# History of Egypt, Chaldæa, Syria, Babylonia, and Assyria, Volume 3 (of 12) eBook

## History of Egypt, Chaldæa, Syria, Babylonia, and Assyria, Volume 3 (of 12) by Gaston Maspero

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## CHAPTER I—ANCIENT CHALDAEA

The Creation, the Deluge, the history of the gods—The country, its cities its inhabitants, its early dynasties.

[Illustration:  002a.jpg]

“In the time when nothing which was called heaven existed above, and when nothing below had as yet received the name of earth,* Apsu, the Ocean, who first was their father, and Chaos-Tiamat, who gave birth to them all, mingled their waters in one, reeds which were not united, rushes which bore no fruit."** Life germinated slowly in this inert mass, in which the elements of our world lay still in confusion:  when at length it did spring up, it was but feebly, and at rare intervals, through the hatching of divine couples devoid of personality and almost without form.  “In the time when the gods were not created, not one as yet, when they had neither been called by their names, nor had their destinies been assigned to them by fate, gods manifested themselves.  Lakhmu and Lakhamu were the first to appear, and waxed great for ages; then Anshar and Kishar were produced after them.  Days were added to days, and years were heaped upon years:  Anu, Inlil, and Ea were born in their turn, for Anshar and Kishar had given them birth.”  As the generations emanated one from the other, their vitality increased, and the personality of each became more clearly defined; the last generation included none but beings of an original character and clearly marked individuality.  Anu, the sunlit sky by day, the starlit firmament by night; Inlil-Bel, the king of the earth; Ea, the sovereign of the waters and the personification of wisdom.*** Each of them duplicated himself, Anu into Anat, Bel into Belit, Ea into Damkina, and united himself to the spouse whom he had deduced from himself.  Other divinities sprang from these fruitful pairs, and the impulse once given, the world was rapidly peopled by their descendants.  Sin, Shamash, and Kamman, who presided respectively over the moon, the sun, and the air, were all three of equal rank; next came the lords of the planets, Ninib, Merodach, Nergal, the warrior-goddess Ishtar, and Nebo; then a whole army of lesser deities, who ranged themselves around Anu as round a supreme master.  Tiamat, finding her domain becoming more and more restricted owing to the activity of the others, desired to raise battalion against battalion, and set herself to create unceasingly; but her offspring, made in her own image, appeared like those incongruous phantoms which men see in dreams, and which are made up of members borrowed from a score of different animals.  They appeared in the form of bulls with human heads, of horses with the snouts of dogs, of dogs with quadruple bodies springing from a single fish-like tail.  Some of them had the beak of an eagle or a hawk; others, four wings and two faces; others, the legs and horns of a goat; others, again, the hind quarters of a horse and the whole body of a man.  Tiamat furnished them with terrible weapons, placed them under the command of her husband Kingu, and set out to war against the gods.

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* In Chaldaea, as in Egypt, nothing was supposed to have a real existence until it had received its name: the sentence quoted in the text means practically, that at that time there was neither heaven nor earth.** Apsu has been transliterated kiracruv [in Greek], by the author an extract from whose works has been preserved by Damascius. He gives a different version of the tradition, according to which the amorphous goddess Mummu-Tiamat consisted of two persons. The first, Tauthe, was the wife of Apason; the second, Moymis, was the son of Apason and of Tauthe. The last part of the sentence is very obscure in the Assyrian text, and has been translated in a variety of different ways. It seems to contain a comparison between Apsu and Mummu-Tiamat on the one hand, and the reeds and clumps of rushes so common in Chaldaea on the other; the two divinities remain inert and unfruitful, like water-plants which have not yet manifested their exuberant growth.*** The first fragments of the Chaldaean account of the Creation were discovered by G. Smith, who described them in the *Daily Telegraph* (of March 4, 1875), and published them in the *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, and translated in his Chaldaean account of Genesis all the fragments with which he was acquainted; other fragments have since been collected, but unfortunately not enough to enable us to entirely reconstitute the legend. It covered at least six tablets, possibly more. Portions of it have been translated after Smith, by Talbot, by Oppert, by Lenormant, by Schrader, by Sayce, by Jensen, by Winckler, by Zimmern, and lastly by Delitzsch. Since G. Smith wrote *The Chaldaean Account*, a fragment of a different version has been considered to be a part of the dogma of the Creation, as it was put forth at Kutha.

[Illustration: 006.jpg *one of the eagle-headed genii*.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin from an Assyrian bas-relief from Khorsabad

At first they knew not whom to send against her. Anshar despatched his son Anu; but Anu was afraid, and made no attempt to oppose her. He sent Ea; but Ea, like Anu, grew pale with fear, and did not venture to attack her. Merodach, the son of Ea, was the only one who believed himself strong enough to conquer her. The gods, summoned to a solemn banquet in the palace of Anshar, unanimously chose him to be their champion, and proclaimed him king. “Thou, thou art glorious among the great gods, thy will is second to none, thy bidding is Anu; Marduk (Merodach), thou art glorious among the great gods, thy will is second to none,* thy bidding is Anu.** From this day, that which thou orderest may not be changed, the power to raise or to abase shall be in thy hand, the word of thy mouth shall endure, and thy commandment shall not meet with opposition. None of the gods shall transgress thy law; but wheresoever

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a sanctuary of the gods is decorated, the place where they shall give their oracles shall be thy place.*** Marduk, it is thou who art our avenger! We bestow on thee the attributes of a king; the whole of all that exists, thou hast it, and everywhere thy word shall be exalted. Thy weapons shall not be turned aside, they shall strike thy enemy. O master, who trusts in thee, spare thou, his life; but the god who hath done evil, put out his life like water. They clad their champion in a garment, and thus addressed him: 'Thy will, master, shall be that of the gods. Speak the word, 'Let it be so,' it shall be so. Thus open thy mouth, this garment shall disappear; say unto it, 'Return,' and the garment shall be there." He spoke with his lips, the garment disappeared; he said unto it, "Return," and the garment was restored.
* The Assyrian runs, "thy destiny is second to none." This refers not to the *destiny* of the god himself, but to the fate which he allots to others. I have substituted, here and elsewhere, for the word "destiny," the special meaning of which would not have been understood, the word "will," which, though it does not exactly reproduce the Assyrian expression, avoids the necessity for paraphrases or formulas calculated to puzzle the modern reader.

> ** Or, to put it less concisely, "When thou commandest, it is Anu himself who commands," and the same blind obedience must be paid to thee as to Anu.
>
> *** The meaning is uncertain. The sentence seems to convey that henceforth Merodach would be at home in all temples that were constructed in honour of the other gods.

Merodach having been once convinced by this evidence that he had the power of doing everything and of undoing everything at his pleasure, the gods handed to him the sceptre, the throne, the crown, the insignia of supreme rule, and greeted him with their acclamations: "Be King!—Go! Cut short the life of Tiamat, and let the wind carry her blood to the hidden extremities of the universe."* He equipped himself carefully for the struggle. "He made a bow and placed his mark upon it;"** he had a spear brought to him and fitted a point to it; the god lifted the lance, brandished it in his right hand, then hung the bow and quiver at his side. He placed a thunderbolt before him, filled his body with a devouring flame, then made a net in which to catch the anarchic Tiamat; he placed the four winds in such a way that she could not escape, south and north, east and west, and with his own hand he brought them the net, the gift of his father Anu. "He created the hurricane, the evil wind, the storm, the tempest, the four winds, the seven winds, the waterspout, the wind that is second to none; then he let loose the winds he had created, all seven of them, in order to bewilder the anarchic Tiamat by charging behind her. And the master of the waterspout raised his mighty weapon, he mounted his chariot, a work without its equal, formidable; he installed himself therein, tied the four reins to the side, and darted forth, pitiless, torrent-like, swift."

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* Sayce was the first, I believe, to cite, in connection with this mysterious order, the passage in which Berossus tells how the gods created men from a little clay, moistened with the blood of the god Belos. Here there seems to be a fear lest the blood of Tiamat, mingling with the mud, should produce a crop of monsters similar to those which the goddess had already created; the blood, if carried to the north, into the domain of the night, would there lose its creative power, or the monsters who might spring from it would at any rate remain strangers to the world of gods and men.

** “Literally, he made his weapon known; “perhaps it would be better to interpret it, “and he made it known that the bow would henceforth be his distinctive weapon.”

[Illustration: 008.jpg *Bel-Merodach*, *armed with the thunderbolt*, *does battle with the tumultuous Tiamat*.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin from the bas-relief from Nimrud preserved in the British Museum.

He passed through the serried ranks of the monsters and penetrated as far as Tiamat, and provoked her with his cries. “’Thou hast rebelled against the sovereignty of the gods, thou hast plotted evil against them, and hast desired that my fathers should taste of thy malevolence; therefore thy host shall be reduced to slavery, thy weapons shall be torn from thee. Come, then, thou and I must give battle to one another!’ Tiamat, when she heard him, flew into a fury, she became mad with rage; then Tiamat howled, she raised herself savagely to her full height, and planted her feet firmly on the earth. She pronounced an incantation, recited her formula, and called to her aid the gods of the combat, both them and their weapons. They drew near one to another, Tiamat and Marduk, wisest of the gods: They flung themselves into the combat, they met one another in the struggle. Then the master unfolded his net and seized her; he caused the hurricane which waited behind him to pass in front of him, and, when Tiamat opened her mouth to swallow him, he thrust the hurricane into it so that the monster could not close her jaws again. The mighty wind filled her paunch, her breast swelled, her maw was split. Marduk gave a straight thrust with his lance, burst open the paunch, pierced the interior, tore the breast, then bound the monster and deprived her of life. When he had vanquished Tiamat, who had been their leader, her army was disbanded, her host was scattered, and the gods, her allies, who had marched beside her, trembled, were scared, and fled.” He seized hold of them, and of Kingu their chief, and brought them bound in chains before the throne of his father.

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He had saved the gods from ruin, but this was the least part of his task; he had still to sweep out of space the huge carcase which encumbered it, and to separate its ill-assorted elements, and arrange them afresh for the benefit of the conquerors. He returned to Tiamat whom he had bound in chains. He placed his foot upon her, with his unerring knife he cut into the upper part of her; then he cut the blood-vessels, and caused the blood to be carried by the north wind to the hidden places. And the gods saw his face, they rejoiced, they gave themselves up to gladness, and sent him a present, a tribute of peace; then he recovered his calm, he contemplated the corpse, raised it and wrought marvels.

[Illustration: 010.jpg A *kufa laden with stones*, *and manned by* A *crew of four men*.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a bas-relief at Koyunjik.
Behind the *kufa* may be seen a fisherman seated astride on an inflated skin with his fish-basket attached to his neck.

He split it in two as one does a fish for drying; then he hung up one of the halves on high, which became the heavens; the other half he spread out under his feet to form the earth, and made the universe such as men have since known it. As in Egypt, the world was a kind of enclosed chamber balanced on the bosom of the eternal waters.* The earth, which forms the lower part of it, or floor, is something like an overturned boat in appearance, and hollow underneath, not like one of the narrow skiffs in use among other races, but a kufa, or kind of semicircular boat such as the tribes of the Lower Euphrates have made use of from earliest antiquity down to our own times.

* The description of the Egyptian world will be found in vol. i. p. 21 of the present work. So far the only systematic attempt to reconstruct the Chaldaean world, since Lenormant, has been made by Jensen, who, after examining all the elements which went to compose it, one after another, sums up in a few pages, and reproduces in a plate, the principal results of his inquiry. It will be seen at a glance how much I have taken from his work, and in what respects the drawing here reproduced differs from his.

[Illustration: 012.jpg *the world as conceived by the Chaldaeans*]

The earth rises gradually from the extremities to the centre, like a great mountain, of which the snow-region, where the Euphrates finds its source, approximately marks the summit. It was at first supposed to be divided into seven zones, placed one on the top of the other along its sides, like the stories of a temple; later on it was divided into four “houses,” each of which, like the “houses” of Egypt, corresponded with one of the four cardinal points, and was under the rule of particular gods. Near the foot of the mountain, the edges of the so-called

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boat curve abruptly outwards, and surround the earth with a continuous wall of uniform height having no opening. The waters accumulated in the hollow thus formed, as in a ditch; it was a narrow and mysterious sea, an ocean stream, which no living man might cross save with permission from on high, and whose waves rigorously separated the domain of men from the regions reserved to the gods. The heavens rose above the "mountain of the world" like a boldly formed dome, the circumference of which rested on the top of the wall in the same way as the upper structures of a house rest on its foundations. Merodach wrought it out of a hard resisting metal which shone brilliantly during the day in the rays of the sun, and at night appeared only as a dark blue surface, strewn irregularly with luminous stars. He left it quite solid in the southern regions, but tunnelled it in the north, by contriving within it a huge cavern which communicated with external space by means of two doors placed at the east and the west.* The sun came forth each morning by the first of these doors; he mounted to the zenith, following the internal base of the cupola from east to south; then he slowly descended again to the western door, and re-entered the tunnel in the firmament, where he spent the night,** Merodach regulated the course of the whole universe on the movements of the sun. He instituted the year and divided it into twelve months. To each month he assigned three decans, each of whom exercised his influence successively for a period of ten days; he then placed the procession of the days under the authority of Nibiru, in order that none of them should wander from his track and be lost. "He lighted the moon that she might rule the night, and made her a star of night that she might indicate the days:*** 'From month to month, without ceasing, shape thy disk,**** and at the beginning of the month kindle thyself in the evening, lighting up thy horns so as to make the heavens distinguishable; on the seventh day, show to me thy disk; and on the fifteenth, let thy two halves be full from month to month.'" He cleared a path for the planets, and four of them he entrusted to four gods; the fifth, our Jupiter, he reserved for himself, and appointed him to be shepherd of this celestial flock; in order that all the gods might have their image visible in the sky, he mapped out on the vault of heaven groups of stars which he allotted to them, and which seemed to men like representations of real or fabulous beings, fishes with the heads of rams, lions, bulls, goats and scorpions.

* Jensen has made a collection of the texts which speak of the interior of the heavens (Kirib shami) and of their aspect. The expressions which have induced many Assyriologists to conclude that the heavens were divided into different parts subject to different gods may be explained without necessarily having recourse to this hypothesis; the "heaven of Ami," for instance, is an expression which merely affirms Anu's sovereignty

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in the heavens, and is only a more elegant way of designating the heavens by the name of the god who rules them. The gates of heaven are mentioned in the account of the Creation.** It is generally admitted that the Chaldaeans believed that the sun passed over the world in the daytime, and underneath it during the night. The general resemblance of their theory of the universe to the Egyptian theory leads me to believe that they, no less than the Egyptians (cf. vol. i. pp. 24, 25, of the present work), for along time believed that the sun and moon revolved round the earth in a horizontal plane.*** This obscure phrase seems to be explained, if we remember that the Chaldaean, like the Egyptian day, dated from the rising of one moon to the rising of the following moon; for instance, from six o'clock one evening to about six o'clock the next evening. The moon, the star of night, thus marks the appearance of each day and "indicates the days."

**** The word here translated by "disk" is literally the royal cap, decorated with horns, "Agu," which Sin, the moon-god, wears on his head.

The heavens having been put in order,* he set about peopling the earth, and the gods, who had so far passively and perhaps powerlessly watched him at his work, at length made up their minds to assist him. They covered the soil with verdure, and all collectively "made living beings of many kinds. The cattle of the fields, the wild beasts of the fields, the reptiles of the fields, they fashioned them and made of them creatures of life."** According to one legend, these first animals had hardly left the hands of their creators, when, not being able to withstand the glare of the light, they fell dead one after the other. Then Merodach, seeing that the earth was again becoming desolate, and that its fertility was of no use to any one, begged his father Ea to cut off his head and mix clay with the blood which welled from the trunk, then from this clay to fashion new beasts and men, to whom the virtues of this divine blood would give the necessary strength to enable them to resist the air and light. At first they led a somewhat wretched existence, and "lived without rule after the manner of beasts. But, in the first year, appeared a monster endowed with human reason named Oannes, who rose from out of the Erythraean sea, at the point where it borders Babylonia. He had the whole body of a fish, but above his fish's head he had another head which was that of a man, and human feet emerged from beneath his fish's tail; he had a human voice, and his image is preserved to this day. He passed the day in the midst of men without taking any food; he taught them the use of letters, sciences and arts of all kinds, the rules for the founding of cities, and the construction of temples, the principles of law and of surveying; he showed them how to sow and reap; he gave them all that contributes to the comforts of life. Since

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that time nothing excellent has been invented. At sunset this monster Oannes plunged back into the sea, and remained all night beneath the waves, for he was amphibious. He wrote a book on the origin of things and of civilization, which he gave to men." These are a few of the fables which were current among the races of the Lower Euphrates with regard to the first beginnings of the universe. That they possessed many other legends of which we now know nothing is certain, but either they have perished for ever, or the works in which they were recorded still await discovery, it may be under the ruins of a palace or in the cupboards of some museum.

* The arrangement of the heavens by Merodach is described at the end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth tablets. The text, originally somewhat obscure, is so mutilated in places that it is not always possible to make out the sense with certainty.

** The creation of the animals and then of man is related on the seventh tablet, and on a tablet the place of which, in the series, is still undetermined. I have been obliged to translate the text rather freely, so as to make the meaning clear to the modern reader.

[Illustration: 017.jpg A *god-fish*]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from an Assyrian bas-relief from Nimrud.

They do not seem to have conceived the possibility of an absolute creation, by means of which the gods, or one of them, should have evolved out of nothing all that exists: the creation was for them merely the setting in motion of pre-existing elements, and the creator only an organizer of the various materials floating in chaos. Popular fancy in different towns varied the names of the creators and the methods employed by them; as centuries passed on, a pile of vague, confused, and contradictory traditions were amassed, no one of which was held to be quite satisfactory, though all found partisans to support them. Just as in Egypt, the theologians of local priesthoods endeavoured to classify them and bring them into a kind of harmony: many they rejected and others they recast in order to better reconcile their statements: they arranged them in systems, from which they undertook to unravel, under inspiration from on high, the true history of the universe. That which I have tried to set forth above is very ancient, if, as is said to be the case, it was in existence two or even three thousand years before our era; but the versions of it which we possess were drawn up much later, perhaps not till about the VIIth century B.C.* It had been accepted by the inhabitants of Babylon because it flattered their religious vanity by attributing the credit of having evolved order out of chaos to Merodach, the protector of their city.** He it was whom the Assyrian scribes had raised to a position of honour at the court of the last kings of Nineveh:*** it was Merodach's name which Berossus inscribed at the beginning of his book, when he set

about relating to the Greeks the origin of the world according to the Chaldeans, and the dawn of Babylonian civilization.

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* The question as to whether the text was originally written in Sumerian or in the Semitic tongue has frequently been discussed; the form in which we have it at present is not very old, and does not date much further back than the reign of Assurbanipal, if it is not even contemporary with that monarch. According to Sayce, the first version would date back beyond the XXth century, to the reign of Khammurabi; according to Jensen, beyond the XXXth century before our era.** Sayce thinks that the myth originated at Eridu, on the shores of the Persian Gulf, and afterwards received its present form at Babylon, where the local schools of theology adapted it to the god Merodach.*** The tablets in which it is preserved for us come partly from the library of Assurbanipal at Nineveh, partly from that of the temple of Nebo at Borsippa; these latter are more recent than the others, and seem to have been written during the period of the Persian supremacy.

Like the Egyptian civilization, it had had its birth between the sea and the dry land on a low, marshy, alluvial soil, flooded annually by the rivers which traverse it, devastated at long intervals by tidal waves of extraordinary violence. The Euphrates and the Tigris cannot be regarded as mysterious streams like the Nile, whose source so long defied exploration that people were tempted to place it beyond the regions inhabited by man. The former rise in Armenia, on the slopes of the Niphates, one of the chains of mountains which lie between the Black Sea and Mesopotamia, and the only range which at certain points reaches the line of eternal snow. At first they flow parallel to one another, the Euphrates from east to west as far as Malatiyeh, the Tigris from the west towards the east in the direction of Assyria. Beyond Malatiyeh, the Euphrates bends abruptly to the south-west, and makes its way across the Taurus as though desirous of reaching the Mediterranean by the shortest route, but it soon alters its intention, and makes for the south-east in search of the Persian Gulf. The Tigris runs in an oblique direction towards the south from the point where the mountains open out, and gradually approaches the Euphrates. Near Bagdad the two rivers are only a few leagues apart. However, they do not yet blend their waters; after proceeding side by side for some twenty or thirty miles, they again separate and only finally; unite at a point some eighty leagues lower down. At the beginning of our geological period their course was not such a long one. The sea then penetrated as far as lat. 33 deg., and was only arrested by the last undulations of the great plateau of secondary formation, which descend from the mountain group of Armenia: the two rivers entered the sea at a distance of about twenty leagues apart, falling into a gulf bounded on the east by the last spurs of the mountains of Iran, on the west by the sandy heights which border the margin of the Arabian Desert.* They

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filled up this gulf with their alluvial deposit, aided by the Adhem, the Diyaleh, the Kerkha, the Karun, and other rivers, which at the end of long independent courses became tributaries of the Tigris. The present beds of the two rivers, connected by numerous canals, at length meet near the village of Kornah and form one single river, the Shatt-el-Arab, which carries their waters to the sea. The mud with which they are charged is deposited when it reaches their mouth, and accumulates rapidly; it is said that the coast advances about a mile every seventy years.** In its upper reaches the Euphrates collects a number of small affluents, the most important of which, the Kara-Su, has often been confounded with it. Near the middle of its course, the Sadjur on the right bank carries into it the waters of the Taurus and the Amanus, on the left bank the Balikh and the Khabur contribute those of the Karadja-Dagh; from the mouth of the Khabur to the sea the Euphrates receives no further affluent. The Tigris is fed on the left by the Bitlis-Khai, the two Zabs, the Adhem, and the Diyaleh. The Euphrates is navigable from Sumeisat, the Tigris from Mossul, both of them almost as soon as they leave the mountains. They are subject to annual floods, which occur when the winter snow melts on the higher ranges of Armenia. The Tigris, which rises from the southern slope of the Niphates and has the more direct course, is the first to overflow its banks, which it does at the beginning of March, and reaches its greatest height about the 10th or 12th of May. The Euphrates rises in the middle of March, and does not attain its highest level till the close of May. From June onwards it falls with increasing rapidity; by September all the water which has not been absorbed by the soil has returned to the river-bed. The inundation does not possess the same importance for the regions covered by it, that the rise of the Nile does for Egypt. In fact, it does more harm than good, and the river-side population have always worked hard to protect themselves from it and to keep it away from their lands rather than facilitate its access to them; they regard it as a sort of necessary evil to which they resign themselves, while trying to minimize its effects.***

* This fact has been established by Ross and Lynch in two articles in the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, vol. ix. pp. 446, 472. The Chaldaeans and Assyrians called the gulf into which the two rivers debouched, Nar Marratum, or “salt river,” a name which they extended to the Chaldaean Sea, *i.e*. to the whole Persian Gulf.** Loftus estimated, about the middle of the last century, the progress of alluvial deposit at about one English mile in every seventy years; H. Rawlinson considers that the progress must have been more considerable in ancient times, and estimates it at an English mile in thirty years. Kiepert thinks, taking the above estimate as a basis, that in the sixth century

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before our era the fore-shore came from about ten to twelve German miles (47 to 56 English) higher up than the present fore-shore. G. Rawlinson estimates on his part that between the thirtieth and twentieth centuries B.C., a period in which he places the establishment of the first Chaldaean Empire, the fore-shore was more than 120 miles above the mouth of Shatt-el-Arab, to the north of the present village of Kornah.*** Fr. Lenormant has energetically defended this hypothesis in the majority of his works: it is set forth at some length in his work on *La Langue primitive de la Chaldee*. Hommel, on the other hand, maintains and strives to demonstrate scientifically the relationship of the non-Semitic tongue with Turkish.

The traveller Olivier noticed this, and writes as follows: “The land there is rather less fertile [than in Egypt], because it does not receive the alluvial deposits of the rivers with the same regularity as that of the Delta. It is necessary to irrigate it in order to render it productive, and to protect it sedulously from the inundations which are too destructive in their action and too irregular.”

The first races to colonize this country of rivers, or at any rate the first of which we can find traces, seem to have belonged to three different types. The most important were the Semites, who spoke a dialect akin to Aramaic, Hebrew, and Phoenician. It was for a long time supposed that they came down from the north, and traces of their occupation have been pointed out in Armenia in the vicinity of Ararat, or halfway down the course of the Tigris, at the foot of the Gordysean mountains. It has recently been suggested that we ought rather to seek for their place of origin in Southern Arabia, and this view is gaining ground among the learned. Side by side with these Semites, the monuments give evidence of a race of ill-defined character, which some have sought, without much success, to connect with the tribes of the Urall or Altai; these people are for the present provisionally called Sumerians.* They came, it would appear, from some northern country; they brought with them from their original home a curious system of writing, which, modified, transformed, and adopted by ten different nations, has preserved for us all that we know in regard to the majority of the empires which rose and fell in Western Asia before the Persian conquest. Semite or Sumerian, it is still doubtful which preceded the other at the mouths of the Euphrates. The Sumerians, who were for a time all-powerful in the centuries before the dawn of history, had already mingled closely with the Semites when we first hear of them. Their language gave way to the Semitic, and tended gradually to become a language of ceremony and ritual, which was at last learnt less for everyday use, than for the drawing up of certain royal inscriptions, or for the interpretation of very ancient texts of a legal or sacred character. Their religion became

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assimilated to the religion, and their gods identified with the gods, of the Semites. The process of fusion commenced at such an early date, that nothing has really come down to us from the time when the two races were strangers to each other. We are, therefore, unable to say with certainty how much each borrowed from the other, what each gave, or relinquished of its individual instincts and customs. We must take and judge them as they come before us, as forming one single nation, imbued with the same ideas, influenced in all their acts by the same civilization, and possessed of such strongly marked characteristics that only in the last days of their existence do we find any appreciable change. In the course of the ages they had to submit to the invasions and domination of some dozen different races, of whom some—Assyrians and Chaldaeans—were descended from a Semitic stock, while the others—Elamites, Cossaaans, Persians, Macedonians, and Parthians—either were not connected with them by any tie of blood, or traced their origin in some distant manner to the Sumerian branch. They got quickly rid of a portion of these superfluous elements, and absorbed or assimilated the rest; like the Egyptians, they seem to have been one of those races which, once established, were incapable of ever undergoing modification, and remained unchanged from one end of their existence to the other.

* The name *Accadian* proposed by H. Rawlinson and by Hincks, and adopted by Sayce, seems to have given way to *Sumerian*, the title put forward by Oppert. The existence of the Sumerian or Sumero-Accadian has been contested by Halevy in a number of noteworthy works. M. Halevy wishes to recognize in the so-called Sumerian documents the Semitic tongue of the ordinary inscriptions, but written in a priestly syllabic character subject to certain rules; this would be practically a *cryptogram*, or rather an *allogram*. M. Halevy won over Messrs. Guyard and Pognon in France, Delitzsch and a part of the Delitzsch school in Germany, to his view of the facts. The controversy, which has been carried on on both sides with a somewhat unnecessary vehemence, still rages; it has been simplified quite recently by Delitzcsh's return to the Sumerian theory. Without reviewing the arguments in detail, and while doing full justice to the profound learning displayed by M. Halevy, I feel forced to declare with Tiele that his criticisms "oblige scholars to carefully reconsider all that has been taken as proved in these matters, but that they do not warrant us in rejecting as untenable the hypothesis, still a very probable one, according to which the difference in the graphic systems corresponds to a real difference in. idiom."

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Their country must have presented at the beginning very much the same aspect of disorder and neglect which it offers to modern eyes. It was a flat interminable moorland stretching away to the horizon, there to begin again seemingly more limitless than ever, with, no rise or fall in the ground to break the dull monotony; clumps of palm trees and slender mimosas, intersected by lines of water gleaming in the distance, then long patches of wormwood and mallow, endless vistas of burnt-up plain, more palms and more mimosas, make up the picture of the land, whose uniform soil consists of rich, stiff, heavy clay, split up by the heat of the sun into a network of deep narrow fissures, from which the shrubs and wild herbs shoot forth each year in spring-time. By an almost imperceptible slope it falls gently away from north to south towards the Persian Gulf, from east to west towards the Arabian plateau. The Euphrates flows through it with unstable and changing course, between shifting banks which it shapes and re-shapes from season to season.

[Illustration: 025.jpg GIGANTIC CHALDAEAN REEDS]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from an Assyrian bas-relief of the palace of Nimrud.

The slightest impulse of its current encroaches on them, breaks through them, and makes openings for streamlets, the majority of which are clogged up and obliterated by the washing away of their margins, almost as rapidly as they are formed. Others grow wider and longer, and, sending out branches, are transformed into permanent canals or regular rivers, navigable at certain seasons. They meet on the left bank detached offshoots of the Tigris, and after wandering capriciously in the space between the two rivers, at last rejoin their parent stream: such are the Shatt-el-Hai and the Shatt-en-Nil. The overflowing waters on the right bank, owing to the fall of the land, run towards the low limestone hills which shut in the basin of the Euphrates in the direction of the desert; they are arrested at the foot of these hills, and are diverted on to the low-lying ground, where they lose themselves in the morasses, or hollow out a series of lakes along its borders, the largest of which, Bahr-i-Nedjif, is shut in on three sides by steep cliffs, and rises or falls periodically with the floods. A broad canal, which takes its origin in the direction of Hit at the beginning of the alluvial plain, bears with it the overflow, and, skirting the lowest terraces of the Arabian chain, runs almost parallel to the Euphrates. In proportion as the canal proceeds southward the ground sinks still lower, and becomes saturated with the overflowing waters, until, the banks gradually disappearing, the whole neighbourhood is converted into a morass. The Euphrates and its branches do not at all times succeed in reaching the sea: they are lost for the most part in vast lagoons to which the tide comes up, and in its ebb bears their waters away with it. Reeds grow there luxuriantly in enormous beds, and reach sometimes a height of from thirteen to sixteen feet; banks of black and putrid mud emerge amidst the green growth, and give off deadly emanations. Winter is scarcely felt here: snow is unknown, hoar-frost is rarely seen, but sometimes in the morning a thin film of ice covers the marshes, to disappear under the first rays of the sun.*

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* Loftus attributes the lowering of the temperature during the winter to the wind blowing over a soil impregnated with saltpetre. “We were,” he says, “in a kind of immense freezing chamber.”

[Illustration: 027.jpg THE MARSHES ABOUT THE CONFLUENCE OF THE KERKHA AND TIGRIS.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a sketch by J. Dieulafoy. For six weeks in November and December there is much rain: after this period there are only occasional showers, occurring at longer and longer intervals until May, when they entirely cease, and the summer sets in, to last until the following November. There are almost six continuous months of depressing and moist heat, which overcomes both men and animals and makes them incapable of any constant effort.* Sometimes a south or east wind suddenly arises, and bearing with it across the fields and canals whirlwinds of sand, burns up in its passage the little verdure which the sun had spared. Swarms of locusts follow in its train, and complete the work of devastation. A sound as of distant rain is at first heard, increasing in intensity as the creatures approach. Soon their thickly concentrated battalions fill the heavens on all sides, flying with slow and uniform motion at a great height. They at length alight, cover everything, devour everything, and, propagating their species, die within a few days: nothing, not a blade of vegetation, remains on the region where they alighted.

* Loftus says that he himself had witnessed in the neighbourhood of Bagdad during the daytime birds perched on the palm trees in an exhausted condition, and panting with open beaks. The inhabitants of Bagdad during the summer pass their nights on the housetops, and the hours of day in passages within, expressly constructed to protect them from the heat.

Notwithstanding these drawbacks, the country was not lacking in resources. The soil was almost as fertile as the loam of Egypt, and, like the latter, rewarded a hundredfold the labour of the inhabitants.* Among the wild herbage which spreads over the country in the spring, and clothes it for a brief season with flowers, it was found that some plants, with a little culture, could be rendered useful to men and beasts. There were ten or twelve different species of pulse to choose from—beans, ’lentils, chick-peas, vetches, kidney beans, onions, cucumbers, egg-plants, “gombo,” and pumpkins. From the seed of the sesame an oil was expressed which served for food, while the castor-oil plant furnished that required for lighting. The safflower and henna supplied the women with dyes for the stuffs which they manufactured from hemp and flax. Aquatic plants were more numerous than on the banks of the Nile, but they did not occupy such an important place among food-stuffs. The “lily bread” of the Pharaohs would have seemed meagre fare to people accustomed from early times to wheaten bread. Wheat and barley are considered to be indigenous on the plains of the

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Euphrates; it was supposed to be here that they were first cultivated in Western Asia, and that they spread from hence to Syria, Egypt, and the whole of Europe.** “The soil there is so favourable to the growth of cereals, that it yields usually two hundredfold, and in places of exceptional fertility three hundredfold. The leaves of the wheat and barley have a width of four digits. As for the millet and sesame, which in altitude are as great as trees, I will not state their height, although I know it from experience, being convinced that those who have not lived in Babylonia would regard my statement with incredulity.” Herodotus in his enthusiasm exaggerated the matter, or perhaps, as a general rule, he selected as examples the exceptional instances which had been mentioned to him: at present wheat and barley give a yield to the husbandman of some thirty or forty fold.
* Olivier, who was a physician and naturalist, and had visited Egypt as well as Mesopotamia, thought that Babylonia was somewhat less fertile than Egypt. Loftus, who was neither, and had not visited Egypt, declares, on the contrary, that the banks of the Euphrates are no less productive than those of the Nile.** Native traditions collected by Berossus confirm this, and the testimony of Olivier is usually cited as falling in with that of the Chaldaean writer. Olivier is considered, indeed, to have discovered wild cereals in Mesopotamia. Pie only says, however, that on the banks of the Euphrates above Anah he had met with “wheat, barley, and spelt in a kind of ravine;” from the context it clearly follows that these were plants which had reverted to a wild state—-instances of which have been observed several times in Mesopotamia. A. de Oandolle admitted the Mesopotamian origin of the various species of wheat and barley.

[Illustration: 030.jpg THE GATHERING OF THE SPATHES OF THE MALE PALM TREE]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a cylinder in the Museum at the Hague. The original measures almost an inch in height.

“The date palm meets all the other needs of the population; they make from it a kind of bread, wine, vinegar, honey, cakes, and numerous kinds of stuffs; the smiths use the stones of its fruit for charcoal; these same stones, broken and macerated, are given as a fattening food to cattle and sheep.” Such a useful tree was tended with a loving care, the vicissitudes in its growth were observed, and its reproduction was facilitated by the process of shaking the flowers of the male palm over those of the female: the gods themselves had taught this artifice to men, and they were frequently represented with a bunch of flowers in their right hand, in the attitude assumed by a peasant in fertilizing a palm tree. Fruit trees were everywhere mingled with ornamental trees—the fig, apple, almond, walnut, apricot, pistachio, vine, with the plane tree, cypress, tamarisk, and acacia; in the prosperous period of the country the plain of the Euphrates was a great orchard which extended uninterruptedly from the plateau of Mesopotamia to the shores of the Persian Gulf.

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The flora would not have been so abundant if the fauna had been sufficient for the supply of a large population. A considerable proportion of the tribes on the Lower Euphrates lived for a long time on fish only. They consumed them either fresh, salted, or smoked: they dried them in the sun, crushed them in a mortar, strained the pulp through linen, and worked it up into a kind of bread or into cakes. The barbel and carp attained a great size in these sluggish waters, and if the Chalaeans, like the Arabs who have succeeded them in these regions, clearly preferred these fish above others, they did not despise at the same time such less delicate species as the eel, murena, silurus, and even that singular gurnard whose habits are an object of wonder to our naturalists. This fish spends its existence usually in the water, but a life in the open air has no terrors for it: it leaps out on the bank, climbs trees without much difficulty, finds a congenial habitat on the banks of mud exposed by the falling tide, and basks there in the sun, prepared to vanish in the ooze in the twinkling of an eye if some approaching bird should catch sight of it. Pelicans, herons, cranes, storks, cormorants, hundreds of varieties of seagulls, ducks, swans, wild geese, secure in the possession of an inexhaustible supply of food, sport and prosper among the reeds. The ostrich, greater bustard, the common and red-legged partridge and quail, find their habitat on the borders of the desert; while the thrush, blackbird, ortolan, pigeon, and turtle-dove abound on every side, in spite of daily onslaughts from eagles, hawks, and other birds of prey.

[Illustration: 032.jpg A WINGED GENIUS HOLDING IN HIS HAND THE SPATHE OF THE MALE DATE-PALM.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a bas-relief from Nimrud, in the British Museum.

[Illustration: 033.jpg THE HEAVILY MANED LION WOUNDED BY AN ARROW AND VOMITING BLOOD.]

Snakes are found here and there, but they are for the most part of innocuous species: three poisonous varieties only are known, and their bite does not produce such terrible consequences as that of the horned viper or Egyptian uraeus. There are two kinds of lion—one without mane, and the other hooded, with a heavy mass of black and tangled hair: the proper signification of the old Chaldaean name was “the great ’dog,” and they have, indeed, a greater resemblance to large dogs than to the red lions of Africa.* They fly at the approach of man; they betake themselves in the daytime to retreats among the marshes or in the thickets which border the rivers, sallying forth at night, like the jackal, to scour the country. Driven to bay, they turn upon the assailant and fight desperately. The Chaldaean kings, like the Pharaohs, did not shrink from entering into a close conflict with them, and boasted of having rendered a service to their subjects by the destruction of many of these beasts.

* The Sumerian name of the lion is ur-malch “the great dog.” The best description of the first-mentioned species is still that of Olivier, who saw in the house oL the Pasha of Bagdad five of them in captivity; cf. Layard, Nineveh and Babylon, p. 487. Father Scheil tells me the lions have disappeared completely since the last twenty years.

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[Illustration: 034.jpg THE URUS IN ACT OF CHARGING]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from an Assyrian bas-relief from Nimrud (Layard, Monuments of Nineveh, 1st series, pi. 11).

[Illustration: 035.jpg a herd of onagers pursued by dogs and wounded by arrows.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a bas-relief in the British Museum.

The elephant seems to have roamed for some time over the steppes of the middle Euphrates;* there is no indication of its presence after the XIIIth century before our era, and from that time forward it was merely an object of curiosity brought at great expense from distant countries. This is not the only instance of animals which have disappeared in the course of centuries; the rulers of Nineveh were so addicted to the pursuit of the urus that they ended by exterminating it. Several sorts of panthers and smaller felidae had their lairs in the thickets of Mesopotamia. The wild ass and onager roamed in small herds between the Balikh and the Tigris. Attempts were made, it would seem, at a very early period to tame them and make use of them to draw chariots; but this attempt either did not succeed at all, or issued in such uncertain results, that it was given up as soon as other less refractory animals were made the subjects of successful experiment.

* The existence of the elephant in Mesopotamia and Northern Syria is well established by the Egyptian inscription of Amenemhabi in the XVth century before our era.

[Illustration: 036.jpg THE CHIEF DOMESTIC ANIMALS OP THE REGIONS OF THE EUPHRATES.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from an Assyrian bas-relief from Kouyunjik.

The wild boar, and his relative, the domestic hog, inhabited the morasses. Assyrian sculptors amused themselves sometimes by representing long gaunt sows making their way through the cane-brakes, followed by their interminable offspring. The hog remained here, as in Egypt, in a semi-tamed condition, and the people were possessed of only a small number of domesticated animals besides the dog—namely, the ass, ox, goat, and sheep; the horse and camel were at first unknown, and were introduced at a later period.*

[Illustration: 037.jpg THE SOW AND HER LITTER MAKING THEIR WAY THROUGH A BED OF REEDS.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a bas-relief from Kouyunjik.

* The horse is denoted in the Assyrian texts by a group of signs which mean “the ass of the East,” and the camel by other signs in which the character for “ass” also appears. The methods of rendering these two names show that the subjects of them were unknown in the earliest times; the epoch of their introduction is uncertain. A chariot drawn by horses appears on the “Stele of the Vultures.” Camels are mentioned among the booty obtained from the Bedouin of the desert.

We know nothing of the efforts which the first inhabitants—Sumerians

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and Semites—had to make in order to control the waters and to bring the land under culture: the most ancient monuments exhibit them as already possessors of the soil, and in a forward state of civilization.* Their chief cities were divided into two groups: one in the south, in the neighbourhood of the sea; the other in a northern direction, in the region where the Euphrates and Tigris are separated from each other by merely a narrow strip of land. The southern group consisted of seven, of which Eridu lay nearest to the coast. This town stood on the left bank of the Euphrates, at a point which is now called Abu-Shahrein. A little to the west, on the opposite bank, but at some distance from the stream, the mound of Mugheir marks the site of Uru, the most important, if not the oldest, of the southern cities. Lagash occupied the site of the modern Telloh to the north of Eridu, not far from the Shatt-el-Hai; Nisin and Mar, Larsam and Uruk, occupied positions at short distances from each other on the marshy ground which extends between the Euphrates and the Shatt-en-Nil. The inscriptions mention here and there other less important places, of which the ruins have not yet been discovered—Zirlab and Shurippak, places of embarkation at the mouth of the Euphrates for the passage of the Persian Gulf; and the island of Dilmun, situated some forty leagues to the south in the centre of the Salt Sea,—"Nar-Marratum." The northern group comprised Nipur, the "incomparable;" Barsip, on the branch which flows parallel to the Euphrates and falls into the Bahr-i-Nedjif; Babylon, the "gate of the god," the "residence of life," the only metropolis of the Euphrates region of which posterity never lost a reminiscence; Kishu, Kuta, Agade;** and lastly the two Sipparas, that of Shamash and that of Anunit. The earliest Chaldaean civilization was confined almost entirely to the two banks of the Lower Euphrates: except at its northern boundary, it did not reach the Tigris, and did not cross this river. Separated from the rest of the world—on the east by the marshes which border the river in its lower course, on the north by the badly watered and sparsely inhabited table-land of Mesopotamia, on the west by the Arabian desert—it was able to develop its civilization, as Egypt had done, in an isolated area, and to follow out its destiny in peace. The only point from which it might anticipate serious danger was on the east, whence the Kashshi and the Elamites, organized into military states, incessantly harassed it year after year by their attacks. The Kashshi were scarcely better than half-civilized mountain hordes, but the Elamites were advanced in civilization, and their capital, Susa, vied with the richest cities of the Euphrates, Uru and Babylon, in antiquity and magnificence.

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* For an ideal picture of what may have been the beginnings of that civilization, see Delitzsch, Die Entstehung des altesten Schriflssystems, p. 214, et seq. I will not enter into the question as to whether it did or did not come by sea to the mouths of the Euphrates and Tigris. The legend of the fish-god Oannes (Berossus, frag. 1), which seems to conceal some indication on the subject, is merely a mythological tradition, from which it would be wrong to deduce historical conclusions.** Agade, or Agane, has been identified with one of the two towns of which Sippara is made up, more especially with that which was called Anunit Sippara; the reading Agadi, Agacle, was especially assumed to lead to its identification with the Accad of *Genesis x. 10*, and with the Akkad of native tradition. This opinion has been generally abandoned by Assyriologists, and Agane has not yet found a site. Was it only a name for Babylon?

[Illustration: 040.jpg MAP OF CHALDAEA]

There was nothing serious to fear from the Guti, on the branch of the Tigris to the north-east, or from the Shuti to the north of these; they were merely marauding tribes, and, however troublesome they might be to their neighbours in their devastating incursions, they could not compromise the existence of the country, or bring it into subjection. It would appear that the Chaldseans had already begun to encroach upon these tribes and to establish colonies among them—El-Ashshur on the banks of the Tigris, Harran on the furthest point of the Mesopotamian plain, towards the sources of the Balikh. Beyond these were vague and unknown regions—Tidanum, Martu, the sea of the setting sun, the vast territories of Milukhkha and Magan.* Egypt, from the time they were acquainted with its existence, was a semi-fabulous country at the ends of the earth.

* The question concerning Milukhkha and Magan has exercised Assyriologists for twenty years. The prevailing opinion appears to be that which identifies Magan with the Sinaitic Peninsula, and Milukhkha with the country to the north of Magan as far as the Wady Arish and the Mediterranean; others maintain, not the theory of Delitzsch, according to whom Magan and Milukhkha are synonyms for Shumir and Akkad, and consequently two of the great divisions of Babylonia, but an analogous hypothesis, in which they are regarded as districts to the west of the Euphrates, either in Chaldaean regions or on the margin of the desert, or even in the desert itself towards the Sinaitic Peninsula. What we know of the texts induces me, in common with H. Rawlinson, to place these countries on the shores of the Persian Gulf, between the mouth of the Euphrates and the Bahrein islands; possibly the Makse and the Melangitso of classical historians and geographers were the descendants of the people of Magan (Makan) and Milukhkha (Melugga), who had been driven towards the entrance to the Persian

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Gulf by some such event as the increase in these regions of the Kashdi (Chaldaeans). The names, emigrated to the western parts of Arabia and to the Sinaitic Peninsula in after-times, as the name of India passed to America in the XVIth century of our era.

How long did it take to bring this people out of savagery, and to build up so many flourishing cities? The learned did not readily resign themselves to a confession of ignorance on the subject. As they had depicted the primordial chaos, the birth of the gods, and their struggles over the creation, so they related unhesitatingly everything which had happened since the creation of mankind, and they laid claim to being able to calculate the number of centuries which lay between their own day and the origin of things. The tradition to which most credence was attached in the Greek period at Babylon, that which has been preserved for us in the histories of Berossue, asserts that there was a somewhat long interval between the manifestation of Oannes and the foundation of a dynasty. The first king was Aloros of Babylon, a Chaldaean of whom nothing is related except that he was chosen by the divinity himself to be a shepherd of the people. He reigned for ten sari, amounting in all to 36,000 years; for the saros is 3600 years, the ner 600 years, and the soss 60 years.

[Illustration: 041.jpg TWO FISH-LIKE DEITIES OF THE CHALDAEANS.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from an intaglio in the British Museum.

After the death of Aloros, his son Alaparos ruled for three sari, after which Amillaros, of the city of Pantibibla, reigned thirteen sari. It was under him that there issued from the Bed Sea a second Annedotos, resembling Oannes in his semi-divine shape, half man and half fish. After him Ammenon, also from Pantibibla, a Chaldaean, ruled for a term of twelve sari; under him, they say, the mysterious Oannes appeared. Afterwards Amelagaros of Pantibibla governed for eighteen sari; then Davos, the shepherd from Pantibibla, reigned ten sari: under him there issued from the Red Sea a fourth Annedotos, who had a form similar to the others, being made up of man and fish. After him Bvedoranchos of Pantibibla reigned for eighteen sari; in his time there issued yet another monster, named Anodaphos, from the sea. These various monsters developed carefully and in detail that which Oannes had set forth in a brief way. Then Amempsinos of Larancha, a Chalaean, reigned ten sari; and Obartes, also a Chaldaean, of Larancha, eight sari. Finally, on the death of Obartes, his son Xisuthros held the sceptre for eighteen sari. It was under him that the great deluge took place. Thus ten kings are to be reckoned in all, and the duration of their combined reigns amounts to one hundred and twenty sari. From the beginning of the world to the Deluge they reckoned 691,200 years, of which 259,200 had passed before the coming of Aloros, and the remaining 432,000 were generously distributed between this prince and his immediate successors: the Greek and Latin writers had certainly a fine occasion for amusement over these fabulous numbers of years which the Chaldaeans assigned to the lives and reigns of their first kings.

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Men in the mean time became wicked; they lost the habit of offering sacrifices to the gods, and the gods, justly indignant at this negligence, resolved to be avenged.* Now, Shamashnapishtim I was reigning at this time in Shurippak, the “town of the ship:” he and all his family were saved, and he related afterwards to one of his descendants how Ea had snatched him from the disaster which fell upon his people.** “Shurippak, the city which thou thyself knowest, is situated on the bank of the Euphrates; it was already an ancient town when the hearts of the gods who resided in it impelled them to bring the deluge upon it—the great gods as many as they are; their father Anu, their counsellor Bel the warrior, their throne-bearer Ninib, their prince Innugi. The master of wisdom, Ea, took his seat with them,*** and, moved with pity, was anxious to warn Shamashnapishtim, his servant, of the peril which threatened him;” but it was a very serious affair to betray to a mortal a secret of heaven, and as he did not venture to do so in a direct manner, his inventive mind suggested to him an artifice.

* The account of Bcrossus implies this as a cause of the Deluge, since he mentions the injunction imposed upon the survivors by a mysterious voice to be henceforward respectful towards the gods, [Greek word]. The Chalaean account considers the Deluge to have been sent as a punishment upon men for their sins against the gods, since it represents towards the end (cf. p. 52 of this History) Ea as reproaching Bel for having confounded the innocent and the guilty in one punishment.** The name of this individual has been read in various ways: Shamashnapishtim, “sun of life,” Sitnapishtim, “the saved,” and Pirnapishtim. In one passage at least we find, in place of Shamashnapishtim, the name or epithet of Aclrakhasis, or by inversion Khasisadra, which appears to signify “the very shrewd,” and is explained by the skill with which he interpreted the oracle of Ea. Khasisadra is most probably the form which the Greeks have transcribed by Xisuthros, Sisuthros, Sisithes.*** The account of the Deluge covers the eleventh tablet of the poem of Gilgames. The hero, threatened with death, proceeds to rejoin his ancestor Shamashnapishtim to demand from him the secret of immortality, and the latter tells him the manner in which he escaped from the waters: he had saved his life only at the expense of the destruction of men. The text of it was published by Smith and by Haupt, fragment by fragment, and then restored consecutively. The studies of which it is the object would make a complete library. The principal translations are those of Smith, of Oppert, of Lenor-mant, of Haupt, of Jensen, of A. Jeremias, of Sauveplane, and of Zimmern.

[Illustration: 045.jpg Page with ONE OF THE TABLETS OF THE DELUGE SERIES.]

Facsimile by Faucher-Gudin, from the photograph published by G. Smith, Chaldaean Account of the Deluge from terra-cotta tablets found at Nineveh.

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He confided to a hedge of reeds the resolution that had been adopted:* “Hedge, hedge, wall, wall! Hearken, hedge, and understand well, wall! Man of Shurippak, son of Ubaratutu, construct a wooden house, build a ship, abandon thy goods, seek life; throw away thy possessions, save thy life, and place in the vessel all the seed of life. The ship which thou shalt build, let its proportions be exactly measured, let its dimensions and shape be well arranged, then launch it in the sea.” Shamashnapishtim heard the address to the field of reeds, or perhaps the reeds repeated it to him. “I understood it, and I said to my master Ea ’The command, O my master, which thou hast thus enunciated, I myself will respect it, and I will execute it: but what shall I say to the town, the people and the elders?’” Ea opened his mouth and spake; he said to his servant: “Answer thus and say to them: ’Because Bel hates me, I will no longer dwell in your town, and upon the land of Bel I will no longer lay my head, but I will go upon the sea, and will dwell with Ea my master. Now Bel will make rain to fall upon you, upon the swarm of birds and the multitude of fishes, upon all the animals of the field, and upon all the crops; but Ea will give you a sign: the god who rules the rain will cause to fall upon you, on a certain evening, an abundant rain. When the dawn of the next day appears, the deluge will begin, which will cover the earth and drown all living things.’” Shamashnapishtim repeated the warning to the people, but the people refused to believe it, and turned him into ridicule. The work went rapidly forward: the hull was a hundred and forty cubits long, the deck one hundred and forty broad; all the joints were caulked with pitch and bitumen. A solemn festival was observed at its completion, and the embarkation began.** “All that I possessed I filled the ship with it all that I had of silver, I filled it with it; all that I had of gold I filled it with it, all that I had of the seed of life of every kind I filled it with it; I caused all my family and my servants to go up into it; beasts of the field, wild beasts of the field, I caused them to go up all together. Shamash had given me a sign: ’When the god who rules the rain, in the evening shall cause an abundant rain to fall, enter into the ship and close thy door.’ The sign was revealed: the god who rules the rain caused to fall one night an abundant rain. The day, I feared its dawning; I feared to see the daylight; I entered into the ship and I shut the door; that the ship might be guided, I handed over to Buzur-Bel, the pilot, the great ark and its fortunes.”

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* The sense of this passage is far from being certain; I have followed the interpretation proposed, with some variations, by Pinches, by Haupt, and by Jensen. The stratagem at once recalls the history of King Midas, and the talking reeds which knew the secret of his ass's ears. In the version of Berossus, it is Kronos who plays the part here assigned to Ea in regard to Xisuthros.** The text is mutilated, and does not furnish enough information to follow in every detail the building of the ark. From what we can understand, the vessel of Shamashnapishtim was a kind of immense kelek, decked, but without masts or rigging of any sort. The text identifies the festival celebrated by the hero before the embarkation with the festival Akitu of Merodach, at Babylon, during which "Nebo, the powerful son, sailed from Borsippa to Babylon in the bark of the river Asmu, of beauty." The embarkation of Nebo and his voyage on the stream had probably inspired the information according to which the embarkation of Shamashnapishtim was made the occasion of a festival Akitu, celebrated at Shurippak; the time of the Babylonian festival was probably thought to coincide with the anniversary of the Deluge.

"As soon as the morning became clear, a black cloud arose from the foundations of heaven. Bamman growled in its bosom; Nebo and Marduk ran before it—ran like two throne-bearers over hill and dale. Nera the Great tore up the stake to which the ark was moored. Ninib came up quickly; he began the attack; the Anunnaki raised their torches and made the earth to tremble at their brilliancy; the tempest of Ramman scaled the heaven, changed all the light to darkness, flooded the earth like a lake.* For a whole day the hurricane raged, and blew violently over the mountains and over the country; the tempest rushed upon men like the shock of an army, brother no longer beheld brother, men recognized each other no more.

* The progress of the tempest is described as the attack of the gods, who had resolved on the destruction of men. Ramman is the thunder which growls in the cloud; Nebo, Merodach, Nera the Great (Nergal), and Ninib, denote the different phases of the hurricane from the moment when the wind gets up until it is at its height; the Anunnaki represent the lightning which flashes carelessly across the heaven.

[Illustration: 048.jpg SHAMASHNAPISHTIM SHUT INTO THE ARK.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a Chalaean intaglio.

In heaven, the gods were afraid of the deluge;* they betook themselves to flight, they clambered to the firmament of Anu; the gods, howling like dogs, cowered upon the parapet.** Ishtar wailed like a woman in travail; she cried out, "the lady of life, the goddess with the beautiful voice: 'The past returns to clay, because I have prophesied evil before the gods! Prophesying evil before the gods, I have counselled the attack to bring my men to nothing;

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and these to whom I myself have given birth, where are they? Like the spawn of fish they encumber the sea! 'The gods wept with her over the affair of the Anunnaki;' the gods, in the place where they sat weeping, their lips were closed." It was not pity only which made their tears to flow: there were mixed up with it feelings of regret and fears for the future. Mankind once destroyed, who would then make the accustomed offerings? The inconsiderate anger of Bel, while punishing the impiety of their creatures, had inflicted injury upon themselves. "Six days and nights the wind continued, the deluge and the tempest raged. The seventh day at daybreak the storm abated; the deluge, which had carried on warfare like an army, ceased, the sea became calm and the hurricane disappeared, the deluge ceased. I surveyed the sea with my eyes, raising my voice; but all mankind had returned to clay, neither fields nor woods could be distinguished.*** I opened the hatchway and the light fell upon my face; I sank down, I cowered, I wept, and my tears ran down my cheeks when I beheld the world all terror and all sea. At the end of twelve days, a point of land stood up from the waters, the ship touched the land of Nisir:**** the mountain of Nisir stopped the ship and permitted it to float no longer. One day, two days, the mountain of Nisir stopped the ship and permitted it to float no longer.
* The gods enumerated above alone took part in the drama of the Deluge: they were the confederates and emissaries of Bel. The others were present as spectators of the disaster, and were terrified.** The upper part of the mountain wall is here referred to, upon which the heaven is supported. There was a narrow space between the escarpment and the place upon which the vault of the firmament rested: the Babylonian poet represented the gods as crowded like a pack of hounds upon this parapet, and beholding from it the outburst of the tempest and the waters.

> ***The translation is uncertain: the text refers to a legend which has not come down to us, in which Ishtar is related to have counselled the destruction of men.

**** The Anunnaki represent here the evil genii whom the gods that produced the deluge had let loose, and whom Ramman, Nebo, Merodach, Nergal, and Ninib, all the followers of Bel, had led to the attack upon men: the other deities shared the fears and grief of Ishtar in regard to the ravages which these Anunnaki had brought about (cf. below, pp. 141-143 of this History).

Three days, four days, the mountain of Nisir* stopped the ship and permitted it to float no longer. Five days, six days, the mountain of Nisir stopped the ship and permitted it to float no longer. The seventh day, at dawn, I took out a dove and let it go: the dove went, turned about, and as there was no place to alight upon, came back. I took out a swallow and let it go: the swallow went,

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turned about, and as there was no place to alight upon, came back. I took out a raven and let it go: the raven went, and saw that the water had abated, and came near the ship flapping its wings, croaking, and returned no more." Shamashnapishtim escaped from the deluge, but he did not know whether the divine wrath was appeased, or what would be done with him when it became known that he still lived.** He resolved to conciliate the gods by expiatory ceremonies. "I sent forth the inhabitants of the ark towards the four winds, I made an offering, I poured out a propitiatory libation on the summit of the mountain. I set up seven and seven vessels, and I placed there some sweet-smelling rushes, some cedar-wood, and storax." He thereupon re-entered the ship to await there the effect of his sacrifice.
* I have adopted, in the translation of this difficult passage, the meaning suggested by Haupt, according to which it ought to be translated, "The field makes nothing more than one with the mountain;" that is to say, "mountains and fields are no longer distinguishable one from another." I have merely substituted for mountain the version wood, piece of land covered with trees, which Jensen has suggested.** The mountain of Nisir is replaced in the version of Berossus by the Gordyaean mountains of classical geography; a passage of Assur-nazir-pal informs us that it was situated between the Tigris and the Great Zab, according to Delitzsch between 35 deg. and 36 deg. N. latitude. The Assyrian-speaking people interpreted the name as *Salvation*, and a play upon words probably decided the placing upon its slopes the locality where those *saved* from the deluge landed on the abating of the waters. Fr. Lenormant proposes to identify it with the peak Rowandiz.

The gods, who no longer hoped for such a wind-fall, accepted the sacrifice with a wondering joy. "The gods sniffed up the odour, the gods sniffed up the excellent odour, the gods gathered like flies above the offering. "When Ishtar, the mistress of life, came in her turn, she held up the great amulet which Anu had made for her."* She was still furious against those who had determined upon the destruction of mankind, especially against Bel: "These gods, I swear it on the necklace of my neck! I will not forget them; these days I will remember, and will not forget them for ever. Let the other gods come quickly to take part in the offering. Bel shall have no part in the offering, for he was not wise: but he has caused the deluge, and he has devoted my people to destruction." Bel himself had not recovered his temper: "When he arrived in his turn and saw the ship, he remained immovable before it, and his heart was filled with rage against the gods of heaven. 'Who is he who has come out of it living? No man must survive the destruction!'" The gods had everything to fear from his anger: Ninib was eager to exculpate himself, and to put the blame upon the

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right person. Ea did not disavow his acts: “he opened his mouth and spake; he said to Bel the warrior: ’Thou, the wisest among the gods, O warrior, why wert thou not wise, and didst cause the deluge? The sinner, make him responsible for his sin; the criminal, make him responsible for his crime: but be calm, and do not cut off all; be patient, and do not drown all. What was the good of causing the deluge? A lion had only to come to decimate the people. What was the good of causing the deluge? A leopard had only to come to decimate the people. What was the good of causing the deluge? Famine had only to present itself to desolate the country. What was the good of causing the deluge? Nera the Plague had only to come to destroy the people. As for me, I did, not reveal the judgment of the gods: I caused Khasisadra to dream a dream, and he became aware of the judgment of the gods, and then he made his resolve.’” Bel was pacified at the words of Ea: “he went up into the interior of the ship; he took hold of my hand and made me go up, even me; he made my wife go up, and he pushed her to my side; he turned our faces towards him, he placed himself between us, and blessed us: ’Up to this time Shamashnapishtim was a man: henceforward let Shamashnapishtim and his wife be reverenced like us, the gods, and let Shamashnapishtim dwell afar off, at the mouth of the seas, and he carried us away and placed us afar off, at the mouth of the seas.’” Another form of the legend relates that by an order of the god, Xisuthros, before embarking, had buried in the town of Sippara all the books in which his ancestors had set forth the sacred sciences—books of oracles and omens, “in which were recorded the beginning, the middle, and the end. When he had disappeared, those of his companions who remained on board, seeing that he did not return, went out and set off in search of him, calling him by name. He did not show himself to them, but a voice from heaven enjoined upon them to be devout towards the gods, to return to Babylon and dig up the books in order that they might be handed down to future generations; the voice also informed them that the country in which they were was Armenia. They offered sacrifice in turn, they regained their country on foot, they dug up the books of Sippara and wrote many more; afterwards they refounded Babylon.” It was even maintained in the time of the Seleucido, that a portion of the ark existed on one of the summits of the Gordyaean mountains.** Pilgrimages were made to it, and the faithful scraped off the bitumen which covered it, to make out of it amulets of sovereign virtue against evil spells.

[Illustration: 051.jpg THE JUDI MOUNTAINS SOMETIMES IDENTIFIED WITH TUB NTSIB MOUNTAINS.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a sketch by G. Smith, *Assyrian Discoveries*, p. 108.

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* We are ignorant of the object which the goddess lifted up: it may have been the sceptre surmounted by a radiating star, such as we see on certain cylinders. Several Assyriologists translate it arrows or lightning. Ishtar is, in fact, an armed goddess who throws the arrow or lightning made by her father Anu, the heaven.** Bekossus, fragm. xv. The legend about the remains of the ark has passed into Jewish tradition concerning the Deluge. Nicholas of Damascus relates, like Berossus, that they were still to be seen on the top of Mount Baris. From that time they have been continuously seen, sometimes on one peak and sometimes on another. In the last century they were pointed out to Chardin, and the memory of them has not died out in our own century. Discoveries of charcoal and bitumen, such as those made at Gebel Judi, upon one of the mountains identified with Nisir, probably explain many of these local traditions.

The chronicle of these fabulous times placed, soon after the abating of the waters, the foundation of a new dynasty, as extraordinary or almost as extraordinary in character as that before the flood. According to Berossus it was of Chaldaean origin, and comprised eighty-six kings, who bore rule during 34,080 years; the first two, Evechous and Khomasbelos, reigned 2400 and 2700 years, while the later reigns did not exceed the ordinary limits of human life. An attempt was afterwards made to harmonize them with probability: the number of kings was reduced to six, and their combined reigns to 225 years. This attempt arose from a misapprehension of their true character; names and deeds, everything connected with them belongs to myth and fiction only, and is irreducible to history proper. They supplied to priests and poets material for scores of different stories, of which several have come down to us in fragments. Some are short, and serve as preambles to prayers or magical formulas; others are of some length, and may pass for real epics. The gods intervene in them, and along with kings play an important part. It is Nera, for instance, the lord of the plague, who declares war against mankind in order to punish them for having despised the authority of Anu. He makes Babylon to feel his wrath first: “The children of Babel, they were as birds, and the bird-catcher, thou wert he! thou takest them in the net, thou enclosest them, thou decimatest them—hero Nera!” One after the other he attacks the mother cities of the Euphrates and obliges them to render homage to him—even Uruk, “the dwelling of Anu and Ishtar—the town of the priestesses, of the *almehs*, and the sacred courtesans; “then he turns upon the foreign nations and carries his ravages as far as Phoenicia. In other fragments, the hero Etana makes an attempt to raise himself to heaven, and the eagle, his companion, flies away with him, without, however, being able to bring the enterprise to a successful issue. Nimrod and his exploits

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are known to us from the Bible.* “He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.” Almost all the characteristics which are attributed by Hebrew tradition to Nimrod we find in G-ilgames, King of Uruk and descendant of the Shamashnapishtim who had witnessed the deluge.**

* Genesis x. 9, 10. Among the Jews and Mussulmans a complete cycle of legends have developed around Nimrod. He built the Tower of Babel; he threw Abraham into a fiery furnace, and he tried to mount to heaven on the back of an eagle. Sayce and Grivel saw in Nimrod an heroic form of Merodach, the god of Babylonia: the majority of living Assyriologists prefer to follow Smith’s example, and identify him with the hero Gilgames.** The name of this hero is composed of three signs, which Smith provisionally rendered Isdubar—a reading which, modified into Gishdhubar, Gistubar, is still retained by many Assyriologists. There have been proposed one after another the renderings Dhubar, Namrudu, Anamarutu, Numarad, Namrasit, all of which exhibit in the name of the hero that of Nimrod. Pinches discovered, in 1890, what appears to be the true signification of the three signs,Gilgamesh, Gilgames; Sayce and Oppert have compared this name with that of Gilgamos, a Babylonian hero, of whom. AElian has preserved the memory. A. Jeremias continued to reject both the reading and the identification.

Several copies of a poem, in which an unknown scribe had celebrated his exploits, existed about the middle of the VIIth century before our era in the Royal Library at Nineveh; they had been transcribed by order of Assur-banipal from a more ancient copy, and the fragments of them which have come down to us, in spite of their lacunae, enable us to restore the original text, if not in its entirety, at least in regard to the succession of events. They were divided into twelve episodes corresponding with the twelve divisions of the year, and the ancient Babylonian author was guided in his choice of these divisions by something more than mere chance. Gilgames, at first an ordinary mortal under the patronage of the gods, had himself become a god and son of the goddess Aruru: “he had seen the abyss, he had learned everything that is kept secret and hidden, he had even made known to men what had taken place before the deluge.” The sun, who had protected him in his human condition, had placed him beside himself on the judgment-seat, and delegated to him authority to pronounce decisions from which there was no appeal: he was, as it were, a sun on a small scale, before whom the kings, princes, and great ones of the earth humbly bowed their heads.* The scribes had, therefore, some authority for treating the events of his life after the model of the year, and for expressing them in twelve chants, which answered to the annual course of the sun through the twelve months.

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* The identity of Gilgames with the Accadian fire-god, or rather with the sun, was recognized from the first by H. Rawlinson, and has been accepted since by almost all Assyriologists. A tablet brought back by G. Smith, called attention to by Fr. Delitzsch, and published by Haupt, contains the remains of a hymn addressed to Gilgames, “the powerful king, the king of the Spirits of the Earth.”

[Illustration: 057.jpg GILGAMES STRANGLES A LION.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from an Assyrian bas-relief from Khorsabad, in the Museum of the Louvre

The whole story is essentially an account of his struggles with Ishtar, and the first pages reveal him as already at issue with the goddess. His portrait, such as the monuments have preserved it for us, is singularly unlike the ordinary type: one would be inclined to regard it as representing an individual of a different race, a survival of some very ancient nation which had held rule on the plains of the Euphrates before the arrival of the Sumerian or Semitic* tribes.

* Smith (The Chaldaean Account of Genesis, p. 194) remarked the difference between the representations of Gilgames and the typical Babylonian: he concluded from this that the hero was of Ethiopian origin. Hommel declares that his features have neither a Sumerian nor Semitic aspect, and that they raise an insoluble question in ethnology.

His figure is tall, broad, muscular to an astonishing degree, and expresses at once vigour and activity; his head is massive, bony, almost square, with a somewhat flattened face, a large nose, and prominent cheek-bones, the whole framed by an abundance of hair, and a thick beard symmetrically curled. All the young men of Uruk, the well-protected, were captivated by the prodigious strength and beauty of the hero; the elders of the city betook themselves to Ishtar to complain of the state of neglect to which the young generation had relegated them. “He has no longer a rival in their hearts, but thy subjects are led to battle, and Gilgames does not send one child back to his father. Night and day they cry after him: ’It is he the shepherd of Uruk, the well-protected, he is its shepherd and master, he the powerful, the perfect and the wise.’” Even the women did not escape the general enthusiasm: “he leaves not a single virgin to her mother, a single daughter to a warrior, a single wife to her master. Ishtar heard their complaint, the gods heard it, and cried with a loud voice to Aruru: ’It is thou, Aruru, who hast given him birth; create for him now his fellow, that he may be able to meet him on a day when it pleaseth him, in order that they may fight with each other and Uruk may be delivered.’When Aruru heard them, she created in her heart a man of Anu. Aruru washed her hands, took a bit of clay, cast it upon the earth, kneaded it and created Babani, the warrior, the exalted scion, the man of Ninib, whose whole body is covered with hair, whose tresses

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are as long as those of a woman; the locks of his hair bristle on his head like those on the corn-god; he is clad in a vestment like that of the god of the fields; he browses with the gazelles, he quenches his thirst with the beasts of the field, he sports with the beasts of the waters." Frequent representations of Eabani are found upon the monuments; he has the horns of a goat, the legs and tail of a bull.* He possessed not only the strength of a brute, but his intelligence also embraced all things, the past and the future: he would probably have triumphed over Gilgames if Shamash had not succeeded in attaching them to one another by an indissoluble tie of friendship. The difficulty was to draw these two future friends together, and to bring them face to face without their coming to blows; the god sent his courier Saidu, the hunter, to study the habits of the monster, and to find out the necessary means to persuade him to come down peaceably to Uruk. "Saidu, the hunter, proceeded to meet Eabani near the entrance of the watering-place. One day, two days, three days, Eabani met him at the entrance of the watering-place. He perceived Saidu, and his countenance darkened: he entered the enclosure, he became sad, he groaned, he cried with a loud voice, his heart was heavy, his features were distorted, sobs burst from his breast. The hunter saw from a distance that his face was inflamed with anger," and judging it more prudent not to persevere farther in his enterprise, returned to impart to the god what he had observed.

* Smith was the first, I believe, to compare his form to that of a satyr or faun; this comparison is rendered more probable by the fact that the modern inhabitants of Chaldaea believe in the existence of similar monsters. A. Jeremias places Eabani alongside Priapus, who is generally a god of the fields, and a clever soothsayer. Following out these ideas, we might compare our Eabani with the Graico-Roman Proteus, who pastures the flocks of the sea, and whom it was necessary to pursue and seize by force or cunning words to compel him to give oracular predictions.

[Illustration: 060.jpg GILGAMES FIGHTS, ON THE LEFT WITH A BULL, ON THE RIGHT WITH EABANI.]

> Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a Chaldaean intaglio in the Museum at the Hague. The original measures about 1 7/10 inch in height.

"I was afraid," said he, in finishing his narrative,* "and I did not approach him. He had filled up the pit which I had dug to trap him, he broke the nets which I had spread, he delivered from my hands the cattle and the beasts of the field, he did not allow me to search the country through." Shamash thought that where the strongest man might fail by the employment of force, a woman might possibly succeed by the attractions of pleasure; he commanded Saidu to go quickly to Uruk and there to choose from among the priestesses of Ishtar one of the most beautiful.** The hunter presented himself before Grilgames, recounted

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to him his adventures, and sought his permission to take away with him one of the sacred courtesans. "'Go, my hunter, take the priestess; when the beasts come to the watering-place, let her display her beauty; he will see her, he will approach her, and his beasts that troop around him will be scattered.'"*** The hunter went, he took with him the priestess, he took the straight road; the third day they arrived at the fatal plain. The hunter and the priestess sat down to rest; one day, two days, they sat at the entrance of the watering-place from whose waters Eabani drank along with the animals, where he sported with the beasts of the water.

* Haupt, Das Babylonische Nimrodepos, p. 9, 11. 42-50. The beginning of each line is destroyed, and the translation of the whole is only approximate.

** The priestesses of Ishtar were young and beautiful women, devoted to the service of the goddess and her worshippers. Besides the title *qadishtu,* priestess, they bore various names, *kizireti, ukhati, kharimati*; the priestess who accompanied Saidu was an *ukhat*.*** As far as can be guessed from the narrative, interrupted as it is by so many lacunae, the power of Eabani over the beasts of the field seems to have depended on his continence. From the moment in which he yields to his passions the beasts fly from him as they would do from an ordinary mortal; there is then no other resource for him but to leave the solitudes to live among men in towns. This explains the means devised by Shamash against him: cf. in the *Arabian Nights* the story of Shehabeddin.

"When Eabani arrived, he who dwells in the mountains, and who browses upon the grass like the gazelles, who drinks with the animals, who sports with the beasts of the water, the priestess saw the satyr." She was afraid and blushed, but the hunter recalled her to her duty. "It is he, priestess. Undo thy garment, show him thy form, that he may be taken with thy beauty; be not ashamed, but deprive him of his soul. He perceives thee, he is rushing towards thee, arrange thy garment; he is coming upon thee, receive him with every art of woman; his beasts which troop around him will be scattered, and he will press thee to his breast." The priestess did as she was commanded; she received him with every art of woman, and he pressed her to his breast. Six days and seven nights, Eabani remained near the priestess, his well-beloved. When he got tired of pleasure he turned his face towards his cattle, and he saw that the gazelles had turned aside and that the beasts of the field had fled far from him. Eabani was alarmed, he fell into a swoon, his knees became stiff because his cattle had fled from him. While he lay as if dead, he heard the voice of the priestess: he recovered his senses, he came to himself full of love; he seated himself at the feet of the priestess, he looked into her face, and while

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the priestess spoke his ears listened. For it was to him the priestess spoke—to him, Eabani. “Thou who art superb, Eabani, as a god, why dost thou live among the beasts of the field? Come, I will conduct thee to Uruk the well-protected, to the glorious house, the dwelling of Anu and Ishtar—to the place where is Gilgames, whose strength is supreme, and who, like a Urus, excels the heroes in strength.” While she thus spoke to him, he hung upon her words, he the wise of heart, he realized by anticipation a friend. Eabani said to the priestess: “Let us go, priestess; lead me to the glorious and holy abode of Anu and Ishtar—to the place where is Gilgames, whose strength is supreme, and who, like a Urus, prevails over the heroes by his strength. I will fight with him and manifest to him my power; I will send forth a panther against Uruk, and he must struggle with it."* The priestess conducted her prisoner to Uruk, but the city at that moment was celebrating the festival of Tammuz, and Gilgames did not care to interrupt the solemnities in order to face the tasks to which Eabani had invited him: what was the use of such trials since the gods themselves had deigned to point out to him in a dream the line of conduct he was to pursue, and had taken up the cause of their children. Shamash, in fact, began the instruction of the monster, and sketched an alluring picture of the life which awaited him if he would agree not to return to his mountain home. Not only would the priestess belong to him for ever, having none other than him for husband, but Gilgames would shower upon him riches and honours. “He will give thee wherein to sleep a great bed cunningly wrought; he will seat thee on his divan, he will give thee a place on his left hand, and the princes of the earth shall kiss thy feet, the people of Uruk shall grovel on the ground before thee.” It was by such flatteries and promises for the future that Gilgames gained the affection of his servant Eabani, whom he loved for ever.

* I have softened down a good deal the account of the seduction, which is described with a sincerity and precision truly primitive.

Shamash had reasons for being urgent. Khumbaba, King of Elam, had invaded the country of the Euphrates, destroyed the temples, and substituted for the national worship the cult of foreign deities;* the two heroes in concert could alone check his advance, and kill him. They collected their troops, set out on the march, having learned from a female magician that the enemy had concealed himself in a sacred grove. They entered it in disguise, “and stopped in rapture for a moment before the cedar trees; they contemplated the height of them, they contemplated the thickness of them; the place where Khumbaba was accustomed to walk up and down with rapid strides, alleys were made in it, paths kept up with great care. They saw at length the hill of cedars, the abode of the gods, the sanctuary of Irnini, and before the

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hill, a magnificent cedar, and pleasant grateful shade." They surprised Khumbaba at the moment when he was about to take his outdoor exercise, cut off his head, and came back in triumph to Uruk.** "Gilgames brightened his weapons, he polished his weapons. He put aside his war-harness, he put on his white garments, he adorned himself with the royal insignia, and bound on the diadem: Gilgames put his tiara on his head, and bound on his diadem."
* Khumbaba contains the name of the Elamite god, Khumba, whichenters into the composition of names of towns, like Ti- Khumbi; or into those of princes, as Khumbanigash, Khumbasundasa, Khumbasidh. The comparison between Khumbaba and Combabos, the hero of a singular legend, current in the second century of our era, does not seem to be admissible, at least for the present. The names agree well in sound, but, as Oppert has rightly said, no event in the history of Combabos finds a counterpart in anything we know of that of Khumbaba up to the present.** G. Smith places at this juncture Gilgames's accession to the throne; this is not confirmed by the fragments of the text known up to the present, and it is not even certain that the poem relates anywhere the exaltation and coronation of the hero. It would appear even that Gilgames is recognized from the beginning as King of Uruk, the well- protected.

Ishtar saw him thus adorned, and the same passion consumed her which inflames mortals.* "To the love of Gilgames she raised her eyes, the mighty Ishtar, and she said, 'Come, Gilgames, be my husband, thou! Thy love, give it to me, as a gift to me, and thou shalt be my spouse, and I shall be thy wife. I will place thee in a chariot of lapis and gold, with golden wheels and mountings of onyx: thou shalt be drawn in it by great lions, and thou shalt enter our house with the odorous incense of cedar-wood. When thou shalt have entered our house, all the country by the sea shall embrace thy feet, kings shall bow down before thee, the nobles and the great ones, the gifts of the mountains and of the plain they will bring to thee as tribute. Thy oxen shall prosper, thy sheep shall be doubly fruitful, thy mules shall spontaneously come under the yoke, thy chariot-horse shall be strong and shall galop, thy bull under the yoke shall have no rival.'" Gilgames repels this unexpected declaration with a mixed feeling of contempt and apprehension: he abuses the goddess, and insolently questions her as to what has become of her mortal husbands during her long divine life. "Tammuz, the spouse of thy youth, thou hast condemned him to weep from year to year.** Nilala, the spotted sparrow-hawk, thou lovedst him, afterward thou didst strike him and break his wing: he continues in the wood and cries: 'O, my wings!'*** Thou didst afterwards love a lion of mature strength, and then didst cause him to be rent by blows, seven at a time.**** Thou lovedst also a stallion magnificent in the battle; thou didst devote him to death by the goad and whip: thou didst compel him to galop for ten leagues, thou didst devote him to exhaustion and thirst, thou didst devote to tears his mother Silili.

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* Ishtar's declaration to Gilgames and the hero's reply have been frequently translated and summarized since the discovery of the poem. Smith thought to connect this episode with the "Descent of Ishtar to Hades," which we shall meet with further on in this History, but his opinion is no longer accepted. The "Descent of Ishtar" in its present condition is the beginning of a magical formula: it has nothing to do with the acts of Gilgames.** Tammuz-Adonis is the only one known to us among this long list of the lovers of the goddess. The others must have been fairly celebrated among the Chaldaeans, since the few words devoted to each is sufficient to recall them to the memory of the reader, but we have not as yet found anything bearing upon their adventures in the table of the ancient Chaldaeo-Assyrian classics, which had been copied out by a Ninevite scribe for the use of Assur-bani-pal, the title of the poems is wanting.*** The text gives *kappi*, and the legend evidently refers to a bird whose cry resembles the word meaning "my wings." The spotted sparrow-hawk utters a cry which may be strictly understood and interpreted in this way.

**** This is evidently the origin of our fable of the "Amorous Lion."

Thou didst also love the shepherd Tabulu, who lavished incessantly upon thee the smoke of sacrifices, and daily slaughtered goats to thee; thou didst strike him and turn him into a leopard; his own servants went in pursuit of him, and his dogs followed his trail.* Thou didst love Ishullanu, thy father's gardener, who ceaselessly brought thee presents of fruit, and decorated every day thy table. Thou raisedst thine eyes to him, thou seizedst him: 'My Ishullanu, we shall eat melons, then shalt thou stretch forth thy hand and remove that which separates us.' Ishullanu said to thee: 'I, what dost thou require from me? O my mother, prepare no food for me, I myself will not eat: anything I should eat would be for me a misfortune and a curse, and my body would be stricken by a mortal coldness.' Then thou didst hear him and didst become angry, thou didst strike him, thou didst transform him into a dwarf, thou didst set him up on the middle of a couch; he could not rise up, he could not get down from where he was. Thou lovest me now, afterwards thou wilt strike me as thou didst these."**

* The changing of a lover, by the goddess or sorceress who loves him, into a beast, occurs pretty frequently in Oriental tales; as to the man changed by Ishtar into a brute, which she caused to be torn by his own hounds, we may compare the classic story of Artemis surprised at her bath by Actseon.** As to the misfortune of Ishullanu, we may compare the story in the *Abrabian Nights* of the Fisherman and the Genie shut up in the leaden bottle. The king of the Black Islands was transformed into a statue from the waist to the

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feet by the sorceress, whom he had married and afterwards offended; he remained lying on a bed, from which he could not get down, and the unfaithful one came daily to whip him.

“When Ishtar heard him, she fell into a fury, she ascended to heaven. The mighty Ishtar presented herself before her father Anu, before her mother Anatu she presented herself, and said: ’My father, Grilgames has despised me. Grilgames has enumerated my unfaithfulnesses, my unfaithfulnesses and my ignominies.’ Anu opened his mouth and spake to the mighty Ishtar: ’Canst thou not remain quiet now that Gilgames has enumerated to thee thy unfaithfulnesses, thy unfaithfulnesses and ignominies?’” But she refused to allow the outrage to go unpunished. She desired her father to make a celestial urus who would execute her vengeance on the hero; and, as he hesitated, she threatened to destroy every living thing in the entire universe by suspending the impulses of desire, and the effect of love. Anu finally gives way to her rage: he creates a frightful urus, whose ravages soon rendered uninhabitable the neighbourhood of Uruk the well-protected. The two heroes, Gilgames and Eabani, touched by the miseries and terror of the people, set out on the chase, and hastened to rouse the beast from its lair on the banks of the Euphrates in the marshes, to which it resorted after each murderous onslaught.

[Illustration: 068.jpg GILGAMES AND EABANI FIGHTING WITH MONSTERS.]

> Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a Chaldaean intaglio in the New York Museum. The original is about an inch and a half in height.

A troop of three hundred valiant warriors penetrated into the thickets in three lines to drive the animal towards the heroes. The beast with head lowered charged them; but Eabani seized it with one hand by the right horn, and with the other by the tail, and forced it to rear. Gilgames at the same instant, seizing it by the leg, plunged his dagger into its heart. The beast being despatched, they celebrated their victory by a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and poured out a libation to Sharnash, whose protection had not failed them in this last danger. Ishtar, her projects of vengeance having been defeated, “ascended the ramparts of Uruk the well-protected. She sent forth a loud cry, she hurled forth a malediction: ’Cursed be Gilgames, who has insulted me, and who has killed the celestial urus.’ Eabani heard these words of Ishtar, he tore a limb from the celestial urus and threw it in the face of the goddess: ’Thou also I will conquer, and I will treat thee like him: I will fasten the curse upon thy sides.’ Ishtar assembled her priestesses, her female votaries, her frenzied women, and together they intoned a dirge over the limb of the celestial urus. Gilgames assembled all the turners in ivory, and the workmen were astonished at the enormous size of the horns; they were worth thirty *mimae* of lapis, their diameter was a half-cubit, and both of them could contain

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six measures of oil." He dedicated them to Shamash, and suspended them on the corners of the altar; then he washed his hands in the Euphrates, re-entered Uruk, and passed through the streets in triumph. A riotous banquet ended the day, but on that very night Eabani felt himself haunted by an inexplicable and baleful dream, and fortune abandoned the two heroes. Gilgames had cried in the intoxication of success to the women of Uruk: "Who shines forth among the valiant? Who is glorious above all men? Gilgames shines forth among the valiant, Gilgames is glorious above all men." Ishtar made him feel her vengeance in the destruction of that beauty of which he was so proud; she covered him with leprosy from head to foot, and made him an object of horror to his friends of the previous day. A life of pain and a frightful death—he alone could escape them who dared to go to the confines of the world in quest of the Fountain of Youth and the Tree of Life which were said to be there hidden; but the road was rough, unknown, beset by dangers, and no one of those who had ventured upon it had ever returned. Gilgames resolved to brave every peril rather than submit to his fate, and proposed this fresh adventure to his friend Eabani, who, notwithstanding his sad forebodings, consented to accompany him. They killed a tiger on the way, but Eabani was mortally wounded in a struggle in which they engaged in the neighbourhood of Nipur, and breathed his last after an agony of twelve days' duration.

"Gilgames wept bitterly over his friend Eabani, grovelling on the bare earth." The selfish fear of death struggled in his spirit with regret at having lost so dear a companion, a tried friend in so many encounters. "I do not wish to die like Eabani: sorrow has entered my heart, the fear of death has taken possession of me, and I am overcome. But I will go with rapid steps to the strong Shamashnapishtim, son of Ubaratutu, to learn from him how to become immortal." He leaves the plain of the Euphrates, he plunges boldly into the desert, he loses himself for a whole day amid frightful solitudes. "I reached at nightfall a ravine in the mountain, I beheld lions and trembled, but I raised my face towards the moon-god, and I prayed: my supplication ascended even to the father of the gods, and he extended over me his protection." A vision from on high revealed to him the road he was to take. With axe and dagger in hand, he reached the entrance of a dark passage leading into the mountain of Mashu,* "whose gate is guarded day and night by supernatural beings."

* The land of Mashu is the land to the west of the Euphrates, coterminous on one part with the northern regions of the Red Sea, on the other with the Persian Gulf; the name appears to be preserved in that of the classic Mesene, and possibly in the land of Massa of the Hebrews.

[Illustration: 071.jpg THE SCORPION-MEN OF THE MOUNTAINS OF MASHU.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from an Assyrian intaglio.

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“The scorpion-men, of whom the stature extends upwards as far as the supports of heaven, and of whom the breasts descend as low as Hades, guard the door. The terror which they inspire strikes down like a thunderbolt; their look kills, their splendour confounds and overturns the mountains; they watch over the sun at his rising and setting. Grilgames perceived them, and his features were distorted with fear and horror; their savage appearance disturbed his mind. The scorpion-man said to his wife: ’He who comes towards us, his body is marked by the gods.’* The scorpion-woman replied to him: ’In his mind he is a god, in his mortal covering he is a man.’ The scorpion-man spoke and said: ’It is as the father of the gods, has commanded, he has travelled over distant regions before joining us, thee and me.’” Gilgames learns that the guardians are not evilly disposed towards him, and becomes reassured, tell them his misfortunes and implores permission to pass beyond them so as to reach “Sha-mashnapishtim, his father, who was translated to the gods, and who has at his disposal both life and death.” The scorpion-man in vain shows to him the perils before him, of which the horrible darkness enveloping the Mashu mountains is not the least: Gilgames proceeds through the depths of the darkness for long hours, and afterwards comes out in the neighbourhood of a marvellous forest upon the shore of the ocean which encircles the world. One tree especially excites his wonder: “As soon as he sees it he runs towards it. Its fruits are so many precious stones, its boughs are splendid to look upon, for the branches are weighed down with lapis, and their fruits are superb.” When his astonishment had calmed down, Gilgames begins to grieve, and to curse the ocean which stays his steps. “Sabitu, the virgin who is seated on the throne of the seas,” perceiving him from a distance, retires at first to her castle, and barricades herself within it. He calls out to her from the strand, implores and threatens her in turn, adjures her to help him in his voyage. “If it can be done, I will cross the sea; if it cannot be done, I will lay me down on the land to die.” The goddess is at length touched by his tears. “Gilgames, there has never been a passage hither, and no one from time immemorial has been able to cross the sea. Shamash the valiant crossed the sea; after Shamash, who can cross it? The crossing is troublesome, the way difficult, perilous the Water of Death, which, like a bolt, is drawn between thee and thy aim. Even if, Gilgames, thou didst cross the sea, what wouldest thou do on arriving at the Water of Death?” Arad-Ea, Shamashnapishtim’s mariner, can alone bring the enterprise to a happy ending: “if it is possible, thou shalt cross the sea with him; if it is not possible, thou shalt retrace thy steps.”

* We must not forget that Gilgames is covered with leprosy; this is the disease with which the Chaldaean gods mark their enemies when they wish to punish them in a severe fashion.

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[Illustration:  073.jpg GILGAMES AND ARAD-EA NAVIGATING THEIR VESSEL.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a Chaldaean intaglio in the
British Museum.  The original measures a little over an inch.

Arad-Ea and the hero took ship:  forty days' tempestuous cruising brought them to the Waters of Death, which with a supreme effort they passed.  Beyond these they rested on their oars and loosed their girdles:  the happy island rose up before them, and Shamashnapishtim stood upon the shore, ready to answer the questions of his grandson.

None but a god dare enter his mysterious paradise:  the bark bearing an ordinary mortal must stop at some distance from the shore, and the conversation is carried on from on board.  Gilgames narrated once more the story of his life, and makes known the object of his visit; Shamashnapishtim answers him stoically that death follows from an inexorable law, to which it is better to submit with a good grace.  "However long the time we shall build houses, however long the time we shall put our seal to contracts, however long the time brothers shall quarrel with each other, however long the time there shall be hostility between kings, however long the time rivers shall overflow their banks, we shall not be able to portray any image of death.  When the spirits salute a man at his birth, then the genii of the earth, the great gods, Mamitu the moulder of destinies, all of them together assign a fate to him, they determine for him his life and death; but the day of his death remains unknown to him."  Gilgames thinks, doubtless, that his forefather is amusing himself at his expense in preaching resignation, seeing that he himself had been able to escape this destiny.  "I look upon thee, Shamashnapishtim, and thy appearance has not changed:  thou art like me and not different, thou art like me and I am like thee.  Thou wouldest be strong enough of heart to enter upon a combat, to judge by thy appearance; tell me, then, how thou hast obtained this existence among the gods to which thou hast aspired?"  Shamashnapishtim yields to his wish, if only to show him how abnormal his own case was, and indicate the merits which had marked him out for a destiny superior to that of the common herd of humanity.  He describes the deluge to him, and relates how he was able to escape from it by the favour of Ea, and how by that of Bel he was made while living a member of the army of the gods. "'And now,' he adds, 'as far as thou art concerned, which one of the Gods will bestow upon thee the strength to obtain the life which thou seekest?  Come, go to sleep!' Six days and seven nights he is as a man whose strength appears suspended, for sleep has fallen upon him like a blast of wind.  Shamashnapishtim spoke to his wife:  'Behold this man who asks for life, and upon whom sleep has fallen like a blast of wind.'  The wife answers Shamashnapishtim, the man of distant lands:  'Cast a spell upon him, this man, and he will eat of the magic broth; and the road by

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which he has come, he will retrace it in health of body; and the great gate through which he has come forth, he will return by it to his country.' Shamashnapishtim spoke to his wife: 'The misfortunes of this man distress thee: very well, cook the broth, and place it by his head.' And while Gilgames still slept on board his vessel, the material for the broth was gathered; on the second day it was picked, on the third it was steeped, on the fourth Shamashnapishtim prepared his pot, on the fifth he put into it 'Senility,' on the sixth the broth was cooked, on the seventh he cast his spell suddenly on his man, and the latter consumed the broth. Then Gilgames spoke to Shamashnapishtim, the inhabitant of distant lands: 'I hesitated, slumber laid hold of me; thou hast cast a spell upon me, thou hast given me the broth.'" The effect would not have been lasting, if other ceremonies had not followed in addition to this spell from the sorcerer's kitchen: Gilgames after this preparation could now land upon the shore of the happy island and purify himself there. Shamashnapishtim confided this business to his mariner Arad-Ea: "'The man whom thou hast brought, his body is covered with ulcers, the leprous scabs have spoiled the beauty of his body. Take him, Arad-Ea, lead him to the place of purification, let him wash his ulcers white as snow in the water, let him get rid of his scabs, and let the sea bear them away so that at length his body may appear healthy. He will then change the fillet which binds his brows, and the loin-cloth which hides his nakedness: until he returns to his country, until he reaches the end of his journey, let him by no means put off the loin-cloth, however ragged; then only shall he have always a clean one.' Then Arad-Ea took him and conducted him to the place of purification: he washed his ulcers white as snow in the water, he got rid of his scabs, and the sea carried them away, so that at length his body appeared healthy. He changed the fillet which bound his brows, the loincloth which hid his nakedness: until he should reach the end of his journey, he was not to put off the loin-cloth, however ragged; then alone was he to have a clean one." The cure effected, Gilgames goes again on board his bark, and returns to the place where Shamashnapishtim was awaiting him.

Shamashnapishtim would not send his descendant back to the land of the living without making him a princely present. "His wife spoke to him, to him Shamashnapishtim, the inhabitant of distant lands: 'Gilgames has come, he is comforted, he is cured; what wilt thou give to him, now that he is about to return to his country?' He took the oars, Gilgames, he brought the bark near the shore, and Shamashnapishtim spoke to him, to Gilgames: 'Gilgames, thou art going from here comforted; what shall I give thee, now that thou art about to return to thy country? I am about to reveal to thee, Gilgames, a secret, and the judgment of the gods I am about to tell it

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thee. There is a plant similar to the hawthorn in its flower, and whose thorns prick like the viper. If thy hand can lay hold of that plant without being torn, break from it a branch, and bear it with thee; it will secure for thee an eternal youth.'Gilgames gathers the branch, and in his joy plans with Arad-Ea future enterprises: 'Arad-Ea, this plant is the plant of renovation, by which a man obtains life; I will bear it with me to Uruk the well-protected, I will cultivate a bush from it, I will cut some of it, and its name shall be, "the old man becomes young by it;" I will eat of it, and I shall repossess the vigour of my youth.'" He reckoned without the gods, whose jealous minds will not allow men to participate in their privileges. The first place on which they set foot on shore, "he perceived a well of fresh water, went down to it, and whilst he was drawing water, a serpent came out of it, and snatched from him the plant, yea—the serpent rushed out and bore away the plant, and while escaping uttered a malediction. That day Gilgames sat down, he wept, and his tears streamed down his cheeks he said to the mariner Arad-Ba: 'What is the use, Arad-Ea, of my renewed strength; what is the use of my heart's rejoicing in my return to life? It is not myself I have served; it is this earthly lion I have served. Hardly twenty leagues on the road, and he for himself alone has already taken possession of the plant. As I opened the well, the plant was lost to me, and the genius of the fountain took possession of it: who am I that I should tear it from him?'" He re-embarks in sadness, he re-enters Uruk the well-protected, and at length begins to think of celebrating the funeral solemnities of Eabani, to whom he was not able to show respect at the time of his death. He supervises them, fulfils the rites, intones the final chant: "The temples, thou shalt enter them no more; the white vestments, thou shalt no longer put them on; the sweet-smelling ointments, thou shalt no longer anoint thyself with them to envelop thee with their perfume. Thou shalt no longer press thy bow to the ground to bend it, but those that the bow has wounded shall surround thee; thou no longer holdest thy sceptre in thy hand, but spectres fascinate thee; thou no longer adornest thy feet with wings, thou no longer givest forth a sound upon the earth. Thy wife whom thou lovedst thou embracest her no more; thy wife whom thou hatedst thou beatest her no more. Thy daughter whom thou lovedst thou embracest her no more; thy daughter whom thou hatedst, thou beatest her no more. The resounding earth lies heavy upon thee, she who is dark, she who is dark, Tjinazu the mother, she who is dark, whose side is-not veiled with splendid vestments, whose bosom, like a new-born animal, is not covered. Eabani has descended from the earth to Hades; it is not the messenger of Nergal the implacable who has snatched him away, it is not the plague which has carried him off, it is not consumption that has carried him off, it is the

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earth which has carried him off; it is not the field of battle which has carried him off, it is the earth which has carried him off!" Gilgames dragged himself along from temple to temple, repeating his complaint before Bel and before Sin, and at length threw himself at the feet of the god of the Dead, Nergal: "'Burst open the sepulchral cavern, open the ground, that the spirit of Eabani may issue from the soil like a blast of wind.' As soon as Nergal the valiant heard him, he burst open the sepulchral vault, he opened the earth, he caused the spirit of Eabani to issue from the earth like a blast of wind." Gilgames interrogates him, and asks him with anxiety what the state of the dead may be: "'Tell, my friend, tell, my friend, open the earth and what thou seest tell it.'—'I cannot tell it thee, my friend, I cannot tell it thee; if I should open the earth before thee, if I were to tell to thee that which I have seen, terror would overthrow thee, thou wouldest faint away, thou wouldest weep.'—'Terror will overthrow me, I shall faint away, I shall weep, but tell it to me.'" And the ghost depicts for him the sorrows of the abode and the miseries of the shades. Those only enjoy some happiness who have fallen with arms in their hands, and who have been solemnly buried after the fight; the manes neglected by their relatives succumb to hunger and thirst.* "On a sleeping couch he lies, drinking pure water, he who has been killed in battle. 'Thou hast seen him?'—'I have seen him; his father and his mother support his head, and his wife bends over him wailing.' 'But he whose body remains forgotten in the fields,—thou hast seen him?'—'I have seen him; his soul has no rest at all in the earth.' 'He whose soul no one cares for,—thou hast seen him?'—'I have seen him; the dregs of the cup, the remains of a repast, that which is thrown among the refuse of the street, that is what he has to nourish him.'" This poem did not proceed in its entirety, or at one time, from the imagination of a single individual. Each episode of it answers to some separate legend concerning Gilgames, or the origin of Uruk the well-protected: the greater part preserves under a later form an air of extreme antiquity, and, if the events dealt with have not a precise bearing on the life of a king, they paint in a lively way the vicissitudes of the life of the people.** These lions, leopards, or gigantic uruses with which Grilgames and his faithful Eabani carry on so fierce a warfare, are not, as is sometimes said, mythological animals.

* Cf. vol. i. pp. 160, 161 of this History for analogous ideas among the Egyptians as to the condition of the dead who were neglected by their relatives: the Egyptian double had to live on the same refuse as the Chaldaean soul.** G. Smith, identifying Gilgames with Nimrod, believes, on the other hand, that Nimrod was a real king, who reigned in Mesopotamia about 2250 B.C.; the poem contains, according to him,

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episodes, more or less embellished, in the life of the sovereign.

Similar monsters, it was believed, appeared from time to time in the marshes of Chaldaea, and gave proof of their existence to the inhabitants of neighbouring villages by such ravages as real lions and tigers commit in India or the Sahara. It was the duty of chiefs on the border lands of the Euphrates, as on the banks of the Nile, as among all peoples still sunk in semi-barbarism, to go forth to the attack of these beasts single-handed, and to sacrifice themselves one after the other, until one of them more fortunate or stronger than the rest should triumph over these mischievous brutes. The kings of Babylon and Nineveh in later times converted into a pleasure that which had been an official duty of their early predecessors: Gilgames had not yet arrived at that stage, and the seriousness, not to speak of the fear, with which he entered on the fight with such beasts, is an evidence of the early date of the portions of his history which are concerned with his hunting exploits. The scenes are represented on the seals of princes who reigned prior to the year 3000 B.C., and the work of the ancient engraver harmonizes so perfectly with the description of the comparatively modern scribe that it seems like an anticipated illustration of the latter; the engravings represent so persistently and with so little variation the images of the monsters, and those of Gilgames and his faithful Eabani, that the corresponding episodes in the poem must have already existed as we know them, if not in form, at least in their main drift. Other portions of the poem are more recent, and it would seem that the expedition against Khumbaba contains allusions to the Elamite* invasions from which Chaldaea had suffered so much towards the XXth century before our era. The traditions which we possess of the times following the Deluge, embody, like the adventures of Gilganes, very ancient elements, which the scribes or narrators wove together in a more or less skilful manner around the name of some king or divinity.

* Smith thought he could restore from the poem a part of Chaldaean history: he supposed Izdubar-Nimrod to have been, about 2250, the liberator of Babylon, oppressed by Elam, and the date of the foundation of a great Babylonian empire to have coincided with his victory over the Elamites. The annals of Assurbanipal show us, in fact, that an Elamite king, Kudurnankhundi, had pillaged Uruk about 2280 B.C., and had transported to Susa a statue of the goddess Ishtar.

[Illustration: 082.jpg GILGAMES STRUGGLES WITH A LION]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a Chaldaean intaglio in the British Museum. The original measures about 1 2/5 inch in height.

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The fabulous chronicle of the cities of the Euphrates existed, therefore, in a piecemeal condition—in the memory of the people or in the books of the priests—before even their primitive history began; the learned who collected it later on had only to select some of the materials with which it furnished them, in order to form out of them a connected narrative, in which the earliest ages were distinguished from the most recent only in the assumption of more frequent and more direct interpositions of the powers of heaven in the affairs of men. Every city had naturally its own version, in which its own protecting deities, its heroes and princes, played the most important parts. That of Babylon threw all the rest into the shade; not that it was superior to them, but because this city had speedily become strong enough to assert its political supremacy over the whole region of the Euphrates. Its scribes were accustomed to see their master treat the lords of other towns as subjects or vassals. They fancied that this must have always been the case, and that from its origin Babylon had been recognized as the queen-city to which its contemporaries rendered homage. They made its individual annals the framework for the history of the entire country, and from the succession of its princely families on the throne, diverse as they were in origin, they constructed a complete canon of the kings of Chaldaea.

But the manner of grouping the names and of dividing the dynasties varied according to the period in which the lists were drawn up, and at the present time we are in possession of at least two systems which the Babylonian historians attempted to construct. Berossus, who communicated one of them to the Greeks about the beginning of the IInd century B.C., would not admit more than eight dynasties in the period of thirty-six thousand years between the Deluge and the Persian invasion. The lists, which he had copied from originals in the cuneiform character, have suffered severely at the hands of his abbreviators, who omitted the majority of the names which seemed to them very barbarous in form, while those who copied these abbreviated lists have made such further havoc with them that they are now for the most part unintelligible. Modern criticism has frequently attempted to restore them, with varying results; the reconstruction here given, which passes for the most probable, is not equally certain in all its parts:—*

[Illustration: 084.jpg CHRONOLOGIC TABLE]

It was not without reason that Berossus and his authorities had put the sum total of reigns at thirty-six thousand years; this number falls in with a certain astrological period, during which the gods had granted to the Chaldaeans glory, prosperity, and independence, and whose termination coincided with the capture of Babylon by Cyrus.** Others before them had employed the same artifice, but they reckoned ten dynasties in the place of the eight accepted by Berossus:—

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* After the example of G. B. Niebuhr, Gutschmid admitted here, as Oppert did, 45 Assyrians; he based his view on Herodotus, in which it is said that the Assyrians held sway in Asia for 520 years, until its conquest by the Medes. Upon the improbability of this opinion, see Schrader's demonstration.** The existence of this astronomical or astrological scheme on which Berossus founded his chronology, was pointed out by Brandis, afterwards by Gutschmid; it is now generally accepted.

[Illustration: 085.jpg TABLE]

Attempts have been made to bring the two lists* into harmony, with varying results; in my opinion, a waste of time and labour. For even comparatively recent periods of their history, the Chaldaeans, like the Egyptians, had to depend upon a collection of certain abbreviated, incoherent, and often contradictory documents, from which they found it difficult to make a choice: they could not, therefore, always come to an agreement when they wished to determine how many dynasties had succeeded each other during these doubtful epochs, how many kings were included in each dynasty, and what length of reign was to be assigned to each king. We do not know the motives which influenced Berossus in his preference of one tradition over others; perhaps he had no choice in the matter, and that of which he constituted himself the interpreter was the only one which was then known. In any case, the tradition he followed forms a system which we cannot, modify without misinterpreting the intention of those who drew it up or who have handed it down to us. We must accept or reject it just as it is, in its entirety and without alteration: to attempt to adapt it to the testimony of the monuments would be equivalent to the creation of a new system, and not to the correction simply of the old one. The right course is to put it aside for the moment, and confine ourselves to the original lists whose fragments have come down to us: they do not furnish us, it is true, with a history of Chaldaea such as it unfolded itself from age to age, but they teach us what the later Chaldaeans knew, or thought they knew, of that history. Still it is wise to treat them with some reserve, and not to forget that if they agree with each other in the main, they differ frequently in details. Thus the small dynasties, which are called the VIth and VIIth, include the same number of kings on both the tablets which establish their existence, but the number of years assigned to the names of the kings and the total years of each dynasty vary a little from one another:—

* The first document having claim to the title of Royal Canon was found among the tablets of the British Museum, and was published by G. Smith. The others were successively discovered by Pinches; some erroneous readings in them have been corrected by Fr. Delitzsch, and an exact edition has been published by Knudtzon. Smith's list is the fragment of a chronicle in which

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the VIth, VIIth, and VIIIth dynasties only are almost complete. One of Pinches's lists consists merely of a number of royal names not arranged in any consistent order, and containing their non-Semitic as well as their Semitic forms. The other two lists are actual canons, giving the names of the kings and the years of their reigns; unfortunately they are much mutilated, and the lacunae in them cannot yet be filled up. All of them have been translated by Sayce.

[Illustration: 080.jpg TABLE]

[Illustration: 081.jpg TABLE]

Is the difference in the calculations the fault of the scribes, who, in mechanically copying and recopying, ended by fatally altering the figures? Or is it to be explained by some circumstance of which we are ignorant—an association on the throne, of which the duration is at one time neglected with regard to one of the co-regents, and at another time with regard to the other; or was it owing to a question of legitimacy, by which, according to the decision arrived at, a reign was prolonged or abbreviated? Cotemporaneous monuments will some day, perhaps, enable us to solve the problem which the later Chaldaeans did not succeed in clearing up. While awaiting the means to restore a rigorously exact chronology, we must be content with the approximate information furnished by the tablets as to the succession of the Babylonian kings.

Actual history occupied but a small space in the lists—barely twenty centuries out of a whole of three hundred and sixty: beyond the historic period the imagination was given a free rein, and the few facts which were known disappeared almost completely under the accumulation of mythical narratives and popular stories. It was not that the documents were entirely wanting, for the Chaldaeans took a great interest in their past history, and made a diligent search for any memorials of it. Each time they succeeded in disinterring an inscription from the ruins of a town, they were accustomed to make several copies of it, and to deposit them among the archives, where they would be open to the examination of their archaeologists.* When a prince undertook the rebuilding of a temple, he always made excavations under the first courses of the ancient structure in order to recover the documents which preserved the memory of its foundation: if he discovered them, he recorded on the new cylinders, in which he boasted of his own work, the name of the first builder, and sometimes the number of years which had elapsed since its erection.**

* We have a considerable number of examples of copies of ancient texts made in this manner. For instance, the dedication of a temple at Uruk by King Singashid, copied by the scribe Nabubalatsuikbi, son of Mizirai ("the Egyptian "), for the temple of Ezida; the legendary history of King Sargon of Agade, copied from the inscription on the base of his statue, of which there will be further mention (pp. 91- 93

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of this History); a dedication of the King Khammurabi; the inscription of Agumkakrimi, which came from the library of Assurbanipal.** Nabonidos, for instance, the last king of Babylon before the Persian conquest, has left us a memorial of his excavations. He found in this manner the cylinders of Shagashaltiburiash at Sippara, those of Khammurabi, and those of Naramsin.

We act in a similar way to-day, and our excavations, like those of the Chaldaeans, end in singularly disconnected results: the materials which the earth yields for the reconstruction of the first centuries consist almost entirely of mutilated records of local dynasties, isolated names of sovereigns, dedications of temples to gods, on sites no longer identifiable, of whose nature we know nothing, and too brief allusions to conquests or victories over vaguely designated nations.* The population was dense and life active in the plains of the Lower Euphrates. The cities in this region formed at their origin so many individual and, for the most part, petty states, whose kings and patron gods claimed to be independent of all the neighbouring kings and gods: one city, one god, one lord—this was the rule here as in the ancient feudal districts from which the nomes of Egypt arose. The strongest of these principalities imposed its laws upon the weakest: formed into unions of two or three under a single ruler, they came to constitute a dozen kingdoms of almost equal strength on the banks of the Euphrates. On the north we are acquainted with those of Agade, Babylon, Kuta, Kharsag-Kalama, and that of Kishu, which comprised a part of Mesopotamia and possibly the distant fortress of Harran: petty as these States were, their rulers attempted to conceal their weakness by assuming such titles as “Kings of the Four Houses of the World,” “Kings of the Universe,” “Kings of Shumir and Akkad.” Northern Babylonia seems to have possessed a supremacy amongst them. We are probably wise in not giving too much credit to the fragmentary tablet which assigns to it a dynasty of kings, of which we have no confirmatory information from other sources—Amilgula, Shamashnazir, Amilsin, and several others: this list, however, places among these phantom rulers one individual at least, Shargina-Sharrukin, who has left us material evidences of his existence. This Sargon the Elder, whose complete name is Shargani-shar-ali, was the son of a certain Ittibel, who does not appear to have been king. At first his possessions were confined to the city of Agade and some undetermined portions of the environs of Babylon, but he soon succeeded in annexing Babylon itself, Sippara, Kishu, Uruk, Kuta, and Nipur: the contemporary records attest his conquest of Elam, Guti, and even of the far-off land of Syria, which was already known to him under the name of Amuru. His activity as a builder was in no way behind his warlike zeal. He built Ekur, the sanctuary of Bel in Nipur, and the great temple

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Eulbar in Agade, in honour of Anunit, the goddess presiding over the morning star. He erected in Babylon a palace which afterwards became a royal burying-place. He founded a new capital, a city which he peopled with families brought from Kishu and Babylon: for a long time after his day it bore the name which he bestowed upon it, Dur-Sharrukin. This sums up all the positive knowledge we have about him, and the later Chaldseans seem not to have been much better informed than ourselves.
* The earliest Assyriologists, H. Rawlinson, Oppert, considered the local kings as having been, for the most part, kings of all Chaldaea, and placed them in succession one after the other in the framework of the most ancient dynasties of Berossus. The merit of having established the existence of series of local dynasties, and of having given to Chaldaean history its modern form, belongs to G. Smith. Smith's idea was adopted by Menant, by Delitzsch-Murdter, by Tiele, by Winckler, and by all Assyriologists, with modifications suggested by the progress of decipherment.

They filled up the lacunae of his history with legends. As he seemed to them to have appeared suddenly on the scene, without any apparent connection with the king who preceded him, they assumed that he was a usurper of unknown origin, irregularly introduced by the favour of the gods into the lawful series of kings. An inscription engraved, it was said, on one of his statues, and afterwards, about the VIIth century B.C., copied and deposited in the library of Nineveh, related at length the circumstances of his mysterious birth. "Sharrukin, the mighty king, the king of Agade, am I. My mother was a princess; my father, I did not know him; the brother of my father lived in the mountains. My town was Azupirani, which is situated on the bank of the Euphrates. My mother, the princess, conceived me, and secretly gave birth to me: she placed me in a basket of reeds, she shut up the mouth of it with bitumen, she abandoned me to the river, which did not overwhelm me. The river bore me; it brought me to Akki, the drawer of water. Akki, the drawer of water, received me in the goodness of his heart; Akki, the drawer of water, made me a gardener. As gardener, the goddess Ishtar loved me, and during forty-four years I held royal sway; I commanded the Black Heads,* and ruled them." This is no unusual origin for the founders of empires and dynasties; witness the cases of Cyrus and Bomulus.* Sargon, like Moses, and many other heroes of history or fable, is exposed to the waters: he owes his safety to a poor fellah who works his shadouf on the banks of the Euphrates to water the fields, and he passes his infancy in obscurity, if not in misery. Having reached the age of manhood, Ishtar falls in love with him as she did with his fellow-craftsman, the gardener Ishullanu, and he becomes king, we know not by what means.

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* The phrase “Black Heads,” *nishi salmat hahhadi*, has been taken in an ethnological sense as designating one of the races of Chaldaea, the Semitic; other Assyriologists consider it as denoting mankind in general. The latter meaning seems the more probable.** Smith had already compared the infancy of Sargon with that of Moses; the comparison with Cyrus, Bacchus, and Romulus was made by Talbot. Traditions of the same kind are frequent in history or folk-tales.

The same inscription which reveals the romance of his youth, recounts the successes of his manhood, and boasts of the uniformly victorious issue of his warlike exploits. Owing to lacunae, the end of the account is in the main wanting, and we are thus prevented from following the development of his career, but other documents come to the rescue and claim to furnish its most important vicissitudes. He had reduced the cities of the Lower Euphrates, the island of Dilmun, Durilu, Elam, the country of Kazalla: he had invaded Syria, conquered Phoenicia, crossed the arm of the sea which separates Cyprus from the coast, and only returned to his palace after an absence of three years, and after having erected his statues on the Syrian coast. He had hardly settled down to rest when a rebellion broke out suddenly; the chiefs of Chaldaea formed a league against him, and blockaded him in Agade: Ishtar, exceptionally faithful to the end, obtains for him the victory, and he comes out of a crisis, in which he might have been utterly ruined, with a more secure position than ever. All these events are regarded as having occurred sometime about 3800 B.C., at a period when the VIth dynasty was flourishing in Egypt. Some of them have been proved to be true by recent discoveries, and the rest are not at all improbable in themselves, though the work in which they are recorded is a later astrological treatise. The writer was anxious to prove, by examples drawn from the chronicles, the use of portents of victory or defeat, of civic peace or rebellion—portents which he deduced from the configuration of the heavens on the various days of the month: by going back as far as Sargon of Agade for his instances, he must have at once increased the respect for himself on account of his knowledge of antiquity, and the difficulty which the common herd must have felt in verifying his assertions. His zeal in collecting examples was probably stimulated by the fact that some of the exploits which he attributes to the ancient Sargon had been recently accomplished by a king of the same name: the brilliant career of Sargon of Agade would seem to have been in his estimation something like an anticipation of the still more glorious life of the Sargon of Nineveh.* What better proof of the high veneration in which the learned men of Assyria held the memory of the ancient Chaldaean conqueror? Naramsin, who succeeded Sargon about 3750 B.C.** inherited his authority, and to some extent his renown.

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* Hommel (Gescamede, p. 307) believes that the life of our Sargon was modelled, not on the Assyrian Sargon, but on a second Sargon, whom he places about 2000 B.C. Tiele refuses to accept the hypothesis, but his objections are not weighty, in my opinion; Hilprecht and Sayce accepted the authenticity of the facts in their details, and the recent discoveries have shown that they were right in so doing. There is a distant resemblance between the life of the legendary Sargon and the account of the victories of Ramses II. ending in a conspiracy on his return.** The date of Naramsin is given us by the cylinder of Nabonidos, who is cited lower down. It was discovered by Pinches. Its authenticity is maintained by Oppert, by Latrille, by Tiele, by Hommel, who felt at first some hesitation, by Delitzsch-Murdter; it has been called in question, with hesitation, by Ed. Meyer, and more boldly by Winckler. There is at present no serious reason to question its accuracy, at least relatively, except the instinctive repugnance of modern critics to consider as legitimate, dates which carry them back further into the past than they are accustomed to go.

The astrological tablets assert that he attacked the city of Apirak, on the borders of Elam, killed the Sing, Rish-ramman, and led the people away into slavery. He conquered at least part, if not the whole of Elam, and one of the few monuments which have come down to us was raised at Sippara in commemoration of his prowess against the mountaineers of the Zagros. He is represented on it overpowering their chief: his warriors follow after him and charge up the hill, carrying everything before their steady onslaught. Another of his warlike expeditions is said to have had as its field of operations a district of Magan, which, in the view of the writer, undoubtedly represented the Sinaitic Peninsula and perhaps Egypt. This expedition against Magan no doubt took place, and one of the few monuments of Naramsin which have reached us refers to it. Other inscriptions tell us incidentally that Naramsin reigned over the “four Houses of the world,” Babylon, Sippara, Nipur, and Lagash. Like his father, he had worked at the building of the Ekur of Nipur and the Bulbar of Agade; he erected, moreover, at his own cost, the temple of the Sun at Sippara.* The latter passed through many and varied vicissitudes. Restored, enlarged, ruined on several occasions, the date of its construction and the name of its founder were lost in the course of ages.

* The text giving us this information is that in which Nabonidos affirms that Naramsin, son of Sargon of Agado, had founded the temple of the Sun at Sippara, 3200 years before himself, which would give us 3750 B.C. for the reign of Naramsin.

The last independent King of Babylon, Nabonaid [Nabonidos], at length discovered the cylinders in which Naramsin, son of Sargon, had signified to posterity all that

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he had done towards the erection of a temple worthy of the deity to the god of Sippara: “for three thousand two hundred years not one of the kings had been able to find them.” We have no means of judging what these edifices were like for which the Chaldaeans themselves showed such veneration; they have entirely disappeared, or, if anything remains of them, the excavations hitherto carried out have not revealed it. Many small objects, however, which have accidentally escaped destruction give us a fair idea of the artists who lived in Babylon at this time, and of their skill in handling the graving-tool and chisel. An alabaster vase with the name of Naramsin, and a mace-head of exquisitely veined marble, dedicated by Shargani-shar-ali to the sun-god of Sippara, are valued only on account of the beauty of the material and the rarity of the inscription; but a porphyry cylinder, which belonged to Ibnishar, scribe of the above-named Shargani, must be ranked among the masterpieces of Oriental engraving. It represents the hero Gilgames, kneeling and holding with both hands a spherically shaped vase, from which flow two copious jets forming a stream running through the country; an ox, armed with a pair of gigantic crescent-shaped horns, throws back its head to catch one of the jets as it falls. Everything in this little specimen is equally worthy of admiration—the purity of outline, the skilful and delicate cutting of the intaglio, the fidelity of the action, and the accuracy of form. A fragment of a bas-relief of the reign of Naramsin shows that the sculptors were not a bit behind the engravers of gems. This consists now only of a single figure, a god, who is standing on the right, wearing a conical head-dress and clothed in a hairy garment which leaves his right arm free. The legs are wanting, the left arm and the hair are for the most part broken away, while the features have also suffered; its distinguishing characteristic is a sublety of workmanship which is lacking in the artistic products of a later age. The outline stands out from the background with a rare delicacy, the details of the muscles being in no sense exaggerated: were it not for the costume and pointed beard, one would fancy it a specimen of Egyptian work of the best Memphite period.

[Illustration 096.jpg THE SEAL OF SHARGANI-SHAR-ALI: GILGAMES WATERS THE CELESTIAL OX.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from Menant.

One is almost tempted to believe in the truth of the tradition which ascribes to Naramsin the conquest of Egypt, or of the neighbouring countries.

[Illustration: 096a.jpg Painting in Color of Charioteer]

Drawn by Boudier, from a photograph published by Father Schiel.

[Illustration: 097.jpg Page image]

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Did Sargon and Naramsin live at so early a date as that assigned to them by Nabonidos? The scribes who assisted the kings of the second Babylonian empire in their archaeological researches had perhaps insufficient reasons for placing the date of these kings so far back in the misty past: should evidence of a serious character A constrain us to attribute to them a later origin, we ought not to be surprised. In the mean time our best course is to accept the opinion of the Chaldaeans, and to leave Sargon and Naramsin in the century assigned to them by Nabonidos, although from this point they look down as from a high eminence upon all the rest of Chaldaean antiquity. Excavations have brought to light several personages of a similar date, whether a little earlier, or a little later: Bingani-sharali, Man-ish-turba, and especially Alusharshid, who lived at Kishu and Nipur, and gained victories over Elam.

[Illustration: 098.jpg Page image: the arms op the city and kings of Lagash]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a bas-relief from Lagash, now in the Louvre

After this glimpse of light on these shadowy kings darkness once more closes in upon us, and conceals from us the majority of the sovereigns who ruled afterwards in Babylon. The facts and names which can be referred with certainty to the following centuries belong not to Babylon, but to the southern States, Lagash, Uruk, Uru, Nishin, and Larsam. The national writers had neglected these principalities; we possess neither a resume of their chronicles nor a list of their dynasties, and the inscriptions which speak of their the arms of the city gods and princes are still very rare and kings of Lagash. Lagash, as far as our evidence goes, was, perhaps, the most illustrious of all these cities.* It occupied the heart of the country, and its site covered both sides of the Shatt-el-Hai; the Tigris separated it on the east from Anshan, the westernmost of the Elamite districts, with which it carried on a perpetual frontier war.

* We are indebted almost exclusively to the researches of M. de Sarzec, and his discoveries at Telloh, for what we know of it. The results of his excavations, acquired by the French government, are now in the Louvre. The description of the ruins, the text of the inscriptions, and an account of the statues and other objects found in the course of the work, have been published by Heuzey-Sakzec, *Decouvertes en Chaldee*. The name of the ancient town has been read Sirpurla, Zirgulla, *etc*.

All parts of the country were not equally fertile: the fruitful and well-cultivated district in the neighbourhood of the Shatt-el-Hai gave place to impoverished lands ending to the eastward, finally in swampy marshes, which with great difficulty furnished means of sustenance to a poor and thinly scattered population of fisher-folk.

[Illustration: 099.jpg FRAGMENT OF BAS-RELIEF BY URNINA, KING OF LAGASH.]

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Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a stone in the Louvre.

The capital, built on the left bank of the river, stretched out to the north-east and south-west a distance of some five miles. It was not so much a city as an agglomeration of large villages, each grouped around a temple or palace—Uruazagga, Gishgalla, G-irsu, Nina, and Lagash, which latter imposed its name upon the whole. A branch of the river Shatt-el-Hai protected it on the south, and supplied the village of Nina with water; no trace of an inclosing wall has been found, and the temples and palaces seem to have served as refuges in case of attack. It had as its arms, or totem, a double-headed eagle standing on a lion passant, or on two demi-lions placed back to back. Its chief god was called Ningirsu, that is, the lord of Girsu, where his temple stood: his companion Bau, and his associates Ninagal, Innanna and Ninsia, were the deities of the other divisions of the city. The princes were first called kings, but afterwards vicegerents—*patesi*—-when they came under the suzerainty of a more powerful king, the King of Uruk or of Babylon.

The earlier history of this remarkable town is made up of the scanty memoirs of its rulers, together with those of the princes of Gishban—“the land of the Bow,” of which Ishin seems to have been the principal town. A very ancient document states, that, at the instigation of Inlil, the god of Nipur, the local deities, Ningirsu and Kirsig, set up a boundary between the two cities. In the course of time, Meshilim, a king of Kishu, which, before the rise of Agade, was the chief town in those parts, extended his dominion over Lagash and erected his stele at its border; Ush, vicegerent of Gishban, however, removed it, and had to suffer defeat before he would recognize the new order of things. After the lapse of some years, of which we possess no records, we find the mention of a certain Urukagina, who assumes the title of king: he restored or enlarged several temples, and dug the canal which supplied the town of Nina with water. A few generations later we find the ruling authority in the hands of a certain Urnina, whose father Ninigaldun and grandfather Gurshar received no titles—a fact which proves that they could not have been reigning sovereigns. Urnina appears to have been of a peaceful and devout disposition, as the inscriptions contain frequent references to the edifices he had erected in honour of the gods, the sacred objects he had dedicated to them, and the timber for building purposes which he had brought from Magan, but there is no mention in them of any war. His son Akurgal was also a builder of temples, but his grandson Idingiranagin, who succeeded Akurgal, was a warlike and combative prince.

[Illustration: 101.jpg IDINGIRANAGIN HOLDING THE TOTEM OF LAGASH.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from the bas-relief F2 in the Louvre.

It seems probable that, about that time, the kingdom of Gishban had become a really powerful state. It had triumphed not only over Babylonia proper, but over Kish, Uru, Uruk, and Larsam, while one of its sovereigns had actually established his rule in some

parts of Northern Syria.  Idingiranagin vanquished the troops of Gishban, and there is now in the Louvre a trophy which he dedicated in the temple of Ninglrsu on his return from the campaign.

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* Hilpeecht, Bab. Expcd. of the Univ. of Pennsylvania, vol. i., 2nd part, p. 47 sqq.

[Illustration: 102.jpg IDINGIRANAGIN IN HIS CHARIOT LEADING HIS TROOPS.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a bas-relief in the Louvre. The attendant standing behind the king has been obliterated, but we see clearly the contour of his shoulder, and his hands holding the reins. It is a large stele of close-grained white limestone, rounded at the top, and covered with scenes and inscriptions on both its faces. One of these faces treats only of religious subjects. Two warlike goddesses, crowned with plumed head-dresses and crescent-shaped horns, are placed before a heap of weapons and various other objects, which probably represent some of the booty collected in the campaign. It would appear that they accompany a tall figure of a god or king, possibly that of the deity Ningirsu, patron of Lagash and its kings. Ningirsu raises in one hand an ensign, of which the staff bears at the top the royal totem, the eagle with outspread wings laying hold by his talons of two half-lions back to back; with the other hand he brings a, club down heavily upon a group of prisoners, who struggle at his feet in the meshes of a large net.

[Illustration: 103.jpg Page image. VULTURES FEEDING UPON THE DEAD.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from the fragment of a bas-relief in the Louvre. This is the human sacrifice after the victory, such as we find it in Egypt—the offering to the national god of a tenth of the captives, who struggle in vain to escape from fate. On the other stele the battle is at its height. Idingiranagin, standing upright in his chariot, which is guided by an attendant, charges the enemy at the head of his troops, and the plain is covered with corpses cut down by his fierce blows: a flock of vultures accompany him, and peck at each other in their struggles over the arms, legs, and decapitated heads of the vanquished. Victory once secured, he retraces his steps to bestow funeral honours upon the dead.

[Illustration: 104.jpg PILING UP THE MOUND OF THE DEAD AFTER THE BATTLE.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from the fragment of a bas-relief in the Louvre. The bodies raised regularly in layers form an enormous heap: priests or soldiers wearing loin-cloths mount to its top, where they pile the offerings and the earth which are to form the funerary mound. The sovereign, moreover, has, in honour of the dead, consigned to execution some of the prisoners, and deigns to kill with his own hand one of the principal chiefs of the enemy.

The design and execution of these scenes are singularly rude; men and beasts—-indeed, all the figures—have exaggerated proportions, uncouth forms, awkward positions, and an uncertain and heavy gait. The war ended in a treaty concluded with Enakalli, vicegerent of Grishban, by which Lagash obtained considerable advantages.

Idingiranagin replaced the stele of Meshilim, overthrown by one of Enakalli's predecessors, and dug a ditch from the Euphrates to the provinces of Guedln to serve henceforth as a boundary.  He further levied a tribute of corn for the benefit of the goddess Nina and her consort Ningirsu, and applied the spoils of the campaign to the building of new sanctuaries for the patron-gods of his city.

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[Illustration:  105.jpg KING URNINA AND HIS FAMILY.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a bas-relief in the Louvre.  Cf. another bas-relief of the same king, p. 244; and for the probable explanation of these pierced plaques, see p. 258 of the present work.

His reign was, on the whole, a glorious and successful one.  He conquered the mountain district of Elam, rescued Uruk and Uru, which had both fallen into the hands of the people of Gishban, organized an expedition against the town of Az and killed its vicegerent, in addition to which he burnt Arsua, and devastated the district of Mishime. He next directed an attack against Zuran, king of Udban, and, by vanquishing this Prince on the field of battle, he extended his dominion over nearly the whole of Babylonia.

The prosperity of his dynasty was subjected to numerous and strange vicissitudes. Whether it was that its resources were too feeble to stand the exigencies and strain of war for any length of time, or that intestine strife had been the chief cause of its decline, we cannot say.  Its kings married many wives and became surrounded with a numerous progeny:  Urnina had at least four sons.  They often entrusted to their children or their sons-in-law the government of the small towns which together made up the city:  these represented so many temporary fiefs, of which the holders were distinguished by the title of “vicegerents.”  This dismemberment of the supreme authority in the interest of princes, who believed for the most part that they had stronger claims to the throne than its occupant, was attended with dangers to peace and to the permanence of the dynasty.  The texts furnish us with evidence of the existence of at least half a dozen descendants of Akurgal—Inannatuma I., Intemena, his grandson Inannatuma II, all of whom seem to have been vigorous rulers who energetically maintained the supremacy of their city over the neighbouring estates.  Inannatuma I., however, proved no match in the end against Urlamma, the vicegerent of Gishban, and lost part, at least, of the territory acquired by Idingiranagin, but his son Intemena defeated Urlamma on the banks of the Lumasirta Canal, and, having killed or deposed him, gave the vicegerency of Gishban to a certain Hi, priest of Ninab, who remained his loyal vassal to the end of his days.  With his aid Intemena restored the stelae and walls which had been destroyed during the war; he also cleared out the old canals and dug new ones, the most important of which was apparently an arm of the Shatt-el-Hai, and ran from the Euphrates to the Tigris, through the very centre of the domains of Ghirsu.

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Other kings and vicegerents of doubtful sequence were followed lastly by Urbau and his son Gudea. These were all piously devoted to Ningirsu in general, and in particular to the patron of their choice from among the divinities of the country—Papsukal, Dunziranna, and Ninagal. They restored and enriched the temples of these gods: they dedicated to them statues or oblation vases for the welfare of themselves and their families. It would seem, if we are to trust the accounts which they give of themselves, that their lives were passed in profound peace, without other care than that of fulfilling their duties to heaven and its ministers. Their actual condition, if we could examine it, would doubtless appear less agreeable and especially less equable; revolutions in the palace would not be wanting, nor struggles with the other peoples of Chaldaea, with Susiana and even more distant nations. When Agade rose into power in Northern Babylonia, they fell under its rule, and one of them, Lugal-ushum-gal, acknowledged himself a dependant of Sargon. On the decline of Agade, and when that city was superseded by Uru in the hegemony of Babylonia proper, the vicegerents of Lagash were transferred with the other great towns to the jurisdiction of Uru, and flourished under the supremacy of the new dynasty.

Grudea, son of Urbau, who, if not the most powerful of its princes, is at least the sovereign of whom we possess the greatest number of monuments, captured the town of Anshan in Elam, and this is probably not the only campaign in which he took part, for he speaks of his success in an incidental manner, and as if he were in a hurry to pass to more interesting subjects.

[Illustration: 108.jpg THE SACRIFICE]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a stone in the Louvre.

That which seemed to him important in his reign, and which especially called forth the recognition of posterity, was the number of his pious foundations, distinguished as they were by beauty and magnificence. The gods themselves had inspired him in his devout undertakings, and had even revealed to him the plans which he was to carry out. An old man of venerable aspect appeared to him in a vision, and commanded him to build a temple: as he did not know with whom he had to do, Nina his mother informed him that it was his brother, the god Ningirsu. This having been made clear, a young woman furnished with style and writing tablet was presented to him—Nisaba, the sister of Nina; she made a drawing in his presence, and put before him the complete model of a building. He set to work on it *con amore*, and sent for materials to the most distant countries—to Magan, Amanus, the Lebanon, and into the mountains which separate the valley of the Upper Tigris from that of the Euphrates.

[Illustration: 109.jpg SITTING STATUE OF GUDEA]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin

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The sanctuaries which he decorated, and of which he felt so proud, are to-day mere heaps of bricks, now returned to their original clay; but many of the objects which he placed in them, and especially the statues, have traversed the centuries without serious damage before finding a resting-place in the Louvre. The sculptors of Lagash, after the time of Idingi-ranagin, had been instructed in a good school, and had learned their business. Their bas-reliefs are not so good as those of Naramsin; the execution of them is not so refined, the drawing less delicate, and the modelling of the parts not so well thought out. A good illustration of their work is the fragment of a square stele which represents a scene of offering or sacrifice. We see in the lower part of the picture a female singer, who is accompanied by a musician, playing on a lyre ornamented with the head of an ox, and a bull in the act of walking. In the upper part an individual advances, clad in a fringed mantle, and bearing in his right hand a kind of round paten, and in his left a short staff. An acolyte follows him, his arms brought up to his breast, while another individual marks, by clapping his hands, the rhythm of the ode which a singer like the one below is reciting. The fragment is much abraded, and its details, not being clearly exhibited, have rather to be guessed at; but the defaced aspect which time has produced is of some service to it, since it conceals in some respect the rudeness of its workmanship. The statues, on the other hand, bear evidence of a precision of chiselling and a skill beyond question. Not that there are no faults to be found in the work. They are squat, thick, and heavy in form, and seem oppressed by the weight of the woollen covering with which the Chaldeans enveloped themselves; when viewed closely, they excite at once the wonder and repulsion of an eye accustomed to the delicate grace, and at times somewhat slender form, which usually characterized the good statues of the ancient and middle empire of Egypt. But when we have got over the effect of first impressions, we can but admire the audacity with which the artists attacked their material. This is of hard dolerite, offering great resistance to the tool—-harder, perhaps, than the diorite out of which the Memphite sculptor had to cut his Khephren: they succeeded in mastering it, and in handling it as freely as if it were a block of limestone or marble.

[Illustration: 111.jpg Plan of the Ruins of Mughier]

The surface of the breast and back, the muscular development of the shoulders and arms, the details of the hands and feet, all the nude portions, are treated at once with a boldness and attention to minutiae rarely met with in similar works. The pose is lacking in variety; the individual, whether male or female, is sometimes represented standing and sometimes sitting on a low seat, the legs brought together, the bust rising squarely from the hips, the hands crossed upon the breast, in a posture of submission or respectful adoration. The mantle passes over the left shoulder, leaving the right free, and is fastened on the right breast, the drapery displaying awkward and inartistic folds: the latter widens in the form of a funnel from top to bottom, being bell-shaped around the lower part of the body, and barely leaves the ankles exposed.

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[Illustration:  112.jpg STATUES FROM TELLOH. and HEAD OF ONE OF THE STATUE OF GUDEA.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from Heuzey-Sarzec.

All the large statues to be seen at the Louvre have lost their heads; fortunately we possess a few separate heads.  Some are completely shaven, others wear a kind of turban affording shade to the forehead and eyes; among them all we see the same qualities and defects which we find in the bodies:  a hardness of expression, heaviness, absence of vivacity, and yet withal a vigour of reproduction and an accurate knowledge of human anatomy.  These are instances of what could be accomplished in a city of secondary rank; better things were doubtless produced in the great cities, such as Uru and Babylon.  Chaldaean art, as we are able to catch a glimpse of it in the monuments of Lagash, had neither the litheness, nor animation, nor elegance of the Egyptian, but it was nevertheless not lacking in force, breadth, and originality.  Urningirsu succeeded his father Gudea, to be followed rapidly by several successive vicegerents, ending, it would appear, in Gala-lama.  Their inscriptions are short and insignificant, and show that they did not enjoy the same resources or the same favour which enabled Gudea to reign gloriously.  The prosperity of Lagash decreased steadily under their administration, and they were all the humble vassals of the King of Uru, Dungi, son of Urbau; a fact which tends to make us regard Urbau as having been the suzerain upon whom Gudea himself was dependent.  Uru, the only city among those of Lower Chaldaea which stands on the right bank of the Euphrates, was a small but strong place, and favourably situated for becoming one of the commercial and industrial centres in these distant ages.  The Wady Eummein, not far distant, brought to it the riches of Central and Southern Arabia, gold, precious stones, gums, and odoriferous resins for the exigencies of worship.  Another route, marked out by wells, traversed the desert to the land of the semi-fabulous Mashu, and from thence perhaps penetrated as far as Southern Syria and the Sinaitic Peninsula—Magan and Milukhkha on the shores of the Red Sea:  this was not the easiest but it was the most direct route for those bound for Africa, and products of Egypt were no doubt carried along it in order to reach in the shortest time the markets of Uru.  The Euphrates now runs nearly five miles to the north of the town, but from the regions bordering the Black Sea.

[Illustration:  114.jpg Plan of the Ruins of Abu-Shahreyn]

In ancient times it was not so distant, but passed almost by its gates.  The cedars, cypresses, and pines of Amamis and the Lebanon,the limestones, marbles, and hard stones of Upper Syria, were brought down to it by boat; and probably also metals—iron, copper and lead.

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The Shatt-el-Hai, moreover, poured its waters into the Euphrates almost opposite the city, and opened up to it commercial relations with the Upper and Middle Tigris. And this was not all; whilst some of its boatmen used its canals and rivers as highways, another section made their way to the waters of the Persian Gulf and traded with the ports on its coast. Eridu, the only city which could have barred their access to the sea, was a town given up to religion, and existed only for its temples and its gods. It was not long before it fell under the influence of its powerful neighbour, becoming the first port of call for vessels proceeding up the Euphrates.

[Illustration: 115.jpg AN ARAB CROSSING THE TIGRIS IN A “KUFA.”]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a sketch by Chesney.

In the time of the Greeks and Romans the Chaldaeans were accustomed to navigate the Tigris either in round flat-bottomed boats, of little draught—“kufas,” in fact—or on rafts placed upon inflated skins, exactly similar in appearance and construction to the “keleks” of our own day. These keleks were as much at home on the sea as upon the river, and they may still be found in the Persian Gulf engaged in the coasting trade. Doubtless many of these were included among the vessels of Uru mentioned in the texts, but there were also among the latter those long large rowing-boats with curved stem and stern, Egyptian in their appearance, which are to be found roughly incised on some ancient cylinders. These primitive fleets were not disposed to risk the navigation of the open sea. They preferred to proceed slowly along the shore, hugging it in all cases, except when it was necessary to reach some group of neighbouring islands; many days of navigation were thus required to make a passage which one of our smallest sail-boats would effect in a few hours, and at the end of their longest voyages they were not very distant from their point of departure. It would be a great mistake to suppose them capable of sailing round Arabia and of fetching blocks of stone by sea from the Sinaitic Peninsula; such an expedition, which would have been dangerous even for Greek or Roman Galleys, would have been simply impossible for them. If they ever crossed the Strait of Ormuzd, it was an exceptional thing, their ordinary voyages being confined within the limits of the gulf. The merchants of Uru were accustomed to visit regularly the island of Dilmun, the land of Magan, the countries of Milukhkha and Gubin; from these places they brought cargoes of diorite for their sculptors, building-timber for their architects, perfumes and metals transported from Yemen by land, and possibly pearls from the Bahrein Islands. They encountered serious rivalry from the sailors of Dilmun and Magan, whose maritime tribes were then as now accustomed to scour the seas. The risk was great for those who set out on such expeditions, perhaps never to return, but the profit was considerable.

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[Illustration: 117.jpg AN ASSYRIAN KELEK LADEN WITH BUILDING-STONE.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a bas-relief from “Kouyunjik”
(Layard, *The Monuments of Nineveh*, 2nd series, pi. 13; cf.
Place, *Ninive et l’Assyrie*, pl. 43, No. 1.)

Uru, enriched by its commerce, was soon in a position to subjugate the petty neighbouring states—Uruk, Larsam, Lagash, and Nipur. Its territory formed a fairly extended sovereignty, whose lords entitled themselves kings of Shumir and Akkad, and ruled over all Southern Chaldaea for many centuries.

Several of these kings, the Lugalkigubnidudu and the Lugalkisalsi, of whom some monuments have been preserved to us, seem to have extended their influence beyond these limits prior to the time of Sargon the Elder; and we can date the earliest of them with tolerable probability. Urbau reigned some time about 2900 B.C. He was an energetic builder, and material traces of his activity are to be found everywhere throughout the country. The temple of the Sun at Larsam, the temple of Nina in Uruk, and the temples of Inlilla and Ninlilla in Nipur were indebted to him for their origin or restoration: he decorated or repaired all structures which were not of his own erection: in Uru itself the sanctuary of the moon-god owes its foundation to him, and the fortifications of the city were his work. Dungi, his son, was an indefatigable bricklayer, like his father: he completed the sanctuary of the moon-god, and constructed buildings in Uruk, Lagash, and Kutha. There is no indication in the inscriptions of his having been engaged in any civil struggle or in war with a foreign nation; we should make a serious mistake, however, if we concluded from this silence that peace was not disturbed in his time. The tie which bound together the petty states of which Uru was composed was of the slightest. The sovereign could barely claim as his own more than the capital and the district surrounding it; the other cities recognized his authority, paid him tribute, did homage to him in religious matters, and doubtless rendered him military service also, but each one of them nevertheless maintained its particular constitution and obeyed its hereditary lords. These lords, it is true, lost their title of king, which now belonged exclusively to their suzerain, and each one had to be content in his district with the simple designation of “vicegerent;” but having once fulfilled their feudal obligations, they had absolute power over their ancient domains, and were able to transmit to their progeny the inheritance they had received from their fathers. Gudea probably, and most certainly his successors, ruled in this way over Lagash, as a fief depending on the crown of Uru. After the manner of the Egyptian barons, the vassals of the kings of Chaldaea submitted to the control of their suzerain without resenting his authority as long as they felt the curbing influence of a strong hand:

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but on the least sign of feebleness in their master they reasserted themselves, and endeavoured to recover their independence. A reign of any length was sure to be disturbed by rebellions sometimes difficult to repress: if we are ignorant of any such, it is owing to the fact that inscriptions hitherto discovered are found upon objects upon which an account of a battle would hardly find a fitting place, such as bricks from a temple, votive cones or cylinders of terra-cotta, amulets or private seals. We are still in ignorance as to Dungi's successors, and the number of years during which this first dynasty was able to prolong its existence. We can but guess that its empire broke up by disintegration after a period of no long duration. Its cities for the most part became emancipated, and their rulers proclaimed themselves kings once more. We see that the kingdom of Amnanu, for instance, was established on the left bank of the Euphrates, with Uruk as its capital, and that three successive sovereigns at least—of whom Singashid seems to have been the most active—were able to hold their own there. Uru had still, however, sufficient prestige and wealth to make it the actual metropolis of the entire country. No one could become the legitimate lord of Shumir and Accad before he had been solemnly enthroned in the temple at Uru. For many centuries every ambitious kinglet in turn contended for its possession and made it his residence. The first of these, about 2500 B.C., were the lords of Nishin, Libitanunit, Gamiladar, Inedin, Bursin I., and Ismidagan: afterwards, about 2400 B.C., Gungunum of Nipur made himself master of it. The descendants of Gungunum, amongst others Bursin II., Gimilsin, Inesin, reigned gloriously for a few years. Their records show that they conquered not only a part of Elam, but part of Syria. They were dispossessed in their turn by a family belonging to Larsam, whose two chief representatives, as far as we know, were Nurramman and his son Sinidinnam (about 2300 B.C.). Naturally enough, Sinidinnam was a builder or repairer of temples, but he added to such work the clearing of the Shatt-el-Hai and the excavation of a new canal giving a more direct communication between the Shatt and the Tigris, and in thus controlling the water-system of the country became worthy of being considered one of the benefactors of Chaldaea.

We have here the mere dust of history, rather than history itself: here an isolated individual makes his appearance in the record of his name, to vanish when we attempt to lay hold of him; there, the stem of a dynasty which breaks abruptly off, pompous preambles, devout formulas, dedications of objects or buildings, here and there the account of some battle, or the indication of some foreign country with which relations of friendship or commerce were maintained—these are the scanty materials out of which to construct a connected narrative. Egypt has not much more to offer us in regard to many of her Pharaohs, but

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we have in her case at least the ascertained framework of her dynasties, in which each fact and each new name falls eventually, and after some uncertainty, into its proper place. The main outlines of the picture are drawn with sufficient exactitude to require no readjustment, the groups are for the most part in their fitting positions, the blank spaces or positions not properly occupied are gradually restricted, and filled in from day to day; the expected moment is in sight when, the arrangement of the whole being accomplished, it will be necessary only to fill in the details. In the case of Chaldaea the framework itself is wanting, and expedients must be resorted to in order to classify the elements entering into its composition. Naramsin is in his proper place, or nearly so; but as for Gudea, what interval separates him from Naramsin, and at what distance from Gudea are we to place the kings of Uru? The beginnings of Chaldaea have merely a provisional history: the facts in it are certain, but the connection of the facts with one another is too often a matter of speculation. The arrangement which is put forward at present can be regarded only as probable, but it would be difficult to propose a better until the excavations have furnished us with fresh material; it must be accepted merely as an attempt, without pledging to it our confidence on the one hand, or regarding it with scepticism on the other.

## CHAPTER II—THE TEMPLES AND THE GODS OF CHALDAEA

*THE CONSTRUCTION AND REVENUES OF THE TEMPLES—THE POPULAR GODS AND THE THEOLOGICAL TRIADS——THE DEAD AND HADES*.

*Chaldaean cities: the resemblance of their ruins to natural mounds caused by their exclusive use of brick as a building material—Their city walls: the temples and local gods; reconstruction of their history by means of the stamped bricks of which they were built—The two types of ziggurat: the arrangement of the temple of Nannar at Uru.*

The tribes of the Chaldaean gods—Genii hostile to men, their monstrous shapes; the south-west wind; friendly genii—The Seven, and their attacks on the moon-god; Gibil, the fire-god, overcomes them and their snares—The Sumerian gods; Ningirsu: the difficulty of defining them and of understanding the nature of them; they become merged in the Semitic deities.

Characteristics and dispositions of the Chaldaean gods—the goddesses, like women of the harem, are practically nonentities; Mylitta and her meretricious rites—The divine aristocracy and its principal representatives: their relations to the earth, oracles, speaking statues, household gods—The gods of each city do not exclude those of neighbouring cities: their alliances and their borrowings from one another—The sky-gods and the earth-gods, the sidereal gods: the moon and the sun.

The feudal gods:  several among them unite to govern the world; the two triads of Eridu —The supreme triad:  Anu the heaven; Bel the earth and his fusion with the Babylonian Merodach; Ea, the god of the waters—The second triad:  Sin the moon and Shamash the sun; substitution of Bamman for Ishtar in this triad; the winds and the legend of Adapa, the attributes of Ramman—The addition of goddesses to these two triads; the insignificant position which they occupy.

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The assembly of the gods governs the world:  the bird Zu steals the tablets of destiny—-Destinies are written in the heavens and determined by the movements of the stars; comets and their presiding deities, Nebo and Ishtai—The numerical value of the gods —The arrangement of the temples, the local priesthood, festivals, revenues of the gods and gifts made to them—Sacrifices, the expiation of crimes—Death and the future of the soul—Tombs and the cremation of the dead; the royal sepulchres and funerary rites—-Hades and its sovereigns:  Nergal, Allat, the descent of Ishtar into the infernal regions, and the possibility of a resurrection The invocation of the dead—The ascension of Etana._

[Illustration:  124.jpg Chapter II]

## CHAPTER II—THE TEMPLES AND THE GODS OF CHALDAEA

*The construction and revenues of the temples—Popular gods and theological triads—-The dead and Hades*.

The cities of the Euphrates attract no attention, like those of the Nile, by the magnificence of their ruins, which are witnesses, even after centuries of neglect, to the activity of a powerful and industrious people:  on the contrary, they are merely heaps of rubbish in which no architectural outline can be distinguished—mounds of stiff and greyish clay, cracked by the sun, washed into deep crevasses by the rain, and bearing no apparent traces of the handiwork of man.

[Illustration:  126.jpg PLAN OF THE RUINS OF WAKKA]

In the estimation of the Chaldaean architects, stone was a material of secondary consideration:  as it was necessary to bring it from a great distance and at considerable expense, they used it very sparingly, and then merely for lintels, uprights, thresholds, for hinges on which to hang their doors, for dressings in some of their state apartments, in cornices or sculptured friezes on the external walls of their buildings; and even then its employment suggested rather that of a band of embroidery carefully disposed on some garment to relieve the plainness of the material.  Crude brick, burnt brick, enamelled brick, but always and everywhere brick was the principal element in their construction. The soil of the marshes or of the plains, separated from the pebbles and foreign substances which it contained, mixed with grass or chopped straw, moistened with water, and assiduously trodden underfoot, furnished the ancient builders with materials of incredible tenacity.  This was moulded into thin square bricks, eight inches to a foot across, and three to four inches thick, but rarely larger:  they were stamped on the flat side, by means of an incised wooden block, with the name of the reigning sovereign, and were then dried in the sun.* A layer of fine mortar or of bitumen was sometimes spread between the courses, or handfuls of reeds would be strewn at intervals between

the brickwork to increase the cohesion:  more frequently the crude bricks were piled one upon another, and their natural softness and moisture brought about their rapid agglutination.** As the building proceeded, the weight of the courses served to increase still further the adherence of the layers:  the walls soon became consolidated into a compact mass, in which the horizontal strata were distinguishable only by the varied tints of the clay used to make the different relays of bricks.

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* The making of bricks for the Assyrian monuments of the time of the Sargonids has been minutely described by Place, *Ninive et l'Assyrie*, vol. i. pp. 211-214. The methods of procedure were exactly the same as those used under the earliest king known, as has been proved by the examination of the bricks taken from the monuments of Uru and Lagash.** This method of building was noticed by classical writers. The word "Bowarieh," borne by several ancient mounds in Chaldoa, signifies, properly speaking, a mat of reeds; it is applied only to such buildings as are apparently constructed with alternate layers of brick and dried reeds. The proportion of these layers differs in certain localities: in the ruins of the ancient temple of Belos at Babylon, now called the "Mujelibeh," the lines of straw and reeds run uninterruptedly between each course of bricks; in the ruins of Akkerkuf, they only occur at wider intervals—according to Niebuhr and Ives, every seventh or eighth course; according to Raymond, every seventh course, or sometimes every fifth or sixth course, but in these cases the layer of reeds becomes 3 1/2 to 3 3/4 inches wide. H. Rawlin-son thinks, on the other hand, that all the monuments in which we find layers of straw and reeds between the brick courses belong to the Parthian period.

[Illustration: 128.jpg A CHALDAEAN STAMPED BRICK.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a brick preserved in the Louvre. The bricks bearing historical inscriptions, which are sometimes met with, appear to have been mostly ex-voto offerings placed somewhere prominently, and not building materials hidden in the masonry.

Monuments constructed of such a plastic material required constant attention and frequent repairs, to keep them in good condition: after a few years of neglect they became quite disfigured, the houses suffered a partial dissolution in every storm, the streets were covered with a coating of fine mud, and the general outline of the buildings and habitations grew blurred and defaced. Whilst in Egypt the main features of the towns are still traceable above ground, and are so well preserved in places that, while excavating them, we are carried away from the present into the world of the past, the Chaldaean cities, on the contrary, are so overthrown and seem to have returned so thoroughly to the dust from which their founders raised them, that the most patient research and the most enlightened imagination can only imperfectly reconstitute their arrangement.

The towns were not enclosed within those square or rectangular enclosures with which the engineers of the Pharaohs fortified their strongholds. The ground-plan of Uru was an oval, that of Larsam formed almost a circle upon the soil, while Uruk and Eridu resembled in shape a sort of irregular trapezium. The curtain of the citadel looked down on the plain from a great height, so that the defenders were almost

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out of reach of the arrows or slings of the besiegers: the remains of the ramparts at Uruk at the present day are still forty to fifty feet high, and twenty or more feet in thickness at the top. Narrow turrets projected at intervals of every fifty feet along the face of the wall: the excavations have not been sufficiently pursued to permit of our seeing what system of defence was applied to the entrances. The area described by these cities was often very large, but the population in them was distributed very unequally; the temples in the different quarters formed centres around which were clustered the dwellings of the inhabitants, sometimes densely packed, and elsewhere thinly scattered. The largest and richest of these temples was usually reserved for the principal deity, whose edifices were being continually decorated by the ruling princes, and the extent of whose ruins still attracts the traveller. The walls, constructed and repaired with bricks stamped with the names of lords of the locality, contain in themselves alone an almost complete history. Did Urbau, we may ask, found the ziggurat of Nannar in Uru? We meet with his bricks at the base of the most ancient portions of the building, and we moreover learn, from cylinders unearthed not far from it, that “for Nannar, the powerful bull of Anu, the son of Bel, his King, Urbau, the brave hero, King of Uru, had built E-Timila, his favourite temple.” The bricks of his son Dungi are found mixed with his own, while here and there other bricks belonging to subsequent kings, with cylinders, cones, and minor objects, strewn between the courses, mark restorations at various later periods. What is true of one Chaldaean city is equally true of all of them, and the dynasties of Uruk and of Lagash, like those of Uru, can be reconstructed from the revelations of their brickwork. The lords of heaven promised to the lords of the earth, as a reward of their piety, both glory and wealth in this life, and an eternal fame after death: they have, indeed, kept their word. The majority of the earliest Chaldaean heroes would be unknown to us, were it not for the witness of the ruined sanctuaries which they built, and that which they did in the service of their heavenly patrons has alone preserved their names from oblivion. Their most extravagant devotion, however, cost them less money and effort than that of the Pharaohs their contemporaries. While the latter had to bring from a distance, even from the remotest parts of the desert, the different kinds of stone which they considered worthy to form part of the decoration of the houses of their gods, the Chaldaean kings gathered up outside their very doors the principal material for their buildings: should they require any other accessories, they could obtain, at the worst, hard stone for their statues and thresholds in Magan and Milukhkha, and beams of cedar and cypress in the forests of the Amanus and the Upper Tigris. Under these conditions a temple was soon erected,

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and its construction did not demand centuries of continuous labour, like the great limestone and granite sanctuaries of Egypt: the same ruler who laid the first brick, almost always placed the final one, and succeeding generations had only to keep the building in ordinary repair, without altering its original plan. The work of construction was in almost every case carried out all at one time, designed and finished from the drawings of one architect, and bears traces but rarely of those deviations from the earlier plans which sometimes make the comprehension of the Theban temples so difficult a matter: if the state of decay of certain parts, or more often inadequate excavation, frequently prevent us from appreciating their details, we can at least reinstate their general outline with tolerable accuracy.

While the Egyptian temple was spread superficially over a large area, the Chalaean temple strove to attain as high an elevation as possible. The “ziggurats,” whose angular profile is a special characteristic of the landscapes of the Euphrates, were composed of several immense cubes, piled up on one another, and diminishing in size up to the small shrine by which they were crowned and wherein the god himself was supposed to dwell. There are two principal types of these ziggurats. In the first, for which the builders of Lower Chaldaea showed a marked preference, the vertical axis, common to all the superimposed stories, did not pass through the centre of the rectangle which served as the base of the whole building; it was carried back and placed near to one of the narrow ends of the base, so that the back elevation of the temple rose abruptly in steep narrow ledges above the plain, while the terraces of the front broadened out into wide platforms. The stories are composed of solid blocks of crude brick; up to the present, at least, no traces of internal chambers have been found.* The chapel on the summit could not contain more than one apartment: an altar stood before the door, and access to it was obtained by a straight external staircase, interrupted at each terrace by a more or less spacious landing.** The second type of temple frequently found in Northern Chaldaea was represented by a building on a square base with seven stories, all of equal height, connected by one or two lateral staircases, having on the summit, the pavilion of the god; this is the “terraced tower” which excited the admiration of the Greeks at Babylon, and of which the temple of Bel was the most remarkable example. The ruins of it still exist, but it has been so frequently and so completely restored in the course of ages, that it is impossible to say how much now remains of the original construction. We know of several examples, however, of the other type of ziggurat—-one at Uru, another at Bridu, a third at Uruk, without mentioning those which have not as yet been methodically explored. None of them rises directly from the surface of the ground, but they are all built on a

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raised platform, which consequently places the foundations of the temple nearly on a level with the roofs of the surrounding houses. The raised platform of the temple of Nannar at Uru still measures 20 feet in height, and its four angles are orientated exactly to the four cardinal points. Its facade was approached by an inclined plane, or by a flight of low steps, and the summit, which was surrounded by a low balustrade, was paved with enormous burnt bricks. On this terrace, processions at solemn festivals would have ample space to perform their evolutions. The lower story of the temple occupies a parallelogram of 198 feet in length by 173 feet in width, and rises about 27 feet in height.

* Perrot-Ohipiez admit that between the first and second story there was a sort of plinth seven feet in height which corresponded to the foundation platform below the first story. It appears to me, as it did to Loftus, that the slope which now separates the two vertical masses of brickwork "is accidental, and owes its existence to the destruction of the upper portion of the second story." Taylor mentions only two stories, and evidently considers the slope in question to be a bank of rubbish.** Perrot-Chipiez place the staircase leading from the ground-level to the terrace inside the building—"an arrangement which would have the advantage of not interfering with the outline of this immense platform, and would not detract from the strength and solidity of its appearance;" Reber proposes a different combination. At Uru, the whole staircase projects in front of the platform and "loads up to the edge of the basement of the second story," then continues as an inclined plane from the edge of the first story to the terrace of the second, forming one single staircase, perhaps of the same width as this second story, leading from the base to the summit of the building.

[Illustration: 134.jpg THE TEMPLE OF NANNAR AT URU, APPROXIMATELY RESTORED.]

> Drawn by Faucher-Gudin. The restoration differs from that proposed by Perrot-Chipiez. I have made it by working out the description taken down on the spot by Taylor.

The central mass of crude brick has preserved its casing of red tiles, cemented with bitumen, almost intact up to the top; it is strengthened by buttresses—nine on the longer and six on the shorter sides—projecting about a foot, which relieve its rather bare surface. The second story rises to the height of only 20 feet above, the first, and when intact could not have been more than 26 to 30 feet high.* Many bricks bearing the stamp of Dungi are found among the materials used in the latest restoration, which took place about the VIth century before our era; they have a smooth surface, are broken here and there by air-holes, and their very simplicity seems to bear witness to the fact that Nabonidos confined himself to the task of merely restoring things to the state in which the earlier kings of Uru had left them.**

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[Illustration: 135.jpg THE TEMPLE OF URU IN ITS PRESENT STATE, ACCORDING TO TAYLOR]

Facsimile, by Faucher-Gudin, of the drawing published by Taylor.

* At the present time 14 feet high, plus 5 feet of rubbish, 119 feet long, 75 feet wide (Loftus, *Travels and Researches in Olialdsea and Susiana*, p. 129).

** The cylinders of Nabonidos describing the restoration of the temple were found at the four angles of the second story by Taylor.

Till within the last century, traces of a third story to this temple might have been distinguished; unlike the lower ones, it was not of solid brickwork, but contained at least one chamber: this was the Holy of Holies, the sanctuary of Nannar. The external walls were covered with pale blue enamelled tiles, having a polished surface. The interior was panelled with cedar or cypress—rare woods procured as articles of commerce from the peoples of the North and West; this woodwork was inlaid in parts with thin leaves of gold, alternating with panels of mosaics composed of small pieces of white marble, alabaster, onyx, and agate, cut and polished.

[Illustration: 136.jpg FURTHER VIEW OF THE TEMPLE OF URU]

In Its Present State, According To Loftus. Drawn by Bouchier, from Loftus.

Here stood the statue of Nannar, one of those stiff and conventionalized figures in the traditional pose handed down from generation to generation, and which lingered even in the Chaldaean statues of Greek times. The spirit of the god dwelt within it in the same way as the double resided in the Egyptian idols, and from thence he watched over the restless movements of the people below, the noise of whose turmoil scarcely reached him at that elevation. The gods of the Euphrates, like those of the Nile, constituted a countless multitude of visible and invisible beings, distributed into tribes and empires throughout all the regions of the universe. A particular function or occupation formed, so to speak, the principality of each one, in which he worked with an indefatigable zeal, under the orders of his respective prince or king; but, whereas in Egypt they were on the whole friendly to man, or at the best indifferent in regard to him, in Chaldaea they for the most part pursued him with an implacable hatred, and only seemed to exist in order to destroy him. These monsters of alarming aspect, armed with knives and lances, whom the theologians of Heliopolis and Thebes confined within the caverns of Hades in the depths of eternal darkness, were believed by the Chaldaeans to be let loose in broad daylight over the earth,—such were the “gallu” and the “mas-kim,” the “alu” and the

“utukku,” besides a score of other demoniacal tribes bearing curious and mysterious names.

[Illustration:  137.jpg Lion-headed genius.]

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Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a small terra-cotta figure of the Assyrian period, and now in the Louvre. It was one of the figures buried under the threshold of one of the gates of the town at Khorsabad, to keep off baleful influences.

Some floated in the air and presided over the unhealthy winds. The South-West Wind, the most cruel of them all, stalked over the solitudes of Arabia, whence he suddenly issued during the most oppressive months of the year: he collected round him as he passed the malarial vapours given off by the marshes under the heat of the sun, and he spread them over the country, striking down in his violence not only man and beast, but destroying harvests, pasturage, and even trees.

[Illustration: 138.jpg THE SOUTH-WEST WIND]

> Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from the bronze original now in the Louvre. The latter museum and the British Museum possess several other figures of the same demon.

The genii of fevers and madness crept in silently everywhere, insidious and traitorous as they were. The plague alternately slumbered or made furious onslaughts among crowded populations. Imps haunted the houses, goblins wandered about the water's edge, ghouls lay in wait for travellers in unfrequented places, and the dead quitting their tombs in the night stole stealthily among the living to satiate themselves with their blood. The material shapes attributed to these murderous beings were supposed to convey to the eye their perverse and ferocious characters. They were represented as composite creatures in whom the body of a man would be joined grotesquely to the limbs of animals in the most unexpected combinations. They worked in as best they could, birds' claws, fishes' scales, a bull's tail, several pairs of wings, the head of a lion, vulture, hyaena, or wolf; when they left the creature a human head, they made it as hideous and distorted as possible. The South-West Wind was distinguished from all the rest by the multiplicity of the incongruous elements of which his person was composed. His dog-like body was supported upon two legs terminating in eagle's claws; in addition to his arms, which were furnished with sharp talons, he had four outspread wings, two of which fell behind him, while the other two rose up and surrounded his head; he had a scorpion's tail, a human face with large goggle-eyes, bushy eyebrows, fleshless cheeks, and retreating lips, showing a formidable row of threatening teeth, while from his flattened skull protruded the horns of a goat: the entire combination was so hideous, that it even alarmed the god and put him to flight, when he was unexpectedly confronted with his own portrait. There was no lack of good genii to combat this deformed and vicious band. They too were represented as monsters, but monsters of a fine and noble bearing,—griffins, winged lions, lion-headed men, and more especially those splendid human-headed bulls, those "lamassi"

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crowned with mitres, whose gigantic statues kept watch before the palace and temple gates. Between these two races hostility was constantly displayed: restrained at one point, it broke out afresh at another, and the evil genii, invariably beaten, as invariably refused to accept their defeat. Man, less securely armed against them than were the gods, was ever meeting with them. "Up there, they are howling, here they lie in wait,—-they are great worms let loose by heaven—powerful ones whose clamour rises above the city—who pour water in torrents from heaven, sons who have come out of the bosom of the earth.—They twine around the high rafters, the great rafters, like a crown;—they take their way from house to house,—for the door cannot stop them, nor bar the way, nor repulse them,—for they creep like a serpent under the door—they insinuate themselves like the air between the folding doors,—they separate the bride from the embraces of the bridegroom,—they snatch the child from between the knees of the man,—they entice the unwary from out of his fruitful house,—they are the threatening voice which pursues him from behind." Their malice extended even to animals: "They force the raven to fly away on the wing,—and they make the swallow to escape from its nest;—they cause the bull to flee, they cause the lamb to flee—they, the bad demons who lay snares."

The most audacious among them did not fear at times to attack the gods of light; on one occasion, in the infancy of the world, they had sought to dispossess them and reign in their stead. Without any warning they had climbed the heavens, and fallen upon Sin, the moon-god; they had repulsed Shamash, the Sun, and Eamman, both of whom had come to the rescue; they had driven Ishtar and Anu from their thrones: the whole firmament would have become a prey to them, had not Bel and Nusku, Ea and Merodach, intervened at the eleventh hour, and succeeded in hurling them down to the earth, after a terrible battle. They never completely recovered from this reverse, and the gods raised up as rivals to them a class of friendly genii—the "Igigi," who were governed by five heavenly Anunnas.

[Illustration: 141.jpg SIN DELIVERED BY MERODACH FROM THE ASSAULT OF THE SEVEN EVIL SPIRITS.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from an Assyrian intaglio published by Layard.

The earthly Anunnas, the Anunnaki, had as their chiefs seven sons of Bel, with bodies of lions, tigers, and serpents: "the sixth was a tempestuous wind which obeyed neither god nor king,—the seventh, a whirlwind, a desolating storm which destroys everything,"—"Seven, seven,—in the depth of the abyss of waters they are seven,—and destroyers of heaven they are seven.—They have grown up in the depths of the abyss, in the palace;—males they are not, females they are not,—they are storms which pass

quickly.—They take no wife, they give birth to no child,—they know neither compassion nor kindness,—they

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listen to no prayer nor supplication.—As wild horses they are born in the mountains,—-they are the enemies of Ba,—they are the agents of the gods;—they are evil, they are evil—and they are seven, they are seven, they are twice seven." Man, if reduced to his own resources, could have no chance of success in struggling against beings who had almost reduced the gods to submission. He invoked in his defence the help of the whole universe, the spirits of heaven and earth, the spirit of Bel and of Belit, that of Ninib and of Nebo, those of Sin, of Ishtar, and of Bamman; but Gibir or Gibil, the Lord of Fire, was the most powerful auxiliary in this incessant warfare. The offspring of night and of dark waters, the Anunnaki had no greater enemy than fire; whether kindled on the household hearth or upon the altars, its appearance put them to flight and dispelled their power.

[Illustration: 142.jpg STRUGGLE BETWEEN A GOOD AND AN EVIL GENIUS.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from Layard.

"Gibil, renowned hero in the land,—valiant, son of the Abyss, exalted in the land,—Gibil, thy clear flame, breaking forth,—when it lightens up the darkness,—assigns to all that bears a name its own destiny. —The copper and tin, it is thou who dost mix them,—-gold and silver, it is thou who meltest them,—thou art the companion of the goddess Ninkasi—thou art he who exposes his breast to the nightly enemy!—Cause then the limbs of man, son of his god, to shine,—make him to be bright like the sky,—may he shine like the earth,—may he be bright like the interior of the heavens,—may the evil word be kept far from him," and with it the malignant spirits. The very insistence with which help is claimed against the Anunnaki shows how much their power was dreaded. The Chaldean felt them everywhere about him, and could not move without incurring the danger of coming into contact with them. He did not fear them so much during the day, as the presence of the luminary deities in the heavens reassured him; but the night belonged to them, and he was open to their attacks. If he lingered in the country at dusk, they were there, under the hedges, behind walls and trunks of trees, ready to rush out upon him at every turn. If he ventured after sundown into the streets of his village or town, he again met with them quarrelling with dogs over the offal on a rubbish heap, crouched in the shelter of a doorway, lying hidden in corners where the shadows were darkest. Even when barricaded within his house, under the immediate protection of his domestic idols, these genii still threatened him and left him not a moment's repose.* The number of them was so great that he was unable to protect himself adequately from all of them: when he had disarmed the greater portion of them, there were always several remaining against whom he had forgotten to take necessary precautions. What must have been the total of the subordinate genii, when, towards the IXth century before our era, the official census of the invisible beings stated the number of the great gods in heaven and earth to be sixty-five thousand!**

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* The presence of the evil spirits everywhere is shown, among other magical formulas, by the incantation in Rawlinson, *Cun, Ins. W. As.*, vol. ii. pi. 18, where we find enumerated at length the places from which they are to be kept out. The magician closes the house to them, the hedge which surrounds the house, the yoke laid upon the oxen, the tomb, the prison, the well, the furnace, the shade, the vase for libation, the ravines, the valleys, the mountains, the door.

** Assurnazirpal, King of Assyria, speaks in one of his inscriptions of these sixty-five thousand great gods of heaven and earth.

We are often much puzzled to say what these various divinities, whose names we decipher on the monuments, could possibly have represented. The sovereigns of Lagash addressed their prayers to Ningirsu, the valiant champion of Inlil; to Ninursag, the lady of the terrestrial mountain: to Ninsia, the lord of fate; to the King Ninagal; to Inzu, of whose real name no one has an idea; to Inanna, the queen of battles; to Pasag, to Galalim, to Dunshagana, to Ninmar, to Ningishzida. Gudea raised temples to them in all the cities over which his authority extended, and he devoted to these pious foundations a yearly income out of his domain land or from the spoils of his wars. “Gudea, the ‘vicegerent’ of Lagash, after having built the temple Ininnu for Ningirsu, constructed a treasury; a house decorated with sculptures, such as no ‘vicegerent’ had ever before constructed for Ningirsu; he constructed it for him, he wrote his name in it, he made in it all that was needful, and he executed faithfully all the words from the mouth of Ningirsu.” The dedication of these edifices was accompanied with solemn festivals, in which the whole population took an active part. “During seven years no grain was ground, and the maidservant was the equal of her mistress, the slave walked beside his master, and in my town the weak rested by the side of the strong.” Henceforward Gudea watched scrupulously lest anything impure should enter and mar the sanctity of the place.

[Illustration: 145.jpg THE GOD NINGIBSU, PATRON OF LAGASH.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from Heuzey-Sarzec. The attribution of this figure to Ningirsu is very probable, but not wholly certain.

Those we have enumerated were the ancient Sumerian divinities, but the characteristics of most of them would have been lost to us, had we not learned, by means of other documents, to what gods the Semites assimilated them, gods who are better known and who are represented under a less barbarous aspect. Ningirsu, the lord of the division of Lagash which was called Girsu, was identified with Ninib; Inlil is Bel, Ninursag is Beltis, Inzu is Sin, Inanna is Ishtar, and so on with the rest. The cultus of each, too, was not a local cultus, confined to some obscure corner of the country; they all were rulers

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over the whole of Chaldaea, in the north as in the south, at Uruk, at Urn, at Larsam, at Nipur, even in Babylon itself. Inlil was the ruler of the earth and of Hades, Babbar was the sun, Inzu the moon, Inanna-Antmit the morning and evening star and the goddess or love, at a time when two distinct religious and two rival groups of gods existed side by side on the banks of the Euphrates. The Sumerian language is for us, at the present day, but a collection of strange names, of whose meaning and pronunciation we are often ignorant. We may well ask what beings and beliefs were originally hidden under these barbaric combinations of syllables which are constantly recurring in the inscriptions of the oldest dynasties, such as Pasag, Dunshagana, Dumuzi-. Zuaba, and a score of others. The priests of subsequent times claimed to define exactly the attributes of each of them, and probably their statements are, in the main, correct. But it is impossible for us to gauge the motives which determined the assimilation of some of these divinities, the fashion in which it was carried out, the mutual concessions which Semite and Sumerian must have made before they could arrive at an understanding, and before the primitive characteristics of each deity were softened down or entirely effaced in the process. Many of these divine personages, such as Ea, Merodach, Ishtar, are so completely transformed, that we may well ask to which of the two peoples they owed their origin. The Semites finally gained the ascendency over their rivals, and the Sumerian gods from thenceforward preserved an independent existence only in connection with magic, divination, and the science of foretelling events, and also in the formulas of exorcists and physicians, to which the harshness of their names lent a greater weight. Elsewhere it was Bel and Sin, Shamash and Eamman, who were universally worshipped, but a Bel, a Sin, a Shamash, who still betrayed traces of their former connection with the Sumerian Inlil and Inzu, with Babbar and Mermer. In whatever language, however, they were addressed, by whatever name they were called upon, they did not fail to hear and grant a favourable reply to the appeals of the faithful.

Whether Sumerian or Semitic, the gods, like those of Egypt, were not abstract personages, guiding in a metaphysical fashion the forces of nature. Each of them contained in himself one of the principal elements of which our universe is composed, —earth, water, sky, sun, moon, and the stars which moved around the terrestrial mountain. The succession of natural phenomena with them was not the result of unalterable laws; it was due entirely to a series of voluntary acts, accomplished by beings of different grades of intelligence and power. Every part of the great whole is represented by a god, a god who is a man, a Chaldaean, who, although of a finer and more lasting nature than other Chaldaeans, possesses nevertheless the same instincts and is swayed by the same passions.

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He is, as a rule, wanting in that somewhat lithe grace of form, and in that rather easy-going good-nature, which were the primary characteristics of the Egyptian gods: the Chaldaean divinity has the broad shoulders, the thick-set figure and projecting muscles of the people over whom he rules; he has their hasty and violent temperament, their coarse sensuality, their cruel and warlike propensities, their boldness in conceiving undertakings, and their obstinate tenacity in carrying them out. Their goddesses are modelled on the tyra of the Chaldaen women, or, more properly speaking, on that of their queens. The majority of them do not quit the harem, and have no other ambition than to become speedily the mother of a numerous offspring. Those who openly reject the rigid constraints of such a life, and who seek to share the rank of the gods, seem to lose all self-restraint when they put off the veil: like Ishtar, they exchange a life of severe chastity for the lowest debauchery, and they subject their followers to the same irregular life which they themselves have led. “Every woman born in the country must enter once during her lifetime the enclosure of the temple of Aphrodite, must there sit down and unite herself to a stranger. Many who are wealthy are too proud to mix with the rest, and repair thither in closed chariots, followed by a considerable train of slaves. The greater number seat themselves on the sacred pavement, with a cord twisted about their heads,—and there is always a great crowd there, coming and going; the women being divided by ropes into long lanes, down which strangers pass to make their choice. A woman who has once taken her place here cannot return home until a stranger has thrown into her lap a silver coin, and has led her away with him beyond the limits of the sacred enclosure. As he throws the money he pronounces these words: ’May the goddess Mylitta make thee happy! ’—Now, among the Assyrians, Aphrodite is called Mylitta. The silver coin may be of any value, but none may refuse it, that is forbidden by the law, for, once thrown, it is sacred. The woman follows the first man who throws her the money, and repels no one. When once she has accompanied him, and has thus satisfied the goddess, she returns to her home, and from thenceforth, however large the sum offered to her, she will yield to no one. The women who are tall or beautiful soon return to their homes, but those who are ugly remain a long time before they are able to comply with the law; some of them are obliged to wait three or four years within the enclosure."* This custom still existed in the Vth century before our era, and the Greeks who visited Babylon about that time found it still in full force.

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* Herodotus, i. 199:  of.  Stabo, xvi. p. 1058, who probably has merely quoted this passage from Herodotus, or some writer who copied from Herodotus.  We meet with a direct allusion to this same custom in the Bible, in the *Book of Barueh*; “The women also, with cords about them, sitting in the ways, burn bran for perfume; but if any of them, drawn by some that passeth by, lie with him, she reproacheth her fellow, that she was not thought as worthy as herself, nor her cord broken.”

The gods, who had begun by being the actual material of the element which was their attribute, became successively the spirit of it, then its ruler.* They continued at first to reside in it, but in the course of time they were separated from it, and each was allowed to enter the domain of another, dwell in it, and even command it, as they could have done in their own, till finally the greater number of them were identified with the firmament.

* Pk.  Lbnoemant, *La Magie chez les Chaldeens*, p. 144, et seq., where the author shows how Anu, after having at first been the Heaven itself, the starry vault stretched above the earth, became successively the Spirit of Heaven (*Zi-ana*), and finally the supreme ruler of the world:  according to Lenormant, it was the Semites in particular who transformed the primitive spirit into an actual god-king.

Bel, the lord of the earth, and Ea, the ruler of the waters, passed info the heavens, which did not belong to them, and took their places beside Ami:  the pathways were pointed out which they had made for themselves across the celestial vault, in order to inspect their kingdoms from the exalted heights to which they had been raised; that of Bel was in the Tropic of Cancer, that of Ea in the Tropic of Capricorn.  They gathered around them all the divinities who could easily be abstracted from the function or object to which they were united, and they thus constituted a kind of divine aristocracy, comprising all the most powerful beings who guided the fortunes of the world.  The number of them was considerable, for they reckoned seven supreme and magnificent gods, fifty great gods of heaven and earth, three hundred celestial spirits, and six hundred terrestrial spirits.  Each of them deputed representatives here below, who received the homage of mankind for him, and signified to them his will.  The god revealed himself in dreams to his seers and imparted to them the course of coming events,* or, in some cases, inspired them suddenly and spoke by their mouth:  their utterances, taken down and commented on by their assistants, were regarded as infallible oracles.  But the number of mortal men possessing adequate powers, and gifted with sufficiently acute senses to bear without danger the near presence of a god, was necessarily limited; communications were, therefore, more often established by means of various objects, whose grosser substance lessened for human intelligence and flesh and blood the dangers

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of direct contact with an immortal. The statues hidden in the recesses of the temples or erected on the summits of the “ziggurats” became imbued, by virtue of their consecration, with the actual body of the god whom they represented, and whose name was written either on the base or garment of the statue.** The sovereign who dedicated them, summoned them to speak in the days to come, and from thenceforth they spoke: when they were interrogated according to the rite instituted specially for each one, that part of the celestial soul, which by means of the prayers had been attracted to and held captive by the statue, could not refuse to reply.** Were there for this purpose special images, as in Egypt, which were cleverly contrived so as to emit sounds by the pulling of a string by the hidden prophet? Voices resounded at night in the darkness of the sanctuaries, and particularly when a king came there to prostrate himself for the purpose of learning the future: his rank alone, which raised him halfway to heaven, prepared him to receive the word from on high by the mouth of the image.
* A prophetic dream is mentioned upon, one of the statues of Telloh. In the records of Assurbanipal we find mention of several “seers”—*shabru*—one of whom predicts the general triumph of the king over his enemies, and of whom another announces in the name of Ishtar the victory over the Elamites and encourages the Assyrian army to cross a torrent swollen by rains, while a third sees in a dream the defeat and death of the King of Elam. These “seers” are mentioned in the texts of Gudea with the prophetesses “who tell the message” of the gods.** In a formula drawn up against evil spirits, for the purpose of making talismanic figures for the protection of houses, it is said of Merodach that he “inhabits the image” —*ashibu salam*—which has been made of him by the magician.** This is what Gudea says, when, describing his own statue which he had placed in the temple of Telloh, he adds that “he gave the order to the statue: ’To the statue of my king, speak!’” The statue of the king, inspired by that of the god, would thenceforth speak when interrogated according to the formularies. Cf. what is said of the divine or royal statues dedicated in the temples of Egypt, vol. i. pp. 169, 170. A number of oracles regularly obtained in the time of Asarhaddon and Assurbanabal have been published by Knudtzon.

[Illustration: 152.jpg THE ADORATION OF THE MACE AND THE WHIP.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from the Chaldaean intaglio reproduced in Heuzey-Sarzec, *Decouvertes en Chaldee*, pl. 30bis, No. 13b.

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More frequently a priest, accustomed from childhood to the office, possessed the privilege of asking the desired questions and of interpreting to the faithful the various signs by means of which the divine will was made known. The spirit of the god inspired, moreover, whatever seemed good to him, and frequently entered into objects where we should least have expected to find it. It animated stones, particularly such as fell from heaven; also trees, as, for example, the tree of Eridu which pronounced oracles; and, besides the battle-mace, with a granite head fixed on a wooden handle, the axe of Ramman, lances made on the model of Gilgames' fairy javelin, which came and went at its master's orders, without needing to be touched. Such objects, when it was once ascertained that they were imbued with the divine spirit, were placed upon the altar and worshipped with as much veneration as were the statues themselves.

[Illustration: 153.jpg A protecting amulet.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from the terra-cotta figurine of Assyrian date now in the Louvre.

Animals never became objects of habitual worship as in Egypt: some of them, however, such as the bull and lion, were closely allied to the gods, and birds unconsciously betrayed by their flight or cries the secrets of futurity.* In addition to all these, each family possessed its household gods, to whom its members recited prayers and poured libations night and morning, and whose statues set up over the domestic hearth defended it from the snares of the evil ones.** The State religion, which all the inhabitants of the same city, from the king down to the lowest slave, were solemnly bound to observe, really represented to the Chaldaeans but a tithe of their religious life: it included some dozen gods, no doubt the most important, but it more or less left out of account all the others, whose anger, if aroused by neglect, might become dangerous. The private devotion of individuals supplemented the State religion by furnishing worshippers for most of the neglected divinities, and thus compensated for what was lacking in the official public worship of the community.

* Animal forms are almost always restricted either to the genii, the constellations, or the secondary forms of the greater divinities: Ea, however, is represented by a man with a fish's tail, or as a man clothed with a fish-skin, which would appear to indicate that at the outset he was considered to be an actual fish.** The images of these gods acted as amulets, and the fact of their presence alone repelled the evil spirits. At Khorsabad they were found buried under the threshold of the city gates. A bilingual tablet in the British Museum has preserved for us the formula of consecration which was supposed to invest these protecting statuettes with divine powers.

If the idea of uniting all these divine beings into a single supreme one, who would combine within himself

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all their elements and the whole of their powers, ever for a moment crossed the mind of some Chaldaean theologian, it never spread to the people as a whole. Among all the thousands of tablets or inscribed stones on which we find recorded prayers and magical formulas, we have as yet discovered no document treating of the existence of a supreme god, or even containing the faintest allusion to a divine unity. We meet indeed with many passages in which this or that divinity boasts of his power, eloquently depreciating that of his rivals, and ending his discourse with the injunction to worship him alone: "Man who shall come after, trust in Nebo, trust in no other god!" The very expressions which are used, commanding future races to abandon the rest of the immortals in favour of Nebo, prove that even those who prided themselves on being worshippers of one god realized how far they were from believing in the unity of God. They strenuously asserted that the idol of their choice was far superior to many others, but it never occurred to them to proclaim that he had absorbed them all into himself, and that he remained alone in his glory, contemplating the world, his creature. Side by side with those who expressed this belief in Nebo, an inhabitant of Babylon would say as much and more of Merodach, the patron of his birthplace, without, however, ceasing to believe in the actual independence and royalty of Nebo. "When thy power manifests itself, who can withdraw himself from it?—Thy word is a powerful net which thou spreadest in heaven and over the earth:—it falls upon the sea, and the sea retires,—it falls upon the plain, and the fields make great mourning,—it falls upon the upper waters of the Euphrates, and the word of Merodach stirs up the flood in them.—O Lord, thou art sovereign, who can resist thee?—Merodach, among the gods who bear a name, thou art sovereign." Merodach is for his worshippers the king of the gods, he is not the sole god. Each of the chief divinities received in a similar manner the assurance of his omnipotence, but, for all that, his most zealous followers never regarded them as the only God, beside whom there was none other, and whose existence and rule precluded those of any other. The simultaneous elevation of certain divinities to the supreme rank had a reactionary influence on the ideas held with regard to the nature of each. Anu, Bel, and Ea, not to mention others, had enjoyed at the outset but a limited and incomplete personality, confined to a single concept, and were regarded as possessing only such attributes as were indispensable to the exercise of their power within a prescribed sphere, whether in heaven, or on the earth, or in the waters; as each in his turn gained the ascendency over his rivals, he became invested with the qualities which were exercised by the others in their own domain. His personality became enlarged, and instead of remaining merely a god of heaven or earth or of the waters, he became god of all three

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simultaneously. Anu reigned in the province of Bel or of Ea as he ruled in his own; Bel joined to his own authority that of Anu and Ea; Ea treated Anu and Bel with the same absence of ceremony which they had shown to him, and added their supremacy to his own. The personality of each god was thenceforward composed of many divers elements: each preserved a nucleus of his original being, but superadded to this were the peculiar characteristics of all the gods above whom he had been successively raised. Anu took to himself somewhat of the temperaments of Bel and of Ea, and the latter in exchange borrowed from him many personal traits. The same work of levelling which altered the characteristics of the Egyptian divinities, and transformed them little by little into local variants of Osiris and the Sun, went on as vigorously among the Chaldaean gods: those who were incarnations of the earth, the waters, the stars, or the heavens, became thenceforth so nearly allied to each other that we are tempted to consider them as being doubles of a single god, worshipped under different names in different localities. Their primitive forms can only be clearly distinguished when they are stripped of the uniform in which they are all clothed.

The sky-gods and the earth-gods had been more numerous at the outset than they were subsequently. We recognize as such Anu, the immovable firmament, and the ancient Bel, the lord of men and of the soil on which they live, and into whose bosom they return after, death; but there were others, who in historic times had partially or entirely lost their primitive character,—such as Nergal, Ninib, Dumuzi; or, among the goddesses, Damkina, Esharra, and even Ishtar herself, who, at the beginning of their existence, had represented only the earth, or one of its most striking aspects. For instance, Nergal and Ninib were the patrons of agriculture and protectors of the soil, Dumuzi was the ground in spring whose garment withered at the first approach of summer, Damkina was the leafy mould in union with fertilizing moisture, Esharra was the field whence sprang the crops, Ishtar was the clod which again grew green after the heat of the dog days and the winter frosts. All these beings had been forced to submit in a greater or less degree to the fate which among most primitive races awaits those older earth-gods, whose manifestations are usually too vague and shadowy to admit of their being grasped or represented by any precise imagery without limiting and curtailing their spheres. New deities had arisen of a more definite and tangible kind, and hence more easily understood, and having a real or supposed province which could be more easily realized, such as the sun, the moon, and the fixed or wandering stars. The moon is the measure of time; it determines the months, leads the course of the years, and the entire life of mankind and of great cities depends upon the regularity of its movements: the Chaldaeans, therefore, made it, or rather the

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spirit which animated it, the father and king of the gods; but its suzerainty was everywhere a conventional rather than an actual superiority, and the sun, which in theory was its vassal, attracted more worshippers than the pale and frigid luminary. Some adored the sun under its ordinary title of Shamash, corresponding to the Egyptian Ra; others designated it as Merodach, Ninib, Nergal, Dumuzi, not to mention other less usual appellations. Nergal in the beginning had nothing in common with Ninib, and Merodach differed alike from Shamash, Ninib, Nergal, and Dumuzi; but the same movement which instigated the fusion of so many Egyptian divinities of diverse nature, led the gods of the Chaldaeans to divest themselves little by little of their individuality and to lose themselves in the sun. Each one at first became a complete sun, and united in himself all the innate virtues of the sun—its brilliancy and its dominion over the world, its gentle and beneficent heat, its fertilizing warmth, its goodness and justice, its emblematic character of truth and peace; besides the incontestable vices which darken certain phases of its being—the fierceness of its rays at midday and in summer, the inexorable strength of its will, its combative temperament, its irresistible harshness and cruelty. By degrees they lost this uniform character, and distributed the various attributes among themselves. If Shamash continued to be the sun in general, Ninib restricted himself, after the example of the Egyptian Harmakhis, to being merely the rising and setting sun, the sun on the two horizons. Nergal became the feverish and destructive summer sun.* Merodach was transformed into the youthful sun of spring and early morning;** Dumuzi, like Merodach, became the sun before the summer. Their moral qualities naturally were affected by the process of restriction which had been applied to their physical being, and the external aspect now assigned to each in accordance with their several functions differed considerably from that formerly attributed to the unique type from which they had sprung. Ninib was represented as valiant, bold, and combative; he was a soldier who dreamed but of battle and great feats of arms. Nergal united a crafty fierceness to his bravery: not content with being lord of battles, he became the pestilence which breaks out unexpectedly in a country, the death which comes like a thief, and carries off his prey before there is time to take up arms against him. Merodach united wisdom with courage and strength: he attacked the wicked, protected the good, and used his power in the cause of order and justice. A very ancient legend, which was subsequently fully developed among the Canaanites, related the story of the unhappy passion of Ishtar for Dumuzi. The goddess broke out yearly into a fresh frenzy, but the tragic death of the hero finally moderated the ardour of her devotion. She wept distractedly for him, went to beg the lords of the infernal regions for his return, and brought him back

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triumphantly to the earth: every year there was a repetition of the same passionate infatuation, suddenly interrupted by the same mourning. The earth was united to the young sun with every recurring spring, and under the influence of his caresses became covered with verdure; then followed autumn and winter, and the sun, grown old, sank into the tomb, from whence his mistress had to call him up, in order to plunge afresh with him by a common impulse into the joys and sorrows of another year.
* The solar character of Nergal, at least in later times, is admitted, but with restrictions, by all Assyriologists. The evident connection between him and Ninib, of which we have proofs, was the ground of Delitzsch's theory that he was likewise the burning and destructive sun, and also of Jensen's analogous concept of a midday and summer sun.** Pr. Lenormant seems to have been the first to distinguish in Merodach, besides the god of the planet Jupiter, a solar personage. This notion, which has been generally admitted by most Assyriologists, has been defined with greater exactitude by Jensen, who is inclined to see in Merodach both the morning sun and the spring sun; and this is the opinion held at present.

The differences between the gods were all the more accentuated, for the reason that many who had a common origin were often separated from one another by, relatively speaking, considerable distances. Having divided the earth's surface between them, they formed, as in Egypt, a complete feudal system, whose chiefs severally took up their residence in a particular city. Anu was worshipped in Uruk, Enlil-Bel reigned in Nipur, Eridu belonged to Ea, the lord of the waters. The moon-god, Sin, alone governed two large fiefs, Uru in the extreme south, and Harran towards the extreme north-west; Shamash had Larsam and one of the Sipparas for his dominion, and the other sun-gods were not less well provided for, Nergal possessing Kutha, Zamama having Kish, Ninib side by side with Bel reigning in Nipur, while Merodach ruled at Babylon. Each was absolute master in his own territory, and it is quite exceptional to find two of them co-regnant in one locality, as were Ninib and Bel at Nipur, or Ea and Ishtar in Uruk; not that they raised any opposition on principle to the presence of a stranger divinity in their dominions, but they welcomed them only under the titles of allies or subjects. Each, moreover, had fair play, and Nebo or Shamash, after having filled the *role* of sovereign at Borsippa or at Larsam, did not consider it derogatory to his dignity to accept a lower rank in Babylon or at Uru. Hence all the feudal gods played a double part, and had, as it were, a double civil portion—that of suzerain in one or two localities, and that of vassals everywhere else—and this dual condition was the surest guarantee not only of their prosperity, but of their existence. Sin would have run great risk of sinking

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into oblivion if his resources had been confined to the subventions from his domain temples of Harran and Uru. Their impoverishment would in such case have brought about his complete failure: after having enjoyed an existence amid riches and splendour in the beginning of history, he would have ended his life in a condition of misery and obscurity. But the sanctuaries erected to him in the majority of the other cities, the honours which these bestowed upon him, and the offerings which they made to him, compensated him for the poverty and neglect which he experienced in his own domains; and he was thus able to maintain his divine dignity on a suitable footing. All the gods were, therefore, worshipped by the Chaldeans, and the only difference among them in this respect arose from the fact that some exalted one special deity above the others. The gods of the richest and most ancient principalities naturally enjoyed the greatest popularity. The greatness of Uru had been the source of Sin's prestige, and Merodach owed his prosperity to the supremacy which Babylon had acquired over the districts of the north. Merodach was regarded as the son of Ba, as the star which had risen from the abyss to illuminate the world, and to confer upon mankind the decrees of eternal wisdom. He was proclaimed as lord—"bilu"—*par excellence*, in comparison with whom all other lords sank into insignificance, and this title soon procured for him a second, which was no less widely recognized than the first: he was spoken of everywhere as the Bel of Babylon, Bel-Merodach—before whom Bel of Nipur was gradually thrown into the shade. The relations between these feudal deities were not always pacific: jealousies arose among them like those which disturbed the cities over which they ruled; they conspired against each other, and on occasions broke out into open warfare. Instead of forming a coalition against the evil genii who threatened their rule, and as a consequence tended to bring everything into jeopardy, they sometimes made alliances with these malign powers and mutually betrayed each other. Their history, if we could recover it in its entirety, would be marked by as violent deeds as those which distinguished the princes and kings who worshipped them. Attempts were made, however, and that too from an early date, to establish among them a hierarchy like that which existed among the great ones of the earth. The faithful, who, instead of praying to each one separately, preferred to address them all, invoked them always in the same order: they began with Anu, the heaven, and followed with Bel, Ea, Sin, Shamash, and Bamman. They divided these six into two groups of three, one trio consisting of Anu, Bel, and Ea, the other of Sin, Shamash, and Bamman. All these deities were associated with Southern Chaldoa, and the system which grouped them must have taken its rise in this region, probably at Uruk, whose patron Anu V occupied the first rank among them. The

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theologians who classified them in this manner seem never to have dreamt of explaining, like the authors of the Heliopolitan Ennead, the successive steps in their creation: these triads were not, moreover, copies of the human family, consisting of a father and mother whose marriage brings into the world a new being. Others had already given an account of the origin of things, and of Merodach's struggles with chaos; these theologians accepted the universe as it was, already made, and contented themselves with summing up its elements by enumerating the gods which actuated them.* They assigned the first place to those elements which make the most forcible impression upon man—beginning with Anu, for the heaven was the god of their city; following with Bel of Nipur, the earth which from all antiquity has been associated with the heaven; and concluding with Ea of Eridu, the terrestrial waters and primordial Ocean whence Anu and Bel, together with all living creatures, had sprung—Ea being a god whom, had they not been guided by local vanity, they would have made sovereign lord of all. Anu owed his supremacy to an historical accident rather than a religious conception: he held his high position, not by his own merits, but because the prevailing theology of an early period had been the work of his priesthood.

* I know of Sayce only who has endeavoured to explain the historical formation of the triads. They are considered by him as of Accadian origin, and probably began in an astronomical triad, composed of the moon-god, the sun-god, and the evening star, Sin, Shamash, and Ishtar; alongside this elementary trinity, "the only authentic one to be found in the religious faith of primitive Chaldaea," the Semites may have placed the cosmogonical trinity of Anu, Bel, and Ea, formed by the reunion of the gods of Uruk, Nipur, and Eridu.

The characters of the three personages who formed the supreme triad can be readily deduced from the nature of the elements which they represent. Anu is the heaven itself —"ana"—the immense vault which spreads itself above our heads, clear during the day when glorified by the sun, obscure and strewn with innumerable star clusters during the night. Afterwards it becomes the spirit which animates the firmament, or the god which rules it: he resides in the north towards the pole, and the ordinary route chosen by him when inspecting his domain is that marked out by our ecliptic. He occupies the high regions of the universe, sheltered from winds and tempests, in an atmosphere always serene, and a light always brilliant. The terrestrial gods and those of middle-space take refuge in this "heaven of Anu," when they are threatened by any great danger, but they dare not penetrate its depths, and stop, shortly after passing its boundary, on the ledge which supports the vault, where they loll and howl like dogs. It is but rarely that it may be entered, and then only by the highly privileged—kings

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whose destiny marked them out for admittance, and heroes who have fallen valiantly on the field of battle. In his remote position on unapproachable summits Anu seems to participate in the calm and immobility of his dwelling. If he is quick in forming an opinion and coming to a conclusion, he himself never puts into execution the plans which he has matured or the judgments which he has pronounced: he relieves himself of the trouble of acting, by assigning the duty to Bel-Merodach, Ea, or Eamman, and he often employs inferior genii to execute his will. "They are seven, the messengers of Anu their king; it is they who from town to town raise the stormy wind; they are the south wind which drives mightily in the heavens; they are the destroying clouds which overturn the heavens; they are the rapid tempests which bring darkness in the midst of clear day, they roam here and there with the wicked wind and the ill-omened hurricane." Anu sends forth all the gods as he pleases, recalls them again, and then, to make them his pliant instruments, enfeebles their personality, reducing it to nothing by absorbing it into his own. He blends himself with them, and their designations seem to be nothing more than doublets of his own: he is Anu the Lakhmu who appeared on the first days of creation; Ahu Urash or Ninib is the sun-warrior of Nipur; and Anu is also the eagle Alala whom Ishtar enfeebled by her caresses. Anu regarded in this light ceases to be the god *par excellence*: he becomes the only chief god, and the idea of authority is so closely attached to his name that the latter alone is sufficient in common speech to render the idea of God. Bel would have been entirely thrown into the shade by him, as the earth-gods generally are by the sky-gods, if it had not been that he was confounded with his namesake Bel-Merodach of Babylon: to this alliance he owed to the end the safety of his life, in presence of Anu. Ea was the most active and energetic member of the triad.* As he represented the bottomless abyss, the dark waters which had filled the universe until the day of the creation, there had been attributed to him a complete knowledge of the past, present, and future, whose germs had lain within him, as in a womb. The attribute of supreme wisdom was revered in Ea, the lord of spells and charms, to which gods and men were alike subject: no strength could prevail against his strength, no voice against his voice: when once he opened his mouth to give a decision, his will became law, and no one might gainsay it. If a peril should arise against which the other gods found themselves impotent, they resorted to him immediately for help, which was never refused. He had saved Shamashnapishtirn from the Deluge; every day he freed his votaries from sickness and the thousand demons which were the causes of it. He was a potter, and had modelled men out of the clay of the plains. From him smiths and workers in gold obtained the art of rendering malleable and of fashioning the metals. Weavers and stone-cutters, gardeners, husbandmen, and sailors hailed him as their teacher and patron. From his incomparable knowledge the scribes derived theirs, and physicians and wizards invoked spirits in his name alone by the virtue of prayers which he had condescended to teach them.

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* The name of this god was read “Nisrok” by Oppert, “Nouah” by Hincks and Lenormant. The true reading is Ia, Ea, usually translated “house,” “water-house”; this is a popular interpretation which appears to have occurred to the Chaldaeans from the values of the signs entering into the name of the god. From the outset H. Rawlinson recognized in Ea, which he read Hea, Hoa, the divinity presiding over the abyss of waters; he compared him with the serpent of Holy Scripture, in its relation to the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life, and deduced therefrom his character of lord of wisdom. His position as lord of the primordial waters, from which all things proceeded, clearly denned by Lenormant, is now fully recognized. His name was transcribed Aos by Damascius, a form which is not easily explained; the most probable hypothesis is that of Hommel who considers Aos as a shortened form of Iaos = Ia, Ea.

Subordinate to these limitless and vague beings, the theologians placed their second triad, made up of gods of restricted power and invariable form. They recognized in the unswerving regularity with which the moon waxed and waned, or with which the sun rose and set every day, a proof of their subjection to the control of a superior will, and they signalized this dependence by making them sons of one or other of the three great gods. Sin was the offspring of Bel, Shamash of Sin, Kamman of Anu. Sin was indebted for this primacy among the subordinate divinities to the preponderating influence which Uru exercised over Southern Chaldaea. Mar, where Ramman was the chief deity, never emerged from its obscurity, and Larsam acquired supremacy only many centuries after its neighbour, and did not succeed in maintaining it for any length of time. The god of the suzerain city necessarily took precedence of those of the vassal towns, and when once his superiority was admitted by the people, he was able to maintain his place in spite of all political revolutions. Sin was called in Uru, “Uruki,” or “Nannar the glorious,” and his priests sometimes succeeded in identifying him with Anu. “Lord, prince of the gods, who alone in heaven and earth is exalted,—father Nannar, lord of the hosts of heaven, prince of the gods,—father Nannar, lord, great Anu, prince of the gods,—father Nannar, lord, moon-god, prince of the gods,—father Nannar, lord of Uni, prince of the gods....—Lord, thy deity fills the far-off heavens, like the vast sea, with reverential fear! Master of the earth, thou who fixest there the boundaries [of the towns] and assignest to them their names,—father, begetter of gods and men, who establishest for them dwellings and institutest for them that which is good, who proclaimest royalty and bestowest the exalted sceptre on those whose destiny was determined from distant times,—chief, mighty, whose heart is great, god whom no one can name, whose limbs are steadfast, whose knees never bend, who preparest the paths of thy brothers the gods....—In heaven,

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who is supreme?  As for thee, it is thou alone who art supreme!  As for thee, thy decree is made known in heaven, and the Igigi bow their faces!—As for thee, thy decree is made known upon earth, and the spirits of the abyss kiss the dust!—As for thee, thy decree blows above like the wind, and stall and pasture become fertile!—As for thee, thy decree is accomplished upon earth below, and the grass and green things grow!—-As for thee, thy degree is seen in the cattle-folds and in the lairs of the wild beasts, and it multiplies living things!—As for thee, thy decree has called into being equity and justice, and the peoples have promulgated thy law!—As for thee, thy decree, neither in the far-off heaven, nor in the hidden depths of the earth, can any one recognize it!—As for thee, thy decree, who can learn it, who can try conclusions with it?—O Lord, mighty in heaven, sovereign upon earth, among the gods thy brothers, thou hast no rival.” Outside Uru and Harran, Sin did not obtain this rank of creator and ruler of things; he was simply the moon-god, and was represented in human form, usually accompanied by a thin crescent, upon which he sometimes stands upright, sometimes appears with the bust only rising out of it, in royal costume and pose.

[Illustration:  169.jpg THE GOD SUN RECEIVES THE HOMAGE OF TWO WORSHIPPERS.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a heliogravure by Menant.

His mitre is so closely associated with him that it takes his place on the astrological tablets; the name he bears—“agu”—often indicates the moon regarded simply as a celestial body and without connotation of deity.  Babbar-Shamash, “the light of the gods, his fathers,” “the illustrious scion of Sin,” passed the night in the depths of the north, behind the polished metal walls which shut in the part of the firmament visible to human eyes.

[Illustration:  170.jpg SHAMASH SETS OUT, IN THE MORNING, FROM THE INTERIOR OF THE HEAVEN BY THE EASTERN GATE.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a Chaldaean intaglio of green jasper in the Louvre.  The original measures about 1 3/10 inch in height.

As soon as the dawn had opened the gates for him, he rose in the east all aflame, his club in his hand, and he set forth on his headlong course over the chain of mountains which surrounds the world;* six hours later he had attained the limit of his journey towards the south, he then continued his journey to the west, gradually lessening his heat, and at length re-entered his accustomed resting-place by the western gate, there to remain until the succeeding morning.  He accomplished his journey round the earth in a chariot conducted by two charioteers, and drawn by two vigorous onagers, “whose

legs never grew weary;" the flaming disk which was seen from earth was one of the wheels of his chariot.**

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* His course along the embankment which runs round the celestial vault was the origin of the title, *Line of Union between Heaven and Earth*; he moved, in fact, where the heavens and the earth come into contact, and appeared to weld them into one by the circle of fire which he described. Another expression of this idea occurs in the preamble of Nergal and Ninib, who were called “the separators”; the course of the sun might, in fact, be regarded as separating, as well as uniting, the two parts of the universe.** The disk has sometimes four, sometimes eight rays inscribed on it, indicating wheels with four or eight spokes respectively. Rawlinson supposed “that these two figures indicate a distinction between the male and female power of the deity, the disk with four rays symbolizing Shamash, the orb with eight rays being the emblem of Ai, Gula, or Anunit.”

[Illustration: 171.jpg SHAMASH IN HIS SHRINE, HIS EMBLEM BEFORE HIM ON THE ALTAR.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a photograph by Rassam. The busts of the two deities on the front of the roof of the shrine are the two charioteers of the sun; they uphold and guide the rayed disk upon the altar. Cf. in the Assyrian period the winged disk led with cords by two genii.

As soon as he appeared he was hailed with the chanting of hymns: “O Sun, thou appearest on the foundation of the heavens,—thou drawest back the bolts which bar the scintillating heavens, thou openest the gate of the heavens! O Sun, thou raisest thy head above the earth,—Sun, thou extendest over the earth the brilliant vaults of the heavens.” The powers of darkness fly at his approach or take refuge in their mysterious caverns, for “he destroys the wicked, he scatters them, the omens and gloomy portents, dreams, and wicked ghouls—he converts evil to good, and he drives to their destruction the countries and men—who devote themselves to black magic.” In addition to natural light, he sheds upon the earth truth and justice abundantly; he is the “high judge” before whom everything makes obeisance, his laws never waver, his decrees are never set at naught. “O Sun, when thou goest to rest in the middle of the heavens—may the bars of the bright heaven salute thee in peace, and may the gate of heaven bless thee!—May Misharu, thy well-beloved servant, guide aright thy progress, so that on Rbarra, the seat of thy rule, thy greatness may rise, and that A, thy cherished spouse, may receive thee joyfully! May thy glad heart find in her thy rest!—May the food of thy divinity be brought to thee by her,—warrior, hero, sun, and may she increase thy vigour;—lord of Ebarra, when thou ap-proachest, mayest thou direct thy course aright!—–0 Sun, urge rightly thy way along the fixed road determined for thee,—O Sun, thou who art the judge of the land, and the arbiter of its laws!”

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It would appear that the triad had begun by having in the third place a goddess, Ishtar of Dilbat. Ishtar is the evening star which precedes the appearance of the moon, and the morning star which heralds the approach of the sun: the brilliance of its light justifies the choice which made it an associate of the greater heavenly bodies. “In the days of the past.... Ea charged Sin, Shamash, and Ishtar with the ruling of the firmament of heaven; he distributed among them, with Anu, the command of the army of heaven, and among these three gods, his children, he apportioned the day and the night, and compelled them to work ceaselessly.”

[Illustration: 173.jpg ISHTAR HOLDING HER STAR BEFORE SIN.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from an intaglio at Rome.

Ishtar was separated from her two companions, when the group of the planets was definitely organized and claimed the adoration of the devout; the theologians then put in her place an individual of a less original aspect, Ramman. Ramman embraced within him the elements of many very ancient genii, all of whom had been set over the atmosphere, and the phenomena which are daily displayed in it—wind, rain, and thunder. These genii occupied an important place in the popular religion which had been cleverly formulated by the theologians of Uruk, and there have come down to us many legends in which their incarnations play a part. They are usually represented as enormous birds flocking on their swift wings from below the horizon, and breathing flame or torrents of water upon the countries over which they hovered. The most terrible of them was Zu, who presided over tempests: he gathered the clouds together, causing them to burst in torrents of rain or hail; he let loose the winds and lightnings, and nothing remained standing where he had passed. He had a numerous family: among them cross-breeds of extraordinary species which would puzzle a modern naturalist, but were matters of course to the ancient priests. His mother Siris, lady of the rain and clouds, was a bird like himself; but Zu had as son a vigorous bull, which, pasturing in the meadows, scattered abundance and fertility around him. The caprices of these strange beings, their malice, and their crafty attacks, often brought upon them vexatious misfortunes. Shutu, the south wind, one day beheld Adapa, one of the numerous offspring of Ea, fishing in order to provide food for his family. In spite of his exalted origin, Adapa was no god; he did not possess the gift of immortality, and he was not at liberty to appear in the presence of Anu in heaven. He enjoyed, nevertheless, certain privileges, thanks to his familiar intercourse with his father Ea, and owing to his birth he was strong enough to repel the assaults of more than one deity. When, therefore, Shutu, falling upon him unexpectedly, had overthrown him, his anger knew no bounds: “’Shutu, thou hast overwhelmed me with thy hatred, great as it is,—I will break thy wings! ’Having

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thus spoken with his mouth unto Shutu, Adapa broke his wings. For seven days,—-Shutu breathed no longer upon the earth." Anu, being disturbed at this quiet, which seemed to him not very consonant with the meddling temperament of the wind, made inquiries as to its cause through his messenger Ilabrat. "His messenger Ilabrat answered him: 'My master,—Adapa, the son of Ea, has broken Shutu's wings.'—Anu, when he heard these words, cried out: 'Help!'" and he sent to Ea Barku, the genius of the lightning, with an order to bring the guilty one before him. Adapa was not quite at his ease, although he had right on his side; but Ea, the cleverest of the immortals, prescribed a line of conduct for him. He was to put on at once a garment of mourning, and to show himself along with the messenger at the gates of heaven. Having arrived there, he would not fail to meet the two divinities who guarded them,—Dumuzi and Gishzida: "'In whose honour this garb, in whose honour, Adapa, this garment of mourning?' 'On our earth two gods have disappeared—it is on this account I am as I am.' Dumuzi and Gishzida will look at each other,* they will begin to lament, they will say a friendly word—to the god Anu for thee, they will render clear the countenance of Anu,—in thy favour. When thou shalt appear before the face of Anu, the food of death, it shall be offered to thee, do not eat it. The drink of death, it shall be offered to thee, drink it not. A garment, it shall be offered to the, put it on. Oil, it shall be offered to thee, anoint thyself with it. The command I have given thee observe it well.'"
* Dumuzi and Gishzida are the two gods whom Adapa indicates without naming them; insinuating that he has put on mourning on their account, Adapa is secure of gaining their sympathy, and of obtaining their intervention with the god Anu in his favour. As to Dumuzi, see pp. 158, 159 of the present work; the part played by Gishzida, as well as the event noted in the text regarding him, is unknown.

Everything takes place as Ea had foreseen. Dumuzi and Gishzida welcome the poor wretch, speak in his favour, and present him: "as he approached, Anu perceived him, and said to him: 'Come, Adapa, why didst thou break the wings of Shutu?' Adapa answered Anu: 'My lord,—for the household of my lord Ea, in the middle of the sea,—I was fishing, and the sea was all smooth.—Shutu breathed, he, he overthrew me, and I plunged into the abode of fish. Hence the anger of my heart,—that he might not begin again his acts of ill will,—I broke his wings.'" Whilst he pleaded his cause the furious heart of Anu became calm. The presence of a mortal in the halls of heaven was a kind of sacrilege, to be severely punished unless the god should determine its expiation by giving the philtre of immortality to the intruder. Anu decided on the latter course, and addressed Adapa: "'Why, then, did Ea allow an unclean mortal to see—the interior of heaven and earth?' He handed him

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a cup, he himself reassured him.—'We, what shall we give him? The food of life—take some to him that he may eat.' The food of life, some was taken to him, but he did not eat of it. The water of life, some was taken to him, but he drank not of it. A garment, it was taken to him, and he put it on. Oil, some was taken to him, and he anointed himself with it." Anu looked upon him; he lamented over him: "'Well, Adapa, why hast thou not eaten—why hast thou not drunk? Thou shalt not now have eternal life.' Ea, my lord, has commanded me: thou shalt not eat, thou shalt not drink." Adapa thus lost, by remembering too well the commands of his father, the opportunity which was offered to him of rising to the rank of the immortals; Anu sent him back to his home just as he had come, and Shutu had to put up with his broken wings.

Bamman absorbed one after the other all these genii of tempest and contention, and out of their combined characters his own personality of a hundred diverse aspects was built up.

[Illustration: 177.jpg THE BIRDS OF THE TEMPEST]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a Chaldaean cylinder in the Museum of New York. Lenormant, in a long article, which he published under the pseudonym of Mansell, fancied he recognized here the encounter between Sabitum and Gilgames on the shores of the Ocean.

He was endowed with the capricious and changing disposition of the element incarnate in him, and passed from tears to laughter, from anger to calm, with a promptitude which made him one of the most disconcerting deities. The tempest was his favourite role. Sometimes he would burst suddenly on the heavens at the head of a troop of savage subordinates, whose chiefs were known as Matu, the squall, and Barku, the lightning; sometimes these were only the various manifestations of his own nature, and it was he himself who was called Matu and Barku. He collected the clouds, sent forth the thunder-bolt, shook the mountains, and "before his rage and violence, his bellowings, his thunder, the gods of heaven arose to the firmament—the gods of the earth sank into the earth" in their terror. The monuments represent him as armed for battle with club, axe, or the two-bladed flaming sword which was usually employed to signify the thunderbolt. As he destroyed everything in his blind rage, the kings of Chaldaea were accustomed to invoke him against their enemies, and to implore him to "hurl the hurricane upon the rebel peoples and the insubordinate nations." When his wrath was appeased, and he had returned to more gentle ways, his kindness knew no limits. From having been the waterspout which overthrew the forests, he became the gentle breeze which caresses and refreshes them: with his warm showers he fertilizes the fields: he lightens the air and tempers the summer heat.

[Illustration: 178.jpg RAMMAN ARMED WITH AN AXE.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a sketch by Loftus. The original, a small stele of terra-cotta, is in the British Museum. The date of this representation is uncertain. Ramman stands upon the mountain which supports the heaven.

He causes the rivers to swell and overflow their banks; he pours out the waters over the fields, he makes channels for them, he directs them to every place where the need of water is felt.

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But his fiery temperament is stirred up by the slightest provocation, and then “his flaming sword scatters pestilence over the land:  he destroys the harvest, brings the ingathering to nothing, tears up trees, and beats down and roots up the corn.”

[Illustration:  179.jpg RAMMAN, THE GOD OF TEMPESTS AND THUNDER.]

> Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from Layard.  Properly speaking, this is a Susian deity brought by the soldiers of Assurbanipal into Assyria, but it carries the usual insignia of Ramman.

In a word, the second triad formed a more homogeneous whole when Ishtar still belonged to it, and it is entirely owing to the presence of this goddess in it that we are able to understand its plan and purpose; it was essentially astrological, and it was intended that none should be enrolled in it but the manifest leaders of the constellations.  Ramman, on the contrary, had nothing to commend him for a position alongside the moon and sun; he was not a celestial body, he had no definitely shaped form, but resembled an aggregation of gods rather than a single deity.  By the addition of Ramman to the triad, the void occasioned by the removal of Ishtar was filled up in a blundering way.  We must, however, admit that the theologians must have found it difficult to find any one better fitted for the purpose:  when Venus was once set along with the rest of the planets, there was nothing left in the heavens which was sufficiently brilliant to replace her worthily.  The priests were compelled to take the most powerful deity they knew after the other five—the lord of the atmosphere and the thunder.*

* Their embarrassment is shown in the way in which they have classed this god.  In the original triad, Ishtar, being the smallest of the three heavenly bodies, naturally took the third place.  Ramman, on the contrary, had natural affinities with the elemental group, and belonged to Anu, Bel, Ea, rather than to Sin and Shamash.  So we find him sometimes in the third place, sometimes in the first of the second triad, and this post of eminence is so natural to him, that Assyriologists have preserved it from the beginning, and describe the triad as composed, not of Sin, Shamash, and Ramman, but of Ramman, Sin, and Shamash, or even of Sin, Ramman, and Shamash.

The gods of the triads were married, but their goddesses for the most part had neither the liberty nor the important functions of the Egyptian goddesses.* They were content, in their modesty, to be eclipsed behind the personages of their husbands, and to spend their lives in the shade, as the women of Asiatic countries still do.  It would appear, moreover, that there was no trouble taken about them until it was too late—when it was desired, for instance, to explain the affiliation of the immortals.  Anu and Bel were bachelors to start with.  When it was determined to assign to them female companions, recourse was had to the procedure adopted by the Egyptians in a similar case:

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there was added to their names the distinctive suffix of the feminine gender, and in this manner two grammatical goddesses were formed, Anat and Belit, whose dispositions give some indications of this accidental birth. There was always a vague uncertainty about the parts they had to play, and their existence itself was hardly more than a seeming one. Anat sometimes represented a feminine heaven, and differed from Anu only in her sex. At times she was regarded as the antithesis of Anu, *i.e*. as the earth in contradistinction to the heaven. Belit, as far as we can distinguish her from other persons to whom the title "lady" was attributed, shared with Bel the rule over the earth and the regions of darkness where the dead were confined. The wife of Ea was distinguished by a name which was not derived from that of her husband, but she was not animated by a more intense vitality than Anat or Belit: she was called Damkina, the lady of the soil, and she personified in an almost passive manner the earth united to the water which fertilized it. The goddesses of the second triad were perhaps rather less artificial in their functions. Ningal, doubtless, who ruled along with Sin at Uru, was little more than an incarnate epithet. Her name means "the great lady," "the queen," and her person is the double of that of her husband; as he is the man-moon, she is the woman-moon, his beloved, and the mother of his children Shamash and Ishtar. But A or Sirrida enjoyed an indisputable authority alongside Shamash: she never lost sight of the fact that she had been a sun like Shamash, a disk-god before she was transformed into a goddess. Shamash, moreover, was surrounded by an actual harem, of which Sirrida was the acknowledged queen, as he himself was its king, and among its members Gula, the great, and Anunit, the daughter of Sin, the morning star, found a place. Shala, the compassionate, was also included among them; she was subsequently bestowed upon Ramman. They were all goddesses of ancient lineage, and each had been previously worshipped on her own account when the Sumerian people held sway in Chaldaea: as soon as the Semites gained the upper hand, the powers of these female deities became enfeebled, and they were distributed among the gods. There was but one of them, Nana, the doublet of Ishtar, who had succeeded in preserving her liberty: when her companions had been reduced to comparative insignificance, she was still acknowledged as queen and mistress in her city of Eridu. The others, notwithstanding the enervating influence to which they were usually subject in the harem, experienced at times inclinations to break into rebellion, and more than one of them, shaking off the yoke of her lord, had proclaimed her independence: Anunit, for instance, tearing herself away from the arms of Shamash, had vindicated, as his sister and his equal, her claim to the half of his dominion. Sippara was a double city, or rather there were two neighbouring

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Sipparas, one distinguished as the city of the Sun, “Sippara sha Shamash,” while the other gave lustre to Anunit in assuming the designation of “Sippara sha Anunitum.” Rightly interpreted, these family arrangements of the gods had but one reason for their existence—the necessity of explaining without coarseness those parental connections which the theological classification found it needful to establish between the deities constituting the two triads. In Chaldaea as in Egypt there was no inclination to represent the divine families as propagating their species otherwise than by the procedure observed in human families: the union of the goddesses with the gods thus legitimated their offspring.
* The passive and almost impersonal character of the majority of the Babylonian and Assyrian goddesses is well known. The majority must have been independent at the outset, in the Sumerian period, and were married later on, under the influence of Semitic ideas.

The triads were, therefore, nothing more than theological fictions. Each of them was really composed of six members, and it was thus really a council of twelve divinities which the priests of Uruk had instituted to attend to the affairs of the universe; with this qualification, that the feminine half of the assembly rarely asserted itself, and contributed but an insignificant part to the common work. When once the great divisions had been arranged, and the principal functionaries designated, it was still necessary to work out the details, and to select v agents to preserve an order among them. Nothing happens by chance in this world, and the most insignificant events are determined by previsional arrangements, and decisions arrived at a long time previously. The gods assembled every morning in a hall, situated near the gates of the sun in the east, and there deliberated on the events of the day. The sagacious Ea submitted to them the fates which are about to be fulfilled, and caused a record of them to be made in the chamber of destiny on tablets which Shamash or Merodach carried with them to scatter everywhere on his way; but he who should be lucky enough to snatch these tablets from him would make himself master of the world for that day. This misfortune had arisen only once, at the beginning of the ages. Zu, the storm-bird, who lives with his wife and children on Mount Sabu under the protection of Bel, and who from this elevation pounces down upon the country to ravage it, once took it into his head to make himself equal to the supreme gods. He forced his way at an early hour into the chamber of destiny before the sun had risen: he perceived within it the royal insignia of Bel, “the mitre of his power, the garment of his divinity,—the fatal tablets of his divinity, Zu perceived them. He perceived the father of the gods, the god who is the tie between heaven and earth,—and the desire of ruling took possession of his heart;—-yea, Zu perceived the father of the gods, the god who is

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the tie between heaven and earth,—and the desire of ruling took possession of his heart,—'I will take the fatal tablets of the gods, I myself,—and the oracles of all the gods, it is I who will give them forth;—I will install myself on the throne, I will send forth decrees,—I will manage the whole of the Igigi.'—And his heart plotted warfare;—lying in wait on the threshold of the hall, he watched for the dawn.—When Bel had poured out the shining waters,—had installed himself on the throne, and donned the crown, Zu took away the fatal tablets from his hand,—he seized power, and the authority to give forth decrees,—the god Zu, he flew away and concealed himself in the mountains." Bel immediately cried out, he was inflamed with anger, and ravaged the world with the fire of his wrath. "Anu opened his mouth, he spake,—he said to the gods his offspring:—-'Who will conquer the god Zu?—He will make his name great in every land.'—Bamman, the supreme, the son of Anu, was called, and Anu himself gave to him his orders;—yea, Bamman, the supreme, the son of Anu, was called, and Anu himself gave to him his orders.—'Go, my son Kamman, the valiant, since nothing resists thy attack;—conquer Zu by thine arm, and thy name shall be great among the great gods,—among the gods, thy brothers, thou shalt have no equal: sanctuaries shall be built to thee, and if thou buildest for thyself thy cities in the "four houses of the world,"* —thy cities shall extend over all the terrestrial mountain! 'Be valiant, then, in the sight of the gods, and may thy name be strong.' Bamman answers, he addresses this bpeech to Anu his father:—-'Father, who will go to the inaccessible mountains? Who is the equal of Zu among the gods, thy offspring? He has carried off in his hand the fatal tablets,—he has seized power and authority to give forth decrees,—Zu thereupon flew away and hid himself in his mountain.—Now, the word of his mouth is like that of the god who unites heaven and earth;——my power is no more than clay,—and all the gods must bow before him.'" Anu sent for the god Bara, the son of Ishtar, to help him, and exhorted him in the same language he had addressed to Ramman: Bara refused to attempt the enterprise. Shamash, called in his turn, at length consented to set out for Mount Sabu: he triumphed over the storm-bird, tore the fatal tablets from him, and brought him before Ea as a prisoner.

* Literally, "Construct thy cities in the four regions of the world (cf. pp. 12, 13 of the present work), and thy cities will extend to the mountain of the earth." Anu would appear to have promised to Ramman a monopoly; if he wished to build cities which would recognize him as their patron, these cities will cover the entire earth.

[Illustration: 186.jpg SHAMASH FIGHTS WITH ZU AND THE STORM BIRDS.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from Layard.

[Illustration: 186a.jpg The Plenisphere taken from the Temple of Tentyra]

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[Illustration:  186b.jpg Text of The Plenisphere]

The sun of the complete day, the sun in the full possession of his strength, could alone win back the attributes of power which the morning sun had allowed himself to be despoiled of.  From that time forth the privilege of delivering immortal decrees to mortals was never taken out of the hands of the gods of light.

Destinies once fixed on the earth became a law—“mamit”—a good or bad fate, from which no one could escape, but of which any one might learn the disposition beforehand if he were capable of interpreting the formulas of it inscribed on the book of the sky.  The stars, even those which were most distant from the earth, were not unconcerned in the events which took place upon it.  They were so many living beings endowed with various characteristics, and their rays as they passed across the celestial spaces exercised from above an active control on everything they touched.  Their influences became modified, increased or weakened according to the intensity with which they shed them, according to the respective places they occupied in the firmament, and according to the hour of the night and the month of the year in which they rose or set.  Each division of time, each portion of space, each category of existences—and in each category each individual—was placed under their rule and was subject to their implacable tyranny.  The infant was born their slave, and continued in this condition of slavery until his life’s end:  the star which was in the ascendent at the instant of his birth became his star, and ruled his destiny.  The Chaldaeans, like the Egyptians, fancied they discerned in the points of light which illuminate the nightly sky, the outline of a great number of various figures—men, animals, monsters, real and imaginary objects, a lance, a bow, a fish, a scorpion, ears of wheat, a bull, and a lion.  The majority of these were spread out above their heads on the surface of the celestial vault; but twelve of these figures, distinguishable by their brilliancy, were arranged along the celestial horizon in the pathway of the sun, and watched over his daily course along the walls of the world.  These divided this part of the sky into as many domains or “houses,” in which they exercised absolute authority, and across which the god could not go without having previously obtained their consent, or having brought them into subjection beforehand.  This arrangement is a reminiscence of the wars by which Bel-Merodach, the divine bull, the god of Babylon, had succeeded in bringing order out of chaos:  he had not only killed Tiamat, but he had overthrown and subjugated the monsters which led the armies of darkness.  He meets afresh, every year and every day, on the confines of heaven and earth, the scorpion-men of his ancient enemy, the fish with heads of men or goats, and many more.  The twelve constellations were combined into a zodiac, whose twelve signs, transmitted

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to the Greeks and modified by them, may still be read on our astronomical charts. The constellations, immovable, or actuated by a slow motion, in longitude only, contain the problems of the future, but they are not sufficient of themselves alone to furnish man with the solution of these problems. The heavenly bodies capable of explaining them, the real interpreters of destiny, were at first the two divinities who rule the empires of night and day—the moon and the sun; afterwards there took part in this work of explanation the five planets which we call Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Mars, and Mercury, or rather the five gods who actuate them, and who have controlled their course from the moment of creation—Merodach, Ishtar, Ninib, Nergal, and Nebo. The planets seemed to traverse the heavens in every direction, to cross their own and each other's paths, and to approach the fixed stars or recede from them; and the species of rhythmical dance in which they are carried unceasingly across the celestial spaces revealed to men, if they examined it attentively, the irresistible march of their own destinies, as surely as if they had made themselves master of the fatal tablets of Shamash, and could spell them out line by line.

The Chaldaens were disposed to regard the planets as perverse sheep who had escaped from the fold of the stars to wander wilfully in search of pasture.* At first they were considered to be so many sovereign deities, without other function than that of running through the heavens and furnishing there predictions of the future; afterwards two of them descended to the earth, and received upon it the homage of men* —Ishtar from the inhabitants of the city of Dilbat, and Nebo* from those of Borsippa. Nebo assumed the *role* of a soothsayer and a prophet. He knew and foresaw everything, and was ready to give his advice upon any subject: he was the inventor of the method of making clay tablets, and of writing upon them. Ishtar was a combination of contradictory characteristics.****

* Their generic name, read as "lubat," in Sumero-Accadian, "bibbu" in Semitic speech (Fr. Lenormant, *Essai de Commentaire de Berose*, pp. 370, 371), denoted a quadruped, the species of which Lenormant was not able to define; Jensen (*Die Kosmologie*, pp. 95-99) identified it with the sheep and the ram. At the end of the account of the creation, Merodach-Jupiter is compared with a shepherd who feeds the flock of the gods on the pastures of heaven (cf. p. 15 of the present work).** The site of Dilbat is unknown: it has been sought in the neighbourhood of Kishu and Babylon (Delitzsch, *Wo lag das Paradies?* p. 219); it is probable that it was in the suburbs of Sippara. The name given to the goddess was transcribed AeXckit (Hesychius, *sub voce*), and signifies the herald, the messenger of the day.*** The role of Nebo was determined by the early Assyriologists (Rawlin-son, *On*

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*the Religion of the Babylonians and Assyrians*, pp. 523-52G; Oppeet, *Expedition en Mesopotamie*, vol. ii. p. 257; Lenormant, *Essai de Commentaire de Berose*, pp. 114-116). He owed his functions partly to his alliance with other gods (Sayce, *Religion of the Ancient Babylonians*, pp. 118, 119).**** See the chapter devoted by Sayce to the consideration of Ishtar in his Religion of the Ancient Babylonians (IV. Tammuz and Ishtar, p. 221, et seq.), and the observations made by Jeremias on the subject in the sequel of his Izdubar-Nimrod (Ishtar-Astarte im Izdubar-Epos), pp. 56-66.

[Illustration: 190.jpg ISHTAR AS A WARRIOR-GODDESS]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a heliogravure in Menant's *Recherches sur la Glyptique orientale*.

In Southern Chaldaea she was worshipped under the name of Nana, the supreme mistress.* The identity of this lady of the gods, "Belit-ilanit," the Evening Star, with Anunit, the Morning Star, was at first ignored, and hence two distinct goddesses were formed from the twofold manifestation of a single deity: having at length discovered their error, the Chaldaeans merged these two beings in one, and their names became merely two different designations for the same star under a twofold aspect. The double character, however, which had been attributed to them continued to be attached to the single personality.

* With regard to Nana, consult, with reserve, Fk. Lenormant, Essai de Commentaire de Berose, pp. 100-103, 378, 379, where the identity of Ishtar and Nana is still unrecognized.

[Illustration: 191.jpg NEBO]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from an Assyrian statue in alabaster in the British Museum.

The Evening Star had symbolized the goddess of love, who attracted the sexes towards one another, and bound them together by the chain of desire; the Morning Star, on the other hand, was regarded as the cold-blooded and cruel warrior who despised the pleasures of love and rejoiced in warfare: Ishtar thus combined in her person chastity and lasciviousness, kindness and ferocity, and a peaceful and warlike disposition, but this incongruity in her characteristics did not seem to disconcert the devotion of her worshippers. The three other planets would have had a wretched part to play in comparison with Nebo and Ishtar, if they had not been placed under new patronage. The secondary solar gods, Merodach, Ninib, and Nergal, led, if we examine their role carefully, but an incomplete existence: they were merely portions of the sun, while Shamash represented the entire orb. What became of them apart from the moment in the day and year in which they were actively engaged in their career? Where did they spend their nights, the hours during which Shamash had retired into the firmament, and

lay hidden behind the mountains of the north?  As in Egypt the Horuses identified at first with the

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sun became at length the rulers of the planets, so in Chaldaea the three suns of Ninib, Merodach, and Nergal became respectively assimilated to Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars;* and this identification was all the more easy in the case of Saturn, as he had been considered from the beginning as a bull belonging to Shamash. Henceforward, therefore, there was a group of five powerful gods—distributed among the stars of heaven, and having abodes also in the cities of the earth—whose function it was to announce the destinies of the universe. Some, deceived by the size and brilliancy of Jupiter, gave the chief command to Merodach, and this opinion naturally found a welcome reception at Babylon, of which he was the feudal deity. Others, taking into account only the preponderating influence exercised by the planets over the fortunes of men, accorded the primacy to Ninib, placing Merodach next, followed respectively by Ishtar, Nergal, and Nebo. The five planets, like the six triads, were not long before they took to themselves consorts, if indeed they had not already been married before they were brought together in a collective whole. Ninib chose for wife, in the first place, Bau, the daughter of Anu, the mistress of Uru, highly venerated from the most remote times; afterwards Gula, the queen of physicians, whose wisdom alleviated the ills of humanity, and who was one of the goddesses sometimes placed in the harem of Shamash himself. Merodach associated with him Zirbanit, the fruitful, who secures from generation to generation the permanence and increase of living beings. Nergal distributed his favours sometimes to Laz, and sometimes to Esharra, who was, like himself, warlike and always victorious in battle. Nebo provided himself with a mate in Tashmit, the great bride, or even in Ishtar herself. But Ishtar could not be content with a single husband: after she had lost Dumuzi-Tammuz, the spouse of her youth, she gave herself freely to the impulses of her passions, distributing her favours to men as well as gods, and was sometimes subject to be repelled with contempt by the heroes upon whom she was inclined to bestow her love. The five planets came thus to be actually ten, and advantage was taken of these alliances to weave fresh schemes of affiliation: Nebo was proclaimed to be the son of Merodach and Zirbanit, Merodach the son of Ba, and Ninib the offspring of Bel and Esharra.

* Ishtar, Nebo, Sin, and Shamash being heavenly bodies, to begin with, and the other great gods, Anu, Bel, Ea, and Ramman having their stars in the heavens, the Chaldaeans were led by analogy to ascribe to the gods which represented the phases of the sun, Merodach, Ninib, and Nergal, three stars befitting their importance, *i.e*. three planets.

There were two councils, one consisting of twelve members, the other of ten; the former was composed of the most popular gods of Southern Chaldaea, representing the essential elements of the world, while the latter

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consisted of the great deities of Northern Chaldaea, whose function it was to regulate or make known the destinies of men. The authors of this system, who belonged to Southern Chaldaea, naturally gave the position to their patron gods, and placed the twelve above the ten. It is well known that Orientals display a great respect for numbers, and attribute to them an almost irresistible power; we can thus understand how it was that the Chaldaeans applied them to designate their divine masters, and we may calculate from these numbers the estimation in which each of these masters was held. The goddesses had no value assigned to them in this celestial arithmetic, Ishtar excepted, who was not a mere duplication, more or less ingenious, of a previously existing deity, but possessed from the beginning an independent life, and could thus claim to be called goddess in her own right. The members of the two triads were arranged on a descending scale, Anu taking the highest place: the scale was considered to consist of a soss of sixty units in length, and each of the deities who followed Anu was placed ten of these units below his predecessor, Bel at 50 units, Ea at 40, Sin at 30, Shamash at 20, Ramman at 10 or 6. The gods of the planets were not arranged in a regular series like those of the triads, but the numbers attached to them expressed their proportionate influence on terrestrial affairs: to Ninib was assigned the same number as had been given to Bel, 50, to Merodach perhaps 25, to Ishtar 15, to Nergal 12, and to Nebo 10. The various spirits were also fractionally estimated, but this as a class, and not as individuals: the priests would not have known how to have solved the problem if they had been obliged to ascribe values to the infinity of existences.* As the Heliopolitans were obliged to eliminate from the Ennead many feudal divinities, so the Chaldaeans had left out of account many of their sovereign deities, especially goddesses, Bau of Uru, Nana of Uruk, and Allat; or if they did introduce them into their calculations, it was by a subterfuge, by identifying them with other goddesses, to whom places had been already assigned; Bau being thus coupled with Ohila, Nana with Ishtar, and Allat with Ninhl-Beltis. If figures had been assigned to the latter proportionate to the importance of the parts they played, and the number of their votaries, how comes it that they were excluded from the cycle of the great gods? They were actually placed alongside rather than below the two councils, and without insistence upon the rank which they enjoyed in the hierarchy. But the confusion which soon arose among divinities of identical or analogous nature opened the way for inserting all the neglected personalities in the framework already prepared for them. A sky-god, like Dagan, would mingle naturally with Anu, and enjoy like honours with him. The gods of all ranks associated with the sun or fire, Nusku, Gibil, and Dumuzi, who had not been at first received among the privileged group,

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obtained a place there by virtue of their assimilation to Shamash, and his secondary forms, Bel-Merodach, Ninib, and Nergal. Ishtar absorbed all her companions, and her name put in the plural, Ishtarati, “the Ishtars,” embraced all goddesses in general, just as the name Hani took in all the gods. Thanks to this compromise, the system flourished, and was widely accepted: local vanity was always able to find a means for placing in a prominent place within it the feudal deity, and for reconciling his pretensions to the highest rank with the order of precedence laid down by the theologians of Uruk. The local god was always the king of the gods, the father of the gods, he who was worshipped above the others in everyday life, and whose public cult constituted the religion of the State or city.
* As far as we can at present determine, the most ancient series established was that of the planetary gods, whose values, following each other irregularly, are not calculated on a scheme of mathematical progression, but according to the empirical importance, which a study of predictions had ascribed to each planet. The regular series, that of the great gods, bears in its regularity the stamp of its later introduction: it was instituted after the example of the former, but with corrections of what seemed capricious, and fixing the interval between the gods always at the same figure.

The temples were miniature reproductions of the arrangement of the universe. The “ziggurat” represented in its form the mountain of the world, and the halls ranged at its feet resembled approximately the accessory parts of the world: the temple of Merodach at Babylon comprised them all up to the chambers of fate, where the sun received every morning the tablets of destiny. The name often indicated the nature of the patron deity or one of his attributes: the temple of Shamash at Larsam, for instance was called E-Babbara, “the house of the sun,” and that of Nebo at Borsippa, E-Zida, “the eternal house.” No matter where the sanctuary of a specific god might be placed, it always bore the same name; Shamash, for example, dwelt at Sippara as at Larsam in an E-Babbara. In Chaldaea, as in Egypt, the king or chief of the State was the priest *par excellence*, and the title of “vicegerent,” so frequent in the early period, shows that the chief was regarded as representing the divinity among his own people; but a priestly body, partly hereditary, partly selected, fulfilled for him his daily sacerdotal functions, and secured the regularity of the services. A chief priest—“ishshakku”—was at their head, and his principal duty was the pouring out of the libation. Each temple had its “ishshakku,” but he who presided over the worship of the feudal deity took precedence of all the others in the city, as in the case of the chief priests of Bel-Merodach at Babylon, of Sin at Uru, and of Shamash at Larsam or Sippara. He presided over various categories

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of priests and priestesses whose titles and positions in the hierarchy are not well known. The “sangutu” appear to have occupied after him the most important place, as chamberlains attached to the house of the god, and as his liegemen. To some of these was entrusted the management of the harem of the god, while others were overseers of the remaining departments of his palace. The “kipu” and the “shatammu” were especially charged with the management of his financial interests, while the “pashishu” anointed with holy and perfumed oil his statues of stone, metal, or wood, the votive stelae set up in the chapels, and the objects used in worship and sacrifice, such as the great basins, the “seas” of copper which contained the water employed in the ritual ablutions, and the victims led to the altar. After these came a host of officials, butchers and their assistants, soothsayers, augurs, prophets,—in fact, all the attendants that the complicated rites, as numerous in Chaldaea as in Egypt, required, not to speak of the bands of women and men who honoured the god in meretricious rites. Occupation for this motley crowd was never lacking. Every day and almost every hour a fresh ceremony required the services of one or other member of the staff, from the monarch himself, or his deputy in the temple, down to the lowest sacristan. The 12th of the month Blul was set apart at Babylon for the worship of Bel and Beltis: the sovereign made a donation to them according as he was disposed, and then celebrated before them the customary sacrifices, and if he raised his hand to plead for any favour, he obtained it without fail. The 13th was dedicated to the moon, the supreme god; the 14th to Beltis and Nergal; the 15th to Shamash; the 16th was a fast in honour of Merodach and Zirbanit; the 17th was the annual festival of Nebo and Tashmit; the 18th was devoted to the laudation of Sin and Shamash; while the 19th was a “white day” for the great goddess Gula. The whole year was taken up in a way similar to this casual specimen from the calendar. The kings, in founding a temple, not only bestowed upon it the objects and furniture required for present exigencies, such as lambs and oxen, birds, fish, bread, liquors, incense, and odoriferous essences; they assigned to it an annual income from the treasury, slaves, and cultivated lands; and their royal successors were accustomed to renew these gifts or increase them on every opportunity. Every victorious campaign brought him his share in the spoils and captives; every fortunate or unfortunate event which occurred in connection with the State or royal family meant an increase in the gifts to the god, as an act of thanksgiving on the one hand for the divine favour, or as an offering on the other to appease the wrath of the god. Gold, silver, copper, lapis-lazuli, gems and precious woods, accumulated in the sacred treasury; fields were added to fields, flocks to flocks, slaves to slaves; and the result of such increase would in a few generations have made

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the possessions of the god equal to those of the reigning sovereign, if the attacks of neighbouring peoples had not from time to time issued in the loss of a part of it, or if the king himself had not, under financial pressure, replenished his treasury at the expense of the priests. To prevent such usurpations as far as possible, maledictions were hurled at every one who should dare to lay a sacrilegious hand on the least object belonging to the divine domain; it was predicted of such "that he would be killed like an ox in the midst of his prosperity, and slaughtered like a wild urus in the fulness of his strength!... May his name be effaced from his stelae in the temple of his god! May his god see pitilessly the disaster of his country, may the god ravage his land with the waters of heaven, ravage it with the waters of the earth. May he be pursued as a nameless wretch, and his seed fall under servitude! May this man, like every one who acts adversely to his master, find nowhere a refuge, afar off, under the vault of the skies or in any abode of man whatsoever." These threats, terrible as they were, did not succeed in deterring the daring, and the mighty men of the time were willing to brave them, when their interests promoted them. Gulkishar, Lord of the "land of the sea," had vowed a wheat-field to Nina, his lady, near the town of Deri, on the Tigris. Seven hundred years later, in the reign of Belnadinabal, Ekarrakais, governor of Bitsinmagir, took possession of it, and added it to the provincial possessions, contrary to all equity. The priest of the goddess appealed to the king, and prostrating himself before the throne with many prayers and mystic formulas, begged for the restitution of the alienated land. Belnadinabal acceded to the request, and renewed the imprecations which had been inserted on the original deed of gift: "If ever, in the course of days, the man of law, or the governor of a suzerain who will superintend the town of Bitsinmagir, fears the vengeance of the god Zikum or the goddess Nina, may then Zikum and Nina, the mistress of the goddesses, come to him with the benediction of the prince of the gods; may they grant to him the destiny of a happy life, and may they accord to him days of old age, and years of uprightness! But as for thee, who hast a mind to change this, step not across its limits, do not covet the land: hate evil and love justice." If all sovereigns were not so accommodating in their benevolence as Belnadinabal, the piety of private individuals, stimulated by fear, would be enough to repair the loss, and frequent legacies would soon make up for the detriment caused to the temple possessions by the enemy's sword or the rapacity of an unscrupulous lord. The residue, after the vicissitudes of revolutions, was increased and diminished from time to time, to form at length in the city an indestructible fief whose administration was a function of the chief priest for life, and whose revenue furnished means in abundance for the personal exigencies of the gods as well as the support of his ministers.

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This was nothing more than justice would prescribe. A loyal and universal faith would not only acknowledge the whole world to be the creation of the gods, but also their inalienable domain. It belonged to them at the beginning; every one in the State of which the god was the sovereign lord, all those, whether nobles or serfs, vicegerents or kings, who claimed to have any possession in it, were but ephemeral lease-holders of portions of which they fancied themselves the owners. Donations to the temples were, therefore, nothing more than voluntary restitutions, which the gods consented to accept graciously, deigning to be well pleased with the givers, when, after all-, they might have considered the gifts as merely displays of strict honesty, which merited neither recognition nor thanks. They allowed, however, the best part of their patrimony to remain in the hands of strangers, and they contented themselves with what the pretended generosity of the faithful might see fit to assign to them. Of their lands, some were directly cultivated by the priests themselves; others were leased to lay people of every rank, who took off the shoulders of the priesthood all the burden of managing them, while rendering at the same time the profit that accrued from them; others were let at a fixed rent according to contract. The tribute of dates, corn, and fruit, which was rendered to the temples to celebrate certain commemorative ceremonies in the honour of this or that deity, were fixed charges upon certain lands, which at length usually fell entirely into the hands of the priesthood as mortmain possessions. These were the sources of the fixed revenues of the gods, by means of which they and their people were able to live, if not luxuriously, at least in a manner befitting their dignity. The offerings and sacrifices were a kind of windfall, of which the quantity varied strangely with the seasons; at certain times few were received, while at other times there was a superabundance. The greatest portion of them was consumed on the spot by the officials of the sanctuary; the part which could be preserved without injury was added to the produce of the domain, and constituted a kind of reserve for a rainy day, or was used to produce more of its kind. The priests made great profit out of corn and metals, and the skill with which they conducted commercial operations in silver was so notorious that no private person hesitated to entrust them with the management of his capital: they were the intermediaries between lenders and borrowers, and the commissions which they obtained in these transactions was not the smallest or the least certain of their profits. They maintained troops of slaves, labourers, gardeners, workmen, and even women-singers and sacred courtesans of which mention has been made above, all of whom either worked directly for them in their several trades, or were let out to those who needed their services. The god was not only the greatest cultivator in the State after

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the king, sometimes even excelling him in this respect, but he was also the most active manufacturer, and many of the utensils in daily use, as well as articles of luxury, proceeded from his workshops. His possessions secured for him a paramount authority in the city, and also an influence in the councils of the king: the priests who represented him on earth thus became mixed up in State affairs, and exercised authority on his behalf in the same measure as the officers of the crown.

[Illustration: 203.jpg A VOTARY LED TO THE GOD TO RECEIVE THE REWARD OF THE SACRIFICE]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a Chaldaean intaglio in the Berlin Museum.

He, had, indeed, as much need of riches and renown as the least of his clients. As he was subject to all human failings, and experienced all the appetites of mankind, he had to be nourished, clothed, and amused, and this could be done only at great expense. The stone or wooden statues erected to him in the sanctuaries furnished him with bodies, which he animated with his breath, and accredited to his clients as the receivers of all things needful to him in his mysterious kingdom. The images of the gods were clothed in vestments, they were anointed with odoriferous oils, covered with jewels, served with food and drink; and during these operations the divinities themselves, above in the heaven, or down in the abyss, or in the bosom of the earth, were arrayed in garments, their bodies were perfumed with unguents, and their appetites fully satisfied: all that was further required for this purpose was the offering of sacrifices together with prayers and prescribed rites. The priest began by solemnly inviting the gods to the feast: as soon as they sniffed from afar the smell of the good cheer that awaited them, they ran “like a swarm of flies” and prepared themselves to partake of it.

[Illustration: 204.jpg THE SACRIFICE: A GOAT PRESENTED TO ISHTAR.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from an Assyrian intaglio illustrated in A. Rich, *Narrative of a Journey to the Site of Babylon in 1811*. The sacrifice of the goat, or rather its presentation to the god, is not infrequently represented on the Assyrian bas-reliefs.

The supplications having been heard, water was brought to the gods for the necessary ablutions before a repast. “Wash thy hands, cleanse thy hands,—may the gods thy brothers wash their hands!—From a clean dish eat a pure repast,—from a clean cup drink pure water.” The statue, from the rigidity of the material out of which it was carved, was at a loss how to profit by the exquisite things which had been lavished upon it: the difficulty was removed by the opening of its mouth at the moment of consecration, thus enabling it to partake of the good fare to its satisfaction.* The banquet lasted a long time, and consisted of every delicacy which the culinary skill of

the time could prepare:  the courses consisted of dates, wheaten flour, honey, butter, various kinds of wines, and fruits, together with roast and boiled meats.

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* This operation, which was also resorted to in Egypt in the case of the statues of the gods and deceased persons, is clearly indicated in a text of the second Chaldaean empire published in *W. A. Insc*, vol. iv. pi. 25. The priest who consecrates an image makes clear in the first place that “its mouth not being open it can partake of no refreshment: it neither eats food nor drinks water.” Thereupon he performs certain rites, which he declares were celebrated, if not at that moment, at least for the first time by Ea himself: “Ea has brought thee to thy glorious place,—to thy glorious place he has brought thee,—brought thee with his splendid hand,—brought also butter and honey;—*he has poured consecrated water into thy mouth—and by magic has opened thy mouth.*” Henceforward the statue can eat and drink like an ordinary living being the meat and beverages offered to it during the sacrifice.

[Illustration: 205.jpg THE GOD SHAMASH SEIZES WITH HIS LEFT HAND THE SMOKE OF THE SACRIFICE.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a Chaldaean intaglio pointed out by Heuzey-Sarzcc; the original is in the Louvre. The scene depicted behind Shamash deals with a legend still unknown. A goddess, pursued by a genius with a double face, has taken refuge under a tree, which bows down to protect her; while the monster endeavours to break down the obstacle branch by branch, a god rises from the stem and hands to the goddess a stone-headed mace to protect her against her enemy.

In the most ancient times it would appear that even human sacrifices were offered, but this custom was obsolete except on rare occasions, and lambs, oxen, sometimes swine’s flesh, formed the usual elements of the sacrifice. The gods seized as it arose from the altar the unctuous smoke, and fed on it with delight. When they had finished their repast, the supplication of a favour was adroitly added, to which they gave a favourable hearing. Services were frequent in the temples: there was one in the morning and another in the evening on ordinary days, in addition to those which private individuals might require at any hour of the day. The festivals assigned to the local god and his colleagues, together with the acts of praise in which the whole nation joined, such as that of the New Year, required an abundance of extravagant sacrifices, in which the blood of the victims flowed like water. Days of sorrow and mourning alternated with these days of joy, during which the people and the magnates gave themselves up to severe fasting and acts of penitence. The Chaldeans had a lively sense of human frailty, and of the risks entailed upon the sinner by disobedience to the gods. The dread of sinning haunted them during their whole life; they continually subjected the motives of their actions to a strict scrutiny, and once self-examination had revealed to them the shadow of an evil intent, they were accustomed to implore pardon for it in a humble manner. “Lord,

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my sins are many, great are my misdeeds!—O my god, my sins are many, great my misdeeds!—O my goddess, my sins are many, great my misdeeds!—I have committed faults and I knew them not; I have committed sin and I knew it not; I have fed upon misdeeds and I knew them not; I have walked in omissions and I knew them not.—The lord, in the anger of his heart, he has stricken me,—the god, in the wrath of his heart, has abandoned me,—Ishtar is enraged against me, and has treated me harshly!—I make an effort, and no one offers me a hand,—I weep, and no one comes to me,—I cry aloud, and no one hears me:—I sink under affliction, I am overwhelmed, I can no longer raise up my head,—I turn to my merciful god to call upon him, and I groan!... Lord reject not thy servant,—and if he is hurled into the roaring waters, stretch to him thy hand;—-the sins I have committed, have mercy upon them,—the misdeeds I have committed, scatter them to the winds—and my numerous faults, tear them to pieces like a garment." Sin in the eyes of the Chaldaean was not, as with us, an infirmity of the soul; it assaulted the body like an actual virus, and the fear of physical suffering or death engendered by it, inspired these complaints with a note of sincerity which cannot be mistaken.

Every individual is placed, from the moment of his birth, under the protection of a god and goddess, of whom he is the servant, or rather the son, and whom he never addresses otherwise than as his god and his goddess. These deities accompany him night and day, not so much to protect him from visible dangers, as to guard him from the invisible beings which ceaselessly hover round him, and attack him on every side. If he is devout, piously disposed towards his divine patrons and the deities of his country, if he observes the prescribed rites, recites the prayers, performs the sacrifices—in a word, if he acts rightly—their aid is never lacking; they bestow upon him a numerous posterity, a happy old age, prolonged to the term fixed by fate, when he must resign himself to close his eyes for ever to the light of day. If, on the contrary, he is wicked, violent, one whose word cannot be trusted, "his god cuts him down like a reed," extirpates his race, shortens his days, delivers him over to demons who possess themselves of his body and afflict it with sicknesses before finally despatching him. Penitence is of avail against the evil of sin, and serves to re-establish a right course of life, but its efficacy is not permanent, and the moment at last arrives in which death, getting the upper hand, carries its victim away. The Chaldaeans had not such clear ideas as to what awaited them in the other world as the Egyptians possessed: whilst the tomb, the mummy, the perpetuity of the funeral revenues, and the safety of the double, were the engrossing subjects in Egypt, the Chaldaean texts are almost entirely silent as to the condition of the soul, and the living seem to have had no further

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concern about the dead than to get rid of them as quickly and as completely as possible. They did not believe that everything was over at the last breath, but they did not on that account think that the fate of that which survived was indissolubly associated with the perishable part, and that the disembodied soul was either annihilated or survived, according as the flesh in which it was sustained was annihilated or survived in the tomb. The soul was doubtless not utterly unconcerned about the fate of the *larva* it had quitted: its pains were intensified on being despoiled of its earthly case if the latter were mutilated, or left without sepulture, a prey to the fowls, of the air. This feeling, however, was not sufficiently developed to create a desire for escape from corruption entirely, and to cause a resort to the mummifying process of the Egyptians.

[Illustration: 208.jpg DECORATED WRAPPINGS FROM A MUMMY (Color)]

The Chaldaeans did not subject the body, therefore, to those injections, to those prolonged baths in preserving fluids, to that laborious swaddling which rendered it indestructible; whilst the family wept and lamented, old women who exercised the sad function of mourners washed the dead body, perfumed it, clad it in its best apparel, painted its cheeks, blackened its eyelids, placed a collar on its neck, rings on its fingers, arranged its arms upon its breast, and stretched it on a bed, setting up at its head a little altar for the customary offerings of water, incense, and cakes.

[Illustration: 209.jpg Chaldaean coffin in the form of a jar]

[Illustration: 209a.jpg A VAULTED TOMB IN URU]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a sketch by Taylor.

[Illustration: 210.jpg CHALDAEAN TOMB WITH DOMED ROOF.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a sketch by Taylor.

Evil spirits, prowled incessantly around the dead bodies of the Chaldaeans, either to feed upon them, or to use them in their sorcery: should they succeed in slipping into a corpse, from that moment it could be metamorphosed into a vampire, and return to the world to suck the blood of the living. The Chaldaeans were, therefore, accustomed to invite by prayers beneficent genii and gods to watch over the dead. Two of these would take their invisible places at the head and foot of the bed, and wave their hands in the act of blessing: these were the vassals of Ea, and, like their master, were usually clad in fish-skins. Others placed themselves in the sepulchral chamber, and stood ready to strike any one who dared to enter: these had human figures, or lions' heads joined to the bodies of men. Others, moreover, hovered over the house in order to drive off the spectres who might endeavour to enter through the roof. During the last hours in which

the dead body remained among its kindred, it reposed under the protection of a legion of gods.

We must not expect to find on the plains of the Euphrates the rock-cut tombs, the mastabas or pyramids, of Egypt.  No mountain chain ran on either side of the river, formed of rock soft enough to be cut and hollowed easily into chambers or sepulchral halls, and at the same time sufficiently hard to prevent the tunnels once cut from falling in.

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[Illustration:  111.jpg CHALDEAN TOMB WITH FLAT ROOF.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a sketch by Taylor.

The alluvial soil upon which the Chaldaean cities were built, far from, preserving the dead body, rapidly decomposed it under the influence of heat and moisture:  vaults constructed in it would soon be invaded by water in spite of masonry; paintings and sculpture would soon be eaten away by nitre, and the funereal furniture and the coffin quickly destroyed.  The dwelling-house of the Chaldaean dead could not, therefore, properly be called, as those of Egypt, an “eternal house.”  It was constructed of dried or burnt brick, and its form varied much from the most ancient times.  Sometimes it was a great vaulted chamber, the courses forming the roof being arranged corbel-wise, and contained the remains of one or two bodies walled up within it.* At other times it consisted merely of an earthen jar, in which the corpse had been inserted in a bent-up posture, or was composed of two enormous cylindrical jars, which, when united and cemented with bitumen, formed a kind of barrel around the body.  Other tombs are represented by wretched structures, sometimes oval and sometimes round in shape, placed upon a brick base and covered by a flat or domed roof.  The interior was not of large dimensions, and to enter it was necessary to stoop to a creeping posture.  The occupant of the smallest chambers was content to have with him his linen, his ornaments, some bronze arrowheads, and metal or clay vessels.  Others contained furniture which, though not as complete as that found in Egyptian sepulchres, must have ministered to all the needs of the spirit.  The body was stretched, fully clothed, upon a mat impregnated with bitumen, the head supported by a cushion or flat brick,** the arms laid across the breast, and the shroud adjusted by bands to the loins and legs.  Sometimes the corpse was placed on its left side, with the legs slightly bent, and the right hand, extending over the left shoulder, was inserted into a vase, as if to convey the contents to the mouth.

* Vaulted chambers are confined chiefly to the ancient cemeteries of Uru at Mugheir; they are rather over six to seven feet long, with a breadth of five and a half feet.  The walls are not quite perpendicular, but are somewhat splayed up to two-thirds of their height, where they begin to narrow into the vaulted roof.** The object placed under the head of the skeleton is the dried brick mentioned in the text; the vessel to which the hand is stretched out was of copper; the other vessels were of earthenware, and contained water, or dates, of which the stones were found.  The small cylinders on the side were of stone; the two large cylinders, between the copper vessel and those of earthenware, were pieces of bamboo, of whose use we are ignorant.

[Illustration:  213.jpg THE INTERIOR OF THE TOMB]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a sketch by Taylor

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Clay jars and dishes, arranged around the body, contained the food and drink required for the dead man's daily fare—his favourite wine, dates, fish, fowl, game, occasionally also a boar's head—and even stone representations of provisions, which, like those of Egypt, were lasting substitutes for the reality. The dead man required weapons also to enable him to protect his food-store, and his lance, javelins and baton of office were placed alongside him, together with a cylinder bearing his name, which he had employed as his seal in his lifetime. Beside the body of a woman or young girl was arranged an abundance of spare ornaments, flowers, scent-bottles, combs, cosmetic pencils, and cakes of the black paste with which they were accustomed to paint the eyebrows and the edges of the eyelids.

Cremation seems in many cases to have been preferred to burial in a tomb. The funeral pile was constructed at some distance from the town, on a specially reserved area in the middle of the marshes. The body, wrapped up in coarse matting, was placed upon a heap of reeds and rushes saturated with bitumen: a brick wall, coated with moist clay, was built around this to circumscribe the action of the flames, and, the customary prayers having been recited, the pile was set on fire, masses of fresh material, together with the funerary furniture and usual viaticum, being added to the pyre. When the work of cremation was considered to be complete, the fire was extinguished, and an examination made of the residue. It frequently happened that only the most accessible and most easily destroyed parts of the body had been attacked by the flames, and that there remained a black and disfigured mass which the fire had not consumed. The previously prepared coating of mud was then made to furnish a clay covering for the body, so as to conceal the sickening spectacle from the view of the relatives and spectators. Sometimes, however, the furnace accomplished its work satisfactorily, and there was nothing to be seen at the end but greasy ashes and scraps of calcined bones. The remains were frequently left where they were, and the funeral pile became their tomb. They were, however, often collected and disposed of in a manner which varied with their more or less complete combustion. Bodies insufficiently burnt were interred in graves, or in public chapels; while the ashes of those fully cremated, together with the scraps of bones and the *debris* of the offerings, were placed in long urns. The heat had contorted the weapons and half melted the vessels of copper; and the deceased was thus obliged to be content with the fragments only of the things provided for him. These were, however, sufficient for the purpose, and his possessions, once put to the test of the flames, now accompanied him whither he went: water alone was lacking, but provision was made for this by the construction on the spot of cisterns to collect it. For this purpose several cylinders of pottery, some twenty

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inches broad, were inserted in the ground one above the other from a depth of from ten to twelve feet, and the last cylinder, reaching the level of the ground, was provided with a narrow neck, through which the rainwater or infiltrations from the river flowed into this novel cistern. Many examples of these are found in one and the same chamber,* thus giving the soul an opportunity of finding water in one or other of them. The tombs at Uruk, arranged closely together with coterminous walls, and gradually covered by the sand or by the accumulation and *debris* of new tombs, came at length to form an actual mound. In cities where space was less valuable, and where they were free to extend, the tombs quickly disappeared without leaving any vestiges above the surface, and it would now be necessary to turn up a great deal of rubbish before discovering their remains. The Chaldaea of to-day presents the singular aspect of a country almost without cemeteries, and one would be inclined to think that its ancient inhabitants had taken pains to hide them.** The sepulture of royal personages alone furnishes us with monuments of which we can determine the site. At Babylon these were found in the ancient palaces in which the living were no longer inclined to dwell: that of Shargina, for instance, furnished a burying-place for kings more than two thousand years after the death of its founder. The chronicles devoutly indicate the spot where each monarch, when his earthly reign was over, found a last resting-place; and where, as the subject of a ceremonial worship similar to that of Egypt, his memory was preserved from the oblivion which had overtaken most of his illustrious subjects.
* The German expedition of 1886-87 found four of these reservoirs in a single chamber, and nine distributed in the chambers of a house entirely devoted to the burial of the dead.** Various explanations have been offered to account for this absence of tombs, Without mentioning the desperate attempt to get rid of the difficulty by the assumption that the dead bodies were cast into the river, Loftus thinks that the Chaldaeans and Assyrians were accustomed to send them to some sanctuary in Southern Chaldaea, especially to Uru and Uruk, whose vast cemeteries, he contends, would have absorbed during the centuries the greater part of the Euphratean population; his opinion has been adopted by some historians, and, as far only as the later period is concerned, by Hommel.

The dead man, or rather that part of him which survived—his “ekimmu”—dwelt in the tomb, and it was for his comfort that there were provided, at the time of sepulture or cremation, the provisions and clothing, the ornaments and weapons, of which he was considered to stand in need. Furnished with these necessities by his children and heirs, he preserved for the donors the same affection which he had felt for them in his lifetime, and gave evidence of it in every way he could, watching over their welfare,

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and protecting them from malign influences. If they abandoned or forgot him, he avenged himself for their neglect by returning to torment them in their homes, by letting sickness attack them, and by ruining them with his imprecations: he became thus no less hurtful than the “luminous ghost” of the Egyptians, and if he were accidentally deprived of sepulture, he would not be merely a plague to his relations, but a danger to the entire city. The dead, who were unable to earn an honest living, showed little pity to those who were in the same position as themselves: when a new-comer arrived among them without prayers, libations, or offerings, they declined to receive him, and would not give him so much as a piece of bread out of their meagre store. The spirit of the unburied dead man, having neither place of repose nor means of subsistence, wandered through the town and country, occupied with no other thought than that of attacking and robbing the living. He it was who, gliding into the house during the night, revealed himself to its inhabitants with such a frightful visage as to drive them distracted with terror. Always on the watch, no sooner does he surprise one of his victims than he falls upon him, “his head against his victim’s head, his hand against his hand, his foot against his foot.” He who has been thus attacked, whether man or beast, would undoubtedly perish if magic were not able to furnish its all-powerful defence against this deadly embrace.* This human survival, who is so forcibly represented both in his good and evil aspects, was nevertheless nothing more than a sort of vague and fluid existence—a double, in fact, analogous in appearance to that of the Egyptians.
* The majority of the spells employed against sickness contain references to the spirits against which they contend—“the wicked ekimmu who oppresses men during the night,” or simply “the wicked ekimmu,” the ghost.

With the faculty of roaming at will through space, and of going forth from and returning to his abode, it was impossible to regard him as condemned always to dwell in the case of terra-cotta in which his body lay mouldering: he was transferred, therefore, or rather he transferred himself, into the dark land—the Aralu—situated very far away—according to some, beneath the surface of the earth; according to others, in the eastern or northern extremities of the universe. A river which opens into this region and separates it from the sunlit earth, finds its source in the primordial waters into whose bosom this world of ours is plunged. This dark country is surrounded by seven high walls, and is approached through seven gates, each of which is guarded by a pitiless warder. Two deities rule within it—Nergal, “the lord of the great city,” and Beltis-Allat, “the lady of the great land,” whither everything which has breathed in this world descends after death. A legend relates that Allat, called in Sumerian Erishkigal, reigned alone in Hades, and

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was invited by the gods to a feast which they had prepared in heaven. Owing to her hatred of the light, she sent a refusal by her messenger Narntar, who acquitted himself on this mission with such a bad grace, that Ann and Ea were incensed against his mistress, and commissioned Nergal to descend and chastise her; he went, and finding the gates of hell open, dragged the queen by her hair from the throne, and was about to decapitate her, but she mollified him by her prayers, and saved her life by becoming his wife. The nature of Nergal fitted him well to play the part of a prince of the departed: for he was the destroying sun of summer, and the genius of pestilence and battle. His functions, however, in heaven and earth took up so much of his time that he had little leisure to visit his nether kingdom, and he was consequently obliged to content himself with the *role* of providing subjects for it by despatching thither the thousands of recruits which he gathered daily from the abodes of men or from the field of battle. Allat was the actual sovereign of the country. She was represented with the body of a woman, ill-formed and shaggy, the grinning muzzle of a lion, and the claws of a bird of prey. She brandished in each hand a large serpent—a real animated javelin, whose poisonous bite inflicted a fatal wound upon the enemy. Her children were two lions, which she is represented as suckling, and she passed through her empire, not seated in the saddle, but standing upright or kneeling on the back of a horse, which seems oppressed by her weight. Sometimes she set out on an expedition upon the river which communicates with the countries of light, in order to meet the procession of newly arrived souls ceaselessly despatched to her: she embarked in this case upon an enchanted vessel, which made its way without sail or oars, its prow projecting like the beak of a bird, and its stern terminating in the head of an ox. She overcomes all resistance, and nothing can escape from her: the gods themselves can pass into her empire only on the condition of submitting to death like mortals, and of humbly avowing themselves her slaves.

[Illustration: 220.jpg THE GODDESS ALLAT PASSES THROUGH THE NETHER REGIONS IN HER BARK.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a bronze plaque of which an engraving was published by Clermont-Ganneau. The original, which belonged to M. Peretie, is now in the collection of M. de Clercq

[Illustration: 221.jpg NERGAL, THE GOD OF HADES; BACK VIEW.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin. This is the back of the bronze plate represented on the preceding page; the animal-head of the god appears in relief at the top of the illustration.

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The warders at the gates despoiled the new-comers of everything which they had brought with them, and conducted them in a naked condition before Allat, who pronounced sentence upon them, and assigned to each his place in the nether world. The good or evil committed on earth by such souls was of little moment in determining the sentence: to secure the favour of the judge, it was of far greater importance to have exhibited devotion to the gods and to Allat herself, to have lavished sacrifices and offerings upon them and to have enriched their temples. The souls which could not justify themselves were subjected to horrible punishment: leprosy consumed them to the end of time, and the most painful maladies attacked them, to torture them ceaselessly without any hope of release. Those who were fortunate enough to be spared from her rage, dragged out a miserable and joyless existence. They were continually suffering from the pangs of thirst and hunger, and found nothing to satisfy their appetites but clay and dust. They shivered with cold, and they obtained no other garment to protect them than mantles of feathers—the great silent wings of the night-birds, invested with which they fluttered about and filled the air with their screams. This gloomy and cruel conception of ordinary life in this strange kingdom was still worse than the idea formed of the existence in the tomb to which it succeeded. In the cemetery the soul was, at least, alone with the dead body; in the house of Allat, on the contrary, it was lost as it were among spirits as much afflicted as itself, and among the genii born of darkness. None of these genii had a simple form, or approached the human figure in shape; each individual was a hideous medley of human and animal parts, in which the most repellent features were artistically combined. Lions' heads stood out from the bodies of scorpion-tailed jackals, whose feet were armed with eagles' claws: and among such monsters the genii of pestilence, fever, and the south-west wind took the chief place. When once the dead had become naturalized among this terrible population, they could not escape from their condition, unless by the exceptional mandate of the gods above. They possessed no recollection of what they had done upon earth. Domestic affection, friendships, and the memory of good offices rendered to one another,—all were effaced from their minds: nothing remained there but an inexpressible regret at having been exiled from the world of light, and an excruciating desire to reach it once more. The threshold of Allat's palace stood upon a spring which had the property of restoring to life all who bathed in it or drank of its waters: they gushed forth as soon as the stone was raised, but the earth-spirits guarded it with a jealous care, and kept at a distance all who attempted to appropriate a drop of it. They permitted access to it only by order of Ea himself, or one of the supreme gods, and even then with a rebellious heart at seeing their

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prey escape them. Ancient legends related how the shepherd Dumuzi, son of Ea and Damkina, having excited the love of Ishtar while he was pasturing his flocks under the mysterious tree of Eridu, which covers the earth with its shade, was chosen by the goddess from among all others to be the spouse of her youth, and how, being mortally wounded by a wild boar, he was cast into the kingdom of Allat. One means remained by which he might be restored to the light of day: his wounds must be washed in the waters of the wonderful spring, and Ishtar resolved to go in quest of this marvellous liquid. The undertaking was fraught with danger, for no one might travel to the infernal regions without having previously gone through the extreme terrors of death, and even the gods themselves could not transgress this fatal law. "To the land without return, to the land which thou knowest—Ishtar, the daughter of Sin, turned her thoughts: she, the daughter of Sin, turned her thoughts—to the house of darkness, the abode of Irkalla—to the house from which he who enters can never emerge—to the path upon which he who goes shall never come back—to the house into which he who enters bids farewell to the light—the place where dust is nourishment and clay is food; the light is not seen, darkness is the dwelling, where the garments are the wings of birds—where dust accumulates on door and bolt." Ishtar arrives at the porch, she knocks at it, she addresses the guardian in an imperious voice: "'Guardian of the waters, open thy gate —open thy gate that I may enter, even I.—If thou openest not the door that I may enter, even I,—I will burst open the door, I will break the bars, I will break the threshold, I will burst in the panels, I will excite the dead that they may eat the living,—and the dead shall be more numerous than the living.'—The guardian opened his mouth and spake, he announced to the mighty Ishtar: 'Stop, O lady, and do not overturn the door until I go and apprise the Queen Allat of thy name.' Allat hesitates, and then gives him permission to receive the goddess: 'Go, guardian, open the gate to her—but treat her according to the ancient laws. Mortals enter naked into the world, and naked must they leave it: and since Ishtar has decided to accept their lot, she too must be prepared to divest herself of her garments.'" The guardian went, he opened his mouth: 'Enter, my lady, and may Kutha rejoice—may the palace and the land without return exult in thy presence! 'He causes her to pass through the first gate, divests her, removes the great crown from her head:—'Why, guardian, dost thou remove the great crown from my head?'—'Enter, my lady, such is the law of Allat.' The second gate, he causes her to pass through it, he divests her—removes the rings from her ears:—'Why, guardian, dost thou remove the rings from my ears?'—'Enter, my lady, such is the law of Allat.'" And from gate to gate he removes some ornament from the distressed lady—now her necklace with its

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attached amulets, now the tunic which covers her bosom, now her enamelled girdle, her bracelets, and the rings on her ankles: and at length, at the seventh gate, takes from her her last covering. When she at length arrives in the presence of Allat, she throws herself upon her in order to wrest from her in a terrible struggle the life of Dumuzi; but Allat sends for Namtar, her messenger of misfortune, to punish, the rebellious Ishtar. "Strike her eyes with the affliction of the eyes—strike her loins with the affliction of the loins—strike her feet with the affliction of the feet—strike her heart with the affliction of the heart—strike her head with the affliction of the head—strike violently at her, at her whole body!" While Ishtar was suffering the torments of the infernal regions, the world of the living was wearing mourning on account of her death. In the absence of the goddess of love, the rites of love could no longer be performed. The passions of animals and men were suspended. If she did not return quickly to the daylight, the races of men and animals would become extinct, the earth would become a desert, and the gods would have neither votaries nor offerings.

[Illustration: 226.jpg ISHTAR DESPOILED OF HER GARMENTS IN HADES]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a Chaldaean intaglio in the Hague Museum. Salomon Reinach has demonstrated that the naked figure is not the goddess herself, but a statue of the goddess which was adored in one of the temples.

"Papsukal, the servant of the great gods, tore his face before Shamash—clothed in mourning, filled with sorrow. Shamash went—he wept in the presence of Sin, his father, —and his tears flowed in the presence of Ea, the king:—'Ishtar has gone down into the earth, and she has not come up again!—And ever since Ishtar has descended into the land without return... [the passions of men and beasts have been suspended]... the master goes to sleep while giving his command, the servant goes to sleep on his duty.'" The resurrection of the goddess is the only remedy for such ills, but this is dependent upon the resurrection of Damuzi: Ishtar will never consent to reappear in the world, if she cannot bring back her husband with her. Ea, the supreme god, the infallible executor of the divine will—he who alone can modify the laws imposed upon creation—-at length decides to accord to her what she desires. "Ea, in the wisdom of his heart, formed a male being,—formed Uddushunamir, the servant of the gods:—'Go then, Uddushunamir, turn thy face towards the gate of the land without return; —the seven gates of the land without return—may they become open at thy presence—may Allat behold thee, and rejoice in thy presence! When her heart shall be calm, and her wrath appeased, charm her in the name of the great gods—turn thy thoughts to the spring'—-'May the spring, my lady, give me of its waters that I may drink of them.'" Allat broke out into a terrible

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rage, when she saw herself obliged to yield to her rival; “she beat her sides, she gnawed her fingers,” she broke out into curses against the messenger of misfortune. “’Thou hast expressed to me a wish which should not be made!—Fly, Uddushunamir, or I will shut thee up in the great prison—the mud of the drains of the city shall be thy food—the gutters of the town shall be thy drink—the shadow of the walls shall be thy abode—the thresholds shall be thy habitation—confinement and isolation shall weaken thy strength.’”* She is obliged to obey, notwithstanding; she calls her messenger Namtar and commands him to make all the preparations for resuscitating the goddess. It was necessary to break the threshold of the palace in order to get at the spring, and its waters would have their full effect only in presence of the Anunnas. “Namtar went, he rent open the eternal palace,—he twisted the uprights so that the stones of the threshold trembled;—he made the Anunnaki come forth, and seated them on thrones of gold,—he poured upon Ishtar the waters of life, and brought her away.” She received again at each gate the articles of apparel she had abandoned in her passage across the seven circles of hell: as soon as she saw the daylight once more, it was revealed to her that the fate of her husband was henceforward in her own hands. Every year she must bathe him in pure water, and anoint him with the most precious perfumes, clothe him in a robe of mourning, and play to him sad airs upon a crystal flute, whilst her priestesses intoned their doleful chants, and tore their breasts in sorrow: his heart would then take fresh life, and his youth flourish once more, from springtime to springtime, as long as she should celebrate on his behalf the ceremonies already prescribed by the deities of the infernal world.

* It follows from this passage that Ishtar could be delivered only at the cost of another life: it was for this reason, doubtless, that Ea, instead of sending the ordinary messenger of the gods, created a special messenger. Allat, furious at the insignificance of the victim sent to her, contents herself with threatening Uddushanamir with an ignominious treatment if he does not escape as quickly as possible.

Dumuzi was a god, the lover, moreover, of a goddess, and the deity succeeded where mortals failed.* Ea, Nebo, Gula, Ishtar, and their fellows possessed, no doubt, the faculty of recalling the dead to life, but they rarely made use of it on behalf of their creatures, and their most pious votaries pleaded in vain from temple to temple for the resurrection of their dead friends; they could never obtain the favour which had been granted by Allat to Dumuzi.

* Merodach is called “the merciful one who takes pleasure in raising the dead to life,” and “the lord of the pure libation,” the “merciful one who has power to give life.” In Jeremias may be found the list of the gods who up to the present are known to have had the power to resuscitate the dead; it is probable that this power belonged to all the gods and goddesses of the first rank.

[Illustration: 229.jpg DUMUZI REJUVENATED ON THE KNEES OF ISHTAR.]

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Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a Chaldaean intaglio.

When the dead body was once placed in the tomb, it rose up no more, it could no more be reinstated in the place in the household it had lost, it never could begin once more a new earthly existence. The necromancers, indeed, might snatch away death's prey for a few moments. The earth gaped at the words of their invocations, the soul burst forth like a puff of wind and answered gloomily the questions proposed to it; but when the charm was once broken, it had to retrace its steps to the country without return, to be plunged once more in darkness. This prospect of a dreary and joyless eternity was not so terrifying to the Chaldaeans as it was to the Egyptians. The few years of their earthly existence were of far more concern to them than the endless ages which were to begin their monotonous course on the morrow of their funeral. The sum of good and evil fortune assigned to them by destiny they preferred to spend continuously in the light of day on the fair plains of the Euphrates and Tigris: if they were to economize during this period with the view of laying up a posthumous treasure of felicity, their store would have no current value beyond the tomb, and would thus become so much waste. The gods, therefore, whom they served faithfully would recoup them, here in their native city, with present prosperity, with health, riches, power, glory, and a numerous offspring, for the offerings of their devotion; while, if they irritated the deities by their shortcomings, they had nothing to expect but overwhelming calamities and sufferings. The gods would "cut them down like a reed," and their "names would be annihilated, their seed destroyed;—they would end their days in affliction and hunger,—their dead bodies would be at the mercy of chance, and would receive no sepulture." They were content to resign themselves, therefore, to the dreary lot of eternal misery which awaited them after death, provided they enjoyed in this world a long and prosperous existence. Some of them felt and rebelled against the injustice of the idea, which assigned one and the same fate, without discrimination, to the coward and the hero killed on the battle-field, to the tyrant and the mild ruler of his people, to the wicked and the righteous. These therefore supposed that the gods would make distinctions, that they would separate such heroes from the common herd, welcome them in a fertile, sunlit island, separated from the abode of men by the waters of death—the impassable river which leads to the house of Allat. The tree of life flourished there, the spring of life poured forth there its revivifying waters; thither Ea transferred Xisuthros after the Deluge; Gilgames saw the shores of this island and returned from it, strong and healthy as in the days of his youth. The site of this region of delights was at first placed in the centre of the marshes of the Euphrates, where this river flows into the sea; afterwards when the

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country became better known, it was transferred beyond the ocean. In proportion as the limits of the Chaldaean horizon were thrust further and further away by mercantile or warlike expeditions, this mysterious island was placed more and more to the east, afterwards to the north, and at length at a distance so great that it tended to vanish altogether. As a final resource, the gods of heaven themselves became the hosts, and welcomed into their own kingdom the purified souls of the heroes.

These souls were not so securely isolated from humanity that the inhabitants of the world were not at times tempted to rejoin them before their last hour had come. Just as Gilgames had dared of old the dangers of the desert and the ocean in order to discover the island of Khasisadra, so Etana darted through the air in order to ascend to the sky of Anu, to become incorporated while still living in the choir of the blessed. The legend gives an account of his friendship with the eagle of Shamash, and of the many favours he had obtained from and rendered to the bird. It happened at last, that his wife could not bring forth the son which lay in her womb; the hero, addressing himself to the eagle, asked from her the plant which alleviates the birth-pangs of women and facilitates their delivery. This was only to be found, however, in the heaven of Anu, and how could any one run the risk of mounting so high, without being destroyed on the way by the anger of the gods? The eagle takes pity upon the sorrow of his comrade, and resolves to attempt the enterprise with him. "'Friend,' she says, 'banish the cloud from thy face! Come, and I will carry thee to the heaven of the god Anu. Place thy breast against my breast—place thy two hands upon the pinions of my wings—place thy side against my side.' He places his breast against the breast of the eagle, he places his two hands upon the pinions of the wings, he places his side against her side;—he adjusts himself firmly, and his weight was great." The Chaldaean artists have more than once represented the departure of the hero. They exhibit him closely attached to the body of his ally, and holding her in a strong embrace. A first flight has already lifted them above the earth, and the shepherds scattered over the country are stupefied at the unaccustomed sight: one announces the prodigy to another, while their dogs seated at their feet extend their muzzles as if in the act of howling with terror. "For the space of a double hour the eagle bore him—then the eagle spake to him, to him Etana: 'Behold, my friend, the earth what it is; regard the sea which the ocean contains! See, the earth is no more than a mountain, and the sea is no more than a lake.' The space of a second double hour she bore him, then the eagle spake to him, to him Etana: 'Behold, my friend, the earth what it is; the sea appears as the girdle of the earth! 'The space of a third double hour she bore him, then the eagle spake to him, to him Etana: 'See, my friend, the earth, what it is:—the sea is no more than the rivulet made by a gardener.'"

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[Illustration:  233.jpg ETANA CARRIED TO HEAVEN BY AN EAGLE.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a Chaldaean intaglio.

“They at length arrive at the heaven of Anu, and rest there for a moment.  Etana sees around him nothing but empty space—no living thing within it—not even a bird:  he is struck with terror, but the eagle reassures him, and tells him to proceed on his way to the heaven of Ishtar. “’Come, my friend, let me bear thee to Ishtar,—and I will place thee near Ishtar, the lady,—and at the feet of Ishtar, the lady, thou shalt throw thyself.—Place thy side against my side, place thy hands on the pinions of my wings.’  The space of a double hour she bore him:  ’Friend, behold the earth what it is.—The face of the earth stretches out quite flat—and the sea is no greater than a mere.’  The space of a second double hour she bore him:  ’Friend, behold the earth what it is,—the earth is no more than a square plot in a garden, and the great sea is not greater than a puddle of water.’” At the third hour Etana lost courage, and cried, “Stop!” and the eagle immediately descended again; but, Etana’s strength being exhausted, he let go his hold, and was dashed to pieces on the ground.

The eagle escaped unhurt this time, but she soon suffered a more painful death than that of Etana.  She was at war with the serpent, though the records which we as yet possess do not vouchsafe the reason, when she discovered in the roots of a tree the nest in which her enemy concealed its brood.  She immediately proposed to her young ones to pounce down upon the growing snakes; one of her eaglets, wiser than the rest, reminded her that they were under the protection of Shamash, the great righter of wrongs, and cautioned her against any transgression of the divine laws.  The old eagle felt herself wiser than her son, and rebuked him after the manner of wise mothers:  she carried away the serpent’s young, and gave them as food to her own brood.  The hissing serpent crawled as far as Shamash, crying for vengeance:  “The evil she has done me, Shamash—behold it!  Come to my help, Shamash! thy net is as wide as the earth—thy snares reach to the distant mountain—who can escape thy net?—The criminal Zu, Zu who was the first to act wickedly, did he escape it?” Shamash refused to interfere personally, but he pointed out to the serpent an artifice by which he might satisfy his vengeance as securely as if Shamash himself had accomplished it.  “Set out upon the way, ascend the mountain,—and conceal thyself in a dead bull;—make an incision in his inside—tear open his belly,—take up thy abode—establish thyself in his belly.  All the birds of the air will pounce upon it....—and the eagle herself will come with them, ignorant that thou art within it;—she will wish to possess herself of the flesh, she will come swiftly—she will think of nothing but the entrails within.  As soon as she begins to attack the inside, seize her by her wings, beat down her wings, the pinions of her wings and her claws, tear her and throw her into a ravine of the mountain, that she may die there a death of hunger and thirst.”

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The serpent did as Shamash advised, and the birds of the air began to flock round the carcase in which she was hidden. The eagle came with the rest, and at first kept aloof, looking for what should happen. When she saw that the birds flew away unharmed all fear left her. In vain did the wise eaglet warn her of the danger that was lurking within the prey; she mocked at him and his predictions, dug her beak into the carrion, and the serpent leaping out seized her by the wing. Then “the eagle her mouth opened, and spake unto the snake, ’Have mercy upon me, and according to thy pleasure a gift I will lavish upon thee!’ The snake opened her mouth and spake unto the eagle, ’Did I release thee, Shamash would take part against me; and the doom would fall upon me, which now I fulfil upon thee.’ She tore out her wings, her feathers, her pinions; she tore her to pieces, she threw her into a cleft, and there she died a death of hunger and of thirst.”

The gods allowed no living being to penetrate with impunity into their empire: he who was desirous of ascending thither, however brave he might be, could do so only by death. The mass of humanity had no pretensions to mount so high. Their religion gave them the choice between a perpetual abode in the tomb, or confinement in the prison of Allat; if at times they strove to escape from these alternatives, and to picture otherwise their condition in the world beyond, their ideas as to the other life continued to remain vague, and never approached the minute precision of the Egyptian conception. The cares of the present life were too absorbing to allow them leisure to speculate upon the conditions of a future existence.

[Illustration: 230.jpg Endplate]

## CHAPTER III—CHALDAEAN CIVILIZATION

*CHALDAEAN CIVILIZATION—ROYALTY—THE CONSTITUTION OF THE FAMILY AND ITS PROPERTY—CHALMAN COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY.*

*The kings not gods, but the vicegerents of the gods: their sacerdotal character—The queens and the women of the royal family: the sons and the order of succession to the throne—The royal palaces: description of the palace of Gudea at Lagash, the facades, the zigurat, the private apartments, the furniture, the external decoration—Costume of the men and women: the employees of the palace and the method of royal administration; the military and the great lords.*

*The scribe and the clay books.—Cuneiform writing: its hieroglyphic origin; the Protean character of the sounds which may be assigned to the ideograms, grammatical tablets, and dictionaries—Their contracts, and their numerous copies of them: the finger-nail mark, the seal.*

*The constitution of the family: the position held by the wife—Marriage, the contract, the religious ceremonies—Divorce: the rights of wealthy women; woman and marriage*

*among the lower classes—Adopted children, their position in the family; ordinary motives for adoption—Slaves, their condition, their enfranchisement.*

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*The Chaldaean towns: the aspect and distribution of the houses, domestic life—The family patrimony: division of the inheritance—Lending on usury, the rate of interest, commercial intercourse by land and sea—Trade corporations: brick-making, industrial implements in stone and metal, goldsmiths, engravers of cylinders, weavers; the state of the working classes.*

*Farming and cultivation of the ground: landmarks, slaves, and agricultural labourers—-Scenes of pastoral life: fishing, hunting—Archaic literature; positive sciences: arithmetic and geometry, astronomy and astrology, the science of foretelling the future —The physician; magic and its influence on neighbouring countries.*

[Illustration: 239.jpg CHAPTER III.]

Drawn by Boudier, from the sketch by Loftus. The initial vignette, which is by Faucher-Gudin, represents a royal figure kneeling and holding a large nail in both hands. The nail serves to keep the figure fixed firmly in the earth. It is a reproduction of the bronze figurine in the Louvre, already published by Heuzey-Sakzeo, *Decouvertes en Chaldee*, pl. 28, No. 4.

## CHAPTER III—CHALDAEAN CIVILIZATION

*Royalty—The constitution of the family and its property—Chaldaean commerce and industry*.

The Chaldaean kings, unlike their contemporaries the Pharaohs, rarely put forward any pretensions to divinity. They contented themselves with occupying an intermediate position between their subjects and the gods, and for the purpose of mediation they believed themselves to be endowed with powers not possessed by ordinary mortals. They sometimes designated themselves the sons of Ea, or of Ninsun, or some other deity, but this involved no belief in a divine parentage, and was merely pious hyperbole: they entertained no illusions with regard to any descent from a god or even from one of his doubles, but they desired to be recognized as his vicegerents here below, as his prophets, his well-beloved, his pastors, elected by him to rule his human flocks, or as priests devotedly attached to his service. While, however, the ordinary priest chose for himself a single master to whom he devoted himself, the priest-king exercised universal sacerdotal functions and claimed to be pontiff of all the national religions. His choice naturally was directed by preference to the patrons of his city, those who had raised his ancestors from the dust, and had exalted him to the supreme rank, but there were other divinities who claimed their share of his homage and expected of him a devotion suited to their importance. If he had attempted to carry out these duties personally in detail, he would have had to spend his whole life at the foot of the altar; even when he had delegated as many of them as he could to the regular clergy, there still remained sufficient to occupy a large part of his time. Every month,

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every day, brought its inevitable round of sacrifices, prayers, and processions. On the 1st of the second Elul, the King of Babylon had to present a gazelle without blemish to Sin; he then made an offering of his own choosing to Shamash, and cut the throats of his victims before the god. These ceremonies were repeated on the 2nd without any alteration, but from the 3rd to the 12th they took place during the night, before the statues of Merodach and Ishtar, in turn with those of Nebo and Tashmit, of Mullil and Ninlil, of Eamman and of Zirbanit; sometimes at the rising of a particular constellation—-as, for instance, that of the Great Bear, or that of the sons of Ishtar; sometimes at the moment when the moon "raised above the earth her luminous crown." On such a date a penitential psalm or a litany was to be recited; at another time it was forbidden to eat of meat either cooked or smoked, to change the body-linen, to wear white garments, to drink medicine, to sacrifice, to put forth an edict, or to drive out in a chariot. Not only at Babylon, but everywhere else, obedience to the religious rites weighed heavily on the local princes; at Uru, at Lagash, at Nipur, and in the ruling cities of Upper and Lower Chaldaea. The king, as soon as he succeeded to the throne, repaired to the temple to receive his solemn investiture, which differed in form according to the gods he worshipped: at Babylon, he addressed himself to the statue of Bel-Merodach in the first days of the month Nisan which followed his accession, and he "took him by the hands" to do homage to him. From thenceforth, he officiated for Merodach here below, and the scrupulously minute devotions, which daily occupied hours of his time, were so many acts of allegiance which his fealty as a vassal constrained him to perform to his suzerain. They were, in fact, analogous to the daily audiences demanded of a great lord by his steward, for the purpose of rendering his accounts and of informing him of current business: any interruption not justified by a matter of supreme importance would be liable to be interpreted as a want of respect or as revealing an inclination to rebel. By neglecting the slightest ceremonial detail the king would arouse the suspicions of the gods, and excite their anger against himself and his subjects: the people had, therefore, a direct interest in his careful fulfilment of the priestly functions, and his piety was not the least of his virtues in their eyes. All other virtues—bravery, equity, justice—depended on it, and were only valuable from the divine aid which piety obtained for them. The gods and heroes of the earliest ages had taken upon themselves the task of protecting the faithful from all their enemies, whether men or beasts. If a lion decimated their flocks, or a urus of gigantic size devastated their crops, it was the king's duty to follow the example of his fabulous predecessors and to set out and overcome them. The enterprise demanded all the more courage and supernatural

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help, since these beasts were believed to be no mere ordinary animals, but were looked on as instruments of divine wrath the cause of which was often unknown, and whoever assailed these monsters, provoked not only them but the god who instigated them. Piety and confidence in the patron of the city alone sustained the king when he set forth to drive the animal back to its lair; he engaged in close combat with it, and no sooner had he pierced it with his arrows or his lance, or felled it with axe and dagger, than he hastened to pour a libation upon it, and to dedicate it as a trophy in one of the temples. His exalted position entailed on him no less perils in time of war: if he did not personally direct the first attacking column, he placed himself at the head of the band composed of the flower of the army, whose charge at an opportune moment was wont to secure the victory.

What would have been the use of his valour, if the dread of the gods had not preceded his march, and if the light of their countenances had not struck terror into the ranks of the enemy? As soon as he had triumphed by their command, he sought before all else to reward them amply for the assistance they had given him. He poured a tithe of the spoil into the coffers of their treasury, he made over a part of the conquered country to their domain, he granted them a tale of the prisoners to cultivate their lands or to work at their buildings. Even the idols of the vanquished shared the fate of their people: the king tore them from the sanctuaries which had hitherto sheltered them, and took them as prisoners in his train to form a court of captive gods about his patron divinity. Shamash, the great judge of heaven, inspired him with justice, and the prosperity which his good administration obtained for the people was less the work of the sovereign than that of the immortals.

We know too little of the inner family life of the kings, to attempt to say how they were able to combine the strict sacerdotal obligations incumbent on them with the routine of daily life. We merely observe that on great days of festival or sacrifice, when they themselves officiated, they laid aside all the insignia of royalty during the ceremony and were clad as ordinary priests. We see them on such occasions represented with short-cut hair and naked breast, the loin-cloth about their waist, advancing foremost in the rank, carrying the heavily laden “kufa,” or reed basket, as if they were ordinary slaves; and, as a fact, they had for the moment put aside their sovereignty and were merely temple servants, or slaves appearing before their divine master to do his bidding, and disguising themselves for the nonce in the garb of servitors. The wives of the sovereign do not seem to have been invested with that semi-sacred character which led the Egyptian women to be associated with the devotions of the man, and made them indispensable auxiliaries in all religious ceremonies; they did not, moreover, occupy that important position side by side with the man which the Egyptian law assigned to the queens of the Pharaohs. Whereas the monuments on the banks of the Nile reveal to us princesses sharing the throne of their husbands whom they embrace with a gesture of

frank affection, in Chaldaea the wives of the prince, his mother, sisters, daughters, and even his slaves, remain invisible to posterity.

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[Illustration:  244.jpg THE KING URNINA BEARING THE “KUFA.”]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from Heuzey Sarzec.

The harem in which they were shut up by custom, rarely opened its doors:  the people seldom caught sight of them, their relatives spoke of them as little as possible, those in power avoided associating them in any public acts of worship or government, and we could count on our fingers the number of those whom the inscriptions mention by name.  Some of them were drawn from the noble families of the capital, others came from the kingdoms of Chaldaea or from foreign courts; a certain number never rose above the condition of mere concubines, many assumed the title of queen, while almost all served as living pledges of alliances made with rival states, or had been given as hostages at the concluding of a peace on the termination of a war.* As the kings, who put forward no pretensions to a divine origin, were not constrained, after the fashion of the Pharaohs, to marry their sisters in order to keep up the purity of their race, it was rare to find one among their wives who possessed an equal right to the crown with themselves:  such a case could be found only in troublous times, when an aspirant to the throne, of base extraction, legitimated his usurpation by marrying a sister or daughter of his predecessor.

* Political marriage-alliances between Egypt and Chaldaea were of frequent occurrence, according to the Tel el-Amarna tablets, and at a later period between Chaldaea and Assyria; among the few queens of the very earliest times, the wife of Nammaghani is the daughter of Urbau, vicegerent of Lagash, and consequently the cousin or niece of her husband, while the wife of Rimsin appears to be the daughter of a nobleman of the name of Rimnannar.

The original status of the mother almost always determined that of her children, and the sons of a princess were born princes, even if their father were of obscure or unknown origin.* These princes exercised important functions at court, or they received possessions which they administered under the suzerainty of the head of the family; the daughters were given to foreign kings, or to scions of the most distinguished families. The sovereign was under no obligation to hand down his crown to any particular member of his family; the eldest son usually succeeded him, but the king could, if he preferred, select his favourite child as his successor even if he happened to be the youngest, or the only one born of a slave.  As soon as the sovereign had made known his will, the custom of primogeniture was set aside, and his word became law.  We can well imagine the secret intrigues formed both by mothers and sons to curry favour with the father and bias his choice; we can picture the jealousy with which they mutually watched each other, and the bitter hatred which any preference shown to one would arouse in the breasts of all the others.  Often brothers who had been disappointed in their expectations would combine secretly against the chosen or supposed heir; a conspiracy would break out, and the people suddenly learn that their ruler of yesterday had died by the hand of an assassin and that a new one filled his place.

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* This fact is apparent from the introduction to the inscription in which Sargon I. is supposed to give an account of his life: “My father was unknown, my mother was a princess;” and it was, indeed, from his mother that he inherited his rights to the crown of Agade.

Sometimes discontent spread beyond the confines of the palace, the army became divided into two hostile camps, the citizens took the side of one or other of the aspirants, and civil war raged for several years till some decisive action brought it to a close. Meantime tributary vassals took advantage of the consequent disorder to shake off the yoke, the Blamites and various neighbouring cities joined in the dispute and ranged themselves on the side of the party from which there was most to be gained: the victorious faction always had to pay dearly for this somewhat dubious help, and came out impoverished from the struggle. Such an internecine war often caused the downfall of a dynasty—at times, indeed, that of the entire state.*

* The above is perfectly true of the later Assyrian and Chalaean periods: it is scarcely needful to recall to the reader the murders of Sargon II. and Sennacherib, or the revolt of Assurdainpal against his father Shalmaneser III. With regard to the earliest period we have merely indications of what took place; the succession of King Urnina of Lagash appears to have been accompanied by troubles of this kind, and it is certain that his successor Akurgal was not the eldest of his sons, but we do not at present know to what events Akurgal owed his elevation.

The palaces of the Chaldaean kings, like those of the Egyptians, presented the appearance of an actual citadel: the walls had to be sufficiently thick to withstand an army for an indefinite period, and to protect the garrison from every emergency, except that of treason or famine. One of the statues found at Telloh holds in its lap the plan of one of these residences: the external outline alone is given, but by means of it we can easily picture to ourselves a fortified place, with its towers, its forts, and its gateways placed between two bastions. It represents the ancient palace of Lagash, subsequently enlarged and altered by Oudea or one of the vicegerents who succeeded him, in which many a great lord of the place must have resided down to the time of the Christian era. The site on which it was built in the Girsu quarter of. the city was not entirely unoccupied at the time of its foundation. Urbau had raised a ziggurat on that very spot some centuries previously, and the walls which he had constructed were falling into ruin.

[Illustration: 248.jpg THE PLAN OF A PALACE BUILT BY GUDEA.]

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Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from Heuzey-Sarzec. The plan is traced upon the tablet held in the lap of Statue E in the Louvre. Below the plan can be seen the ruler marked with the divisions used by the architect for drawing his designs to the desired scale; the scribe's stylus is represented lying on the left of the plan. [Prof. Petrie has shown that the unit of measurement represented on this ruler is the cubit of the Pyramid-builders of Egypt.—Te.]

Gudea did not destroy the work of his remote predecessor, he merely incorporated it into the substructures of the new building, thus showing an indifference similar to that evinced by the Pharaohs for the monuments of a former dynasty. The palaces, like the temples, never rose directly from the soil, but were invariably built on the top of an artificial mound of crude brick. At Lagash, this solid platform rises to the height of 40 feet above the plain, and the only means of access to the top is by a single narrow steep staircase, easily cut off or defended.

[Illustration: 249.jpg TERRA-COTTA BARREL-right]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from the facsimile by Place.

The palace which surmounts this artificial eminence describes a sort of irregular rectangle, 174 feet long by 69 feet wide, and had, contrary to the custom in Egypt, the four angles orientated to the four cardinal points. The two principal sides are not parallel, but swell out slightly towards the middle, and the flexion of the lines almost follows the contour of one of those little clay cones upon which the kings were wont to inscribe their annals or dedications. This flexure was probably not intentional on the part of the architect, but was owing to the difficulty of keeping a wall of such considerable extent in a straight line from one end to another; and all Eastern nations, whether Chaldaeans or Egyptians, troubled themselves but little about correctness of alignment, since defects of this kind were scarcely ever perceptible in the actual edifice, and are only clearly revealed in the plan drawn out to scale with modern precision.*

* *Mons*. Heuzey thinks that the outward deflection of the lines is owing "merely to a primitive method of obtaining greater solidity of construction, and of giving a better foundation to these long facades, which are placed upon artificial terraces of crude brick always subject to cracks and settlements." I think that the explanation of the facts which I have given in the text is simpler than that ingeniously proposed by *Mons*. Heuzey: the masons, having begun to build the wall at one end, were unable to carry it on in a straight line until it reached the spot denoted on the architect's plan, and therefore altered the direction of the wall when they detected their error; or, having begun to build the wall from both ends simultaneously, were not successful in making the two lines meet correctly, and they have frankly patched up the junction by a mass of projecting brickwork which conceals their unskilfulness.

[Illustration: 250.jpg PLAN OF THE EXISTING BUILDINGS OF TELLOH.]

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Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from Heuzey-Sarzec.

The facade of the building faces south-east, and is divided into three blocks of unequal size. The centre of the middle block for a length of 18 feet projects some 3 feet from the main front, and, by directly facing the spectator, ingeniously masks the obtuse angle formed by the meeting of the two walls. This projection is flanked right and left by rectangular grooves, similar to those which ornament the facades of the fortresses and brick houses of the Ancient Empire in Egypt: the regular alternation of projections and hollows breaks the monotony of the facing by the play of light and shade. Beyond these, again, the wall surface is broken by semicircular pilasters some 17 inches in diameter, without bases, capitals, or even a moulding, but placed side by side like so many tree-trunks or posts forming a palisade.

[Illustration: 251.jpg DECORATION OF COLOURED CONES ON THE FACADE AT URUK]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from the sketch by Loftus.

Various schemes of decoration succeed each other in progressive sequence, less ornate and at greater distances apart, the further they recede from the central block and the nearer they approach to the extremities of the facade. They stop short at the southern angle, and the two sides of the edifice running from south to west, and again from west to north, are flat, bare surfaces, unbroken by projection or groove to relieve the poverty and monotony of their appearance. The decoration reappears on the north-east front, where the arrangement of the principal facade is partly reproduced. The grooved divisions here start from the angles, and the engaged columns are wanting, or rather they are transferred to the central projection, and from a distance have the effect of a row of gigantic organ-pipes. We may well ask if this squat and heavy mass of building, which must have attracted the eye from all parts of the town, had nothing to relieve the dull and dismal colour of its component bricks.

[Illustration: 252.jpg PILASTERS OF THE FACADE OF GUDEA'S PALACE]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from Heuzey-Sarzec

The idea might not have occurred to us had we not found elsewhere an attempt to lessen the gloomy appearance of the architecture by coloured plastering. At Uruk, the walls of the palace are decorated by means of terra-cotta cones, fixed deep into the solid plaster and painted red, black, or yellow, forming interlaced or diaper patterns of chevrons, spirals, lozenges, and triangles, with a very fair result: this mosaic of coloured plaster covered all the surfaces, both flat and curved, giving to the building a cheerful aspect entirely wanting in that of Lagash.

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A long narrow trough of yellowish limestone stood in front of the palace, and was raised on two steps: it was carved in relief on the outside with figures of women standing with outstretched hands, passing to each other vases from which gushed forth two streams of water. This trough formed a reservoir, which was filled every morning for the use of the men and beasts, and those whom some business or a command brought to the palace could refresh themselves there while waiting to be received by the master. The gates which gave access to the interior were placed at somewhat irregular intervals: two opened from the principal facade, but on each of the other sides there was only one entrance. They were arched and so low that admittance was not easily gained; they were closed with two-leaved doors of cedar or cypress, provided with bronze hinges, which turned upon two blackish stones firmly set in the masonry on either side, and usually inscribed with the name of the founder or that of the reigning sovereign. Two of the entrances possessed a sort of covered way, in which the soldiers of the external watch could take shelter from the heat of the sun by day, from the cold at night, and from the dews at dawn. On crossing the threshold, a corridor, flanked with two small rooms for porters or warders, led into a courtyard surrounded with buildings of sufficient depth to take up nearly half of the area enclosed within the walls. This court was moreover a semi-public place, to which tradesmen, merchants, suppliants, and functionaries of all ranks had easy access. A suite of three rooms shut off in the north-east angle did duty for a magazine or arsenal. The southern portion of the building was occupied by the State apartments, the largest of which measures only 40 feet in length. In these rooms Gudea and his successors gave audience to their nobles and administered justice. The administrative officers and the staff who had charge of them were probably located in the remaining part of the building. The roof was flat, and ran all round the enclosing wall, forming a terrace, access to it being gained by a staircase built between the principal entrance and the arsenal. At the northern angle rose a ziggurat. Custom demanded that the sovereign should possess a temple within his dwelling, where he could fulfil his religious duties without going into the town and mixing with the crowd. At Lagash the sacred tower was of older date than the palace, and possibly formed part of the ancient building of Urbau. It was originally composed of three stories, but the lower one was altered by Gudea, and disappeared entirely in the thickness of the basal platform. The second story thus became the bottom one; it was enlarged, slightly raised above the neighbouring roofs, and was probably crowned by a sanctuary dedicated to Ningirsu. It was, indeed, a monument of modest proportions, and most of the public temples soared far above it; but, small as it was, the whole town

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might be seen from the summit, with its separate quarters and its belt of gardens; and beyond, the open country intersected with streams, studded with isolated villages, patches of wood, pools and weedy marshes left by the retiring inundation, and in the far distance the lines of trees and bushes which bordered the banks of the Euphrates and its confluents. Should a troop of enemies venture within the range of sight, or should a suspicious tumult arise within the city, the watchers posted on the highest terrace would immediately give the alarm, and 'through their warning the king would have time to close his gates, and take measures to resist the invading enemy or crush the revolt of his subjects.

[Illustration: 255.jpg STONE SOCKET OF ONE OF THE DOORS IN THE PALACE OF GUDEA.( right)]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from Heuzey-Sarzec.

The northern apartments of the palace were appropriated to Gudea and his family. They were placed with their back to the entrance court, and were divided into two groups; the sovereign, his male children and their attendants, inhabited the western one, while the women and their slaves were cloistered, so to speak, in the northern set. The royal dwelling had an external exit by means of a passage issuing on the north-west of the enclosure, and it also communicated with the great courtyard by a vaulted corridor which ran along one side of the base of the ziggurat: the doors which, closed these two entrances opened wide enough to admit only one person at a time, and to the right and left were recesses in the wall which enabled the guards to examine all comers unobserved, and stab them promptly if there were anything suspicious in their behaviour. Eight chambers were lighted from the courtyard. In one of them were kept all the provisions for the day, while another served as a kitchen: the head, cook carried on his work at a sort of rectangular dresser of moderate size, on which several fireplaces were marked out by little dividing walls of burnt bricks, to accommodate as many pots or pans of various sizes. A well sunk in the corner right down below the substructure provided the water needed for culinary purposes. The king and his belongings accommodated themselves in the remaining five or six rooms as best they could. A corridor, guarded as carefully as the one previously described, led to his private apartments and to those of his wives: these comprised a yard, some half-dozen cells varying in size, a kitchen, a well, and a door through which the servants could come and go, without passing through the men's quarters. The whole description in no way corresponds with the marvellous ideal of an Oriental palace which we form for ourselves: the apartments are mean and dismal, imperfectly lighted by the door or by some small aperture timidly cut in the ceiling, arranged so as to protect the inmates from the heat and dust, but without a thought given to luxury or display. The walls were entirely void of any cedar woodwork inlaid with gold, or panels of mosaic such as we find in the temples, nor were they hung with dyed or embroidered draperies such as we

moderns love to imagine, and which we spread about in profusion, when we attempt to reproduce the interior of an ancient house or palace.*

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* *Mons*. de Sarzec expressly states that he was unable to find anywhere in the palace of Gudea “the slightest trace of any coating on the walls, either of colour or glazed brick. The walls appear to have been left bare, without any decoration except the regular joining of the courses of brickwork.” The wood panelling was usually reserved for the temples or sacred edifices: *Mons*. de Sarzec found the remains of carbonized cedar panels in the ruins of a sanctuary dedicated to Ningirsu. According to *Mons*. Heuzey, the wall-hangings were probably covered with geometrical designs, similar to tho"e formed by the terra-cotta cones on the walls of the palace at Uruk; the inscriptions, however, which are full of minute details with regard to the construction and ornamentation of the temples and palaces, have hitherto contained nothing which would lead us to infer that hangings were used for mural decoration in Chaldoa or Assyria.

The walls had to remain bare for the sake of coolness: at the most they were only covered with a coat of white plaster, on which were painted, in one or two colours, some scene of civil or religious life, or troops of fantastic monsters struggling with one another, or men each with a bird seated on his Wrist. The furniture was not less scanty than the decoration; there were mats on the ground, coffers in which were kept the linen and wearing apparel, low beds inlaid with ivory and metal and provided with coverings and a thin mattress, copper or wooden stands to support lamps or vases, square stools on four legs united by crossbars, armchairs with lions’ claw feet, resembling the Egyptian armchairs in outline, and making us ask if they were brought into Chaldaea by caravans, or made from models which had come from some other country. A few rare objects of artistic character might be found, which bore witness to a certain taste for elegance and refinement; as, for instance, a kind of circular trough of black stone, probably used to support a vase. Three rows of imbricated scales surrounded the base of this, while seven small sitting figures lean back against the upper part with an air of satisfaction which is most cleverly rendered. The decoration of the larger chambers used for public receptions and official ceremonies, while never assuming the monumental character which we observe in contemporary Egyptian buildings, afforded more scope for richness and variety than was offered by the living-rooms.

[Illustration: 258.jpg STAND OF BLACK STONE FROM THE PALACE OF TELLOH.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from Heuzey-Sarzec.

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Small tablets of brownish limestone, let into the wall or affixed to its surface by terra-cotta pegs, and decorated with inscriptions, represented in a more or less artless fashion the figure of the sovereign officiating before some divinity, while his children and servants took part in the ceremony by their chanting. Inscribed bricks celebrating the king's exploits were placed here and there in conspicuous places. These were not embedded like the others in two layers of bitumen or lime, but were placed in full view upon bronze statues of divinities or priests, fixed into the ground or into some part of the masonry as magical nails destined to preserve the bricks from destruction, and consequently to keep the memory of the dedicator continually before posterity. Stelaa engraved on both sides recalled the wars of past times, the battle-field, the scenes of horror which took place there, and the return of the victor and his triumph. Sitting or standing figures of diorite, silicious sandstone or hard limestone, bearing inscriptions on their robes or shoulders, perpetuated the features of the founder or of members of his family, and commemorated the pious donations which had obtained for him the favour of the gods: the palace of Lagash contained dozens of such statues, several of which have come down to us almost intact—one of the ancient Urbau, and nine of Gudea.

To judge by the space covered and the arrangement of the rooms, the vicegerents of Lagash and the chiefs of towns of minor importance must, as a rule, have been content with a comparatively small number of servants; their court probably resembled that of the Egyptian barons who lived much about the same period, such as Khnumhotpu of the nome of the Gazelle, or Thothotpu of Hermopolis. In great cities such as Babylon the palace occupied a much larger area, and the crowd of courtiers was doubtless as great as that which thronged about the Pharaohs. No exact enumeration of them has come down to us, but the titles which we come across show with what minuteness they defined the offices about the person of the sovereign. His costume alone required almost as many persons as there were garments. The men wore the light loin-cloth or short-sleeved tunic which scarcely covered the knees; after the fashion of the Egyptians, they threw over the loin-cloth and the tunic a large "abayah," whose shape and material varied with the caprice of fashion. They often chose for this purpose a sort of shawl of a plain material, fringed or ornamented with a flat stripe round the edge; often they seem to have preferred it ribbed, or artificially kilted from top to bottom.*

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* The relatively modern costume was described by Herodotus, i. 114; it was almost identical with the ancient one, as proved by the representations on the cylinders and monuments of Telloh. The short-sleeved tunic is more rarely represented, and the loin-cloth is usually hidden under the abayah in the case of nobles and kings. We see the princes of Lagash wearing the simple loin-cloth, on the monuments of Urnina, for example. For the Egyptian abayah, and the manner of representing it, cf. vol. i. pp. 69, 71.

The favourite material in ancient times, however, seems to have been a hairy, shaggy cloth or woollen stuff, whose close fleecy thread hung sometimes straight, sometimes crimped or waved, in regular rows like flounces one above another. This could be arranged squarely around the neck, like a mantel, but was more often draped crosswise over the left shoulder and brought under the right arm-pit, so as to leave the upper part of the breast and the arm bare on that side. It made a convenient and useful garment—an excellent protection in summer from the sun, and from the icy north wind in the winter. The feet were shod with sandals, a tight-fitting cap covered the head, and round it was rolled a thick strip of linen, forming a sort of rudimentary turban, which completed the costume.*

*Cf. the head belonging to one of the statues of Telloh, which is reproduced on p. 112 of this volume. We notice the same head-dress on several intaglios and monuments, and also on the terra-cotta plaque which will be found on p. 330 of this volume, and which represents a herdsman wrestling with a lion. Until we have further evidence, we cannot state, as G. Raw-linson did, that this strip forming a turban was of camel's hair; the date of the introduction of the camel into Chaldoa still remains uncertain.*

It is questionable whether, as in Egypt, wigs and false beards formed part of the toilette. On some monuments we notice smooth faces and close-cropped heads; on others the men appear with long hair, either falling loose or twisted into a knot on the back of the neck. While the Egyptians delighted in garments of thin white linen, but slightly plaited or crimped, the dwellers on the banks of the Euphrates preferred thick and heavy stuffs patterned and striped with many colours. The kings wore the same costume as their subjects, but composed of richer and finer materials, dyed red or blue, decorated with floral, animal, or geometrical designs;** a high tower-shaped tiara covered the forehead,*** unless replaced by a diadem of Sin or some of the other gods, which was a conical mitre supporting a double pair of horns, and sometimes surmounted by a sort of diadem of feathers and mysterious figures, embroidered or painted on the cap. Their arms were loaded with massive bracelets and their fingers with rings; they wore necklaces and earrings, and carried each a dagger in the belt.

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* Dignitaries went bareheaded and shaved the chin; see, for example, the two bas-reliefs given on pp. 105 and 244 of this volume; cf. the heads reproduced as tailpieces on pp. 2, 124. The knot of hair behind on the central figure is easily distinguished in the vignette on p. 266 of this volume.** The details of colour and ornamentation, not furnished by the Chaldaean monuments, are given in the wall-painting at Beni-Nasan representing the arrival of Asiatics in Egypt, which belongs to a period contemporary with or slightly anterior to the reign of Gudea. The resemblance of the stuffs in which they are clothed to those of the Chaldaean garments, and the identity of the patterns on them with the geometrical decoration of painted cones on the palace at Uruk, have been pointed out with justice by H. G. Tomkins*** The high tiara is represented among others on the head of Mardukna-dinakhe, King of Babylon: cf. what is said of the conical mitre, the headdress of Sin, on pp. 14, 169 of this volume.

[Illustration: 262.jpg FEMALE SERVANT BARE TO THE WAIST.(left)]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from the bronze figure in the Louvre, published by Heuzey-Sarzec, *Decouvertes en Chaldee*, pl. 14.

The royal wardrobe, jewels, arms, and insignia formed so many distinct departments, and each was further divided into minor sections for body-linen, washing, or for this or that kind of headdress or sceptre. The dress of the women, which was singularly like that of the men, required no less a staff of attendants. The female servants, as well as the male, went about bare to the waist, at all events while working indoors. When they went out, they wore the same sort of tunic or loin-cloth, but longer and more resembling a petticoat; they had the same “abayah” drawn round the shoulders or rolled about the body like a cloak, but with the women it nearly touched the ground; sometimes an actual dress seems to have been substituted for the “abayah,” drawn in to the figure by a belt and cut out of the same hairy material as that of which the mantles were made. The boots were of soft leather, laced, and without heels; the women’s ornaments were more numerous than those of the men, and comprised necklaces, bracelets, ankle, finger, and ear rings; their hair was separated into bands and kept in place on the forehead by a fillet, falling in thick plaits or twisted into a coil on the nape of the neck.

[Illustration: 262.jpg COSTUME OF A CHALDAEN LADY (right)]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from the alabaster statuette in the Louvre, published in Heuzey. She holds in her hand the jar full of water, analogous to the streaming vase mentioned above.

A great deal of the work was performed by foreign or native slaves, generally under the command of eunuchs, to whom the king and royal princes entrusted most of the superintendence of their domestic arrangements; they guarded and looked after the sleeping apartments, they fanned and kept the flies from their master, and handed him

his food and drink.  Eunuchs in Egypt were either unknown or but little esteemed:  they never seem to have been used, even in times when relations with Asia were of daily occurrence, and when they might have been supplied from the Babylonian slave-markets.

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All these various officials closely attached to the person of the sovereign—heads of the wardrobe, chamberlains, cupbearers, bearers of the royal sword or of the flabella, commanders of the eunuchs or of the guards—had, by the nature of their duties, daily opportunities of gaining a direct influence over their master and his government, and from among them he often chose the generals of his army or the administrators of his domains. Here, again, as far as the few monuments and the obscurity of the texts permit of our judging, we find indications of a civil and military organization analogous to that of Egypt: the divergencies which contemporaries may have been able to detect in the two national systems are effaced by the distance of time, and we are struck merely by the resemblances. As all business transactions were carried on by barter or by the exchange of merchandise for weighed quantities of the precious metals, the taxes were consequently paid in kind: the principal media being corn and other cereals, dates, fruits, stuffs, live animals and slaves, as well as gold, silver, lead, and copper, either in its native state or melted into bars fashioned into implements or ornamented vases. Hence we continually come across fiscal storehouses, both in town and country, which demanded the services of a whole troop of functionaries and workmen: administrators of corn, cattle, precious metals, wine and oil; in fine, as many administrators as there were cultures or industries in the country presided over the gathering of the products into the central depots and regulated their redistribution. A certain portion was reserved for the salaries of the employes and the pay of the workmen engaged in executing public works: the surplus accumulated in the treasury and formed a reserve, which was not drawn upon except in cases of extreme necessity. Every palace, in addition to its living-rooms, contained within its walls large store-chambers filled with provisions and weapons, which made it more or less a fortress, furnished with indispensable requisites for sustaining a prolonged siege either against an enemy’s troops or the king’s own subjects in revolt. The king always kept about him bodies of soldiers who perhaps were foreign mercenaries, like the Mazaiu of the armies of the Pharaohs, and who formed his permanent body-guard in times of peace. When a war was imminent, a military levy was made upon his domains, but we are unable to find out whether the recruits thus raised were drawn indiscriminately from the population in general, or merely from a special class, analogous to that of the warriors which we find in Egypt, who were paid in the same way by grants of land. The equipment of these soldiers was of the rudest kind: they had no cuirass, but carried a rectangular shield, and, in the case of those of higher rank at all events, a conical metal helmet, probably of beaten copper, provided with a piece to protect the back of the neck; the heavy infantry were

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armed with a pike tipped with bronze ox-copper, an axe or sharp adze, a stone-headed mace, and a dagger; the light troops were provided only with the bow and sling. As early as the third millennium b.c., the king went to battle in a chariot drawn by onagers, or perhaps horses; he had his own peculiar weapon, which was a curved baton probably terminating in a metal point, and resembling the sceptre of the Pharaohs. Considerable quantities of all these arms were stored in the arsenals, which contained depots for bows, maces, and pikes, and even the stones needed for the slings had their special department for storage. At the beginning of each campaign, a distribution of weapons to the newly levied troops took place; but as soon as the war was at an end, the men brought back their accoutrements, which were stored till they were again required. The valour of the soldiers and their chiefs was then rewarded; the share of the spoil for some consisted of cattle, gold, corn, a female slave, and vessels of value; for others, lands or towns in the conquered country, regulated by the rank of the recipients or the extent of the services they had rendered.

[Illustration: 266.jpg A SOLDIER BRINGING PRISONERS AND SPOIL.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from the Chaldaean intaglio in the British. Museum.

Property thus given was hereditary, and privileges were often added to it which raised the holder to the rank of a petty prince: for instance, no royal official was permitted to impose a tax upon such lands, or take the cattle off them, or levy provisions upon them; no troop of soldiers might enter them, not even for the purpose of arresting a fugitive. Most of the noble families possessed domains of this kind, and constituted in each kingdom a powerful and wealthy feudal aristocracy, whose relations to their sovereign were probably much the same as those which bound the nomarchs to the Pharaoh. The position of these nobles was not more stable than that of the dynasties under which they lived: while some among them gained power by marriages or by continued acquisitions of land, others fell into disgrace and were ruined. As the soil belonged to the gods, it is possible that these nobles were supposed, in theory, 'to depend upon the gods; but as the kings were the vicegerents of the gods upon earth, it was to the king, as a matter of fact, that they owed their elevation. Every state, therefore, comprised two parts, each subject to a distinct regime: one being the personal domain of the suzerain, which he managed himself, and from which he drew the revenues; the other was composed of fiefs, whose lords paid tribute and owed certain obligations to the king, the nature of which we are as yet unable to define.

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The Chaldaean, like the Egyptian scribe, was the pivot on which the machinery of this double royal and seignorial administration turned. He does not appear to have enjoyed as much consideration as his fellow-official in the Nile Valley: the Chaldaean princes, nobles, priests, soldiers, and temple or royal officials, did not covet the title of scribe, or pride themselves upon holding that office side by side with their other dignities, as we see was the case with their Egyptian contemporaries. The position of a scribe, nevertheless, was an important one. We continually meet with it in all grades of society —in the palace, in the temples, in the storehouses, in private dwellings; in fine, the scribe was ubiquitous, at court, in the town, in the country, in the army, managing affairs both small and great, and seeing that they were carried on regularly. His education differed but little from that given to the Egyptian scribe; he learned the routine of administrative or judicial affairs, the formularies for correspondence either with nobles or with ordinary people, the art of writing, of calculating quickly, and of making out bills correctly. We may well ask whether he ever employed papyrus or prepared skins for these purposes. It would, indeed, seem strange that, after centuries of intercourse, no caravan should have brought into Chaldaean any of those materials which were in such constant use for literary purposes in Africa;* yet the same clay which furnished the architect with such an abundant building material appears to have been the only medium for transmitting the language which the scribes possessed. They were always provided with slabs of a fine plastic clay, carefully mixed and kept sufficiently moist to take easily the impression of an object, but at the same time sufficiently firm to prevent the marks once made from becoming either blurred or effaced. When a scribe had a text to copy or a document to draw up, he chose out one of his slabs, which he placed flat upon his left palm, and taking in the right hand a triangular stylus of flint, copper, bronze, or bone,** he at once set to work. The instrument, in early times, terminated in a fine point, and the marks made by it when it was gently pressed upon the clay were slender and of uniform thickness; in later times, the extremity of the stylus was cut with a bevel, and the impression then took the shape of a metal nail or a wedge.

* On the Assyrian monuments we frequently see scribes taking a list of the spoil, or writing letters on tablets and some other soft material, either papyrus or prepared skin. Sayce has given good reasons for believing that the Chaldaeanns of the early dynasties knew of the papyrus, and either made it themselves, or had it brought from Egypt.** See the triangular stylus of copper or bronze reproduced by the side of the measuring-rule, and the plan on the tablet of Gudea, p. 248 of this volume. The Assyrian Museum in the

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Louvre possesses several large, flat styli of bone, cut to a point at one end, which appear to have belonged to the Assyrian scribes. Taylor discovered in a tomb at Eridu a flint tool, which may have served for the same purpose as the metal or bone styli.

[Illustration: 268.jpg MANUSCRIPT ON PAPYRUS IN HEIROGLYPHICS]

They wrote from left to right along the upper part of the tablet, and covered both sides of it with closely written lines, which sometimes ran over on to the edges. When the writing was finished, the scribe sent his work to the potter, who put it in the kiln and baked it, or the writer may have had a small oven at his own disposition, as a clerk with us would have his table or desk. The shape of these documents varied, and sometimes strikes us as being peculiar: besides the tablets and the bricks, we find small solid cones, or hollow cylinders of considerable size, on which the kings related their exploits or recorded the history of their wars or the dedication of their buildings. This method had a few inconveniences, but many advantages. These clay books were heavy to hold and clumsy to handle, while the characters did not stand out well from the brown, yellow, and whitish background of the material; but, on the other hand, a poem, baked and incorporated into the page itself, ran less danger of destruction than if scribbled in ink on sheets of papyrus. Fire could make no impression on it; it could withstand water for a considerable length of time; even if broken, the pieces were still of use: as long as it was not pulverized, the entire document could be restored, with the exception, perhaps, of a few signs, or 'some scraps of a sentence. The inscriptions which have been saved from the foundations of the most ancient temples, several of which date back forty or fifty centuries, are for the most part as clear and legible as when they left the hands of the writer who engraved them or of the workmen who baked them. It is owing to the material to which they were committed that we possess the principal works of Chaldaean literature which have come down to us—poems, annals, hymns, magical incantations; how few fragments of these would ever have reached us had their authors confided them to parchment or paper, after the manner of the Egyptian scribes! The greatest danger that they ran was that of being left forgotten in the corner of the chamber in which they had been kept, or buried under the rubbish of a building after a fire or some violent catastrophe; even then the *debris* were the means of preserving them, by falling over them and covering them up. Protected under the ruins, they would lie there for centuries, till the fortunate explorer should bring them to light and deliver them over to the patient study of the learned.

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The cuneiform character in itself is neither picturesque nor decorative. It does not offer that delightful assemblage of birds and snakes, of men and quadrupeds, of heads and limbs, of tools, weapons, stars, trees, and boats, which succeed each other in perplexing order on the Egyptian monuments, to give permanence to the glory of Pharaoh and the greatness of his gods. Cuneiform writing is essentially composed of thin short lines, placed in juxtaposition or crossing each other in a somewhat clumsy fashion; it has the appearance of numbers of nails scattered about at haphazard, and its angular configuration, and its stiff and spiny appearance, gives the inscriptions a dull and forbidding aspect which no artifice of the engraver can overcome.

[Illustration: 271.jpg Page image]

[Illustration: 272.jpg Page Image]

Yet, in spite of their seemingly arbitrary character, this mass of strokes had its source in actual hieroglyphs. As in the origin of the Egyptian script the earliest writers had begun by drawing on stone or clay the outline of the object of which they desired to convey the idea. But, whereas in Egypt the artistic temperament of the race, and the increasing skill of their sculptors, had by degrees brought the drawing of each sign to such perfection that it became a miniature portrait of the being or object to be reproduced, in Chaldaea, on the contrary, the signs became degraded from their original forms on account of the difficulty experienced in copying them with the stylus on the clay tablets: they lost their original vertical position, and were placed horizontally, retaining finally but the very faintest resemblance to the original model. For instance, the Chaldaean conception of the sky was that of a vault divided into eight segments by diameters running from the four cardinal points and from their principal subdivisions [symbol] the external circle was soon omitted, the transverse lines alone remaining [symbol], which again was simplified into a kind of irregular cross [symbol]. The figure of a man standing, indicated by the lines resembling his contour, was placed on its side [symbol] and reduced little by little till it came to be merely a series of ill-balanced lines [symbol] [symbol]. We may still recognize in [symbol] the five fingers and palm of a human hand [symbol]; but who would guess at the first glance that [symbol] stands for the foot which the scribes strove to place beside each character the special hieroglyph from which it had been derived. Several fragments of these still exist, a study of which seems to show that the Assyrian scribes of a more recent period were at times as much puzzled as we are ourselves when they strove to get at the principles of their own script: they had come to look on it as nothing more than a system of arbitrary combinations, whose original form had passed all the more readily into oblivion, because it had been borrowed from a foreign race, who, as far as they were concerned, had

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ceased to have a separate existence. The script had been invented by the Sumerians in the very earliest times, and even they may have brought it in an elemental condition from their distant fatherland. The first articulate sounds which, being attached to the hieroglyphs, gave to each an unalterable pronunciation, were words in the Sumerian tongue; subsequently, when the natural progress of human thought led thi Chaldaeans to replace, as in Egypt, the majority of the signs representing ideas by those representing sounds, the syllabic values which were developed side by side with the ideographic values were purely Sumerian. The group [symbol] throughout all its forms, designates in the first place the sky, then the god of the sky, and finally the concept of divinity in general. In its first two senses it is read ana, but in the last it becomes dingir, dimir; and though it never lost its double force, it was soon separated from the ideas which it evoked, to be used merely to denote the syllable an wherever it occurred, even in cases where it had no connection with the sky or heavenly things. The same process was applied to other signs with similar results: after having merely denoted ideas, they came to stand for the sounds corresponding to them, and then passed on to be mere syllables—complex syllables in which several consonants may be distinguished, or simple syllables composed of only one consonant and one vowel, or vice versa. The Egyptians had carried this system still further, and in many cases had kept only one part of the syllable, namely, a mute consonant: they detached, for example, the final u from pu and bu, and gave only the values b and p to the human leg J and the mat Q. The peoples of the Euphrates stopped halfway, and admitted actual letters for the vowel sounds a, i, and u only. Their system remained a syllabary interspersed with ideograms, but excluded an alphabet.

[Illustration: 274.jpg Page image]

It was eminently wanting in simplicity, but, taken as a whole, it would not have presented as many difficulties as the script of the Egyptians, had it not been forced, at a very early period, to adapt itself to the exigencies of a language for which it had not been made. When it came to be appropriated by the Semites, the ideographs, which up till then had been read in Sumerian, did not lose the sounds which they possessed in that tongue, but borrowed others from the new language. For example, “god” was called ilu, and “heaven” called shami: [symbol], when encountered in inscriptions by the Semites, were read [symbol] when the context showed the sense to be “god,” and shami when the character evidently meant “heaven.” They added these two vocables to the preceding ana, an, dingir, dimir; but they did not stop there: they confounded the picture of the star [symbol] with that of the sky, and sometimes attributed to [symbol], the pronunciation kakkabu, and the meaning of star. The same process was applied to all the groups, and

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the Semitic values being added to the Sumerian, the scribes soon found themselves in possession of a double set of syllables both simple and compound. This multiplicity of sounds, this polyphonous character attached to their signs, became a cause of embarrassment even to them. For instance, [symbol] when found in the body of a word, stood for the syllables hi or hat, mid, mit, til, ziz; as an ideogram it was used for a score of different concepts: that of lord or master, inu, bilu; that of blood, damu; for a corpse, pagru, shalamtu; for the feeble or oppressed, kahtu, nagpu; as the hollow and the spring, nakbu; for the state of old age, labaru; of dying, matu; of killing, mitu; of opening, pitu; besides other meanings. Several phonetic complements were added to it; it was preceded by ideograms which determined the sense in which it was to be read, but which, like the Egyptian determinatives, were not pronounced, and in this manner they succeeded in limiting the number of mistakes which it was possible to make. With a final [symbol] it would always mean [symbol] bilu, the master, but with an initial [symbol] (thus [symbol]) it denoted the gods Bel or Ea; with [symbol]. which indicates a man [symbol], it would be the corpse, pagru and shalamtu; with [symbol] prefixed, it meant [symbol]—mutanu, the plague or death and so on. In spite of these restrictions and explanations, the obscurity of the meaning was so great, that in many cases the scribes ran the risk of being unable to make out certain words and understand certain passages; many of the values occurred but rarely, and remained unknown to those who did not take the trouble to make a careful study of the syllabary and its history. It became necessary to draw up tables for their use, in which all the signs were classified and arranged, with their meanings and phonetic transcriptions. These signs occupied one column, and in three or four corresponding columns would be found, first, the name assigned to it; secondly, the spelling, in syllables, of the phonetic values which the signs expressed, thirdly, the Sumerian and Assyrian words which they served to render, and sometimes glosses which completed the explanation.

[Illustration: 276.jpg Tables]

Even this is far from exhausting the matter. Several of these dictionaries went back to a very early date, and tradition ascribes to Sargon of Agade the merit of having them drawn up or of having collected them in his palace. The number of them naturally increased in the course of centuries; in the later times of the Assyrian empire they were so numerous as to form nearly one-fourth of the works in the library at Nineveh under Assurbanipal. Other tablets contained dictionaries of archaic or obsolete terms, grammatical paradigms, extracts from laws or ancient hymns analyzed sentence by sentence and often word by word, interlinear glosses, collections of Sumerian formulas translated into Semitic speech—a child’s guide, in fact, which the savants of those times consulted with as much advantage as those of our own day have done, and which must have saved them from many a blunder.

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When once accustomed to the difficulties and intricacies of their calling, the scribes were never at a standstill. The stylus was plied in Chaldaea no less assiduously than was the calamus in Egypt, and the indestructible clay, which the Chaldaeans were as a rule content to use, proved a better medium in the long run than the more refined material employed by their rivals: the baked or merely dried clay tablets have withstood the assaults of time in surprising quantities, while the majority of papyri have disappeared without leaving a trace behind. If at Babylon we rarely meet with those representations, which we find everywhere in the tombs of Saqqara or Gizeh, of the people themselves and their families, their occupations, amusements, and daily intercourse, we possess, on the other hand, that of which the ruins of Memphis have furnished us but scanty instances up to the present time, namely, judicial documents, regulating the mutual relations of the people and conferring a legal sanction on the various events of their life. Whether it were a question of buying lands or contracting a marriage, of a loan on interest, or the sale of slaves, the scribe was called in with his soft tablets to engross the necessary agreement. In this he would insert as many details as possible—the day of the month, the year of the reigning sovereign, and at times, to be still more precise, an allusion to some important event which had just taken place, and a memorial of which was inserted in official annals, such as the taking of a town, the defeat of a neighbouring king, the dedication of a temple, the building of a wall or fortress, the opening of a canal, or the ravages of an inundation: the names of the witnesses and magistrates before whom the act was confirmed were also added to those of the contracting parties. The method of sanctioning it was curious. An indentation was made with the finger-nail on one of the sides of the tablet, and this mark, followed or preceded by the mention of a name, “Nail of Zabudamik,” “Nail of Abzii,” took the place of our more or less complicated sign-manuals. In later times, only the buyer and witnesses approved by a nail-mark, while the seller appended his seal; an inscription incised above the impress indicating the position of the signatory. Every one of any importance possessed a seal, which he wore attached to his wrist or hung round his neck by a cord; he scarcely ever allowed it to be separated from his person during his lifetime, and after death it was placed with him in the tomb in order to prevent any improper use being made of it. It was usually a cylinder, sometimes a truncated cone with a convex base, either of marble, red or green jasper, agate, cornelian, onyx or rock crystal, but rarely of metal. Engraved upon it in intaglio was an emblem or subject chosen by the owner, such as the single figure of a god or goddess, an act of adoration, a sacrifice, or an episode in the story of Gilgames, followed sometimes by the inscription

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of a name and title. The cylinder was rolled, or, in the case of the cone, merely pressed on the clay, in the space reserved for it. In several localities the contracting parties had recourse to a very ingenious procedure to prevent the agreements being altered or added to by unscrupulous persons. When the document had been impressed on the tablet, it was enveloped in a second coating of clay, upon which an exact copy of the original was made, the latter thus becoming inaccessible to forgers: if by chance, in course of time, any disagreement should take place, and an alteration of the visible text should be suspected, the outer envelope was broken in the presence of witnesses, and a comparison was made to see if the exterior corresponded exactly with the interior version. Families thus had their private archives, to which additions were rapidly made by every generation; every household thus accumulated not only the evidences of its own history, but to some extent that of other families with whom they had formed alliances, or had business or friendly relations.*

* The tablets of Tell-Sifr come from one of these family collections. They all, in number about one hundred, rested on three enormous bricks, and they had been covered with a mat of which the half-decayed remains were still visible: three other crude bricks covered the heap. The documents contained in them relate for the most part to the families of Sininana and Amililani, and form part of their archives.

[Illustration: 279.jpg THE TABLET OF TELL-SIFR, BROKEN TO SHOW THE TWO TEXTS.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from Loftus.

[Illustration: 280.jpg TABLET BEARING THE IMPRESS OF A SEAL]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a sketch by Layard.

The constitution of the family was of a complex character. It would appear that the people of each city were divided into clans, all of whose members claimed to be descended from a common ancestor, who had flourished at a more or less remote period. The members of each clan were by no means all in the same social position, some having gone down in the world, others having raised themselves; and amongst them we find many different callings—from agricultural labourers to scribes, and from merchants to artisans. No mutual tie existed among the majority of these members except the remembrance of their common origin, perhaps also a common religion, and eventual rights of succession or claims upon what belonged to each one individually. The branches which had become gradually separated from the parent stock, and which, taken all together, formed the clan, possessed each, on the contrary, a very strict organization. It is possible that, at the outset, the woman occupied the more important position, but at an early date the man became the head of the family,* and around him were ranged the wives, children, servants, and slaves, all of whom had their various duties and privileges.

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* The change in the condition of women would be due to the influence of Semitic ideas and customs in Chaldaea.

He offered the household worship to the gods of his race, in accordance with special rites which had come down to him from his father; he made at the tombs of his ancestors, at such times as were customary, the offerings and prayers which assured their repose in the other world, and his powers were as extensive in civil as in religious matters. He had absolute authority over all the members of his household, and anything undertaken by them without his consent was held invalid in the eyes of the law; his sons could not marry unless he had duly authorized them to do so. For this purpose he appeared before the magistrate with the future couple, and the projected union could not be held as an actual marriage, until he had affixed his seal or made his nail-mark on the contract tablet. It amounted, in fact, to a formal deed of sale, and the parents of the girl parted with her only in exchange for a proportionate gift from the bridegroom. One girl would be valued at a silver shekel by weight, while another was worth a mina, another much less;* the handing over of the price was accompanied with a certain solemnity. When the young man possessed no property as yet of his own, his family advanced him the sum needed for the purchase. On her side, the maiden did not enter upon her new life empty handed; her father, or, in the case of his death, the head of the family at the time being, provided her with a dowry suited to her social position, which was often augmented by considerable presents from her grandmother, aunts, and cousins.**

* Shamashnazir receives, as the price of his daughter, ten shekels of silver, which appears to have been an average price in the class of life to which he belonged.

** The nature of the dowry in ancient times is clear from the Sumero-Assyrian tablets in which the old legal texts are explained, and again from the contents of the contracts of Tell-Sifr, and the documents on stone, such as the Micliaux stone, in which we see women bringing their possessions into the community by marriage, and yet retaining the entire disposition of them.

The dowry would consist of a carefully marked out field of corn, a grove of date-palms, a house in the town, a trousseau, furniture, slaves, or ready money; the whole would be committed to clay, of which there would be three copies at least, two being given by the scribe to the contracting parties, while the third would be deposited in the hands of the magistrate. When the bride and bridegroom both belonged to the same class, or were possessed of equal fortunes, the relatives of the woman could exact an oath from the man that he would abstain from taking a second wife during her lifetime; a special article of the marriage agreement permitted the woman to go free should the husband break his faith, and bound him to pay an indemnity

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as a compensation for the insult he had offered her. This engagement on the part of the man, however, did not affect his relations with his female servants. In Chaldaea, as in Egypt, and indeed in the whole of the ancient world, they were always completely at the mercy of their purchaser, and the permission to treat them as he would had become so much of a custom that the begetting of children by their master was desired rather than otherwise: the complaints of the despised slave, who had not been taken into her master's favour, formed one of the themes of popular poetry at a very early period. When the contract tablet was finally sealed, one of the witnesses, who was required to be a free man, joined the hands of the young couple; nothing then remained to be done but to invite the blessing of the gods, and to end the day by a feast, which would unite both families and their guests. The evil spirits, however, always in quest of an easy prey, were liable to find their way into the nuptial chamber, favoured by the confusion inseparable from all household rejoicing: prudence demanded that their attempts should be frustrated, and that the newly married couple should be protected from their attacks. The companions of the bridegroom took possession of him, and, hand to hand and foot to foot, formed as it were a rampart round him with their bodies, and carried him off solemnly to his expectant bride. He then again repeated the words which he had said in the morning: "I am the son of a prince, gold and silver shall fill thy bosom; thou, even thou, shalt be my wife, I myself will be thy husband;" and he continued: "As the fruits borne by an orchard, so great shall be the abundance which I shall pour out upon this woman."* The priest then called down upon him benedictions from on high: "Therefore, O ye (gods), all that is bad and that is not good in this man, drive it far from him and give him strength. As for thee, O man, exhibit thy manhood, that this woman may be thy wife; thou, O woman, give that which makes thy womanhood, that this man may be thy husband." On the following morning, a thanksgiving sacrifice celebrated the completion of the marriage, and by purifying the new household drove from it the host of evil spirits.**

* This part of the ceremony is described on a Sumero- Assyrian tablet, of which two copies exist, discovered and translated by Pinches. The interpretation appears to me to result from the fact that mention is made, at the commencement of the column, of impious beings without gods, who might approach the man; in other places magical exorcisms indicate how much those spirits were dreaded "who deprived the bride of the embraces of the man." As Pinches remarks, the formula is also found in the part of the poem of Gilgames, where Ishtar wishes to marry the hero, which shows that the rite and its accompanying words belong to a remote past.** The text that describes these ceremonies

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was discovered and published by Pinches. As far as I can judge, it contained an exorcism against the "knotting of the tag," and the mention of this subject called up that of the marriage rites. The ceremony commanded on the day following the marriage was probably a purification: as late as the time of Herodotus, the union of man and woman rendered both impure, and they had to perform an ablution before recommencing their occupations.

The woman, once bound, could only escape from the sovereign power of her husband by death or divorce; but divorce for her was rather a trial to which she submitted than a right of which she could freely make use. Her husband could repudiate her at will without any complicated ceremonies. It was enough for him to say: "Thou art not my wife!" and to restore to her a sum of money equalling in value the dowry he had received with her;* he then sent her back to her father, with a letter informing him of the dissolution of the conjugal tie.** But if in a moment of weariness or anger she hurled the fatal formula at him: "Thou are not my husband!" her fate was sealed: she was thrown into the river and drowned.***

> * The sum is fixed at half a mina by the text of the Sumerian laws; but it was sometimes less, *e.g*. ten shekels, and sometimes more, *e.g*. a whole mina.

** Repudiation of a wife, and the ceremonial connected with it, are summarized, as far as ancient times are concerned, by a passage in the Sumero-Assyrian tablet, published by Rawlinson, and translated by Oppert-Menant. Bertin, on the contrary, takes the same text to be a description of the principal marriage-rites, and from it he draws the conclusion that the possibility of divorce was not admitted in Chaldaea between persons of noble family. Meissner very rightly returns to Oppert's interpretation, a few details in which he corrects.*** This fact was evident from the text of the so-called *Sumerian Laws concerning the Organization of the Family*, according to the generally received interpretation: according to that proposed by Oppert-Menant, it was the woman who had the right of causing the husband who had wronged her to be thrown into the river. The publication of the contracts of Iltani and of Bashtum appear to have shown conclusively the correctness of the ordinary translation: uncertainty with regard to one word prevents us from knowing whether the guilty wife were strangled before being thrown into the water, or if she were committed to the river alive.

The adulteress was also punished with death, but with death by the sword: and when the use of iron became widespread, the blade was to be of that metal. Another ancient custom only spared the criminal to devote her to a life of infamy: the outraged husband stripped her of her fleecy garments, giving her merely the loin-cloth in its place, which left her half naked, and then turned-her out of the house

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into the street, where she was at the mercy of the first passer-by. Women of noble or wealthy families found in their fortune a certain protection from the abuse of marital authority. The property which they brought with them by their marriage contract, remained at their own disposal.* They had the entire management of it, they farmed it out, they sold it, they spent the income from it as they liked, without interference from any one: the man enjoyed the comforts which it procured, but he could not touch it, and his hold upon it was so slight that his creditors could not lay their hands on it.
* In the documents of the New Chaldaean Empire we find instances of married women selling their property themselves, and even of their being present, seated, at the conclusion of the sale, or of their ceding to a married daughter some property in their own possession, thus renouncing the power of disposing of it, and keeping merely the income from it; we have also instances of women reclaiming valuables of gold which their husbands had given away without their authorisation, and also obtaining an indemnity for the wrong they had suffered; also of their lending money to the mother-in-law of their brother; in fine, empowered to deal with their own property in every respect like an ordinary proprietor.

If by his own act he divorced his wife, he not only lost all benefit from her property, but he was obliged to make her an allowance or to pay her an indemnity;* at his death, the widow succeeded to these, without prejudice to what she was entitled to by her marriage contract or the will of the deceased. The woman with a dowry, therefore, became more or less emancipated by virtue of her money. As her departure deprived the household of as much as, and sometimes more than, she had brought into it, every care was taken that she should have no cause to retire from it, and that no pretext should be given to her parents for her recall to her old home; her wealth thus obtained for her the consideration and fair treatment which the law had, at the outset, denied to her.

* The restitution of the dowry after divorce is ascertained, as far as later times are concerned, from documents similar to that published by Kohler-Peiser, in which we see the second husband of a divorced wife claiming the dowry from the first husband. The indemnity was fixed beforehand at six silver minae, in the marriage contract published by Oppert.

When, however, the wife was poor, she had to bear without complaint the whole burden of her inferior position. Her parents had no other resource than to ask the highest possible price for her, according to the rank in which they lived, or in virtue of the personal qualities she was supposed to possess, and this amount, paid into their hands when they delivered her over to the husband, formed, if not an actual dowry for her, at least a provision for her in case of repudiation or widowhood: she was not, however, any less the slave of her husband—a privileged slave, it is true, and one whom he could not sell like his other slaves,* but of whom he could easily rid himself when her first youth was passed, or when she ceased to please him.**

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* It appears, however, in certain cases not clearly specified, that the husband could sell his wife, if she were a shrew, as a slave.

** This form of marriage, which was of frequent occurrence in ancient times, fell into disuse among the upper classes, at least of Babylonian society. A few examples, however, are found in late times. It continued in use among the lower classes, and Herodotus affirms that in his time marriage markets were held regularly, as in our own time fairs are held for hiring male and female servants.

In many cases the fiction of purchase was set aside, and mutual consent took the place of all other formalities, marriage then becoming merely cohabitation, terminating at will. The consent of the father was not required for this irregular union, and many a son contracted a marriage after this fashion, unknown to his relatives, with some young girl either in his own or in an inferior station: but the law refused to allow her any title except that of concubine, and forced her to wear a distinctive mark, perhaps that of servitude, namely, the representation of an olive in some valuable stone or in terra-cotta, bearing her own and her husband's name, with the date of their union, which she kept hung round her neck by a cord. Whether they were legitimate wives or not, the women of the lower and middle classes enjoyed as much independence as did the Egyptian women of a similar rank. As all the household cares fell to their share, it was necessary that they should be free to go about at all hours of the day: and they could be seen in the streets and the markets, with bare feet, their head and face uncovered, wearing their linen loin-cloth or their long draped garments of hairy texture.* Their whole life was expended in a ceaseless toil for their husbands and children: night and morning they went to fetch water from the public well or the river, they bruised the corn, made the bread, spun, wove, and clothed the entire household in spite of the frequent demands of maternity.** The Chaldaean women of wealth or noble birth, whose civil status gave them a higher position, did not enjoy so much freedom. They were scarcely affected by the cares of daily life, and if they did any work within their houses, it was more from a natural instinct, a sense of duty, or to relieve the tedium of their existence, than from constraint or necessity; but the exigencies of their rank reduced them to the state of prisoners. All the luxuries and comforts which money could procure were lavished on them, or they obtained them for themselves, but all the while they were obliged to remain shut in the harem within their own houses; when they went out, it was only to visit their female friends or their relatives, to go to some temple or festival, and on such occasions they were surrounded with servants, eunuchs, and pages, whose serried ranks shut out the external world.

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* For the long garment of the women, see the statue represented on p. 263 of the present work; for the loin- cloth, which left the shoulders and bust exposed, see the bronze figure on p. 262. The latter was no doubt the garment worn at home by respectable women; we see by the punishment inflicted on adulteresses that it was an outdoor garment for courtesans, and also, doubtless, for slaves and women of the lower classes.** Women's occupations are mentioned in several texts and on several ancient monuments. On the seal, an impress of which is given on p. 233 of this volume, we see above, on the left, a woman kneeling and crushing the corn, and before her a row of little disks, representing, no doubt, the loaves prepared for baking. The length of time for suckling a child is fixed at three years by the Sumero-Assyrian tablet relating the history of the foundling; protracted suckling was customary also in Egypt.

There was no lack of children in these houses when the man had several mistresses, either simultaneously or successively. Maternity was before all things a woman's first duty: should she delay in bearing children, or should anything happen to them, she was considered as accursed or possessed, and she was banished from the family lest her presence should be a source of danger to it.* In spite of this many households remained childless, either because a clause inserted in the contract prevented the dismissal of the wife if barren, or because the children had died when the father was stricken in years, and there was little hope of further offspring. In such places adoption filled the gaps left by nature, and furnished the family with desired heirs. For this purpose some chance orphan might be brought into the household—one of those poor little creatures consigned by their mothers to the river, as in the case of Shargani, according to the ancient legend; or who had been exposed at the cross-roads to excite the pity of passers-by,** like the foundling whose story is given us in an old ballad. "He who had neither father nor mother,—he who knew not his father or mother, but whose earliest memory is of a well—whose entry into the world was in the street," his benefactor "snatched him from the jaws of dogs—and took him from the beaks of ravens.—He seized the seal before witnesses—and he marked him on the sole of the foot with the seal of the witness,—then he entrusted him to a nurse,—and for three years he provided the nurse with flour, oil, and clothing." When the weaning was accomplished, "he appointed him to be his child,—he brought him up to be his child,—he inscribed him as his child,—and he gave him the education of a scribe." The rites of adoption in these cases did not differ from those attendant upon birth. On both occasions the newly born infant was shown to witnesses, and it was marked on the soles of its feet to establish its identity; its registration in the family archives did not take place until these precautions had been observed, and children adopted in this manner were regarded thenceforward in the eyes of the world as the legitimate heirs of the family.

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* Divorce for sterility was customary in very early times. Complete sterility or miscarriage was thought to be occasioned by evil spirits; a woman thus possessed with a devil came to be looked on as a dangerous being whom it was necessary to exorcise.** Many of these children were those of courtesans or women who had been repudiated, as we learn from the Sumero- Assyrian tablet of Rawlinson: “She will expose her child alone in the street, where the serpents in the road may bite it, and its father and mother will know it no more.”

People desiring to adopt a child usually made inquiries among their acquaintances, or poor friends, or cousins who might consent to give up one of their sons, in the hope of securing a better future for him. When he happened to be a minor, the real father and mother, or, in the case of the death of one, the surviving parent, appeared before the scribe, and relinquished all their rights in favour of the adopting parents; the latter, in accepting this act of renunciation, promised henceforth to treat the child as if he were of their own flesh and blood, and often settled upon him, at the same time, a certain sum chargeable on their own patrimony. When the adopted son was of age, his consent to the agreement was required, in addition to that of his parents. The adoption was sometimes prompted by an interested motive, and not merely by the desire for posterity or its semblance. Labour was expensive, slaves were scarce, and children, by working for their father, took the place of hired servants, and were content, like them, with food and clothing. The adoption of adults was, therefore, most frequent in ancient times. The introduction of a person into a fresh household severed the ties which bound him to the old one; he became a stranger to those who had borne him; he had no filial obligations to discharge to them, nor had he any right to whatever property they might possess, unless, indeed, any unforeseen circumstance prevented the carrying out of the agreement, and legally obliged him to return to the status of his birth. In return, he undertook all the duties and enjoyed the privileges of his new position; he owed to his adopted parents the same amount of work, obedience, and respect that he would have given to his natural parents; he shared in their condition, whether for good or ill, and he inherited their possessions. Provision was made for him in case of his repudiation by those who had adopted him, and they had to make him compensation: he received the portion which would have accrued to him after their death, and he then left them. Families appear to have been fairly united, in spite of the elasticity of the laws which governed them, and of the divers elements of which they were sometimes composed. No doubt polygamy and frequently divorce exercised here as elsewhere a deleterious influence; the harems of Babylon were constantly the scenes of endless intrigues and quarrels

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among the women and children of varied condition and different parentage who filled them. Among the people of the middle classes, where restricted means necessarily prevented a man having many wives, the course of family life appears to have been as calm and affectionate as in Egypt, under the unquestioned supremacy of the father: and in the event of his early death, the widow, and later the son or son-in-law, took the direction of affairs. Should quarrels arise and reach the point of bringing about a complete rupture between parents and children, the law intervened, not to reconcile them, but to repress any violence of which either side might be guilty towards the other. It was reckoned as a misdemeanour for any father or mother to disown a child, and they were punished by being kept shut up in their own house, as long, doubtless, as they persisted in disowning it; but it was a crime in a son, even if he were an adopted son, to renounce his parents, and he was punished severely. If he had said to his father, “Thou art not my father!” the latter marked him with a conspicuous sign and sold him in the market. If he had said to his mother, “As for thee, thou art not my mother!” he was similarly branded, and led through the streets or along the roads, where with hue and cry he was driven from the town and province.*

* I have adopted the generally received meaning of this document as a whole, but I am obliged to state that Oppert- Menant admit quite a different interpretation. According to them, it would appear to be a sweeping renunciation of children by parents, and of parents by children, at the close of a judicial condemnation. Oppert has upheld this interpretation against Haupt, and still keeps to his opinion. The documents published by Meissner show that the text of the ancient Sumerian laws applied equally to adopted children, but made no distinction between the insult offered to the father and that offered to the mother: the same penalty was applicable in both cases.

The slaves were numerous, but distributed in unequal proportion among the various classes of the population: whilst in the palace they might be found literally in crowds, it was rare among the middle classes to meet with any family possessing more than two or three at a time. They were drawn partly from foreign races; prisoners who had been wounded and carried from the field of battle, or fugitives who had fallen into the hands of the victors after a defeat, or Elamites or Gutis who had been surprised in their own villages during some expedition; not to mention people of every category carried off by the Bedouin during their raids in distant parts, such as Syria or Egypt, whom they were continually bringing for sale to Babylon and Uru, and, indeed, to all those cities to which they had easy access. The kings, the vicegerents, the temple administration, and the feudal lords, provided employment for vast numbers in the construction of

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their buildings or in the cultivation of their domains; the work was hard and the mortality great, but gaps were soon filled up by the influx of fresh gangs. The survivors intermarried, and their children, brought up to speak the Chaldaean tongue and conforming to the customs of the country, became assimilated to the ruling race; they formed, beneath the superior native Semite and Sumerian population,an inferior servile class, spread alike throughout the towns and country, who were continually reinforced by individuals of the native race, such as foundlings, women and children sold by husband or father, debtors deprived by creditors of their liberty, and criminals judicially condemned. The law took no individual account of them, but counted them by heads, as so many cattle: they belonged to their respective masters in the same fashion as did the beasts of his flock or the trees of his garden, and their life or death was dependent upon his will, though the exercise of his rights was naturally restrained by interest and custom. He could use them as pledges or for payment of debt, could exchange them or sell them in the market. The price of a slave never rose very high: a woman might be bought for four and a half shekels of silver by weight, and the value of a male adult fluctuated between ten shekels and the third of a mina. The bill of sale was inscribed on clay, and given to the purchaser at the time of payment: the tablets which were the vouchers of the rights of the former proprietor were then broken, and the transfer was completed. The master seldom ill-treated his slaves, except in cases of reiterated disobedience, rebellion, or flight; he could arrest his runaway slaves wherever he could lay his hands on them; he could shackle their ankles, fetter their wrists, and whip them mercilessly. As a rule, he permitted them to marry and bring up a family; he apprenticed their children, and as soon as they knew a trade, he set them up in business in his own name, allowing them a share in the profits. The more intelligent among them were trained to be clerks or stewards; they were taught to read, write, and calculate, the essential accomplishments of a skilful scribe; they were appointed as superintendents over their former comrades, or overseers of the administration of property, and they ended by becoming confidential servants in the household. The savings which they had accumulated in their earlier years furnished them with the means of procuring some few consolations: they could hire themselves out for wages, and could even acquire slaves who would go out to work for them, in the same way as they themselves had been a source of income to their proprietors. If they followed a lucrative profession and were successful in it, their savings sometimes permitted them to buy their own freedom, and, if they were married, to pay the ransom of their wife and children. At times, their master, desirous of rewarding long and faithful service, liberated them of his own accord, without

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waiting till they had saved up the necessary money or goods for their enfranchisement: in such cases they remained his dependants, and continued in his service as freemen to perform the services they had formerly rendered as slaves. They then enjoyed the same rights and advantages as the old native race; they could leave legacies, inherit property, claim legal rights, and acquire and possess houses and lands. Their sons could make good matches among the daughters of the middle classes, according to their education and fortune; when they were intelligent, active, and industrious, there was nothing to prevent them from rising to the highest offices about the person of the sovereign.

[Illustration: 294.jpg AN EGYPTIAN SLAVE MERCHANT]

[Illustration: 294-text.jpg]

If we knew more of the internal history of the great Chaldaean cities, we should no doubt come to see what an important part the servile element played in them; and could we trace it back for a few generations, we should probably discover that there were few great families who did not reckon a slave or a freedman among their ancestors. It would be interesting to follow this people, made up of such complex elements, in all their daily work and recreation, as we are able to do in the case of contemporary Egyptians; but the monuments which might furnish us with the necessary materials are scarce, and the positive information to be gleaned from them amounts to but little. We are tolerably safe, however, in supposing the more wealthy cities to have been, as a whole, very similar in appearance to those existing at the present day in the regions which as yet have been scarcely touched by the advent of European civilization. Sinuous, narrow, muddy streets, littered with domestic refuse and organic detritus, in which flocks of ravens and wandering packs of dogs perform with more or less efficiency the duties of sanitary officers; whole quarters of the town composed of huts made of reeds and puddled clay, low houses of crude brick, surmounted perhaps even in those times with the conical domes we find later on the Assyrian bas-reliefs; crowded and noisy bazaars, where each trade is located in its special lanes and blind alleys; silent and desolate spaces occupied by palaces and gardens, in which the private life of the wealthy was concealed from public gaze; and looking down upon this medley of individual dwellings, the palaces and temples with their ziggurats crowned with gilded and painted sanctuaries. In the ruins of Uru, Eridu, and Uruk, the remains of houses belonging doubtless to well-to-do families have been brought to light. They are built of fine bricks, whose courses are cemented together with a thin layer of bitumen, but they they are only lighted internally by small appertures pierced at irregular distances in the upper part of the walls: the low arched doorway, closed by a heavy two-leaved door, leads into a blind passage, which opens as a rule on the courtyard in the centre of the building.

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[Illustration:  208a.jpg Chaldean houses at Uru.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from the sketch by Taylor.

[Illustration:  208b plans of houses excavated at Eridu and Ubu.]

These plans were drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from sketches by Taylor.  The houses reproduced to the left of the plan were those uncovered in the ruins of Uru; those on the right belong to the ruins of Eridu.  On the latter, the niches mentioned in the text will be found indicated.

In the interior may still be distinguished the small oblong rooms, sometimes vaulted, sometimes roofed with a flat, ceiling supported by trunks of palm trees;* the walls are often of a considerable thickness, in which are found narrow niches here and there. The majority of the rooms were merely store-chambers, and contained the family provisions and treasures; others served as living-rooms, and were provided with furniture.  The latter, in the houses of the richer citizens no less than in those of the people, was of a very simple kind, and was mostly composed of chairs and stools, similar to those in the royal palaces; the bedrooms contained the linen chests and the beds with their thin mattresses, coverings, and cushions, and perhaps wooden head-rests, resembling those found in Africa,** but the Chaldaeans slept mostly on mats spread on the ground.

* Taylor, *Notes on the Ruins of Mugeyer*, in the *Journ. of the Royal As.  Soc*, vol. xv. p. 266, found the remains of the palm-tree beams which formed the terrace still existing. He thinks (*Notes on Tel-el-Lahm*, *etc*., in the *Journ, of the Royal As.  Soc.*, vol. xv. p. 411) with Loftus that some of the chambers were vaulted.  Cf. upon the custom of vaulting in Chaldaean houses, Piereot-Cupiez, *Histoire de l'Art*, vol. ii. p. 163, et seq.** The dressing of the hair in coils and elaborate erections, as seen in the various figures engraved upon Chaldaean intaglios (cf. what is said of the different ways of arranging the hair on p. 262 of this volume), appears to have necessitated the use of these articles of furniture; such complicated erections of hair must have lasted several days at least, and would not have kept in condition so long except for the use of the head-rest.

An oven for baking occupied a corner of the courtyard, side by side with the stones for grinding the corn; the ashes on the hearth were always aglow, and if by chance the fire went out, the fire-stick was always at hand to relight it, as in Egypt.  The kitchen utensils and household pottery comprised a few large copper pans and earthenware pots rounded at the base, dishes, water and wine jars, and heavy plates of coarse ware; metal had not as yet superseded stone, and in the same house we meet with bronze axes and hammers side by side with the same implements in cut flint, besides knives, scrapers, and mace-heads.*

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* Implements in flint and other kinds of stone have been discovered by Taylor, and are now in the British Museum. The bronze implements come partly from the tombs of Mugheir, and partly from the ruins explored by Loftus at Tell-Sifr—that is to say, the ancient cities of Uru and Larsam: the name of Tell-Sifr, the “mound of copper,” comes from the quantity of objects in copper which have been discovered there.

[Illustration: 300.jpg CHALDAEAN HOUSEHOLD UTENSILS IN TERRA-COTTA]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from the sketch by G. Rawlinson, and the heliogravure in Heuzey-Sarzec.

At the present day the women of the country of the Euphrates spend a great part of their time on the roofs of their dwellings.* They install themselves there in the morning, till they are driven away by the heat; as soon as the sun gets low in the heavens, they return to their post, and either pass the day on neighbouring roofs whilst they bake, cook, wash and dry the linen; or, if they have slaves to attend to such menial occupations, they sew and embroider in the open air.

* Olivier, *Voyage dans l’Empire Othoman,* vol. ii. pp. 356, 357, 381, 382, 392, 393.

They come down into the interior of the house during the hottest hours of the day. In most of the wealthy houses, the coolest room is one below the level of the courtyard, into which but little light can penetrate. It is paved with plaques of polished gypsum, which resembles our finest grey-and-white marble, and the walls are covered with a coat of delicate plastering, smooth to the touch and agreeable to the eye. This is watered several times during the day in hot weather, and the evaporation from it cools the air. The few ruined habitations which have as yet been explored seem to bear witness to a considerable similarity between the requirements and customs of ancient times and those of to-day. Like the modern women of Bagdad and Mosul, the Chaldaean women of old preferred an existence in the open air, in spite of its publicity, to a seclusion within stuffy rooms or narrow courts. The heat of the sun, cold, rain, and illness obliged them at times to seek a refuge within four walls, but as soon as they could conveniently escape from them, they climbed up on to their roof to pass the greater part of their time there.

Many families of the lower and middle classes owned the houses which they occupied. They constituted a patrimony which the owners made every effort to preserve intact through all reverses of fortune.* The head of the family bequeathed it to his widow or his eldest son, or left it undivided to his heirs, in the assurance, no doubt, that one of them would buy up the rights of the others.

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* A house could be let for various lengths of time—for three months, for a year, for five years, for an indefinite term, but with a minimum of six months, since the rent is payable at the beginning and in the middle of each year.

The remainder of his goods, farms, gardens, corn-lands, slaves, furniture, and jewels, were divided among the brothers or natural descendants, “from the mouth to the gold;” that is to say, from the moment of announcing the beginning of the business, to that when each one received his share. In order to invest this act with greater solemnity, it took place usually in the presence of a priest. Those interested repaired to the temple, “to the gate of the god;” they placed the whole of the inheritance in the hands of the chosen arbitrator, and demanded of him to divide it justly; or the eldest brother perhaps anticipated the apportionment, and the priest had merely to sanction the result, or settle the differences which might arise among the lawful recipients in the course of the operation. When this was accomplished, the legatees had to declare themselves satisfied; and when no further claims arose, they had to sign an engagement before the priestly arbitrator that they would henceforth refrain from all quarrelling on the subject, and that they would never make a complaint one against the other. By dint of these continual redistributions from one generation to another, the largest fortunes soon became dispersed: the individual shares became smaller and smaller, and scarcely sufficed to keep a family, so that the slightest reverse obliged the possessor to have recourse to usurers. The Chaldaeans, like the Egyptians, were unacquainted with the use of money, but from the earliest times the employment of precious metals for purposes of exchange was practised among them to an enormous extent. Though copper and gold were both used, silver was the principal medium in these transactions, and formed the standard value of all purchaseable objects. It was never cut into flat rings or twists of wire, as was the case with the Egyptian “tabnu;” it was melted into small unstamped ingots, which were passed from hand to hand by weight, being tested in the scales at each transaction. “To weigh” was in the ordinary language the equivalent for “payment in metal,” whereas “to measure” denoted that the payment was in grain. The ingots for exchange were, therefore, designated by the name of the weights to which they corresponded. The lowest unit was a shekel, weighing on an average nearly half an ounce, sixty shekels making a mina, and sixty minas a talent. It is a question whether the Chaldaeanns possessed in early times, as did the Assyrians of a later period, two kinds of shekels and minas, one heavy and the other light. Whether the loan were in metal, grain, or any other substance, the interest was very high.* A very ancient law fixed it in certain cases at twelve drachmas per mina, per annum—that is to say, at twenty per cent.—and more recent texts show us that, when raised to twenty-five per cent., it did not appear to them abnormal.

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* We find several different examples, during the Second Chaldaeann Empire, of an exchange of corn for provisions and liquids, or of beams for dates. As a fact, exchange has never completely died out in these regions, and at the present day, in Chaldaea, as in Egypt, corn is used in many cases either to pay Government taxes or to discharge commercial debts.

The commerce of the chief cities was almost entirely concentrated in the temples. The large quantities of metals and cereals constantly brought to the god, either as part of the fixed temple revenue, or as daily offerings, accumulated so rapidly, that they would have overflowed the storehouses, had not a means been devised of utilizing them quickly: the priests treated them as articles of commerce and made a profit out of them.* Every bargain necessitated the calling in of a public scribe. The bill, drawn up before witnesses on a clay tablet, enumerated the sums paid out, the names of the parties, the rate per cent., the date of repayment, and sometimes a penal clause in the event of fraud or insolvency; the tablet remained in the possession of the creditor until the debt had been completely discharged. The borrower often gave as a pledge either slaves, a field, or a house, or certain of his friends would pledge on his behalf their own personal fortune; at times he would pay by the labour of his own hands the interest which he would otherwise have been unable to meet, and the stipulation was previously made in the contract of the number of days of corvee which he should periodically fulfil for his creditor. If, in spite of all this, the debtor was unable to procure the necessary funds to meet his engagements, the principal became augmented by a fixed sum—for instance, one-third—and continued to increase at this rate until the total value of the amount reached that of the security:** the slave, the field, or the house then ceased to belong to their former, master, subject to a right of redemption, of which he was rarely able to avail himself for lack of means.***

* It was to the god himself—Shamash, for example—that the loan was supposed to be made, and it is to him that the contracts stipulate that the capital and interest shall be paid. It is curious to lind among the most successful money- lenders several princesses consecrated to the sun-god.** It is easy to foresee, from the contracts of the New Assyrian or Babylonian Empire, how in this manner the original sum lent became doubled and trebled; generally the interest accumulated till it was quadrupled, after which, no doubt, the security was taken by the creditor. They probably calculated that the capital and compound interest was by then equal in value to the person or object given as a security.*** The creditors protected themselves against this right of redemption by a maledictory formula inserted at the end of the contracts

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against those who should avail themselves of it; it is generally inscribed on the boundary stones of the First Chaldaean Empire.

The small tradesman or free workman, who by some accident had become involved in debt, seldom escaped this progressive impoverishment except by strenuous efforts and incessant labour. Foreign commerce, it is true, entailed considerable risk, but the chances of acquiring wealth were so great that many individuals launched upon it in preference to more sure but less lucrative undertakings. They would set off alone or in companies for Elam or the northern regions, for Syria, or even for so distant a country as Egypt, and they would bring back in their caravans all that was accounted precious in those lands. Overland routes were not free from dangers; not only were nomad tribes and professional bandits constantly hovering round the traveller, and obliging him to exercise ceaseless vigilance, but the inhabitants of the villages through which he passed, the local lords and the kings of the countries which he traversed, had no scruple in levying blackmail upon him in obliging him to pay dearly for right of way through their marches or territory.** There were less risks in choosing a sea route: the Euphrates on one side, the Tigris, the Ulai, and the Uknu on the other, ran through a country peopled with a rich industrial population, among whom Chaldaean merchandise was easily and profitably sold or exchanged for commodities which would command a good price at the end of the voyage. The vessels generally were keleks or “kufas,” but the latter were of immense size.

* We have no information from Babylonian sources relating to the state of the roads, and the dangers which merchants encountered in foreign lands; the Egyptian documents partly supply what is here lacking. The “instructions” contained in the *Sallier Papyrus,* No. ii., show what were the miseries of the traveller, and the *Adventures of Sinuhit* allude to the insecurity of the roads in Syria, by the very care with which the hero relates all the precautions which he took for his protection. These two documents are of the XIIth or XIIIth dynasty—that is to say, contemporaneous with the kings, of Uru and with Gudea.

Several individuals, as a rule, would club together to hire one of these boats and freight it with a suitable cargo.* The body of the boat was very light, being made of osier or willow covered with skins sewn together; a layer of straw was spread on the bottom, on which were piled the bales or chests, which were again protected by a rough thatch of straw. The crew was composed of two oarsmen at least, and sometimes a few donkeys: the merchants then pursued their way up stream till they had disposed of their cargo, and taken in a sufficient freight for their return voyage. The dangers, though apparently not so great as those by the land route, were not the less real. The boat was liable to sink or run aground near the bank, the dwellers in the neighbourhood of the river might intercept it and pillage its contents, a war might break out between two contiguous kingdoms and suspend all commerce: the merchants’ career continually vacillated between servitude, death, and fortune.

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* The payment demanded was something considerable: the only contract which I know of existing for such a transaction is of the time of Darius I., and exacts a silver shekel per day for the hire of boat and crew.

Business carried on at home in the towns was seldom the means of enriching a man, and sometimes scarcely afforded him a means of livelihood. Rent was high for those who had not a house of their own; the least they could expect to pay was half a silver shekel per annum, but the average price was a whole shekel. On taking possession they paid a deposit which sometimes amounted to one-third of the whole sum, the remainder being due at the end of the year. The leases lasted, as a rule, merely a twelvemonth, though sometimes they were extended for terms of greater length, such as two, three, or even eight years. The cost of repairs and of keeping the house in good condition fell usually upon the lessee, who was also allowed to build upon the land he had leased, in which case it was declared free of all charges for a period of about ten years, but the house, and, as a rule, all he had built, then reverted to the landlord. Most possessors of shops made their own goods for sale, assisted by slaves or free apprentices. Every workman taught his own trade to his children, and these in their turn would instruct theirs; families which had an hereditary profession, or from generation to generation had gathered bands of workmen about them, formed themselves into various guilds, or, to use the customary term, into tribes, governed by chiefs and following specified customs. A workman belonged to the tribe of the weavers, or of the blacksmiths, or of the corn-merchants, and the description of an individual would not have been considered as sufficiently exact, if the designation of his tribe were not inserted after his name in addition to his paternal affiliation. The organization was like that of Egypt, but more fully developed. The various trades, moreover, were almost the same among the two peoples, the exceptions being such as are readily accounted for by the differences in the nature of the soil and physical constitution of the respective countries. We do not meet on the banks of the Euphrates with those corporations of stone-cutters and marble workers which were so numerous in the valley of the Nile. The vast Chaldaean plain, in the absence of mountains or accessible quarries, would have furnished no occupation for them: the Chaldaeans had to go a long way in quest of the small quantities of limestone, alabaster, or diorite which they required, and which they reserved only for details of architectural decoration for which a small number of artisans and sculptors were amply sufficient. The manufacture of bricks, on the other hand, made great progress; the crude bricks were larger than those of Egypt, and they were more enduring, composed of finer clay and better executed; the manufacture of burnt brick too was carried to

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a degree of perfection to which Memphis or Thebes never attained. An ancient legend ascribes the invention of the bricks, and consequently the construction of the earliest cities, jointly to Sin, the eldest son of Bel, and Ninib his brother: this event was said to have taken place in May-June, and from that time forward the third month of the year, over which the twins presided, was called, Murga in Sumerian, Simanu in the Semitic speech, the month of brick. This was the season which was especially devoted to the processes of their manufacture: the flood in the rivers, which was very great in the preceding months, then began to subside, and the clay which was deposited by the waters during the weeks of overflow, washed and refined as it was, lent itself readily to the operation. The sun, moreover, gave forth sufficient heat to dry the clay blocks in a uniform and gradual manner: later, in July and August, they would crack under the ardour of his rays, and become converted externally into a friable mass, while their interior would remain too moist to allow them to be prudently used in carefully built structures. The work of brick-making was inaugurated with festivals and sacrifices to Sin, Merodach, Nebo, and all the deities who were concerned in the art of building: further religious ceremonies were observed at intervals during the month to sanctify the progress of the work. The manufacture did not cease on the last day of the month, but was continued with more or less activity, according to the heat of the sun, and the importance of the orders received, until the return of the inundation: but the bricks intended for public buildings, temples, or palaces, could not be made outside a prescribed limit of time. The shades of colour produced naturally in the process of burning—red or yellow, grey or brown—were not pleasant to the eye, and they were accustomed, therefore, to coat the bricks with an attractive enamel which preserved them from the disintegrating effects of sun and rain. The paste was laid on the edges or sides while the brick was in a crude state, and was incorporated with it by vitrification in the heat of the kiln. The process was known from an early date in Egypt, but was rarely employed there in the decoration of buildings, while in Chaldaea the use of such enamelled plaques was common. The substructures of palaces and the exterior walls of temples were left unadorned, but the shrines which crowned the “ziggurat,” the reception-halls, and the headings of doors were covered with these many-coloured tiles. Fragments of them are found to-day in the ruins of the cities, and the analysis of these pieces shows the marvellous skill of the ancient workers in enamel; the shades of colour are pure and pleasant to the eye, while the material is so evenly put on and so solid, that neither centuries of burial in a sodden soil, nor the wear and tear of transport, nor the exposure to the damp of our museums, have succeeded in diminishing their brilliance and freshness.

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To get a clear idea of the industrial operations of the country, it would be necessary to see the various corporations at their work, as we are able to do, in the case of Egypt in the scenes of the mastabas of Saqqara, or of the rock-chambers of Beni-Hasan. The manufacture of stone implements gave considerable employment, and the equipment of the dead in the tombs of Uru would have been a matter of small moment, if we were to exclude its flint implements, its knives, cleavers, scrapers, adzes, axes, and hammers. The cutting of these objects is bold, and the final touches show skill, but we rarely meet with that purity of contour and intensity of polish which distinguish similar objects among Western peoples. A few examples, it is true, are of fairly artistic shape, and bear engraved inscriptions: one of these, a flint hammer of beautiful form, belonged to a god, probably Eamman, and seems to have come from a temple in which one of its owners had deposited it.

[Illustration: 311a.jpg CHALDAEAN STONE IMPLEMENTS.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from the sketches published by Taylor and by 'G. Rawlinson. On the left a scraper and two knives one above the other, an axe in the middle, on the right an axe and a hammer. All these objects were found in Taylor's excavations, and are now in the British Museum.

It is an exception, and a remarkable exception. Stone was the material of the implements of the poor—implements which were coarse in shape, and cost little: if much care were given to their execution, they would come to be so costly that no one would buy them, or, if sold for a moderate sum, the seller would obtain no profit from the transaction. Beyond a certain price, it was more advantageous to purchase metal implements, of copper in the early ages, afterwards of bronze, and lastly of iron. Among the metal-founders and smiths all kinds of examples of these were to be found—axes of an elegant and graceful design, hammers and knives, as well as culinary and domestic utensils, cups, cauldrons, dishes, mountings of doors and coffers, statuettes of men, bulls, monsters, and gods—which could be turned to weapons of all descriptions—-arrow and lance heads, swords, daggers, and rounded helmets with neck-piece or visor.

[Illustration: 311b.jpg CHALDAEAN STONE HAMMER BEARING AN INSCRIPTION.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from the illustration published by Fr. Lenormant.

[Illustration: CHALDAEN IMPLEMENTS OF BRONZE]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from Rawlinson's *Five Great Monarchies*. On the right two axes, in the middle a hammer, on the left a knife, and below the head of a lance.

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Some of the metal objects manufactured by the Chaldaeans attained large dimensions; for instance, the “brazen seas” which were set up before each sanctuary, either for the purpose of receiving the libations, or for the prescribed rites of purification. As is often the case among half-civilized peoples, the goldsmiths worked in the precious metals with much facility and skill. We have not, succeeded up to the present in finding any of those golden images which the kings were accustomed to dedicate in the temples out of their own possessions, or the spoil obtained from the enemy; but a silver vase dedicated to Ningirsu by Entena, vicegerent of Lagash, gives us some idea of this department of the temple furniture. It stands upright on a small square bronze pedestal with four feet. A piously expressed inscription runs round the neck, and the bowl of the vase is divided horizontally into two divisions, framed above and below by twisted cord-work. Four two-headed eagles, with outspread wings and tail, occupy the lower division; they are in the act of seizing with their claws two animals, placed back to back, represented in the act of walking: the intervals between the eagles are filled up alternatively by two lions, two wild goats, and two stags. Above, and close to the rise of the neck, are disposed seven heifers lying down and all looking in the same direction: they are all engraved upon the flat metal, and are without relief or incrustation. The whole composition is harmoniously put together, the posture of the animals and their general form are well conceived and boldly rendered, but the details of the mane of the lions and the feathers of the eagles are reproduced with a realism and attention to minutio which belong to the infancy of art. This single example of ancient goldsmiths’work would be sufficient to prove that the early Chaldaens were not a whit behind the Egyptians in this handicraft, even if we had not the golden ornaments, the bracelets, ear and finger rings to judge from, with which the tombs have furnished us in considerable numbers.

[Illustration: VASE OF SILVER. AND BULL OF COPPER.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from Heuzey-Sarzec

Alongside the goldsmiths there must have been a whole army of lapidaries and gem-cutters occupied in the engraving of cylinders. Numerous and delicate operations were required to metamorphose a scrap of crude rock, marble, granite, agate, onyx, green and red jasper, crystal or lapis-lazuli, into one of those marvellous seals which are now found by the hundred scattered throughout the museums of Europe. They had to be rounded, reduced to the proper proportions, and polished, before the subject or legend could be engraved upon them with the burin. To drill a hole through them required great dexterity, and some of the lapidaries, from a dread of breaking the cylinder, either did not pierce it at all, or merely bored a shallow hole into each extremity to allow it to roll

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freely in its metallic mounting. The tools used in engraving were similar to those employed at the present day, but of a rougher kind. The burin, which was often nothing more than a flint point, marked out the area of the design, and sketched out the figures; the saw was largely employed to cut away the depressions when these required no detailed handling; and lastly, the drill, either worked with the hand or in a kind of lathe, was made to indicate the joints and muscles of the individual by a series of round holes. The object thus summarily dealt with might be regarded as sufficiently worked for ordinary clients; but those who were willing to pay for them could obtain cylinders from which every mark of the tool had been adroitly removed, and where the beauty of the workmanship vied with the costliness of the material.

[Illustration: 315.jpg CHALDAEAN CYLINDER EXHIBITING TRACES OF THE DIFFERENT TOOLS USED BY THE ENGRAVER]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a heliogravure in Menant's
*Catalogue de la collection de M. de Clercq*

The seal of Shargani, King of Agade, that of Bingani-shar-ali, and many others which have been picked up by chance in the excavations, are true bas-reliefs, reduced and condensed, so to speak, to the space of something like a square inch of surface, but conceived with an artistic ingenuity and executed with a boldness which modern engravers have rarely equalled and never surpassed. There are traces on them, it is true, of some of the defects which disfigured the latter work of the Assyrians—heaviness of form, exaggerated prominence of muscles and hardness of outline—but there are also all the qualities which distinguish an original and forcible art.

The countries of the Euphrates were renowned in classic times for the beauty of the embroidered and painted stuffs which they manufactured.* Nothing has come down to us of these Babylonian tissues of which the Greek and Latin writers extolled the magnificence, but we may form some idea, from the statues and the figures engraved on cylinders, of what the weavers and embroiderers of this ancient time were capable. The loom which they made use of differed but slightly from the horizontal loom commonly employed in the Nile Valley, and everything tends to show that their plain linen cloths were of the kind represented in the swathings and fragments of clothing still to be found in the sepulchral chambers of Memphis and Thebes. The manufacture of fleecy woollen garments so much affected by men and women alike indicates a great dexterity. When once the threads of the woof had been stretched, those of the warp were attached to them by knots in as many parallel lines—at regular intervals—as there were rows of fringe to be displayed on the surface of the cloth, the loops thus formed being allowed to hang down in their respective places: sometimes these loops were retained just as they stood, sometimes they were cut and the ends frayed out so as to give the appearance of a shaggy texture.

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* Most modern writers understand by tapestry what the ancients were accustomed to call needle embroidery or painting on stuffs:  I can find no indication on the most ancient monuments of Chaldaean or Egypt of the manufacturing of real tapestry.

[Illustration:  316.jpg Egyptian Manuscript]

Part of an Egyptian Manuscript found in the Swathing of a Mummy

[Illustration:  316-text.jpg Egyptian Manuscript]

Most of these stuffs preserved their original white or creamy colour—especially those woven at home by the women for the requirements of their own toilet, and for the ordinary uses of the household.  The Chaldaeans, however, like many other Asiatic peoples, had a strong preference for lively colours, and the outdoor garments and gala attire of the rich were distinguished by a profusion of blue patterns on a red ground, or red upon blue, arranged in stripes, zigzags, checks, and dots or circles.  There must, therefore, have been as much occupation for dyers as there was for weavers; and it is possible that the two operations were carried out by the same hands.  We know nothing of the bakers, butchers, carriers, masons, and other artisans who supplied the necessities of the cities:  they were doubtless able to make two ends meet and nothing more, and if we should succeed some day in obtaining information about them, we shall probably find that their condition was as miserable as that of their Egyptian contemporaries.  The course of their lives was monotonous enough, except when it was broken at prescribed intervals by the ordinary festivals in honour of the gods of the city, or by the casual suspensions of work occasioned by the triumphant return of the king from some warlike expedition, or by his inauguration of a new temple.

The gaiety of the people on such occasions was the more exuberant in proportion to the undisturbed monotony or misery of the days which preceded them.  As soon, for instance, as Gudea had brought to completion Ininnu, the house of his patron Ningirsu, “he felt relieved from the strain and washed his hands.  For seven days, no grain was bruised in the quern, the maid was the equal of her mistress, the servant walked in the same rank as his master, the strong and the weak rested side by side in the city.”  The world seemed topsy-turvy as during the Roman Saturnalia; the classes mingled together, and the inferiors were probably accustomed to abuse the unusual licence which they momentarily enjoyed:  when the festival was over, social distinctions reasserted themselves, and each one fell back into his accustomed position.  Life was not so pleasant in Chaldaea as in Egypt.  The innumerable promissory notes, the receipted accounts, the contracts of sale and purchase—these cunningly drawn up deeds which have been deciphered by the hundred—reveal to us a people greedy of gain, exacting, litigious, of artisans in Egypt.  This is taken from a source belonging to the XIIth or possibly the XIIIth dynasty.  We may assume, from the fact that the two civilizations were about on the same level, that the information supplied in this respect

by the Egyptian monuments is generally applicable to the condition of Chaldaean workmen of the same period.

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(Unreadable) and almost exclusively absorbed by material concerns. The climate, too, variable and oppressive in summer and winter alike, imposed upon the Chaldaean painful exactions, and obliged him to work with an energy of which the majority of Egyptians would not have felt themselves capable. The Chaldaean, suffering greater and more prolonged hardships, earned more doubtless, but was not on this account the happier. However lucrative his calling might be, it was not sufficiently so to supply him always with domestic necessities, and both tradespeople and operatives were obliged to run into debt to supplement their straitened means. When they had once fallen into the hands of the usurer, the exorbitant interest which they had to pay kept them a long time in his power. If when the bill fell due there was nothing to meet it, it had to be renewed under still more disastrous conditions; as the pledge given was usually the homestead, or the slave who assisted in the trade, or the garden which supplied food for the family, the mortgagor was reduced to the extreme of misery if he could not satisfy his creditors, This plague of usury was not, moreover, confined to the towns; it raged with equal violence in the country, and the farmers also became its victims.

If, theoretically, the earth belonged to the gods, and under them to the kings, the latter had made, and continued daily to make, such large concessions of it to their vassals, that the greater part of their domains were always in the hands of the nobles or private individuals. These could dispose of their landed property at pleasure, farm it out, sell it or distribute it among their heirs and friends.

They paid on account of it a tax which varied at different epochs, but which was always burthensome; but when they had once satisfied this exaction, and paid the dues which the temples might claim on behalf of the gods, neither the State nor any individual had the right to interfere in their administration of it, or put any restrictions upon them. Some proprietors cultivated their lands themselves—the poor by their own labour, the rich by the aid of some trustworthy slave whom they interested in the success of his farming by assigning him a certain percentage on the net return. Sometimes the lands were leased out in whole or in part to free peasants who relieved the proprietors of all the worry and risks of managing it themselves. A survey of the area of each state had been made at an early age, and the lots into which it had been divided were registered on clay tablets containing the name of the proprietor as well as those of his neighbours, together with such indications of the features of the land, dykes, canals, rivers, and buildings as would serve to define its boundaries: rough plans accompanied the description, and in the most complicated instances interpreted it to the eye. This survey was frequently repeated, and enabled the sovereign to arrange his scheme of taxation on a solid

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basis, and to calculate the product of it without material error. Gardens and groves of date-palms, together with large regions devoted to rough attempts at vegetable culture, were often to be met with, especially in the neighbourhood of towns; these paid their contributions to the State, as well as the owners'rent, in kind—in fruit, vegetables, and fresh or dried dates. The best soil was reserved, for the growth of wheat and other cereals, and its extent was measured in terms of corn; corn was also the standard in which the revenue was reckoned both in public and private contracts. Such and such a field required about fifty litres of seed to the arura. Another needed sixty-two or seventy-five according to the fertility of the land and its locality. Landed property was placed under the guardianship of the gods, and its transfer or cession was accompanied by formalities of a half-religious, half-magical character: the party giving delivery of it called down upon the head of any one who would dare in the future to dispute the validity of the deed, imprecations of which the text was inserted on a portion of the surface of an egg-shaped nodule of flint, basalt, or other hard stone. These little monuments display on their cone-shaped end a series of figures, sometimes arranged in two parallel divisions, sometimes scattered over the surface, which represent the deities invoked to watch over the sanctity of the contract. It was a kind of representation in miniature of the aspect which the heavens presented to the Chaldaeans. The disks of the sun and moon, together with Venus-Ashtar, are the prominent elements in the scene: the zodiacal figures, or the symbols employed to represent them, are arranged in an apparent orbit around these—such as the Scorpion, the Bird, the Dog, the Thunderbolt of Ramman, the mace, the horned monsters, half hidden by the temples they guard, and the enormous Dragon who embraces in his folds half the entire firmament. "If ever, in the course of days, any one of the brothers, children, family, men or women, slaves or servants of the house, or any governor or functionary whatsoever, arises and intends to steal this field, and remove this landmark, either to make a gift of it to a god, or to assign it to a competitor, or to appropriate it to himself; if he modifies the area of it, the limits and the landmark; if he divides it into portions, and if he says: 'The field has no owner, since there has been no donation of it; '—if, from dread of the terrible imprecations which protect this stele and this field, he sends a fool, a deaf or blind person, a wicked wretch, an idiot, a stranger, or an ignorant one, and should cause this stele to be taken away,* and should throw it into the water, cover it with dust, mutilate it by scratching it with a stone, burn it in the fire and destroy it, or write anything else upon it, or carry,it away to a place where it will be no longer seen,—this man, may Anu, Bel, Ea, the exalted lady, the great gods, cast upon him looks of wrath, may they destroy his strength, may they exterminate his race." All the immortals are associated in this excommunication, and each one promises in his turn the aid of his power.

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* All the people enumerated in this passage might, in ignorance of what they were doing, be induced to tear up the stone, and unconsciously commit a sacrilege from which every Chaldaean in his senses would have shrunk back. The formula provides for such cases, and it secures that the curse shall fall not only on the irresponsible instruments, but reach the instigator of the crime, even when he had taken no actual part in the deed.

[Illustration: 322.jpg THE MICHAUX STONE (left)]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin. The original is in the medal cabinet of the Bibliotheque Nationale.

[Illustration: 323.jpg THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MICHAUX STONE (right)]

Merodach, by whose spells the sick are re stored, will inflict upon the guilty one a dropsy which no incantation can cure. Shamas, the supreme judge, will send forth against him one of his inexorable judgments. Sin, the inhabitant of the brilliant heavens, will cover him with leprosy as with a garment. Adar, the warrior, will break his weapons; and Zamama, the king of strifes, will not stand by him on the field of battle. Eamman will let loose his tempest upon his fields, and will overwhelm them. The whole band of the invisibles hold themselves ready to defend the rights of the proprietor against all attacks. In no part of the ancient world was the sacred character of property so forcibly laid down, or the possession of the soil more firmly secured by religion.

In instruments of agriculture and modes of cultivation Chaldaea was no better off than Egypt. The rapidity with which the river rose in the spring, and its variable subsidence from year to year, furnished little inducement to the Chaldaeans to entrust to it the work of watering their lands; on the contrary, they were compelled to protect themselves from it, and to keep at a distance the volume of waters it brought down. Each property, whether of square, triangular, or any other shape, was surrounded with a continuous earth-built barrier which bounded it on every side, and served at the same time as a rampart against the inundation.

[Illustration: 324.jpg TWO ROWS OF SHADUFS ON THE BANK OF A RIVER.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from an Assyrian bas-relief from Koyunjik.

Rows of shadufs installed along the banks of the canals or streams provided for the irrigation of the lands.* The fields were laid out like a chess-board, and the squares, separated from each other by earthen ridges, formed as it were so many basins: when the elevation of the ground arrested the flow of the waters, these were collected into reservoirs, whence by the use of other shadufs they were raised to a higher level.

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* In Mesopotamia and Chaldaea there may still be seen “everywhere ruins of ancient canals; and there are also to be met with, in many places, ridges of earth, which stretch for considerable distances in a straight line, and surround lands perfectly level.” (Olivier).

The plough was nothing more than an obliquely placed mattock, whose handle was lengthened in order to harness oxen to it. Whilst the ploughman pressed heavily on the handle, two attendants kept incessantly goading the beasts, or urging them forward with voice and whip, and a third scattered the seed in the furrow. A considerable capital was needed to ensure success in agricultural undertakings: contracts were made for three years, and stipulated that payments should be made partly in metal and partly in the products of the soil.

[Illustration: 325.jpg CHALDAEAN FARMING OPERATIONS.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a Chaldaean intaglio reproduced in Layard. The original is in the cabinet of medals in the Bibliotheque Nationale.

The farmer paid a small sum when entering into possession, and the remainder of the debt was gradually liquidated at the end of each twelve months, the payment being in silver one year, and in corn the two following. The rent varied according to the quality of the soil and the facilities which it afforded for cultivation: a field, for instance, of three bushels was made to pay nine hundred measures, while another of ten bushels had only eighteen hundred to pay. In many instances the peasant preferred to take the proprietor into partnership, the latter in such case providing all the expenses of cultivation, on the understanding that he should receive two-thirds of the gross product. The tenant was obliged to administer the estate as a careful householder during the term of his lease: he was to maintain the buildings and implements in good repair, to see that the hedges were kept up, to keep the shadufs in working order, and to secure the good condition of the watercourses. He had rarely enough slaves to manage the business with profit: those he had purchased were sufficient, with the aid of his wives and children, to carry on ordinary operations, but when any pressure arose, especially at harvest-time, he had to seek elsewhere the additional labourers he required. The temples were the chief sources for the supply of these. The majority of the supplementary labourers were free men, who were hired out by their family, or engaged themselves for a fixed term, during which they were subject to a sort of slavery, the conditions of which were determined by law. The workman renounced his liberty for fifteen days, or a month, or for a whole year; he disposed, so to speak, of a portion of his life to the provisional master of his choice, and if he did not enter upon his work at the day agreed upon, or if he showed himself inactive in the duties assigned to him, he was liable to severe punishment. He received in exchange for his labour his food, lodging, and clothing; and if an accident should occur to him during the term of his service, the law granted him an indemnity in proportion to the injury he had sustained.

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[Illustration:  327.jpg THE FARM OXEN]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a green marble cylinder in the Louvre.

His average wage was from four to six shekels of silver per annum.  He was also entitled by custom to another shekel in the form of a retaining fee, and he could claim his pay, which was given to him mostly in corn, in monthly instalments, if his agreement were for a considerable time, and daily if it were for a short period.

The mercenary never fell into the condition of the ordinary serf:  he retained his rights as a man, and possessed in the person of the patron for whom he laboured, or whom he himself had selected, a defender of his interests.  When he came to the end of his engagement, he returned to his family, and resumed his ordinary occupation until the next occasion.  Many of the farmers in a small way earned thus, in a few weeks, sufficient means to supplement their own modest personal income.  Others sought out more permanent occupations, and hired themselves out as regular farm-servants.

The lands which neither the rise of the river nor the irrigation system could reach so as to render fit for agriculture, were reserved for the pasture of the flocks in the springtime, when they were covered with rich grass.  The presence of lions in the neighbourhood, however, obliged the husbandmen to take precautions for the safety of their flocks. They constructed provisional enclosures into which the animals were driven every evening, when the pastures were too far off to allow of the flocks being brought back to the sheepfold.  The chase was a favourite pastime among them, and few days passed without the hunter’s bringing back with him a young gazelle caught in a trap, or a hare killed by an arrow.  These formed substantial additions to the larder, for the Chaldaeans do not seem to have kept about them, as the Egyptians did, such tamed animals as cranes or herons, gazelles or deer:  they contented themselves with the useful species, oxen, asses, sheep, and goats.  Some of the ancient monuments, cylinders, and clay tablets reproduce in a rough manner scenes from pastoral life.  The door of the fold opens, and we see a flock of goats sallying forth to the cracking of the herdsman’s whip:  when they reach the pasture they scatter over the meadows, and while the shepherd keeps his eye upon them, he plays upon his reed to the delight of his dog.  In the mean time the farm-people are engaged in the careful preparation of the evening meal:  two individuals on opposite sides of the hearth watch the pot boiling between them, while a baker makes his dough into round cakes.

[Illustration:  329a.jpg COOKING:  A QUARREL.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from one of the terra-cotta plaques discovered by Loftus.

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Sometimes a quarrel breaks out among the comrades, and leads to a stand-up fight with the fists; or a lion, perhaps, in quest of a meal, surprises and kills one of the bulls: the shepherd runs up, his axe in his hand, to contend bravely with the marauder for the possession of his beast. The shepherd was accustomed to provide himself with assistance in the shape of enormous dogs, who had no more hesitation in attacking beasts of prey than they had in pursuing game. In these combats the natural courage of the shepherd was stimulated by interest: for he was personally responsible for the safety of his flock, and if a lion should find an entrance into one of the enclosures.

[Illustration: 329b.jpg SCENES OF PASTORAL LIFE IN CHALDAEA.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a Chaldaean intaglio from Layard. Another cylinder of the same kind is reproduced at p. 233 of the present work; it represents Etana arising to heaven by the aid of his friend the eagle, while the pastoral scene below resembles in nearly all particulars that given above.

[Illustration: 330.jpg FIGHT WITH A LION]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from one of the terra-cotta tablets discovered by Loftus.

Fishing was not so much a pastime as a source of livelihood; for fish occupied a high place in the bill of fare of the common folk. Caught by the line, net, or trap, it was dried,in the sun, smoked, or salted. The chase was essentially the pastime of the great noble—the pursuit of the lion and the bear in the wooded covers or the marshy thickets of the river-bank; the pursuit of the gazelle, the ostrich, and bustard on the elevated plains or rocky tablelands of the desert. The onager of Mesopotamia is a very beautiful animal, with its grey glossy coat, and its lively and rapid action.

[Illustration: 331.jpg THE DOG IN TUB LEASH]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a terra-cotta tablet discovered by Sir H. Rawlinson in the ruins of Babylon, and now in the British Museum

If it is disturbed, it gives forth a cry, kicks up its heels, and dashes off: when at a safe distance, it stops, turns round, and faces its pursuer: as soon as he approaches, it starts off again, stops, and takes to its heels again, continuing this procedure as long as it is followed. The Chaldaeans found it difficult to catch by the aid of dogs, but they could bring it down by arrows, or perhaps catch it alive by stratagem. A running noose was thrown round its neck, and two men held the ends of the ropes. The animal struggled, made a rush, and attempted to bite, but its efforts tended only to tighten the noose still more firmly, and it at length gave in, half strangled; after alternating struggles and suffocating paroxysms, it became somewhat calmer, and allowed itself to be led. It

was finally tamed, if not to the extent of becoming useful in agriculture, at least for the purposes of war:  before the horse was

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known in Chaldaea, it was used to draw the chariot. The original habitat of the horse was the great table-lands of Central Asia: it is doubtful whether it was brought suddenly into the region of the Tigrus and Euphrates by some barbaric invasion, or whether it was passed on from tribe to tribe, and thus gradually reached that country. It soon became acclimatized, and its cross-breeding with the ass led for centuries to the production of magnificent mules. The horse was known to the kings of Lagash, who used it in harness. The sovereigns of neighbouring cities were also acquainted with it, but it seems to have been employed solely by the upper classes of society, and never to have been generally used in the war-chariot or as a charger in cavalry operations.

[Illustration: 332.jpg CHALDAEAN CARRYING A FISH. (left)]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from one of the terra-cotta tablets discovered by Loftus.

The Chaldaeans carried agriculture to a high degree of perfection, and succeeded in obtaining from the soil everything it could be made to yield.

[Illustration: 333.jpg THE ONAGER TAKEN WITH THE LASSO.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from the Assyrian bas-relief of Nimrud. See p. 35 of the present work for an illustration of onagers pierced by arrows in the chase.

Their methods, transmitted in the first place to the Greeks, and afterwards to the Arabs, were perpetuated long after their civilization had disappeared, and were even practised by the people of Iraq under the Abbasside Caliphs. Agricultural treatises on clay, which contained an account of these matters, were deposited in one or other of the sacred libraries in which the priests of each city were long accustomed to collect together documents from every source on which they could lay their hands. There were to be found in each of these collections a certain number of works which were unique, either because the authors were natives of the city, or because all copies of them had been destroyed in the course of centuries—the Epic of Grilgames, for instance, at Uruk; a history of the Creation, and of the battles of the gods with the monsters at Kutha: all of them had their special collections of hymns or psalms, religious and magical formulas, their lists of words and grammatical phraseology, their glossaries and syllabaries, which enabled them to understand and translate texts drawn up in Sumerian, or to decipher those whose writing presented more than ordinary difficulty. In these libraries there was, we find, as in the inscriptions of Egypt, a complete literature, of which only some shattered fragments have come down to us. The little we are able to examine has produced upon our modern investigators a complex impression, in which astonishment rather than admiration contends with a sense of tedious-ness. There may be

recognized here and there, among the wearisome successions of phrases, with their rugged

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proper names, episodes which seem something like a Chaldaean “Genesis” or “Veda;” now and then a bold flight of fancy, a sudden exaltation of thought, or a felicitous expression, arrests the attention and holds it captive for a time. In the narrative of the adventures of Grilgames, for instance, there is a certain nobility of character, and the sequence of events, in their natural and marvellous development, are handled with gravity and freedom: if we sometimes encounter episodes which provoke a smile or excite our repugnance, we must take into account the rudeness of the age with which they deal, and remember that the men and gods of the later Homeric epic are not a whit behind the heroes of Babylonian story in coarseness. The recognition of divine omnipotence, and the keenly felt afflictions of the soul, awakened in the Chaldaean psalmist feelings of adoration and penitence which still find, in spite of the differences of religion, an echo in our own hearts; and the unknown scribe, who related the story of the descent of Ishtar to the infernal regions, was able to express with a certain gloomy energy the miseries of the “Land without return. “These instances are to be regarded, however, as exceptional: the bulk of Chaldaean literature seems nothing more than a heap of pretentious trash, in which even the best-equipped reader can see no meaning, or, if he can, it is of such a character as to seem unworthy of record. His judgment is natural in the circumstances, for the ancient East is not, like Greece and Italy, the dead of yesterday whose soul still hovers around us, and whose legacies constitute more than the half of our patrimony: on the contrary, it was buried soul and body, gods and cities, men and circumstances, ages ago, and even its heirs, in the lapse of years, have become extinct. In proportion as we are able to bring its civilization to light, we become more and more conscious that we have little or nothing in common with it. Its laws and customs, its methods of action and its modes of thought, are so far apart from those of the present day, that they seem to us to belong to a humanity utterly different from our own. The names of its deities do not appeal to our imagination like those of the Olympian cycle, and no traditional respect serves to do away with the sense of uncouthness which we experience from the jingle of syllables which enter into them. Its artists did not regard the world from the same point of view as we do, and its writers, drawing their inspiration from an entirely different source, made use of obsolete methods to express their feelings and co-ordinate their ideas. It thus happens that while we understand to a shade the classical language of the Greeks and Romans, and can read their works almost without effort, the great primitive literatures of the world, the Egyptian and Chaldaean, have nothing to offer us for the most part but a sequence of problems to solve or of enigmas to unriddle with patience. How many phrases, how many words at which we stumble,

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require a painstaking analysis before we can make ourselves master of their meaning! And even when we have determined to our satisfaction their literal signification, what a number of excursions we must make in the domain of religious, ethical, and political history before we can compel them to render up to us their full import, or make them as intelligible to others as they are to ourselves! When so many commentaries are required to interpret the thought of an individual or a people, some difficulty must be experienced in estimating the value of the expression which they have given to it. Elements of beauty were certainly, and perhaps are still, within it; but in proportion as we clear away the rubbish which encumbers it, the mass of glossaries necessary to interpret it fall in and bury it so as to stifle it afresh.

While the obstacles to our appreciation of Chaldaeann literature are of such a serious character, we are much more at home in our efforts to estimate the extent and depth of their scientific knowledge. They were as well versed as the Egyptians, but not more, in arithmetic and geometry in as far as these had an application to the affairs of everyday life: the difference between the two peoples consisted chiefly in their respective numerical systems—the Egyptians employing almost exclusively the decimal system of notation, while the Chaldaeans combined its use with the duodecimal.

[Illustration: 337.jpg Page image]

To express the units, they made use of so many vertical “nails” placed one after, or above, each other, thus [symbols] *etc*.; tens were represented by bent brackets [symbols], up to 60; beyond this figure they had the choice of two methods of notation: they could express the further tens by the continuous additions of brackets thus, [symbols] or they could represent 50 by a vertical “nail,” and add for every additional ten a bracket to the right of it, thus: [symbols]. The notation of a hundred was represented by the vertical “nail” with a horizontal stroke to the right thus [symbols], and the number of hundreds by the symbols placed before this sign, thus [symbols], *etc*.: a thousand was written [symbols] *i.e*. ten times one hundred, and the series of thousands by the combination of different notations which served to express units, tens, and hundreds. They subdivided the unit, moreover, into sixty equal parts, and each of these parts into sixty further equal subdivisions, and this system of fractions was used in all kinds of quantitive measurements. The fathom, the foot and its square, talents and bushels, the complete system of Chaldaean weights and measures, were based on the intimate alliance and parallel use of the decimal and duodecimal systems of notation. The sixtieth was more frequently employed than the hundredth when large quantities were in question: it was called a “soss,” and ten sosses were equal to a “ner,” while sixty ners were equivalent to a “sar;”

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the series, sosses, ners, and sars, being employed in all estimations of values. Years and measures of length were reckoned in sosses, while talents and bushels were measured in sosses and sars. The fact that these subdivisions were all divisible by 10 or 12, rendered calculations by means of them easy to the merchant and workmen as well as to the mathematical expert. The glimpses that we have been able to obtain up to the present of Chaldaean scientific methods indicate that they were on a low level, but they were sufficiently advanced to furnish practical rules for application in everyday affairs: helps to memory of different kinds, lists of figures with their names phonetically rendered in Sumerian and Semitic speech, tables of squares and cubes, and rudimentary formulas and figures for land-surveying, furnished sufficient instructions to enable any one to make complicated calculations in a ready manner, and to work out in figures, with tolerable accuracy, the superficial area of irregularly shaped plots of land. The Chaldaeans could draw out, with a fair amount of exactness, plans of properties or of towns, and their ambition impelled them even to attempt to make maps of the world. The latter were, it is true, but rough sketches, in which mythological beliefs vitiated the information which merchants and soldiers had collected in their journeys. The earth was represented as a disk surrounded by the ocean stream: Chaldaea took up the greater part of it, and foreign countries did not appear in it at all, or held a position out in the cold at its extremities. Actual knowledge was woven in an extraordinary manner with mystic considerations, in which the virtues of numbers, their connections with the gods, and the application of geometrical diagrams to the prediction of the future, played an important part. We know what a brilliant fortune these speculations attained in after-years, and the firm hold they obtained for centuries over Western nations, as formerly over the Bast. It was not in arithmetic and geometry alone, moreover, that the Chaldaeans were led away by such deceits: each branch of science in its turn was vitiated by them, and, indeed, it could hardly be otherwise when we come to consider the Chaldaean outlook upon the universe. Its operations, in their eyes, were not carried on under impersonal and unswerving laws, but by voluntary and rational agents, swayed by an inexorable fate against which they dared not rebel, but still free enough and powerful enough to avert by magic the decrees of destiny, or at least to retard their execution. From this conception of things each subordinate science was obliged to make its investigations in two perfectly distinct regions: it had at first to determine the material facts within its competence—such as the position of the stars, for instance, or the symptoms of a malady; it had then to discover the beings which revealed themselves through these material manifestations, their names and their characteristics. When once it had obtained this information, and could lay its hands upon them, it could compel them to work on its behalf: science was thus nothing else than the application of magic to a particular class of phenomena.

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The number of astronomical facts with which the Chaldaeans had made themselves acquainted was considerable.

[Illustration:  340.jpg CHALDAEAN MAP OF THE WORLD.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a sketch by Peiser.

It was a question in ancient times whether they or the Egyptians had been the first to carry their investigations into the infinite depths of celestial space:  when it came to be a question as to which of the two peoples had made the greater progress in this branch of knowledge, all hesitation vanished, and the pre-eminence was accorded by the ancients to the priests of Babylon rather than to those of Heliopolis and Memphis.*

* Clement of Alexandria, Lucien, Diogenes Laertius, Macrobius, attribute the origin of astronomy to the Egyptians, and Diodorus Sioulus asserts that they were the teachers of the Babylonians; Josephus maintains, on the contrary, that the Egyptians were the pupils of the Chaldaeans.

[Illustration:  340.jpg ASTRONOMICAL TABLE]

The Chaldaeans had conducted astronomical observations from remote antiquity.* Callisthenes collected and sent to his uncle Aristotle a number of these observations, of which the oldest had been made nineteen hundred and three years before his time—-that is, about the middle of the twenty-third century before our era:  he could have transcribed many of a still earlier date if the archives of Babylon had been fully accessible to him.

* Epigenes asserts that their observations extended back to 720,000 years before the time of Alexander, while Berossus and Critodemus limit their antiquity to 490,000 years, which was further reduced to 473,000 years by Diodorus, to 470,000 by Cicero, and to 270,000 by Hipparchus.

The Chaldaean priests had been accustomed from an early date to record on their clay tablets the aspect of the heavens and the changes which took place in them night after night, the appearance of the constellations, their comparative brilliancy, the precise moments of their rising and setting and culmination, together with the more or less rapid movements of the planets, and their motions towards or from one another.  To their unaided eyes, sharpened by practice and favoured by the transparency of the air, many stars were visible, as to the Egyptians, which we can perceive only by the aid of the telescope.  These thousands of brilliant bodies, scattered apparently at random over the face of the sky, moved, however, with perfect regularity, and the period between their departure from and their return to the same point in the heavens was determined at an early date:  their position could be predicted at any hour, their course in the firmament being traced so accurately that its various stages were marked out and indicated

beforehand.  The moon, they discovered, had to complete two hundred and twenty-three revolutions of twenty-nine days and a half each, before it returned to the point from which it had set out.

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This period of its career being accomplished, it began a second of equal length, then a third, and so on, in an infinite series, during which it traversed the same celestial houses and repeated in them the same acts of its life:  all the eclipses which it had undergone in one period would again afflict it in another, and would be manifest in the same places of the earth in the same order of time.* Whether they ascribed these eclipses to some mechanical cause, or regarded them as so many unfortunate attacks made upon Sin by the seven, they recognized their periodical character, and they were acquainted with the system of the two hundred and twenty-three lunations by which their occurrence and duration could be predicted.  Further observations encouraged the astronomers to endeavour to do for the sun what they had so successfully accomplished in regard to the moon.
* This period of two hundred and twenty-three lunations is that described by Ptolemy in the fourth book of his “Astronomy,” in which he deals with the average motion of the moon.  The Chaldaeans seem not to have been able to make a skilful use of it, for their books indicate the occurrence of lunar eclipses outside the predicted periods.

No long experience was needed to discover the fact that the majority of solar eclipses were followed some fourteen days and a half after by an eclipse of the moon; but they were unable to take sufficient advantage of this experience to predict with certainty the instant of a future eclipse of the sun, although they had been so struck with the connection of the two phenomena as to believe that they were in a position to announce it approximately.* They were frequently deceived in their predictions, and more than one eclipse which they had promised did not take place at the time expected:** but their successful prognostications were sufficiently frequent to console them for their failures, and to maintain the respect of the people and the rulers for their knowledge.  Their years were vague years of three hundred and sixty days.  The twelve equal months of which they were composed bore names which were borrowed, on the one hand, from events in civil life, such as “Simanu,” from the making of brick, and “Addaru,” from the sowing of seed, and, on the other, from mythological occurrences whose origin is still obscure, such as “Nisanu,” from the altar of Ea, and “Elul,” from a message of Ishtar.  The adjustment of this year to astronomical demands was roughly carried out by the addition of a month every six years, which was called a second Adar, Blul, or Nisan, according to the place in which it was intercalated.

* Tannery is of opinion that the Chaldaeans must have predicted eclipses of the sun by means of the period of two hundred and twenty-three lunations, and shows by what a simple means they could have arrived at it.** An astronomer mentions, in the time of Assurbanipal, that on the 28th, 29th, and

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30th of the month he prepared for the observation of an eclipse; but the sun continued brilliant, and the eclipse did not take place.

The neglect of the hours and minutes in their calculation of the length of the year became with them, as with the Egyptians, a source of serious embarrassment, and we are still ignorant as to the means employed to meet the difficulty. The months had relations to the signs of the zodiac, and the days composing them were made up of twelve double hours each. The Chaldaens had invented two instruments, both of them of a simple character, to measure time—the clepsydra and the solar clock, the latter of which in later times became the source of the Greek “polos.” The sun-dial served to determine a number of simple facts which were indispensable in astronomical calculations, such as the four cardinal points, the meridian of the place, the solstitial and equinoctial epochs, and the elevation of the pole at the position of observation. The construction of the sundial and clepsydra, if not of the polos also, is doubtless to be referred back to a very ancient date, but none of the texts already brought to light makes mention of the employment of these instruments.*

* Herodotus (ii. 109) formally attributes the invention of the sun-dial and polos to the Babylonians. The “polos” was a solar clock. It consisted of a concave hemisphere with a style rising from its centre: the shadow of the style described every day an arc of a circle parallel to the equator, and the daily parallels were divided into twelve or twenty-four equal parts. Smith discovered, in the palace of Sennacherib at Koyunjik, a portion of an astrolabe, which is now in the British Museum.

All these discoveries, which constitute in our eyes the scientific patrimony of the Chaldaeans, were regarded by themselves as the least important results of their investigations. Did they not know, thanks to these investigations, that the stars shone for other purposes than to lighten up the nights—to rule, in fact, the destinies of men and kings, and, in ruling that of kings, to determine the fortune of empires? Their earliest astronomers, by their assiduous contemplation of the nightly heavens, had come to the conclusion that the vicissitudes of the heavenly bodies were in fixed relations with mundane phenomena and events. If Mercury, for instance, displayed an unusual brilliancy at his rising, and his disk appeared as a two-edged sword, riches and abundance, due to the position of the luminous halo which surrounded him, would be scattered over Chaldaea, while discords would cease therein, and justice would triumph over iniquity. The first observer who was struck by this coincidence noted it down; his successors confirmed his observations, and at length deduced, in the process of the years, from their accumulated knowledge, a general law. Henceforward, each time that Mercury assumed the same aspect it was of favourable

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augury, and kings and their subjects became the recipients of his bounty. As long as he maintained this appearance no foreign ruler could install himself in Chaldaea, tyranny would be divided against itself, equity would prevail, and a strong monarch bear sway; while the landholders and the king would be confirmed in their privileges, and obedience, together with tranquillity, would rule everywhere in the land. The number of these observations increased to such a degree that it was found necessary to classify them methodically to avoid confusion. Tables of them were drawn up, in which the reader could see at one and the same moment the aspect of the heavens on such and such a night and hour, and the corresponding events either then happening, or about to happen, in Chaldaean, Syria, or some foreign land. If, for instance, the moon displayed the same appearance on the 1st and 27th of the month, Elam was threatened; but "if the sun, at his setting, appears double his usual size, with three groups of bluish rays, the King of Chaldaea is ruined." To the indications of the heavenly bodies, the Chaldaeans added the portents which could be deduced from atmospheric phenomena: if it thundered on the 27th of Tammuz, the wheat-harvest would be excellent and the produce of the ears magnificent; but if this, should occur six days later, that is, on the 2nd of Abu, floods and rains were to be apprehended in a short time, together with the death of the king and the division of his empire. It was not for nothing that the sun and moon surrounded themselves in the evening with blood-red vapours or veiled themselves in dark clouds; that they grew suddenly pale or red after having been intensely bright; that unexpected fires blazed out on the confines of the air, and that on certain nights the stars seemed to have become detached from the firmament and to be falling upon the earth. These prodigies were so many warnings granted by the gods to the people and their kings before great crises in human affairs: the astronomer investigated and interpreted them, and his predictions had a greater influence than we are prepared to believe upon the fortunes of individuals and even of states. The rulers consulted and imposed upon the astronomers the duty of selecting the most favourable moment for the execution of the projects they had in view. From an early date each temple contained a library of astrological writings, where the people might find, drawn up as in a. code, the signs which bore upon their destinies. One of these libraries, consisting of not less than seventy clay tablets, is considered to have been first drawn up in the reign of Sargon of Agade, but to have been so modified and enriched with new examples from time to time that the original is well-nigh lost. This was the classical work on the subject in the VIIth century before our era, and the astronomers-royal, to whom applications were accustomed to be made to explain a natural phenomenon or a prodigy, drew their answers ready-made from it.

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Astronomy, as thus understood, was not merely the queen of sciences, it was the mistress of the world: taught secretly in the temples, its adepts—at least, those who had passed through the regular curriculum of study which it required—became almost a distinct class in society. The occupation was a lucrative one, and its accomplished professors had numerous rivals whose educational antecedents were unknown, but who excited the envy of the experts in their trading upon the credulity of the people. These quacks went about the country drawing up horoscopes, and arranging schemes of birthday prognostications, of which the majority were without any authentic warranty. The law sometimes took note of the fact that they were competing with the official experts, and interfered with their business: but if they happened to be exiled from one city, they found some neighbouring one ready to receive them.

Chaldaea abounded with soothsayers and necromancers no less than with astrologers; she possessed no real school of medicine, such as we find in Egypt, in which were taught rational methods of diagnosing maladies and of curing them by the use of simples. The Chaldaeans were content to confide the care of their bodies to sorcerers and exorcists, who were experts in the art of casting out demons and spirits, whose presence in a living being brought about those disorders to which humanity is prone. The facial expression of the patient during the crisis, the words which escaped from him in delirium, were, for these clever individuals, so many signs revealing the nature and sometimes the name of the enemy to be combated—the Fever-god, the Plague-god, the Headache-god. Consultations and medical treatment were, therefore, religious offices, in which were involved purifications, offerings, and a whole ritual of mysterious words and gestures. The magician lighted a fire of herbs and sweet-smelling plants in front of his patient, and the clear flame arising from this put the spectres to flight and dispelled the malign influences, a prayer describing the enchantments and their effects being afterwards recited. “The baleful imprecation like a demon has fallen upon a man;—wail and pain have fallen upon him,—direful wail has fallen upon him,—the baleful imprecation, the spell, the pains in the head!—This man, the baleful imprecation slaughters him like a sheep,—for his god has quitted his body—his goddess has withdrawn herself in displeasure from him,—a wail of pain has spread itself as a garment upon him and has overtaken him!” The harm done by the magician, though terrible, could be repaired by the gods, and Merodach was moved to compassion betimes. Merodach cast his eyes on the patient, Merodach entered into the house of his father Ea, saying: “My father, the baleful curse has fallen like a demon upon the man!” Twice he thus speaks, and then adds: “What this man ought to do, I know not; how shall he be healed?” Ea replies to his son Merodach:

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“My son, what is there that I could add to thy knowledge?—Merodach, what is there that I could add to thy knowledge?—That which I know, thou knowest it:—go then, my son, Merodach,—lead him to the house of purification of the god who prepares remedies,—-and break the spell that is upon him, draw away the charm which is upon him,—the ill which afflicts his body,—which he suffers by reason of the curse of his father,—or the curse of his mother,—or the curse of his eldest brother,—or by the curse of a murderess who is unknown to the man.—The curse, may it be taken from him by the charm of Ea,—like a clove of garlic which is stripped skin by skin,—like a cluster of dates may it be cut off,—like a bunch of flowers may it be uprooted! The spell, may heaven avert it,—-may the earth avert it!” The god himself deigned to point out the remedy: the sick man was to take a clove of garlic, some dates, and a stalk bearing flowers, and was to throw them into the fire, bit by bit, repeating appropriate prayers at each stage of the operation. “In like manner as this garlic is peeled and thrown into the fire,—and the burning flame consumes it,—as it will never be planted in the vegetable garden, it will never draw moisture from the pond or from the ditch,—its root will never again spread in the earth,—its stalk will not pierce the ground and behold the sun,—it will not serve as food for the gods or the king,—so may it remove the baleful curse, so may it loose the bond—of sickness, of sin, of shortcomings, of perversity, of crime!—The sickness which is in my body, in my flesh, in my muscles,—like this garlic may it be stripped off,—and may the burning flame consume it in this day;—may the spell of the sorcerer be cast out, that I may behold the light!” The ceremony could be prolonged at will: the sick person pulled to pieces the cluster of dates, the bunch of flowers, a fleece of wool, some goats’ hair, a skein of dyed thread, and a bean, which were all in turn consumed in the fire. At each stage of the operation he repeated the formula, introducing into it one or two expressions characterizing the nature of the particular offering; as, for instance, “the dates will no more hang from their stalks, the leaves of the branch will never again be united to the tree, the wool and the hair will never again lie on the back of the animal on which they grew, and will never be used for weaving garments.” The use of magical words was often accompanied by remedies, which were for the most part both grotesque and disgusting in their composition: they comprised bitter or stinking wood-shavings, raw meat, snake’s flesh, wine and oil, the whole reduced to a pulp, or made into a sort of pill and swallowed on the chance of its bringing relief. The Egyptian physicians employed similar compounds, to which they attributed wonderful effects, but they made use of them in exceptional circumstances only. The medical authorities in Chaldaea recommended them before all others, and their very strangeness reassured

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the patient as to their efficacy: they filled the possessing spirits with disgust, and became a means of relief owing to the invincible horror with which they inspired the persecuting demons. The Chaldaeans were not, however, ignorant of the natural virtues of herbs, and at times made use of them; but they were not held in very high esteem, and the physicians preferred the prescriptions which pandered to the popular craving for the supernatural. Amulets further confirmed the effect produced by the recipes, and prevented the enemy, once cast out, from re-entering the body; these amulets were made of knots of cord, pierced shells, bronze or terra-cotta statuettes, and plaques fastened to the arms or worn round the neck. On each of the latter kind were roughly drawn the most terrible images that they could conceive, a shortened incantation was scrawled on its surface, or it was covered with extraordinary characters, which when the spirits perceived they at once took flight, and the possessor of the talisman escaped the threatened illness.

However laughable, and at the same time deplorable, this hopeless medley of exact knowledge and gross superstition may appear to us at the present day, it was the means of bringing a prosperity to the cities of Chaldaea which no amount of actual science would ever have produced. The neighbouring barbaric peoples were imbued with the same ideas as the Chaldaens regarding the constitution of the world and the nature of the laws which governed it. They lived likewise in perpetual fear of those invisible beings whose changeable and arbitrary will actuated all visible phenomena; they attributed all the reverses and misfortunes which overtook them to the direct action of these malevolent beings; they believed firmly in the influence of stars on the course of events; they were constantly on the look out for prodigies, and were greatly alarmed by them, since they had no certain knowledge of the number and nature of their enemies, and the means they had invented for protecting themselves from them or of overcoming them too often proved inefficient. In the eyes of these barbarians, the Chaldeans seemed to be possessed of the very powers which they themselves lacked. The magicians of Chaldaea had forced the demons to obey them and to unmask themselves before them; they read with ease in the heavens the present and future of men and nations; they interpreted the will of the immortals in its smallest manifestations, and with them this faculty was not a limited and ephemeral power, quickly exhausted by use: the rites and formulas known to them enabled them to exercise it freely at all times, in all places, alike upon the most exalted of the gods and the most dreaded of mortals, without its ever becoming weakened.

[Illustration:352.jpg A CHALDAEAN AMULET.]

Drawn by Faucher-Gudin, from a sketch by Loftus. The original is in the British Museum.

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A race so endowed with wisdom was, indeed, destined to triumph over its neighbours, and the latter would have no chance of resisting such a nation unless they borrowed from it its manners, customs, industry, writing, and all the arts and sciences which had brought about their superiority. Chaldaeann civilization spread into Elam and took possession of the inhabitants of the shores of the Persian Gulf, and then, since its course was impeded on the south by the sea, on the west by the desert, and on the east by the mountains, it turned in the direction of the great northern plains and proceeded up the two rivers, beside whose lower waters it had been cradled. It was at this very time that the Pharaohs of the XIIIth dynasty had just completed the conquest of Nubia. Greater Egypt, made what she was by the efforts of twenty generations, had become an African power. The sea formed her northern boundary, the desert and the mountains enclosed her on all sides, and the Nile appeared the only natural outlet into a new world: she followed it indefatigably from one cataract to another, colonizing as she passed all the lands fertilized by its waters. Every step which she made in this direction increased the distance between her capitals and the Mediterranean, and brought her armies further south. Asia would have practically ceased to exist, as far as Egypt was concerned, had not the repeated incursions of the Bedouin obliged her to make advances from time to time in that direction; still she crossed the frontier as seldom as possible, and recalled her troops as soon as they had reduced the marauders to order: Ethiopia alone attracted her, and it was there that she firmly established her empire. The two great civilized peoples of the ancient world, therefore, had each their field of action clearly marked out, and neither of them had ever ventured into that of the other. There had been no lack of intercourse between them, and the encounter of their armies, if it ever really had taken place, had been accidental, had merely produced passing results, and up till then had terminated without bringing to either side a decisive advantage.

[Illustration: 354.jpg MAGIC NAIL OF TERRA COTTA]

[Illustration: 355.jpg EGYPTIAN CORNICE BEARING THE CARTOUCHES OF RAMSES I.]

## APPENDIX—THE PHARAOHS OF THE ANCIENT AND MIDDLE EMPIRES

(Dynasties I.-XIV.)

The lists of the Pharaohs of the Memphite period appear to have been drawn up in much the same order as we now possess them, as early as the XIIth dynasty: it is certain that the sequence was definitely fixed about the time of the XXth dynasty, since it was under this that the Canon of Turin was copied. The lists which have come down to us appear to follow two traditions, which differ completely in certain cases: one has been preserved for us by the abbreviators of Manetho, while the other was the authority

followed by the compilers of the tables of Abydos and Saqqara, as well as by the author of the Turin Papyrus.

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There appear to have been in the first five dynasties a certain number of kings whose exact order and filiation were supposed to be well known to the compilers; but, at the same time, there were others whose names were found on the monuments, but whose position with regard to their predecessors was indicated neither by historical documents nor by popular romance. We find, therefore, in these two traditional lists a series of sovereigns always occupying the same position, and others hovering around them, who have no decided place. The hieroglyphic lists and the Royal Canon appear to have been chiefly concerned with the former; but the authorities followed by Manetho have studiously collected the names of the latter, and have intercalated them in different places, sometimes in the middle, but mostly at the end of the dynasty, where they form a kind of *caput mortuum*. The most striking example of this arrangement is afforded us in the IVth dynasty. The contemporary monuments show that its kings formed a compact group, to which are appended the first three sovereigns of the Vth dynasty, always in the same order: Menkauri succeeded Khafri, Shopsiskaf followed Menkauri, Usirkaf followed Shopsiskaf, and so on to the end. The lists of Manetho suppress Shopsiskaf, and substitute four other individuals in his place, namely, Katoises, Bikheris, Seberkheres, Thamphthis, whose reigns must have occupied more than half a century; these four were doubtless aspirants to the throne, or local kings belonging to the time between the IVth and Vth dynasties, whom Manetho's authorities inserted between the compact groups made up of Kheops and his sons on the one hand, and of Usirkaf and his two real of supposed brothers on the other, omitting Shopsiskaf, and having no idea that Usirkaf was his immediate successor, with or without rivals to the throne.

In a course of lectures given at the *College de France* (1893-95), I have examined at length the questions raised by a study of the various lists, and I may be able, perhaps, some day to publish the result of my researches: for the present I must confine myself merely to what is necessary to the elucidation of the present work, namely, the Manethonian tradition on the one hand, and the tradition of the monumental tables on the other. The text which I propose to follow for the latter, during the first five dynasties, is that of the second table of Abydos; the names placed between brackets [ ] are taken either from the table of Saqqara or from the Royal Canon of Turin. The numbers of the years, months, and days are those furnished by the last-mentioned document.

[Illustration: 357.jpg LISTS OF THE PHARAOHS OF THE ANCIENT EMPIRE]

[Illustration: 358.jpg LISTS ON THE MONUMENTS]

From the VIth to the XIIth dynasty, the lists of Manetho are at fault: they give the origin and duration of the dynasties, without furnishing us with the names of the kings.

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[Illustration: 359.jpg LISTS ON THE MONUMENTS]

This blank is partially filled by the table of Abydos, by the fragments of the Turin Papyrus, and by information supplied by the monuments. No such definitely established sequence appears to have existed for this period, as for the preceding ones. The Heracleopolitan dynasties figure, perhaps, in the Canon of Turin only; as for the later Memphite dynasties, the table of Abydos gives one series of Pharaohs, while the Canon adopts a different one. After the close of the VIth dynasty, and before the accession of the IXth, there was, doubtless, a period when several branches of the royal family claimed the supremacy and ruled in different parts of Egypt: this is what we know to have taken place later between the XXIInd and the XXIVth dynasties. The tradition of Abydos had, perhaps, adopted one of these contemporaneous dynasties, while the Turin Papyrus had chosen another: Manetho, on the other hand, had selected from among them, as representatives of the legitimate succession, the line reigning at Memphis which immediately followed the sovereigns of the VIth dynasty. The following table gives both the series known, as far as it is possible for the present to re-establish the order:—

[Illustration: 360.jpg LISTS ON THE MONUMENTS]

The XIth (Theban) dynasty contains but a small number of kings according to the official lists. The tables on the monuments recognize only two, Nibkhrouri and Sonkhkari, but the Turin Canon admits at least half a dozen. These differences probably arose from the fact that, the second Heracleopolitan dynasty having reigned at the same time as the earlier Theban princes, the tables on the monuments, while rejecting the Heracleopolitans, recognized as legitimate Pharaohs only those of the Theban kings who had ruled over the whole of Egypt, namely, the first and last of the series; the Canon, on the contrary, replaced the later Heracleopolitans by those among the contemporary Thebans who had assumed the royal titles. Whatever may have been the cause of these combinations, we find the lists again harmonizing with the accession of the XIIth (Theban) dynasty.

For the succeeding dynasties we possess merely the names enumerated on the fragments of the Turin Papyrus, several of which, however, are also found either in the royal chamber at Karnak, or on contemporary monuments. The order of the names is not always certain: it is, perhaps, best to transcribe the sequence as we are able to gather it from the fragments of the Royal Papyrus, without attempting to distinguish between those which belong to the XIIIth and those which must be. relegated to the following dynasties.

[Illustration: 361.jpg LISTS ON THE MONUMENTS]

About fifty names still remain, but so mutilated and scattered over such small fragments of papyrus, that their order is most uncertain. We possess monuments of about one-

fifth of these kings, and the lengths of their reigns, as far as we know them, all appear to have been short:  we have no reason to doubt that they did really govern, and we can only hope that in time the progress of excavation will yield us records of them one after another.  They bring us down to the period of the invasion of the Shepherds, and it is possible that some among them may be found to be contemporaries of the XVth and XVIth dynasties.

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[Illustration:  362.jpg Tailpiece]