinar, but that we must look for that land in Upper Mesopotamia; and he is inclined to fix it in the plains about Ur* or Orfa, in the province of Diar-Modzar. But there are better data on which to proceed in examining this question; and Mr Ainsworth, in his "Researches," has furnished proof, first, that the country, indicated by Mr Beke as answering to the Shinar of the postdiluvians, agrees in no particular with the description of that land in Scripture; and, secondly, that the alluvial formations of Babylonia did not, at the period when the Tower of Babel was built, differ greatly in extent, consistence, or natural appearance from their condition at the present day. In regard to the first point, it may be sufficient to remark, that the whole of Upper Mesopotamia, with the exception of particular and limited spots, consists of gravelly tracts intersected by ranges of hills, in no place affording an expanse of flat country answering to the Scriptural account of Shinar. The only two level tracts

* See the map annexed to his work.

of great extent are those which stretch eastward from the Khabour and south from Sinjar to the Hamrine range of hills ; and both of these, so far as is known, are rather of a gravelly than an alluvial character, and in no case far removed from mountains. Now we are especially told in Scripture that the builders of the Tower of Babel used bricks, well burned in the fire, instead of stones, and slime or bitumen for mortar. But in no part of Upper Mesopotamia could there have been occasion for such expedients, the two last-named materials being far less abundant than stone and mortar ; whereas in the alluvial district of Babylonia the use of brick would become a measure of necessity ; and the ever-flowing fountains of Hit, which unquestionably furnished the bituminous cement for the capital of Nebuchadnezzar, were at hand to supply the builders of Babel with the same ingredient.

These considerations may serve perhaps to prove that, notwithstanding the tempting lure which the name of Sinjar or Singara holds out to etymologists, the position of that land must be sought for at a lower point in the valley of the Euphrates, if indeed the whole country, from the Sinjar hills downwards to the sea, did not in those early times pass under the same name. In fact, the geological researches of Mr Ainsworth supply us with the means of showing, that the early postdiluvians could have had no such serious obstacles to contend with in choosing the locality which is generally believed to have been the scene of their daring attempt. We shall not follow him through the elaborate inquiry of which he has given us the result. It goes chiefly to prove that the large beds of breccia and gravel which abound throughout Mesopotamia, must have been brought to their present situation by the agency of water, at some period *antecedent* to the Deluge of Scripture : first, because these beds in many places *underlie* formations of a plutonic character, which must have been produced by physical convulsions, of which there exists no record since that event ; secondly, because these gravelly for-

mations extend in the valley of the Euphrates to a distance *below* the site of ancient Babylon, having been discovered at Iskenderia, in the ancient bed of the Pallacopas, and to the west of Semava ; and thirdly, because there is every reason for believing the greater part of the alluvium of Babylonia and Chaldea to have been formed by the Flood, and to have experienced little alteration since the progress of alluvial encroachment upon the waters of the gulf by the washings of the rivers became comparatively slow. Mr Ainsworth proves, that, reckoning from the time when Babylon attained its high rank as a city, a period of 2600 years, the increase of land by the deposition of alluvium at the head of the gulf, into which the Euphrates, Tigris, and all the rivers of Susiana empty their waters, has not exceeded the rate of thirty yards per annum.

Thus it may be considered as established, both that the Shinar of Scripture, or at least the portion of it referred to in the 10th chapter of Genesis, was not in Upper Mesopotamia, and also that it lay further down the valley of the Euphrates, in an alluvial soil, and in the neighbourhood of bituminous springs. A full consideration of all the circumstances detailed, will, we think, lead to the conclusion that the Tower of Babel and first city of the postdiluvians must have been founded on some spot not very distant from the ruins of Babylon which are seen at this day. Whether that celebrated structure did actually occupy the exact position of those mounds that now attract the traveller's eye, is a point which, from the scanty information we possess, will never in all human probability be decided.

Adopting, however, the reasoning of Mr Rich, in his first Memoir on the ruins of Babylon, it may be observed that there is no Scriptural authority for supposing that the building was destroyed at the time of the dispersion of mankind, although its further progress was arrested. We learn that the Babel of Nimrod was certainly placed in the land of Shinar, and there appears nothing unreasonable in the supposition that the city of the

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dispersed might continue to be the abode of the mighty hunter and of his descendants; while those who, in a later age, undertook to raise a monument to the honour of Belus may have availed themselves of the labours of their forefathers as a foundation for their own. At the same time, it may be remarked that there are no grounds for even conjecturing to what extent the building had proceeded when stopped by the interposition of the Almighty, or whether it had attained a magnitude calculated to impart an enduring grandeur to its ruins.

Assuming, then, that the Babel of the postdiluvians did actually occupy the same or nearly the same place as the mounds which represent the Babylon of a subsequent period, a step at least will be gained towards establishing the positions of the other cities of the kingdom of Nimrod, "Erech, and Accad, and Calneh," in the land of Shinar. Recent researches, both geographical and historical, have induced several learned persons to fix the sites of these ancient cities as follows:

Accad is supposed to be represented by the huge mound of Akkerkoof, above six miles from Bagdad, and the smaller ones by which it is surrounded.

Erech, by the still more imposing remains known by the name of Workha, in Chaldea Proper, below Lemlum.

Calneh, is referred to the site of Ctesiphon or Madayn, which cities have of course obliterated all vestiges of a prior state.

The proofs on which these conclusions rest are not as yet before the public; and it would exceed the bounds of a work like this to give in detail a chain of evidence and reasoning which, it is to be hoped, will soon appear in a perfect shape. But, with regard to the first, it may be mentioned that, while the remains of ancient embankments, canals, and other buildings, fragments of pottery, glass, and similar substances, no less than the nature of its structure and materials, attest its having in very remote times been a place of great importance, the name applied to it by several ancient authors approaches to

that of the ancient city of Nimrod. Thus, in the text of the Talmud, it is called *Aggada*, and the learned Hyde quotes from Maimonides the expression “Extat Aggada tres annos natus” in reference to this spot. That the Accad of Scripture should be found in the vicinity of Babel was to be expected; and it is worthy of remark that the Akkerkoof of the Arabs is by the Turks called Aker-i-Nimrod or Akree-Babel.

The name of Erech appears to be well preserved in the present appellation of Irkah, Irakh, or Workha; while its locality with reference to that of Babel as now assumed, appears confirmatory of the conjecture that it commemorates the second-mentioned city of Nimrod. Yet it is possible that it may represent only the Orchoe of the Chaldeans instead of Umgeyer, or Mugeyer, a ruin hitherto unknown or undescribed, and which by some is conceived to occupy the ground of that city; while, on the other hand, the term Orchoe may be nothing more than a modification of the ancient Erech, and Workha or Irkha a more modern pronunciation of both.

The comparative vicinity of the site of Ctesiphon to that of ancient Babel may, in like manner, lend plausibility to the conjecture which places the Calneh of Nimrod's kingdom on the ground afterwards occupied by the former; and it is further strengthened by the appellation of Chalonitis, subsequently borne by the whole district, which was the seat of one of the early bishoprics. Yet, even in the position of Chalonitis there appears to be a doubt; for Isidore of Charax, himself a native of that quarter, says that Apolloniatis commenced at Seleucia, extending eastward thirty-three shæni or parasangs, the city of Artemita, then called Chalar, being distant fifteen of these measures from Seleucia, nearly direct east. From thence,—that is, from the boundary of Apolloniatis,—stretches Chalonitis, twenty-one shæni broad, of which a Greek city, Chala, is the capital, fifteen shæni from Apolloniatis, and 156 miles east of Seleucia. Five shæni east from it is Mount

Zagros, the boundary between Chalonitis and the territory of the Medes.*

That any portion of the mounds now seen, or the sites we have described, belong to those earliest cities of the world, which are presumed to have been there erected, it would be more than rash to affirm. On the contrary, it is almost certain, that in the long period of more than 4000 years which have elapsed since Nimrod founded his kingdom in Shinar, every portion of the original fabrics must have mouldered into dust, and that the huge mounds which astonish us in various parts,—such as the Birs Nimrod, Akkerkoof, Workha, Mugeyer, Sunkhera, Zibliyeh, Jibel Sanam, and others,—belong all to far later, though still very remote ages, and were temples erected at the instance of the Chaldean priesthood, in the days succeeding Bel or Pul, to the honour of their various deities.

From the consideration of these heaps of dust and potsherds, it is now time to turn our eyes for a while to the Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar, “the glory of the kingdoms,” “the golden city,” “the praise of the whole earth,” which the arrogant monarch, in the days of his impious pride, declared that he had built by the might of his power and for the honour of his majesty.

But in order to form some idea of this splendid metropolis, we must have recourse to other sources besides Scripture; for, although we find in the sacred volume many direct allusions to the great power of the empire, and the magnificence of its capital,—its walls, its palaces, its temples, and its idols of massy gold,—to give a detailed description of Babylon, in its high and palmy state, formed no part of the design contemplated by the inspired writers. We must therefore turn to the pages of Herodotus, Ctesias, Strabo, and Diodorus, where we shall find ample materials.

These authors all describe the city as having been

* Two Essays on the Geography of Ancient Asia. By the Rev. John Williams. 8vo, Lond. 1829, p. 58

in form a square, each side of which, according to the first of them, extended 120 stadia, or about fifteen miles. But as the accounts differ greatly in regard to the dimensions and extent of the walls, the following table, taken from Rennell's Geography of Herodotus, will serve to give at a glance the results of the several authorities :—

	Circuit of Walls.		Height of Walls.		Breadth of Walls.	
	Stadia.	Cubits.	Feet.	Cubits.	Feet.	
Herodotus	480	200	300	50	75	
Ctesias	360	*	300	...	...
Pliny	480	...	...	...	...
Clitarchus	365	...	...	...	...
Curtius	368	100	150	...	32	
Strabo	385	50	75	...	32	

The walls, according to the old historian, were protected from approach by a large wet ditch, the mud from which served to form the bricks that were used in the building. These were cemented together with melted bitumen, and the moat was lined with the same materials. In each side of the square there were twenty-five portals, making 100 in all, which were furnished with gates of brass. On the summit of the wall, between each two of these gateways, were built three towers: there was one at each corner, and three between each corner and the first gate, all of them rising ten feet above the parapet of the wall. In some parts, however, where the line led through a morass, these towers were omitted, as unnecessary for defence, so that there were but 250 in all. Within the walls there was left a space of 200 feet clear of houses, forming a spacious pathway all round. The city was intersected by straight streets, running from each gate on either side to that corresponding opposite, so that the whole area of it was divided by fifty streets—each fifteen miles long, and crossing each other at right angles—into 676 squares. Around these stood the houses, not contiguous, but with spaces between them, and all three or four stories high, having their fronts ornamented in various ways. The

* Fifty orgya are given; it should probably be fifty cubits.

interior of each square was laid out in fields and gardens, so that more than half the space within the walls was occupied by cultivated land.

Babylon was intersected by a branch of the Euphrates, which, running from north to south, divided it into two parts, each of its banks being lined by a breast-work or wall of burned brick, in which were small portals furnished with gates of brass corresponding to each of the streets. These parts were united in the middle of the city by a bridge thirty feet in breadth, and not less than a furlong in length,* and built with much ingenuity. At each end of this bridge, according to some authors, there was a palace, the old and the new,—the former, on the east side, occupying four of the square divisions, that is, being three miles and three quarters in circumference; the latter on the west, covering nine of them, that is, having a circuit of seven and a half miles. The temple of Belus, which filled a single square, rose near the former. Herodotus mentions but one of these palaces, stating that it stood in an enclosed circular space at one end of the bridge,—the temple of Belus, with its brazen gates, standing in the other. The new palace, according to Diodorus, was a place of vast strength surrounded by three walls, having considerable vacancies between them, and each, as well as those of the old palace, being embellished with a variety of sculptures.

To this new structure, which, it is pretended by Berossus, was but the work of fifteen days, were attached what have been called the hanging gardens, built by Nebuchadnezzar, to gratify his wife Amytis, a Median lady. These occupied a square of four plethra, or 400 feet on each side, and are described as rising in terraces one above another, till they attained the height of the city walls; the ascent to each terrace being by a flight

* Diodorus states that it was five furlongs in length, while according to Strabo the Euphrates at Babylon was only one furlong broad. The bridge may, however, have been of such a length as to connect the two portions of the city in the event of a flooding of the river.

of steps ten feet wide, the pile resting upon a series of arches, tier above tier, and strengthened by a surrounding wall twenty-two feet thick. The floors were formed by a pavement of stones, each sixteen feet long by four broad, over which two courses of brick, cemented together with plaster, were laid in a bed of bitumen; over these were spread thick sheets of lead; and on this solid terrace was placed suitable mould, deep enough to nourish and support the largest trees. On the highest of these terraces was a reservoir, which, being filled by an engine from the river, served to water the plants. Such, according to Diodorus, were the celebrated hanging gardens of Babylon erected by Nebuchadnezzar. The temple of Belus, which, at all events, was enlarged and embellished by that monarch, is described by Herodotus as two furlongs square, in the midst of which rose a tower of the solid depth and height of one furlong, upon which, resting, as a base, seven other turrets were built in like manner and in regular succession. The ascent, which was on the outside, winding from the ground, was continued to the highest tower, and in the middle of the vast structure there was a convenient resting-place. In the last tower was a large chapel, in which was placed a couch, magnificently adorned, and near it a table of solid gold; but there was no statue. No man was suffered to sleep there; but the apartment was occupied by a female, who, as the Chaldean priests affirmed, was selected by their deity from the whole nation, as the object of his pleasures. "They themselves," adds the historian, "have a tradition, which cannot easily obtain credit, that their deity enters this temple, and reposes by night on this couch."

In the temple there was also a small chapel, which contained a figure of Jupiter, in a sitting posture, with a large table before him. These, with the base of the table, and the seat of the throne, were all of the purest gold, and were estimated to be worth 800 talents. On the outside of the chapel there were two altars; one was of gold, on which only young animals were sacrificed; the other was of immense size, and appropriated to the

sacrifice of those which were full grown. Upon this, too, at the annual festival in honour of their god, the priests are said to have consumed incense to the amount of 1000 talents. In this temple there was formerly a statue of solid gold, twelve cubits high; a fact the historian mentions from information given by the Chaldeans, not from his own knowledge, which would seem to imply that his other descriptions were drawn from personal observation. Darius, the son of Hystaspes, he adds, endeavoured by sinister means to obtain possession of this statue, not daring openly to take it; but his son Xerxes afterwards seized it, putting to death the priest who endeavoured to prevent its removal.

Besides those gigantic works, there were others of less show, but much more important to the prosperity of the capital and its surrounding territory, which were constructed or completed by Nebuchadnezzar or other sovereigns of the Chaldæo-Babylonian dynasty. Such were the noble system of canals, which are alluded to by Herodotus, and several of which are mentioned by ancient historians,—the Nahr Malikah, the Pallacopas, the Nahrawan, and the Dijeil of later times. To these may be added the great artificial lake, the huge embankments, and the subterraneous passage or tunnel under the Euphrates, attributed by Diodorus, on the authority of Ctesias, to the great Semiramis; by Berosus, Abydenus, and others, to Nebuchadnezzar; and by Herodotus to Queen Nitocris, who, we have reason to believe, was the wife of Evil Merodach, although the historian mentions neither the name of her consort nor of her predecessor.

Of these canals Herodotus speaks in terms of approbation, but seems to consider them as formed rather as a means of defence than of agricultural improvement; for he says, that by their disposition they rendered the Euphrates, which before flowed to the sea in an almost even line, so complicated in its windings, that in its passage to Babylon it arrived three times at Ardericca, an Assyrian village, at which all persons wishing to go from the sea to the capital were compelled to touch on three different days. The banks, too, which she raised

to restrain the river on each side, were, he says, really wonderful from their enormous height and substance. The earth used for them was taken from an immense lake which she dug,—the circumference of which was not less than 420 furlongs (about forty-two miles),—and the banks were strengthened by stones brought from a distance.

One use of this lake, he remarks, was to receive the waters of the Euphrates, which were turned into it, so that the bed below becoming dry, she was enabled to erect a bridge over the channel; previous to which period, all persons desiring to cross from the one half of the city to the other were forced to make use of boats. To have been available for this purpose, the lake must doubtless have communicated with some of the low marshy tracts to the southward, by which the water made its way to the sea, or was absorbed by the sand; and it may now be represented by some of those very tracts south-west of Babylon, as, however large, it could scarcely have absorbed the river for a time sufficient to admit of the construction of a bridge over so broad a stream. It proved in the sequel a fatal work to the city, as it was by a repetition of that very operation that Cyrus gained an entrance, and wrested it and the empire from King Labynetus.

With regard to the population of this great metropolis, and the extent of inhabited ground contained within its walls, a great deal has been written, and various opinions entertained. D'Anville, upon a calculation of what he conceives to be the most probable data, reduces its area to thirty-six square miles; while Rennell, following a similar method, inclines to assume for its extent a square of eight and a half British miles, or seventy-two square miles, observing, that even this estimate is far below the one in Herodotus, which would give an area of 126 square miles, or about eight times that of London. It is not, however, to be imagined that the whole of this enclosure was covered with houses; on the contrary, we learn that the interior of every division was occupied by gardens,—and Quintus Curtius, particularly, limits

the space under building to eighty stadia, adding, "nor do the houses join, perhaps from motives of safety; the remainder of the place is cultivated, that, in the event of a siege, the inhabitants may not be compelled to depend upon supplies from without." What the eighty stadia of Curtius may have meant, it is by no means certain; but this much is sure, that a great limitation was intended of the inhabited space within the walls. It is very well known, that most oriental cities usually contain a large space of garden-ground within their circuit; and when we find Nineveh called a city of three days' journey, we may be sure that this description comprehended a vast extent of orchards or even fields. Those who desire to see what has been written on this subject by a deservedly esteemed writer, may consult Rennell's *Geography of Herodotus*, section xiv. It will there be seen, that the learned author is inclined to think that Babylon, in its most flourishing state, may have contained 1,200,000 inhabitants.

Such, then, was the capital of Nebuchadnezzar and his successors, until sacked and destroyed by Darius, according to the testimony of Herodotus, who visited the place scarcely a century after its first reduction by Cyrus, and about eighty-seven years after the more severe treatment inflicted on it by his successor. We have now to visit its mouldering remains, after the full accomplishment of the Divine denunciations, pronounced against it by the mouth of his prophets: "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!—I will make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water; and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction."* "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."†

* Isaiah, xiv. 12, 23.

† Jeremiah, li. 37, 43.

CHAPTER VI.

Ruins of Babylon described.

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

THE gigantic mounds and mouldering heaps, which are now all that remains of this great capital, have for ages past attracted the notice of travellers. Ibn Haukul, the Persian geographer, in 917 A. C., speaks of Babel as a small village, and assumes that hardly any remains of Babylon were to be seen. Abulfeda describes the former merely as the place where Ibrahim ul Khaleel was cast into the fire. The city, he says, is now destroyed, and replaced by a diminutive hamlet, and, quoting from Ibn

Haukul, he calls it the most ancient structure of Irak, from which the surrounding country took its name. "The Canaanitish kings and their descendants dwelt here; its ruins declare it to have been an extensive city." Benjamin of Tudela, a Jewish traveller of the twelfth century, remarks that nothing was to be seen but the ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's palace, into which no one dared to enter, on account of the serpents and scorpions with which it was infested. In 1583, Eldred, an English merchant, on his way from Bir to Bagdad, passed the "old mighty city of Babylon, many ruins whereof are easily to be seen by daylight;" and he mentions in particular the Tower of Babel, which he describes as a quarter of a mile in circuit, and about the height of St Pauls," but it "sheweth much bigger;" and he further states, that it was built of very large sun-dried bricks, cemented by courses of "mattes, made of canes, as though they had been laid within one yeere."

Rawolff, who visited the place in the sixteenth century speaks of the remains of an ancient bridge, of the relics of ancient fortifications, and of the Temple of Belus, which was so much destroyed, and so full of venomous animals, that it could only be approached during two months of winter, when they do not leave their holes.

In 1616, Pietro della Valle visited the ruins, and described them rather generally as a confused heap of fragments, so covered over with earth that they looked sometimes as much like hills as buildings. There are on record the narratives of several other persons who travelled thither during the same century; but Niebuhr, in 1765, and Beauchamp, twenty years later, are the first among more modern authors who have given any account of the remains. The latter states that the ruins of Babylon are very conspicuous about one league north of the town of Hillah. "Above all the rest, is one which is rather flat on the top, of an irregular form, about thirty toises or 180 feet high, and much cut up by furrows down the sides. It would never have been taken for a work of man, were it not for the regular

layers of bricks which are visible, and which prove that it was no natural hill. Beyond this mound, on the bank of the river, are immense masses of building, which supplied bricks for the building of Hillah."

Besides these ruins, M. de Beauchamp likewise mentions a brick wall, which he calculates must have been sixty feet thick. "It ran," he observes, "parallel with the river, and may have been part of the wall of the city. I discovered also a subterranean channel, which, instead of being vaulted, was covered with flat stones three feet broad by six or seven long. These ruins extend several miles to the north of Hillah, and satisfactorily prove this to have been the site of ancient Babylon." He also alludes to Brouss, on the opposite side of the river; but he does not describe it.

A few years after, Olivier visited these ruins, which he describes as being so far from presenting any traces of a city, that a careful examination is required before some of the mounds, dug into on all sides, are discovered. Among these heaps he particularizes one, which, he says, appears to be the remains of the Temple of Belus, built by Semiramis. The surface of it is formed of earth; but from the interior the Arabs dig out large baked bricks, cemented with a layer of reeds and bitumen; and the circumference he estimates at 1100 to 1200 ordinary paces. This is certainly the Mujelibé, as he says that it is situated about one league north of Hillah; and he adds, that between it and the river there are a great many heaps, and many foundations of ancient walls.

"Here it is that in general are found the large bricks on which are the inscriptions in unknown characters. There are some ruins to be found on the west side of the Euphrates, where likewise are sometimes found bricks with inscriptions on them; but I sought in vain for traces of the palace of the kings, nor could I discover in any direction the ramparts or walls of the city." Hence it is plain that Olivier did not see or at least did not visit the Birs.

The first comprehensive and authentic account we

possess is from the pen of Claudius James Rich, of the East India Company's civil service, who for many years filled the important situation of Resident at Bagdad, and through the consideration he enjoyed from his official situation and high character, possessed peculiar advantages for prosecuting his researches. Of these he fully availed himself; and, repairing to Hillah, accompanied by the requisite guards, he spent ten days upon the ground, zealously occupied in investigation and inquiry. We shall therefore take his description of these ruins as the groundwork of our own, adding what further may appear expedient from the observations of subsequent writers.

“From the accounts of modern travellers,” says he, “I had expected to have found on the site of Babylon more or less than I actually did. Less, because I could have formed no conception of the prodigious extent of the whole ruins, or of the size, solidity, and perfect state of some of the parts of them; and more, because I thought that I should have distinguished some traces, however imperfect, of many of the principal structures of Babylon. I imagined, I should have said,—‘Here were the walls, and such must have been the extent of the area; there stood the palace, and this most assuredly was the tower of Belus.’ I was completely deceived: instead of a few insulated mounds, I found the whole face of the country covered with vestiges of building, in some places consisting of brick walls surprisingly fresh, in others, merely of a vast succession of mounds of rubbish of such indeterminate figures, variety, and extent, as to involve the person who should have formed any theory in inextricable confusion. . . . I shall confine myself, in the present Memoir, to a plain, minute, and accurate statement of what I actually saw, avoiding all conjectures except where they may tend to throw light on the description, or be the means of exciting others to inquiry and consideration.

“The whole country between Bagdad and Hillah is a perfectly flat and (with the exception of a few spots

as you approach the latter place) uncultivated waste. That it was at some former period in a far different state, is evident from the number of canals by which it is traversed, now dry and neglected, and the quantity of heaps of earth, covered with fragments of brick and broken tiles, which are seen in every direction,—the indisputable traces of former population.”*

Little need be added to this general description of the appearances on the ground, for the accuracy of which every one who has visited the spot will readily vouch. The wide extent of mounds and vestiges of buildings must in truth arrest the attention of every beholder, who, at the same time, will not fail to remark how little the shapeless heaps on which he gazes can suggest in any degree either the nature or object of the structures of which they are the wrecks. After a minute account of the surrounding country, Mr Rich goes on to describe the ruins. The principal masses on the eastern side of the river extend from a point about two miles north of Hillah for a space of three miles in the same direction, and are chiefly embraced by a long circular† mound, which commences near the south-east corner of the Mujelibé, and taking a wide detour to the eastward, terminates at the south-east corner of the eminence called the hill of Amran. There is, besides, a long ridge called by him the Embankment, which extends 750 yards along the river, and bending to the eastward, is continued beyond the village of Jumjuma, till, further east, it crosses the road from Hillah to Bagdad. The whole area included within these rampart-like mounds is two miles and 600 yards from east to west, and two miles 1000 yards from north to south. It is again cut nearly in half, longitudinally, first by a straight dike, like the boundary, but of less magnitude, of which only a mile in length remains; and there is to the west of this a still smaller

* Narrative of a Journey to the Site of Babylon, &c., by Claudius James Rich, Esq., 8vo., London, 1839, p. 33-46.

† Sir R. K. Porter describes it as two straight lines converging to an angle.

and shorter ridge, which terminates to the north in a high heap of rubbish of a red colour, nearly 300 yards long and 100 broad, but containing few whole bricks. All these, and the rest of the ruins hereafter to be described, consist of mounds of earth formed by the decomposition of buildings channelled by the weather, and the surface of them strewed with pieces of brick, bitumen, and pottery.

Beyond the southern enclosure or embankment, which affords little interest, and proceeding towards the north, is found the first grand mass of ruins, which, in consequence of having upon it a small domed building, said to be the tomb of a son of Ali named Amran, has been named the hill of Amran. Its figure approaches that of a quadrangle of about 1100 yards long and 800 broad, very irregular in height, but rising in the highest part from fifty to sixty feet above the plain. It has been much dug into for the purpose of procuring bricks; but there is nothing in its appearance to require a more particular description. On the north of this mound there is a valley of 550 yards in length, covered with tufts of rank grass, and crossed by a low ridge of ruins. To this succeeds the second important class of remains, which form nearly a square of 700 yards in length and breadth, and are connected with the mounds of Amran by a bank of considerable height and nearly 100 yards in breadth. This square, named the Kasr or Palace, Mr Rich considers as the most interesting part of the Babylonian ruins, as all that can be seen of it attests its having been composed of buildings far superior to any which have left traces in the eastern quarter. The bricks are of the finest description, and notwithstanding the immense quantities of them that have been carried off, they appear still to be abundant. But the search for them has caused further dilapidation and confusion, by burrowing into the mound, and cutting it into ravines in all quarters, so that it is impossible to guess at the original plan of the structure. In these excavations, walls of burnt brick and excellent mortar are constantly met with, and frag-

ments of alabaster vessels, fine earthenware, marble, and great quantities of varnished tiles, the glazing and colouring of which are surprisingly fresh. He found in a hollow a sepulchral urn of earthenware, and near it some human bones, which pulverized with the touch. One ravine, hollowed out by explorers, ran into its substance near 100 yards by thirty feet wide, and forty to fifty deep, displaying on one side some yards of a perfect wall, the front no doubt of some building; the other, an utterly confused mass of rubbish, as if the way had been made through a solid structure. At the south end was found a subterraneous passage, floored and walled with large bricks laid in bitumen, and covered over with blocks of sandstone a yard thick and several yards long. It was half full of brackish water, is nearly seven feet in height, and, the workmen said, increased farther on so much in size, that a horseman might pass through it. The superstructure over it is cemented with bitumen; in other parts of the ravine mortar has been used; and all the bricks have writing on them. At the northern end of this cavity, Mr Rich, in consequence of hearing from an old Arab of an image or idol of black stone having been seen, set some men to excavate, and disinterred a lion,* rudely sculptured in dark gray stone, and of colossal dimensions, standing on a pedestal.

A little to the west of the ravine is a pile of building, consisting of several walls and piers which face the cardinal points, eight feet in thickness, in some places ornamented with niches, and in others strengthened by pilasters and buttresses built of fine burnt brick, still perfectly clean and sharp, laid in lime cement of such tenacity that those whose business it is to find bricks have given up working on account of the extreme difficulty of extracting them whole. The tops of those walls are broken, so that they may have originally been much higher. This remarkable ruin is by the natives called the Kasr

* This lion, having been again disinterred, and examined by the officers of the Euphrates expedition, has been pronounced to be an elephant, of which the trunk is broken off.

or Palace, which appellation has been used to distinguish the whole quadrangular mass. A little to the north-north-east may be seen the singular tree, the only one found near these remains, said by the Arabs to have flourished in ancient Babylon, and to have been miraculously preserved to afford Ali a convenient place to tie up his horse after the battle of Hillah. It is thought to resemble the *lignum vitæ*; but it is in fact a peculiar species of tamarisk.

Mr Rich then describes the embankment on the river-side, which is separated on the east from those of Amran and the Kasr by a winding valley or ravine, 150 yards broad, the bottom of which is covered with nitrous efflorescence, and apparently never had any buildings on it. The face of the mound to the river-side is abrupt and perpendicular, having been cut by the action of the water, and exposes at the top a number of urns filled with human bones, which have not undergone the action of fire. The river has encroached here, as fragments of masonry are seen in the water beneath the bank.

The other mounds within this space deserve little attention, as they present no remarkable appearance; but the huge mass farthest north requires particular notice. It is called by the Arabs Mukalibé or Mujelibé, the first of which words means the "overturned," a term which, Mr Rich observes, is sometimes applied to the Kasr. The second, Mujelibé, has been rendered "the place of captivity," from jalib "a captive;" and is supposed to identify the place as the prison in which the Israelites were confined. It is of an oblong shape, but irregular in its sides, which face the cardinal points,—the northern one being 200 yards in length; the southern 219; the eastern 182; and the western, 136. Its height is still more unequal, but at the highest point, which is the south-eastern angle, it measures 141 feet. Near the summit of the western face, which is the least elevated part, there appears a low wall with interruptions, built of unburned bricks mixed up with chopped straw or reeds, and cemented with clay-mortar

of great thickness, having between every course a layer of reeds. On the north side there are vestiges of a similar construction. The south-western angle is crowned by something like a turret or lantern; the other angles are in a less perfect state, but may once have been similarly ornamented. All its faces are furrowed by the weather, and in some parts ploughed to a very great depth. The top is covered with heaps of rubbish, in digging into some of which layers of broken bricks cemented with mortar are discovered, and entire ones with inscriptions may here and there be found; the whole being interspersed with innumerable fragments of pottery, bitumen, pebbles, vitrified scoria, and even shells, bits of glass, and mother-of-pearl. There were dens of wild beasts in several parts; and Mr Rich perceived in some a strong smell like that of a lion. Bones of sheep and other animals, with abundance of porcupine quills, were seen in the cavities, with numbers of bats and owls. It is a singular coincidence, that here for the first time he became aware of the belief held by the natives as to the existence of satyrs—animals like men from the waist upwards, but having the thighs and legs of a goat. It is added, they hunt them with dogs, and eat the lower part, abstaining from the upper portion of the figure on account of its resemblance.

Having heard that a coffin of mulberry wood, containing a human body, swathed in tight wrappers, and partially covered with bitumen, had been observed in a passage which leads into the interior of the mound, he set twelve men to work, in order to uncover the cellar to which it leads. They dug into a shaft or hollow pier, sixty feet square, lined with brick laid in bitumen and filled with earth, in which they got a brass spike, some earthen vessels, and a beam of date-tree; and after three or four days' toil, and making their way through several passages, lined chiefly with fine bricks, but exhibiting also some that were unburnt, they found a wooden coffin containing a skeleton in high preservation. Under the head of it was a round pebble, on the

outside a bird, and in the inside an ornament of the same material, which had probably been suspended to some part of the corpse. A little further on was seen the skeleton of a child. No doubt can be entertained of their antiquity.

Such are the principal remains on the eastern side of the river. Upon the western, Mr Rich found but one object worthy of much attention; and indeed on looking to that quarter from the height of the Mujelibé, none else was to be seen. The ruin in question was the *Birs Nimrod*, by far the most interesting and gigantic of the whole that underwent his examination. This huge and venerable pile, which is situated about six miles* south-west of Hillah, is a mound of an oblong figure, the total circumference of which is 762 yards. The eastern side is cloven by a deep furrow, and is not more than fifty or sixty feet high; but the opposite side rises in a conical figure to an elevation of 198, and is crowned by a solid pile of brick-work, thirty-seven in height, by twenty-eight in breadth, diminishing in thickness to the top, which is broken and irregular. It is rent by a fissure to a great extent, and is also perforated by square holes, disposed in rhomboids. The fine bricks of which it is built have inscriptions on them; and so admirable is the cement by which they are fastened, and which appears to be lime-mortar, that, though the layers are so close together that it is difficult to discern what substance is between them, it is nearly impossible to extract one of them whole. The other parts of the summit are occupied by immense fragments of brick-work, of no determinate figure, tumbled together, and converted into solid vitrified masses, as if they had undergone the action of the fiercest fire, or been blown up with gunpowder, the layers being still perfectly discernible,—a curious fact, and one for which Mr Rich professes himself quite unable to account.

* By some of the officers of the Euphrates expedition it is considered to be ten or eleven.

The whole of the mound on which those fragments are deposited is itself a ruin, channelled by the weather, strewed also with the usual debris, as well as with pieces of black stone, sandstone, and marble. In the eastern face, layers of unburnt brick are plainly to be seen, but no reeds were discernible in any part, and in the north side may be observed traces of building, exactly similar to the brick pile. At the foot of the mound a step is observed, scarcely elevated above the plain, but exceeding in extent by several feet each way the true or measured base ; and there is a quadrangular enclosure around the whole, as at the Mujelibé, at once much more perfect and of greater dimensions. At a trifling distance from the Birs, and parallel with its eastern face, is a mound, not inferior to that of the Kasr in elevation, but much longer than it is broad. On its top are two small oratories, one of which is called Makam Ibrahim ul Khaleel ; and around the Birs to a considerable extent are traces of smaller elevations.

This very remarkable ruin, more striking from its utter loneliness, burst upon Mr Rich's view, under circumstances of a peculiarly impressive nature. It was a stormy morning, and dark clouds obscured every surrounding object, till, when just within a favourable distance, they broke and discovered the Birs, with its picturesque mound, relieved against the opening sky, yet enveloped with a gauzy haze that added to the sentiment of mysterious awe which the sight of this venerable pile cannot fail to inspire.

The mound of Al Heimar resembles the one now described, though on a much smaller scale, and stands about six miles east of Hillah, being generally included among the Babylonian ruins. It is a conical mass of rubbish, surmounted by a structure of brick-work which, like that of the Birs, but far inferior in style, evidently rises from the foundation. It is called Al Heimar from its red colour.

Several other remains are noticed in the vicinity of these, the most remarkable of which are Nebbi Eyoub,

the tomb of the prophet Job, three leagues south of Hillah, near the Euphrates, with a canal and two large mounds ; and a collection of ruins, named Boursa by the natives, near Jerbouiya, a village four leagues south from the same town, but distant from the river. Two considerable elevations are visible from the top of the Mujelibé, looking southward, and another, called Towereij, to the north-west. The governor also mentioned one as large as the Mujelibé, thirty-five hours south of Hillah, where, a few years ago, a cap or diadem and some other articles of fine gold were found. This was probably Mugheyer, of which we shall hereafter have occasion to speak more at length.

Such is an abstract of Mr Rich's account of these interesting relics ; and in the few observations which he has offered regarding them, his object has rather been to enable his readers to form their own opinion, or to make their own conjectures, than to pronounce any decision himself. He has been followed by Mr Buckingham and Sir Robert Ker Porter, who have each of them given a detailed narrative, not only of what they saw, but of the conclusions they arrived at, respecting the various mounds which they describe from personal inspection. The first-mentioned gentleman spent only two days in his examination—the latter ten ; but, as the result very nearly corresponds with that attained by Mr Rich, we shall only notice the points on which any difference exists. Mr Buckingham, indeed, on all occasions refers to the Memoir as to a document which cannot be improved in point of accuracy. He adopts Rich's measurements generally ; and quotes extensively from his publication. He thinks the Mujelibé was certainly enclosed by walls and ditches, but differs entirely from those who have been disposed to regard it as the ruins of the temple of Belus ; being satisfied that it must have comprised a variety of edifices varying in form as well as in use and materials. On its exterior surface are the remains of walls sufficient to prove that its base is still a solid building, very little enlarged by debris ;

while the summit, for similar reasons, affords ample evidence that its elevation could never have much exceeded that of its present height. All this goes to establish that it cannot be the tower of Belus, which must have left an infinitely larger quantity of ruins. Its area, too, is larger than what has been attributed to that celebrated structure, which, besides, is stated by Diodorus, Strabo, and others, to have been built of fire-burned bricks and bitumen, whereas the chief part of the Mujelibé is composed of sun-dried ones, cemented with clay-mortar and layers of reeds or rushes.

Mr Buckingham is rather disposed to consider this mound as the old castellated palace mentioned by Diodorus, which he supposes to have been built on the side of the river opposite to the temple of Belus.

The Kasr, distant from the Mujelibé somewhat more than a mile, is, he observes, occasionally called Babel; and here he conjectures was the royal abode to which were attached the hanging gardens. "Were it not that the palaces are said to have been seated on opposite sides of the river, I should have said, when looking towards the Mujelibé, There was certainly the old palace, and here is the site of the new;" but this he acknowledges to be at variance with all existing accounts, though he suggests that the stream may have changed its course and once passed between them.

Viewing the mounds of Amran and the Kasr, connected together as they are with a broad and lofty ridge like a causeway, and faced by an embankment on the edge of the river, he is inclined to regard them as forming the space and buildings, which, according to Diodorus and Strabo, were surrounded by three walls, one of sixty stadia in circuit, one of forty, and a third of which the extent is not mentioned. The first of these walls, he observes, may be represented by the mound which strikes off from the east corner of the embankment, and which he says may be traced at its northern end in an eminence appearing north-west of the Mujelibé. The wall of forty stadia is the circular ridge

mentioned by Mr Rich, joining the south-eastern corner of Amran, and coinciding nearly with the south-east angle of the Mujelibé. The third he considers to be represented by the straight mounds E and F of Mr Rich's plan.*

After surveying this place, Mr Buckingham and his companion rode eastward across the country, to try if they could find any traces of the walls of Babylon. Their more definite object was Al Heimar, in their way to which they saw many straight lines of mounds running in various directions, some intersecting others, which that gentleman identifies at once as being the remains of the rectilinear streets of the old capital, because they rise too high above the soil to be formed of the earth from the intervening space, which was level with the surrounding land. Had Mr Buckingham been better acquainted with the nature of the ancient canals of Babylonia, he would have known that their banks generally rose above the surface; and that these mounds, therefore, more probably represent aqueducts than houses, which were too insignificant both in point of size and material to have continued so long where so many great fabrics have entirely disappeared.

This author enters into a long and elaborate disquisition, to prove that the mound at Al Heimar is the remains of part of the wall of the ancient metropolis; a conclusion which we shall notice hereafter. As to the Birn Nimrod, he estimates the mound at 200 feet high, and the brick building on the top at fifty more. He describes four stages in this remarkable ruin, besides the step already mentioned, a little raised above the ground, and exceeding in extent by several feet the true base of the building. Within this rises the lowest stage, showing a part of its material only where a pit has been dug or worn. These are of sun-dried though firmly made brick, cemented with bitumen or mortar, but without reeds. The second stage presents at the north-east angle, which is exposed, a wall, externally at least, of

* Rich's Journey to the Site of Babylon, &c., p. 60.

burned brick. The third, which, like the last, recedes in a due proportion, is also formed of the same material. Above all, rises the fourth and last stage, which is the tower-like pile. The summit of this, still 250 feet above its base, occupies, says he, nearly an area of 100 feet, only one side of which is now erect, being a wall of thirty feet in breadth, fifteen in thickness, and fifty feet high. He adverts to the vitrified masses at its foot, and seems to think, that had fuel been collected in the upper stage, and set on fire, it might have burst the fabric asunder and produced such effects; alluding here to a quotation by Sir Isaac Newton from Vitringa, in which that author speaks of a Parthian king having, about 130 years B. C., burned many of the temples of the Babylonians with fire. Mr Buckingham entertains no doubt that this is really the remains of the tower of Belus, notwithstanding the objections that may be urged against it on the ground of its locality or otherwise.

Sir R. K. Porter spent ten days at Hillah, great part of which was employed in examining the ruins; and his accounts, though in some respects more detailed, differ little in substance from those furnished by Mr Rich. He limits the circumference of the Birs Nimrod to 694 yards; but the difference between this and the measurement of his predecessor may probably have arisen from the difficulty of determining the exact limit of the base. The mound he states to be 200 feet high, and the fragments of the brick wall thirty-five. He remarked, that in the upper part of the masonry, lime is exclusively used for cement, while bitumen has been confined to the lower parts of the building. The bricks, too, used below were larger, so that in some parts of the wall, exposed at the eastern angle, he found them twelve inches and three quarters square by four inches and three quarters thick, and laid in mortar an inch deep. In a portion of the wall at the north-west angle, the several courses, instead of being on a level, had a gentle inclination; those facing the north sloped towards the east, and those on the western face towards the south. Still lower

down, a large hole afforded a peep into what Sir Robert calls the *pith* of the building, which was composed of large sun-dried bricks, cemented with clay-mortar mixed with broken straw or reeds to the thickness of an inch and a half. Hence he supposes that the whole interior of the lower part is constructed of these materials, each stage or story being cased with furnace-baked bricks, binding the rest together; and that the bitumen was used only near the foundation, where damp was likely to do injury. He entertains no doubt that the *Birs* is the ancient temple of Belus. Of the *Mujelibé* his description is quite the same as that of Mr Rich; but his measurements vary. As to its height he nearly agrees, the south-east corner being the highest point; but states that the north side measures 552 feet; the south, 230; the east, 230; and the west, 551. In this there is probably some error, as the south instead of the west side must correspond with the northern one. He thinks it never rose much higher than at present, and concludes that it must have been a platform on which more magnificent buildings were meant to be erected, as at Persepolis. He repudiates entirely the opinion that this could have been the tower of Belus, and inclines to consider it as the remains of the castellated palace.

In the measurements of the *Kasr* he agrees in the main with Mr Rich, since whose visit, he remarks, the excavations had greatly altered its external form. Here, also, he observed the use of bitumen in the lower part of the building, but adds, that the core or *pith* of these mounds is composed of furnace-baked bricks cemented with lime. He entertains no doubt that the two mounds of Amran and the *Kasr* conjointly formed the new palace, of which the first enclosure was the rampart-like mass that joins it to the *Mujelibé*, and which Sir Robert lays down as forming an angle with the apex pointing eastward instead of a circular sweep. The second and third enclosures he conceives to be represented by the several ridges which divide the enclosed space in a direction from north to south, and subtending the angle; along the

summit of one of which the present road to Hillah runs. He considers Rennell's idea of the river having ever flowed between the Mujelibé and Kasr as totally chimerical.

At Al Heimar, Porter discovered nothing new. He visited certain mounds about a mile to the eastward, but conceives that they could never have stood within the precincts of Babylon. He took considerable pains also in searching for ruins on the western side of the river, and found two groups of mounds between the village Anana and the Birs. The largest of these was thirty-five feet high, and the neighbouring country was dotted with heaps. He asks whether these can be the remains of the lesser palace. He observed also, in proceeding round by the village Thamasia, that for a mile and three quarters before reaching the Birs, the land was covered with the usual vestiges, which continued to the foot of that ruin; and relying on this fact, he argues that the Birs did actually occupy a space in the city.

Such is the amount of the three best descriptions of the Babylonian remains, written by persons who, in our own day, have enjoyed the most favourable opportunities for carrying on their investigations; and it will be seen that, upon comparing the delineations of ancient writers with the actual state of the ruins, they have all come to the conclusion that the temple of Belus is represented by the Birs Nimrod, and the palace and hanging gardens by the ruins of the Kasr, in combination perhaps with those of the Amran hill.

To reconcile the positions of these two places, and the present course of the Euphrates, with the details given by Herodotus, Diodorus, Strabo, and others, appears impossible. Yet, from many circumstances, it seems more probable that their writings have been inaccurately copied, or imperfectly understood by us, than that the mounds in question can represent any other buildings of the ancient capital than those now specified. For, in the first place, assuming that the Euphrates has changed its course, the distance of seven to eleven miles at least

—which we find between the Birs* and the Kasr—can never be made to correspond with that which would appear to have existed between these celebrated edifices according to every description of Babylon that has reached our times. On the other hand, it must be admitted, that no other structures could have left remains so gigantic as those which have just been described, and are presumed to represent the temple of Belus and the palace of Nebuchadnezzar.

So great, indeed, is the distance between the principal mounds, that it seems impossible by any process of measurement to bring them within the space assigned to the walls of the old city. For, even supposing the enclosed sections in each division of it,—in one of which was the palace, in the other the temple of Belus, as mentioned by Herodotus,—not to have been, mathematically speaking, in the centre of their respective squares, it is scarcely possible to wrest the sense so far as to imagine that either building could have been placed in a corner or at an extremity of the town; and yet, if the Birs and Kasr are assumed to represent the temple and palace described by the Greek historian, such must needs be the case with one of them, supposing the other to have been near the centre of its division.

Some very ingenious antiquaries, in seeking for the boundaries of ancient Babylon, have been inclined to regard the Birs as forming the south-western angle of the city,—Al Heimar as that of the south-east,—the Towebah as representing the north-east angle; while the one to the north-west must be looked for in the marshes that stretch westward in that quarter. This, of course, would exclude the Birs from the distinction, which others are disposed to bestow upon it, of representing the temple of Belus, even if we concede to the metropolis the utmost extent assigned by any historian; but there appears to be no ground for supposing such a theory, nor does

* A late traveller, Colonel Chesney, asserts that the distance of the Birs from Hillah is not less than ten miles; if this be so, it must be eleven at least from the Kasr.

actual observation warrant it. The writer of these pages examined great part of the ground between Al Heimar and the river in a line with the Birs and northward from Al Heimar towards the Towebah ; and the result was, that though great part of the country appeared covered with vestiges of former buildings, he not only failed in detecting any continuous course of mounds, such as might indicate the direction of the wall, but actually observed a greater number of these remains eastward of the imaginary line than to the west of it.

Mr Buckingham is disposed to regard that conical mound as constituting a portion of the ramparts of Babylon. He probably overlooked the distance between Al Heimar and the Birs—not less than fifteen miles*—which would either shut out his tower of Belus altogether, or make it nothing more than a corner bastion. Sir Robert Porter, with better judgment, is disposed to exclude Al Heimar and all the mounds eastward of it from the space assigned by Herodotus ; but even this will not remove the stubborn obstacle, with which every theory for reconciling ancient accounts with modern appearances is met at the threshold,—the distance between the principal masses of ruins.

A good deal of stress has been laid upon the probability of considerable changes having taken place in the course of the Euphrates ; and there can be no doubt that such have occurred, though in what direction and to what extent has not hitherto been ascertained. Its encroachments on the mound called by Mr Rich “ the embankment,” by which so many sepulchral vases have been brought to view, is obvious ; and through the whole district, the remains of mason-work on its sides and even in the water bear witness to the former existence of building where the river now flows. Colonel Chesney conceives that he saw a former bed of the stream in the tract between its present course and the site of the Birs ; and another gentleman, who visited and examined that part

* According to Colonel Chesney more than twenty.

of the country with great care, has suggested that there is quite sufficient space between the Birs and the mound of Ibrahim ul Khaleel to admit of the river or a branch of it having run between them. In this case, the positions of these two mounds would identify them as the remains of the temple of Belus and the palace, just in the proper situations at either side of the stream. But the remains of old canals to the eastward, between the Birs and Hillah, would seem to indicate, that the Euphrates must of old, as well as now, have run in that direction; and at all events, we should be equally at a loss what to make of the gigantic ruins on the present eastern bank—the Mujelibé, the Kasr, and others—which must represent some stately fabrics pertaining to the city.

Another conjecture has been hazarded with regard to the Birs, namely, that it may be the remains of a temple of the ancient Borsippa or Bursif, which is mentioned as being near ancient Babylon if not once forming a section of it. In this place, after the downfall of the empire, and partial destruction of the great city, a number of the Chaldean priests and artificers took up their abode; and thither also, we learn, Labynetus fled from Cyrus, after the conquest by that prince.

The name *Bursif*, so easily passing into Birs, seems to favour this idea, which would also account for the otherwise unintelligible appellation by which this remarkable ruin is known; for the word *Birs* has no signification in Arabic or the cognate languages.

Mr Rich, it is true, alludes to a collection of mounds, four or five hours south of Hillah, near the village Jerbouiyah, known by the name of Bursa, which may lay claim to being the Borsippa mentioned by Strabo and other writers. But Buckingham casts some doubt on the position and even on the existence of this Bursa; for it appears, that of all his escort, there was only one man who pretended to any acquaintance with the place, and even he had no clear notions respecting it. Sir R. Porter mentions a station called Bursa Shishara, two hours from Kiahya Khan on the way from Bagdad to

Hillah, where is a true Babylonian mound thirty feet high, with a layer of reeds between each course of bricks ; and he speculates on the possibility of this having been the Borsippa where Alexander halted on his way from Ecbatana to Babylon.

But if the Birs be pronounced a relic of Borsippa, and not of Babylon, where are we to look for the temple of Belus, which, of all the buildings in that metropolis, must, from its uncommon height, have left the most imposing ruins ! It has been shown that neither the Mujelibé nor Kasr can pretend to be its representative, and there is none other to fall back upon.

There is, indeed, no small difficulty in reconciling the accounts of historians respecting the state of this celebrated structure from time to time. Herodotus, who describes it as an eyewitness 430 years B. C., though he alludes to the destruction of its walls by Darius, and the partial pillage of its shrines by Xerxes, speaks of it as by no means dilapidated ; on the contrary, he describes its two walls as still existing, the outer one castellated and 200 cubits high, and the temple of Belus as being quite perfect and undesecrated, except by the plunder of its golden image by the Persian prince. Yet barely a century afterwards, Alexander, according to Arrian, found it so encumbered by ruins that 10,000 men were not able to remove them in two months ; while Berosus, a priest of Belus, who flourished at the same period, writes a history of the Chaldean cosmogony, chiefly from the allegorical representations which he saw on the walls of this very temple. That it must, however, have suffered greatly prior to this time, is certain ; and in tracing the progress of its decay, we have witnessed a rapidity of destruction, which is the more impressive as it corresponds so accurately with all the denunciations of divine wrath which were hurled against the sinful and devoted city. But Providence works by instruments, and it is striking indeed to trace the Almighty hand in the human agents who overwhelmed that mighty city by a rapid succession of attacks ; nor need we be

surprised at the disappearance of great part of her ruins, when we reflect, that out of them were built in succession, Seleucia and Ctesiphon, Coché, Cufa, Kerbelah, Meshed Ali, Bagdad old and new, besides many smaller towns and villages. No wonder that, when the more solid materials were carried off, the mud and sun-burnt bricks, exposed to the action of rain and wind, should crumble into the soil whence they were taken.

A late and very acute traveller, Mr Ainsworth, whose work has already been referred to, has suggested a change of names for the several ruins, which he thinks will simplify the investigation. The Mujelibé, he says, ought to be called *Babel*; and he applies the former term to the Kasr, which last appellation he again bestows upon the mound called by Mr Rich the embankment. We do not know to what extent he prosecuted his discoveries upon the spot; but it appears to us, that had he inquired minutely, he would scarcely have found grounds on which to rest his new nomenclature. We think he would rather have adopted the conclusion held by other travellers that the northern mound could never have been much higher than it now is, and consequently that it could not be the tower of Belus; while certainly there is strong internal evidence that the Kasr, called by him the Mujelibé, represents the palace and hanging gardens. We think him greatly in error, too, in the elevation which he assigns to the several mounds, sixty-four feet to the northernmost or Mujelibé of Rich,—twenty-eight feet to the Kasr of the same author,—twenty-three feet to the Amran ibn Ali. In these there can be no doubt of his being mistaken. The Birs, according to him, belonged to the most westerly quarter of Babylon, if not to a distinct city, and is therefore more likely to represent Borsippa than the tower of Belus.

There is one fact, in connexion with the most remarkable of these relics, which we cannot dismiss without a few more observations. All travellers who have ascended the Birs have taken notice of the singular heaps of brick-work scattered on the summit of the mound, at

the foot of the remnant of wall still standing. To the writer of this volume they appeared the most striking of all the ruins. That they have undergone the most violent action of fire is evident from the complete vitrification which has taken place in many of the masses. Yet how a heat, sufficient to produce such an effect, could have been applied at such a height from the ground, is unaccountable. They now lie upon a spot elevated 200 feet above the plain, and must have fallen from some much more lofty position, for the structure which still remains, and of which they may be supposed to have originally formed a part, bears no mark of fire. The building originally cannot have contained any great proportion of combustible materials; and to produce so intense a heat by substances carried to such an elevation, would have been almost impossible from the want of space to pile them on. Nothing, we should be inclined to say, short of the most powerful action of electric fire could produce the complete yet circumscribed fusion which is here observed; for that the melted masses have had some connexion with the building yet remaining cannot be doubted. Of such a catastrophe we have no record, unless we accept as such the prophecy of Jeremiah,* "and her high gates shall be burnt with fire;" but there are many events connected with the history of this city which remain in total obscurity, and this we are inclined to think must be placed among them. These fragments are of various hues, brown, yellow, and gray. Although fused into a solid mass, the courses of bricks are still visible, identifying them with the standing pile above; but so hardened have they been by the power of heat, that it is almost impossible to break off the smallest piece; and though porous in texture, and full of air-holes and cavities, like other bricks, they require, on being submitted to the stone-cutter's lathe, the same machinery as is used to dress the hardest pebbles. Their specific gravity is very great, and they are capable of receiving a very good polish.

* Chap. li. 58.

From the statements now made it is obvious, that however much has been written on the subject, the locality of ancient Babylon is as yet but very imperfectly understood,—a circumstance which arises chiefly from the difficulty of residence and of making the necessary observations upon the spot, so that no traveller hitherto has been able to devote to the examination of the ruins themselves as well as of the circumjacent country, that time and attention which are indispensable for illustrating so obscure a subject. But matters will probably not remain long thus. Something has already been done towards removing the obstacles that have hitherto existed: the Euphrates expedition has familiarized the Arabs on the banks of that river with the sight of Europeans; and we know that even now there are in those regions travellers peculiarly well qualified by intelligence, zeal, and perseverance, for prosecuting these interesting investigations. Hence there is good ground to hope that the secrets of ancient Mesopotamia and Babylonia, historical, geographical, and antiquarian, will ere long be laid at least as open to the present generation as those of Egypt, Greece, and Rome.

CHAPTER VII.

Other Ruins of Babylonia and Chaldea.

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

NEXT to the ruins just described, and as certainly contemporary with them, we must notice the isolated but enormous pile of Akkerkoof or Aggerkoof, called also Tel Nimrod, and by the Turks Nimrod Tepessi. Sir R. Porter says the former name is only applied to the district around it. It is six miles from Bagdad, and stands upon a hillock that slopes gently upwards from the level of the plain to a considerable height, above which it rises to an elevation of about 125 feet. Its general resemblance to the Birs Nimrod struck Mr Rich forcibly; and the mass of the building, which is solid, is composed of unburnt bricks mixed with chopped straw, having layers of reeds two inches thick between every five or six courses. These reeds protrude from the weather-worn edges of the bricks, communicating to the profile of the edifice a singular serrated look visible from a distance. In appearance they are still perfectly fresh, differing only from those that grow in the circumjacent

marshes in being a little darker in colour. As in the Birs, there are also here square holes running through the body of the pile, as if to afford ventilation. The shape is now so irregular, owing to the effect of time, that its original form can scarcely be detected; but it seems to have been a square, the sides of which faced the cardinal points. The circumference, taken above the mound of rubbish, is 300 feet, and the diameter at the largest part about 100. The mound consists of loose sandy earth, probably drifted by the wind, mingled with fragments of brick, pottery, and half-vitrified clay. Like the Birs, it has a mound of debris on the eastern side; and this is supposed to indicate the site of Accad, one of the cities of Nimrod,—a conjecture which is thought to be supported by its position with reference to Babylon, by the name of Akkerkoof, and the tradition which ascribes it to the mighty hunter. Embankments, and the usual debris, testify to its having been a considerable town; while its vicinity to Bagdad accounts sufficiently for the disappearance of its furnace-bricks and all transportable materials.

The remaining antiquities of Babylonia will not detain us long, as, though some may represent places of importance, they do not possess the great interest which attaches to the capital or to Nineveh. We shall mention a few of the most remarkable.

Following the course of the Euphrates, we find upon its right bank, about twenty-five miles south-east of Semava, and ten or eleven from the river-bank, the most perfect remains of one of those lofty edifices which, like the Birs and Akkerkoof, are supposed to have been Chaldean temples. It is called Mugeyer or Umgeyer, which in Arabic signifies “the place of bitumen;” and as it has not as yet, we believe, been described, if indeed it has ever before been visited by any modern traveller, we shall here introduce an account of it derived from personal inspection. It is a huge quadrangular building, rising to the height of eighty or a hundred feet above the plain from a great mass of dilapidated matter. The lower half was hid from view by these ruins, out of

which the masonwork emerged in two distinct stories. The sides, which faced the cardinal points, were on the west fully sixty yards in length, and on the north about forty; there being no means at hand for more accurate measurement. The structure resembles that of the Birs; but there was no such fine masonry as appears on the top of the latter. The bricks were coarser and softer; many were marked with the arrow-headed character, and in most cases laid together in very thick beds of bitumen, which bore the impression of the matted reeds. The workmanship on the whole was very good, and much of it quite perfect, as there have not been any materials abstracted from it as at Babylon. The mass is pervaded with small holes as is the Birs; and a circular one was observed on the top, at present filled with rubbish, but which may possibly descend into the building. The northern and western faces exhibited two distinct stories, the upper diminishing in extent as in some of the Indian pagodas, which it a good deal resembled; but the bricks were so altered by long exposure to the weather, that it was impossible to pronounce whether those that now met the eye constituted part of the original outside coating or not. Looking from the top, vestiges of a wall of no great thickness could be traced, apparently forming an enclosure to the building. Its north face, the only one at all perfect, measured 118 long paces; of the rest, only the corners were visible, and near the south-eastern angle rose a pretty large conical mound, like the ruins of a bastion. There were many others about it, especially towards the south-east; and the earth was extensively covered with ruins, among which were fragments of sepulchral vases sticking out of the ground, flints, pebbles, and numerous pieces of old copper. The whole character of this edifice testifies that it must be coeval with the Birs. Mr Ainsworth has pronounced it to be the ancient Orchoe of the Chaldeans, of the situation of which we know little; but there is rather more reason for believing that city to be represented by the ruins of Workha, in Chaldea Proper, and to which we shall soon allude.

Mugeyer is also believed to stand on the banks of the ancient Pallacopas ; but the exact course of that canal has not been traced in modern times, and there was nothing seen from the top of the ruin to confirm the idea. There were, however, one or two lofty mounds observed to the westward, bearing much the appearance of the place itself when first seen above the horizon ; but circumstances did not permit us to visit them.

Of the remains to the south and eastward of this place little is known, although there is every reason to believe that relics abound in the course of the Pallacopas. Jibel Sanam, which marks the site of the ancient Tere-don, a city built by Nebuchadnezzar at the mouth of that outlet of the Euphrates, is described as a true Babylonian mound of prodigious size, lofty, and of infinitely greater extent than the Birs, but in other respects resembling those already described.

The territory of ancient Chaldea, extending from Dewannah and the Euphrates to the Boo je Heirat canal, is thickly dotted with immense mounds, among which that of Workha rises pre-eminent ; but from the difficulty of approaching it, owing to the surrounding lakes and marshes, it has never been examined. We could descry this elevation at a distance of about four miles, but were unable to reach it. Not far from Workha is seen Sunkhera, one of a large number of mounds forming a sort of circle, built of fire-burnt bricks ; the whole surface being strewed with scorïæ, agates and cornelian fragments, and bits of copper, but no glass. The chief one was very large, and from fifty to sixty feet high ; and the entire circle must have been more than a mile in diameter. The surface of the land around it was irregular, raised in heights and hollows ; but whether or not these were sites of buildings could not be ascertained. In the area were traces of foundations, a square consisting of houses and courts, which, as they do not rise above the level of the soil, are probably of recent date. The rest was undoubtedly ancient. To the north and east were several clusters of mounds, the largest of which was called Yok-

ha, of considerable size, and in the centre of a wide tract of debris. To the north-west of this was observed a lofty pyramidal mass called Til Eide, surrounded by the relics of old habitations.

Six or eight miles north-east of this last, our attention was attracted by an elevation, which belonged to a place that must have been of very great magnitude in its day. It appeared to have been a quadrangle of at least five or six miles each way, and of which the building in question formed the north-eastern corner. It was a structure like a great bastion, formed of sun-burnt bricks of the usual size, with layers of reeds between each tier as at the Mujelibé, and rising to a height of at least fifty feet from the plain, including the *tuppeh* or hillock of ruins out of which it springs. It was split from top to bottom into four pieces, and each opening afforded the means of entrance into the interior, which was partially hollowed out; but whether by original construction or effected by the rains, is uncertain.

From the summit may be traced, by irregular heaps and fragments, the course of the northern and eastern sides, converging at right angles to each other. The greater part of the area was bare, as is usual in such cases, and dotted all over with the black camps of Arab tribes. Following the line of the north wall for nearly five miles, the country on the northern side appeared also covered with debris, and a boundless extent of them stretched to the west of the square space; besides which, there are huge ridges about the same distance to the south, which the natives call Hummam. They gave no name to the ruins in general, but assigned to the country at large the appellation of Guttubeh. The evidences of an extensive population in former times were more remarkable here, perhaps, than in any other part of the Jezirah.

A large portion of this district is low, and, to a great extent, periodically overflowed, so that the remains were less conspicuous; but about thirty miles northward the mounds again become frequent. Among the most remarkable are those of Iskhuriah, not far from the Tigris;

and Zibliyeh, south-west of the former, nearly half-way between the two rivers. The first is a name applied by the Arabs to a huge group, of which the highest may rise to twenty-five or thirty feet above the plain, and are covered with immense quantities of scorïæ and slag-like stones resembling the refuse of a brick furnace. These are either black, porous, hard, and heavy, or composed of yellow vitrified matter, being, in some cases, several feet square by six inches thick. The mounds themselves, except in this particular, are not very remarkable; but the size and multitude of the slabs were perplexing. It was told us that they are formed into millstones and various other articles; and, in truth, they might be supposed to have constituted some peculiar manufactory. The Arab name implies a "stony" place; and the tradition regarding them is, that this was the country of Lot (*Loot*), and that Heaven in its wrath showered them down on the wicked inhabitants. Looking from the top of the highest of these mounds, the whole region seemed covered with others of various sizes; insomuch that there was scarcely a quarter of the horizon without a height of some sort, all of which must be the remains of towns or villages.

The line of march, adopted from a camp of the Zo-beid Arabs where we had halted for a night, led, for twelve or fourteen miles, over a country littered with ruins, to a group which rose in a circular space covered with bricks and potsherds. Of these, the principal objects were four pyramidal mounds, rising abruptly to a height of forty or fifty feet, and built of sun-dried brick. Two or three miles distant from these was a still loftier structure, consisting of a tower or bastion-shaped building, about eighty feet in height. The exterior of it was formed of sun-dried brick, like the Mujelibé, and pierced with holes; but the interior was composed of furnace-bricks, like those of the Birs and similar edifices. The walls were plainly perceived in one part, and the external coating of sun-dried brick was deeply furrowed by the rains. The Arabs called it Zibliyeh, and gave a

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